

Sartre

Being and Nothingness

Jean-Paul Sartre
Being and Nothingness

With a new preface by Richard Eyre

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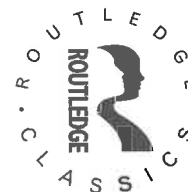
Being and Nothingness

An essay on phenomenological ontology



Translated by Hazel E. Barnes

Introduction by Mary Warnock
With a new preface by Richard Eyre



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Part III

Being-for-Others

1

THE EXISTENCE OF OTHERS

I. THE PROBLEM

We have described human reality from the standpoint of negating conduct and from the standpoint of the *cogito*. Following this lead we have discovered that human reality is-for-itself. Is this all that it is? Without going outside our attitude of reflective description, we can encounter modes of consciousness which seem, even while themselves remaining strictly in for-itself, to point to a radically different type of ontological structure. This ontological structure is *mine*; it is in relation to myself as subject that I am concerned about myself, and yet this concern (for-myself) reveals to me a being which is my being without being-for-me.

Consider for example shame. Here we are dealing with a mode of consciousness which has a structure identical with all those which we have previously described. It is a non-positional self-consciousness, conscious (of) itself as shame; as such, it is an example of what the Germans call *Erlebnis*, and it is accessible to reflection. In addition its structure is intentional; it is a shameful apprehension of something and this something is me. I am ashamed of what I am. Shame therefore realizes an intimate relation of myself to myself. Through shame I have discovered an aspect of my being. Yet although certain complex forms derived from shame can appear on the reflective plane, shame is not originally a phenomenon of reflection. In fact no matter what results one can obtain in solitude by the religious practice of shame, it is in its primary structure shame *before somebody*. I have just made an awkward or vulgar gesture. This gesture clings to me; I neither judge it nor blame it. I simply live it. I realize it in the mode of for-itself. But now suddenly I raise my head. Somebody was there and has seen me. Suddenly I realize the vulgarity of my gesture, and I am ashamed. It is certain that my shame is not reflective, for the

presence of another in my consciousness, even as a catalyst, is incompatible with the reflective attitude; in the field of my reflection I can never meet with anything but the consciousness which is mine. But the Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me. I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other.

By the mere appearance of the Other, I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as on an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other. Yet this object which has appeared to the Other is not an empty image in the mind of another. Such an image in fact, would be imputable wholly to the Other and so could not "touch" me. I could feel irritation, or anger before it as before a bad portrait of myself which gives to my expression an ugliness or baseness which I do not have, but I could not be touched to the quick. Shame is by nature *recognition*. I recognize that I am as the Other sees me. There is however no question of a comparison between what I am for myself and what I am for the Other as if I found in myself, in the mode of being of the For-itself, an equivalent of what I am for the Other. In the first place this comparison is not encountered in us as the result of a concrete psychic operation. Shame is an immediate shudder which runs through me from head to foot without any discursive preparation. In addition the comparison is impossible; I am unable to bring about any relation between what I am in the intimacy of the For-Itself, without distance, without recoil, without perspective, and this unjustifiable being-in-itself which I am for the Other. There is no standard here, no table of correlation. Moreover the very notion of *vulgarity* implies an inter-monad relation. Nobody can be vulgar all alone!

Thus the Other has not only revealed to me what I was; he has established me in a new type of being which can support new qualifications. This being was not in me potentially before the appearance of the Other, for it could not have found any place in the For-itself. Even if some power had been pleased to endow me with a body wholly constituted before it should be for-others, still my vulgarity and my awkwardness could not lodge there potentially; for they are meanings and as such they surpass the body and at the same time refer to a witness capable of understanding them and to the totality of my human reality. But this new being which appears for the other does not reside in the Other; I am responsible for it as is shown very well by the education system which consists in making children ashamed of what they are.

Thus shame is shame of oneself before the Other; these two structures are inseparable. But at the same time I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being. The For-itself refers to the For-others. Therefore if we wish to grasp in its totality the relation of man's being to being-in-itself, we can not be satisfied with the descriptions outlined in the earlier chapters of this work. We must answer two far more formidable questions: first that of

the existence of the Other, then that of the relation of my being to the being of the Other.

II. THE REEF OF SOLIPSISM

It is strange that the problem of Others has never truly disturbed the realists. To the extent that the realist takes everything as given, doubtless it seems to him that the Other is given. In the midst of the real what is more real than the Other? The Other is a thinking substance of the same essence as I am, a substance which will not disappear into primary and secondary qualities, and whose essential structure I find in myself. Yet for all that realism attempts to account for knowledge by an action of the world upon the thinking substance, it has not been concerned with establishing an immediate reciprocal action of thinking substances upon each other. It is through the mediacy of the world that they communicate. My body as a thing in the world and the Other's body are the necessary intermediaries between the Other's consciousness and mine. The Other's soul is therefore separated from mine by all the distance which separates first my soul from my body, then my body from the Other's body, and finally the Other's body from his soul. And if it is as yet not certain that the relation of the For-itself to the body is an external relation (we shall have to deal with this problem later), at least it is evident that the relation of my body to the Other's body is a relation of pure, indifferent exteriority. If the souls are separated by their bodies, they are distinct as this inkwell is distinct from this book; that is, we can not conceive of the immediate presence of the one in the other. And even if we admit that my soul can be immediately present to the Other's body, I still have to overcome all the density of a body before I touch his soul. Therefore if realism bases its certitude upon the presence "in person" of the spatial-temporal thing in my consciousness, it can not lay claim to the same evidence for the reality of the Other's soul since by this very admission, the Other's soul does not give itself "in person" to mine. It is an absence, a meaning; the body points to it without delivering it. In short, in a philosophy based on intuition, there is provided no intuition of the soul of the Other. But if we are not to make a mere play on words, this means that realism provides no place for the intuition of the Other. It would be of no use to say that at least the Other's body is given to us and that this body is a certain presence of the Other or of a part of the Other. It is true that the body belongs to the totality which we call "human reality" as one of its structures. But to be exact the body is the body of a man only in so far as it exists in the indissoluble unity of this totality, just as the organ is a living organ only in the totality of the organism. Realism in taking this position and presenting us with a body not enveloped in human totality but apart, like a stone or a tree or a piece of wax, has killed the body as

surely as the physiologist who with his scalpel separates a piece of flesh from the totality of the living being. It is not the Other's body which is present to the realist intuition but a body, a body which doubtless has particular aspects and a particular ἔξις but which belongs nevertheless to the great class of bodies. If it is true that for a spiritual realism, the soul is easier to know than the body, still the body will be easier to know than the Other's soul.

To tell the truth, the realist is not much concerned with this problem; that is because he takes the existence of others as certain. This is why the realistic and positivistic psychology of the nineteenth century, taking for granted the existence of my fellow-man, occupied itself exclusively with establishing the ways by which I know this existence and read upon the body the nuances of a consciousness which is strange to me. The body, it will be said, is an object whose ἔξις demands a particular interpretation. The hypothesis which gives the best account of its behavior is that of a consciousness which is analogous to my own consciousness and whose various emotions the body reflects. It remains to explain how we arrive at this hypothesis. We will be told at one time that it is by analogy with what I know of myself and again that it is experience which teaches us, for example, to interpret the sudden reddening of a face as the forewarning of blows and angry cries. It will be freely admitted that this procedure can only give us a probable knowledge. It remains always possible¹ that the Other is only a body. If animals are machines, why shouldn't the man whom I see pass in the street be one? Why should not the radical conception of the behaviorists be the right one? What I apprehend on this face is nothing but the effect of certain muscular contractions, and they in turn are only the effect of a nervous impulse of which I know the course. Why not reduce the ensemble of these reactions to simple or conditioned reflexes? But the majority of psychologists remain convinced of the existence of the Other as a total reality of the same structure as their own. For them the existence of others is certain, and the knowledge which we have of them is probable. We can see here the sophistry of realism. Actually we ought to reverse the terms of this proposition and recognize that if the Other is accessible to us only by means of the knowledge which we have of him, and if this knowledge is only conjectural, then the existence of the Other is only conjectural, and it is the role of critical reflection to determine its exact degree of probability. Thus by a curious reversal, the realist because he has posited the reality of the external world, is forced to return to idealism when he confronts the existence of others. If the body is a real object really acting on thinking substance, the Other becomes a pure representation, whose *esse* is a simple *percipi*; that is, one whose existence is measured by the knowledge which we have of it. The more recent theories of *Einfühlung*, of *sympathy*, and of

forms serve only to perfect the description of our ways of making the Other present, but they do not put the debate on its true ground: that is, the Other is first perceived or he appears in experience as a particular form before all habitude; and in the absence of any analogous inference the fact remains that the object, signifying and perceived, the expressive form refer purely and simply to a human totality whose existence remains purely and simply conjectural.

If realism thus refers us to idealism, is it not advisable to adopt immediately the perspective of critical idealism? Since the Other is "my representation," is it not better to question this representation at the heart of a system which reduces the ensemble of objects to a connected grouping of representations and which measures all existence by the knowledge which I have of it?

We shall, however, find little help in the Kantians. In fact they, preoccupied with establishing the universal laws of subjectivity which are the same for all, never dealt with the question of persons. The subject is only the common essence of these persons; it would no more allow us to determine the multiplicity of persons than the essence of man, in Spinoza's system, permits one to determine that of concrete men. At first then it seems that Kant placed the problem of others among those matters which were not within the province of his critique. However let us look more closely. The Other as such is given in our experience; he is an object and a particular object. Kant adopted the point of view of the pure subject in order to determine the conditions of possibility not only for an object in general but for the various categories of objects: the physical object, the mathematical object, the beautiful or ugly object, and the one which presents teleological characteristics. In this connection Kant has been criticized for lacunas in his work, and some—following Dilthey, for example—have wished to establish the conditions of possibility for the historical object—i.e., to attempt a critique of historical reason. Similarly if it is true that the Other represents a particular type of object which is discovered to our experience, then it is necessary even within the perspective of a rigorous Kantianism to ask how the knowledge of the Other is possible; that is, to establish the conditions of possibility for the experience involving others.

Actually it would be completely erroneous to put the problem of the Other and that of noumenal realities on the same footing. Of course, if certain "Others" exist and if they are similar to me, the question of their intelligible existence can be posed for them as that of my noumenal existence is posed for me; to be sure also, the same reply will be valid for them and for me: this noumenal existence can only be thought, not conceived. But when I aim at the Other in my daily experience, it is by no means a noumenal reality that I am aiming at; neither do I apprehend or aim at my intelligible reality when I become aware of my emotions or of my empirical thoughts. The Other is a phenomenon which refers to other phenomena—to a

¹ The French reads *probable*, which I feel certain must be an error. Tr.

phenomenon-of-anger which the Other feels toward me, to a series of thoughts which appear to him as phenomena of his inner sense. What I aim at in the Other is nothing more than what I find in myself. But these phenomena are radically distinct from all other phenomena.

In the first place the appearance of the Other in my experience is manifested by the presence of organized forms such as gestures and expression, acts and conducts. These organized forms refer to an organizing unity which on principle is located outside of our experience. The Other's anger in so far as it appears to his inner sense and is by nature refused to my apperception, gives the meaning and is perhaps the cause of the series of phenomena which I apprehend in my experience under the name of expression or gestures. The Other as the synthetic unity of his experiences and as both will and passion comes to organize my experience. It is not a question of the pure and simple action of an unknowable noumenon upon my sensibility but of the constitution of connected groups of phenomena within the field of my experience by a being who is not me. These phenomena, unlike all others, do not refer to possible experiences but to experiences which on principle are outside my experience and belong to a system which is inaccessible to me. But on the other hand, the condition of possibility for all experience is that the subject organize his impressions into a connected system. Thus we find in things "only what we have put into them." The Other therefore can not without contradiction appear to us as organizing our experience; there would be in this an over-determination of the phenomenon.

Can we make use of causality here? This question is well designed to show the ambiguous character of the Other in a Kantian philosophy. Causality could in fact link only phenomena to each other. But to be exact, the anger which the Other feels is one phenomenon, and the furious expression which I perceive is another and different phenomenon. Can there be a causal connection between them? This would conform to their phenomenal nature, and in this sense I am not prevented from considering the redness of Paul's face as the effect of his anger; this is a part of my ordinary affirmation. But on the other hand, causality has meaning only if it links the phenomena of *one and the same* experience and contributes to constituting that experience. Can it serve as a bridge between two experiences which are radically separated? Here we must note that by using causality in this capacity I shall make it lose its nature as an *ideal* unification of empirical appearances. Kantian causality is a unification of the moments of *my* time in the form of irreversibility. Now are we to admit that it will unify my time with that of the Other? What temporal relation is to be established between the decision to express himself, which is a phenomenon appearing in the woof of the Other's experience, and the expression which is a phenomenon of my experience? Is it simultaneity? Succession? But how can an instant of my time be in a relation of simultaneity

or of succession with an instant in the Other's time? Even if a preestablished harmony (which is, however, incomprehensible in a Kantian perspective) could effect a correspondence of instant with instant in the two times considered, they would still remain two times unrelated since for each of them the unifying synthesis of moments is an act of the subject. The universality of time with Kant is only the universality of a concept; it means only that each temporality must possess a definite structure, that the conditions of possibility for a temporal experience are valid for all temporalities. But this identity of temporal essence does not prevent the incommunicable diversity of times any more than the identity of the essence of man prevents the incommunicable diversity of human consciousnesses. Thus since a relation between consciousnesses is by nature unthinkable, the concept of the Other can not constitute our experience; it must be placed along with teleological concepts among the *regulative* concepts. The Other therefore belongs to the category of "as if." The Other is an *a priori* hypothesis with no justification save the unity which it permits to operate in our experience, an hypothesis which can not be thought without contradiction. It is possible, so far as the pure exercise of knowledge is concerned, to conceive of the action of an intelligible reality on our sensibility, but it is not even thinkable that a phenomenon whose reality is strictly relative to its appearance in the Other's experience should *really* act on a phenomenon of *my* experience. Even if we admitted that the action of an intelligible reality should be exerted simultaneously on my experience and on that of the Other (in the sense that the intelligible reality would affect the Other to the same degree that it would affect me), it would still remain radically impossible to establish or even to postulate a parallelism and a table of correlation between two systems which are spontaneously constituted.² But on the other hand does the quality of a regulative concept really fit the concept of the Other? It is not a question of establishing a stronger unity between the phenomena of my experience in the manner of a purely formal concept which would only allow the discovery of details in the objects which appear to me. It is not a question of a kind of *a priori* hypothesis not extending beyond the field of my experience but inspiring new investigation within the very limits of this field. The perception of the Other-as-object refers to a coherent system of representations, and this system is *not mine*. This means that in my experience the Other is not a phenomenon which refers to my experience but that on principle he refers himself to phenomena located outside of all experience which is possible for me. Of course the concept of the Other allows discoveries and predictions within the heart of my system of

² Even if we adopt the Kantian metaphysics of nature and the catalogue of principles which Kant has drawn up, it would be possible to conceive of radically different types of physics based on these principles.

representations, a contraction in the web of phenomena: thanks to the hypothesis of Others I can anticipate this gesture as coming from that expression. But this concept does not appear as those scientific notions (imaginary numbers, for example) which intervene as instruments of calculation for the physicist, but are not presented in the empirical statement of the problem and are eliminated from the results. The concept of the Other is not purely instrumental. Far from the concepts existing in order to serve to unify phenomena, the truth is that certain categories of phenomena seem to exist only for the concept of the Other.

The existence of a system of meanings and experiences radically distinct from my own is the fixed skeletal framework to which diverse series of phenomena are pointing in their very flow. This framework, which on principle is external to my experience, is gradually filled in. We can never apprehend the relation of that Other to me and he is never given, but gradually we constitute him as a concrete object. He is not the instrument which serves to predict an event in my experience, but there are events in my experience which serve to constitute the Other qua Other; that is, as a system of representations out of reach, as a concrete and knowable object. What I constantly aim at across my experiences are the Other's feelings, the Other's ideas, the Other's volitions, the Other's character. This is because the Other is not only the one whom I see but the one who sees me. I aim at the Other in so far as he is a connected system of experiences out of reach in which I figure as one object among others. But to the extent that I strive to determine the concrete nature of this system of representations and the place which I occupy there as an object, I radically transcend the field of my experience. I am concerned with a series of phenomena which on principle can never be accessible to my intuition, and consequently I exceed the lawful limits of my knowledge. I seek to bind together experiences which will never be my experiences, and consequently this work of construction and unification can in no way serve for the unification of my own experience. To the extent that the Other is an absence he escapes nature. Therefore the Other can not be described as a regulative concept. Of course Ideas like the World, for example, also on principle escape my experience, but at least they are referred back to it and have meaning only through it. The Other, on the contrary, is presented in a certain sense as the radical negation of my experience, since he is the one for whom I am not subject but object. Therefore as the subject of knowledge I strive to determine as object the subject who denies my character as subject and who himself determines me as object.

Thus the Other within the perspective of idealism can be considered neither as a constitutive concept nor as a regulative concept of my knowledge. He is conceived as real, and yet I can not conceive of his real relation to me. I construct him as object, and yet he is never released by intuition. I posit him

as subject, and yet it is as the object of my thoughts that I consider him. There remain then only two solutions for the idealist: either to get rid of the concept of the Other completely and prove that he is useless to the constitution of my experience, or to affirm the real existence of the Other—that is, to posit a real, extra-empirical communication between consciousnesses.

The first solution is known by the name of solipsism. Yet if it is formulated in conformity with its denomination as the affirmation of my ontological solitude, it is a pure metaphysical hypothesis, perfectly unjustified and gratuitous; for it amounts to saying that outside of me nothing exists and so it goes beyond the limits of the field of my experience. But if it is presented more modestly as a refusal to leave the solid ground of experience and as a positive attempt not to make use of the concept of the Other, then it is perfectly logical; it remains on the level of critical positivism, and although it is opposed to the deepest inclinations of our being, it derives its justification from the contradictions of the notion of Others considered in the idealist perspective. A psychology which wants to be exact and objective, like the "behaviorism," of Watson, is really only solipsism as a working hypothesis. It will not try to deny within the field of my experience the presence of objects which we shall call "psychic beings" but will merely practice a sort of *ἐποχή*³ with respect to the existence of systems of representations organized by a subject and located outside my experience.

Confronted with this solution, Kant and the majority of post-Kantians continue to affirm the existence of the Other. But they can refer only to common sense or to our deep-rooted tendencies to justify their affirmation. We know that Schopenhauer speaks of the solipsist as "a madman shut up up in an impregnable blockhouse." What a confession of impotence! It is in fact by this position with regard to the existence of the Other that we suddenly explode the structure of idealism and fall back into a metaphysical realism. First of all by positing a plurality of closed systems which can communicate only through the outside, we implicitly re-establish the notion of substance. Of course these systems are non-substantial since they are systems of representation. But their reciprocal exteriority is an exteriority in itself; it is without being known; we do not even apprehend the effects with any certainty since the solipsist hypothesis remains always possible. We are not limited to positing this nothingness in-itself as an absolute fact; indeed it is not relative to our knowledge of the Other; rather it conditions our knowledge of the Other. Therefore even if consciousnesses are only pure conceptual connections of phenomena, even if the rule of their existence is the *percipere* and the *percipi*, the fact still remains that the multiplicity of these relational systems is a multiplicity in-itself and that it immediately transforms them each one into a system

³ Correction for *ἐποχή*. Tr.

in-itself. In addition, if I posit the notion that my experience of the Other's anger has as a correlate in another system a subjective experience of anger, I reinstate the system of the true image which Kant was especially concerned to get rid of. To be sure, we are dealing with a relation of agreement between the two phenomena—the anger perceived in the gestures and signs and the anger apprehended as a phenomenal reality of inner sense—and not with a relation between a phenomenon and a thing-in-itself. But the fact remains that the criterion of truth here is the conformity of thought to its object, not the agreement of representations with each other. In fact precisely because all recourse to the noumenon is here removed, the phenomenon of the anger felt is to that of the anger established as the *objective real* is to its image. The problem is indeed one of adequate representation since there is a *real* and a mode of apprehension of this real. If we were dealing with the problem of my own anger, I could in fact consider its subjective manifestations and its physiological objectively discernible manifestations as two series of the effects of a single cause without having one of the series represent the truth of the anger or its reality and the other only its effect or its image. But if one of the series of the phenomena resides in the Other and the other series in me, then the one series functions as the reality of the other series, and the realist scheme of truth is the only one which can be applied here.

Thus we abandoned the realist solution of the problem only because it necessarily resulted in idealism; we deliberately placed ourselves within the idealist perspective and thereby gained nothing because, conversely, to the extent that idealism rejects the solipsistic hypothesis, it results in a dogmatic and totally unjustified realism. Let us see if we can understand this abrupt inversion of doctrines and if we can derive from this paradox some information which will facilitate a correct setting of the question.

At the origin of the problem of the existence of others, there is a fundamental presupposition: others are the Other, that is the self which is not myself. Therefore we grasp here a negation as the constitutive structure of the being-of-others. The presupposition common to both idealism and realism is that the constituting negation is an external negation. The Other is the one who is not me and the one who I am not. This *not* indicates a nothingness as a *given* element of separation between the Other and myself. Between the Other and myself there is a nothingness of separation. This nothingness does not derive its origin from myself nor from the Other, nor is it a reciprocal relation between the Other and myself. On the contrary, as a primary absence of relation, it is originally the foundation of all relation between the Other and me. This is because the Other appears to me empirically on the occasion of the perception of a body, and this body is an in-itself external to my body; the type of relation which unites and separates these two bodies is a spatial relation, the relation of things which have no relation among themselves,

pure exteriority in so far as it is given. The realist who believes that he apprehends the Other through his body considers therefore that he is separated from the Other as one body from another body, which means that the ontological meaning of the negation contained in the judgment, "I am not Paul," is of the same type as that of the negation contained in the judgment, "The table is not the chair." Thus since the separation of consciousnesses is attributable to the bodies, there is a sort of original space between diverse consciousnesses; that is, precisely a given nothingness, an absolute distance passively experienced. Idealism, to be sure, reduces my body and the Other's body to objective systems of representation. For Schopenhauer my body is nothing but the "immediate object." But this view does not thereby suppress the absolute distance between consciousnesses. A total system of representations—i.e., each monad—can be limited only by itself and so can not enter into relation with what is not it. The knowing subject can neither limit another subject nor cause itself to be limited by another subject. It is isolated by its positive plenitude, and consequently between itself and another equally isolated system there is preserved a *spatial* separation as the very type of exteriority. Thus it is still *space* which implicitly separates my consciousness from the Other's. Even so it must be added that the idealist without being aware of it is resorting to a "third man" in order to effect the appearance of this external negation. For as we have seen, every external relation inasmuch as it is not constituted by its very terms, requires a witness to posit it. Thus for the idealist as for the realist one conclusion is imposed: due to the fact that the Other is revealed to us in a spatial world, we are separated from the Other by a real or ideal space.

This presupposition entails a serious consequence: if my relation to the Other must in fact be in the mode of indifferent exteriority, then I can not in my being be affected by either the upsurge or the abolition of the Other any more than an In-itself can be affected by the apparition or the disappearance of another In-itself. Consequently since the Other can not act on my being by means of his being, the only way that he can reveal himself to me is by appearing as an *object* to my knowledge. But it must be understood by this that I must constitute the Other as the unification which my spontaneity imposes upon a diversity of impressions; that is, that I am the one who constitutes the Other in the field of his experience. Therefore the Other can be for me only an *image* in spite of the fact that the whole theory of knowledge which I have erected aims at rejecting this notion of image. Only a witness external both to myself and to the Other could compare the image with the model and decide whether it is a true one. Moreover this witness in order to be authorized could not in turn maintain a relation of exteriority with both the Other and myself, for otherwise he would know us only by images. Within the ekstatic unity of his being, he would have to be simultaneously *here* upon me as the

internal negation of myself and over there upon the Other as the internal negation of the Other.

Thus the recourse to God, which we find in Leibniz, is purely and simply a recourse to the negation of interiority; this is concealed by the theological notion of creation: God at the same time is and is not both myself and the Other since he creates us. He must of necessity be myself in order to apprehend my reality without intermediary and with apodictic evidence, and yet it is necessary that he not be me in order that he may preserve his impartiality as witness and be able over there both to be and not be the Other. The image of creation is the most adequate here since in the creative act I look into the very heart of what I create—for what I create is me—and yet what I create opposes itself to me by closing in on itself in an affirmation of objectivity. Thus the spatializing presupposition does not leave us any choice: it must either resort to God or fall into a probabilism which leaves the door open to solipsism.

But this conception of a God who is his creatures makes us fall into a new dilemma: this is the difficulty presented by the problem of substances in post-Cartesian thought. If God is I and if he is the Other, then what guarantees my own existence? If creation is held to be continuous, I remain always suspended between a distinct existence and a pantheistic fusion with the Creator Being. If Creation is an original act and if I am shut up against God, then nothing any longer guarantees my existence to God; he is now united to me only by a relation of exteriority, as the sculptor is related to the finished statue, and once again he can know me only through images. Under these conditions the notion of God while revealing to us the internal negation as the only possible connection between consciousnesses, shows the concept's total inadequacy: God is neither necessary nor sufficient as a guarantee of the Other's existence. Furthermore God's existence as the intermediary between me and the Other already presupposes the presence of the Other to me in an internal connection; for God, being endowed with the essential qualities of a Mind, appears as the quintessence of the Other, and he must be able to maintain an internal connection with myself in order for a real foundation of the Other's existence to be valid for me. It seems therefore that a positive theory of the Other's existence must be able simultaneously to avoid solipsism and to dispense with a recourse to God if it envisages my original relation to the Other as an internal negation; that is, as a negation which posits the original distinction between the Other and myself as being such that it determines me by means of the Other and determines the Other by means of me. Is it possible to look at the question from this point of view?

III. HUSSERL, HEGEL, HEIDEGGER

The philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seems to have understood that once myself and the Other are considered as two separate substances, we cannot escape solipsism; any union of these substances must in fact be held to be impossible. That is why the examination of modern theories reveals to us an attempt to seize at the very heart of the consciousness a fundamental, transcending connection with the Other which would be constitutive of each consciousness in its very upsurge. But while this philosophy appears to abandon the postulate of the external negation, it nevertheless preserves its essential consequence; that is, the affirmation that my fundamental connection with the Other is realized through knowledge.

When Husserl in his *Cartesian Meditations* and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* attempts to refute solipsism, he believes that he can succeed by showing that a referral to the Other is the indispensable condition for the constitution of a world. Without going into the details of his theory, we shall limit ourselves to indicating his general position. For Husserl the world as it is revealed to consciousness is inter-monadic. The Other is present in it not only as a particular concrete and empirical appearance but as a permanent condition of its unity and of its richness. Whether I consider this table or this tree or this bare wall in solitude or with companions, the Other is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object's objectivity. And since our psychophysical self is contemporary with the world, forms a part of the world, and falls with the world under the impact of the phenomenological reduction, the Other appears as necessary to the very constitution of this self. If I am to doubt the existence of my friend Pierre or of others in general, then inasmuch as this existence is on principle outside my experience, I must of necessity doubt also my concrete being, my empirical reality as a professor having this or that tendency, these habits, this particular character. There is no privilege for my self: my empirical Ego and the Other's empirical Ego appear in the world at the same time. The general meaning of "Others" is necessary to the constitution of each one of these "Egos." Thus each object far from being constituted as for Kant, by a simple relation to the subject, appears in my concrete experience as polyvalent; it is given originally as possessing systems of reference to an indefinite plurality of consciousnesses; it is on the table, on the wall that the Other is revealed to me as that to which the object under consideration is perpetually referred—as well as on the occasion of the concrete appearances of Pierre or Paul.

To be sure, these views show progress over the classical positions. It is undeniable that the instrumental-thing from the moment of its discovery refers to a plurality of For-itselfs. We shall have to return to this point. It is

also certain that the meaning of "the Other" can not come from the experience nor from a reasoning by analogy effected on the occasion of the experience; on the contrary, it is in the light of the concept of the Other that the experience is interpreted. Does that mean that the concept of the Other is *a priori*? This we shall attempt to determine later. But in spite of these undeniable advantages Husserl's theory does not seem to us perceptibly different from Kant's. This is due to the fact that while my empirical Ego is not any more sure than the Other's, Husserl has retained the transcendental subject, which is radically distinct from the Ego and which strongly resembles the Kantian subject. Now what ought to be demonstrated is not the parallelism of the empirical "Egos" which nobody doubts but that of the transcendental subjects. This is because actually the Other is *never* that empirical person who is encountered in my experience; he is the transcendental subject to whom this person by nature refers. Thus the true problem is that of the connection of transcendental subjects beyond experience. If someone replies that from the start the transcendental subject refers to other subjects *for* the constitution of the noematic whole, it is easy to reply that it refers to them as to *meanings*. The Other here would be a kind of supplementary category which would allow a world to be constituted, not a real being existing beyond this world. Of course the "category" of the Other implies in its very meaning a reference from the other side of the world to a subject, but this reference could be only hypothetical. It has the pure value of the content of a unifying concept; it is valid in and for the world. Its rights are limited to the world, and the Other is by nature outside the world. Furthermore Husserl has removed the very possibility of understanding what can be meant by the extra-mundane being of the Other since he defines *being* as the simple indication of an infinite series of operations to be effected. There could be no better way to measure being by knowledge. Now even admitting that knowledge in general measures being, the Other's being is measured in its reality by the knowledge which the Other has of himself, not by that which I have of him. What I must attain is the Other, not as I obtain knowledge of him, but as he obtains knowledge of himself—which is impossible. This would in fact suppose the internal identification of myself with the Other. Thus we find here again that distinction on principle between the Other and myself which does not stem from the exteriority of our bodies but from the simple fact that each of us exists in interiority and that a knowledge valid for interiority can be effected only in interiority which on principle excludes all *knowledge* of the Other as he knows himself—i.e., as he is. Moreover Husserl understood this since he says that "the Other" as he is revealed to our concrete experience is an *absence*. But within Husserl's philosophy, at least, how can one have a full intuition of an absence? The Other is the object of empty intentions, the Other on principle refuses himself to us and flees. The only reality which remains is therefore

that of my intention; the Other is the empty noema which corresponds to my directing toward the Other, to the extent that he appears concretely in my experience. He is an ensemble of operations of unification and of the constitution of my experience so that he appears as a transcendental concept. Husserl replies to the solipsist that the Other's existence is as sure as that of the world, and Husserl includes in the world my psycho-physical existence. But the solipsist says the same thing: it is as sure, he will say, but no more sure. The existence of the world is measured, he will add, by the knowledge which I have of it; the case will not be otherwise for the existence of the Other.

Formerly I believed that I could escape solipsism by refuting Husserl's concept of the existence of the Transcendental "Ego."⁴ At that time I thought that since I had emptied my consciousness of its subject, nothing remained there which was privileged as compared to the Other. But actually although I am still persuaded that the hypothesis of a transcendental subject is useless and disastrous, abandoning it does not help one bit to solve the question of the existence of Others. Even if outside the empirical Ego there is *nothing other* than the consciousness of that Ego—that is, a transcendental field without a subject—the fact remains that my affirmation of the Other demands and requires the existence beyond the world of a similar transcendental field. Consequently the only way to escape solipsism would be here again to prove that my transcendental consciousness is in its very being, affected by the extra-mundane existence of other consciousnesses of the same type. Because Husserl has reduced being to a series of meanings, the only connection which he has been able to establish between my being and that of the Other is a connection of *knowledge*. Therefore Husserl can not escape solipsism any more than Kant could.

If now instead of observing the rules of chronological succession, we are guided by those of a sort of non-temporal dialectic, we shall find that in the solution which Hegel gives to the problem in the first volume of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, he has made significant progress over Husserl. Here the appearance of the Other is indispensable not to the constitution of the world and of my empirical "Ego" but to the very existence of my consciousness as self-consciousness. In fact as self-consciousness, the Self itself apprehends itself. The equation "Myself = myself" or "I am I" is precisely the expression of this fact. At first this self-consciousness is pure self-identity, pure existence for itself. It has certitude of itself, but this certitude still lacks truth. In fact this certitude would be true only to the extent that its own existence for itself appeared to it as an independent object. Thus self-consciousness is first a syncretic relation without truth between a subject and an object, an object,

⁴ "La transcendance de l'Ego," *Recherches philosophiques*, 1937.

which is not yet objectified and which is this subject himself. Since the impulse of this consciousness is to realize its concept by becoming conscious of itself in all respects, it tends to make itself valid externally by giving itself objectivity and manifest existence. It is concerned with making the "I am I" explicit and producing itself as an object in order to attain the ultimate stage of development. This state in another sense is naturally the prime mover for the becoming of consciousness; it is self-consciousness in general, which is recognized in other self-consciousnesses and which is identical with them and with itself. The mediator is the Other. The Other appears along with myself since self-consciousness is identical with itself by means of the exclusion of every Other. Thus the primary fact is the plurality of consciousnesses, and this plurality is realized in the form of a double, reciprocal relation of exclusion. Here we are then in the presence of that connection by means of an internal negation which was demanded earlier. No external nothingness in-itself separates my consciousness from the Other's consciousness; it is by the very fact of being me that I exclude the Other. The Other is the one who excludes me by being himself, the one whom I exclude by being myself. Consciousnesses are directly supported by one another in a reciprocal imbrication of their being.

This position allows us at the same time to define the way in which the Other appears to me: he is the one who is other than I; therefore he is given as a non-essential object with a character of negativity. But this Other is also a self-consciousness. As such he appears to me as an ordinary object immersed in the being of life. Similarly it is thus that I appear to the Other: as a concrete, sensible, immediate existence. Here Hegel takes his stand on the ground not of a univocal relation which goes from me (apprehended by the *cogito*) to the Other, but of the reciprocal relation which he defines as "the self-apprehension of the one in the other." In fact it is only in so far as each man is opposed to the Other that he is absolutely for himself. Opposite the Other and confronting the Other, each one asserts his right of being individual. Thus the *cogito* itself can not be a point of departure for philosophy; in fact it can be born only in consequence of my appearance for myself as an individual, and this appearance is conditioned by the recognition of the Other. The problem of the Other should not be posited in terms of the *cogito*; on the contrary, the existence of the Other renders the *cogito* possible as the abstract moment when the self is apprehended as an object. Thus the "moment" which Hegel calls *being for the Other* is a necessary stage of the development of self-consciousness; the road of interiority passes through the Other. But the Other is of interest to me only to the extent that he is another Me, a Me-object for Me, and conversely to the extent that he reflects my Me—i.e., is, in so far as I am an object for him. Due to the fact that I must necessarily be an object for myself only over there in the Other, I must obtain from the Other the

recognition of my being. But if another consciousness must mediate between my consciousness for itself and itself, then the being-for-itself of my consciousness—and consequently its being in general—depends on the Other. As I appear to the Other, so I am. Moreover since the Other is such as he appears to me and since my being depends upon the Other, the way in which I appear—that is, the moment of the development of my self-consciousness—depends on the way in which the Other appears to me. The value of the Other's recognition of me depends on the value of my recognition of the Other. In this sense to the extent that the Other apprehends me as bound to a body and immersed in life, I am myself only *an Other*. In order to make myself recognized by the Other, I must risk my own life. To risk one's life, in fact, is to reveal oneself as not-bound to the objective form or to any determined existence—as not-bound to life.

But at the same time I pursue the *death* of the Other. This means that I wish to cause myself to be mediated by an Other who is only other—that is, by a dependent consciousness whose essential characteristic is to exist only for another. This will be accomplished at the very moment when I risk my life, for in the struggle against the other I have made an abstraction of my sensible being by risking it. On the other hand, the Other prefers life and freedom even while showing that he has not been able to posit himself as not-bound to the objective form. Therefore he remains bound to external things in general; he appears to me and he appears to himself as *non-essential*. He is the *Slave* I am the *Master*; for him it is I who am essence. Thus there appears the famous "Master-Slave" relation which so profoundly influenced Marx. We need not here enter into its details. It is sufficient to observe that the Slave is the Truth of the Master. But this unilateral recognition is unequal and insufficient, for the truth of his self-certitude for the Master is a non-essential consciousness; therefore the Master is not certain of *being for himself as truth*. In order to attain this truth there is necessary "a moment in which the master does for himself what he does as regards the Other and when the slave does as regards the Other what he does for himself."⁵ At this moment there will appear a self-consciousness in general which is recognized in other self-consciousnesses and which is identical with them and with itself.

Thus Hegel's brilliant intuition is to make me depend on the Other in my being. I am, he said, a being for-itself which is for-itself only through another. Therefore the Other penetrates me to the heart. I can not doubt him without doubting myself since "self-consciousness is real only in so far as it recognizes its echo (and its reflection) in another."⁶ Since the very doubt implies a consciousness which exists for itself, the Other's existence conditions my

⁵ *Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*, p. 148. Edition Lasson.

⁶ *Propädeutik*, p. 20, first edition of the complete works.

attempt to doubt it just as in the work of Descartes my existence conditions systematic doubt. Thus solipsism seems to be put out of the picture once and for all. By proceeding from Husserl to Hegel, we have realized immense progress: first the negation which constitutes the Other is direct, internal, and reciprocal; second, it calls each consciousness to account and pierces it to the deepest part of its being; the problem is posited on the level of inner being, of the universal and transcendental "I;" finally in my essential being I depend on the essential being of the Other, and instead of holding that my being-for-myself is opposed to my being-for-others, I find that being-for-others appears as a necessary condition for my being-for-myself.

Yet in spite of the wide scope of this solution, in spite of the richness and profundity of the detailed insights with which the theory of the Master and the Slave is filled to overflowing, can we be satisfied with it?

To be sure, Hegel has posed the question of the being of consciousnesses. It is being-for-itself and being-for-others which he is studying, and he holds that each consciousness includes the reality of the other. Nevertheless it is certain that this ontological problem remains everywhere formulated in terms of knowledge. The mainspring of the conflict of consciousnesses is the effort of each one to transform his self-certitude into truth. And we know that this truth can be attained only in so far as my consciousness becomes as object for the Other at the same time as the Other becomes an object for my consciousness. Thus when idealism asks, "How can the Other be an object for me?" Hegel while remaining on the same ground as idealism replies: if there is in truth a Me for whom the Other is an object, this is because there is an Other for whom the Me is object. Knowledge here is still the measure of being, and Hegel does not even conceive of the possibility of a being-for-others which is not finally reducible to a "being-as-object." Thus a universal self-consciousness which seeks to disengage itself through all these dialectical phases is by its own admission reducible to a purely empty formula—the "I am I." Yet Hegel writes, "This proposition regarding self-consciousness is void of all content."⁷ And in another place he says "[It is] the process of absolute abstraction which consists in surpassing all immediate existence and which results in the purely negative being of consciousness identical with itself." The limiting term of this dialectical conflict, universal self-consciousness, is not enriched in the midst of its avatars; it is on the contrary entirely denuded. It is no more than the "I know that another knows me as me." Of course this is because for idealism absolute being and knowledge are identical. But what does this identification involve?

To begin with, this "I am I," a pure, universal form of identity, has nothing in common with the concrete consciousness which we have attempted to

describe in our Introduction. There we established that the being of self-consciousness could not be defined in terms of knowledge. Knowledge begins with reflection (reflexion) but the game of "the-reflection (reflet)-reflecting" is not a subject-object dyad, not even implicitly. Its being does not depend on any transcendent consciousness; rather its mode of being is precisely to be in question for itself. We showed subsequently in the first chapter of Part Two that the relation of the reflection to the reflecting was in no way a relation of identity and could not be reduced to the "Me = Me" or to the "I am I" of Hegel. The reflection does not make itself be the reflecting; we are dealing here with a being which nihilates itself in its being and which seeks in vain to dissolve into itself as a self. If it is true that this description is the only one which allows us to understand the original fact of consciousness, then we must judge that Hegel has not succeeded in accounting for this abstract doubling of the Me which he gives as equivalent to self-consciousness. Finally we succeeded in getting rid of the pure unreflective consciousness of the transcendental "I" which obscured it and we showed that selfness, the foundation of personal existence, was altogether different from an Ego or from a reference of the Ego to itself. There can be, therefore, no question of defining consciousness in terms of a transcendental ego-ology. In short, consciousness is a concrete being *sui generis*, not an abstract, unjustifiable relation of identity. It is selfness and not the seat of an opaque, useless Ego. Its being is capable of being reached by a transcendental reflection, and there is a truth of consciousness which does not depend on the Other; rather the very being of consciousness, since it is independent of knowledge, pre-exists its truth. On this plane as for naive realism, being measures truth; for the truth of a reflective intuition is measured by its conformity to being: consciousness was there before it was known. Therefore if consciousness is affirmed in the face of the Other, it is because it lays claim to a recognition of its being and not of an abstract truth. In fact it would be ill conceived to think that the ardent and perilous conflict between master and slave had for its sole stake the recognition of a formula as barren and abstract as the "I am I." Moreover there would be a deception in this very conflict since the end finally attained would be universal self-consciousness, "the intuition of the existing self by the self." Here as everywhere we ought to oppose to Hegel Kierkegaard, who represents the claims of the individual as such. The individual claims his achievement as an individual, the recognition of his concrete being, and of the objective specification of a universal structure. Of course the rights which I demand from the Other posit the universality of self; respect of persons demands the recognition of my person as universal. But it is my concrete and individual being which flows into this universal and fills it; it is for that being-there that I demand rights. The particular is here the support and foundation of the universal; the universal

⁷ *Propädeutik*, p. 20, first edition of the complete works.

in this case could have no meaning if it did not exist for the purpose of the individual.

This identification of being and knowledge results in a large number of errors or impossibilities. We shall consider them here under two headings; that is we shall marshal against Hegel a twofold charge of optimism.

In the first place Hegel appears to us to be guilty of an epistemological optimism. It seems to him that the truth of self-consciousness can appear; that is, that an objective agreement can be realized between consciousnesses—by authority of the Other's recognition of me and my recognition of the Other. This recognition can be simultaneous and reciprocal: "I know that the Other knows me as himself." It produces actually and in truth the universality of self-consciousness. But the correct statement of the problem of Others renders this passage to the universal impossible. If the Other can in fact refer my "self" to me, then at least at the end of the dialectical evolution there must be a common measure between what I am for him, what he is for me, what I am for myself, what he is for himself. Of course this homogeneity does not exist at the start; Hegel agrees to this. The relation "Master-Slave" is not reciprocal. But Hegel affirms that the reciprocity must be capable of being established. Here at the outset he is creating a confusion—so easy that it seems voluntary—between *being-an-object* and *life*. The Other, he says appears to me as an object. Now the object is *Myself* in the Other. When Hegel wants to define this object-state more exactly, he distinguishes in it three elements: "This self-apprehension by one in the other is: (1) The abstract moment of self-identity. (2) Each one, however, has also this particularity, that he manifests himself to the Other as an external object, as an immediately concrete and sensible existence. (3) Each one is absolutely for himself and individual as opposed to the other."⁸

We see that the abstract moment of self-identity is given in the knowledge of the Other. It is given with two other moments of the total structure. But—a curious thing in a philosopher of Synthesis—Hegel did not ask if these three elements did not react on one another in such a way as to constitute a new form resistant to analysis. He defines his point of view in the *Phenomenology of Mind* when he declares that the Other appears first as non-essential (this is the sense of the third moment cited above) and as a "consciousness immersed in the being of life." But here we are dealing with a pure co-existence of the abstract moment and of life. It is sufficient therefore that I or the Other risk our life in order that in the very act of offering oneself to danger, we realize the analytical separation of life and consciousness: "What the Other is for each consciousness, each consciousness is for the Other; each consciousness in turn accomplishes in itself by means of its own activity and by means of

the activity of the Other, that pure abstraction of being for itself . . . To present oneself as a pure abstraction of self-consciousness is to reveal oneself as a pure negation of one's objective form, to reveal oneself as not-bound to any determined existence; . . . it is to reveal oneself as not-bound to life."⁹ Of course Hegel will say later that by the experience of risk and of the danger of death, self-consciousness learns that life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness; but this is from a totally different point of view, and the fact still remains that I can always separate, in the Other, the pure truth of self-consciousness from his *life*. Thus the slave apprehends the self-consciousness of the master; he is its truth although, as we have seen, this truth is still not adequate.¹⁰

But is it the same thing to say that the Other on principle appears to me as an object and to say that he appears to me as bound to a particular existence, as immersed in life? If we remain on the level of pure, logical hypotheses, we shall note first that the Other can in fact be given to a consciousness in the form of an object without that object's being precisely bound to that contingent object which we call a living body. In fact our experience presents us only with conscious, living individuals, but in *theory* it must be remarked that the Other is an object for me because he is the Other and not because he appears on the occasion of a body-object; otherwise we should fall back into the illusion of space which we discussed above. Thus what is essential to the Other qua Other is objectivity and not life. Moreover Hegel took this logical affirmation as his point of departure.

But if it is true that the connection between a consciousness and life does not distort the nature of the "abstract moment of self-consciousness" which remains there, immersed, always capable of being discovered, is the case the same for objectivity? In other words, since we know that a consciousness is before being known, then is not a known consciousness wholly modified by the very fact that it is known? Is "to appear as an object for a consciousness" still "to be consciousness"? It is easy to reply to this question: the very being of self-consciousness is such that in its being, its being is in question; this means that it is pure interiority. It is perpetually a reference to a *self* which it has to be. Its being is defined by this: that it is this being in the mode of being what it is not and of not being what it is. Its being, therefore, is the radical exclusion of all objectivity. I am the one who can not be an object for myself, the one who can not even conceive for myself of existence in the form of an object (save on the plane of the reflective dissociation—but we have seen that reflection is the drama of the being who can not be an object for himself). This is not because of the lack of detachment or because of an intellectual prejudice or of a limit imposed on my knowledge, but because objectivity

⁸ *Propädeutik*, p. 18.

⁹ *Phenomenology of Mind*. *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Idem.*

demands an explicit negation: the object is what I make myself not-be whereas I myself am what I make myself be. I pursue myself everywhere, I can not escape myself, I reapprehend myself from behind. Even if I could attempt to make myself an object, I would already be myself at the heart of that object which I am; and at the very center of that object I should have to be the subject who is looking at it. Moreover this is what Hegel hinted at when he said that the Other's existence is necessary in order for me to be an object for myself. But by holding that self-consciousness is expressed by the "I am I"—i.e., by identifying it with self-knowledge—he failed to derive the consequences of his first affirmations; for he introduced into consciousness something like an object existing potentially to be disengaged without change by the Other. But if to be an object is precisely not-to-be-me, then the fact of being an object for a consciousness radically modifies consciousness not in what it is for itself but in its appearance to the Other. The Other's consciousness is what I can simply contemplate and what because of this fact appears to me as being a pure given instead of being what has to be me. It is what is released to me in universal time (i.e. in the original dispersion of moments) instead of appearing to me within the unity of its own temporalization. For the only consciousness which can appear to me in its own temporalization is mine, and it can do so only by renouncing all objectivity. In short the *for-itself* as *for-itself* can not be known by the Other. The object which I apprehend under the name of the Other appears to me in a radically other form. The Other is not a *for-itself* as he appears to me; I do not appear to myself as I am *for-the-Other*. I am incapable of apprehending for myself the self which I am for the Other, just as I am incapable of apprehending on the basis of the *Other-as-object* which appears to me, what the Other is for himself. How then could we establish a universal concept subsuming under the name of self-consciousness, my consciousness for myself and (of) myself and my knowledge of the Other. But this is not all.

According to Hegel the Other is an object, and I apprehend myself as an object in the Other. But the one of these affirmations destroys the other. In order for me to be able to appear to myself as an object in the Other, I would have to apprehend the Other as subject; that is, to apprehend him in his interiority. But in so far as the Other appears to me as object, my objectivity for him can not appear to me. Of course I apprehend that the *Other-as-object* refers to me by means of intentions and acts, but due to the very fact that he is an object, the *Other-as-a-mirror* is clouded and no longer reflects anything. These intentions and these acts are things in the world and are apprehended in the Time of the World; they are established and contemplated, their meaning is an object for me. Thus I can only appear to myself as a transcendent quality to which the Other's acts and intentions refer; but since the Other's objectivity destroys my objectivity for him, it is as an internal subject that I

apprehend myself as being that to which those intentions and those acts refer. It must be understood that this apprehension of myself by myself is in pure terms of consciousness, not of knowledge; by having to be what I am in form of an ekstastic self-consciousness, I apprehend the Other as an object pointing to me. Thus Hegel's optimism results in failure: between the *Other-as-object* and *Me-as-subject* there is no common measure, no more than between self-consciousness and consciousness of the Other. I can not know myself in the Other if the Other is first an object for me; neither can I apprehend the Other in his true being—that is, in his subjectivity. No universal knowledge can be derived from the relation of consciousnesses. This is what we shall call their ontological separation.

But there is in Hegel another and more fundamental form of optimism. This may be called an ontological optimism. For Hegel indeed truth is truth of the Whole. And he places himself at the vantage point of truth—i.e., of the Whole—to consider the problem of the Other. Thus when Hegelian monism considers the relation of consciousnesses, it does not put itself in any particular consciousness. Although the Whole is to be realized, it is already there as the truth of all which is true. Thus when Hegel writes that every consciousness, since it is identical with itself, is other than the Other, he has established himself in the whole, outside consciousnesses, and he considers them from the point of view of the Absolute. For individual consciousnesses are moments in the whole, moments which by themselves are *unselbständig*, and the whole is a mediator between consciousnesses. Hence is derived an ontological optimism parallel to the epistemological optimism: plurality can and must be surpassed toward the totality. But if Hegel can assert the reality of this surpassing, it is because he has already given it to himself at the outset. In fact he has forgotten his own consciousness; he is the Whole, and consequently if he so easily resolves the problem of particular consciousnesses it is because for him there never has been any real problem in this connection. Actually he does not raise the question of the relation between his own consciousness and that of the Other. By effecting completely the abstraction of his own, he studies purely and simply the relation between the consciousnesses of others—i.e. the relation of consciousnesses which are already for him objects whose nature according to him, is precisely that of being a particular type of object,—the subject-object. These consciousnesses from the totalitarian point of view which he has adopted are strictly equivalent to each other although each of them is separated from the rest by a particular privilege.

But if Hegel has forgotten himself, we can not forget Hegel. This means that we are referred back to the *cogito*. In fact, if, as we have established, the being of my consciousness is strictly irreducible to knowledge, then I can not transcend my being toward a reciprocal and universal relation in which I could see my being and that of others as equivalent. On the contrary, I must

establish myself in my being and posit the problem of the Other in terms of my being. In a word the sole point of departure is the interiority of the *cogito*. We must understand by this that each one must be able by starting out from his own interiority, to rediscover the Other's being as a transcendence which conditions the very being of that interiority. This of necessity implies that the multiplicity of consciousnesses is on principle unsurpassable, for I can undoubtedly transcend myself toward a Whole, but I can not establish myself in this Whole so as to contemplate myself and to contemplate the Other. No logical or epistemological optimism could put an end to the scandal of the plurality of consciousnesses. If Hegel believed that it could, this is because he never grasped the nature of that particular dimension of being which is self-consciousness. The task which an ontology can lay down for itself is to describe this scandal and to found it in the very nature of being, but ontology is powerless to overcome it. It is possible—as we shall see better later—that we may be able to refute solipsism and show that the Other's existence is both evident and certain for us. But even if we could succeed in making the Other's existence share in the apodictic certainty of the *cogito*—i.e., of my own existence—we should not thereby “surpass” the Other toward any intermonad totality. So long as consciousnesses exist, the separation and conflict of consciousnesses will remain; we shall simply have discovered their foundation and their true terrain.

What has this long criticism accomplished for us? Simply this: if we are to refute solipsism, then my relation to the Other is first and fundamentally a relation of being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge. We have seen Husserl's failure when on this particular level he measures being by knowledge, and Hegel's when he identifies knowledge and being. But we have equally recognized that Hegel, although his vision is obscured by the postulate of absolute idealism, has been able to put the discussion on its true plane.

In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger seems to have profited by study of his predecessors and to have been deeply impressed with this twofold necessity: (1) the relation between “human-realities” must be a relation of being; (2) this relation must cause “human-realities” to depend on one another in their essential being. At least his theory fulfills these two requirements. In his abrupt, rather barbaric fashion of cutting Gordian knots rather than trying to untie them, he gives in answer to the question posited a pure and simple definition. He has discovered several moments—inseparable except by abstraction—in “being-in-the-world,” which characterizes human reality. These moments are “world,” “being-in,” and “being.” He has described the world as “that by which human reality makes known to itself what it is;” “being-in” he has defined as *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstand*.¹¹ We have still to speak of being; that

is, the mode in which human reality is its being-in-the world. Being, Heidegger tells us, is the *Mit-Sein*—that is, “being-with.” Thus the characteristic of being of human-reality is its being with others. This does not come about by chance. I do not exist first in order that subsequently a contingency should make me encounter the Other. The question here is of an essential structure of my being. But this structure is not established from outside and from a totalitarian point of view as it was with Hegel. To be sure, Heidegger does not take his departure from the *cogito* in the Cartesian sense of the discovery of consciousness by itself; but the human-reality which is revealed to him and for which he seeks to fix the structures in concepts is his own. “*Dasein ist je meines*,” he writes. It is by making explicit the preontological comprehension which I have of myself that I apprehend being-with-others as an essential characteristic of my being. In short I discover the transcendental relation to the Other as constituting my own being, just as I have discovered that being-in-the-world measures my human-reality. Henceforth the problem of the Other is a false problem. The Other is no longer first a particular existence which I encounter in the world—and which could not be indispensable to my own existence since I existed before encountering it. The Other is the ex-centric limit which contributes to the constitution of my being. He is the test of my being inasmuch as he throws me outside of myself toward structures which at once both escape me and define me; it is this test which originally reveals the Other to me.

Let us observe in addition that the type of connection with the Other has changed. With realism, idealism, Husserl, Hegel, the type of relation between consciousnesses was being-for; the Other appeared to me and even constituted me in so far as he was for me or I was for him. The problem was the mutual recognition of consciousnesses brought face to face which appeared in the world and which confronted each other. “To-be-with” has an altogether different meaning; “with” does not intend the reciprocal relation of recognition and of conflict which would result from the appearance of a human-reality other than mine in the midst of the world. It expresses rather a sort of ontological solidarity for the exploitation of this world. The Other is not originally bound to me as an ontic reality appearing in the midst of the world among “instruments” as a type of particular object; in that case he would be already degraded, and the relation uniting him to me could never take on reciprocity. The Other is not an object. In his connection with me he remains a human-reality; the being by which he determines me in my being is his pure being apprehended as “being-in-the-world.” And we know that the “in” must be understood in the sense of *colo*, *habito*, not of *insum*; to-be-in-the-world is to haunt the world, not to be ensnared in it; and it is in my “being-in-the-world” that the Other determines me. Our relation is not a frontal opposition but rather an oblique interdependence. In so far as I make a world

¹¹ Roughly, *Befindlichkeit* is “finitude” and *Verstand* “comprehension.” Tr.

exist as a complex of instruments which I use for the ends of my human reality, I cause myself to be determined in my being by a being who makes the world exist as a complex of instruments for the ends of his reality. Moreover it is not necessary to understand this being-with as a pure concomitance which is passively received by my being. For Heidegger, to be is to be one's own possibilities; that is, to make oneself be. It is then a mode of being which I make myself be. And it is very true that I am responsible for my being-for the Other in so far as I realize him freely in authenticity or in unauthenticity. It is in complete freedom and by an original choice that, for example, I realize my being-with in the anonymous form of "they." And if I am asked how my "being-with" can exist for-myself, I must reply that through the world I make known to myself what I am. In particular when I am in the unauthentic mode of the "they," the world refers to me a sort of impersonal reflection of my unauthentic possibilities in the form of instruments and complexes of instruments which belong to "everybody" and which belong to me in so far as I am "everybody:" ready-made clothes, common means of transportation, parks, gardens, public places, shelters made for *anyone* who may take shelter there, etc. Thus I make myself known as *anybody* by means of the indicative complex of instruments which indicate me as a *Worum-willen*. The unauthentic state—which is my ordinary state in so far as I have not realized my conversion to authenticity—reveals to me my "being-with," not as the relation of one unique personality with other personalities equally unique, not as the mutual connection of "most irreplaceable beings," but as a total interchangeability of the terms of the relation. The determination of the terms is still lacking; I am not opposed to the Other, for I am not "me;" instead we have the social unity of the *they*. To posit the problem on the level of the incommunicability of individual subjects was to commit an *ὕστερον πρότερον*,¹² to stand the world on its head. Authenticity and individuality have to be earned: I shall be my own authenticity only if under the influence of the call of conscience (*Ruf des Gewissens*) I launch out toward death with a resolute-decision (*Entschlossenheit*) as toward my own most peculiar possibility. At this moment I reveal myself to myself in authenticity, and I raise others along with myself toward the authentic.

The empirical image which may best symbolize Heidegger's intuition is not that of a conflict but rather a *crew*. The original relation of the Other and my consciousness is not the *you* and *me*; it is the *we*. Heidegger's being-with is not the clear and distinct position of an individual confronting another individual; it is not *knowledge*. It is the mute existence in common of one member of the crew with his fellows, that existence which the rhythm of the oars or the regular movements of the coxswain will render sensible to the rowers and

which will be *made manifest* to them by the common goal to be attained, the boat or the yacht to be overtaken, and the entire world (spectators, performance, etc.) which is profiled on the horizon. It is on the common ground of this co-existence that the abrupt revelation of my "being-into-death" will suddenly make me stand out in an absolute "common solitude" while at the same time it raises the others to that solitude.

This time we have indeed been given what we asked for: a being which in its own being implies the Other's being. And yet we can not consider ourselves satisfied. First of all, Heidegger's theory offers us the indication of the solution to be found rather than that solution itself. Even if we should without reservation accept his substitution of "being-with" for "being-for," it would still remain for us a simple affirmation without foundation. Undoubtedly we shall encounter certain empirical states of our being—in particular that to which the Germans give the untranslatable name *Stimmung*¹³—which seem to reveal a co-existence of consciousnesses rather than a relation of opposition. But it is precisely this co-existence which must be explained. Why does it become the unique foundation of our being? Why is it the fundamental type of our relation with others? Why did Heidegger believe that he was authorized to pass from this empirical and ontic establishment of being-with to a position claiming co-existence as the ontological structure of my "being-in-the-world?" And what type of being does this co-existence have? To what extent is the negation which makes the Other *an other* and which constitutes him as non-essential maintained? If we suppress it entirely, are we not going to fall into a monism? And if we are to preserve it as an essential structure of the relation to the Other, then what modification must it undergo in order to lose the character of *opposition* which it had in being-for-others and acquire this character as a connection which creates solidarity and which is the very structure of being-with? And how shall we be able to pass from there to the concrete experience of the Other in the world, as when from my window I see a man walking in the street? To be sure it is tempting to conceive of myself as standing out on the undifferentiated ground of the human by means of the impulse of my freedom, by the choice of my unique possibilities—and perhaps this conception holds an important element of truth. But in this form at least such a view gives rise to serious objections.

First of all, the ontological point of view joins here with the abstract view of the Kantian subject. To say that human reality (even if it is my human reality) "is-with" by means of its ontological structure is to say that it is-with by nature—that is, in an essential and universal capacity. Even if this affirmation were proved, it would not enable us to explain any concrete being-with.

¹² Correction for *ὕστερον πρότερον*, obviously a misprint. Tr.

¹³ Literally "pitch" or "tuning." Perhaps the nearest English equivalent is "sympathy" in its original Greek sense of feeling or experiencing with someone. Tr.

In other words, the ontological co-existence which appears as the structure of "being-in-the-world" can in no way serve as a foundation to an ontic being-with, such as, for example, the co-existence which appears in my friendship with Pierre or in the couple which Annie and I make. In fact it would be necessary to show that "being-with-Pierre" or "being-with-Annie" is a structure constitutive of my concrete-being. But this is impossible from the point of view which Heidegger has adopted. The Other in the relation "with," taken on the ontological level, can not in fact be concretely determined any more than the directly confronted human-reality of which it is the alter ego; it is an abstract term and hence *unselbständig*, and it does not contain the power of becoming that Other—Pierre or Annie. Thus the relation of the *Mit-Sein* can be of absolutely no use to us in resolving the psychological, concrete problem of the recognition of the Other. There are two incommunicable levels and two problems which demand separate solutions.

It may be said that this is only one of the difficulties which Heidegger encounters in passing in general from the ontological level to the ontic level, in passing from "being-in-the-world" in general to my relation with this particular instrument, in passing from my being-unto-death, which makes of my death my most essential possibility, to this "ontic" death which I shall experience by encountering this or that external existent. But this difficulty can be disguised, if need be, in all other cases since, for example, it is human reality which causes the existence of a world in which a threat of death to human reality is hidden. Better yet, if the world is, it is because it is "mortal" in the sense in which we say that a wound is mortal. But the impossibility of passing from one level to the other bursts forth when we meet the problem of the Other. In fact even if in the ekstastic upsurge of its being-in-the-world, human reality makes a world exist, one can not, for all that, say that its being-with causes another human reality to rise up. Of course I am the being by whom "there is" (*es gibt*) being. But are we to say that I am the being by whom "there is" another human-reality? If we understand by that that I am the being for whom there is *for me* another human reality, this is a pure and simple truism. If we mean that I am the being by whom *there are* in general Others, we fall back into solipsism. In fact this human reality "with whom" I am is itself "in-the-world-with-me"; it is the free foundation of a world. (How does this make it my world? We can not deduce from the being-with an identity of the worlds "in which" the human realities are.) Human reality is its own possibilities. It is then for itself without having to wait for me to make its being exist in the form of the "there is." Thus I can constitute a world as "mortal," but I can not constitute a human-reality as a concrete being which is its own possibilities. My being-with, apprehended from the standpoint of "my" being, can be considered only as a pure exigency founded in my being;

it does not constitute the slightest proof of the Other's existence, not the slightest bridge between me and the Other.

More precisely, this ontological relation between me and an abstract Other, due to the very fact that it defines in general my relation to others, is far from facilitating a particular ontic relation between me and Pierre; in fact it renders impossible any concrete connection between my being and a particular Other given in my experience. If my relation with the Other is *a priori*, it thereby exhausts all possibility of relation with others. Empirical and contingent relations can neither be specifications of it, nor particular cases. There can be specifications of a law only under two circumstances: either the law is derived inductively from empirical, particular facts, and that is not the case here; or else it is *a priori* and unifies experience, as the Kantian concepts do. Actually in this latter case, its scope is restricted to the limits of experience: I find in things only what I have put into them. Now the act of relating two concrete "beings-in-the world" can not belong to my experience; and it therefore escapes from the domain of being-with. But as the law precisely constitutes its own domain, it excludes *a priori* every real fact which it has not constructed. The existence of time as an *a priori* form of my sensibility would *a priori* exclude me from all connection with a noumenal time which had the characteristics of a being. Thus the existence of an ontological and hence *a priori* "being-with" renders impossible all ontic connection with a concrete human-reality which would arise *for-itself* as an absolute transcendent. The "being-with," conceived as a structure of my being, isolates me as surely as the arguments for solipsism.

The reason for this is that Heidegger's *transcendence* is a concept in bad faith: it aims, to be sure, at surpassing idealism, and it succeeds in so far as idealism presents us with a subjectivity at rest in itself and contemplating its own images. But the idealism thus surpassed is only a bastard form of idealism, a sort of empirical-critical psychologism. Undoubtedly Heidegger's human-reality "exists outside itself." But this existence outside itself is precisely Heidegger's definition of the self. It resembles neither the Platonic [Neo-Platonic?] ekstasis where existence is really alienation, existence in an Other, nor Malebranche's vision in God, our own conception of the ekstasis and of the internal negation. Heidegger does not escape idealism; his flight outside the self, as an *a priori* structure of his being, isolates him as surely as the Kantian reflection on the *a priori* conditions of our experience. In fact what human-reality re-discovers at the inaccessible limit of this flight outside itself is still the self: the flight outside the self is a flight toward the self, and the world appears as the pure distance between the self and the self.

Consequently it would be in vain to look in *Sein und Zeit* for a simultaneous surpassing of all idealism and of all realism. Heidegger's attempt to bring human-reality out of its solitude raises those same difficulties which idealism

generally encounters when it tries to found the existence of concrete beings which are similar to us and which as such escape our experience, which even as they are being constituted do not arise from our *a priori*. He seems to escape isolation because he takes the "outside of self" sometimes as being "outside-of-self-toward-self" and sometimes as "outside-self-in-others." But the second interpretation of "outside-of-self," which Heidegger surreptitiously slides in through his devious reasoning, is strictly incompatible with the first. Human-reality at the very heart of its ekstases remains alone. It is here that we can derive a new and valid insight as the result of our critical examination of Heidegger's teaching: Human-reality remains alone because the Other's existence has the nature of a contingent and irreducible fact. We encounter the Other; we do not constitute him. And if this fact still appears to us in the form of a necessity, yet it does not belong with those "conditions of the possibility of our experience" or—if you prefer—with ontological necessity. If the Other's existence is a necessity, it is a "contingent necessity;" that is, it is of the same type as the *factual necessity* of the *cogito*. If the Other is to be capable of being given to us, it is by means of a direct apprehension which leaves to the encounter its character as facticity, just as the *cogito* itself leaves all its facticity to my own thought, a facticity which nevertheless shares in the apodicticity of the *cogito* itself—i.e., in its indubitability.

This long exposition of doctrine will not therefore have been useless if it enables us to formulate the necessary and sufficient conditions under which a theory of the existence of others can be valid.

(1) Such a theory can not offer a new *proof* of the existence of others, or an argument better than any other against solipsism. Actually if solipsism is to be rejected, this can be only because it is impossible or, if you prefer, because nobody is truly solipsistic. The Other's existence will always be subject to doubt, at least if one doubts the Other only in words and abstractly, in the same way that without really being able to conceive of it, I can write, "I doubt my own existence." In short the Other's existence can not be a probability. Probability can concern only objects which appear in our experience or from which new effects can appear in our experience. There is probability only if a validation or invalidation of it is at every moment possible. If the Other on principle and in its "For-itself" is outside my experience, the probability of his existence as *Another Self* can never be either validated or invalidated; it can neither increase nor decrease, it can not even be measured; it loses therefore its very being as probability and becomes a pure fictional conjecture. In the same way M. Lalande¹⁴ has effectively shown that an hypothesis concerning the existence of living beings on the planet Mars will remain purely conjectural with no chance of being either true or false so

¹⁴ *Les théories de l'induction et de l'expérimentation.*

long as we do not have at our disposal instruments or scientific theories enabling us to produce facts validating or invalidating this hypothesis. But the structure of the Other is on principle such that no new experiment will ever be able to be conceived, that no new theory will come to validate or invalidate the hypothesis of his existence, that no instrument will come to reveal new facts inspiring me to affirm or to reject this hypothesis. Therefore if the Other is not immediately present to me, and if his existence is not as sure as my own, all conjecture concerning him is entirely lacking in meaning. But I do not conjecture about the existence of the Other: I affirm it. A theory of the Other's existence must therefore simply question me in my being, must make clear and precise the meaning of that affirmation; in particular, far from inventing a proof, it must make explicit the very foundation of that certainty. In other words Descartes has not *proved* his existence. Actually I have always known that I existed, I have never ceased to practice the *cogito*. Similarly my resistance to solipsism—which is as lively as any I should offer to an attempt to doubt the *cogito*—proves that I have always known that the Other existed, that I have always had a total though implicit *comprehension* of his existence, that this "pre-ontological" comprehension comprises a surer and deeper understanding of the nature of the Other and the relation of his being to my being than all the theories which have been built outside my comprehension. If the Other's existence is not a vain conjecture, a pure fiction, this is because there is a sort of *cogito* concerning it. It is this *cogito* which we must bring to light by specifying its structures and determining its scope and its laws.

(2) On the other hand, Hegel's failure has shown us that the only point of departure possible is the Cartesian *cogito*. Moreover the *cogito* alone establishes us on the ground of that factual necessity which is the necessity of the Other's existence. Thus what for lack of a better term we called the *cogito* of the Other's existence is merged with my own *cogito*. The *cogito* examined once again, must throw me outside it and onto the Other, just as it threw me outside upon the In-itself; and this must be done not by revealing to me an *a priori* structure of myself which would point toward an equally *a priori* Other but by disclosing to me the concrete, indubitable presence of a particular, concrete Other, just as it has already revealed to me my own incomparable, contingent but necessary, and concrete existence. Thus we must ask the For-itself to deliver to us the For-others; we must ask absolute immanence to throw us into absolute transcendence. In my own inmost depths I must find not *reasons for believing* that the Other exists but the Other himself as not being me.

(3) What the *cogito* must reveal to us is not the-Other-as-object. For a long time now it must have been obvious that what is called an *object* is said to be *probable*. If the Other is an object for me, he refers me to probability. But probability is founded solely on the congruity of our representations to

infinity. Since the Other is neither a representation nor a system of representations nor a necessary unity of our representations, he can not be probable; he can not at first be an object. Therefore if he is for us, this can be neither as a constitutive factor of our knowledge of the world nor as a constitutive factor of our knowledge of the self, but as one who "interests" our being, and that not as he contributes *a priori* to constitute our being but as he interests it concretely and "ontically" in the empirical circumstances of our facticity.

(4) If we attempt somehow regarding the Other what Descartes attempted to do for God with that extraordinary "proof by the idea of perfection" which is wholly animated by the intuition of transcendence, then for our apprehension of the Other qua Other we are compelled to reject a certain type of negation which we have called an external negation. The Other must appear to the *cogito* as not being me. This negation can be conceived in two ways: either it is a pure, external negation, and it will separate the Other from myself as one substance from another substance—and in this case all apprehension of the Other is by definition impossible; or else it will be an internal negation, which means a synthetic, active connection of the two terms, each one of which constitutes itself by denying that it is the other. This negative relation will therefore be reciprocal and will possess a two fold interiority: This means first that the multiplicity of "Others" will not be a collection but a totality (in this sense we admit that Hegel is right) since each Other finds his being in the Other.¹⁵ It also means that this Totality is such that it is on principle impossible for us to adopt "the point of view of the whole." In fact we have seen that no abstract concept of consciousness can result from the comparison of my being-for-myself with my object-state for the Other. Furthermore this totality—like that of the For-itself—is a detotalized totality; for since existence-for-others is a radical refusal of the Other, no totalitarian and unifying synthesis of "Others" is possible.

It is in the light of these few observations that we in turn shall now approach the question of The Other.

IV. THE LOOK

This woman whom I see coming toward me, this man who is passing by in the street, this beggar whom I hear calling before my window, all are for me objects—of that there is no doubt. Thus it is true that at least one of the modalities of the Other's presence to me is object-ness. But we have seen that if this relation of object-ness is the fundamental relation between the Other and myself, then the Other's existence remains purely conjectural. Now it is not only conjectural but probable that this voice which I hear is that of a man and

not a song on a phonograph; it is infinitely probable that the passerby whom I see is a man and not a perfected robot. This means that without going beyond the limits of probability and indeed because of this very probability, my apprehension of the Other as an object essentially refers me to a fundamental apprehension of the Other in which he will not be revealed to me as an object but as a "presence in person." In short, if the Other is to be a probable object and not a dream of an object, then his object-ness must of necessity refer not to an original solitude beyond my reach, but to a fundamental connection in which the Other is manifested in some way other than through the knowledge which I have of him. The classical theories are right in considering that every perceived human organism refers to something and that this to which it refers is the foundation and guarantee of its probability. Their mistake lies in believing that this reference indicates a separate existence, a consciousness which would be behind its perceptible manifestations as the noumenon is behind the Kantian *Empfindung*. Whether or not this consciousness exists in a separate state, the face which I see does not refer to it; it is not this consciousness which is the truth of the probable object which I perceive. In actual fact the reference to a twin upsurge in which the Other is presence for me is to a "being-in-a-pair-with-the-Other," and this is given outside of knowledge proper even if the latter be conceived as an obscure and unexpressible form on the order of intuition. In other words, the problem of Others has generally been treated as if the primary relation by which the Other is discovered is object-ness; that is, as if the Other were first revealed—directly or indirectly—to our perception. But since this perception by its very nature refers to something other than to itself and since it can refer neither to an infinite series of appearances of the same type—as in idealism the perception of the table or of the chair does—nor to an isolated entity located on principle outside my reach, its essence must be to refer to a primary relation between my consciousness and the Other's. This relation, in which the Other must be given to me directly as a subject although in connection with me, is the fundamental relation, the very type of my being-for-others.

Nevertheless the reference here cannot be to any mystic or ineffable experience. It is in the reality of everyday life that the Other appears to us, and his probability refers to everyday reality. The problem is precisely this: there is in everyday reality an original relation to the Other which can be constantly pointed to and which consequently can be revealed to me outside all reference to a religious or mystic unknowable. In order to understand it I must question more exactly this ordinary appearance of the Other in the field of my perception; since this appearance refers to that fundamental relation, the appearance must be capable of revealing to us, at least as a reality aimed at, the relation to which it refers.

I am in a public park. Not far away there is a lawn and along the edge of

¹⁵ Chaque autrui trouve son être en l'autre. Tr.

that lawn there are benches. A man passes by those benches. I see this man; I apprehend him as an object and at the same time as a man. What does this signify? What do I mean when I assert that this object is a man?

If I were to think of him as being only a puppet, I should apply to him the categories which I ordinarily use to group temporal-spatial "things." That is, I should apprehend him as being "beside" the benches, two yards and twenty inches from the lawn, as exercising a certain pressure on the ground, etc. His relation with other objects would be of the purely additive type; this means that I could have him disappear without the relations of the other objects around him being perceptibly *changed*. In short, no new relation would appear through him between those things in my universe: grouped and synthesized from my point of view into instrumental complexes, they would from his disintegrate into multiplicities of indifferent relations. Perceiving him as a man, on the other hand, is not to apprehend an additive relation between the chair and him; it is to register an organization *without distance* of the things in my universe around that privileged object. To be sure, the lawn remains two yards and twenty inches away from him, but it is also as a lawn bound to him in a relation which at once both transcends distance and contains it. Instead of the two terms of the distance being indifferent, interchangeable, and in a reciprocal relation, the distance is *unfolded starting from the man* whom I see and extending up to the lawn as the synthetic up-surge of a univocal relation. We are dealing with a relation which is without parts, given at one stroke, inside of which there unfolds a spatiality which is not my spatiality; for instead of a grouping toward me of the objects, there is now an orientation which *flee from me*.

Of course this relation without distance and without parts is in no way that original relation of the Other to me which I am seeking. In the first place, it concerns only the man and the things in the world. In addition it is still an object of knowledge; I shall express it, for example, by saying that this man sees the lawn, or that in spite of the prohibiting sign he is preparing to walk on the grass, etc. Finally it still retains a pure character of probability: First, it is *probable* that this object is a man. Second, even granted that he is a man, it remains only probable that he *sees* the lawn at the moment that I perceive him; it is possible that he is dreaming of some project without exactly being aware of what is around him, or that he is blind, etc., etc. Nevertheless this new relation of the object-man to the object-lawn has a particular character; it is simultaneously given to me as a whole, since it is there in the world as an object which I can know (it is, in fact, an objective relation which I express by saying: Pierre has glanced at this watch, Jean has looked out the window, etc.), and at the same time it entirely escapes me. To the extent that the man-as-object is the fundamental term of this relation, to the extent that the relation *reaches toward him*, it escapes me. I can not put myself at the center of it. The distance which unfolds between the lawn and the man through the

synthetic upsurge of this primary relation is a negation of the distance which I establish—as a pure type of external negation—between these two objects. The distance appears as a pure *disintegration* of the relations which I apprehend between the objects of my universe. It is not I who realize this disintegration; it appears to me as a relation which I aim at emptily across the distances which I originally established between things. It stands as a background of things, a background which on principle escapes me and which is conferred on them from without. Thus the appearance, among the objects of my universe, of an element of disintegration in that universe is what I mean by the appearance of a man in my universe.

The Other is first the permanent flight of things toward a goal which I apprehend as an object at a certain distance from me but which escapes me inasmuch as it unfolds about itself its own distances. Moreover this disintegration grows by degrees; if there exists between the lawn and the Other a relation which is without distance and which creates distance, then there exists necessarily a relation between the Other and the statue which stands on a pedestal in the middle of the lawn, and a relation between the Other and the big chestnut trees which border the walk; there is a total space which is grouped around the Other, and this space is made with *my space*; there is a regrouping in which I take part but which escapes me, a regrouping of all the objects which people my universe. This regrouping does not stop there. The grass is something qualified; it is this green grass which exists for the Other; in this sense the very quality of the object, its deep, raw green is in direct relation to this man. This green turns toward the Other a face which escapes me. I apprehend the relation of the green to the Other as an objective relation, but I can not apprehend the green as it appears to the Other. Thus suddenly an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me. Everything is in place; everything still exists for me; but everything is traversed by an invisible flight and fixed in the direction of a new object. The appearance of the Other in the world corresponds therefore to a fixed sliding of the whole universe, to a decentralization of the world which undermines the centralization which I am simultaneously effecting.

But the Other is still an object for me. He belongs to my distances; the man is there, twenty paces from me, he is turning his back on me. As such he is again two yards, twenty inches from the lawn, six yards from the statue; hence the disintegration of my universe is contained within the limits of this same universe; we are not dealing here with a flight of the world toward nothingness or outside itself. Rather it appears that the world has a kind of drain hole in the middle of its being and that it is perpetually flowing off through this hole. The universe, the flow, and the drain hole are all once again recovered, reapprehended, and fixed as an object. All this is there for me as a partial structure of the world, even though the total disintegration of the universe is

involved. Moreover these disintegrations may often be contained within more narrow limits. There, for example, is a man who is reading while he walks. The disintegration of the universe which he represents is purely virtual; he has ears which do not hear, eyes which see nothing except his book. Between his book and him I apprehend an undeniable relation without distance of the same type as that which earlier connected the walker with the grass. But this time the form has closed in on itself. There is a full object for me to grasp. In the midst of the world I can say "man-reading" as I could say "cold stone," "fine rain." I apprehend a closed "Gestalt" in which the *reading* forms the essential quality; for the rest, it remains blind and mute, lets itself be known and perceived as a pure and simple temporal-spatial thing, and seems to be related to the rest of the world by a purely indifferent externality. The quality "man-reading" as the relation of the man to the book is simply a little particular crack in my universe. At the heart of this solid, visible form he makes himself a particular emptying. The form is massive only in appearance; its peculiar meaning is to be—in the midst of my universe, at ten paces from me, at the heart of that massivity—a closely consolidated and localized flight.

None of this enables us to leave the level on which the Other is an *object*. At most we are dealing with a particular type of objectivity akin to that which Husserl designated by the term *absence* without, however, his noting that the Other is defined not as the absence of a consciousness in relation to the body which I see but by the absence of the world which I perceive, an absence discovered at the very heart of my perception of this world. On this level the Other is an object in the world, an object which can be defined by the world. But this relation of flight and of absence on the part of the world in relation to me is only probable. If it is this which defines the objectivity of the Other, then to what original presence of the Other does it refer? At present we can give this answer: if the Other-as-object is defined in connection with the world as the object which *sees* what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of *being seen* by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject. For just as the Other is a probable object for me-as-subject, so I can discover myself in the process of becoming a probable object for only a certain subject. This revelation can not derive from the fact that my universe is an *object* for the Other-as-object, as if the Other's look after having wandered over the lawn and the surrounding objects came following a definite path to turn toward me. I have observed that I can not be an object for an object. A radical conversion of the Other is necessary if he is to escape objectivity. Therefore I can not consider the look which the Other directs on me as one of the possible manifestations of his objective being; the Other can not look at me as he looks at the grass. Furthermore my objectivity can not

itself derive *for me* from the objectivity of the world since I am precisely the one by whom *there* is a world; that is, the one who on principle can not be an object for himself.

Thus this relation which I call "being-seen-by-another," far from being merely one of the relations signified by the word *man*, represents an irreducible fact which can not be deduced either from the essence of the Other-as-object, or from my being-as-subject. On the contrary, if the concept of the Other-as-object is to have any meaning, this can be only as the result of the conversion and the degradation of that original relation. In a word, my apprehension of the Other in the world as *probably being* a man refers to my permanent possibility of *being-seen-by-him*; that is, to the permanent possibility that a subject who sees me may be substituted for the object seen by me. "Being-seen-by-the-Other" is the truth of "seeing-the-Other." Thus the notion of the Other can not under any circumstances aim at a solitary, extramundane consciousness which I can not even think. The man is defined by his relation to the world and by his relation to myself. He is that object in the world which determines an internal flow of the universe, an internal hemorrhage. He is the subject who is revealed to me in that flight of myself toward objectivation. But the original relation of myself to the Other is not only an absent truth aimed at across the concrete presence of an object in my universe; it is also a concrete, daily relation which at each instant I experience. At each instant the Other is *looking at me*. It is easy therefore for us to attempt with concrete examples to describe this fundamental connection which must form the basis of any theory concerning the Other. If the Other is on principle the *one who looks at me*, then we must be able to explain the meaning of the Other's look.

Every look directed toward me is manifested in connection with the appearance of a sensible form in our perceptive field, but contrary to what might be expected, it is not connected with any determined form. Of course what most often manifests a look is the convergence of two ocular globes in my direction. But the look will be given just as well on occasion when there is a rustling of branches, or the sound of a footstep followed by silence, or the slight opening of a shutter, or a light movement of a curtain. During an attack men who are crawling through the brush apprehend as a *look to be avoided*, not two eyes, but a white farm-house which is outlined against the sky at the top of a little hill. It is just probable, of course, that the object thus constituted still manifests the look. It is only probable that behind the bush which has just moved there is someone hiding who is watching me. But this probability need not detain us for the moment; we shall return to this point later. What is important first is to define the look in itself. Now the bush, the farmhouse are not the look; they only represent the eye, for the eye is not at first apprehended as a sensible organ of vision but as the support for the look. They

never refer therefore to the actual eye of the watcher hidden behind the curtain, behind a window in the farmhouse. In themselves they are already eyes. On the other hand neither is the look one quality among others of the object which functions as an eye, nor is it the total form of that object, nor a "worldly" relation which is established between that object and me. On the contrary, far from perceiving the look on the objects which manifest it, my apprehension of a look turned toward me appears on the ground of the destruction of the eyes which "look at me." If I apprehend the look, I cease to perceive the eyes; they are there, they remain in the field of my perception as pure presentations, but I do not make any use of them; they are neutralized, put out of play; they are no longer the object of a thesis but remain in that state of "disconnection"¹⁶ in which the world is put by a consciousness practicing the phenomenological reduction prescribed by Husserl. It is never when eyes are looking at you that you can find them beautiful or ugly, that you can remark on their color. The Other's look hides his eyes; it seems to go in front of them. This illusion stems from the fact that eyes as objects of my perception remain at a precise distance which unfolds from me to them (in a word, I am present to the eyes without distance, but they are distant from the place where I "find myself") whereas the look is upon me without distance while at the same time it holds me at a distance—that is, its immediate presence to me unfolds a distance which removes me from it. I can not therefore direct my attention on the look without at the same stroke causing my perception to decompose and pass into the background. There is produced here something analogous to what I attempted to show elsewhere in connection with the subject of the imagination.¹⁷ We can not, I said then, perceive and imagine simultaneously; it must be either one or the other. I should willingly say here: we can not perceive the world and at the same time apprehend a look fastened upon us; it must be either one or the other. This is because to perceive is to look at, and to apprehend a look is not to apprehend a look-as-object in the world (unless the look is not directed upon us); it is to be conscious of being looked at. The look which the eyes manifest, no matter what kind of eyes they are is a pure reference to myself. What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches crackling behind me is not that *there is someone there*; it is that I am vulnerable, that I have a body which can be hurt, that I occupy a place and that I can not in any case escape from the space in which I am without defense—in short, that I *am seen*. Thus the look is first an intermediary which refers from me to myself. What is the nature of this intermediary? What does being seen mean for me?

Let us imagine that moved by jealousy, curiosity, or vice I have just glued

my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole. I am alone and on the level of a non-thetic self-consciousness. This means first of all that there is no self to inhabit my consciousness, nothing therefore to which I can refer my acts in order to qualify them. They are in no way known; I *am* my acts and hence they carry in themselves their whole justification. I am a pure consciousness of things, and things, caught up in the circuit of my selfness, offer to me their potentialities as the proof of my non-thetic consciousness (of) my own possibilities. This means that behind that door a spectacle is presented as "to be seen," a conversation as "to be heard." The door, the keyhole are at once both instruments and obstacles; they are presented as "to be handled with care;" the keyhole is given as "to be looked through close by and a little to one side," etc. Hence from this moment "I do what I have to do." No transcending view comes to confer upon my acts the character of a given on which a judgment can be brought to bear. My consciousness sticks to my acts, it is my acts; and my acts are commanded only by the ends to be attained and by the instruments to be employed. My attitude, for example, has no "outside"; it is a pure process of relating the instrument (the keyhole) to the end to be attained (the spectacle to be seen), a pure mode of losing myself in the world, of causing myself to be drunk in by things as ink is by a blotter in order that an instrumental-complex oriented toward an end may be synthetically detached on the ground of the world. The order is the reverse of causal order. It is the end to be attained which organizes all the moments which precede it. The end justifies the means; the means do not exist for themselves and outside the end.

Moreover the ensemble exists only in relation to a free project of my possibilities. Jealousy, as the possibility which I *am*, organizes this instrumental complex by transcending it toward itself. But I *am* this jealousy; I do not know it. If I contemplated it instead of making it, then only the worldly complex of instrumentality could teach it to me. This ensemble in the world with its double and inverted determination (there is a spectacle to be seen behind the door only because I am jealous, but my jealousy is nothing except the simple objective fact that *there is a sight to be seen* behind the door)—this we shall call *situation*. This situation reflects to me at once both my facticity and my freedom; on the occasion of a certain objective structure of the world which surrounds me, it refers my freedom to me in the form of tasks to be freely done. There is no constraint here since my freedom eats into my possibles and since correlatively the potentialities of the world indicate and offer only themselves. Moreover I can not truly define myself as *being* in a situation: first because I am not a positional consciousness of myself; second because I am my own nothingness. In this sense—and since I am what I am not and since I am not what I am—I can not even define myself as truly *being* in the process of listening at doors. I escape this provisional definition of

¹⁶ Literally, "put out of circuit" (*mise hors circuit*). Tr.

¹⁷ L'Imaginaire. N.R.F., 1940. In English, *The Psychology of the Imagination*. Philosophical Library, 1948.

myself by means of all my transcendence. There as we have seen is the origin of bad faith. Thus not only am I unable to know myself, but my very being escapes—although I am that very escape from my being—and I am absolutely nothing. There is nothing there but a pure nothingness encircling a certain objective ensemble and throwing it into relief outlined upon the world, but this ensemble is a real system, a disposition of means in view of an end.

But all of a sudden I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me! What does this mean? It means that I am suddenly affected in my being and that essential modifications appear in my structure—modifications which I can apprehend and fix conceptually by means of the reflective *cogito*.

First of all, I now exist as myself for my unreflective consciousness. It is this irruption of the self which has been most often described: I see myself because somebody sees me—as it is usually expressed. This way of putting it is not wholly exact. But let us look more carefully. So long as we considered the for-itself in its isolation, we were able to maintain that the unreflective consciousness can not be inhabited by a self; the self was given as an object only for the reflective consciousness. But here the self comes to haunt the unreflective consciousness. Now the unreflective consciousness is a consciousness of the world. Therefore for the unreflective consciousness the self exists on the level of objects in the world; this role which devolved only on the reflective consciousness—the making-present of the self—belongs now to the unreflective consciousness. Only the reflective consciousness has the self directly for an object. The unreflective consciousness does not apprehend the person directly or as its object; the person is presented to consciousness in so far as the person is an object for the Other. This means that all of a sudden I am conscious of myself as escaping myself, not in that I am the foundation of my own nothingness but in that I have my foundation outside myself. I am for myself only as I am a pure reference to the Other.

Nevertheless we must not conclude here that the object is the Other and that the *Ego* present to my consciousness is a secondary structure or a meaning of the Other-as-object; the Other is not an object here and can not be an object, as we have shown, unless by the same stroke my self ceases to be an object-for-the-Other and vanishes. Thus I do not aim at the Other as an object nor at my *Ego* as an object for myself; I do not even direct an empty intention toward that *Ego* as toward an object presently out of my reach. In fact it is separated from me by a nothingness which I can not fill since I apprehend it as not being for me and since on principle it exists for the Other. Therefore I do not aim at it as if it could someday be given me but on the contrary in so far as it on principle flees from me and will never belong to me. Nevertheless I am that *Ego*; I do not reject it as a strange image, but it is present to me as a self which I am without knowing it; for I discover it in shame and, in other instances, in pride. It is shame or pride which reveals to me the Other's look and myself at

the end of that look. It is the shame or pride which makes me live, not know the situation of being looked at.

Now, shame, as we noted at the beginning of this chapter, is shame of self; it is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging. I can be ashamed only as my freedom escapes me in order to become a given object. Thus originally the bond between my unreflective consciousness and my *Ego*, which is being looked at, is a bond not of knowing but of being. Beyond any knowledge which I can have, I am this self which another knows. And this self which I am—this I am in a world which the Other has made alien to me, for the Other's look embraces my being and correlatively the walls, the door, the keyhole. All these instrumental-things in the midst of which I am, now turn toward the Other a face which on principle escapes me. Thus I am my *Ego* for the Other in the midst of a world which flows toward the Other. Earlier we were able to call this internal hemorrhage the flow of my world toward the Other-as-object. This was because the flow of blood was trapped and localized by the very fact that I fixed as an object in my world that Other toward which this world was bleeding. Thus not a drop of blood was lost; all was recovered, surrounded, localized although in a being which I could not penetrate. Here on the contrary the flight is without limit; it is lost externally; the world flows out of the world and I flow outside myself. The Other's look makes me be beyond my being in this world and puts me in the midst of the world which is at once this world and beyond this world. What sort of relations can I enter into with this being which I am and which shame reveals to me?

In the first place there is a relation of being. I am this being. I do not for an instant think of denying it; my shame is a confession. I shall be able later to use bad faith so as to hide it from myself, but bad faith is also a confession since it is an effort to flee the being which I am. But I am this being, neither in the mode of "having to be" nor in that of "was;" I do not found it in its being; I can not produce it directly. But neither is it the indirect, strict effect of my acts as when my shadow on the ground or my reflection in the mirror is moved in correlation with the gestures which I make. This being which I am preserves a certain indetermination, a certain unpredictability. And these new characteristics do not come only from the fact that I can not know the Other; they stem also and especially from the fact that the Other is free. Or to be exact and to reverse the terms, the Other's freedom is revealed to me across the uneasy indetermination of the being which I am for him. Thus this being is not my possible; it is not always in question at the heart of my freedom. On the contrary, it is the limit of my freedom, its "backstage" in the sense that we speak of "behind the scenes." It is given to me as a burden which I carry without ever being able to turn back to know it, without even being able to realize its weight. If it is comparable to my shadow, it is like a

shadow which is projected on a moving and unpredictable material such that no table of reference can be provided for calculating the distortions resulting from these movements. Yet we still have to do with my being and not with an image of my being. We are dealing with my being as it is written in and by the Other's freedom. Everything takes place as if I had a dimension of being from which I was separated by a radical nothingness; and this nothingness is the Other's freedom. The Other has to make my being-for-him be in so far as he has to be his being. Thus each of my free conducts engages me in a new environment where the very stuff of my being is the unpredictable freedom of another. Yet by my very shame I claim as mine that freedom of another. I affirm a profound unity of consciousnesses, not that harmony of monads which has sometimes been taken as a guarantee of objectivity but a unity of being; for I accept and wish that others should confer upon me a being which I recognize.

Shame reveals to me that I am this being, not in the mode of "was" or of "having to be" but *in-itself*. When I am alone, I can not realize my "being-seated;" at most it can be said that I simultaneously both am it and am not it. But in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me. It is not for myself, to be sure; I myself shall never succeed at realizing this being-seated which I grasp in the Other's look. I shall remain forever a consciousness. But it is for the Other. Once more the nihilating escape of the for-itself is fixed, once more the in-itself closes in upon the for-itself. But once more this metamorphosis is effected at a distance. For the Other I am seated as this inkwell is on the table; for the Other, I am leaning over the keyhole as this tree is bent by the wind. Thus for the Other I have stripped myself of my transcendence. This is because my transcendence becomes for whoever makes himself a witness of it (i.e., determines himself as not being my transcendence) a purely established transcendence, a given-transcendence; that is, it acquires a nature by the sole fact that the Other confers on it an outside. This is accomplished, not by any distortion or by a refraction which the Other would impose on my transcendence through his categories, but by his very being. If there is an Other, whatever or whoever he may be, whatever may be his relations with me, and without his acting upon me in any way except by the pure upsurge of his being—then I have an outside, I have a nature. My original fall is the existence of the Other. Shame—like pride—is the apprehension of myself as a nature although that very nature escapes me and is unknowable as such. Strictly speaking, it is not that I perceive myself losing my freedom in order to become a thing, but my nature is—over there, outside my lived freedom—as a given attribute of this being which I am for the Other.

I grasp the Other's look at the very center of my act as the solidification and alienation of my own possibilities. In fear or in anxious or prudent

anticipation, I perceive that these possibilities which I am and which are the condition of my transcendence are given also to another, given as about to be transcended in turn by his own possibilities. The Other as a look is only that—my transcendence transcended. Of course I still am my possibilities in the mode of non-thetic consciousness (of) these possibilities. But at the same time the look alienates them from me. Hitherto I grasped these possibilities thetically on the world and in the world in the form of the potentialities of instruments: the dark corner in the hallway referred to me the possibility of hiding—as a simple potential quality of its shadow, as the invitation of its darkness. This quality or instrumentality of the object belonged to it alone and was given as an objective, ideal property marking its real belonging to that complex which we have called situation. But with the Other's look a new organization of complexes comes to superimpose itself on the first. To apprehend myself as seen is, in fact, to apprehend myself as seen in the world and from the standpoint of the world. The look does not carve me out in the universe; it comes to search for me at the heart of my situation and grasps me only in irresolvable relations with instruments. If I am seen as seated, I must be seen as "seated-on-a-chair," if I am grasped as bent over, it is as "bent-over-the-keyhole," etc. But the alienation of myself, which is the fact of being-looked-at, involves at once the alienation of the world which I organize. I am seen as seated on this chair with the result that I do not see it at all, that it is impossible for me to see it, that it escapes me so as to organize itself into a new and differently oriented complex—with other relations and other distances in the midst of other objects which similarly have for me a secret face.

Thus I, who in so far as I am my possibles, am what I am not and am not what I am—behold now I am somebody! And the one who I am—and who on principle escapes me—I am he in the midst of the world in so far as he escapes me. Due to this fact my relation to an object or the potentiality of an object decomposes under the Other's look and appears to me in the world as my possibility of utilizing the object, but only as this possibility on principle escapes me; that is, in so far as it is surpassed by the Other toward his own possibilities. For example, the potentiality of the dark corner becomes a given possibility of hiding in the corner by the sole fact that the Other¹⁸ can pass beyond it toward his possibility of illuminating the corner with his flashlight. This possibility is there, and I apprehend it but as absent, as in the Other; I apprehend it through my anguish and through my decision to give up that hiding place which is "too risky." Thus my possibilities are present to my unreflective consciousness in so far as the Other is watching me. If I see him ready for anything, his hand in his pocket where he has a weapon, his finger

¹⁸ The French has *l'auteur*, "the author," which I feel sure must be a misprint for *l'autrui*, "the Other." Tr.

placed on the electric bell and ready "at the slightest movement on my part" to call the police, I apprehend my possibilities from outside and through him at the same time that I *am* my possibilities, somewhat as we objectively apprehend our thought through language at the same time that we think it in order to express it in language. This inclination to run away, which dominates me and carries me along and which I *am*—this I read in the Other's watchful look and in that other look—the gun pointed at me. The Other apprehends this inclination in me in so far as he has anticipated it and is already prepared for it. He apprehends it in me in so far as he surpasses it and disarms it. But I do not grasp the actual surpassing; I grasp simply the death of my possibility. A subtle death: for my possibility of hiding still remains my possibility; inasmuch as I *am* it, it still lives; and the dark corner does not cease to signal me, to refer its potentiality to me. But if instrumentality is defined as the fact of "being able to be surpassed towards —," then my very possibility becomes an instrumentality. My possibility of hiding in the corner becomes the fact that the Other can surpass it toward his possibility of pulling me out of concealment, of identifying me, of arresting me. For the Other my possibility is at once an obstacle and a means as all instruments are. It is an obstacle, for it will compel him to certain new acts (to advance toward me, to turn on his flashlight). It is a means, for once I am discovered in this cul-de-sac, I "am caught." In other words every act performed against the Other can on principle be for the Other an instrument which will serve him against me. And I grasp the Other not in the clear vision of what he can make out of my act but in a fear which lives all my possibilities as ambivalent. The Other is the hidden death of my possibilities in so far as I live that death as hidden in the midst of the world. The connection between my possibility and the instrument is no more than between two instruments which are adjusted to each other outside in view of an end which escapes me. Both the obscurity of the dark corner and my possibility of hiding there are surpassed by the Other when, before I have been able to make a move to take refuge there, he throws the light on the corner. Thus in the shock which seizes me when I apprehend the Other's look, this happens—that suddenly I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities, which are now associated with objects of the world, far from me in the midst of the world.

Two important consequences result. The first is that my possibility becomes a probability which is outside me. In so far as the Other grasps it as eaten away by a freedom which he is not, in so far as he makes himself a witness of it and calculates its results, it is a pure indetermination in the game of possibles, and it is precisely thus that I guess at it. Later when we are in direct connection with the Other by language and when we gradually learn what he thinks of us, this is the thing which will be able at once to fascinate us and fill us with horror.

"I swear to you that I will do it."

"Maybe so. You tell me so. I want to believe you. It is indeed possible that you will do it."

The sense of this dialogue implies that the Other is originally placed before my freedom as before a given property of indetermination and before my possibles as before my probables. This is because originally I perceive myself to be over there for the Other, and this phantom-outline of my being touches me to the heart. For in shame and anger and fear I do not cease to assume myself as such. Yet I assume myself in blindness since I do not know what I assume. I simply *am* it.

On the other hand, the ensemble "instrument-possibility," made up of myself confronting the instrument, appears to me as surpassed and organized into a world by the Other. With the Other's look the "situation" escapes me. To use an everyday expression which better expresses our thought, I *am no longer master of the situation*. Or more exactly, I remain master of it, but it has one real dimension by which it escapes me, by which unforeseen reversals cause it to be otherwise than it appears for me. To be sure it can happen that in strict solitude I perform an act whose consequences are completely opposed to my anticipations and to my desires; for example I gently draw toward me a small platform holding this fragile vase, but this movement results in tipping over a bronze statuette which breaks the vase into a thousand pieces. Here, however, there is nothing which I could not have foreseen if I had been more careful, if I had observed the arrangement of the objects, etc.—*nothing which on principle escapes me*. The appearance of the Other, on the contrary, causes the appearance in the situation of an aspect which I did not wish, of which I am not master, and which on principle escapes me since it is for the Other. This is what Gide has appropriately called "the devil's part." It is the unpredictable but still real reverse side.

It is this unpredictability which Kafka's art attempts to describe in *The Trial* and *The Castle*. In one sense everything which K. and the Surveyor are doing belongs strictly to them in their own right, and in so far as they act upon the world the results conform strictly to anticipations; they are successful acts. But at the same time the truth of these acts constantly escapes them; the acts have on principle a meaning which is their *true meaning* and which neither K. nor the Surveyor will ever know. Without doubt Kafka is trying here to express the transcendence of the divine; it is for the divine that the human act is constituted in truth. But God here is only the concept of the Other pushed to the limit. We shall return to this point. That gloomy, evanescent atmosphere of *The Trial*, that ignorance which, however, is lived as ignorance, that total opacity which can only be felt as a presentiment across a total translucency—this is nothing but the description of our being-in-the-midst-of-the-world-for-others.

In this way therefore the situation in and through its surpassing for the Other is fixed and organized around me into a *form*, in the sense in which the Gestaltists use that term. A given synthesis is there of which I am the essential structure, and this synthesis at once possesses both ekstastic cohesion and the character of the in-itself. My bond with those people who are speaking and whom I am watching is suddenly given outside me as an unknowable substratum of the bond which I myself establish. In particular my own look or my connection without distance with these people is stripped of its transcendence by the very fact that it is a *look-looked-at*. I am fixing the people whom I see into objects; I am in relation to them as the Other is in relation to me. In looking at them I measure my power. But if the Other sees them and sees me, then my look loses its power; it can not transform those people into objects for the Other since they are already the objects of his look. My look simply manifests a relation in the midst of the world, a relation of myself-as-object to the object-looked-at—something like the attraction which two masses exert over one another at a distance. On the one hand, the objects are ordered around this look: the distance between me and those looked at exists at present, but it is contracted, circumscribed, and compressed by my look so that the ensemble “distance-objects” is like a ground on which the look is detached in the manner of a “this” on the ground of the world. On the other hand, my attitudes are ordered around the look and are given as a series of means employed in order to “maintain” the look. In this sense I constitute an organized whole which is the look, I am a look-as-object; that is, an instrumental complex which is endowed with an inner finality and which can dispose itself in a relation of means and end in order to realize a presence to a particular other object beyond the distance. But the distance is *given to me*. In so far as I am looked at, I do not unfold the distance, I am limited to *clearing it*. The Other’s look confers spatiality upon me. To apprehend oneself as looked-at is to apprehend oneself as a spatializing-spatialized.

But the Other’s look is not only apprehended as spatializing; it is also *temporalizing*. The appearance of the Other’s look is manifested for me through an *Erlebnis* which was on principle impossible for me to get in solitude—that of simultaneity. A world for a single for-itself could not comprehend simultaneity but only co-presences, for the for-itself is lost outside itself everywhere in the world, and it links all beings by the unity of its single presence. But simultaneity supposes the temporal connection of two existents which are not bound by any other relation. Two existents which exercise a reciprocal action on one another are not simultaneous because they belong to the same system. Simultaneity therefore does not belong to the existents of the world, it supposes the co-presence to the world of two presents considered as *presences-to*. Pierre’s presence to the world is simultaneous with my presence. In this sense the original phenomenon of simultaneity is the fact that this glass is

for Paul at the same time that it is for me. This supposes therefore a foundation for all simultaneity which must of necessity be the presence of an Other who is temporalized by my own temporalization. But to be exact, in so far as the other temporalizes himself, he temporalizes me with him; in so far as he launches out toward his own time, I appear to him in universal time. The Other’s look in so far as I apprehend it comes to give to my time a new dimension. My presence, in so far as it is a present grasped by another as my present, has an outside; this presence which makes-itself-present for me is alienated for me in a present to which the Other makes himself present. I am thrown into the universal present in so far as the Other makes himself be a presence to me. But the universal present in which I come to take my place is a pure alienation of my universal present; physical time flows toward a pure and free temporalization which I am not; what is outlined on the horizon of that simultaneity which I live is an absolute temporalization from which I am separated by a nothingness.

As a temporal-spatial object in the world, as an essential structure of a temporal-spatial situation in the world, I offer myself to the Other’s appraisal. This also I apprehend by the pure exercise of the *cogito*. To be looked at is to apprehend oneself as the unknown object of unknowable appraisals—in particular, of value judgments. But at the same time that in shame or pride I recognize the justice of these appraisals, I do not cease to take them for what they are—a free surpassing of the given toward possibilities. A judgment is the transcendental act of a free being. Thus being-seen constitutes me as a defenseless being for a freedom which is not my freedom. It is in this sense that we can consider ourselves as “slaves” in so far as we appear to the Other. But this slavery is not a historical result—capable of being surmounted—of a life in the abstract form of consciousness. I am a slave to the degree that my being is dependent at the center of a freedom which is not mine and which is the very condition of my being. In so far as I am the object of values which come to qualify me without my being able to act on this qualification or even to know it, I am enslaved. By the same token in so far as I am the instrument of possibilities which are not my possibilities, whose pure presence beyond my being I can not even glimpse, and which deny my transcendence in order to constitute me as a means to ends of which I am ignorant—I am in danger. This danger is not an accident but the permanent structure of my being-for-others.

This brings us to the end of our description. Yet before we can make use of it to discover just what the Other is, we must note that this description has been worked out entirely on the level of the *cogito*. We have only made explicit the meaning of those subjective reactions to the Other’s look which are fear (the feeling of being in danger before the Other’s freedom), pride, or shame (the feeling of being finally what I am but elsewhere, over there for the Other), the

recognition of my slavery (the feeling of the alienation of all my possibilities). Besides, this specification is in no way a conceptual fixing of bits of knowledge more or less obscure. Let each one refer to his own experience. There is no one who has not at some time been surprised in an attitude which was guilty or simply ridiculous. The sudden modification then experienced was in no way provoked by the irruption of knowledge. It is rather in itself a solidification and an abrupt stratification of myself which leaves intact my possibilities and my structures "for-myself," but which suddenly pushes me into a new dimension of existence—the dimension of the *unrevealed*. Thus the appearance of the look is apprehended by me as the upsurge of an ekstastic relation of being, of which one term is the "me" as for-itself which is what it is not and which is not what it is, and of which other term is still the "me" but outside my reach, outside my action, outside my knowledge. This term, since it is directly connected with the infinite possibilities of a free Other, is itself an infinite and inexhaustible synthesis of unrevealed properties. Through the Other's look I live myself as fixed in the midst of the world, as in danger, as irremediable. But I know neither what I am nor what is my place in the world, not what face this world in which I am turns toward the Other.

Now at last we can make precise the meaning of this upsurge of the Other in and through his look. The Other is in no way given to us as an object. The objectivation of the Other would be the collapse of his being-as-a-look. Furthermore as we have seen, the Other's look is the disappearance of the Other's eyes as objects which manifest the look. The Other can not even be the object aimed at emptily at the horizon of my being for the Other. The objectivation of the Other, as we shall see, is a defence on the part of my being which, precisely by conferring on the Other a being-for-me, frees me from my being-for the Other. In the phenomenon of the look, the Other is on principle that which can not be an object. At the same time we see that he can not be a limiting term of that relation of myself to myself which makes me arise for myself as the *unrevealed*. Neither can the Other be the goal of my attention; if in the upsurge of the Other's look, I paid attention to the look or to the Other, this could be only as to objects, for attention is an intentional direction toward objects. But it is not necessary to conclude that the Other is an abstract condition, a conceptual structure of the ekstastic relation; there is here in fact no object really thought, of which the Other could be a universal, formal structure. The Other is, to be sure, the condition of my being-unrevealed. But he is the concrete, particular condition of it. He is not engaged in my being in the midst of the world as one of its integral parts since he is precisely that which transcends this world in the midst of which I am as non-revealed; as such he can therefore be neither an object nor the formal, constituent element of an object. He can not appear to me, as we have seen, as a unifying or

regulative category of my experience since he comes to me through an encounter. Then what is the Other?

In the first place, he is the being toward whom I do not turn my attention. He is the one who looks at me and at whom I am not yet looking, the one who delivers me to myself as *unrevealed* but without revealing himself, the one who is present to me as directing at me but never as the object of my direction; he is the concrete pole (though out of reach) of my flight, of the alienation of my possibles, and of the flow of the world toward another world which is the *same* world and yet lacks all communication with it. But he can not be distinct from this same alienation and flow; he is the meaning and the direction of them; he haunts this flow not as a *real* or *categorial* element but as a presence which is fixed and made part of the world if I attempt to "make-it-present" and which is never more present, more urgent than when I am not aware of it. For example if I am wholly engulfed in my shame, the Other is the immense, invisible presence which supports this shame and embraces it on every side; he is the supporting environment of my being-unrevealed. Let us see what it is which the Other manifests as *unrevealed* across my lived experience of the unrevealed.

First, the Other's look as the necessary condition of my objectivity is the destruction of all objectivity for me. The Other's look touches me across the world and is not only a transformation of myself but a total metamorphosis of the world. I am looked-at in a world which is looked-at. In particular the Other's look, which is a look-looking and not a look-looked-at, denies my distances from objects and unfolds its own distances. This look of the Other is given immediately as that by which distance comes to the world at the heart of a presence without distance. I withdraw; I am stripped of my distanceless presence to my world, and I am provided with a distance from the Other. There I am fifteen paces from the door, six yards from the window. But the Other comes searching for me so as to constitute me at a certain distance from him. As the Other constitutes me as at six yards from him, it is necessary that he be present to me without distance. Thus within the very experience of my distance from things and from the Other, I experience the distanceless presence of the Other to me.

Anyone may recognize in this abstract description that immediate and burning presence of the Other's look which has so often filled him with shame. In other words, in so far as I experience myself as looked-at, there is realized for me a trans-mundane presence of the Other. The Other looks at me not as he is "in the midst of" my world but as he comes toward the world and toward me from all his transcendence; when he looks at me, he is separated from me by no distance, by no object of the world—whether real or ideal—by no body in the world, but the sole fact of his nature as Other. Thus the appearance of the Other's look is not an appearance in the world—neither

in "mine" nor in the "Other's"—and the relation which unites me to the Other can not be a relation of exteriority inside the world. By the Other's look I effect the concrete proof that there is a "beyond the world." The Other is present to me without any intermediary as a transcendence which is not mine. But this presence is not reciprocal. All of the world's density is necessary in order that I may myself be present to the Other. An omnipresent and inapprehensible transcendence, posited upon me without intermediary as I am myself being-unrevealed, a transcendence separated from me by the infinity of being, as I am plunged by this look into the heart of a world complete with its distances and its instruments—such is the Other's look when first I experience it as a look.

Furthermore by fixing my possibilities the Other reveals to me the impossibility of my being an object except for another freedom. I can not be an object for myself, for I am what I am; thrown back on its own resources, the reflective effort toward a dissociation results in failure; I am always reapprehended by myself. And when I naively assume that it is possible for me to be an objective being without being responsible for it, I thereby implicitly suppose the Other's existence; for how could I be an object if not for a subject. Thus for me the Other is first the being for whom I am an object; that is, the being through whom I gain my objectness. If I am to be able to conceive of even one of my properties in the objective mode, then the Other is already given. He is given not as a being of my universe but as a pure subject. Thus this pure subject which by definition I am unable to know—i.e., to posit as object—is always there out of reach and without distance whenever I try to grasp myself as object. In experiencing the look, in experiencing myself as an unrevealed object-ness, I experience the inapprehensible subjectivity of the Other directly and with my being.

At the same time I experience the Other's infinite freedom. It is for and by means of a freedom and only for and by means of it that my possibles can be limited and fixed. A material obstacle can not fix my possibilities; it is only the occasion for my projecting myself toward other possibles and can not confer upon them an outside. To remain at home because it is raining and to remain at home because one has been forbidden to go out are by no means the same thing. In the first case I myself determine to stay inside in consideration of the consequences of my acts; I surpass the obstacle "rain" toward myself and I make an instrument of it. In the second case it is my very possibilities of going out of or staying inside which are presented to me as surpassed and fixed and which a freedom simultaneously foresees and prevents. It is not mere caprice which causes us often to do very naturally and without annoyance what would irritate us if another commanded it. This is because the order and the prohibition cause us to experience the Other's freedom across our own slavery. Thus in the look the death of my possibilities

causes me to experience the Other's freedom. This death is realized only at the heart of that freedom; I am inaccessible to myself and yet myself, thrown, abandoned at the heart of the Other's freedom. In connection with this experience my belonging to universal time can appear to me only as contained and realized by an autonomous temporalization; only a for-itself which temporalizes itself can throw me into time.

Thus through the look I experience the Other concretely as a free, conscious subject who causes there to be a world by temporalizing himself toward his own possibilities. That subject's presence without intermediary is the necessary condition of all thought which I would attempt to form concerning myself. The Other is that "myself" from which nothing separates me, absolutely nothing except his pure and total freedom; that is, that indetermination of himself which he has to be for and through himself.

We know enough at present to attempt to explain that unshakable resistance which common sense has always opposed to the solipsistic argument. This resistance indeed is based on the fact that the Other is given to me as a concrete evident presence which I can in no way derive from myself and which can in no way be placed in doubt nor made the object of a phenomenological reduction or of any other *ἐποχή*.¹⁹

If someone looks at me, I am conscious of being an object. But this consciousness can be produced only in and through the existence of the Other. In this respect Hegel was right. However that other consciousness and that other freedom are never given to me; for if they were, they would be known and would therefore be an object, which would cause me to cease being an object. Neither can I derive the concept or the representation of them from my own background. First because I do not "conceive" them nor "represent" them to myself; expressions like these would refer us again to "knowing," which on principle is removed from consideration. In addition every concrete proof of freedom which I can effect by myself is a proof of my freedom; every concrete apprehension of a consciousness is consciousness (of) my consciousness; the very notion of consciousness makes reference only to my possible consciousnesses. Indeed we established in our Introduction that the existence of freedom and of consciousness precedes and conditions their essence; consequently these essences can subsume only concrete exemplifications of my consciousness or of my freedom. In the third place the Other's freedom and consciousness can not be categories serving for the unification of my representations. To be sure, as Husserl has shown, the ontological structure of "my" world demands that it be also a world for others. But to the extent that the Other confers a particular type of objectivity on the objects of my world, this is because he is already in this world in the capacity of an object. If it is

¹⁹ Correction for *ἐποχή*. Tr.

correct that Pierre, who is reading before me, gives a particular type of objectivity to the face of the book which is turned toward him, then this objectivity is conferred on a face which on principle I can see (although as we have said, it escapes me in so far as it is read), on a face which belongs to the world where I am and which consequently by a magic bond is connected beyond distance to Pierre-as-object. Under these conditions the concept of the Other can in fact be fixed as an empty form and employed constantly as a reinforcement of objectivity for the world which is mine. But the Other's presence in his look-looking can not contribute to reinforce the world, for on the contrary it undoes the world by the very fact that it causes the world to escape me. The escape of the world from me when it is *relative* and when it is an escape toward the Other-as-object, reinforces objectivity. The escape of the world and of my self from me when it is absolute and when it is effected toward a freedom which is not mine, is a dissolution of my knowledge. The world disintegrates in order to be reintegrated over there as a world; but this disintegration is not given to me; I can not know it nor even think it. The presence to me of the Other-as-a-look is therefore neither a knowledge nor a projection of my being nor a form of unification nor a category. It is and I can not derive it from me.

At the same time I can not make it fall beneath the stroke of the phenomenological ἐποχή. The latter indeed has for its goal putting the world within brackets so as to reveal transcendental consciousness in its absolute reality. Whether in general this operation is possible or not is something which is not for us to decide here. But in the case which concerns us the Other can not be put out of consideration since as a look-looking he definitely does not belong to the world. I am ashamed of myself *before* the Other, we said. The phenomenological reduction must result in removing from consideration the object of shame in order better to make shame itself stand out in its absolute subjectivity. But the Other is not the *object* of the shame; the object is my act or my situation in the world. They alone can be strictly "reduced." The Other is not even an objective condition of my shame. Yet he is as the very-being of it. Shame is the revelation of the Other not in the way in which a consciousness reveals an object but in the way in which one moment of consciousness implies on the side another moment as its motivation. If we should have attained pure consciousness by means of the *cogito*, and if this pure consciousness were only a consciousness (of being) shame, the Other's consciousness would still haunt it as an inapprehensible presence and would thereby escape all reduction. This demonstrates sufficiently that it is not in the world that the Other is first to be sought but at the side of consciousness as a consciousness in which and by which consciousness makes itself be what it is. Just as my consciousness apprehended by the *cogito* bears indubitable witness of itself and of its own existence, so certain particular consciousnesses—

for example, "shame-consciousness"—bear indubitable witness to the *cogito* both of themselves and of the existence of the Other.

But, someone may object, is this not simply because of the Other's look as meaning of my objectivity-for-myself. If so, we shall fall back into solipsism; when I integrate myself as an object in the concrete system of representations, the meaning of this objectivation would be projected outside me and hypostasized as the Other.

But we must note the following:

(1) My object-ness for myself is in no way a specification of Hegel's *Ich bin Ich*. We are not dealing with a formal identity, and my being-as-object or being-for-others is profoundly different from my being-for-myself. In fact the notion of objectivity, as we observed in Part One, requires an explicit negation. The object is that which is not my consciousness; consequently it is that which does not have the characteristics of consciousness since the only existent which has for me the characteristics of consciousness is the consciousness which is *mine*. Thus the Me-as-object-for-myself is a Me which is not Me; that is, which does not have the characteristics of consciousness. It is a *degraded* consciousness; objectivation is a radical metamorphosis. Even if I could see myself clearly and distinctly as an object, what I should see would not be the adequate representation of what I am in myself and for myself, of that "incomparable monster preferable to all," as Malraux puts it, but the apprehension of my being-outside-myself, for the Other; that is, the objective apprehension of my being-other, which is radically different from my being-for-myself, and which does not refer to myself at all.

To apprehend myself as *evil*, for example, could not be to refer myself to what I am for myself, for I am not and can not be evil for myself for two reasons. In the first place, I am neither evil, for myself, nor a civil servant or a physician. In fact I am in the mode of not being what I am and of being what I am not. The qualification "evil," on the contrary, characterizes me as an *in-itself*. In the second place, if I were to be evil for myself, I should of necessity be so in the mode of *having* to be so and would have to apprehend myself and will myself as evil. But this would mean that I must discover myself as willing what appears to myself as the opposite of my Good and precisely because it is the Evil or the opposite of my Good. It is therefore expressly necessary that I will the contrary of what I desire at one and the same moment and in the same relation; that is, I would have to hate myself precisely as I am myself. If on the level of the for-itself I am to realize fully this essence of evil, it would be necessary for me to assume myself as evil; that is, I would have to approve myself by the same act which makes me blame myself. We can see that this notion of evil can in no way derive its origin from me in so far as I am Me. It would be in vain for me to push the ekstasis to its extreme limits or to effect a detachment from self which would constitute me for myself; I shall never

succeed in conferring evil on myself or even in conceiving it for myself if I am thrown on my own resources.

This is because I am my own detachment from myself, I am my own nothingness; simply because I am my own mediator between Me and Me, all objectivity disappears. I can not be this nothingness which separates me from me-as-object, for there must of necessity be a presentation to me of the object which I am. Thus I can not confer on myself any quality without mediation or an objectifying power which is not my own power and which I can neither pretend nor forge. Of course this has been said before; it was said a long time ago that the Other teaches me who I am. But the same people who uphold this thesis affirm on the other hand that I derive the concept of the Other from myself by reflecting on my own powers and by projection or analogy. Therefore they remain at the center of a vicious circle from which they can not get out. Actually the Other can not be the meaning of my objectivity; he is the concrete, transcending condition of it. This is because such qualities as "evil," "jealous," "sympathetic" or "antipathetic" and the like are not empty imaginings; when I use them to qualify the Other, I am well aware that I want to touch him in his being. Yet I can not live them as my own realities. If the Other confers them on me, they are admitted by what I am for-myself; when the Other describes my character, I do not "recognize" myself and yet I know that "it is me." I accept the responsibility for this stranger who is presented to me, but he does not cease to be a stranger. This is because he is neither a simple unification of my subjective representations, not a "Me" which I am in the sense of the Ich bin Ich, nor an empty image which the Other makes of me for himself and for which he alone bears the responsibility. This Me, which is not to be compared to the Me which I have to be, is still Me but metamorphosed by a new setting and adapted to that setting; it is a being, my being but with entirely new dimensions of being and new modalities. It is Me separated from Me by an impassible nothingness, for I am this me but I am not this nothingness which separates me from myself. It is the Me which I am by an ultimate ekstasis which transcends all my ekstases since it is not the ekstasis which I have to be. My being for-others is a fall through absolute emptiness toward objectivity. And since this fall is an alienation, I can not make myself be for myself as an object; for in no case can I ever alienate myself from myself.

(2) Furthermore the Other does not constitute me as an object for myself but for him. In other words he does not serve as a regulative or constitutive concept for the pieces of knowledge which I may have of myself. Therefore the Other's presence does not cause me-as-object to "appear." I apprehend nothing but an escape from myself toward —. Even when language has revealed that the Other considers me evil or jealous, I shall never have a concrete intuition of my evil or of my jealousy. These will never be more than

fleeting notions whose very nature will be to escape me. I shall not apprehend my evil, but in relation to this or that particular act I shall escape myself, I shall feel my alienation or my flow towards . . . a being which I shall only be able to think emptily as evil and which nevertheless I shall feel that I am, which I shall live at a distance through shame or fear.

Thus myself-as-object is neither knowledge nor a unity of knowledge but an uneasiness, a lived wrenching away from the ekstastic unity of the for-itself, a limit which I can not reach and which yet I am. The Other through whom this Me comes to me is neither knowledge nor category but the fact of the presence of a strange freedom. In fact my wrenching away from myself and the upsurge of the Other's freedom are one; I can feel them and live them only as an ensemble; I cannot even try to conceive of one without the other. The fact of the Other is incontestable and touches me to the heart. I realize him through uneasiness; through him I am perpetually in danger in a world which is this world and which nevertheless I can only glimpse. The Other does not appear to me as a being who is constituted first so as to encounter me later; he appears as a being who arises in an original relation of being with me and whose indubitability and factual necessity are those of my own consciousness.

A number of difficulties remain. In particular there is the fact that through shame we confer on the Other an indubitable presence. Now as we have seen, it is only *probable* that the Other is looking at me. That farm at the top of the hill *seems* to be looking at the commandos, and it is certain that the house is occupied by the enemy. But it is not certain that the enemy soldiers are at present watching through the windows. It is not certain that the man whose footstep I hear behind me is looking at me; his face could be turned away, his look fixed on the ground or on a book. Finally in general it is not sure that those eyes which are fixed on me are eyes; they could be only "artificial ones" resembling real eyes. In short must we not say that in turn the look becomes *probable* because of the fact that I can constantly believe that I am looked at without actually being so? As a result does not our certainty of the Other's existence take on a purely hypothetical character?

The difficulty can be expressed in these terms: On the occasion of certain appearances in the world which seem to me to manifest a look, I apprehend in myself a certain "being-looked-at" with its own structures which refer me to the Other's real existence. But it is possible that I am mistaken; perhaps the objects of the world which I took for eyes were not eyes; perhaps it was only the wind which shook the bush behind me; in short perhaps these concrete objects did not *really* manifest a look. In this case what becomes of my certainty that I am looked-at? My shame was in fact *shame before somebody*. But nobody is there. Does it not thereby become *shame before nobody*? Since it has posited somebody where there was nobody, does it not become a false shame?

This difficulty should not keep us for long, and we should not even have mentioned it except that actually it can help us in our investigation by indicating more purely the nature of our being-for-others. There is indeed a confusion here between two distinct orders of knowledge and two types of being which can not be compared. We have always known that the object-in-the-world can be only probable. This is due to its very character as object. It is probable that the passerby is a man; if he turns his eyes toward me, then although I immediately experience and with certainty the fact of being-looked-at, I can not make this certainty pass into my experience of the Other-as-object. In fact it reveals to me only the Other-as-subject, a transcending presence to the world and the real condition of my being-as-object. In any case, it is impossible to transfer my certainty of the Other-as-subject to the Other-as-object which was the occasion of that certainty, and conversely it is impossible to invalidate the evidence of the appearance of the Other-as-subject by pointing to the constitutional probability of the Other-as-object. Better yet, the look, as we have shown, appears on the ground of the destruction of the object which manifests it. If this gross and ugly passerby shuffling along toward me suddenly looks at me, then there is nothing left of his ugliness, his obesity, and his shuffling. During the time that I feel myself looked-at he is a pure mediating freedom between myself and me. The fact of being-looked-at can not therefore depend on the object which manifests the look. Since my shame as an *Erlebnis* which is reflectively apprehensible is a witness for the Other for the same reason as it is its own witness, I am not going to put it in question on the occasion of an object of the world which can on principle be placed in doubt. This would amount to doubting my own existence, just because the perceptions which I have of my own body (when I see my hand, for example) are subject to error. Therefore if the being-looked-at, in its pure form, is not bound to the Other's body any more than in the pure realization of the *cogito* my consciousness of being a consciousness is bound to my own body, then we must consider the appearance of certain objects in the field of my experience—in particular the convergence of the Other's eyes in my direction—as a pure *monition*, as the pure occasion of realizing my being-looked-at. In the same way for Plato the contradictions of the sensible world are the occasion of effecting a philosophical conversion. In a word what is certain is that I am looked-at: what is only probable is that the look is bound to this or that intra-mundane presence. Moreover there is nothing here to surprise us since as we have seen, it is never eyes which look at us; it is the Other-as-subject.

Nevertheless, someone will say, the fact remains that I can discover that I have been mistaken. Here I am bent over the keyhole; suddenly I hear a footstep. I shudder as a wave of shame sweeps over me. Somebody has seen me. I straighten up. My eyes run over the deserted corridor. It was a false

alarm. I breathe a sigh of relief. Do we not have here an experience which is self-destructive?

Let us look more carefully. Is it actually my being-as-object for the Other which has been revealed as an error? By no means. The Other's existence is so far from being placed in doubt that this false alarm can very well result in making me give up my enterprise. If, on the other hand, I persevere in it, I shall feel my heart beat fast, and I shall detect the slightest noise, the slightest creaking of the stairs. Far from disappearing with my first alarm, the Other is present everywhere, below me, above me, in the neighboring rooms, and I continue to feel profoundly my being-for-others. It is even possible that my shame may not disappear; it is my red face as I bend over the keyhole. I do not cease to experience my being-for-others; my possibilities do not cease to "die," nor do the distances cease to unfold toward me in terms of the stairway where somebody "could" be, in terms of this dark corner where a human presence "could" hide. Better yet, if I tremble at the slightest noise, if each creak announces to me a look, this is because I am already in the state of being-looked-at. What then is it which falsely appeared and which was self-destructive when I discovered the false alarm? It is not the Other-as-subject, nor is it his presence to me. It is the Other's facticity; that is, the contingent connection between the Other and an object-being in my world. Thus what is doubtful is not the Other himself. It is the Other's *being-there*; i.e., that concrete, historical event which we can express by the words, "There is someone in this room."

These observations may enable us to proceed further. The Other's presence in the world can not be derived analytically from the presence of the Other-as-subject to me, for this original presence is transcendent—i.e., being-beyond-the-world. I believed that the Other was present in the room, but I was mistaken. He was not *there*. He was "absent." What then is *absence*?

If we take the expression "absence" in its empirical and everyday usage, it is clear that I do not use it to indicate just any kind of "not-being-there." In the first place, if I do not find my package of tobacco in its usual spot, I do not say that it is *absent* even though I could declare that it "ought to be there." This is because the place of a material object or of an instrument, even though sometimes it may be precisely assigned, does not derive from the nature of the object or instrument. To be exact, its nature can barely bestow on it a location but it is through me that the place of an instrument is realized. Human-reality is the being which causes a place to come to objects. Human reality alone, in so far as it is its own possibilities, can originally take a place. On the other hand I shall not say that Aga-Khan or the Sultan of Morocco is absent from this apartment, but I say that Pierre, who usually lives here, is absent for a quarter of an hour. In short, absence is defined as a mode of being of human-reality in relation to locations and places which it has itself

determined by its presence. Absence is not a nothingness of connections with a place; on the contrary, I determine Pierre in relation to a determined place by declaring that he is absent from it. Finally I shall not speak of Pierre's absence in relation to a natural location even if he often passes by there. On the other hand, I shall be able to lament his absence from a picnic which "took place" in a part of the country where he has never been. Pierre's absence is defined in relation to a place where he might himself determine himself to be, but this place itself is delimited as a place, not by the site nor even by the solitary relations of the location to Pierre himself, but by the presence of other human-realities. It is in relation to other people that Pierre is absent. Absence is Pierre's concrete mode of being in relation to Thérèse; it is a bond between human-realities, not between human-reality and the world. It is in relation to Thérèse that Pierre is absent from *this location*. Absence therefore is a bond of being between two or several human-realities which necessitates a fundamental presence of these realities one to another and which, moreover, is only one of the particular concretizations of this presence. For Pierre to be absent in relation to Thérèse is a particular way of his being present. In fact absence has meaning only if all the relations of Pierre with Thérèse are preserved: he loves her, he is her husband, he supports her, etc. In particular, absence supposes the maintenance of the concrete existence of Pierre: death is not an absence. Due to this fact the distance from Pierre to Thérèse in no way changes the fundamental fact of their reciprocal presence. In fact if we consider this presence from the point of view of Pierre, we see that it means either that Thérèse is existing in the midst of the world as the-Other-as-object, or else that he feels that he exists for Thérèse as for the-Other-as-subject. In the first case the distance is made contingent and signifies nothing in relation to the fundamental fact that Pierre is the one by whom "there is" a world as a Totality and that Pierre is present without distance to this world as the one through whom the distance exists. In the second case Pierre feels himself existing for Thérèse without distance: she is at a distance from him to the extent that she is removed and unfolds a distance between her and him; the entire world separates him from her. But for her he is without distance inasmuch as he is an object in the world which she makes come into being. Consequently in neither case can removal modify these essential relations. Whether the distance is small or great, between Pierre-as-object and Thérèse-as-subject, between Thérèse-as-object and Pierre-as-subject there is the infinite density of a world. Between Pierre-as-subject and Thérèse-as-object, and again between Thérèse-as-subject and Pierre-as-object there is no distance at all. Thus the empirical concepts of absence and of presence are two specifications of a fundamental presence of Pierre to Thérèse and of Thérèse to Pierre. They are only different ways of expressing the presence and have meaning only through it. At London, in the East Indies, in

America, on a desert island, Pierre is present to Thérèse who remains in Paris; he will cease to be present to her only at his death.

This is because a being is not situated in relation to locations by means of degrees of longitude and latitude. He is situated in a human space—between "the Guermantes side" and "Swann's side," and it is the immediate presence of Swann and of the Duchesse de Guermantes which allows the unfolding of the "hodological"²⁰ space in which he is situated. Now this presence has a location in transcendence; it is the presence-to-me in transcendence of my cousin in Morocco which allows me to enfold between him and me this road which situates-me-in-the-world and which can be called the road to Morocco. This road, indeed, is nothing but the distance between the Other-as-object which I could perceive in connection with my "being-for" and the Other-as-subject who is present to me without distance. Thus I am situated by the infinite diversity of the roads which lead me to the object of my world in correlation with the immediate presence of transcendent subjects. And as the world is given to me all at once with all its beings, these roads represent only the ensemble of instrumental complexes which allow me to cause an Other-as-object to appear as a "this" on the ground of the world, an Other-as-object who is already implicitly and really contained there.

But these remarks can be generalized; it is not only Pierre, René, Lucien, who are absent or present in relation to me on the ground of original presence, for they are not alone in contributing to situate me; I am situated also as a European in relation to Asiatics, or to Negroes, as an old man in relation to the young, as a judge in relation to delinquents, as a bourgeois in relation to workers, etc. In short it is in relation to every living man that every human reality is present or absent on the ground of an original presence. This original presence can have meaning only as a being-looked-at or as a being-looking-at; that is, according to whether the Other is an object for me or whether I myself am an object-for-the-Other. Being-for-others is a constant fact of my human reality, and I grasp it with its factual necessity in every thought, however slight, which I form concerning myself. Wherever I go, whatever I do, I only succeed in changing the distances between me and the Other-as-object, only avail myself of paths toward the Other. To withdraw, to approach, to discover this particular Other-as-object is only to effect empirical variations on the fundamental theme of my being-for-others. The Other is present to me everywhere as the one through whom I become an object. Hence I can indeed be mistaken concerning the empirical presence of an Other-as-object whom I happen to encounter on my path. I can indeed

²⁰ An expression borrowed from Lewin and explained by Sartre in *The Emotions*, pp. 57 and 65. It refers to a map or spatial organization of our environment in terms of our acts and needs. "The Guermantes side" and "Swann's side" are references to Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Tr.

believe that it is Annie who is coming toward me on the road and discover that it is an unknown person; the fundamental presence of Annie to me is not thereby changed. I can indeed believe that it is a man who is watching me in the half light and discover that it is a trunk of a tree which I took for a human being; my fundamental presence to all men, the presence of all men to myself is not thereby altered. For the appearance of a man as an object in the field of my experience is not what informs me that *there are* men. My certainty of the Other's existence is independent of these experiences and is, on the contrary, that which makes them possible.

What appears to me then about which I can be mistaken is not the Other nor the real, concrete bond between the Other and Me; it is a *this* which can represent a man-as-object as well as not represent one. What is only probable is the distance and the real proximity of the Other; that is, his character as an object and his belonging to the world which I cause to be revealed are not doubtful inasmuch as I make an Other appear by my very upsurge. However this objectivity dissolves in the world as the result of the Other's being "an Other somewhere in the world." The Other-as-object is certain as an appearance correlative with the *recovery* of my subjectivity, but it is never certain that the Other is that object. Similarly the fundamental fact, my being-as-object for a subject is accompanied by evidence of the same type as reflective evidence, but the case is not the same for the fact that at this precise moment and for a particular Other, I am detached as "*this*" on the ground of the world rather than remaining drowned in the indistinction of the ground. It is indubitable that at present I exist as an object for some German or other. But do I exist as a Frenchman, as a Parisian in the indifferentiation of these collectivities or in my capacity as this Parisian around whom the Parisian population and the French collectivity are suddenly organized to serve for him as ground? On this point I shall never obtain anything but bits of probable knowledge although they can be infinitely probable.

We are able now to apprehend the nature of the look. In every look there is the appearance of an Other-as-object as a concrete and probable presence in my perceptive field; on the occasion of certain attitudes of that Other I determine myself to apprehend—through shame, anguish, *etc.*—my being-looked-at. This "being-looked-at" is presented as the pure probability that I am at present *this* concrete *this*—a probability which can derive its meaning and its very nature as probable, only from a fundamental certainty that the Other is always present to me inasmuch as I am always *for-others*. The experience of my condition as man, as an object for all other living men, as thrown in the arena beneath millions of looks and escaping myself millions of times—this experience I realize concretely on the occasion of the upsurge of an object into my universe if this object indicates to me that I am probably an object at present functioning as a *differentiated this* for a consciousness. The

whole phenomenon, we call it the *look*. Each look makes us feel concretely—and in the indubitable certainty of the *cogito*—that we exist for all living men; that is, that there are (some) consciousnesses for whom I exist. We put "some" between parentheses to indicate that the Other-as-subject present to me in this look is not given in the form of plurality any more than as unity (save in its concrete relation to *one* particular Other-as-object). Plurality, in fact, belongs only to objects; it comes into being through the appearance of a world-making *For-itself*. The being-looked-at, by causing (some) subjects to arise for us, puts us in the presence of an unnumbered reality.

By contrast, as soon as I *look at* those who are looking at me, the *other* consciousnesses are isolated in multiplicity. On the other hand if I turn away from the look as the occasion of concrete proof and seek to think *emptily* of the infinite indistinction of the human presence and to unify it under the concept of the infinite subject which is never an object, then I obtain a purely formal notion which refers to an infinite series of mystic experiences of the presence of the Other, the notion of God as the omnipresent, infinite subject *for whom* I exist. But these two objectivations, the concrete, enumerating objectivation and the unifying, abstract objectivation, both lack proved reality—that is, the prenumerical presence of the Other.

These few remarks will become more concrete if we recall an experience familiar to everybody: if we happen to appear "in public" to act in a play or to give a lecture, we never lose sight of the fact that we are looked at, and we execute the ensemble of acts which we have come to perform *in the presence* of the look; better yet we attempt to constitute a being and an ensemble of objects *for this look*. But it remains unnumbered. While we are speaking, attentive only to the ideas which we wish to develop, the Other's presence remains undifferentiated. It would be wrong to unify it under the headings *class, audience, etc.* In fact we are not conscious of a concrete and individualized being with a collective consciousness; these are images which will be able to serve after the event to translate our experience and which will more than half betray it. But neither do we apprehend a plural look. It is a matter rather of an intangible reality, fleeting and omnipresent, which realizes our unrevealed Me confronting us and which collaborates with us in the production of this Me which escapes us. If on the other hand, I want to verify that my thought has been well understood and if in turn I look at the audience, then I shall suddenly see heads and eyes appear. When objectivized the prenumerical reality of the Other is decomposed and pluralized. But the look has disappeared as well. It is for this prenumerical concrete reality that we ought to reserve the term "*they*" rather than for human reality's state of unauthenticity. Wherever I am, *they* are perpetually looking at me. The *they* can never be apprehended as an object, for it immediately disintegrates.

Thus the look has set us on the track of our being-for-others and has

revealed to us the indubitable existence of this Other for whom we are. But it can not lead us any further. What we must examine next is the fundamental relation of the Me to the Other as he has been revealed to us. Or if you prefer, we must at present make explicit and fix thematically everything which is included within the limits of this original relation and ask what is the *being* of this being-for-others.

There is one consideration which may be drawn from the preceding remarks and which will be of help to us. This is the fact that being-for-others is not an ontological structure of the For-itself. We can not think of deriving being-for-others from a being-for-itself as one would derive a consequence from a principle, nor conversely can we think of deriving being-for-itself from being-for-others. Of course our human-reality must of necessity be simultaneously for-itself and for-others, but our present investigation does not aim at constituting an anthropology. It would perhaps not be impossible to conceive of a For-itself which would be wholly free from all For-others and which would exist without even suspecting the possibility of being an object. But this For-itself simply would not be "man." What the *cogito* reveals to us here is just factual necessity: it is found—and this is indisputable—that our being along with its being-for-itself is also for-others; the being which is revealed to the reflective consciousness is for-itself-for-others. The Cartesian *cogito* only makes an affirmation of the absolute truth of a fact—that of my existence. In the same way the *cogito* a little expanded as we are using it here, reveals to us as a fact the existence of the Other and my existence for the Other. That is all we can say. It is also true that my being-for-others as the upsurge of my consciousness into being has the character of an absolute event. Since this event is at once an historization—for I temporalize myself as presence to others—and a condition of all history, we shall call it a pre-historic historization. It is as a prehistoric temporalization of simultaneity that we shall consider it here. By prehistoric we do not mean that it is in a time prior to history—which would not make sense—but that it is a part of that original temporalization which historicizes itself while making history possible. It is as fact—as a primary and perpetual fact—not as an essential necessity that we shall study being-for-others.

We have seen previously the difference which separates the internal type of negation from the external negation. In particular we have noted that the foundation of all knowledge of a determined being is the original relation by which in its very upsurge the For-itself has to be as not being this being. The negation which the For-itself thus realizes is an internal negation; the For-itself realizes it in its full freedom. Better yet, the for-itself is this negation in so far as it chooses itself as finitude. But the negation binds the For-itself indissolubly to the being which it is not, and we have been able to state that the For-itself includes in its being the being

of the object which it is not, inasmuch as its being is in question as not being this being.

These observations are applicable without any essential change to the primary relation of the For-itself with the Other. If in general there is an Other, it is necessary above all that I be the one who is not the Other, and it is in this very negation effected by me upon myself that I make myself be and that the Other arises as the Other. This negation which constitutes my being and which, as Hegel said, makes me appear as the Same confronting the Other, constitutes me on the ground of a non-thetic selfness as "Myself." We must not understand by this that a Self comes to dwell in our consciousness but that selfness is reinforced by arising as a negation of another selfness and that this reinforcement is positively apprehended as the continuous choice of selfness by itself as the *same* selfness and as this *very* selfness. A for-itself which would have to be a self without being itself would be conceivable. The For-itself which I am simply has to be what it is in the form of a refusal of the Other; that is, as itself. Thus by utilizing the formulae applied to the knowledge of the Not-me in general, we can say that the For-itself as itself includes the being of the Other in its being in so far as its being is in question as not being the Other. In other words, in order for a consciousness to be able to not-be the Other and therefore in order that *there may be* an Other without making this non-being, which is the condition of the self of consciousness, become purely and simply the object of the establishment of a "third man" as witness, two things are necessary: consciousness must have to be itself and must spontaneously have to be this non-being; consciousness must freely disengage itself from the Other and wrench itself away by choosing itself as a nothingness which is simply Other than the Other and thereby must be reunited in "itself." This very detachment, which is the being of the For-itself, causes there to be an Other. This does not mean that it gives being to the Other but simply that it gives to the Other its being-other or the essential condition of the "there is." It is evident that for the For-itself the mode of being-what-is-not-the-Other is wholly paralyzed by Nothingness; the For-itself is what is not the Other in the nihilating mode of "the-reflection-reflecting." The not-being-the-Other is never given but perpetually chosen in a perpetual resurrection: consciousness can not-be the Other only in so far as it is consciousness (of) itself as not being the Other. Thus the internal negation, here as in the case of presence to the world, is a unitary bond of being. It is necessary that the Other be present to consciousness in every part and even that it penetrate consciousness completely in order that consciousness precisely by being nothing may escape that Other who threatens to ensnare it. If consciousness were abruptly to be something, the distinction between itself and the Other would disappear at the heart of a total undifferentiation.

This description, however, allows an essential addition which will radically

modify its implications. When consciousness realized itself as not being a particular *this* in the world, the negative relation was not reciprocal. The *this* confronted did not make itself not-be consciousness; it was determined in and through consciousness not to be consciousness; its relation to consciousness remained that of pure indifferent exteriority. This is because the "*this*" preserved its nature as *in-itself*, and it was as *in-itself* that it was revealed to consciousness in the very negation by which the *For-itself* made itself be by denying that it was *in-itself*. But with regard to the Other, on the contrary, the internal negative relation is a relation of reciprocity. The being which consciousness has to not-be is defined as a being which has to not-be *this* consciousness. This is because at the time of the perception of the *this* in the world, consciousness differed from the *this* not only by its own individuality but also in its mode of being. It was *For-itself* confronting the *In-itself*. In the upsurge of the Other, however, consciousness is in no way different from the Other so far as its mode of being is concerned. The Other is what consciousness is. The Other is *For-itself* and consciousness, and he refers to possibles which are his possibles; he is himself by excluding the Other. There can be no question of viewing this opposition to the Other in terms of a pure numerical determination. We do not have two or several consciousnesses here; numbering supposes an external witness and is the pure and simple establishment of exteriority. There can be an Other for the *For-itself* only in a spontaneous and prenumerical negation. The Other exists for consciousness only as a *refused self*. But precisely because the Other is a self, he can himself be refused for and through me only insofar as it is his self which *refuses me*. I can neither apprehend nor conceive of a consciousness which does not apprehend me. The only consciousness which exists without apprehending me or refusing me and which I myself can conceive is not a consciousness isolated somewhere outside the world; it is my own. Thus the Other whom I recognize in order to refuse to be him is before all else the one for whom my *For-itself* is. Not only do I make myself not-be *this* other being by denying that he is me, I make myself not-be a being who is making himself not-be me.

This double negation, however, is in a sense self-destructive. One of two things happens: Either I make myself not-be a certain being, and then he is an object for me and I lose my object-ness for him; in this case the Other ceases to be the Other-Me—that is, the subject who makes me be an object by refusing to be me. Or else *this* being is indeed the Other and makes himself not-be me, in which case I become an object for him and he loses his own object-ness. Thus originally the Other is the Not-Me-not-object. Whatever may be the further steps in the dialectic of the Other, if the Other is to be at the start the Other, then on principle he can not be revealed in the same upsurge by which I deny being him. In this sense my fundamental negation can not be direct, for there is nothing on which it can be brought to bear.

What I refuse to be can be nothing but this refusal to be the Me by means of which the Other is making me an object. Or, if you prefer, I refuse my refused Me; I determine myself as Myself by means of the refusal of the Me-refused; I posit this refused Me as an alienated-Me in the same upsurge in which I wrench myself away from the Other. But I thereby recognize and affirm not only the Other but the existence of my Self-for-others. Indeed this is because I can not not-be the Other unless I assume my being-as-object for the Other. The disappearance of the alienated Me would involve the disappearance of the Other through the collapse of Myself. I escape the Other by leaving him with my alienated Me in his hands. But as I choose myself as a tearing away from the Other, I assume and recognize as mine *this* alienated Me. My wrenching away from the Other—that is, my Self—is by its essential structure an assumption as *mine* of *this* Me which the Other refuses; we can even say that it is *only that*.

Thus this Me which has been alienated and refused is simultaneously my bond with the Other and the symbol of our absolute separation. In fact to the extent that I am The One who makes there be an Other by means of the affirmation of my selfness, the Me-as-object is mine and I claim it; for the separation of the Other and of myself is never given; I am perpetually responsible for it in my being. But in so far as the Other is co-responsible for our original separation, this Me escapes me since it is what the Other makes himself not-be. Thus I claim as mine and for me a Me which escapes me. And since I make myself not-be the Other, in so far as the Other is a spontaneity identical with mine, it is precisely as Me-escaping-myself that I claim this Me-as-object. This Me-as-object is the Me which I am to the exact extent that it escapes me; in fact I should refuse it as mine if it could coincide with myself in a pure selfness.

Thus my being-for-others—i.e., my Me-as-object—is not an image cut off from me and growing in a strange consciousness. It is a perfectly real being, my being as the condition of my selfness confronting the Other and of the Other's selfness confronting me. It is my *being-outside*—not a being passively submitted to which would itself have come to me from outside, but an outside assumed and recognized as my outside. In fact it is possible for me to deny that the Other is me only in so far as the Other is himself a subject. If I immediately refused the Other as pure object—that is, as existing in the midst of the world—it would not be the Other which I refused but rather an object which on principle had nothing in common with subjectivity. I should remain defenseless before a total assimilation of myself to the Other for failing to take precautions within the true province of the Other—subjectivity—which is also my province. I can keep the Other at a distance only if I accept a limit to my subjectivity. But this limit can neither come from me nor be thought by me, for I can not limit myself; otherwise I should be a finite

totality. On the other hand, in Spinoza's terms, thought can be limited only by thought. Consciousness can be limited only by consciousness. Now we can grasp the nature of my Self as-object: it is the limit between two consciousnesses as it is produced by the limiting consciousness and assumed by the limited consciousness. And we must understand it in the two senses of the word "limit." On the side of the limiting, indeed, the limit is apprehended as the container which contains me and surrounds me, the shell of emptiness which excludes me as a totality while putting me out of play; on the side of the limited, it is wholly a phenomenon of selfness and is as the mathematical limit is to the series which progresses toward it without ever reaching it. Every being which I have to be is at its limit like an asymptotic curve to a straight line. Thus I am a detotalized and indefinite totality, contained within a finite totality which surrounds me at a distance and which I am outside myself without ever being able either to realize it or even to touch it.

A good comparison for my efforts to apprehend myself and their futility might be found in that sphere described by Poincaré in which the temperature decreases as one goes from its center to its surface. Living beings attempt to arrive at the surface of this sphere by setting out from its center, but the lowering of temperature produces in them a continually increasing contraction. They tend to become infinitely flat proportionately to their approaching their goal, and because of this fact they are separated from the surface by an infinite distance. Yet this limit beyond reach, the Self-as-object, is not ideal; it is a real being. This being is not *in-itself*, for it is not produced in the pure exteriority of indifference. But neither is it *for-itself*, for it is not the being which I have to be by nihilating myself. It is precisely my being-for-others, this being which is divided between two negations with opposed origins and opposite meanings. For the Other is not this Me of which he has an intuition and I do not have the intuition of this Me which I am. Yet this Me, produced by the one and assumed by the other, derives its absolute reality from the fact that it is the only separation possible between two beings fundamentally identical as regards their mode of being and immediately present one to the other; for since consciousness alone can limit consciousness, no other mean is conceivable between them.

In view of this presence of the Other-as-subject to me in and through my assumed object-ness, we can see that my making an object out of the Other must be the second moment in my relation to him. In fact the Other's presence beyond my unrevealed limit can serve as motivation for my reapprehension of myself as a free selfness. To the extent that I deny that I am the Other and as the Other is first manifested, he can be manifested only as the Other; that is, as a subject beyond my limit, as the one who limits me. In fact nothing can limit me except the Other. Therefore he appears as the one who in his full freedom and in his free projection toward his possibles puts me out of

play and strips me of my transcendences by refusing to "join in" (in the sense of the German *mit-machen*). Thus at first I must grasp only that one of the two negations for which I am not responsible, the one which does not come to me through myself. But in the very apprehension of this negation there arises the consciousness (of) myself as myself; that is, I can obtain an explicit self-consciousness inasmuch as I am also responsible for a negation of the Other which is my own possibility. This is the process of making explicit the second negation, the one which proceeds from me to the Other. In truth it was already there but hidden by the other negation since it was lost in order to make the other appear. But the other negation is the reason for the appearance of the new one; for if there is an Other who puts me out of play by positing my transcendence as purely contemplated, this is because I wrench myself away from the Other by assuming my limit. The consciousness (of) this wrenching away of the consciousness of (being) the same in relation to the Other is the consciousness (of) my free spontaneity. By this very wrenching away which puts the Other in possession of my limit, I am already putting the Other out of play. Therefore in so far as I am conscious (of) myself as of one of my free possibilities and in so far as I project myself toward myself in order to realize this selfness, to that extent I am responsible for the existence of the Other. It is I who by the very affirmation of my free spontaneity cause there to be an Other and not simply an infinite reference of consciousness to itself. The Other then finds himself put out of play; he is now what it depends on me to not-be, and thereby his transcendence is no longer a transcendence which transcends me toward himself but a purely contemplated transcendence, simply a given circuit of selfness. Since I can not realize both negations at once, the new negation, although it has the other negation for its motivation, in turn disguises it. The Other appears to me as a degraded presence. This is because the Other and I are in fact co-responsible for the Other's existence, but it is by two negations such that I can not experience the one without immediately disguising the second. Thus the Other becomes now what I limit in my very projection toward not-being-the-Other.

Naturally it is necessary to realize here that the motivation of this passage is of the affective order. For example, nothing would prevent me from remaining fascinated by this Unrevealed with its beyond if I did not realize this Unrevealed specifically in fear, in shame, or in pride. It is precisely the affective character of these motivations which accounts for the empirical contingency of these changes in point of view. But these feelings themselves are nothing more than our way of affectively experiencing our being-for-others. Fear in fact implies that I appear to myself as threatened by virtue of my being a presence in the world, not in my capacity as a For-itself which causes a world to exist. It is the object which I am which is in danger in the world and which as such, because of its indissoluble unity of being with the being

which I have to be, can involve in its own ruin the ruin of the For-itself which I have to be. Fear is therefore the discovery of my being-as-object on the occasion of the appearance of another object in my perceptive field. It refers to the origin of all fear, which is the fearful discovery of my pure and simple object-state in so far as it is surpassed and transcended by possibles which are not my possibles. It is by thrusting myself toward my possibles that I shall escape fear to the extent that I shall consider my object-ness as non-essential. This can happen only if I apprehend myself as being responsible for the Other's being. The Other becomes then that which I make myself not-be, and his possibilities are possibilities which I refuse and which I can simply contemplate—hence dead-possibilities. Therefore I surpass my present possibilities in so far as I consider them as always able to be surpassed by the Other's possibilities, but I also surpass the Other's possibilities by considering them from the point of view of the only quality which he has which is not his own possibility—his very character as Other inasmuch as I cause there to be an Other. I surpass the Other's possibilities by considering them as possibilities of surpassing me which I can always surpass toward new possibilities. Thus by one and the same stroke I have regained my being-for-itself through my consciousness (of) myself as a perpetual center of infinite possibilities, and I have transformed the Other's possibilities into dead-possibilities by affecting them all with the character of "not-lived-by-me"—that is as simply given.

Similarly shame is only the original feeling of having my being outside, engaged in another being and as such without any defense, illuminated by the absolute light which emanates from a pure subject. Shame is the consciousness of being irremediably what I always was: "in suspense"—that is, in the mode of the "not-yet" or of the "already-no-longer." Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object but in general of being an object; that is, of recognizing myself in this degraded, fixed, and dependent being which I am for the Other. Shame is the feeling of an original fall, not because of the fact that I may have committed this or that particular fault but simply that I have "fallen" into the world in the midst of things and that I need the mediation of the Other in order to be what I am.

Modesty and in particular the fear of being surprised in a state of nakedness are only a symbolic specification of original shame; the body symbolizes here our defenseless state as objects. To put on clothes is to hide one's object-state; it is to claim the right of seeing without being seen; that is, to be pure subject. This is why the Biblical symbol of the fall after the original sin is the fact that Adam and Eve "know that they are naked." The reaction to shame will consist exactly in apprehending as an object the one who apprehended my own object-state.

In fact from the moment that the Other appears to me as an object, his subjectivity becomes a simple property of the object considered. It is degraded

and is defined as "an ensemble of objective properties which on principle elude me." The-Other-as-Object "has" a subjectivity as this hollow box has "an inside." In this way I recover myself, for I can not be an object for an object. I certainly do not deny that the Other remains connected with me "inside him," but the consciousness which he has of me, since it is consciousness-as-an-object, appears to me as pure interiority without efficacy. It is just one property among others of that "inside," something comparable to a sensitized plate in the closed compartment of a camera. In so far as I make there be an Other, I apprehend myself as the free source of the knowledge which the Other has of me, and the Other appears to me as affected in his being by that knowledge which he has of my being inasmuch as I have affected him with the character of Other. This knowledge takes on then a subjective character in the new sense of "relative;" that is, it remains in the subject-as-object as a quality relative to the being-other with which I have affected him. It no longer touches me; it is an image of me in him. Thus subjectivity is degraded into interiority, free consciousness into a pure absence of principles, possibilities into properties, and the knowledge by which the Other touches me in my being, into a pure image of me in the Other's "consciousness." Shame motivates the reaction which surpasses and overcomes the shame inasmuch as the reaction incloses within it an implicit and non-thematized comprehension of being-able-to-be-an-object on the part of the subject for whom I am an object. This implicit comprehension is nothing other than the consciousness (of) my "being-myself;" that is, of my selfness reinforced. In fact in the structure which expresses the experience "I am ashamed of myself," shame supposes a me-as-object for the Other but also a selfness which is ashamed and which is imperfectly expressed by the "I" of the formula. Thus shame is a unitary apprehension with three dimensions: "I am ashamed of myself before the Other."

If any one of these dimensions disappears, the shame disappears as well. If, however, I conceive of the "they" as a subject before whom I am ashamed, as he can not become an object without being scattered into a plurality of Others, if I posit it as the absolute unity of the subject which can in no way become an object, I thereby posit the eternity of my being-as-object and so perpetuate my shame. This is shame before God; that is, the recognition of my being-an-object before a subject which can never become an object. By the same stroke I realize my object-state in the absolute and hypostasize it. The positing of God is accompanied by a reification of my object-ness. Or better yet, I posit my being-an-object-for-God as more real than my For-itself; I exist alienated and I cause myself to learn from outside what I must be. This is the origin of fear before God. Black masses, desecration of the host, demonic associations, etc., are so many attempts to confer the character of object on the absolute Subject. In desiring Evil for Evil's sake I attempt to contemplate the

divine transcendence—for which Good is the peculiar possibility—as a purely given transcendence and one which I transcend toward Evil. Then I “make God suffer,” I “irritate him,” etc. These attempts, which imply the absolute recognition of God as a subject who can not be an object, carry their own contradiction within them and are always failures.

Pride does not exclude original shame. In fact it is on the ground of fundamental shame or shame of being an object that pride is built. It is an ambiguous feeling. In pride I recognize the Other as the subject through whom my being gets its object-state, but I recognize as well that I myself am also responsible for my object-ness. I emphasize my responsibility and I assume it. In one sense therefore pride is at first resignation; in order to be proud of *being that*, I must of necessity first resign myself to *being only that*. We are therefore dealing with a primary reaction to shame, and it is already a reaction of flight and of bad faith; for without ceasing to hold the Other as a subject, I try to apprehend myself as *affecting* the Other by my object-state. In short there are two authentic attitudes: that by which I recognize the Other as the subject through whom I get my object-ness—this is shame; and that by which I apprehend myself as the free object by which the Other gets his being-other—this is arrogance or the affirmation of my freedom confronting the Other-as-object. But pride—or vanity—is a feeling without equilibrium, and it is in bad faith. In vanity I attempt in my capacity as Object to act upon the Other. I take this beauty or this strength or this intelligence which he confers on me—in so far as he constitutes me as an object—and I attempt to make use of it in a return shock so as to affect him passively with a feeling of admiration or of love. But at the same time I demand that this feeling as the sanction of my being-as-object should be entertained by the Other in his capacity as subject—i.e., as a freedom. This is, in fact, the only way of conferring an absolute object-ness on my strength or on my beauty. Thus the feeling which I demand from the other carries within itself its own contradiction since I must affect the Other with it in so far as he is free. The feeling is entertained in the mode of bad faith, and its internal development leads it to disintegration. In fact as I play my assumed role of my being-as-object, I attempt to recover it as *an object*. Since the Other is the key to it, I attempt to lay hold of the Other so that he may release to me the secret of my being. Thus vanity impels me to get hold of the Other and to constitute him as an object in order to burrow into the heart of this object to discover there my own object-state. But this is to kill the hen that lays the golden eggs. By constituting the Other as object, I constitute myself as an image at the heart of the Other-as-object; hence the disillusion of vanity. In that image which I wanted to grasp in order to recover it and merge it with my own being, I no longer recognize myself. I must willy-nilly impute the image to the Other as one of his own subjective properties. Freed in spite of myself from my object-state, I

remain alone confronting the Other-as-object in my unqualifiable selfness which I have to be forever without relief.

Shame, fear, and pride are my original reactions; they are only various ways by which I recognize the Other as a subject beyond reach, and they include within them a comprehension of my selfness which can and must serve as my motivation for constituting the Other as an object.

This Other-as-object who suddenly appears to me does not remain a purely objective abstraction. He rises before me with his particular meanings. He is not only the object which possesses freedom as a *property*, as a transcended transcendence. He is also “angry” or “joyful,” or “attentive;” he is “amiable” or “disagreeable;” he is “greedy,” “quick-tempered,” etc. This is because while apprehending myself as myself, I make the Other-as-object exist in the midst of the world. I recognize his transcendence, but I recognize it not as a transcendence transcending, but as a transcendence transcended. It appears therefore as a surpassing of instruments toward ends to the exact extent that in my unitary projection of myself I surpass these ends, these instruments, and the Other’s surpassing of the instruments, toward ends. This is because I never apprehend myself abstractly as the pure possibility of being myself, but I live my selfness in its concrete projection toward this or that particular end. I exist only as *engaged*.²¹ and I am conscious (of) being only as *engaged*. Thus I apprehend the Other-as-object only in a concrete and *engaged* surpassing of his transcendence. But conversely the Other’s engagement, which is his mode of being, appears to me, in so far as it is transcended by my transcendence, as a *real* engagement, as a *taking root*. In short, so far as I exist *for-myself*, my “engagement” in a situation must be understood in the sense in which we say: “I am engaged to a particular person, I am engaged to return that money,” etc. It is this engagement which characterizes the Other-as-subject since he is another self like me. But when I grasp the Other as an object, his objectivized engagement is degraded and becomes an engagement-as-object in the sense in which we say, “The knife is deeply engaged in the wound.” Or, “The army was engaged in a narrow pass.” It must be understood that the being-in-the-midst-of-the-world which comes to the Other through me is a real being. It is not at all a purely subjective necessity which makes me know him as existing in the midst of the world. Yet on the other hand the Other did not by himself lose himself in the world. I make him lose himself in the world which is mine by the sole fact that he is for me the one who I have to not-be; that is, by the sole fact that I hold him outside

²¹ Somewhat unhappy I have decided to use the English words “engage” and “engagement” for Sartre’s *engager* and *engagement* simply because there is no one English word which conveys all the meaning of the French. In French *engager* includes the ideas of “commitment,” of “involvement,” of “immersion,” and even of “entering,” as well as the English sense of “engagement.” Tr.

myself as a purely contemplated reality surpassed toward my own ends. Thus objectivity is not the pure refraction of the Other across my consciousness; it comes through me to the Other as a real qualification: I make the Other be in the midst of the world.

Therefore what I apprehend as real characteristics of the Other is a being-in-situation. In fact I organize him in the midst of the world in so far as he organizes the world toward himself; I apprehend him as the objective unity of instruments and of obstacles. In Part Two of this work we explained that the totality of instruments is the exact correlate of my possibilities.²² Since I am my possibilities, the order of instruments in the world is the image of my possibilities projected into the in-itself; that is, the image of what I am. But this mundane image I can never decipher; I adapt myself to it in and through action. The Other inasmuch as he is a subject is found similarly engaged in his image. On the other hand, in so far as I grasp him as object, it is this mundane image which leaps to my eyes. The Other becomes the instrument which is defined by his relation with all other instruments; he is an order of my instruments which is included in the order which I impose on these instruments. To apprehend the Other is to apprehend this enclave-order and to refer it back to a central absence or "interiority;" it is to define this absence as a fixed flow of the objects of my world toward a definite object of my universe. And the meaning of this flow is furnished to me by those objects themselves. The arrangement of the hammer and nails, of the chisel and marble, the arrangement which I surpass without being its foundation defines the meaning of this internal hemorrhage in the world.

Thus the world announces the Other to me in his totality and as a totality. To be sure, the announcement remains ambiguous. But this is because I grasp the order of the world toward the Other as an undifferentiated totality on the ground of which certain explicit structures appear. If I could make explicit all the instrumental complexes as they are turned toward the Other (that is, if I could grasp not only the place which the hammer and the nails occupy in this complex of instrumentality but also the street, the city, the nation, etc.), I should have defined explicitly and totally the being of the Other as object. If I am mistaken concerning an intention of the Other, this is not because I refer his gesture to a subjectivity beyond reach; this subjectivity in itself and by itself has no common measure with the gesture, for it is transcendence for itself, an unsurpassable transcendence. But I am mistaken because I organize the entire world around this gesture differently than it is organized in fact. Thus by the sole fact that the Other appears as object, he is given to me on principle as a totality; he is extended across the whole world as a mundane power for the synthetic organization of this world. I can not make this

synthetic organization explicit any more than I can make the world itself explicit in so far as it is my world. The difference between the Other-as-subject—i.e., between the Other such as he is for-himself—and the Other-as-object is not a difference between the whole and the part or between the hidden and the revealed. The Other-as-object is on principle a whole co-extensive with subjective totality; nothing is hidden and in so far as objects refer to other objects, I can increase indefinitely my knowledge of the Other by indefinitely making explicit his relations with other instruments in the world. The ideal of knowledge of the Other remains the exhaustive specification of the meaning of the flow of the world. The difference of principle between the Other-as-object and the Other-as-subject stems solely from this fact: that the Other-as-subject can in no way be known nor even conceived as such. There is no problem of the knowledge of the Other-as-subject, and the objects of the world do not refer to his subjectivity; they refer only to his object-state in the world as the meaning—surpassed toward my selfness—of the intra-mundane flow.

Thus the Other's presence to me as the one who produces my object-state is experienced as a subject-totality. If I turn toward this presence in order to grasp it, I apprehend the Other once more as totality: an object-totality co-extensive with the totality of the world. This apprehension is made all of a sudden; it is from the standpoint of the entire world that I arrive at the Other-as-object. But it is never anything but particular relations which come out in relief like figures on the ground of the world. Around this man whom I do not know and who is reading in the subway, the entire world is present. It is not his body only—as an object in the world—which defines him in his being; it is his identity card, it is the direction of the particular train which he has boarded, it is the ring which he wears on his finger. Not as the signs of what he is—this notion of a sign, in fact, would refer us to a subjectivity which I can not even conceive and in which he is precisely nothing, strictly speaking, since he is what he is not and is not what he is—but by virtue of real characteristics of his being. Yet if I know that he is in the midst of the world, in France, in Paris, in the process of reading, still for lack of seeing his identity card, I can only suppose that he is a foreigner (which means: to suppose that he is subject to special regulations, that he figures on some official register, that I must speak to him in Dutch, or in Italian in order to obtain from him this or that particular gesture, that the international post directs toward him by this or that route letters bearing this or that stamp, etc.). Yet this identity card is on principle given to me in the midst of the world. It does not escape me—from the moment that it was created, it has been set to existing for me. It exists in an implicit state like each point of the circle which I see as a completed form. And it would be necessary to change the present totality of my relations to the world in order to make the identity

²² Part Two, ch. III, Section iii.

card appear as an explicit this on the ground of the universe. In the same way the anger of the Other-as-object as it is manifested to me across his cries, his stamping, and his threatening gestures is not the sign of a subjective and hidden anger; it refers to nothing except to other gestures and to other cries. It defines the Other, it is the Other. To be sure, I can be mistaken and can take for true anger what is only a pretended irritation. But it is only in relation to other gestures and to other objectively apprehensible acts that I can be mistaken. I am mistaken if I apprehend the motion of his hand as a real intention to hit me. That is, I am mistaken if I interpret it as the function of an objectively discernible gesture which will not take place. In a word the anger objectively apprehended is a disposition of the world around an intra-mundane presence-absence.

Does this mean that we must grant that the Behaviorists are right? Certainly not. For although the Behaviorists interpret man in terms of his situation, they have lost sight of his characteristic principle, which is transcendence-transcended. In fact if the Other is the object which can not be limited to himself, he is also the object which is understood only in terms of his end. Of course the hammer and the saw are not understood any differently. Both are apprehended through their function; that is, through their end. But this is exactly because they are already human. I can understand them only in so far as they refer me to an instrumental-organization in which the Other is the center, only in so far as they form a part of a complex wholly transcended toward an end which I in turn transcend. If then we can compare the Other to a machine, this is because the machine as a human fact presents already the trace of a transcendence-transcended, just as the looms in a mill are explained only by the fabrics which they produce. The Behaviorist point of view must be reversed, and this reversal, moreover, will leave the Other's objectivity intact. For that which first of all is objective—what we shall call *signification* after the fashion of French and English psychologists, *intention* according to the Phenomenologists, *transcendence* with Heidegger, or *form* with the Gestalt School—this is the fact that the Other can be defined only by a total organization of the world and that he is the key to this organization. If therefore I return from the world to the Other in order to define him, this is not because the world would make me understand the Other but because the Other-as-object is nothing but a center of autonomous and intra-mundane reference in my world.

Thus the objective fear which we can apprehend when we perceive the Other-as-object is not the ensemble of the physiological manifestations of disorder which we see or which we measure with sphygmograph or a stethoscope. Fear is a flight; it is a fainting. These phenomena themselves are not released to us as a pure series of movements but as transcendence-transcended: the flight or the fainting is not only that desperate running through the

brush, nor that heavy fall on the stones of the road; it is the total upheaval of the instrumental-organization which had the Other for its center. This soldier who is fleeing formerly had the Other-as-enemy at the point of his gun. The distance from him to the enemy was measured by the trajectory of his bullet, and I too could apprehend and transcend that distance as a distance organized round the "soldier" as center. But behold now he throws his gun in the ditch and is trying to save himself. Immediately the presence of the enemy surrounds him and presses in upon him; the enemy, who had been held at a distance by the trajectory of the bullets, leaps upon him at the very instant when the trajectory collapses; at the same time that land in the background, which he was defending and against which he was leaning as against a wall, suddenly opens fan-wise and becomes the foreground, the welcoming horizon toward which he is fleeing for refuge. All this I establish objectively, and it is precisely this which I apprehend as fear. Fear is nothing but a magical conduct tending by incantation to suppress the frightening objects which we are unable to keep at a distance.²³ It is precisely through its results that we apprehend fear, for it is given to us as a new type of internal hemorrhage in the world—the passage from the world to a type of magical existence.

We must be careful however to remember that the Other is a qualified object for me only to the extent that I can be one for him. Therefore he will be objectivized as a non-individualized portion of the "they" or as purely "absent" represented by his letters and his written accounts of himself or as this man present in fact, according to whether I shall have been myself an element for him of the "they" or a "dear absent one" or a concrete "this man." What decides in each case the type of objectivation of the Other and of his qualities is both my situation in the world and his situation; that is, the instrumental complexes which we have each organized and the various *thises* which appear to each one of us on the ground of the world. All this naturally brings us to facticity. It is my facticity and the Other's facticity which decide whether the Other can see me and whether I can see this particular Other. But the problem of facticity is beyond the scope of this general exposition. We shall consider it in the course of the next chapter.

Thus I experience the Other's presence as a quasi-totality of subjects in my being-an-object-for-Others, and on the ground of this totality I can experience more particularly the presence of a concrete subject without however being able to specify it as that particular Other. My defensive reaction to my object-state will cause the Other to appear before me in the capacity of this or that object. As such he will appear to me as a "this-one;" that is, his subjective quasi-totality is degraded and becomes a totality-as-object co-extensive with the totality of the World. This totality is revealed to me without

²³ Cf. *The Emotions*.

reference to the Other's subjectivity. The relation of the Other-as-subject to the Other-as-object is in no way comparable to that which we usually establish, for example, between the physical object and the object of perception. The Other-as-object is revealed to me for what he is, he refers only to himself. The Other-as-object is simply such as he appears to me on the plane of object-ness in general and in his being-as-object; it is not even conceivable that I should refer back any knowledge which I have of him to his subjectivity such as I experience it on the occasion of the look. The Other-as-object is only an object, but my apprehension of him includes the comprehension of the fact that I could always and on principle produce from him another experience by placing myself on another plane of being. This comprehension is constituted on the one hand by the empirical knowledge of my past experience—which is moreover as we have seen, the pure past (out of reach and what I have to be) of this experience, and on the other hand it is constituted by an implicit apprehension of the dialectic of the Other. The Other is at present what I make myself not-be. But although for the instant I am rid of him and escape him, there remains around him the permanent possibility that he may make himself other. Nevertheless this possibility, foreseen in the embarrassment and constraint which forms the specific quality of my attitude confronting the Other-as-object, is strictly speaking *inconceivable*: first because I can not conceive of a possibility which is not my possibility nor can I apprehend transcendence except by transcending it—that is, by grasping it as a transcendence-transcended; secondly because this anticipated possibility is not the possibility of the Other-as-object—the possibilities of the Other-as-object are dead-possibilities which refer to other objective aspects of the Other. The peculiar possibility of apprehending myself as an object is the possibility belonging to the Other-as-subject and hence is not for a me a living possibility; it is an absolute possibility—which derives its source only from itself—that on the ground of the total annihilation of the Other-as-object, there may occur the upsurge of an Other-as-subject which I shall experience across my objectivity-for-him.

Thus the Other-as-object is an explosive instrument which I handle with care because I foresee around him the permanent possibility that they are going to make it explode and that with this explosion I shall suddenly experience the flight of the world away from me and the alienation of my being. Therefore my constant concern is to contain the Other within his objectivity, and my relations with the Other-as-object are essentially made up of ruses designed to make him remain an object. But one look on the part of the Other is sufficient to make all these schemes collapse and to make me experience once more the transfiguration of the Other. Thus I am referred from transfiguration to degradation and from degradation to transfiguration without ever being able either to get a total view of the ensemble of these two

modes of being on the part of the Other—for each of them is self-sufficient and refers only to itself—or to hold firmly to either one of them—for each has its own instability and collapses in order for the other to rise from its ruins. Only the dead can be perpetually objects without every becoming subjects—for to die is not to lose one's objectivity in the midst of the world; all the dead are there in the world around us. But to die is to lose all possibility of revealing oneself as subject to an Other.

At this point in our investigation now we have elucidated the essential structures of being-for-others, there is an obvious temptation to raise the metaphysical question: "Why are there Others?" As we have seen, the existence of Others is not a consequence which can derive from the ontological structure of the for-itself. It is a primary event, to be sure, but of a metaphysical order; that is, it results from the contingency of being. The question "why" is essentially connected with these metaphysical existences.

We know very well that the answer to the "why" can only refer us to an original contingency, but still it is necessary to prove that the metaphysical phenomenon which we are considering is an irreducible contingency. In this sense ontology appears to us capable of being defined as the specification of the structures of being of the existent taken as a totality, and we shall define metaphysics rather as raising the question of the existence of the existent. This is why in view of the absolute contingency of the existent, we are convinced that any metaphysics must conclude with a "that is"—i.e., in a direct intuition of that contingency.

Is it possible to pose the question of the existence of Others? Is this existence an irreducible fact, or is it to be derived from a fundamental contingency? Such are the preliminary questions which we can in turn pose to the metaphysician who questions us concerning the existence of Others.

Let us examine more closely the possibility of the metaphysical question. What appears to us first is the fact that the being-for-others represents the third ekstasis of the for-itself. The first ekstasis is indeed the tridimensional projection on the part of the for-itself toward a being which it has to be in the mode of non-being. It represents the first fissure, the nihilation which the for-itself has to be, the wrenching away on the part of the for-itself from everything which it is, and this wrenching away is constitutive of its being. The second ekstasis or reflective ekstasis is the wrenching away from this very wrenching away. The reflective scissiparity corresponds to a vain attempt to take a point of view on the nihilation which the for-itself has to be, in order that this nihilation as a simply given phenomenon may be a nihilation which is. But at the same time reflection wants to recover this wrenching away, which it attempts to contemplate as a pure given, by affirming concerning itself that it is this nihilation which is. This is a flagrant contradiction: in order to be able to apprehend my transcendence, I should have to transcend it. But my

own transcendence can only transcend. I am my own transcendence; I can not make use of it so as to constitute it as a transcendence-transcended. I am condemned to be forever my own nihilation. In short reflection (*reflexion*) is the reflected-on.

The reflective nihilation, however, is pushed further than that of the pure for-itself as a simple self-consciousness. In self-consciousness, in fact, the two terms of the dyad "reflected-reflecting" (*reflété-reflétant*) were so incapable of presenting themselves separately that the duality remained perpetually evanescent and each term while positing itself for the other became the other. But with reflection the case is different since the "reflection-reflecting" which is reflected-on exists for a "reflection-reflecting" which is reflective. Reflected-on and reflective, therefore, each tend toward independence, and the nothing which separates them tends to divide them more profoundly than the nothingness which the For-itself has to be separates the reflection from the reflecting. Yet neither the reflective nor the reflected-on can secrete this separating nothingness, for in that case reflection (*reflexion*) would be an autonomous for-itself coming to direct itself on the reflected-on, which would be to suppose an external negation as the preliminary condition of an internal negation. There can be no reflection if it is not entirely a *being*, a being which has to be its own nothingness.

Thus the reflective ekstasis is found on the path to a more radical ekstasis—the being-for-others. The final term of the nihilation, the ideal pole should be in fact the external negation—that is, a scissiparity in-itself or the spatial exteriority of indifference. In relation to this external negation the three ekstases are ranked in the order which we have just presented, but the goal is never achieved. It remains on principle ideal; in fact the for-itself—without running the risk of ceasing by the same stroke to be-for-itself—can not by itself realize in relation to any being a negation which would be in-itself. The constitutive negation of being-for-others is therefore an *internal negation*; it is a nihilation which the for-itself has to be, just like the reflective nihilation. But here the scissiparity attacks the very negation; it is no longer only the negation which divides being into reflected and reflecting and in turn divides the dyad reflected-reflecting into (reflected-reflecting) reflected and (reflected-reflecting) reflecting. Here the negation is divided into two internal and opposed negations; each is an internal negation, but they are nevertheless separated from one another by an inapprehensible external nothingness. In fact since each of them is exhausted in denying that one for-itself is the other and since each negation is wholly engaged in that being which it has to be, it is no longer in command of itself so as to deny concerning itself that it is the opposite negation. Here suddenly appears the given, not as the result of an identity of being-in-itself but as a sort of phantom of exteriority which neither of the negations has to be and which yet separates them. Actually in

the reflective being we have already found the beginning of this negative inversion. In fact the reflective as a witness is profoundly affected in its being by its reflectivity, and consequently in so far as it makes itself reflective, it aims at not being the reflected-on. But reciprocally the reflected-on is self-consciousness as the reflected-on consciousness of this or that transcendent phenomenon. We said of it that it knows itself looked-at. In this sense it aims on its part at not-being the reflective since every consciousness is defined by its negativity. But this tendency to a double schism was recovered and stifled by the fact that in spite of everything the reflective had to be the reflected-on and that the reflected-on had to be the reflective. The double negation remained evanescent.

In the case of the third ekstasis we behold a reflective scissiparity pushed further. The results may surprise us: on the one hand, since the negations are effected in interiority, the Other and myself can not come to one another from the outside. It is necessary that there be a being "I-and-the-Other" which has to be the reciprocal scissiparity of the for-others just as the totality "reflective-reflected-on" is a being which has to be its own nothingness; that is, my selfness and that of the Other are structures of one and the same totality of being. Thus Hegel appears to be right: the point of view of the totality is the point of view of being, the true point of view. Everything happens as if my selfness confronting that of the Other were produced and maintained by a totality which would push its own nihilation to the extreme; being-for-others appears to be the prolongation of the pure reflective scissiparity. In this sense everything happens as if the Other and myself indicated the vain effort of a totality of for-itself to reapprehend itself and to envelop what it *has to be* in the pure and simple mode of the in-itself. This effort to reapprehend itself as object is pushed here to the limit—that is, well beyond the reflective division—and would produce a result precisely the reverse of the end toward which this totality would project itself. By its effort to be self-consciousness the totality-for-itself would be constituted in the face of the self as a self-as-consciousness which has to not-be the self of which it is consciousness. Conversely the self-as-object in order to *be* would have to experience itself as made-to-be by and for a consciousness which it has to not-be if it wishes to be. Thus would be born the schism of the for-others, and this dichotomic division would be repeated to infinity in order to constitute a plurality of consciousnesses as fragments of a radical explosion. "There would be" numerous Others as the result of a failure the reverse of the reflective failure. In reflection in fact if I do not succeed in apprehending myself as an object but only as a quasi-object, this is because I am the object which I wish to grasp; I have to be the nothingness which separates me from myself. I can escape my selfness neither by taking a point of view on myself (for thus I do not succeed in realizing myself as being) nor by apprehending myself in

the form of the "there is" (here the recovery fails because the recoverer is to himself the recovered). In the case of being-for-others, on the contrary, the scissiparity is pushed further; the (reflection-reflecting) reflected is radically distinct from the (reflection-reflecting) reflecting and thereby can be an object for it. But this time the recovery fails because the recovered is not the one recovering. Thus the totality which is not what it is but which is what it is not, would—as the result of a radical attempt at wrenching away from self—everywhere produce its being as an "elsewhere." The scattering of being-in-itself of a shattered totality, always elsewhere, always at a distance, never in itself, but always maintained in being by the perpetual explosion of this totality—such would be the being of others and of myself as other.

But on the other hand, *simultaneously* with my negation of myself, the Other denies concerning himself that he is me. These two negations are equally indispensable to being-for-others, and they can not be reunited by any synthesis. This is not because an external nothingness would have separated them at the start but rather because the in-itself would recapture each one in relation to the other by the mere fact that each one is not the other without having to not-be the other. There is here a kind of limit of the for-itself which stems from the for-itself itself but which qua limit is independent of the for-itself. We rediscover something like *facticity* and we can not conceive how the totality of which we were speaking earlier would have been able at the very heart of the most radical wrenching away to produce in its being a nothingness which it in no way has to be. In fact it seems that this nothingness has slipped into this totality in order to shatter it just as in the atomism of Leucippus non-being slips into the Parmenidean totality of being and makes it explode into atoms. Therefore it represents the negation of any synthetic totality in terms of which one might claim to understand the plurality of consciousnesses. Of course it is inapprehensible since it is produced neither by the Other nor by myself, nor by any intermediary, for we have established that consciousnesses experience one another without intermediary. Of course where we direct our sight, we encounter as the object of our description only a pure and simple internal negation. Yet it is there in the irreducible fact that there is a duality of negations. It is not, to be sure, the foundation of the multiplicity of consciousnesses, for if it existed before this multiplicity, it would make all being-for others impossible. On the contrary, we must conceive of it as the expression of this multiplicity; it appears with this multiplicity. But since there is nothing which can found it, neither a particular consciousness nor a totality exploding into consciousnesses, it appears as a pure, irreducible contingency. It is the fact that my denial that I am the Other is not sufficient to make the Other exist, but that the Other must simultaneously with my own negation deny that he is me. It is the *facticity* of being-for-others.

Thus we arrive at this contradictory conclusion: being-for-others can be

only if it is *made-to-be* by a totality which is lost so that being-for-others may arise, a position which would lead us to postulate the existence and passion of the mind. But on the other hand, this being-for-others can exist only if it involves an inapprehensible and external non-being which no totality, not even the mind, can produce or found. In one sense the existence of a plurality of consciousnesses can not be a primary fact and it refers us to an original fact of a wrenching away from self, a fact of the mind. Thus the question "Why is there a plurality of consciousnesses?" could receive an answer. But in another sense the facticity of this plurality seems to be irreducible; and if the mind is considered from the standpoint of the fact of the plurality, it vanishes. Then the metaphysical question no longer has meaning; we have encountered a fundamental contingency, and we can answer only by "So it is." Thus the original ekstasis is deepened; it appears that we can not assign to the nothingness its share. The for-itself has appeared to us as a being which exists in so far as it is not what it is and is what it is not. The ekstastic totality of the mind is not simply a totality detotalized; it appears to us as a shattered being concerning which we can neither say that it exists or that it does not exist. Thus our description has enabled us to satisfy the preliminary conditions which we have posited for any theory about the existence of the Other. The multiplicity of consciousnesses appears to us as a *synthesis* and not as a *collection*, but it is a synthesis whose totality is inconceivable.

Is this to say that the antinomic nature of the totality is itself an irreducible? Or from a higher point of view can we make it disappear? Ought we to posit that the mind is the *being which is and is not* just as we posited that the for-itself is what it is not and is not what it is? The question has no meaning. It is supposing that it is possible for us to *take a point of view* on the totality; that is, to consider it from outside. But this is impossible precisely because I exist as myself on the foundation of this totality and to the extent that I am engaged in it. No consciousness, not even God's, can "see the underside"—that is, apprehend the totality as such. For if God is consciousness, he is integrated in the totality. And if by his nature, he is a being *beyond consciousness* (that is, an in-itself which would be its own foundation) still the totality can appear to him only as *object* (in that case he lacks the totality's internal disintegration as the subjective effort to reapprehend the self) or as *subject* (then since God is not this subject, he can only experience it without knowing it.) Thus no point of view on the totality is conceivable; the totality has no "outside," and the very question of the meaning of the "underside" is stripped of meaning. We cannot go further.

Here we have arrived at the end of this exposition. We have learned that the Other's existence was experienced with evidence in and through the fact of my objectivity. We have seen also that my reaction to my own alienation for the Other was expressed in my grasping the Other as an object. In short, the

Other can exist for us in two forms: if I experience him with evidence, I fail to know him; if I know him, if I act upon him, I only reach his being-as-object and his probable existence in the midst of the world. No synthesis of these two forms is possible. But we can not stop here. This object which the Other is for me and this object which I am for him are manifested each as a body. What then is my body? What is the body of the Other?

2

THE BODY

The problem of the body and its relations with consciousness is often obscured by the fact that while the body is from the start posited as a certain thing having its own laws and capable of being defined from outside, consciousness is then reached by the type of inner intuition which is peculiar to it. Actually if after grasping "my" consciousness in its absolute interiority and by a series of reflective acts, I then seek to unite it with a certain living object composed of a nervous system, a brain, glands, digestive, respiratory, and circulatory organs whose very matter is capable of being analyzed chemically into atoms of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, etc., then I am going to encounter insurmountable difficulties. But these difficulties all stem from the fact that I try to unite my consciousness not with my body but with the body of others. For the body which I have just described is not my body such as it is for me. I have never seen and never shall see my brain nor my endocrine glands. But because I who am a man have seen the cadavers of men dissected, because I have read articles on physiology, I conclude that my body is constituted exactly like all those which have been shown to me on the dissection table or of which I have seen colored drawings in books. Of course the physicians who have taken care of me, the surgeons who have operated on me, have been able to have direct experience with the body which I myself do not know. I do not disagree with them, I do not claim that I lack a brain, a heart, or a stomach. But it is most important to choose the order of our bits of knowledge. So far as the physicians have had any experience with my body, it was with my body in the midst of the world and as it is for others. My body as it is for me does not appear to me in the midst of the world. Of course during a radioscopy I was able to see the picture of my vertebrae on a screen, but I was outside in the midst of the world.

I was apprehending a wholly constituted object as a *this* among other *thises*, and it was only by a reasoning process that I referred it back to being *mine*; it was much more my *property* than my being.

It is true that I see and touch my legs and my hands. Moreover nothing prevents me from imagining an arrangement of the sense organs such that a living being could see one of his eyes while the eye which was seen was directing its glance upon the world. But it is to be noted that in this case again I am the *Other* in relation to my eye. I apprehend it as a sense organ constituted in the world in a particular way, but I can not "see the seeing;" that is, I can not apprehend it in the process of revealing an aspect of the world to me. Either it is a thing among other things, or else it is that by which things are revealed to me. But it can not be both at the same time. Similarly I see my hand touching objects, but do not know it in its act of touching them. This is the fundamental reason why that famous "sensation of effort" of Maine de Biran does not really exist. For my hand reveals to me the resistance of objects, their hardness or softness, but not itself. Thus I see my hand only in the way that I see this inkwell. I unfold a *distance* between it and me, and this distance comes to integrate itself in the distances which I establish among all the objects of the world. When a doctor takes my wounded leg and looks at it while I, half raised up on my bed, watch him do it, there is no essential difference between the visual perception which I have of the doctor's body and that which I have of my own leg. Better yet, they are distinguished only as different structures of a single global perception; there is no essential difference between the doctor's perception of my leg and my own present perception of it. Of course when I touch my leg with my finger, I realize that my leg is touched. But this phenomenon of double sensation is not essential: cold, a shot of morphine, can make it disappear. This shows that we are dealing with two essentially different orders of reality. To touch and to be touched, to feel that one is touching and to feel that one is touched—these are two species of phenomena which it is useless to try to reunite by the term "double sensation." In fact they are radically distinct, and they exist on two incommunicable levels. Moreover when I touch my leg or when I see it, I surpass it toward my own possibilities. It is, for example, in order to pull on my trousers or to change a dressing on my wound. Of course I can at the same time arrange my leg in such a way that I can more conveniently "work" on it. But this does not change the fact that I transcend it toward the pure possibility of "curing myself" and that consequently I am present to it without its *being me* and without my *being it*. What I cause to exist here is the *thing* "leg;" it is not the leg as the *possibility which I am* of walking, running, or of playing football.

Thus to the extent that my body indicates my possibilities in the world, seeing my body or touching it is to transform these possibilities of mine into dead-possibilities. This metamorphosis must necessarily involve a complete

thisness with regard to the body as a living possibility of running, of dancing, etc. Of course, the discovery of my body as an object is indeed a revelation of its being. But the being which is thus revealed to me is its *being-for-others*. That this confusion may lead to absurdities can be clearly seen in connection with the famous problem of "inverted vision." We know the question posed by the physiologists: "How can we set upright the objects which are painted upside down on our retina?" We know as well the answer of the philosophers: "There is no problem. An object is upright or inverted in relation to the rest of the universe. To perceive the whole universe inverted means nothing, for it would have to be inverted in relation to something." But what particularly interests us is the origin of this false problem. It is the fact that people have wanted to link my consciousness of objects to the body of the *Other*. Here are the candle, the crystalline lens, the inverted image on the screen of the retina. But to be exact, the retina enters here into a physical system; it is a *screen* and only that; the crystalline lens is a *lens* and only a lens; both are homogeneous in their being with the candle which completes the system. Therefore we have deliberately chosen the physical point of view—i.e., the point of view of the outside, of exteriority—in order to study the problem of vision; we have considered a dead eye in the midst of the visible world in order to account for the visibility of this world. Consequently, how can we be surprised later when consciousness, which is absolute interiority, refuses to allow itself to be bound to this object? The relations which I establish between the *Other's* body and the external object are *really* existing relations, but they have for their being the being of the *for-others*; they suppose a center of intra-mundane flow in which knowledge is a *magic* property such as, "action at a distance." From the start they are placed in the perspective of the *Other-as-object*.

If then we wish to reflect on the nature of the body, it is necessary to establish an order of our reflections which conforms to the order of being: we can not continue to confuse the ontological levels, and we must in succession examine the body first *as being-for-itself* and then as *being-for-others*. And in order to avoid such absurdities as "inverted vision," we must keep constantly in mind the idea that since these two aspects of the body are on different and incommunicable levels of being, they can not be reduced to one another. [Being-for-itself must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness;] it can not be united with a body. Similarly being-for-others is wholly body; there are no "psychic phenomena" there to be united with the body. There is nothing *behind* the body. But the body is wholly "psychic." We must now proceed to study these two modes of being which we find for the body.

I. THE BODY AS BEING-FOR-ITSELF: FACTICITY

It appears at first glance that the preceding observations are opposed to the givens of the Cartesian *cogito*. "The soul is easier to know than the body," said Descartes. Thereby he intended to make a radical distinction between the facts of thought, which are accessible to reflection, and the facts of the body, the knowledge of which must be guaranteed by divine Providence. It appears at first that reflection reveals to us only pure facts of consciousness. Of course on this level we encounter phenomena which appear to include within themselves some connection with the body; "physical" pain, the uncomfortable, pleasure, etc. But these phenomena are no less pure facts of consciousness. There is a tendency therefore to make signs out of them, affections of consciousness occasioned by the body, without realizing that one has thereby irremediably driven the body out of consciousness and that no bond will ever be able to reunite this body, which is already a body-for-others, with the consciousness which, it is claimed, makes the body manifest.

That is why we ought not to take this as our point of departure but rather our primary relation to the in-itself: our being-in-the-world. We know that there is not a for-itself on the one hand and a world on the other as two closed entities for which we must subsequently seek some explanation as to how they communicate. The for-itself is a relation to the world. The for-itself, by denying that it is being, makes there be a world, and by surpassing this negation toward its own possibilities it reveals the "thises" as instrumental-things.

But when we say that the for-itself is-in-the-world, that consciousness is consciousness of the world, we must understand that the world exists in front of consciousness as an indefinite multiplicity of reciprocal relations which consciousness flies over without perspective and contemplates without a point of view. For me this glass is to the left of the decanter and a little behind it; for Pierre, it is to the right and a little in front. It is not even conceivable that a consciousness could fly over the world in such a way that the glass should be simultaneously given to it at the right and at the left of the decanter, in front of it and behind it. This is by no means the consequence of a strict application of the principle of identity but because this fusion of right and left, of before and behind, would result in the total disappearance of "thises" at the heart of a primitive indistinction. Similarly if the table leg hides the designs in the rug from my sight, this is not the result of some finitude and some imperfection in my visual organs, but it is because a rug which would not be hidden by the table, a rug which would not be either under it or above it or to one side of it, would not have any relation of any kind with the table and would no longer belong to the "world" in which there is the table. The in-itself which is made manifest in the form of the this would

return to its indifferent self-identity. Even space as a purely external relation would disappear. The constitution of space as a multiplicity of reciprocal relations can be effected only from the abstract point of view of science; it can not be lived, it can not even be represented. The triangle which I trace on the blackboard so as to help me in abstract reasoning is necessarily to the right of the circle tangent to one of its sides, necessarily to the extent that it is on the blackboard. And my effort is to surpass the concrete characteristics of the figure traced in chalk by not including its relation to me in my calculations any more than the thickness of the lines or the imperfection of the drawing.

Thus by the mere fact that there is a world, this world can not exist without a univocal orientation in relation to me. Idealism has rightly insisted on the fact that relation makes the world. But since idealism took its position on the ground of Newtonian science, it conceived this relation as a relation of reciprocity. Thus it attained only abstract concepts of pure exteriority, of action and reaction, etc., and due to this very fact it missed the world and succeeded only in making explicit the limiting concept of absolute objectivity. This concept in short amounted to that of a "desert world" or of "a world without men;" that is, to a contradiction, since it is through human reality that there is a world. Thus the concept of objectivity, which aimed at replacing the in-itself of dogmatic truth by a pure relation of reciprocal agreement between representations, is self-destructive if pushed to the limit.

Moreover the progress of science has led to rejecting this notion of absolute objectivity. What Broglie is led to call "experience" is a system of univocal relations from which the observer is not excluded. If microphysics must reintegrate the observer into the heart of the scientific system, this is not pure subjectivity—this notion would have no more meaning than that of pure objectivity—but as an original relation to the world, as a place, as that toward which all envisaged relations are oriented. Thus, for example, Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy can not be considered either as an invalidation or a validation of the determinist postulate. Instead of being a pure connection between things, it includes within itself the original relation of man to things and his place in the world. This is sufficiently demonstrated, for example, by the fact that we cannot make the dimensions of bodies in motion increase in proportionate quantities without changing their relative speed. If I examine the movement of one body toward another first with the naked eye and then with the microscope, it will appear to me a hundred times faster in the second case; for although the body in motion approaches no closer to the body toward which it is moving, it has in the same time traversed a space a hundred times as large. Thus the notion of speed no longer means anything unless it is speed in relation to given dimensions of a body in motion. But it is we ourselves who decide these dimensions by our very upsurge into the world and it is very necessary that we decide them, for

otherwise they would not be at all. Thus they are relative not to the knowledge which we get of them but to our primary engagement at the heart of the world.

This fact is expressed perfectly by the theory of relativity: an observer placed at the heart of a system can not determine by any experiment whether the system is at rest or in motion. But this relativity is not a "relativism;" it has nothing to do with knowledge; better yet, it implies the dogmatic postulate according to which knowledge releases to us what is. The relativity of modern science aims at being. Man and the world are relative beings, and the principle of their being is the relation. It follows that the first relation proceeds from human-reality to the world. To come into existence, for me, is to unfold my distances from things and thereby to cause things "to be there." But consequently things are precisely "things-which-exist-at-a-distance-from-me." Thus the world refers to me that univocal relation which is my being and by which I cause it to be revealed.

The point of view of pure knowledge is contradictory; there is only the point of view of engaged knowledge. This amounts to saying that knowledge and action are only two abstract aspects of an original, concrete relation. The real space of the world is the space which Lewin calls "hodological." A pure knowledge in fact would be a knowledge without a point of view; therefore a knowledge of the world but on principle located outside the world. But this makes no sense; the knowing being would be only knowledge since he would be defined by his object and since his object would disappear in the total indistinction of reciprocal relations. Thus knowledge can be only an engaged upsurge in a determined point of view which one is. For human reality, to be is to-be-there; that is, "there in that chair," "there at that table," "there at the top of that mountain, with these dimensions, this orientation, etc." It is an ontological necessity.

This point must be well understood. For this necessity appears between two contingencies; on the one hand, while it is necessary that I be in the form of being-there, still it is altogether contingent that I be, for I am not the foundation of my being; on the other hand, while it is necessary that I be engaged in this or that point of view, it is contingent that it should be precisely in this view to the exclusion of all others. This twofold contingency which embraces a necessity we have called the facticity of the for-itself. We have described it in Part Two. We showed there that the nihilated in-itself, engulfed in the absolute event which is the appearance of the foundation or the upsurge of the for-itself, remains at the heart of the for-itself as its original contingency. Thus the for-itself is supported by a perpetual contingency for which it becomes responsible and which it assimilates without ever being able to suppress it. Nowhere can the for-itself find this contingency anywhere within itself; nor can the for-itself anywhere apprehend and know

it—not even by the reflective *cogito*. The for-itself forever surpasses this contingency toward its own possibilities, and it encounters in itself only the nothingness which it has to be. Yet facticity does not cease to haunt the for-itself, and it is facticity which causes me to apprehend myself simultaneously as totally responsible for my being and as totally unjustifiable.

But the world refers to me the image of this unjustifiability in the form of the synthetic unity of its univocal relations to me. It is absolutely necessary that the world appear to me in order. And in this sense this order is me; it is that image of me which we described in the last chapter of Part Two. But it is wholly contingent that it should be this order. Thus it appears as the necessary and totally unjustifiable arrangement of the totality of being. This absolutely necessary and totally unjustifiable order of the things of the world, this order which is myself in so far as I am neither the foundation of my being nor the foundation of a particular being—this order is the body as it is on the level of the for-itself. In this sense we could define the body as the contingent form which is assumed by the necessity of my contingency. The body is nothing other than the for-itself; it is not an in-itself in the for-itself, for in that case it would solidify everything. But it is the fact that the for-itself is not its own foundation, and this fact is expressed by the necessity of existing as an engaged, contingent being among other contingent beings. As such the body is not distinct from the situation of the for-itself since for the for-itself, to exist and to be situated are one and the same; on the other hand the body is identified with the whole world inasmuch as the world is the total situation of the for-itself and the measure of its existence.

But a situation is not a pure contingent given. Quite the contrary, it is revealed only to the extent that the for-itself surpasses it toward itself. Consequently the body-for-itself is never a given which I can know. It is there everywhere as the surpassed; it exists only in so far as I escape it by nihilating myself. The body is what I nihilate. It is the in-itself which is surpassed by the nihilating for-itself and which reapprehends the for-itself in this very surpassing. It is the fact that I am my own motivation without being my own foundation, the fact that I am nothing without having to be what I am and yet in so far as I have to be what I am, I am without having to be. In one sense therefore the body is a necessary characteristic of the for-itself; it is not true that the body is the product of an arbitrary decision on the part of a demiurge nor that the union of soul and body is the contingent bringing together of two substances radically distinct. On the contrary, the very nature of the for-itself demands that it be body; that is, that its nihilating escape from being should be made in the form of an engagement in the world. Yet in another sense the body manifests my contingency; we can even say that it is only this contingency. The Cartesian rationalists were right in being struck with this characteristic; in fact it represents the individualization of my engagement in

the world. And Plato was not wrong either in taking the body as that which individualizes the soul. Yet it would be in vain to suppose that the soul can detach itself from this individualization by separating itself from the body at death or by pure thought, for the soul is the body inasmuch as the for-itself is its own individualization.

We shall understand the bearing of these remarks better if we try to apply them to the problem of sense knowledge.

The problem of sense knowledge is raised on the occasion of the appearance in the midst of the world of certain objects which we call the senses. First we established that the Other had eyes; later as physiologists dissected cadavers, they learned the structure of these objects; they distinguished the cornea from the crystalline lens and the lens from the retina. They established that the object, crystalline lens, was classed in a family of particular objects—lenses—and that they could apply to the object of their study those laws of geometric optics which concern lenses. More precise dissections effected progressively as surgical instruments were perfected, have taught us that a bundle of nerves leave the retina and end up in the brain. With the microscope we have examined the nerves of cadavers and have determined exactly their trajectory, their point of departure, and their point of arrival. The totality of these pieces of knowledge concerned therefore a certain spatial object called the eye; they implied the existence of space and of the world. In addition they implied that we could see this eye, and touch it; that is, we are ourselves provided with a sensible point of view on things. Finally between our knowledge of the eye and the eye itself are interposed all our technical knowledge (the art of making our scalpels, our lancets) and our scientific skills (e.g., geometric optics, which enables us to construct and use microscopes). In short, between me and the eye which I dissect there is interposed the whole world such as I make it appear by my very upsurge. Later a more thorough examination has enabled us to establish the existence of various nerve endings on the surface of our body. We have even succeeded in acting separately on certain of these endings and performing experiments on living subjects. We then found ourselves in the presence of two objects in the world: on the one hand the stimulant; on the other hand, the sensitive cell or the free nerve ending which we stimulated. The stimulant was a physical-chemical object, an electric current, a mechanical or chemical agent whose properties we knew with precision and which we could vary in intensity or in duration in a definite way. Therefore we were dealing with two mundane objects, and their intra-mundane relation could be established by our own senses or by means of instruments. The knowledge of this relation once again supposed a whole system of scientific and technical skills, in short, the existence of a world and our original upsurge into the world. Our empirical information enabled us, furthermore, to conceive a relation between “the inside” of the

Other-as-object and the ensemble of these objective establishments. We learned in fact that by acting on certain senses we “provoked a modification” in the Other’s consciousness. We learned this through language—that is, through the meaningful and objective reactions of the Other. A physical object (the stimulant), a physiological object (sense), a psychic object (the Other), objective manifestations of meaning (language): such are the terms of the objective relation which we wished to establish. But not one of them could enable us to get out of the world of objects.

On occasion I have served as subject for the research work of physiologists or psychologists. If I volunteered for some experiment of this kind, I found myself suddenly in a laboratory where I perceived a more or less illuminated screen, or else felt tiny electric shocks, or I was brushed by an object which I could not exactly determine but whose global presence I grasped as in the midst of the world and over against me. Not for an instant was I isolated from the world; all these events happened for me in a laboratory in the middle of Paris, in the south building of the Sorbonne. I remained in the Other’s presence, and the very meaning of the experiment demanded that I could communicate with him through language. From time to time the experimenter asked me if the screen appeared to me more or less illuminated, if the pressure exerted on my hand seemed to me stronger or weaker, and I replied; that is, I gave objective information concerning things which appeared in the midst of my world. Sometimes an inept experimenter asked me if “my sensation of light was stronger or weaker, more or less intense.” Since I was in the midst of objects and in the process of observing these objects, his phrase would have had no meaning for me if I had not long since learned to use the expression “sensation of light” for objective light as it appeared to me in the world at a given instant. I replied therefore that the sensation of light was, for example, less intense, but I meant by this that the screen was in my opinion less illuminated. Since I actually apprehended the screen as less illuminated, the phrase “in my opinion” corresponded to nothing real except to an attempt not to confuse the objectivity of the world-for-me with a stricter objectivity, which is the result of experimental measures and of the agreement of minds with each other. What I could not know in any case was a certain object which the experimenter observed during this time and which was my visual organ or certain tactile endings. Therefore the result obtained at the end of the experiment could be only the relating of two series of objects: those which were revealed to me during the experiment and those which were revealed during the same period to the experimenter. The illumination of the screen belonged to my world; my eyes as objective organs belonged to the world of the experimenter. The connection of these two series was held to be like a bridge between two worlds; under no circumstances could it be a table of correlation between the subjective and the objective.

Why indeed should we use the term "subjectivity" for the ensemble of luminous or heavy or odorous objects such as they appeared to me in this laboratory at Paris on a day in February, etc. And if despite all we are to consider this ensemble as subjective, then why should we recognize objectivity in the system of objects which were revealed simultaneously to the experimenter, in this laboratory, this same day in February? We do not have two weights or two measures here; we do not encounter anywhere anything which is given as purely felt, as experienced for me without objectivation. Here as always I am conscious of the world, and on the ground of the world I am conscious of certain transcendent objects. As always I surpass what is revealed to me toward the possibility which I have to be—for example, toward that of replying correctly to the experimenter and of enabling the experiment to succeed. Of course these comparisons can give certain objective results: for example, I can establish that the warm water appears cold to me when I put my hand in it after having first plunged my hand in hot water. But this establishment which we pompously call "the law of relativity of sensations" has nothing to do with sensations. Actually we are dealing with a quality of the object which is revealed to me: the warm water is cold when I submerge my heated hand in it. A comparison of this objective quality of the water to equally objective information which the thermometer gives me simply reveals to me a contradiction. This contradiction motivates on my part a free choice of true objectivity. I shall give the name subjectivity to the objectivity which I have not chosen. As for the reasons for the "relativity of sensations," a further examination will reveal them to me in certain objective, synthetic structures which I shall call forms (Gestalt). The Müller-Lyer's illusion, the relativity of the senses, etc., are so many names given to objective laws concerning the structures of these forms. These laws teach us nothing about appearances, but they concern synthetic structures. I intervene here only to the extent that my upsurge into the world gives birth to this putting into relation of objects with each other. As such they are revealed as forms. Scientific objectivity consists in considering the structures separately by isolating them from the whole; hence they appear with other characteristics. But in no case do we get out of an existing world. In the same way we might show that what is called the "threshold of sensation" or the specificity of the senses is referred back to pure determinations of objects as such.

Yet some have claimed that this objective relation of the stimulant to the sense organ is itself surpassed toward a relation of the objective (stimulant-sense organ) to the subjective (pure sensation) and that this subjective is defined by the action exercised on us by the stimulant through the intermediary of the sense organ. The sense organ appears to us to be affected by the stimulant; the protoplasmic and physical-chemical modifications which appear in the sense organ are not actually produced by that organ; they come

to it from the outside. At least we assert this in order to remain faithful to the principle of inertia which constitutes all nature as exteriority. Therefore when we establish a correlation between the objective system (stimulant-sensory organ) which we presently perceive, and the subjective system which for us is the ensemble of the internal properties of the other-object, then we are compelled to admit that the new modality which has just appeared in this subjectivity in connection with the stimulation of the sense is also produced by something other than itself. If it were produced spontaneously, in fact, it would immediately be cut off from all connection with the organ stimulated, or if you prefer, the relation which could be established between them would be anything whatsoever. Therefore we shall conceive of an objective unity corresponding to even the tiniest and shortest of perceptible stimulations, and we shall call it sensation. We shall endow this unity with inertia; that is, it will be pure exteriority since, conceived in terms of the "this," it will participate in the exteriority of the in-itself. This exteriority which is projected into the heart of the sensation touches it almost in its very existence; its reason for being and the occasion of its existence are outside of it. It is therefore an exteriority to itself. At the same time its *raison d'être* does not reside in any "internal" fact of the same nature as it but in a real object (the stimulant) and in the change which affects another real object (the sense organ). Nevertheless as it remains inconceivable that a certain being existing on a certain level of being and incapable of being supported in being by itself alone can be determined to exist by an existent standing on a plane of being which is radically distinct, I must in order to support the sensation and in order to furnish it with being, conceive of an environment which is homogeneous with it and constituted likewise in exteriority. This environment I call *mind* or sometimes even *consciousness*. But I conceive of this consciousness as an Other's consciousness—that is, as an object. Nonetheless as the relations which I wish to establish between the sense organ and the sensation must be universal, I posit that the consciousness thus conceived must be also my consciousness, not for the other but in itself. Thus I have determined a sort of internal space in which certain figures called sensations are formed on the occasion of external stimulations. Since this space is pure passivity, I declare that it suffers its sensations. But I do not thereby mean only that it is the internal environment which serves as matrix for them. I am inspired at present with a biological vision of the world which I borrow for my objective conception of the sensory organ considered, and I claim that this internal space lives its sensation. Thus life is a magical connection which I establish between a passive environment and a passive mode of this environment. The mind does not produce its own sensations and hence they remain exterior to it; but on the other hand, it appropriates them to itself by living them. The unity of the "lived" and the "living" is no longer indeed a spatial juxtaposition nor

a relation of content to container; it is a magical inherence. The mind is its own sensations while remaining distinct from them. Thus sensation becomes a particular type of object—inert, passive, and simply lived. Behold us now obliged to bestow on it absolute subjectivity. But the word “subjectivity” must be correctly understood. It does not mean here the belonging to a subject; that is, to a selfness which spontaneously motivates itself. The subjectivity of the psychologist is of an entirely different sort; on the contrary, it manifests inertia and the absence of all transcendence. That is subjective which can not get out of itself. And precisely to the extent that sensation, since it is pure exteriority, can be only an impression in the mind, precisely to the extent that it is only itself, only this figure which is formed by an eddy in psychic space, it is not transcendence; it is purely and simply that which is suffered, the simple determination of our receptivity. It is subjectivity because it is neither *presentative* nor *representative*. The subjective quality of the Other-as-object is purely and simply a closed box. Sensation is inside the box.

Such is the notion of *sensation*. We can see its absurdity. First of all, it is pure fiction. It does not correspond to anything which I experience in myself or with regard to the Other. We have apprehended only the objective universe; all our personal determinations suppose the world and arise as relations to the world. Sensation supposes that man is already in the world since he is provided with sense organs, and it appears in him as the pure cessation of his relations with the world. At the same time this pure “subjectivity” is given as the necessary basis on which all these transcendent relations which its appearance has just caused to disappear will have to be reconstructed. Thus we meet with these three moments of thought:

(1) In order to establish sensation we must proceed on the basis of a certain realism; thus we take as valid our perception of the Other, the Other's senses, and inductive instruments.

(2) But on the level of sensation all this realism disappears; sensation, a modification which one suffers, gives us information only about ourselves; it belongs with the “lived.”

(3) Nevertheless it is sensation which I give as the basis of my knowledge of the external world. This basis could not be the foundation of a *real* contact with things; it does not allow us to conceive of an intentional structure of the mind.

We are to use the term *objectivity* not for an immediate connection with being but for certain combinations of sensations which will present more permanence or more regularity or which will accord better with the ensemble of our representations. In particular it is thus that we shall have to define our perception of the Other, the Other's sense organs, and inductive instruments. We are dealing with subjective formations of a particular coherence—that is all. On this level there can be no question of explaining my

sensation by the sense organ as I perceive it in the Other or in myself; quite the contrary, it is the sense organ which I explain as a certain association of my sensations. We can see the inevitable circle. My perception of the Other's senses serves me as a foundation for an explanation of sensations and in particular of *my* sensations, but reciprocally my sensations thus conceived constitute the *only* reality of my perception of the Other's senses. In this circle the same object—the Other's sense organ—maintains neither the same nature nor the same truth throughout each of its appearances. It is at first *reality*, and then because it is reality it founds a doctrine which contradicts it. In *appearance* the structure of the classical theory of sensation is exactly that of the Cynic argument of the Liar in that it is precisely because the Cretan tells the truth that he is found to be lying. But in addition, as we have just seen, a sensation is pure subjectivity. How are we supposed to construct an object out of subjectivity? No synthetic grouping can confer an objective quality on what is on principle of the nature of what is lived. If there is to be perception of objects in the world, it is necessary that from the time of our very upsurge we should be in the presence of the world and of objects. Sensation, a hybrid notion between the subjective and the objective, conceived from the standpoint of the object and applied subsequently to the subject, a bastard existence concerning which we can not say whether it exists in fact or in theory—sensation is a pure daydream of the psychologist. It must be deliberately rejected by any serious theory concerning the relations between consciousness and the world.

But if sensation is only a word, what becomes of the senses? No doubt one will recognize that we never in ourselves encounter that phantom and strictly subjective impression which is sensation. One will admit that I apprehend only the *green* of this notebook, of this foliage and never the sensation of green nor even the “quasi-green” which Husserl posits as the hyletic material which the intention animates into green-as-object. One will declare that he is easily convinced of the fact that on the supposition that the phenomenological reduction is possible—which remains to be proved—it will put us face to face with objects put within brackets as the pure correlates of positional acts but not of impressional residues. Nonetheless it is still true that the senses remain. I *see* the green, *touch* this cold, polished marble. An accident can deprive me of a whole sense; I can lose my sight, become deaf, etc. What then is a sense which does not give us sensation?

The answer is easy. Let us establish first that *senses* are everywhere and yet everywhere inapprehensible. This inkwell on the table is given to me immediately in the form of a *thing*, and yet it is given to me *by sight*. This means that its presence is a visible presence and that I am conscious that it is present to me as visible—that is, I am conscious (of) seeing it. But at the same time that sight is knowledge of the inkwell, sight slips away from all knowledge;

there is no knowledge of sight. Even reflection will not give us this knowledge. My reflective consciousness will give to me indeed a knowledge of my reflected-on consciousness of the inkwell but not that of a sensory activity. It is in this sense that we must take the famous statement of Auguste Comte: "The eye can not see itself." It would be admissible, indeed, that another organic structure, a contingent arrangement of our visual apparatus would enable a third eye to see our two eyes while they were seeing. Can I not see and touch my hand while it is touching? But then I shall be assuming the point of view of the Other with regard to my senses. I should be seeing eyes-as-objects; I can not see the eye seeing; I can not touch my hand as it is touching. Thus any sense in so far as it is-for-me is an inapprehensible; it is not the infinite collection of my sensations since I never encounter anything but objects in the world. On the other hand if I assume a reflective point of view on my consciousness, I shall encounter my consciousness of this or that thing-in-the-world, not my visual or tactile sense; finally if I can see or touch my sense organs, I have the revelation of pure objects in the world, not of a revealing or constructive activity. Nevertheless the senses are there. There is sight, touch, hearing.

On the other hand, if I consider the system of seen objects which appear to me, I establish that they are not presented to me in just any order; they are oriented. Therefore since a sense can not be defined either by an apprehensible act or by a succession of lived states, it remains for us to attempt to define it by its objects. If sight is not the sum of visual sensations, can it not be the system of seen objects? In this case it is necessary to return to that idea of orientation which we indicated earlier and to attempt to grasp its significance.

In the first place let us note that orientation is a constitutive structure of the thing. The object appears on the ground of the world and manifests itself in a relation of exteriority with other "theses" which have just appeared. Thus its revelation implies the complementary constitution of an undifferentiated ground which is the total perceptive field or the world. The formal structure of this relation of the figure to the ground is therefore necessary. In a word, the existence of a visual or tactile or auditory field is a necessity; silence, for example, is the resonant field of undifferentiated noises against which the particular sound we pay attention to stands out. But the material connection of a particular "this" to the ground is both chosen and given. It is chosen in so far as the upsurge of the for-itself is an explicit and internal negation of a particular "this" on the ground of the world: I look at the cup or the inkwell. It is given in the sense that my choice operates in terms of an original distribution of the theses which manifests the very facticity of my upsurge. It is necessary that the book appear to me on the right or on the left side of the table. But it is contingent that the book appears to me specifically on the left, and finally I am free to look at the book on the table or at the table supporting the book. It is

this contingency between the necessity and the freedom of my choice that we call sense. It means that an object must always appear to me all at once—it is the cube, the inkwell, the cup which I see—but that this appearance always takes place in a particular perspective which expresses its relations to the ground of the world and to other theses. It is always the note of the violin which I hear. But it is necessary that I hear it through a door or by the open window or in a concert hall. Otherwise the object would no longer be in the midst of the world and would no longer be manifested to an existent-rising-up-in-the-world.

On the other hand while it is very true that all the theses can not appear at once on the ground of the world and that the appearance of certain among them results in the fusion of certain others with the ground, while it is true that each this can manifest itself only in one way at a time although there exists for it an infinity of ways of appearing, still these rules of appearance should not be considered as subjective and psychological. They are strictly objective and derive from the nature of things. If the inkwell hides a portion of the table from me, this does not stem from the nature of my senses but from the nature of the inkwell and of light. If the object gets smaller when moving away, we must not explain this by some kind of illusion in the observer but by the strictly external laws of perspective. Thus by these objective laws a strictly objective center of reference is defined.

For example, in a perspective scheme the eye is the point toward which all the objective lines converge. Thus the perceptive field refers to a center objectively defined by that reference and located in the very field which is oriented around it. Only we do not see this center as the structure of the perceptive field considered; we are the center. Thus the order of the objects in the world perpetually refers to us the image of an object which on principle can not be an object for us since it is what we have to be. The structure of the world demands that we can not see without being visible. The intra-mundane references can be made only to objects in the world, and the seen world perpetually defines a visible object to which its perspectives and its arrangements refer. This object appears in the midst of the world and at the same time as the world. It is always given as an addition to some grouping of objects since it is defined by the orientation of these objects; without it there would be no orientation since all orientations would be equivalent. It is the contingent upsurge of one orientation among the infinite possibilities of orienting the world; it is this orientation raised to the absolute. But on this level this object exists for us only in the capacity of an abstract indication; it is what everything indicates to me and what on principle I can not apprehend since it is what I am. In fact what I am can not on principle be an object for me inasmuch as I am it. The object which the things of the world indicate and which they include in their radius is for itself and on principle a non-object. But the upsurge of my being, by unfolding distances in terms of a center, by the

very act of this unfolding determines an object which is itself in so far as it causes itself to be indicated by the world; and I could have no intuition of it as object because I am it, I who am presence to myself as the being which is its own nothingness. Thus my being-in-the-world, by the sole fact that it *realizes* a world, causes itself to be indicated to itself as a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world by the world which it realizes. The case could not be otherwise, for my being has no other way of entering into contact with the world except to be in the world. It would be impossible for me to realize a world in which I was not and which would be for me a pure object of a surveying contemplation. But on the contrary it is necessary that I lose myself in the world in order for the world to exist and for me to be able to transcend it. Thus to say that I have entered into the world, "come to the world," or that there is a world, or that I have a body is one and the same thing. In this sense my body is everywhere-in the world; it is over there in the fact that the lamp-post hides the bush which grows along the path, as well in the fact that the roof up there is above the windows of the sixth floor or in the fact that a passing car swerves from right to left behind the truck or that the woman who is crossing the street seems smaller than the man who is sitting on the sidewalk in front of the café. My body is co-extensive with the world, spread across all things, and at the same time it is condensed into this single point which all things indicate and which I am without being able to know it. This explanation should allow us to understand the meaning of the senses.

A sense is not given *before* sensible objects. For is it not capable indeed of appearing as an object to the Other? Neither is it given *after* sensible objects; for in that case it would be necessary to suppose a world of incommunicable images, simple copies of reality the mechanism of whose appearance was inconceivable. The senses are contemporaneous with objects; they are things "in person" as they are revealed to us in perspective. They represent simply an objective rule of this revelation. Thus sight does not produce visual sensations; neither is it affected by light rays. It is the collection of all visible objects in so far as their objective and reciprocal relations all refer to certain chosen sizes—submitted to all at once—as measures, and to a certain center of perspective. From this point of view the senses must in no way be identified with subjectivity. In fact all variations which can be registered in a perceptive field are objective variations. In particular, the fact that one can cut off vision by "closing the eyelids" is an external fact which does not refer to the subjectivity of the apperception. The eyelid, in fact, is merely one object perceived among other objects, an object which hides other objects from me as the result of its objective relation with them. No longer to see the objects in my room because I have closed my eyes is to see the curtain of my eyelids. In the same way if I put my gloves on the tablecloth, then no longer to see a particular design in the cloth is precisely to see the gloves. Similarly the accidents which affect a sense

belong to the province of objects. "I see yellow" because I have jaundice or because I am wearing yellow glasses. In each case the reason for the phenomenon is not found in a subjective modification of the sense nor even in an organic change but in an objective relation between objects in the world; in each case I see "through" something, and the truth of my vision is objective. Finally if in one way or another the center of visual reference is destroyed (since destruction can come only from the development of the world according to its own laws—i.e., expressing in a certain way my facticity), visible objects are not by the same stroke annihilated. They continue to exist for me, but they exist without any center of reference, as a visible totality without the appearance of any particular this; that is, they exist in the absolute reciprocity of their relations. Thus it is the upsurge of the for-itself in the world which by the same stroke causes the world to exist as the totality of things and causes senses to exist as the objective mode in which the qualities of things are presented. What is fundamental is my relation to the world, and this relation at once defines the world and the senses according to the point of view which is adopted. Blindness, Daltonism, myopia originally represent the way in which there is a world for me; that is, they define my visual sense in so far as this is the facticity of my upsurge. This is why I can know and objectively define my senses but only *emptily*, in terms of the world; all that is necessary is that my rational and universalizing thought should prolong in the abstract the indications which things give to myself about my sense and that it reconstitute the sense in terms of these signs as the historian reconstitutes an historical personality according to the evidence indicating it. But in this case I have reconstructed the world on the ground of pure rationality by abstracting myself from the world through thought. I fly over the world without attaching myself to it; I place myself in an attitude of absolute objectivity, and each sense becomes one object among objects, a center of relative reference and one which itself supposes co-ordinates. But thereby I establish in thought the absolute equivalence of all centers of reference. I destroy the world's quality of being a world—without my even being aware of it. Thus the world by perpetually indicating the senses which I am and by inviting me to reconstitute it impels me to eliminate the personal equation which I am by reinstating in the world the center of mundane reference in relation to which the world is arranged. But by the same stroke I escape—through abstract thought—from the senses which I am; that is, I cut my bonds with the world. I place myself in a state of simple surveying, and the world disappears in the absolute equivalence of its infinite possible relations. The senses indeed are our being-in-the-world in so far as we have to be it in the form of being-in-the-midst-of-the-world.

These observations can be generalized; they can be applied *in toto* to my body inasmuch as it is the total center of reference which things indicate. In

particular our body is not only what has long been called "the seat of the five senses;" it is also the instrument and the end of our actions. It is impossible to distinguish "sensation" from "action" even if we use the terms of classical psychology: this is what we had in mind when we made the observation that reality is presented to us neither as a *thing* nor as an *instrument* but as an *instrumental-thing*. This is why for our study of the body as a center of action we shall be able to take as a guiding thread the reasoning which has served us to reveal the true nature of the senses.

As soon as we formulate the problem of action, we risk falling into a confusion with grave consequences. When I take this pen and plunge it into the inkwell I am acting. But if I look at Pierre who at that same instant is drawing up a chair to the table, I establish also that he is acting. Thus there is here a very distinct risk of committing the mistake which we denounced a *propos* of the senses; that is, of interpreting my action as it is-*for-me* in terms of the Other's action. This is because the only action which I can *know* at the same time that it is taking place is the action of Pierre. I see his gesture and at the same time I determine his goal: he is drawing a chair up to the table in order to be able to sit down at the table and to write the letter which he told me he wished to write. Thus I can apprehend all the intermediate positions of the chair and of the body which moves it as instrumental organizations; they are ways to achieve his purpose. The Other's body appears to me here as one instrument in the midst of other instruments, not only as a tool to make tools but also as a tool to *handle tools*, in a word as a tool-machine. If I interpret the role of my body in relation to my action, in the light of the knowledge I have gained of the Other's body, I shall then consider myself as disposing of a certain instrument which I can dispose of at my whim and which in turn will dispose of other instruments all functioning toward a certain end which I pursue.

Thus we are brought back to the classical distinction between the soul and the body; the soul *utilizes* the tool which is the body. The parallel with the theory of sensation is perfect. We have seen indeed that the latter started from the knowledge of the Other's senses and that subsequently it endowed me with senses exactly similar to the sensible organs which I perceived in the Other. We have seen also the difficulty which such a theory immediately encountered: this is because I then perceive the world and particularly the Other's sense organs through my own sense, a distorting organ, a refracting environment which can give me information only on its own affections. Thus the consequences of the theory ruin the objectivity of the very principle which has served to establish them. The theory of action, since it has an analogous structure, encounters analogous difficulties. In fact if I start with the Other's body, I apprehend it as an instrument and in so far as I myself make use of it as an instrument. I can utilize it in order to arrive at ends which I

could not attain alone; I *command* its acts through orders or supplications; I can also *provoke* its act by my own acts. At the same time I must take precautions with respect to a tool which is particularly delicate and dangerous to handle. In relation to it I stand in the complex attitude of the worker with respect to his tool-machine when simultaneously he directs its movements and avoids being caught by it. Once again in order to utilize the Other's body to my best interests I need an instrument which is my own body just as in order to perceive the Other's sense organs I need other sense organs which are my own. Therefore if I conceive of my body in the image of the Other's body, it is an instrument in the world which I must handle delicately and which is like a key to the handling of other tools. But my relations with this privileged instrument can themselves be only technical, and I need an instrument in order to handle this instrument—which refers us to infinity. Thus if I conceive of my sense organs as like those of the Other, they require a sense organ in order to perceive them; and if I apprehend my body as an instrument like the Other's body, it demands an instrument to manage it; and if we refuse to conceive of this recourse to infinity, then we must of necessity admit that paradox of a physical instrument *handled* by a soul, which, as we know, causes us to fall into inextricable aporias.

Let us see whether we can attempt here as with the problem of sensations to restore to the body its nature-for-us. Objects are revealed to us at the heart of a complex of instrumentality in which they occupy a determined *place*. This place is not defined by pure spatial co-ordinates but in relation to axes of practical reference. "The glass is on the coffee table;" this means that we must be careful not to upset the glass if we move the table. The package of tobacco is on the mantle piece; this means that we must clear a distance of three yards if we want to go from the pipe to the tobacco while avoiding certain obstacles—end tables, foot-stools, etc.—which are placed between the mantle piece and the table. In this sense perception is in no way to be distinguished from the practical organization of existents into a *world*. Each instrument refers to other instruments, to those which are its *keys* and to those for which it is the *key*. But these references could not be grasped by a purely contemplative consciousness. For such a consciousness the hammer would not refer to the nails but would be alongside them; furthermore the expression "alongside" loses all meaning if it does not outline a path which goes from the hammer to the nail and which must be cleared. The space which is originally revealed to me is *hodological* space; it is furrowed with paths and highways; it is instrumental and it is the *location* of tools. Thus the world from the moment of the upsurge of my *For-itself* is revealed as the indication of acts to be performed; these acts refer to other acts, and those to others, and so on. It is to be noted however that if from this point of view perception and action are indistinguishable, action is nevertheless presented as a future efficacy

which surpasses and transcends the pure and simple perceived. Since the perceived is that to which my For-itself is presence, it is revealed to me as co-presence; it is immediate contact, present adherence, it brushes lightly over me. But as such it is offered without my being able at present to grasp it. The thing perceived is full of promises; it touches me lightly in passing, and each of the properties which it promises to reveal to me, each surrender silently consented to, each meaningful reference to other objects engages the future.

Thus I am in the presence of things which are only promises beyond an ineffable presence which I can not possess and which is the pure "being-there" of things; that is, the "mine," my facticity, my body. The cup is there on the saucer; it is presently given to me with its bottom side which is there, which everything indicates but which I do not see. And if I wish to see the bottom side—i.e., to make it explicit, to make it "appear-on-the-bottom-of-the-cup"—it is necessary for me to grasp the cup by the handle and turn it upside down. The bottom of the cup is at the end of my projects, and it amounts to the same thing whether I say that the other structures of the cup indicate it as an indispensable element of the cup or that they indicate it to me as the action which will best appropriate the cup for me with its meaning. Thus the world as the correlate of the possibilities which I am appears from the moment of my upsurge as the enormous skeletal outline of all my possible actions. Perception is naturally surpassed toward action; better yet, it can be revealed only in and through projects of action. The world is revealed as an "always future hollow," for we are always future to ourselves.¹

Yet it must be noted that this future of the world which is thus revealed to us is strictly objective. The instrumental-things indicate other instruments or objective ways of making use of them: the nail is "to be pounded in" this way or that, the hammer is "to be held by the handle," the cup is "to be picked up by its handle," etc. All these properties of things are immediately revealed, and the Latin gerundives perfectly translate them. Of course they are correlates of non-thetic projects which we are, but they are revealed only as structures of the world: potentialities, absences, instrumentalities. Thus the world appears to me as objectively articulated; it never refers to a creative subjectivity but to an infinity of instrumental complexes.

Nevertheless while each instrument refers to another instrument and this to another, all end up by indicating an instrument which stands as the key for all. This center of reference is necessary, for otherwise all the instrumentalities would become equivalent and the world would vanish due to the total undifferentiation of gerundives. Carthage is "delenda" for the Romans but "servanda" for the Carthaginians. Without relation to its centers Carthage is no

¹ "Creux toujours futur." There is a suggestion here of a mould to be filled but, of course, with no idea of a determined future. Tr.

longer anything; it falls into the indifference of the in-itself, for the two gerundives annihilate each other. Nevertheless we must of necessity see that the key is never given to me but only indicated by a sort of gap.² What I objectively apprehend in action is a world of instruments which encroach on one another, and each of them as it is apprehended in the very act by which I adapt myself to it and surpass it, refers to another instrument which must enable me to utilize this one. In this sense the nail refers to the hammer and the hammer refers to the hand and the arm which utilizes it. But it is only to the extent that I cause the nails to be pounded in by the Other that the hand and the arm become in turn instruments which I utilize and which I surpass toward their potentiality. In this case the Other's hand refers me to the instrument which will allow me to utilize this hand (to threats-promises—salary, etc.) The first term is present everywhere but it is only indicated. I do not apprehend my hand in the act of writing but only the pen which is writing; this means that I use my pen in order to form letters but not my hand in order to hold the pen. I am not in relation to my hand in the same utilizing attitude as I am in relation to the pen; I am my hand. That is, my hand is the arresting of references and their ultimate end. The hand is only the utilization of the pen. In this sense the hand is at once the unknowable and non-utilizable term which the last instrument of the series indicates ("book to be read—characters to be formed on the paper—pen") and at the same time the orientation of the entire series (the printed book itself refers back to the hand). But I can apprehend it—at least in so far as it is acting—only as the perpetual, evanescent reference of the whole series. Thus in a duel with swords or with quarter-staffs, it is the quarter-staff which I watch with my eyes and which I handle. In the act of writing it is the point of the pen which I look at in synthetic combination with the line or the square marked on the sheet of paper. But my hand has vanished; it is lost in the complex system of instrumentality in order that this system may exist. It is simply the meaning and the orientation of the system.

Thus, it seems, we find ourselves before a double and contradictory necessity: since every instrument is utilizable and even apprehensible only by means of another instrument, the universe is an indefinite, objective reference from tool to tool. In this sense the structure of the world implies that we can insert ourselves into the field of instrumentality only by being ourselves an instrument, that we can not act without being acted on. Yet on the other hand, an instrumental complex can be revealed only by the determination of a cardinal meaning of this complex, and this determination is itself practical and active—to pound a nail, to sow seed. In this case the very existence of the complex immediately refers to a center. Thus this center is at once a tool

² Indiquée en creux; literally, "indicated in a hollow (or mould)." Tr.

objectively defined by the instrumental field which refers to it and at the same time the tool which we can not utilize since we should thus be referred to infinity. We do not use this instrument, for we *are* it. It is given to us in no other way than by the instrumental order of the world, by hodological space, by the univocal or reciprocal relations of machines, but it can not be given to my action. I do not have to adapt myself to it nor to adapt another tool to it, but it is my very adaptation to tools, (the adaptation which I am.

This is why if we reject the analogical reconstruction of my body according to the body of the Other, there remain two ways of apprehending the body: First, it is known and objectively defined in terms of the world but *empty*; for this view it is enough that rationalizing thought reconstitute the instrument which I am from the standpoint of the indications which are given by the instruments which I utilize. In this case, however, the fundamental tool becomes a relative center of reference which itself supposes other tools to utilize it. By the same stroke the instrumentality of the world disappears, for in order to be revealed it needs a reference to an absolute center of instrumentality; the world of action becomes the world *acted upon* of classical science; consciousness surveys a universe of exteriority and can no longer in any way enter into the world. Secondly the body is given concretely and fully as the very arrangement of things in so far as the For-itself surpasses it towards a new arrangement. In this case the body is present in every action although invisible, for the act reveals the hammer and the nails, the brake and the change of speed, not the foot which brakes or the hand which hammers. The body is lived and not known. This explains why the famous "sensation of effort" by which Maine de Biran attempted to reply to Hume's challenge is a psychological myth. We never have any sensation of our effort, but neither do we have peripheral sensations from the muscles, bones, tendons, or skin, which have been suggested to replace the sensation of effort. We perceive the *resistance* of things. What I perceive when I want to lift this glass to my mouth is not my effort but the *heaviness of the glass*—that is, its resistance to entering into an instrumental complex which I have made appear in the world.

Bachelard rightly reproaches phenomenology for not sufficiently taking into account what he calls the "coefficient of adversity" in objects.³ The accusation is just and applies to Heidegger's transcendence as well as to Husserl's intentionality. But we must understand that the instrumentality is primary: it is in relation to an original instrumental complex that things reveal their resistance and their adversity. The bolt is revealed as too big to be screwed into the nut; the pedestal too fragile to support the weight which I want to hold up, the stone too heavy to be lifted up to the top of the wall, etc. Other objects will appear as threatening to an instrumental complex already

³ Bachelard, *L'Eau et les Rêves*, 1942. Editions José Corti.

established—the storm and the hail threatening to the harvest, the phyloxera to the vine, the fire to the house. Thus step by step and across the instrumental complexes already established, their threat will extend to the center of reference which all these instruments indicate, and in turn it will indicate this center through them. In this sense every *means* is simultaneously favorable and adverse but within the limits of the fundamental project realized by the upsurge of the For-itself in the world. Thus my body is indicated originally by instrumental complexes and secondarily by destructive devices. I live my body in danger as regards menacing machines as for manageable instruments. My body is everywhere: the bomb which destroys my house also damages my body in so far as the house was already an indication of my body. This is why my body always extends across the tool which it utilizes: it is at the end of the cane on which I lean and against the earth; it is at the end of the telescope which shows me the stars; it is on the chair, in the whole house; for it is my adaptation to these tools.

Thus at the end of this account sensation and action are rejoined and become one. We have given up the idea of first endowing ourselves with a body in order to study *second* the way in which we apprehend or modify the world through the body. Instead we have laid down as the foundation of the revelation of the body as such our original relation to the world—that is, our very upsurge into the midst of being. Far from the body being first for us and revealing things to us, it is the instrumental-things which in their original appearance indicate our body to us. The body is not a screen between things and ourselves; it manifests only the individuality and the contingency of our original relation to instrumental-things. In this sense we defined the senses and the sense organs in general as our being-in-the-world in so far as we have to be it in the form of being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. Similarly we can define *action* as our being-in-the-world in so far as we have to be it in the form of being-an-instrument-in-the-midst-of-the-world. But if I am in the midst of the world, this is because I have caused the world to-be-there by transcending being toward myself. And if I am an instrument in the world, this is because I have caused instruments in general to-be-there by the projection of myself toward my possibles. It is only in a world that there can be a body, and a primary relation is indispensable in order that this world may exist. In one sense the body is what I immediately am. In another sense I am separated from it by the infinite density of the world; it is given to me by a reflux of the world toward my facticity, and the condition of this reflux of the world toward my facticity is a perpetual surpassing.

We are now able to define our body's *nature-for-us*. The preceding observations have allowed us to conclude that the body is perpetually the *surpassed*. The body as a sensible center of reference is that *beyond* which I am in so far as I am immediately present to the glass or to the table or to the distant tree

which I perceive. Perception, in fact, can be accomplished only at the very place where the object is perceived and *without distance*. But at the same time it unfolds the distances, and that in relation to which the perceived object indicates its distance as an absolute property of its being is the body. Similarly as an instrumental center of instrumental complexes the body can be only the *surpassed*; it is that which I surpass toward a new combination of complexes and which I shall perpetually have to surpass whatever may be the instrumental combination at which I arrive; for every combination from the moment that my surpassing fixes it in its being indicates the body as the center of reference for its own fixed immobility. Thus the body, since it is surpassed, is the Past. It is the immediate presence to the For-itself of "sensible" things in so far as this presence indicates a center of reference and is *already surpassed* either toward the appearance of a new this or toward a new combination of instrumental-things. In each project of the For-itself, in each perception the body is there; it is the immediate Past in so far as it still touches on the Present which flees it. This means that it is at once a *point of view* and a *point of departure*—a point of view, a point of departure which I *am* and which at the same time I surpass toward what I have to be.

This point of view which is perpetually surpassed and which is perpetually reborn at the heart of the surpassing, this point of departure which I do not cease to leave and which is myself remaining behind me—this is the necessity of my contingency. It is doubly necessary. First it is necessary because it is the continual reapprehension of the For-itself by the In-itself and the ontological fact that the For-itself can be only as the being which is not its own foundation. To have a body is to be the foundation of one's own nothingness and not to be the foundation of one's being; I *am* my body to the extent that I *am*; I *am not* my body to the extent that I *am not* what I *am*. It is by my nihilation that I escape it. But I do not thereby make an object of it, for what I *am* is what I perpetually escape. The body is necessary again as the obstacle to be surpassed in order to be in the world; that is, the obstacle which I *am* to myself. In this sense it is not different from the absolute order of the world, this order which I cause to arrive in being by surpassing it toward a being-to-come, toward being-beyond-being. We can clearly grasp the unity of these two necessities: being-for-itself is to surpass the world and to cause there to be a world by surpassing it. But to surpass the world is not to survey it but to be engaged in it in order to emerge from it; it is necessary always that a particular perspective of surpassing be effected. In this sense *finitude* is the necessary condition of the original project of the For-itself. The necessary condition for me to be what I *am not* and to *not-be* what I *am*—beyond a world which I cause to come into being—this condition is that at the heart of the infinite pursuit which I *am* there should be perpetually an inapprehensible given. This given which I *am* without having to be it—except in the

mode of non-being—this I can neither grasp nor know, for it is everywhere recovered and surpassed, utilized for my assumed projects. On the other hand everything indicates it to me, every transcendent outlines it in a sort of hollow by its very transcendence without my ever being able to turn back on that which it indicates since I *am* the being indicated. In particular we must not understand the indicated-given as a pure center of reference of a static order of instrumental-things. On the contrary their dynamic order, whether it depends on my action or not, refers to it according to rules, and thereby the center of reference is defined in its change as in its identity. The case could not be otherwise since it is by denying that I *am* being that I make the world come into being and since it is from the standpoint of my past—i.e., in projecting myself beyond my own being—that I can deny that I *am* this or that particular being. From this point of view the body—i.e., this inapprehensible given—is a necessary condition of my action. In fact if the ends which I pursue could be attained by a purely arbitrary wish, if it were sufficient to hope in order to obtain, and if definite rules did not determine the use of instruments, I could never distinguish within me desire from will, nor dream from act, nor the possible from the real. No project of myself would be possible since it would be enough to conceive of it in order to realize it. Consequently my being-for-myself would be annihilated in the indistinction of present and future. A phenomenology of action would in fact show that the act supposes a break in continuity between the simple conception and the realization—that is, between a universal and abstract thought such as "A carburetor must not be clogged" and a technical and concrete thought directed upon this particular carburetor as it appears to me with its absolute dimensions and its absolute position. The condition of this technical thought, which is not distinguished from the act which it directs, is my finitude, my contingency, finally my facticity.

Now, to be exact, I *am* in fact in so far as I have a past, and this immediate past refers to the primary in-itself on the nihilation of which I arise through birth. Thus the body as facticity is the past as it refers originally to a birth; that is, to the primary nihilation which causes me to arise from the In-itself which I *am* in fact without having to be it. Birth, the past, contingency, the necessity of a point of view, the factual condition for all possible action on the world—such is the body, such it is *for me*. It is therefore in no way a contingent addition to my soul; on the contrary it is a permanent structure of my being and the permanent condition of possibility for my consciousness as consciousness of the world and as a transcendent project toward my future. From this point of view we must recognize both that it is altogether contingent and absurd that I *am* a cripple, the son of a civil servant or of a laborer, irritable and lazy, and that it is nevertheless *necessary* that I be that or something else, French or German or English, etc., a proletarian or bourgeois or aristocrat, etc.,

weak and sickly or vigorous, irritable or of amiable disposition—precisely because I can not fly over the world without the world disappearing. My birth as it conditions the way in which objects are revealed to me (objects of luxury or of basic necessity are more or less accessible, certain social realities appear to me as forbidden, there are barriers and obstacles in my hodological space); my race as it is indicated by the Other's attitude with regard to me (these attitudes are revealed as scornful or admiring, as trusting or distrusting); my class as it is disclosed by the revelation of the social community to which I belong inasmuch as the places which I frequent refer to it; my nationality; my physiological structure as instruments imply it by the very way in which they are revealed as resistant or docile and by their very coefficient of adversity; my character; my past, as everything which I have experienced is indicated as my point of view on the world by the world itself: all this in so far as I surpass it in the synthetic unity of my being-in-the-world is my body as the necessary condition of the existence of a world and as the contingent realization of this condition.

Now at last we can grasp clearly the definition which we gave earlier of the body in its being-for-us: the body is the contingent form which is taken up by the necessity of my contingency. We can never apprehend this contingency as such in so far as our body is for us; for we are a choice, and for us, to be is to choose ourselves. Even this disability from which I suffer I have assumed by the very fact that I live; I surpass it toward my own projects, I make of it the necessary obstacle for my being, and I can not be crippled without choosing myself as crippled. This means that I choose the way in which I constitute my disability (as "unbearable," "humiliating," "to be hidden," "to be revealed to all," "an object of pride," "the justification for my failures," etc.). But this inapprehensible body is precisely the necessity that there be a choice, that I do not exist all at once. In this sense my finitude is the condition of my freedom, for there is no freedom without choice; and in the same way that the body conditions consciousness as pure consciousness of the world, it renders consciousness possible even in its very freedom.

It remains for us to achieve a conception of what the body is for me; for precisely because the body is inapprehensible, it does not belong to the objects in the world—i.e., to those objects which I know and which I utilize. Yet on the other hand since I can be nothing without being the consciousness of what I am, the body must necessarily be in some way given to my consciousness. In one sense, to be sure, the body is what is indicated by all the instruments which I grasp, and I apprehend the body without knowing it in the very indications which I perceive on the instruments. But if we limit ourselves to this observation, we shall not be able to distinguish, for example, between the body and the telescope through which the astronomer looks at the planets. In fact if we define the body as a contingent point of view on the

world, we must recognize that the notion of a point of view supposes a double relation: a relation with the things on which the body is a point of view and a relation with the observer for whom the body is a point of view. When we are dealing with the body-as-a-point-of-view, this second relation is radically different from the first; it is not truly distinct when we are dealing with a point of view in the world (spectacles, a look-out point, a magnifying glass, etc.) which is an objective instrument distinct from the body. A traveler contemplating the landscape from a belvedere sees the belvedere as well as the landscape; he sees the trees between the columns of the belvedere, the roof of the belvedere hides the sky from him, etc. Nevertheless the "distance" between him and the belvedere is by definition less great than that between his eyes and the panorama. The point of view can approach the body to the point of almost being dissolved in it, as we see, for example in the case of glasses, pince-nez, monocles, etc., which become, so to speak, a supplementary sense organ. At its extreme limit—if we conceive of an absolute point of view—the distance between it and the one for whom it is a point of view is annihilated. This means that it would become impossible to withdraw in order to "give oneself plenty of room" and to constitute a new point of view on the point of view. It is precisely this fact, as we have seen, which characterizes the body. It is the instrument which I can not use in the way I use any other instrument, the point of view on which I can no longer take a point of view. This is why on the top of that hill which I call a "good viewpoint," I take a point of view at the very instant when I look at the valley, and this point of view on the point of view is my body. But I can not take a point of view on my body without a reference to infinity. Therefore the body can not be for me transcendent and known; the spontaneous, unreflective consciousness is no longer the consciousness of the body. It would be best to say, using "exist" as a transitive verb—that consciousness exists its body. Thus the relation between the body-as-point-of-view and things is an objective relation, and the relation of consciousness to the body is an existential relation. What do we mean by an existential relation?

First of all, it is evident that consciousness can exist its body only as consciousness. Therefore my body is a conscious structure of my consciousness. But precisely because the body is the point of view on which there can not be a point of view, there is on the level of the unreflective consciousness no consciousness of the body. The body belongs then to the structures of the non-thetic self-consciousness. Yet can we identify it purely and simply with this non-thetic consciousness? That is not possible either, for non-thetic consciousness is self-consciousness as the free project toward a possibility which is its own; that is, in so far as it is the foundation of its own nothingness. Non-positional consciousness is consciousness (of the) body as being that which it surmounts and nihilates by making itself consciousness—i.e., as

being something which consciousness is without having to be it and which it passes over in order to be what it has to be. In short, consciousness (of) the body is lateral and retrospective; the body is the neglected, the "passed by in silence." And yet the body is what this consciousness is; it is not even anything except body. The rest is nothingness and silence.

Consciousness of the body is comparable to the consciousness of a sign. The sign moreover is on the side of the body; it is one of the essential structures of the body. Now the consciousness of a sign exists, for otherwise we should not be able to understand its meaning. But the sign is that which is surpassed toward meaning, that which is neglected for the sake of the meaning, that which is never apprehended for itself, that beyond which the look is perpetually directed. Consciousness (of) the body is a lateral and retrospective consciousness of what consciousness is without having to be it (i.e., of its inapprehensible contingency, of that in terms of which consciousness makes itself a choice) and hence it is a non-thetic consciousness of the manner in which it is affected. Consciousness of the body is often confused with original affectivity. Again it is very important to grasp the meaning of this affectivity; and for this we must make a further distinction. Affectivity as introspection reveals it to us in fact already a constituted affectivity; it is consciousness of the world. All hate is hate of someone; all anger is apprehension of someone as hateful or unjust or faulty; to have sympathy for someone is to "find him sympathetic," etc. In these various examples a transcendent "intention" is directed toward the world and apprehends it as such. Already therefore there is a surpassing, an internal negation; we are on the level of transcendence and choice. But Scheler has effectively demonstrated that this "intention" must be distinguished from pure affective qualities. For example, if I have a "head-ache" I can discover within me an intentional affectivity directed toward my pain so as to "suffer" it, to accept it with resignation, or to reject it, to evaluate it (as unjust, as deserved, as purifying, as humiliating, etc.) so as to escape it. Here it is the very intention which is the affection; it is pure act and already a project, a pure consciousness of something. This cannot be what we should consider consciousness (of) the body.

In reality this intention can not be the whole of affectivity. Since affectivity is a surpassing, it pre-supposes a surpassed. Moreover this is proved by the existence of what Baldwin incorrectly calls "emotional abstracts." Baldwin has indeed established that we can realize affectively within us certain emotions without feeling them concretely. For example, if someone tells me of a particular painful event which has just darkened the life of Pierre, I shall exclaim, "How he must have suffered!" I do not know this suffering and I do not actually feel it. These intermediaries between pure knowledge and true affection Baldwin calls "abstracts." But the mechanism of such an abstraction remains very obscure. Who abstracts? If following M. Laporte's definition we

say that to abstract is to think of structures in isolation which can not exist separately, it is necessary either that we identify emotional abstracts with pure abstract concepts of emotions or else that we recognize that these abstracts can exist as such as real modalities of consciousness. In actuality these so-called "emotional abstracts" are empty intentions, pure projects of emotion. That is, we direct ourselves towards pain and shame, we strain toward them, consciousness transcends itself—but empty. Grief is there, objective and transcendent, but it lacks concrete existence. It would be better to give to these insubstantial significations the name of affective images. Their importance of artistic creation and psychological understanding is undeniable. But the important thing here is the fact that what separates them from real shame, for example, is the absence of the quality of being lived.

There exist therefore pure affective qualities which are surpassed and transcended by affective projects. We shall not make of them as Scheler did, some kind of "hyle" borne upon the flux of consciousness. For us it is simply a matter of the way in which consciousness exists its contingency; it is the very texture of consciousness in so far as it surpasses this texture toward its own possibilities; it is the manner in which consciousness exists spontaneously and in the non-thetic mode, that which it constitutes thetically but implicitly as a point of view on the world. This can be pure grief, but it can also be a mood, an affective, non-thetic tonality, the pure agreeable, the pure disagreeable. In a general way, it is what is called *coenesthesia*. This "coenesthesia" rarely appears without being surpassed toward the world by a transcendent project on the part of the For-itself; as such it can only with difficulty be studied in isolation. Yet there exist some privileged experiences in which it can be apprehended in its purity, in particular what we call "physical" pain. Therefore we shall now examine this experience in order to fix conceptually the structures of the consciousness (of) the body.

My eyes are hurting but I should finish reading a philosophical work this evening. I am reading. The object of my consciousness is the book and across the book the truths which it points out. The body is in no way apprehended for itself; it is a point of view and a point of departure. The words slip by one after the other before me; I make them slip by; those at the bottom of the page which I have not yet read still belong to a relative ground or "the-page-as-ground" which is organized upon the "book-as-ground" and on the absolute ground or ground of the world. But from the ground of their indistinction they are calling to me; they already possess the character of a friable totality; they are given as "to be made to slip by under my sight." In all this the body is given only implicitly; the movement of my eyes belongs only to an observer's glance. For myself I apprehend thetically only this fixed upsurge of the words one after the other. Yet the succession of the words in objective time is given and known through my own temporalization. Their motionless

movement is given across a "movement" of my consciousness; and this "movement" of consciousness, a pure metaphor which designates a temporal progression, is for me exactly the movement of my eyes. It is impossible for me to distinguish the movement of my eyes from the synthetic progression of my states of consciousness without resorting to the point of view of the Other. Yet at the very moment that I am reading my eyes hurt. Let us note first that this pain can itself be indicated by objects of the world; i.e., by the book which I read. It is with more difficulty that the words are detached from the undifferentiated ground which they constitute; they may tremble, quiver; their meaning may be derived only with effort, the sentences which I have just read twice, three times may be given as "not understood," as "to be re-read." But these same indications can be lacking—for example, in the case when my reading "absorbs me" and when I "forget" my pain (which does not mean that it has disappeared since if I happen to gain knowledge of it in a later *reflective* act, it will be given as having always been there). In any case this is not what interests us; we are looking for the way in which consciousness exists its pain. But at the start someone will ask, how is the pain given as pain in the eyes? Is there not there an intentional reference to a transcendent object, to my body precisely in so far as it exists outside in the world? It is undeniable that pain contains information about itself; it is impossible to confuse pain in the eyes with pain in the finger or the stomach. Nevertheless pain is totally void of intentionality. It must be understood that if pain is given as pain "in the eyes," there is no mysterious "local sign" there nor any knowledge either. Pain is precisely the eyes in so far as consciousness "exists them." As such it is distinguished from other pain by its very existence, not by a criterion nor by anything added on. To be sure, the expression pain in the eyes supposes a whole constitutive work which we shall have to describe. But at this stage in the argument, there is not as yet any reason to consider this, for it is not made. Pain is not considered from a reflective point of view; it is not referred back to a body-for-others. It is the-eyes-as-pain or vision-as-pain; it is not distinguished from my way of apprehending transcendent words. We ourselves have called it pain in the eyes for the sake of clarity; but it is not named in consciousness, for it is not *known*. Pain in the eyes is distinguished from other possible pains inexpressibly and by its very being.

This pain however does not exist anywhere among the actual objects of the universe. It is not to the right or to the left of the book nor among the truths which are revealed through the book nor in my body-as-object (the body which the other sees and which I can always partially touch and partially see), nor in my body-as-a-point-of-view as the latter is implicitly indicated by the world. Neither must we say that the pain is an "overprint" or that it is like a harmonic "superimposed" on the things which I see. Those are images which have no meaning. Pain then is not in space. But neither does it belong

to objective time; it temporalizes itself, and it is in and through this temporalization that the time of the world can appear. What then is this pain? Simply the translucent matter of consciousness, its *being-there*, its attachment to the world, in short the peculiar contingency of the act of reading. The pain exists beyond all attention and all knowledge since it slips into each act of attention and of knowledge, since it is this very act in so far as the act is without being the foundation of its being.

Yet even on this plane of pure being, pain as a contingent attachment to the world can be existed non-thetically by consciousness only if it is surpassed. Pain-consciousness is an internal negation of the world; but at the same time it exists its pain—i.e., itself—as a wrenching away from self. Pure pain as the simple "lived" can not be reached; it belongs to the category of indefinables and indescribables which are what they are. But pain-consciousness is a project toward a further consciousness which would be empty of all pain; that is, to a consciousness whose contexture, whose being-there would be not painful. But this lateral escape, this wrenching away from self which characterizes pain-consciousness does not constitute pain as a psychic object. It is a non-thetic project of the For-itself; we apprehend it only through the world. For example, it is given in the way in which the book appears as "having to be read in a hurried, jerky rhythm" where the words press against each other in an infernal, fixed round, where the whole universe is pierced with *anxiety*. In addition—and this is the characteristic of corporal existence—the inexpressible which one wishes to flee reappears at the heart of this very wrenching away; it is this which is going to constitute the consciousnesses which surpass it; it is the very contingency and the being of the flight which wishes to flee it. Nowhere else shall we come closer to touching that nihilation of the In-itself by the For-itself and that re-apprehension of the For-itself by the In-itself which nourishes the very nihilation.

Granted, someone may say. But you are weighting the scales by choosing a case where pain is specifically pain in a functioning organ, pain in the eye while it is looking, in the hand while it is grasping. But I can suffer from a wound in my finger while I am reading. In this case it would be difficult to maintain that my pain is the very contingency of my "act of reading."

Let us note first that no matter how absorbed I am in my reading, I do not for all that cease making the world come into being. Better yet, my reading is an act which implies in its very nature the existence of the world as a necessary ground. This certainly does not mean that I have a weaker consciousness of the world but that I am conscious of it as a *ground*. I do not lose sight of the colors, the movements which surround me, I do not cease to hear sounds; they are simply lost in the undifferentiated totality which serves as the background for my reading. Correlatively my body does not cease to be indicated by the world as the total point of view on mundane totality, but it is the

world as ground which indicates it. Thus my body does not cease to be existed in totality as it is the total contingency of my consciousness. It is what the totality of the world as ground indicates, and at the same time it is the totality which I exist affectively in connection with the objective apprehension of the world. But to the extent that a particular this detaches itself as figure on the ground of the world, it correlatively points toward a functional specification of the corporal totality, and by the same stroke my consciousness exists a corporal form which arises on the body-as-totality which it exists. The book is read, and to the extent that I exist and that I surpass the contingency of vision—or if you prefer of reading—the eyes appear as figure on the ground of the corporal totality. On this plane of existence the eyes certainly are not the sensory organ seen by the Other but rather the very contexture of my consciousness of seeing inasmuch as this consciousness is a structure of my larger consciousness of the world. To be conscious is always to be conscious of the world, and the world and body are always present to my consciousness although in different ways. But this total consciousness of the world is consciousness of the world as ground for a particular this; thus just as consciousness specifies itself in its very act of nihilation, there is the presence of a particular structure of the body on the total ground of corporeality. When I am in the process of reading, I do not cease to be a body seated in a particular arm chair three yards from the window under given conditions of pressure and temperature. And I do not cease to exist this pain in my left index finger any more than I cease to exist my body in general. However I exist the pain in such a way that it disappears in the ground of corporeality as a structure subordinated to the corporal totality. The pain is neither absent nor unconscious; it simply forms a part of that distance-less existence of positional consciousness for itself. If a little later I turn the pages of the book, the pain in my finger, without becoming thereby an object of knowledge, will pass to the rank of existed contingency as a figure on a new organization of my body as the total ground of contingency. Moreover these statements are in agreement with the empirical observation that this is because it is easier when reading to “be distracted” from a pain in the finger or in the lower back than from pain in the eyes. For pain in the eyes is *precisely my reading*, and the words which I read refer me to it every instant, whereas the pain in my finger or back is the apprehension of the world as ground and hence is itself lost as a partial structure in the body as the fundamental apprehension of the ground of the world.

But now suppose that I suddenly cease to read and am at present absorbed in apprehending my pain. This means that I direct a reflective consciousness on my present consciousness or consciousness-as-vision. Thus the actual texture of my consciousness reflected-on—in particular my pain—is apprehended and posited by my reflective consciousness. We must recall here what we said

concerning reflection: it is a total grasp without a point of view; it is a knowledge which overflows itself and which tends to be objectivized, to project the known at a distance so as to be able to contemplate it and to think it. The first movement of reflection is therefore to transcend the pure quality of consciousness in pain toward a pain-as-object. Thus if we restrict ourselves to what we have called an accessory reflection, reflection tends to make of pain something psychic.

The psychic object apprehended through pain is *illness*.⁴ This object has all the characteristics of pain, but it is transcendent and passive. It is a reality which has its own time, not the time of the external universe nor that of consciousness, but psychic time. The psychic object can then support evaluations and various determinations. As such it is distinct even from consciousness and appears through it; it remains permanent while consciousness develops, and it is this very permanence which is the condition of the opacity and the passivity of illness. But on the other hand, this illness in so far as it is apprehended through consciousness has all the characteristics of unity, interiority, and spontaneity which consciousness possesses—but in degraded form. This degradation confers psychic individuality upon it. That is, first of all, the illness has an absolute cohesion without parts. In addition it has its own duration since it is outside consciousness and possesses a past and a future. But this duration which is only the projection of the original temporalization, is a multiplicity of interpenetration. The illness is “penetrating,” “caressing,” etc. And these characteristics aim only at rendering the way in which this illness is outlined in duration; they are melodic qualities. A pain which is given in twinges followed by lulls is not apprehended by reflection as the pure alteration of painful and non-painful consciousnesses. For organizing reflection the brief respites are a part of the illness just as silences are a part of a melody. The ensemble constitutes the *rhythm* and the *behavior* of the illness. But at the same time that it is a passive object, illness as it is seen through an absolute spontaneity which is consciousness, is a projection of this spontaneity into the In-itself. As a passive spontaneity it is magical; it is given as extending itself, as entirely the master of its temporal form. It appears and disappears differently than spatial-temporal objects. If I no longer see the table, this is because I have turned my head, but if I no longer feel my illness, it is because it “has left.” In fact there is produced here a phenomenon analogous to that which psychologists of form call the stroboscopic illusion. The disappearance of the illness by frustrating the projects of the reflective for-itself is given as a movement of withdrawal, almost as will. There is an animism of illness; it is given as a living thing which has its form,

⁴ In this passage the reader should bear in mind that Sartre uses the word *mal*, which can refer both to a specific disease or to evil in general. Both ideas are involved in his discussion. Tr.

its own duration, its habits. The sick maintain sort of intimacy with it. When it appears, it is not as a new phenomenon; it is, the sick man will say, "my afternoon crisis." Thus reflection does not join together the moments of the same crisis, but passing over an entire day it links the crises together. Nevertheless this synthesis of recognition has a special character; it does not aim at constituting an object which would remain existing even when it would not be given to consciousness (in the manner of a hate which remains "dormant" or stays "in the unconscious"). In fact when the illness goes away it disappears for good. "Nothing is left of it." But the curious consequence follows that when the illness reappears, it rises up in its very passivity by a sort of spontaneous generation. For example, one can feel its "gentle overtures." It is "coming back again." "This is it." Thus the first pains just like the rest are not apprehended for themselves as a simple, bare texture of the consciousness reflected-on; they are the "announcements" of the illness or rather the illness itself which is born slowly—like a locomotive which gradually gets under way. On the other hand it is very necessary to understand that I constitute the illness with the pain. This does not mean that I apprehend the illness as the cause of the pain but rather that each concrete pain is like a note in a melody: it is at once the whole melody and a "moment" in the melody. Across each pain I apprehend the entire illness and yet it transcends them all, for it is the synthetic totality of all the pains, the theme which is developed by them and through them. But the matter of the illness does not resemble that of a melody. In the first place it is something purely lived; there is no distance between the consciousness reflected-on and the pain nor between the reflective consciousness and the consciousness reflected-on. The result is that the illness is transcendent but without distance. It is outside my consciousness as a synthetic totality and already close to being *elsewhere*. But on the other hand it is in my consciousness, it fastens on to consciousness with all its teeth, penetrates consciousness with all its notes; and these teeth, these notes are my consciousness.

What has become of the body on this level? There has been, we noted, a sort of scission from the moment of the reflective projection: for the unreflective consciousness pain was the body; for the reflective consciousness the illness is distinct from the body, it has its own form, it comes and goes. On the reflective level where we are taking our position—i.e., before the intervention of the for-others—the body is not explicitly and thematically given to consciousness. The reflective consciousness is consciousness of the illness. However while the illness has a form which is peculiar to it and a melodic rhythm which confers on it a transcending individuality, it adheres to the for-itself by means of its matter since it is revealed through the pain and as the unity of all my pains of the same type. The illness is mine in this sense that I give to it its matter. I apprehend it as sustained and nourished by a certain passive

environment in which the passivity is precisely the projection into the in-itself of the contingent facticity of the pains. It is my passivity. This passive environment is not apprehended for itself except as the matter of the statue is apprehended when I perceive its form, and yet it is there. *The illness feeds on this passivity and magically derives new strength from it just as Antaeus was nourished by the earth.* It is my body on a new plane of existence; that is, as the pure noematic correlate of a reflective consciousness. We shall call it a *psychic body*. It is not yet known in any way, for the reflection which seeks to apprehend the pain-consciousness is not yet cognitive. This consciousness is affectivity in its original upsurge. It apprehends the illness as an object but as an affective object. One directs oneself first toward one's pain so as to hate it, to endure it with patience, to apprehend it as unbearable, sometimes to love it, to rejoice in it (if it foretells a release, a cure), to evaluate it in some way. Naturally it is the illness which is evaluated or rather which rises up as the necessary correlate of the evaluation. The illness is therefore not known; it is suffered, and similarly the body is revealed by the illness and is likewise suffered by consciousness. In order to add cognitive structures to the body as it has been given to reflection, we will have to resort to the Other. We can not discuss this point at present, for it is necessary first to bring to light the structures of the body-for-others.

At present, however, we can note that this psychic body since it is the projection on the plane of the in-itself of the intra-texture of consciousness, provides the implicit matter of all the phenomena of the psyche. Just as the original body was existed by each consciousness as its own contingency, so the psychic body is suffered as the contingency of hate or of love, of acts and qualities, but this contingency has a new character. In so far as it was existed by consciousness it was the recapture of consciousness by the in-itself;—in so far as it is suffered by reflection in the illness or the hate or the enterprise, it is projected into the in-itself. Hence it represents the tendency of each psychic object beyond its magical cohesion to be parcelled out in exteriority; it represents beyond the magical relations which unite psychic objects to each other, the tendency of each one of them to be isolated in an insularity of indifference. It is therefore a sort of implicit space supporting the melodic duration of the psychic. In so far as the body is the contingent and indifferent matter of all our psychic events, the body determines a psychic space. This space has neither high nor low, neither left nor right; it is without parts in as much as the magical cohesion of the psychic comes to combat its tendency towards a division in indifference. This is nonetheless a real characteristic of the psyche—not that the psyche is united to a body but that under its melodic organization the body is its substance and its perpetual condition of possibility. It is this which appears as soon as we name the psychic. It is this which is at the basis of the mechanistic and chemical metaphors which we use to classify

and to explain the events of the psyche. It is this which we aim at and which we form into images (image-making consciousnesses) which we produce in order to aim at absent feelings and make them present. It is this, finally, which motivates and to some degree justifies psychological theories like that of the unconscious, problems like that of the preservation of memories.

It goes without saying that we have chosen physical pain for the sake of an example and that there are thousands of other ways, themselves contingent, to exist our contingency. In particular we must note that when no pain, no specific satisfaction or dissatisfaction is "existed" by consciousness, the *for-itself* does not thereby cease to project itself beyond a contingency which is pure and so to speak unqualified. Consciousness does not cease "to have" a body. Coenesthetic affectivity is then a pure, non-positional apprehension of a contingency without color, a pure apprehension of the self as a factual existence. This perpetual apprehension on the part of my *for-itself* of an insipid taste which I cannot place, which accompanies me even in my efforts to get away from it, and which is my taste—this is what we have described elsewhere under the name of *Nausea*. A dull and inescapable nausea perpetually reveals my body to my consciousness. Sometimes we look for the pleasant or for physical pain to free ourselves from this nausea; but as soon as the pain and the pleasure are existed by consciousness, they in turn manifest its facticity and its contingency; and it is on the ground of this nausea that they are revealed. We must not take the term nausea as a metaphor derived from our physiological disgust. On the contrary, we must realize that it is on the foundation of this nausea that all concrete and empirical nauseas (nausea caused by spoiled meat, fresh blood, excrement, etc.) are produced and make us vomit.

II. THE BODY-FOR-OTHERS

We have just described the being of my body *for-me*. On this ontological plane my body is such as we have described it and it is *only that*. It would be useless to look there for traces of a physiological organ, of an anatomical and spatial constitution. Either it is the center of reference indicated emptily by the instrumental-objects of the world or else it is the *contingency which the for-itself* exists. More exactly, these two modes of being are complementary. But the body knows the same avatars as the *for-itself*; it has other planes of existence. It exists also *for-others*. We must now study it in this new ontological perspective. To study the way in which my body appears to the Other or the way in which the Other's body appears to me amounts to the same thing. In fact we have established that the structures of my being-for-the-Other are identical to those of the Other's being-for-me. It is then in terms of the Other's being-

for-me that—for the sake of convenience—we shall establish the nature of the body-for-others (that is, of the Other's body).

We showed in the preceding chapter that the body is not that which first manifests the Other to me. In fact if the fundamental relation of my being to that of the Other were reduced to the relation of my body to the Other's body, it would be a purely external relation. But my connection with the Other is inconceivable if it is not an internal negation. I must apprehend the Other first as the one for whom I exist as an object; the reapprehension of my selfness causes the Other to appear as an object in a second moment of prehistoric historization. The appearance of the Other's body is not therefore the primary encounter; on the contrary, it is only one episode in my relations with the Other and in particular in what we have described as making an object of the Other. Or if you prefer, the Other exists for me first and I apprehend him in his body *subsequently*. The Other's body is for me a secondary structure.

In the fundamental phenomenon of making an object of the Other, he appears to me as a transcendence-transcended. That is, by the mere fact that I project myself toward my possibilities, I surpass and transcend the Other's transcendence. It is put out of play; it is a transcendence-as-object. I apprehend this transcendence in the world, and originally, as a certain arrangement of the instrumental-things of my world inasmuch as they indicate *in addition* a secondary center of reference which is in the midst of the world and which is not me. These indications—unlike the indications which indicate me—are not constitutive of the indicating thing; they are lateral properties of the object. The Other, as we have seen, can not be a constitutive concept of the world. These indications all have therefore an original contingency and the character of an *event*. But the center of reference which they indicate is indeed the Other as a transcendence simply contemplated or transcended. The secondary arrangement of objects refers me to the Other as to the organizer or to the beneficiary of this arrangement, in short to an instrument which disposes of instruments in view of an end which it itself produces. But in turn I surpass this end and utilize it; it is in the midst of the world and I can make use of it for my own ends. Thus the Other is at first indicated by things as an instrument. Things also indicate me too as an instrument, and I am a body precisely in so far as I make myself be indicated by things. Therefore it is the Other-as-body whom things indicate by their lateral and secondary arrangements. The fact is that I actually do not know instruments which do not refer secondarily to the Other's body.

Earlier we pointed out that I could not take any point of view on my body in so far as it was designated by things. The body is, in fact, the point of view on which I can take no point of view, the instrument which I can not utilize in the way I utilize any other instrument. When by means of universalizing

thought I tried to think of my body emptily as a pure instrument in the midst of the world, the immediate result was the collapse of the world as such. On the other hand, because of the mere fact that I am not the Other, his body appears to me originally as a point of view on which I can take a point of view, an instrument which I can utilize with other instruments. The Other's body is indicated by the round of instrumental-things, but in turn it indicates other objects; finally it is integrated with my world, and it indicates my body. Thus the Other's body is radically different from my body-for-me; it is the tool which I am not and which I utilize (or which resists me, which amounts to the same thing). It is presented to me originally with a certain objective coefficient of utility and of adversity. The Other's body is therefore the Other himself as a transcendence-instrument.

These same remarks apply to the Other's body as the synthetic ensemble of sense organs. We do not discover in and through the Other's body the possibility which the Other has of knowing us. This is revealed fundamentally in and through my being-as-object for the Other; that is, it is the essential structure of our original relation with the Other. And in this original relation the flight of my world toward the Other is equally given. By the reapprehension of my selfness I transcend the Other's transcendence inasmuch as this transcendence is the permanent possibility of apprehending myself as an object. Due to this fact it becomes a purely given transcendence surpassed toward my own goals, a transcendence which simply "is-there," and the knowledge which the Other has of me and of the world becomes knowledge-as-an-object. This means that it is a given property of the Other, a property which in turn I can know. In truth this knowledge which I get of it remains empty in this sense that I shall never know the act of knowing; this act, since it is pure transcendence can be apprehended only by itself in the form of non-thetic consciousness or by the reflection issuing from it. What I know is only knowledge as being-there or, if you like, the being-there of knowledge. Thus this relativity of the sensory organ which is revealed to my universalizing reason but which can not be thought, so far as my own sense is concerned, without determining the collapse of the world—this I apprehend first when I apprehend the Other-as-object. I apprehend it without danger; for since the Other forms part of my universe, his relativity can not determine the collapse of this universe. The senses of the Other are senses known as knowing.

We can see here the explanation of the error of psychologists who define my senses by the Other's senses and who give to the sense organ as it is for me a relativity which belongs to its being-for-others. We can see also how this error becomes truth if we place it on its proper level of being after we have determined the true order of being and of knowing. Thus the objects of my world indicate laterally an object-center-of-reference which is the Other. But this center in turn appears to me from a point-of-view-without-a-point-of-

view which is mine, which is my body or my contingency. In short, to employ an inaccurate but common expression, I know the Other through the senses. Just as the Other is the instrument which I utilize in the manner of the instrument which I am and which no instrument can any longer utilize, so he is the ensemble of sense organs which are revealed to my sense knowledge; that is, he is a facticity which appears to a facticity. Thus there can be in its true place in the order of knowing and of being, a study of the Other's sense organs as they are known through the senses by me. This study will attach the greatest importance to the function of these sense organs—which is to know. But this knowledge in turn will be a pure object for me; here, for example, belongs the false problem of "inverted vision." In reality the sensory organ of the Other originally is in no way an instrument of knowledge for him; it is simply the Other's knowledge, his pure act of knowing in so far as this knowledge exists in the mode of an object in my universe.

Nevertheless we have as yet defined the Other's body only in so far as it is indicated laterally by the instrumental-things of my universe. Actually this by no means gives us his being-there in "flesh and blood." To be sure, the Other's body is everywhere present in the very indication which instrumental-things give of it since they are revealed as utilized by him and as known by him. This room in which I wait for the master of the house reveals to me in its totality the body of its owner: this easy chair is a chair-where-he-sits, this desk is a desk-at-which-he-writes, this window is a window through which there enters the light-which-illuminates-the-objects-which-he-sees. Thus he is outlined everywhere, and this outline is an outline-of-an-object; an object may come at every instant to fill the outline with content. But still the master of the house "is not there." He is elsewhere; he is absent.

Now we have seen that absence is a structure of being-there. To be absent is to-be-elsewhere-in-my-world; it is to be already given for me. As soon as I receive a letter from my cousin in Africa, his being-elsewhere is concretely given to me by the very indications of this letter, and this being-elsewhere is a being-somewhere; it is already his body. We can in no other way explain why a mere letter from a beloved woman sensually affects her lover; all the body of the beloved is present as an absence in these lines and on this paper. But since the being-elsewhere is a being-there in relation to a concrete ensemble of instrumental-things in a concrete situation, it is already facticity and contingency. It is not only the encounter which I have today with Pierre which defines his contingency and mine; his absence yesterday similarly defined our contingencies and our facticities. And this facticity of the absent is implicitly given in these instrumental-things which indicate it; his abrupt appearance does not add anything. Thus the Other's body is his facticity as an instrument and as a synthesis of sense organs as it is revealed to my facticity. It is given to me as

soon as the Other exists for me in the world; the presence or absence of the Other changes nothing.

But look! Now Pierre appears. He is entering my room. This appearance changes nothing in the fundamental structure of my relation to him; it is contingency but so was his absence contingency. Objects indicate him to me: the door which he pushes indicates a human presence when it opens before him, the same with the chair when he sits down, etc.

But the objects did not cease to indicate him during his absence. Of course I exist for him, he speaks to me. But I existed equally yesterday when he sent me that telegram, which is now on my table, to tell me of his coming. Yet there is something new. This is the fact that he appears at present on the ground of the world as a *this* which I can look at, apprehend, and utilize directly. What does this mean? First of all, the facticity of the Other—that is, the contingency of his being—is now explicit instead of being implicitly contained in the lateral indications of instrumental-things. This facticity is precisely what the Other exists—in and through his for-itself; it is what the other perpetually lives in nausea as a non-positional apprehension of a contingency which he is, as a pure apprehension of self as a factual existence. In a word, it is his *coenesthesia*. The Other's appearance is the revelation of the taste of his being as an immediate existence. I, however, do not grasp this taste as he does. Nausea for him is not knowledge; it is the non-thetic apprehension of the contingency which he is. It is the surpassing of this contingency toward the unique possibilities of the for-itself. It is an existed contingency, a contingency submitted to and refused. It is this same contingency, and no other, which I presently grasp. But I am not this contingency. I surpass it toward my own possibilities, but this surpassing is the transcendence of an Other. It is given to me in entirety and without appeal; it is irremediable. The Other's for-itself wrenches itself away from this contingency and perpetually surpasses it. But in so far as I transcend the Other's transcendence, I fix it. It is no longer a resource against facticity; quite the contrary, it participates in turn in facticity, it emanates from facticity. Thus nothing comes to interpose itself between the Other's pure contingency as a taste for himself and my consciousness. Indeed I apprehend this taste as it is existed. However, from the very fact of my otherness, this taste appears as a known and given *this* in the midst of the world. The Other's body is given to me as the pure in-itself of his being—an in-itself among in-itselfs and one which I surpass toward my possibilities. The Other's body is revealed therefore with two equally contingent characteristics: it is here and could be elsewhere; that is, instrumental-things could be arranged otherwise in relation to it, could indicate it otherwise; the distance between the chair and this body could be different; the body is like this and could be otherwise—i.e., I grasp its original contingency in the form of an objective and contingent configuration. But in

reality these two characteristics are only one. The second only makes the first present, only makes it explicit for me. The Other's body is the pure fact of the Other's presence in my world as a being-there which is expressed by a being-as-this. Thus the Other's very existence as the Other-for-me implies that he is revealed as a tool possessing the property of knowing and that this property of knowing is bound to some objective existence. This is what we shall call the necessity for the Other to be contingent for me.

From the moment that there is an Other, it must be concluded that he is an instrument provided with certain sense organs. But these considerations only serve to show the abstract necessity for the Other to have a body. This body of the Other as I encounter it is the revelation as object-for-me of the contingent form assumed by the necessity of this contingency. Every Other must have sense organs but not necessarily these sense organs, not any particular face and finally not this face. But face, sense organs, presence—all that is nothing but the contingent form of the Other's necessity to exist himself as belonging to a race, a class, an environment, etc., in so far as this contingent form is surpassed by a transcendence which does not have to exist it. What for the Other is his taste of himself becomes for me the Other's flesh. The flesh is the pure contingency of presence. It is ordinarily hidden by clothes, make-up, the cut of the hair or beard, the expression, etc. But in the course of long acquaintance with a person there always comes an instant when all these disguises are thrown off and when I find myself in the presence of the pure contingency of his presence. In this case I achieve in the face or the other parts of a body the pure intuition of the flesh. This intuition is not only knowledge; it is the affective apprehension of an absolute contingency, and this apprehension is a particular type of nausea.

The Other's body is then the facticity of transcendence transcended as it refers to my facticity. I never apprehend the Other as body without at the same time in a non-explicit manner apprehending my body as the center of reference indicated by the Other. But all the same we can not perceive the Other's body as flesh, as if it were an isolated object having purely external relations with other thises. That is true only for a corpse. The Other's body as flesh is immediately given as the center of reference in a situation which is synthetically organized around it, and it is inseparable from this situation. Therefore we should not ask how the Other's body can be first body for me and subsequently enter into a situation. The Other is originally given to me as a body in situation. Therefore there is not, for example, first a body and later action. But the body is the objective contingency of the Other's action. Thus once again we find on another plane an ontological necessity which we pointed out in connection with the existence of my body for me: the contingency of the for-itself, we said, can be existed only in and through a transcendence; it is the reapprehension—perpetually surpassed and perpetually reapprehending—of the for-itself, the reapprehension of the for-itself by the

in-itself on the ground of the primary nihilation. Similarly here the Other's body as flesh can not be inserted into a situation preliminarily defined. The Other's body is precisely that in terms of which there is a situation. Here also it can exist only in and through a transcendence. Now, however, this transcendence is at the start transcended; it is itself an object. Thus Pierre's body is not first a hand which could subsequently take hold of this glass; such a conception would tend to put the corpse at the origin of the living body. But his body is the complex hand-glass, since the flesh of the hand marks the original contingency of this complex.

Far from the relation of the body to objects being a problem, we never apprehend the body outside this relation. Thus the Other's body is *meaningful*. Meaning is nothing other than a fixed movement of transcendence. A body is a body as this mass of flesh which it is defined by the table which the body looks at, the chair in which it sits, the pavement on which it walks, etc. But to proceed further, there could be no question of exhausting the meanings which constitute the body—by means of reference to concerted actions, to the rational utilization of instrumental-complexes. The body is the totality of meaningful relations to the world. In this sense it is defined also by reference to the air which it breathes, to the water which it drinks, to the food which it eats. The body in fact could not appear without sustaining meaningful relations with the totality of what is. Like action, life is a transcended transcendence and a meaning. There is no difference in nature between action and life conceived as a totality. Life represents the ensemble of meanings which are transcended toward objects which are not posited as *thises* on the ground of the world. Life is the Other's body-as-ground in contrast to the body-as-figure inasmuch as this body-as-ground can be apprehended, not by the Other's for-itself and as something implicit and non-positional, but precisely, explicitly, and objectively by *me*. His body appears then as a meaningful figure on the ground of the universe but without ceasing to be a ground for the Other and precisely *as a ground*. But here we should make an important distinction: the Other's body actually appears "to my body." This means that there is a facticity in my point of view on the Other. In this sense we must not confuse my possibility of apprehending an organ (an arm, a hand) on the ground of the corporal totality and, on the other hand, my explicit apprehension of the Other's body or of certain structures of this body in so far as they are lived by the Other as the *body-as-ground*. It is only in the second case that we apprehend the Other as *life*. In the first instance it can happen that we apprehend as ground that which is figure for him. When I look at his hand, the rest of his body is united into ground. But it is perhaps his forehead or his thorax which for him exists non-thetically as figure on a ground in which his arms and his hands are dissolved.

The result, of course, is that the being of the Other's body is for me a

synthetic totality. This means: (1) I can never apprehend the Other's body except in terms of a total situation which indicates it. (2) I can not perceive any organ of the Other's body in isolation, and I always cause each single organ to be indicated to me in terms of the totality of the *flesh* or of *life*. Thus my perception of the Other's body is radically different from my perception of things.

(1) The Other moves within limits which appear in immediate connection with his movements and which are the terms within which I cause the meaning of these movements to be indicated to myself. These limits are both spatial and temporal. Spatially it is the glass placed at a distance from Pierre which is the meaning of his actual gesture. Thus in my perception I go from the ensemble "table-glass-bottle, etc.," to the movement of the arm in order to make known to myself what it is. If the arm is visible and if the glass is hidden, I perceive Pierre's movement in terms of the pure idea of *situation* and in terms of the goal aimed at emptyly beyond the objects which hide the glass from me, and this is the meaning of the gesture.

Pierre's gesture which is revealed to me in the present I always apprehend temporally from the standpoint of the future goals toward which he is reaching. Thus I make known to myself the present of the body by means of its future and still more generally, by means of the future of the world. We shall never be able to understand anything about the psychological problem of the perception of the Other's body if we do not grasp first this essential truth—that the Other's body is perceived wholly differently than other bodies: for in order to perceive it we always move to it from what is outside of it, in space and in time; we apprehend its gesture "against the current" by a sort of inversion of time and space. To perceive the Other is to make known to oneself what he is by means of the world.

(2) I never perceive an arm raised alongside a motionless body. I perceive Pierre-who-raises-his-hand. This does not mean that by an act of judgment I relate the movement of the hand to a "consciousness" which instigated it; rather I can apprehend the movement of the hand or of the arm only as a temporal structure of the whole body. Here it is the whole which determines the order and the movement of its parts. In order to prove that we are dealing here with an original perception of the Other's body, we need only recall the horror we feel if we happen to see an arm which looks "as if it did not belong to any body," or we may recall any one of those rapid perceptions in which we see, for example, a hand (the arm of which is hidden) crawl like a spider up the length of the doorway. In such cases there is a disintegration of the body, and this disintegration is apprehended as extraordinary. In addition, we know the positive proofs the Gestalt psychology has often advanced. It comes as a shock when a photograph registers an enormous enlargement of Pierre's hands as he holds them forward (because the camera grasps them in

their own dimension and without synthetic connection with the corporal totality), for we perceive that these same hands appear without enlargement if we look at them with the naked eye. In this sense the body appears within the limits of the situation as a synthetic totality of life and action.

Following these observations, it is evident that Pierre's body is in no way to be distinguished from Pierre-for-me. The Other's body with its various meanings exists only for me: to be an object-for-others or to-be-a-body are two ontological modalities which are strictly equivalent expressions of the being-for-others on the part of the for-itself. Thus the meanings do not refer to a mysterious psychism; they are this psychism in so far as it is a transcendence-transcended. Of course there is a psychic cryptography; certain phenomena are "hidden." But this certainly does not mean that the meanings refer to something "beyond the body." They refer to the world and to themselves. In particular these emotional manifestations or, more generally, the phenomena erroneously called the phenomena of *expression*, by no means indicate to us a hidden affection lived by some psychism which would be the immaterial object of the research of the psychologist. These frowns, this redness, this stammering, this slight trembling of the hands, these down-cast looks which seem at once timid and threatening—these do not *express* anger; they *are* the anger. But this point must be clearly understood. In itself a clenched fist is nothing and means nothing. But also we never perceive a clenched fist. We perceive a man who in a certain situation clenches his fist. This meaningful act considered in connection with the past and with possibles and understood in terms of the synthetic totality "body in situation" is the anger. It refers to nothing other than to actions in the world (to strike, insult, etc.); that is, to new meaningful attitudes of the body. We can not get away from the fact that the "psychic object" is entirely given to perception and is inconceivable outside corporeal structures.

If this fact has not been taken into account hitherto or if those who have supported it, like the Behaviorists, have not themselves very well understood what they wanted to say and have shocked the world with their pronouncements, this is because people too readily believe that all perceptions are of the same kind. Actually perception must give to us immediately the spatial-temporal object. Its fundamental structure is the internal negation, and it gives to me the object as it is, not as an empty image of some reality beyond reach. But precisely for this reason a new structure of perception corresponds to each type of reality. The body is the psychic object *par excellence*—the only psychic object. But if we consider that the body is a transcended transcendence, then the perception of it can not by nature be of the same type as that of inanimate objects. We must not understand by this that the perception is progressively enriched but that originally it is of another structure. Thus it is not necessary to resort to habit or reason by analogy in order to explain how

we *understand* expressive conduct. This conduct is originally given to perception as understandable; its meaning is part of its being just as the color of the paper is part of the being of the paper. It is therefore no more necessary to refer to other conduct in order to understand a particular conduct than to refer to the color of the table, or of another paper or of foliage in order to perceive the color of the folio which is placed before me.⁵

The Other's body, however, is given to us immediately as what the Other is. In this sense we apprehend it as that which is perpetually surpassed toward an end by each particular meaning. Take for example a man who is walking. From the start I understand his walking in terms of a spatial-temporal ensemble (alley-street-sidewalk-shops-cars, etc.) in which certain structures represent the meaning-to-come of the walking. I perceive this walking by going from the future to the present—although the future in which there is a question belongs to universal time and is a pure "now" which is not yet. The walking itself, a pure, inapprehensible, and nihilating becoming is the present. But this present is a surpassing toward a future goal on the part of something which is walking; beyond the pure and inapprehensible present of the movement of the arm we attempt to grasp the substratum of the movement. This substratum, which we never apprehend as it is except in the corpse, is yet always there as the surpassed, the past. When I speak of an arm-in-motion, I consider this arm which *was at rest* as the substance of the motion. We pointed out in Part Two that such a conception can not be supported. What moves can not be the motionless arm; motion is a disorder of being. It is nonetheless true that the psychic movement refers to two limits—the future terminus of its result, and the past terminus—the motionless organ which it alters and surpasses. I perceive the movement-of-the-arm as a perpetual, inapprehensible reference toward a past-being. This past-being (the arm, the leg, the whole body at rest) I do not see at all; I can never catch sight of it except *through* the movement which surpasses it and to which I am a presence—just as one gets a glimpse of a pebble at the bottom of the stream through the movement of the water. Yet this immobility of being which is always surpassed and never realized, to which I perpetually refer in order to say what is in motion—this is pure facticity, pure flesh, the pure in-itself as the past of a transcended transcendence which is perpetually being made past.

This pure in-itself, which exists only by virtue of being surpassed and in and through this surpassing, falls to the level of the corpse if it ceases to be simultaneously revealed and hidden by the transcendence-transcended. As a corpse—i.e., as the pure past of a life, as simply the remains—it is still truly understandable only in terms of the surpassing which no longer surpasses it: it is

⁵ If Sartre did not intend to pun on the words *feuillage* and *feuille*, then I apologize for my feeble attempt with "foliage" and "folio." Tr.

that which has been surpassed toward situations perpetually renewed. On the other hand, in so far as it appears at present as a pure in-itself, it exists in relation to other "thises" in the simple relation of indifferent exteriority: the corpse is no longer in situation. At the same time it collapses into itself in a multiplicity of sustaining beings, each maintaining purely external relations with the others. The study of exteriority, which always implies facticity since this exteriority is never perceptible except on the corpse, is *anatomy*. The synthetic reconstitution of the living person from the standpoint of corpses, is *physiology*. From the outset physiology is condemned to understand nothing of life since it conceives life simply as a particular modality of death, since it sees the infinite divisibility of the corpse as primary, and since it does not know the synthetic unity of the "surpassing towards" for which infinite divisibility is the pure and simple past. Even the study of life in the living person, even vivisection, even the study of the life of protoplasm, even embryology or the study of the egg can not rediscover life; the organ which is observed is living, but it is not established in the synthetic unity of a particular life; it is understood in terms of anatomy—i.e., in terms of death. There is therefore an enormous error in believing that the Other's body, which is originally revealed to us, is the body of anatomical-physiology. The fault here is as serious as that of confusing our senses "for ourselves" with our sensory organs for others. The Other's body is the facticity of the transcendence-transcended as this facticity is perpetually a birth; that is, as it refers to the indifferent exteriority of an in-itself perpetually surpassed.

These considerations enable us to explain what is called *character*. It should be noted in fact that character has distinct existence only in the capacity of an object of knowledge for the Other. Consciousness does not know its own character—unless in determining itself reflectively from the standpoint of another's point of view. It exists its character in pure indistinction non-thematically and non-thetically in the proof which it effects of its own contingency and in the nihilation by which it recognizes and surpasses its facticity. This is why pure introspective self-description does not give us character. Proust's hero "does not have" a directly apprehensible character; he is presented first as being conscious of himself as an ensemble of general reactions common to all men ("mechanisms" of passion, emotions, a certain order of memories, etc.) in which each man can recognize himself. This is because these reactions belong to the general "nature" of the psychic. If (as Abraham attempted in his book on Proust) we succeed in determining the character of Proust's hero (for example, his weakness, his passivity, his particular way of linking love and money), this is because we are interpreting brute givens. We adopt an external point of view regarding them; we compare them and we attempt to disengage from them permanent, objective relations. But this necessitates detachment. So long as the reader using the

usual optic process of reading identifies himself with the hero of the novel, the character of "Marcel" escapes him; better yet it does not exist on this level. It appears only if I break the complicity which unites me to the writer, only if I consider the book no longer as a confidant but as a confidence, still better as a document. This character exists therefore only on the plane of the for-others, and that is the reason why the maxims and the descriptions of "moralists" (that is, those French authors who have undertaken an objective, social psychology) never coincide with the lived experience of the subject.

But if character is essentially *for others*, it can not be distinguished from the body as we have described it. To suppose, for example, that temperament is the cause of character, that the "sanguine temperament" is the cause of irascibility is to posit character as a psychic entity presenting all the aspects of objectivity and yet subjective and *suffered* by the subject. Actually the Other's irascibility is known from the outside and is from the start transcended by my transcendence. In this sense it is not to be distinguished from the "sanguine temperament." In both instances we apprehend the apoplectic redness, the same corporeal aspects, but we transcend these givens differently according to our projects. We shall be dealing with *temperament* if we consider this redness as the manifestation of the *body-as-ground*; that is, by cutting all that binds it to the situation. If we try to understand it in terms of the *corpse*, we shall be able to conduct a physiological and medical study of it. If on the contrary, we consider it by approaching it in terms of the global situation, it will be anger itself or again a promise of anger, or rather an anger in promise—that is, a permanent relation with instrumental-things, a potentiality. Between temperament and character there is therefore only a difference of principle, and character is identical with the body. This is what justifies the attempts of numerous authors to instate a physiognomy as the basis of the studies of character and in particular the fine research of Kretschmer on character and the structure of the body. The character of the Other, in fact, is immediately given to intuition as a synthetic ensemble. This does not mean that we can immediately *describe* it. It would take time to make the differentiated structures appear, to make explicit certain givens which we have immediately apprehended affectively, to transform the global indistinction which is the Other's body into organized form. We can be deceived. It is permissible also to resort to general and discursive knowledge (laws empirically or statistically established in connection with other subjects) in order to interpret what we see. But in any case the problem will be only to make explicit and to organize the content of our first intuition in terms of foresight and action. This is without a doubt what is meant by people who insist that "first impressions are not mistaken." In fact from the moment of the first encounter the Other is

given entirely and immediately without any veil or mystery. Here to learn is to understand, to develop, and to appreciate.

Nevertheless as the Other is thus given, he is given in what he is. Character is not different from facticity—that is, from original contingency. We apprehend the Other as *free*, and we have demonstrated above that *freedom* is an objective quality of the Other as the unconditioned power of modifying situations. This power is not to be distinguished from that which originally constitutes the Other and which is the power to make a situation exist in general. In fact, to be able to modify a situation is precisely to make a situation exist. The Other's objective freedom is only transcendence-transcended; it is, as we have established, freedom-as-object. In this sense the Other appears as the one who must be understood from the standpoint of a situation perpetually modified. This is why his body is always the *past*. In this sense the Other's character is released to us as the *surpassed*. Even irascibility as the promise of anger is always a surpassed promise. Thus character is given as the Other's facticity as it is accessible to my intuition but also in so far as it is only in order to be surpassed. In this sense to "get angry" is already to surpass the irascibility by the very fact that one consents to it; it is to give irascibility a meaning. Anger will appear therefore as the recovery of irascibility by freedom-as-object. This does not mean that we are hereby referred to a subjectivity but only that what we transcend here is not only the Other's facticity but his transcendence, not only his being (i.e., his past) but his present and his future. Although the Other's anger appears to me always as a free-anger (which is evident by the very fact that I *pass judgment* on it) I can always transcend it—i.e., stir it up or calm it down; better yet it is by transcending it and only by transcending it that I apprehend it. Thus since the body is the facticity of the transcendence-transcended, it is always the body-which-points-beyond-itself; it is at once in space (it is the situation) and in time (it is freedom-as-object). The body-for-others is the magic object *par excellence*. Thus the Other's body is always "a body-more-than-body" because the Other is given to me totally and without intermediary in the perpetual surpassing of its facticity. But this surpassing does not refer me to a subjectivity; it is the objective fact that the body—whether it be as organism, as character, or as tool—never appears to me without *surroundings*, and that the body must be determined in terms of these surroundings. The Other's body must not be confused with his objectivity. The Other's objectivity is his transcendence as transcended. The body is the facticity of this transcendence. But the Other's corporeality and objectivity are strictly inseparable.

III. THE THIRD ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE BODY

I exist my body: this is its first dimension of being. My body is utilized and known by the Other: this is its second dimension. But in so far as *I am for others*, the Other is revealed to me as the subject for whom I am an object. Even there the question, as we have seen, is of my fundamental relation with the Other. I exist therefore for myself as known by the Other—in particular in my very facticity. I exist for myself as a body known by the Other. This is the third ontological dimension of my body. This is what we are going to study next; with it we shall have exhausted the question of the body's modes of being.

With the appearance of the Other's look I experience the revelation of my being-as-object; that is, of my transcendence as transcended. A me-as-object is revealed to me as an unknowable being, as the flight into an Other which I am with full responsibility. But while I can not know nor even conceive of this "Me" in its reality, at least I am not without apprehending certain of its formal structures. In particular I feel myself touched by the Other in my factual existence; it is my being-there-for-others for which I am responsible. This being-there is precisely the body. Thus the encounter with the Other does not only touch me in my transcendence: in and through the transcendence which the Other surpasses, the facticity which my transcendence nihilates and transcends exists for the Other; and to the extent that I am conscious of existing for the Other I apprehend my own facticity, not only in its non-thetic nihilation, not only in the existent, but in its flight towards a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. The shock of the encounter with the Other is for me a revelation in emptiness of the existence of my body outside as an in-itself for the Other. Thus my body is not given merely as that which is purely and simply lived; rather this "lived experience" becomes—in and through the contingent, absolute fact of the Other's existence—extended outside in a dimension of flight which escapes me. My body's depth of being is for me this perpetual "outside" of my most intimate "inside."

To the extent that the Other's omnipresence is the fundamental fact, the objectivity of my being-there is a constant dimension of my facticity; I exist my contingency in so far as I surpass it toward my possibles and in so far as it surreptitiously flees me toward an irremediable. My body is there not only as the point of view which I am but again as a point of view on which are actually brought to bear points of view which I could never take; my body escapes me on all sides. This means first that this ensemble of *senses*, which themselves can not be apprehended, is given as apprehended elsewhere and by others. This apprehension which is thus empty manifested does not have the character of an ontological necessity; its existence can not be derived even from my facticity, but it is an evident and absolute fact. It has the character of a factual necessity. Since my facticity is pure contingency and is revealed to

me non-thetically as a factual necessity, the being-for-others of this facticity comes to increase the contingency of this facticity, which is lost and flees from me in an infinity of contingency which escapes me. Thus at the very moment when I live my senses as this inner point of view on which I can take no point of view, their being-for-others haunts me: they *are*. For the Other, my senses are as this table or as this tree is for me. They are in the midst of a world; they are in and through the absolute flow of my world toward the Other. Thus the relativity of my senses, which I can not think abstractly without destroying my world, is at the same time perpetually made present to me through the Other's existence; but it is a pure and inapprehensible appresentation.

In the same way my body is for me the instrument which I am and which can not be utilized by any instrument. But to the extent that the Other in the original encounter transcends my being-there toward his possibilities, this instrument which I am is made-present to me as an instrument submerged in an infinite instrumental series, although I can in no way view this series by "surveying" it. My body as alienated escapes me toward a being-a-tool-among-tools, toward a being-a-sense-organ-apprehended-by-sense-organs, and this is accompanied by an alienating destruction and a concrete collapse of my world which flows toward the Other and which the Other will reaprehend in his world. When, for example, a doctor listens to my breathing, I *perceive* his ear. To the extent that the objects of the world indicate me as an absolute center of reference, this perceived ear indicates certain structures as forms which I exist on my body-as-a-ground. These structures—in the same upsurge with my being—belong with the purely lived; they are that which I exist and which I nihilate. Thus we have here in the first-place the original connection between designation and the lived. The things perceived designate that which I subjectively exist. But I apprehend—on the collapse of the sense object "ear"—the doctor as listening to the sounds in my body, feeling my body with his body, and immediately the lived-designated becomes designated as *a thing outside my subjectivity*, in the midst of a world which is not mine. My body is designated as alienated.

The experience of my alienation is made in and through affective structures such as, for example, shyness.⁶ To "feel oneself blushing," to "feel oneself sweating," etc., are inaccurate expressions which the shy person uses to describe his state; what he really means is that he is vividly and constantly conscious of his body not as it is for him but as it is *for the Other*. This constant uneasiness, which is the apprehension of my body's alienation as irremediable, can determine psychoses such as ereutophobia (a pathological fear of blushing); these are nothing but the horrified metaphysical apprehension of the existence of my body for the Others. We often say that the shy man is

"embarrassed by his own body." Actually this expression is incorrect; I can not be embarrassed by my own body as I exist it. It is my body as it is for the Other which may embarrass me. Yet there too the expression is not a happy one, for I can be embarrassed only by a concrete thing which is present inside my universe and which hinders me as I try to use other tools. Here the embarrassment is more subtle, for what constrains me is absent. I never encounter my body-for-the-Other as an obstacle; on the contrary, it is because the body is never there, because it remains inapprehensible that it can be *constraining*. I seek to reach it, to master it, by making use of it as an instrument—since it is also given as an instrument in a world—in order to give it the form and the attitude which are appropriate. But it is on principle out of reach, and all the acts which I perform in order to appropriate it to myself escape me in turn and are fixed at a distance from me as my body-for-the-Other. Thus I forever act "blindly," shoot at a venture without ever knowing the results of my shooting. This is why the effort of the shy man after he has recognized the uselessness of these attempts will be to suppress his body-for-the-Other. When he longs "not to have a body anymore," to be "invisible," etc., it is not his body-for-himself which he wants to annihilate, but this inapprehensible dimension of the body-alienated.

The explanation here is that we in fact attribute to the body-for-the-Other as much reality as to the body-for-us. Better yet, the body-for-the-Other is the body-for-us, but inapprehensible and alienated. It appears to us then that the Other accomplishes for us a function of which we are incapable and which nevertheless is incumbent on us: to *see ourselves as we are*. Language by revealing to us abstractly the principle structures of our body-for-others (even though the existed body is ineffable) impels us to place our alleged mission wholly in the hands of the Other. We resign ourselves to seeing ourselves through the Other's eyes; this means that we attempt to learn our being through the revelations of language. Thus there appears a whole system of verbal correspondence by which we cause our body to be designated for us as it is for the Other by utilizing these designations to denote our body as it is for us. It is on this level that there is effected the analogical identification of the Other's body with mine. It is indeed necessary—if I am to be able to think that "my body is for the Other as the Other's body is for me"—that I have met the Other first in his object-making subjectivity and then as object. If I am to judge the Other's body as an object similar to my body then it is necessary that he has been given to me as an object and that my body has for its part revealed itself to me as possessing an object-dimension. Analogy or resemblance can never at the start constitute the Other's body-as-object and the objectivity of my body; on the contrary, these two object-states must exist beforehand in order that an analogical principle may be brought into play.

⁶ In French, *timidité*, which carries also the idea of timidity. Tr.

Here therefore it is language which teaches me my body's structures for the Other.

Nevertheless it is necessary to realize that it is not on the unreflective plane that language with its meanings can slip in between my body and my consciousness which exists it. On this plane the alienation of the body toward the Other and its third dimension of being can only be experienced emptily; they are only an extension of the lived facticity. No concept, no cognitive intuition can be attached to it. The object-state of my body for the Other is not an object for me and can not constitute my body as an object; it is experienced as the flight of the body which I exist. In order that any knowledge which the Other has of my body and which he communicates to me by language may give to my body-for-me a structure of a particular type, it is necessary that this knowledge be applied to an object and that my body already be an object for me. It is therefore on the level of the reflective consciousness that the Other's knowledge can be brought into play; it will not qualify facticity as the pure *existed* of the non-thetic consciousness but rather facticity as the quasi-object apprehended by reflection. It is this conceptual stratum which by inserting itself between the quasi-object and the reflective consciousness will succeed in making an object of the psychic quasi-body. Reflection, as we have seen, apprehends facticity and surpasses it toward an unreal whose *esse* is a pure *percipi* and which we have named *psychic*. This *psychic* is constituted. The conceptual pieces of knowledge which we acquire in our history and which all come from our commerce with the Other are going to produce a stratum constitutive of the psychic body. In short, so far as we suffer our body reflectively we constitute it as a quasi-object by means of an accessory reflection—thus observation comes from ourselves. But as soon as we *know* the body—i.e., as soon as we apprehend it in a purely cognitive intuition—we constitute it by that very intuition with the Other's knowledge (i.e., as it would never be for us by itself). The knowable structures of our psychic body therefore simply indicate emptily its perpetual alienation. Instead of living this alienation we constitute it emptily by surpassing the lived facticity toward this quasi-object which is the psychic-body and by once again surpassing this quasi-object which is *suffered* toward characters of being which on principle can not be given to me and which are simply signified.

Let us return, for example, to our description of "physical" pain. We have seen how reflection while "suffering" physical pain constitutes it as *Illness*. But we had to stop midway in our description because we lacked the means to proceed further. Now, however, we can pursue the point. The *Illness* which I suffer I can aim at in its In-itself; that is, precisely in its being-for-others. At this moment I *know* it; that is, I aim at it in its dimension of being which escapes me, at the face which it turns toward Others, and my aim is impregnated with the wisdom which language has brought to me;—i.e., I utilize

instrumental concepts which come to me from the Other, and which I should in no case have been able to form by myself or think of directing upon my body. It is by means of the Other's concepts that I *know* my body. But it follows that even in reflection I assume the Other's point of view on my body; I try to apprehend it as if I were the Other in relation to it. It is evident that the categories which I then apply to the *Illness* constitute it *emptily*; that is, in a dimension which escapes me. Why speak then of intuition? It is because despite all, the *body* which is *suffered* serves as a nucleus, as matter for the alienating means which surpass it. The body is this *Illness* which escapes me toward new characteristics which I establish as limits and empty schemata of organization. It is thus, for example, that my *Illness*, suffered as *psychic*, will appear to me reflectively as sickness in my *stomach*. Let us understand, of course, that pain "in the stomach" is the stomach itself as painfully lived. As such before the intervention of the alienating, cognitive stratum, the pain is neither a local sign nor identification. *Gastralgia* is the stomach present to consciousness as the pure quality of pain. As we have seen, the *Illness* as such is distinguished from all other pain and from any other illness—and by itself without an intellectual operation of identification or of discrimination. At this level, however, "the stomach" is an inexpressible; it can be neither named nor thought. It is only this suffered figure which is raised on the ground of the body-existed. Objectivating empirical knowledge, which presently surpasses the *Illness* suffered toward the *stomach* named, is the knowing of a certain objective nature possessed by the stomach. I know that it has the shape of a bagpipe, that is is a sack, that it produces juices, and enzymes, that it is inclosed by a muscular tunica with smooth fibres, etc. I can also know—because a physician has told me—that the stomach has an ulcer, and again I can more or less clearly picture the ulcer to myself. I can imagine it as a redness, a slight internal putrescence; I can conceive of it by means of analogy with abscesses, fever blisters, pus, canker sores, etc. All this on principle stems from bits of knowledge which I have acquired from Others or from such knowledge as Others have of me. In any case all this can constitute my *Illness*, not as I enjoy possession of it, but as it escapes me. The stomach and the ulcer become directions of flight, perspectives of alienation from the object which I possess.

At this point a new layer of existence appears: we have surpassed the lived pain toward the suffered illness; now we surpass the illness toward the *Disease*.⁷ The *Disease* as *psychic* is of course very different from the disease known

⁷ Sartre in this and in the earlier related passage is contrasting three things—pain, illness, disease. "Pain" refers to the specific aches and twinges, "illness" to the familiar recurrent pattern of these, "disease" to a totality which includes along with pain and illness the cause of them both and which can be diagnosed and named by the physician. The French words are *douleur*, *mal*, and *maladie*. Tr.

and described by the physician; it is a state. There is no question here of bacteria or of lesions in tissue, but of a synthetic form of destruction. This form on principle escapes me; at times it is revealed to the Other by the "twinges" of pain, by the "crises" of my illness, but the rest of the time it remains out of reach without disappearing. It is then objectively discernible for Others. Others have informed me of it, Others can diagnose it; it is present for Others even though I am not conscious of it. Its true nature is therefore a pure and simple being-for-others. When I am not suffering, I speak of it, I conduct myself with respect to it as with respect to an object which on principle is out of reach, for which others are the depositories. If I have hepatitis, I avoid drinking wine so as not to arouse pains in my liver. But my precise goal—not to arouse pains in my liver—is in no way distinct from that other goal—to obey the prohibitions of the physician who revealed the pain to me. Thus another is responsible for my disease.

Yet this object which comes to me through others preserves characteristics of a degraded spontaneity deriving from the fact that I apprehend it through my illness. It is not our intention to describe this new object nor to dwell on its characteristics—its magical spontaneity, its destructive finality, its evil potentiality—on its familiarity with me, and on its concrete relations with my being (for it is before all else, my disease). We wish only to point out that in the disease itself the body is a given: by the very fact that it was the support of the illness, it is at present the substance of the disease, that which is destroyed by the disease, that across which this destructive form is extended. Thus the injured stomach is present through the gastralgia as the very matter out of which this gastralgia is made. The stomach is there; it is present to intuition and I apprehend it with its characteristics through the suffered pain. I grasp it as that which is gnawed at, as a "sack in the shape of a bagpipe," etc. I do not see it, to be sure, but I know that it is my pain. Hence the phenomena which are incorrectly called "endoscopy." In reality the pain itself tells me nothing about my stomach—contrary to what Sollier claims. But in and by means of the pain, my practical knowledge of it constitutes a stomach-for-others, which appears to me as a concrete and definite absence with exactly those objective characteristics which I have been able to know in it. But on principle the object thus defined stands as the pole of alienation of my pain; it is, on principle, that which I am without having to be it and without being able to transcend it toward anything else. Thus in the same way that a being-for-others haunts my facticity (which is non-thetically lived), so a being-an-object-for-others haunts—as a dimension of escape from my psychic body—the facticity constituted as a quasi-object for an accessory reflection. In the same way pure nausea can be surpassed toward a dimension of alienation; it will then present to me my body-for-others in its "shape," its "bearing," its physiognomy; it will be given then as disgust with my face, disgust with my

too-white flesh, with my too-grim expression, etc. But we must reverse the terms. I am not disgusted by all this. Nausea is all this as non-thetically existed. My knowledge extends my nausea toward that which it is for others. For it is the Other who grasps my nausea, precisely as flesh and with the nauseous character of all flesh.

We have not with these observations exhausted the description of the appearances of my body. It remains to describe what we shall call an aberrant type of appearance. In actuality I can see my hands, touch my back, smell the odor of my sweat. In this case my hand, for example, appears to me as one object among other objects. It is no longer indicated by the environment as a center of reference. It is organized with the environment, and like it indicates my body as a center of reference. It forms a part of the world. In the same way my hand is no longer the instrument which I can not handle along with other instruments; on the contrary, it forms a part of the utensils which I discover in the midst of the world; I can utilize it by means of my other hand—for example, when I hold an almond or walnut in my left fist and then pound it with my right hand. My hand is then integrated with the infinite system of utensils-utilized. There is nothing in this new type of appearance which should disturb us or make us retract the preceding statements. Nevertheless this type of appearance must be mentioned. It can be easily explained on condition that we put it in its proper place in the order of the appearances of the body; that is, on condition that we examine it last and as a "curiosity" of our constitution. This appearance of my hand means simply that in certain well-defined cases we can adopt with regard to our own body the Other's point of view or, if you like, that our own body can appear to us as the body of the Other. Scholars who have made this appearance serve as a basis for a general theory of the body have radically reversed the terms of the problem and have shown themselves up as understanding nothing about the question. We must realize that this possibility of seeing our body is a pure factual given, absolutely contingent. It can be deduced neither from the necessity on the part of the for-itself "to have" a body nor from the factual structures of the body-for-others. One could easily conceive of bodies which could not take any view on themselves; it even appears that this is the case for certain insects which, although provided with a differentiated nervous system and with sense organs, can not employ this system and these organs to know themselves. We are dealing therefore with a particularity of structure which we must mention without attempting to deduce it. To have hands, to have hands which can touch each other—these are two facts which are on the same plane of contingency and which as such fall in the province of either pure anatomical description or metaphysics. We can not take them for the foundation of a study of corporeality.

We must note in addition that this appearance of the body does not give us

the body as it acts and perceives but only as it is acted on and perceived. In short, as we remarked at the beginning of this chapter, it would be possible to conceive of a system of visual organs such that it would allow one eye to see the other. But the seen eye would be seen as a thing, not as a being of reference. Similarly the hand which I grasp with my other hand is not apprehended as a hand which is grasping but as an apprehensible object. Thus the nature of *our body* for us entirely escapes us to the extent that we can take upon it the Other's point of view. Moreover it must be noted that even if the arrangement of sense organs allows us to see the body as it appears to the Other, this appearance of the body as an instrumental-thing is very late in the child; it is in any case later than the consciousness (of) the body proper and of the world as a complex of instrumentality; it is later than the perception of the body of the Other. The child has known for a long time how to grasp, to draw toward himself, to push away, and to hold on to something before he first learns to pick up his hand and to look at it. Frequent observation has shown that the child of two months does not see his hand as *his* hand. He considers it, and if it is outside his visual field, he turns his head and looks around for his hand as if it did not depend on him to bring it back within his sight. It is by a series of psychological operations and of syntheses of identification and recognition that the child will succeed in establishing tables of reference between the body-existed and the body-seen. Moreover, it is necessary that the child begin the learning process with the Other's body. Thus the perception of my body is placed chronologically after the perception of the body of the Other.

Considered at its proper place and time and in its original contingency, this appearance of the body does not seem to be capable of giving rise to new problems. The body is the instrument which I am. It is my facticity of being "in-the-midst-of-the-world" in so far as I surpass this facticity toward my being-in-the-world. It is, of course, radically impossible for me to take a global point of view on this facticity, for then I should cease to be it. But why should we be surprised that certain structures of my body, without ceasing to be a center of reference for the objects of the world, get organized from a radically different point of view from other objects in such a way that along with the objects they point to one of my sense organs as a partial center of reference and stand out as a figure against the body-as-ground? That my eye should see itself is by nature impossible. But why is it astonishing that my hand touches my eyes? If this seems surprising to us, it is because we have apprehended the necessity for the for-itself to arise as a concrete point of view on the world as if it were an ideal obligation strictly reducible to knowable relations between objects and to simple rules for the development of my achieved knowledge. But instead we ought to see here the necessity of a concrete and contingent existence in the midst of the world.

3

CONCRETE RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

Up to this point we have described only our fundamental relation with the Other. This relation has enabled us to make explicit our body's three dimensions of being. And although the original bond with the Other arises before the relation between my body and the Other's body, it seemed clear to us that the knowledge of the nature of the body was indispensable to any study of the particular relations of my being with that of the Other. These particular relations, in fact, on both sides presuppose facticity; that is, our existence as body in the midst of the world. Not that the body is the instrument and the cause of my relations with others. But the body constitutes their meaning and marks their limits. It is as body-in-situation that I apprehend the Other's transcendence-transcended, and it is as body-in-situation that I experience myself in my alienation for the Other's benefit. Now we can examine these concrete relations since we are cognizant of what the body is. They are not simple specifications of the fundamental relation. Although each one of them includes within it the original relation with the Other as its essential structure and its foundation, they are entirely new modes of being on the part of the for-itself. In fact they represent the various attitudes of the for-itself in a world where there are Others. Therefore each relation in its own way presents the bilateral relation: for-itself-for-others, in-itself. If then we succeed in making explicit the structures of our most primitive relations with the Other-in-the-world, we shall have completed our task. At the beginning of this work, we asked, "What are the relations of the for-itself with the in-itself?" We have learned now that our task is more complex. There is a relation of the for-itself with the in-itself in the *presence* of the Other. When we have described this concrete fact, we shall be in a position to

form conclusions concerning the fundamental relations of the three modes of being, and we shall perhaps be able to attempt a metaphysical theory of being in general.

The for-itself as the nihilation of the in-itself temporalizes itself as a flight toward. Actually it surpasses its facticity (i.e., to be either given or past or body) toward the in-itself which it would be if it were able to be its own foundation. This may be translated into terms already psychological—and hence inaccurate although perhaps clearer—by saying that the for-itself attempts to escape its factual existence (i.e., its being there, as an in-itself for which it is in no way the foundation) and that this flight takes place toward an impossible future always pursued where the for-itself would be an in-itself-for-itself—i.e., an in-itself which would be to itself its own foundation. Thus the for-itself is both a flight and a pursuit; it flees the in-itself and at the same time pursues it. The for-itself is a pursued-pursuing. But in order to lessen the danger of a psychological interpretation of the preceding remarks, let us note that the for-itself is not first in order to attempt later to attain being; in short we must not conceive of it as an existent which would be provided with tendencies as this glass is provided with certain particular qualities. This pursuing flight is not given which is added on to the being of the for-itself. The for-itself is this very flight. The flight is not to be distinguished from the original nihilation. To say that the for-itself is a pursued-pursuing, or that it is in the mode of having to be its being, or that it is not what it is and is what it is not—each of these statements is saying the same thing. The for-itself is not the in-itself and can not be it. But it is a relation to the in-itself. It is even the sole relation possible to the in-itself. Cut off on every side by the in-itself, the for-itself can not escape it because the for-itself is nothing and it is separated from the in-itself by nothing. The for-itself is the foundation of all negativity and of all relation. *The for-itself is relation.*

Such being the case, the upsurge of the Other touches the for-itself in its very heart. By the Other and for the Other the pursuing flight is fixed in in-itself. Already the in-itself was progressively recapturing it; already it was at once a radical negation of fact, an absolute positing of value and yet wholly paralyzed with facticity. But at least it was escaping by temporalization; at least its character as a totality detotalized conferred on it a perpetual "elsewhere." Now it is this very totality which the Other makes appear before him and which he transcends toward his own "elsewhere." It is this totality which is totalized. For the Other I am irremediably what I am, and my very freedom is a given characteristic of my being. Thus the in-self recaptures me at the threshold of the future and fixes me wholly in my very flight, which becomes a flight foreseen and contemplated, a given flight. But this fixed flight is never the flight which I am for myself; it is fixed outside. The objectivity of my flight I experience as an alienation which I can neither transcend nor know. Yet

by the sole fact that I experience it and that it confers on my flight that in-itself which it flees, I must turn back toward it and assume attitudes with respect to it.

Such is the origin of my concrete relations with the Other; they are wholly governed by my attitudes with respect to the object which I am for the Other. And as the Other's existence reveals to me the being which I am without my being able either to appropriate that being or even to conceive it, this existence will motivate two opposed attitudes: First—The Other looks at me and as such he holds the secret of my being, he knows what I am. Thus the profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence. The Other has the advantage over me. Therefore in so far as I am fleeing the in-itself which I am without founding it, I can attempt to deny that being which is conferred on me from outside; that is, I can turn back upon the Other so as to make an object out of him in turn since the Other's object-ness destroys my object-ness for him. But on the other hand, in so far as the Other as freedom is the foundation of my being-in-itself, I can seek to recover that freedom and to possess it without removing from it its character as freedom. In fact if I could identify myself with that freedom which is the foundation of my being-in-itself, I should be to myself my own foundation. To transcend the Other's transcendence, or, on the contrary, to incorporate that transcendence within me without removing from it its character as transcendence—such are the two primitive attitudes which I assume confronting the Other. Here again we must understand the words exactly. It is not true that I first am and then later "seek" to make an object of the Other or to assimilate him; but to the extent that the upsurge of my being is an upsurge in the presence of the Other, to the extent that I am a pursuing flight and a pursued-pursuing, I am—at the very root of my being—the project of assimilating or making an object of the Other. I am the proof of the Other. That is the original fact. But this proof of the Other is in itself an attitude toward the Other; that is, I can not be in the presence of the Other without being that "in-the-presence" in the form of having to be it. Thus again we are describing the for-itself's structures of being although the Other's presence in the world is an absolute and self-evident fact, but a contingent fact—that is, a fact impossible to deduce from the ontological structures of the for-itself.

These two attempts which I am are opposed to one another. Each attempt is the death of the other; that is, the failure of the one motivates the adoption of the other. Thus there is no dialectic for my relations toward the Other but rather a circle—although each attempt is enriched by the failure of the other. Thus we shall study each one in turn. But it should be noted that at the very core of the one the other remains always present, precisely because neither of the two can be held without contradiction. Better yet, each of them is in the Other and engenders the death of the other. Thus we can never get outside the

circle. We must not forget these facts as we approach the study of these fundamental attitudes toward the Other. Since these attitudes are produced and destroyed in a circle, it is as arbitrary to begin with the one as with the other. Nevertheless since it is necessary to choose, we shall consider first the conduct in which the for-itself tries to assimilate the Other's freedom.

I. FIRST ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS: LOVE, LANGUAGE, MASOCHISM

Everything which may be said of me in my relations with the Other applies to him as well. While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the Other, the Other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me. We are by no means dealing with unilateral relations with an object-in-itself, but with reciprocal and moving relations. The following descriptions of concrete behavior must therefore be envisaged within the perspective of *conflict*. Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others.

If we start with the first revelation of the Other as a *look*, we must recognize that we experience our inapprehensible being-for-others in the form of a *possession*. I am possessed by the Other; the Other's look fashions my body in its nakedness, causes it to be born, sculpts it, produces it as it is, sees it as I shall never see it. The Other holds a secret—the secret of what I am. He makes me be and thereby he possess me, and this possession is nothing other than the consciousness of possessing me. I in the recognition of my object-state have proof that he has this consciousness. By virtue of consciousness the Other is for me simultaneously the one who has stolen my being from me and the one who causes "there to be" a being which is my being. Thus I have a comprehension of this ontological structure: I am responsible for my being-for-others, but I am not the foundation of it. It appears to me therefore in the form of a contingent given for which I am nevertheless responsible; the Other founds my being in so far as this being is in the form of the "there is." But he is not responsible for my being although he founds it in complete freedom—in and by means of his free transcendence. Thus to the extent that I am revealed to myself as responsible for my being, I *lay claim* to this being which I am; that is, I wish to recover it, or, more exactly, I am the project of the recovery of my being. I want to stretch out my hand and grab hold of this being which is presented to me as my *being* but at a distance—like the dinner of Tantalus; I want to found it by my very freedom. For if in one sense my being-as-object is an unbearable contingency and the pure "possession" of myself by another, still in another sense this being stands as the indication of what I should be obliged to recover and found in order to be the foundation of myself. But this is conceivable only if I assimilate the Other's freedom.

Thus my project of recovering myself is fundamentally a project of absorbing the Other.

Nevertheless this project must leave the Other's nature intact. Two consequences result: (1) I do not thereby cease to assert the Other—that is, to deny concerning myself that I am the Other. Since the Other is the foundation of my being, he could not be dissolved in me without my being-for-others disappearing. Therefore if I project the realization of unity with the Other, this means that I project my assimilation of the Other's Otherness as my own possibility. In fact the problem for me is to make myself be by acquiring the possibility of taking the Other's point of view on myself. It is not a matter of acquiring a pure, abstract faculty of knowledge. It is not the pure *category* of the Other which I project appropriating to myself. This category is not conceived nor even conceivable. But on the occasion of concrete experience with the Other, an experience suffered and realized, it is this concrete Other as an absolute reality whom in his otherness I wish to incorporate into myself. (2) The Other whom I wish to assimilate is by no means the Other-as-object. Or, if you prefer, my project of incorporating the Other in no way corresponds to a recapturing of my for-itself as myself and to a surpassing of the Other's transcendence toward my own possibilities. For me it is not a question of obliterating my object-state by making an object of the Other, which would amount to *releasing* myself from my being-for-others. Quite the contrary, I want to assimilate the Other as the Other-looking-at-me, and this project of assimilation includes an augmented recognition of my being-looked-at. In short, in order to maintain before me the Other's freedom which is looking at me, I identify myself totally with my being-looked-at. And since my being-as-object is the only possible relation between me and the Other, it is this being-as-object which alone can serve me as an instrument to effect my assimilation of the *other freedom*.

Thus as a reaction to the failure of the third ekstasis, the for-itself wishes to be identified with the Other's freedom as founding its own being-in-itself. To be other to oneself—the ideal always aimed at concretely in the form of being this Other to oneself—is the primary value of my relations with the Other. This means that my being-for-others is haunted by the indication of an absolute-being which would be itself as other and other as itself and which by freely giving to itself its being-itself as other and its being-other as itself, would be the very being of the ontological proof—that is, God. This ideal can not be realized without my surmounting the original contingency of my relations to the Other; that is, by overcoming the fact that there is no relation of internal negativity between the negation by which the Other is made other than I and the negation by which I am made other than the Other. We have seen that this contingency is insurmountable; it is the *fact* of my relations with the Other, just as my body is the *fact* of my being-in-the-world. Unity with

the Other is therefore in fact unrealizable. It is also unrealizable in theory, for the assimilation of the for-itself and the Other in a single transcendence would necessarily involve the disappearance of the characteristic of otherness in the Other. Thus the condition on which I project the identification of myself with the Other is that I persist in denying that I am the Other. Finally this project of unification is the source of conflict since while I experience myself as an object for the Other and while I project assimilating him in and by means of this experience, the Other apprehends me as an object in the midst of the world and does not project identifying me with himself. It would therefore be necessary—since being-for-others includes a double internal negation—to act upon the internal negation by which the Other transcends my transcendence and makes me exist for the Other; that is, to act upon the Other's freedom.

This unrealizable ideal which haunts my project of myself in the presence of the Other is not to be identified with love in so far as love is an enterprise; i.e., an organic ensemble of projects toward my own possibilities. But it is the ideal of love, its motivation and its end, its unique value. Love as the primitive relation to the Other is the ensemble of the projects by which I aim at realizing this value.

These projects put me in direct connection with the Other's freedom. It is in this sense that love is a conflict. We have observed that the Other's freedom is the foundation of my being. But precisely because I exist by means of the Other's freedom, I have no security; I am in danger in this freedom. It moulds my being and makes me be, it confers values upon me and removes them from me; and my being receives from it a perpetual passive escape from self. Irresponsible and beyond reach, this protean freedom in which I have engaged myself can in turn engage me in a thousand different ways of being. My project of recovering my being can be realized only if I get hold of this freedom and reduce it to being a freedom subject to my freedom. At the same time it is the only way in which I can act on the free negation of interiority by which the Other constitutes me as an Other; that is the only way in which I can prepare the way for a future identification of the Other with me. This will be clearer perhaps if we study the problem from a purely psychological aspect. Why does the lover want to be loved? If Love were in fact a pure desire for physical possession, it could in many cases be easily satisfied. Proust's hero, for example, who installs his mistress in his home, who can see her and possess her at any hour of the day, who has been able to make her completely dependent on him economically, ought to be free from worry. Yet we know that he is, on the contrary, continually gnawed by anxiety. Through her consciousness Albertine escapes Marcel even when he is at her side, and that is why he knows relief only when he gazes on her while she sleeps. It is certain then that the lover wishes to capture a "consciousness." But why does he wish it? And how?

The notion of "ownership," by which love is so often explained, is not actually primary. Why should I want to appropriate the Other if it were not precisely that the Other makes me be? But this implies precisely a certain mode of appropriation; it is the Other's freedom as such that we want to get hold of. Not because of a desire for power. The tyrant scorns love, he is content with fear. If he seeks to win the love of his subjects, it is for political reasons; and if he finds a more economical way to enslave them, he adopts it immediately. On the other hand, the man who wants to be loved does not desire the enslavement of the beloved. He is not bent on becoming the object of passion which flows forth mechanically. He does not want to possess an automaton, and if we want to humiliate him, we need only try to persuade him that the beloved's passion is the result of a psychological determinism. The lover will then feel that both his love and his being are cheapened. If Tristan and Isolde fall madly in love because of a love potion, they are less interesting. The total enslavement of the beloved kills the love of the lover. The end is surpassed; if the beloved is transformed into an automaton, the lover finds himself alone. Thus the lover does not desire to possess the beloved as one possesses a thing; he demands a special type of appropriation. He wants to possess a freedom as freedom.

On the other hand, the lover can not be satisfied with that superior form of freedom which is a free and voluntary engagement. Who would be content with a love given as pure loyalty to a sworn oath? Who would be satisfied with the words, "I love you because I have freely engaged myself to love you and because I do not wish to go back on my word." Thus the lover demands a pledge, yet is irritated by a pledge. He wants to be loved by a freedom but demands that this freedom as freedom should no longer be free. He wishes that the Other's freedom should determine itself to become love—and this not only at the beginning of the affair but at each instant—and at the same time he wants this freedom to be captured by itself, to turn back upon itself, as in madness, as in a dream, so as to will its own captivity. This captivity must be a resignation that is both free and yet chained in our hands. In love it is not a determinism of the passions which we desire in the Other nor a freedom beyond reach; it is a freedom which plays the role of a determinism of the passions and which is caught in its own role. For himself the lover does not demand that he be the cause of this radical modification of freedom but that he be the unique and privileged occasion of it. In fact he could not want to be the cause of it without immediately submerging the beloved in the midst of the world as a tool which can be transcended. That is not the essence of love. On the contrary, in Love the Lover wants to be "the whole World" for the beloved. This means that he puts himself on the side of the world; he is the one who assumes and symbolizes the world; he is a *this* which includes all other *thises*. He is and consents to be an *object*. But on the other hand, he wants

to be the object in which the Other's freedom consents to lose itself, the object in which the Other consents to find his being and his *raison d'être* as his second facticity—the object-limit of transcendence, that toward which the Other's transcendence transcends all other objects but which it can in no way transcend. And everywhere he desires the circle of the Other's freedom; that is, at each instant as the Other's freedom accepts this limit to his transcendence, this acceptance is *already* present as the motivation of the acceptance considered. It is in the capacity of an end already chosen that the lover wishes to be chosen as an end. This allows us to grasp what basically the lover demands of the beloved; he does not want to act on the Other's freedom but to exist *a priori* as the objective limit of this freedom; that is, to be given at one stroke along with it and in its very upsurge as the limit which the freedom must accept in order to be free. By this very fact, what he demands is a liming, a gluing down of the Other's freedom by itself; this limit of structure is in fact a *given*, and the very appearance of the given as the limit of freedom means that the freedom *makes itself exist* within the given by being its own prohibition against surpassing it. This prohibition is envisaged by the lover *simultaneously* as something lived—that is, something suffered (in a word, as a facticity) and as something freely consented to. It must be freely consented to since it must be effected only with the upsurge of a freedom which chooses itself as freedom. But it must be only what is lived since it must be an impossibility always present, a facticity which surges back to the heart of the Other's freedom. This is expressed psychologically by the demand that the free decision to love me, which the beloved formerly has taken, must slip in as a magically determining motivation within his present free engagement.

Now we can grasp the meaning of this demand: the facticity which is to be a factual limit for the Other in my demand to be loved and which is to result in being *his own* facticity—this is *my* facticity. It is in so far as I am the object which the Other makes come into being that I must be the inherent limit to his very transcendence. Thus the Other by his upsurge into being makes me be as unsurpassable and absolute, not as a nihilating For-itself but as a being-for-others-in-the-midst-of-the-world. Thus to want to be loved is to infect the Other with one's own facticity; it is to wish to compel him to recreate you perpetually as the condition of a freedom which submits itself and which is engaged; it is to wish both that freedom found fact and that fact have pre-eminence over freedom. If this end could be attained, it would result in the first place in my being *secure* within the Other's consciousness. First because the motive of my uneasiness and my shame is the fact that I apprehend and experience myself in my being-for-others as that which can always be surpassed towards something else, that which is the pure object of a value judgment, a pure means, a pure tool. My uneasiness stems from the fact that I assume necessarily and freely that being which another makes me be in an

absolute freedom. "God knows what I am for him! God knows what he thinks of me!" This means "God knows what he makes me be." I am haunted by this being which I fear to encounter someday at the turn of a path, this being which is so strange to me and which is yet my *being* and which I know that I shall never encounter in spite of all my efforts to do so. But if the Other loves me then I become the *unsurpassable*, which means that I must be the absolute end. In this sense I am saved from *instrumentality*. My existence in the midst of the world becomes the exact correlate of my transcendence-for-myself since my independence is absolutely safeguarded. The object which the Other must make me be is an object-transcendence, an absolute center of reference around which all the instrumental-things of the world are ordered as pure *means*. At the same time, as the absolute limit of freedom—i.e., of the absolute source of all values—I am protected against any eventual devalorization. I am the absolute value. To the extent that I assume my being-for-others, I assume myself as value. Thus to want to be loved is to want to be placed beyond the whole system of values posited by the Other and to be the condition of all valorization and the objective foundation of all values. This demand is the usual theme of lovers' conversations, whether as in *La Porte Etroite*, the woman who wants to be loved identifies herself with an ascetic morality of self-surpassing and wishes to embody the ideal limit of this surpassing—or as more usually happens, the lover demands that the beloved in his acts should sacrifice traditional morality for him and is anxious to know whether the beloved would betray his friends for him, "would steal for him," "would kill for him," etc.

From this point of view, my being must escape the look of the beloved, or rather it must be the object of a look with another structure. I must no longer be seen on the ground of the world as a "this" among other "thises," but the world must be revealed in terms of me. In fact to the extent that the upsurge of freedom makes a world exist, I must be, as the limiting-condition of this upsurge, the very condition of the upsurge of a world. I must be the one whose function is to make trees and water exist, to make cities and fields and other men exist, in order to give them later to the Other who arranges them into a world, just as the mother in matrilineal communities receives titles and the family name not to keep them herself but to transfer them immediately to her children. In one sense if I am to be loved, I am the object through whose procurement the world will exist for the Other; in another sense I am the world. Instead of being a "this" detaching itself on the background-world, I am the object-as-ground on which the world detaches itself. Thus I am reassured; the Other's look no longer paralyzes me with finitude. It no longer fixes my being in *what I am*. I can no longer be *looked at* as ugly, as small, as cowardly, since these characteristics necessarily represent a factual limitation of my being and an apprehension of my finitude as finitude. To be sure, my

possibles remain transcended possibilities, dead-possibilities; but I possess all possibles. I am all the dead-possibilities in the world; hence I cease to be the being who is understood from the standpoint of other beings or of its acts. In the loving intuition which I demand, I am to be given as an absolute totality in terms of which all its peculiar acts and all beings are to be understood. One could say, slightly modifying a famous pronouncement of the Stoics, that "the beloved can fail in three ways."¹ The ideal of the sage and the ideal of the man who wants to be loved actually coincide in this that both want to be an object-as-totality accessible to a global intuition which will apprehend the beloved's or the sage's actions in the world as partial structures which are interpreted in terms of the totality. Just as wisdom is proposed as a state to be attained by an absolute metamorphosis, so the Other's freedom must be absolutely metamorphosed in order to allow me to attain the state of being loved.

Up to this point our description would fall into line with Hegel's famous description of the Master and Slave relation. What the Hegelian Master is for the Slave, the lover wants to be for the beloved. But the analogy stops here, for with Hegel the master demands the Slave's freedom only laterally and, so to speak, implicitly, while the lover wants the beloved's freedom *first and foremost*. In this sense if I am to be loved by the Other, this means that I am to be freely chosen as beloved. As we know, in the current terminology of love, the beloved is often called the *chosen one*. But this choice must not be relative and contingent. The lover is irritated and feels himself cheapened when he thinks that the beloved has chosen him *from among others*. "Then if I had not come into a certain city, if I had not visited the home of so and so, you would never have known me, you wouldn't have loved me?" This thought grieves the lover; his love becomes one love among others and is limited by the beloved's facticity and by his own facticity as well as by the contingency of encounters. It becomes *love in the world*, an object which presupposes the world and which in turn can exist for others. What he is demanding he expresses by the awkward and vitiated phrases of "fatalism." He says, "We were made for each other," or again he uses the expression "soul mate." But we must translate all this. The lover knows very well that "being made for each other" refers to an original choice. This choice can be God's, since he is the being who is absolute choice, but God here represents only the farthest possible limit of the demand for an absolute. Actually what the lover demands is that the beloved should make of him an absolute choice. This means that the beloved's being-in-the-world must be a being-as-loving. The upsurge of the beloved must be the beloved's free choice of the lover. And since the Other is the foundation of my being-as-object, I demand of him that the free upsurge

¹ Literally, "can tumble three times." Tr.

of his being should have his choice of me as his unique and absolute end; that is, that he should choose to be for the sake of founding my object-state and my facticity.

Thus my facticity is *saved*. It is no longer this unthinkable and insurmountable given which I am fleeing; it is that for which the Other freely makes himself exist; it is as an end which he has given to himself. I have infected him with my facticity, but as it is in the form of freedom that he has been infected with it, he refers it back to me as a facticity taken up and consented to. He is the foundation of it in order that it may be his end. By means of this love I then have a different apprehension of my alienation and of my own facticity. My facticity—as for-others—is no longer a fact but a right. My existence is because it is required. That existence, in so far as I assume it, becomes pure generosity. I am because I give myself away. These beloved veins on my hands exist by kindness. How good I am to have eyes, hair, eyebrows and to lavish them away tirelessly in an overflow of generosity to this tireless desire which the Other freely makes himself be. Whereas before being loved we were uneasy about that unjustified, unjustifiable protuberance which was our existence, whereas we felt ourselves "*de trop*," we now feel that our existence is taken up and willed even in its tiniest details by an absolute freedom which at the same time our existence conditions and which we ourselves will with our freedom. This is the basis for the joy of love when there is joy: we feel that our existence is justified.

By the same token if the beloved can love us, he is wholly ready to be assimilated by our freedom; for this being-loved which we desire is already the ontological proof applied to our being-for-others. Our objective essence implies the existence of the Other, and conversely it is the Other's freedom which founds our essence. If we could manage to interiorize the whole system, we should be our own foundation.

Such then is the real goal of the lover in so far as his love is an enterprise — i.e., a project of himself. This project is going to provoke a conflict. The beloved in fact apprehends the lover as one Other-as-object among others; that is, he perceives the lover on the ground of the world, transcends him, and utilizes him. The beloved is a *look*. He can not therefore employ his transcendence to fix an ultimate limit to his surpassings, nor can he employ his freedom to captivate itself. The beloved can not will to love. Therefore the lover must seduce the beloved, and his love can in no way be distinguished from the enterprise of seduction. In seduction I do not try to reveal my subjectivity to the Other. Moreover I could do so only by *looking at* the other; but by this look I should cause the Other's subjectivity to disappear, and it is exactly this which I want to assimilate. To seduce is to risk assuming my object-state completely for the Other; it is to put myself beneath his look and to make him look at me; it is to risk the danger of being-seen in order to effect a

new departure and to appropriate the Other in and by means of my object-ness. I refuse to leave the level on which I make proof of my object-ness; it is on this level that I wish to engage in battle by making myself a fascinating object. In Part Two we defined fascination as a state. It is, we said, the non-thetic consciousness of being *nothing* in the presence of being. Seduction aims at producing in the Other the consciousness of his state of nothingness as he confronts the seductive object. By seduction I aim at constituting myself as a fullness of being and at making myself *recognized as such*. To accomplish this I constitute myself as a meaningful object. My acts must point in two directions: On the one hand, toward that which is wrongly called subjectivity and which is rather a depth of objective and hidden being; the act is not performed for itself only, but it points to an infinite, undifferentiated series of other real and possible acts which I give as constituting my objective, unperceived being. Thus I try to guide the transcendence which transcends me and to refer it to the infinity of my dead-possibilities precisely in order to be the unsurpassable and to the exact extent to which the only unsurpassable is the infinite. On the other hand, each of my acts tries to point to the great density of possible-world and must present me as bound to the vastest regions of the world, whether I present the world to the beloved and try to constitute myself as the necessary intermediary between him and the world, whether I manifest by my acts infinitely varied examples of my power over the world (money, position, "connections," etc.). In the first case I try to constitute myself as an infinity of depth, in the second case to identify myself with the world. Through these different procedures I propose myself as unsurpassable. This proposal could not be sufficient in itself; it is only a besieging of the Other. It can not take on value as fact without the consent of the Other's freedom, which I must capture by making it recognize itself as nothingness in the face of my plenitude of absolute being.

Someone may observe that these various attempts at expression presuppose language. We shall not disagree with this. But we shall say rather that they are language or, if you prefer, a fundamental mode of language. For while psychological and historical problems exist with regard to the existence, the learning and the use of a particular language, there is no special problem concerning what is called the discovery or invention of language. Language is not a phenomenon added on to being-for-others. It is originally being-for-others; that is, it is the fact that a subjectivity experiences itself as an object for the Other. In a universe of pure objects language could under no circumstances have been "invented" since it presupposes an original relation to another subject. In the intersubjectivity of the for-others, it is not necessary to invent language because it is already given in the recognition of the Other. I *am* language. By the sole fact that whatever I may do, my acts freely conceived and executed, my projects launched toward my possibilities have outside of

them a meaning which escapes me and which I experience. It is in this sense—and in this sense only—that Heidegger is right in declaring that I *am* what I say.² Language is not an instinct of the constituted human creature, nor is it an invention of our subjectivity. But neither does it need to be referred to the pure "being-outside-of-self" of the *Dasein*. It forms part of the human condition; it is originally the proof which a for-itself can make of its being-for-others, and finally it is the surpassing of this proof and the utilization of it toward possibilities which are my possibilities; that is, toward my possibilities of being this or that for the Other. Language is therefore not distinct from the recognition of the Other's existence. The Other's upsurge confronting me as a look makes language arise as the condition of my being. This primitive language is not necessarily seduction; we shall see other forms of it. Moreover we have noted that there is no primitive attitude facing the Other and that the two succeed each other in a circle, each implying the other. But conversely seduction does not presuppose any earlier form of language; it is the complete realization of language. This means that language can be revealed entirely and at one stroke by seduction as a primitive mode of being of expression. Of course by language we mean all the phenomena of expression and not the articulated word, which is a derived and secondary mode whose appearance can be made the object of an historical study. Especially in seduction language does not aim at giving to be known but at causing to experience.

But in this first attempt to find a fascinating language I proceed blindly since I am guided only by the abstract and empty form of my object-state for the Other. I can not even conceive what effect my gestures and attitudes will have since they will always be taken up and founded by a freedom which will surpass them and since they can have a meaning only if this freedom confers one on them. Thus the "meaning" of my expressions always escapes me. I never know exactly if I signify what I wish to signify nor even if I am signifying anything. It would be necessary that at the precise instant I should read in the Other what on principle is inconceivable. For lack of knowing what I actually express for the Other, I constitute my language as an incomplete phenomenon of flight outside myself. As soon as I express myself, I can only guess at the meaning of what I express—i.e., the meaning of what I *am*—since in this perspective to express and to be are one. The Other is always there, present and experienced as the one who gives to language its

² This formulation of Heidegger's position is that of A. de Waelhens. *La philosophie de Martin Heidegger*. Louvain, 1942, p. 99. Cf. also Heidegger's text, which he quotes: "Diese Bezeugung meint nicht hier einen nachträglichen und beiherlaufenden Ausdruck des Menschseins, sondern sie macht das Dasein des Menschen mit usw. (*Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung*, p. 6.)"

("This affirmation does not mean here an additional and supplementary expression of human existence, but it does in the process make plain the existence of man." Douglas Scott's translation. *Existence and Being*, Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1949, p. 297.)

meaning. Each expression, each gesture, each word is on my side a concrete proof of the alienating reality of the Other. It is not only the psychopath who can say, "someone has stolen my thought"—as in cases of psychoses of influence, for example.³ The very fact of expression is a stealing of thought since thought needs the cooperation of an alienating freedom in order to be constituted as an object. That is why this first aspect of language—in so far as it is I who employ it for the Other—is *sacred*. The sacred object is an object which is in the world and which points to a transcendence beyond the world. Language reveals to me the freedom (the transcendence) of the one who listens to me in silence.

But at the same moment I remain for the Other a meaningful object—as I have always been. There is no path which departing from my object-state can lead the Other to my transcendence. Attitudes, expressions, and words can only indicate to him other attitudes, other expressions, and other words. Thus language remains for him a simple property of a magical object—and this magical object itself. It is an action at a distance whose effect the Other exactly knows. Thus the word is *sacred* when I employ it and *magic* when the Other hears it. Thus I do not know my language any more than I know my body for the Other. I can not hear myself speak nor see myself smile. The problem of language is exactly parallel to the problem of bodies, and the description which is valid in one case is valid in the other.

Fascination, however, even if it were to produce a state of being-fascinated in the Other could not by itself succeed in producing love. We can be fascinated by an orator, by an actor, by a tightrope-walker, but this does not mean that we love him. To be sure we can not take our eyes off him, but he is still raised on the ground of the world, and fascination does not posit the fascinating object as the ultimate term of the transcendence. Quite the contrary, fascination is transcendence. When then will the beloved become in turn the lover?

The answer is easy: when the beloved projects being loved. By himself the Other-as-object never has enough strength to produce love. If love has for its ideal the appropriation of the Other qua Other (i.e., as a subjectivity which is looking at an object) this ideal can be projected only in terms of my encounter with the Other-as-subject, not with the Other-as-object. If the Other tries to seduce me by means of his object-state, then seduction can bestow upon the Other only the character of a precious object "to be possessed." Seduction will perhaps determine me to risk much to conquer the Other-as-object, but this desire to appropriate an object in the midst of the

³ Furthermore the psychosis of influence, like the majority of psychoses, is a special experience translated by myths, of a great metaphysical fact—here the fact of alienation. Even a madman in his own way realizes the human condition.

world should not be confused with love. Love therefore can be born in the beloved only from the experience which he makes of his alienation and his flight toward the Other. Still the beloved, if such is the case, will be transformed into a lover only if he projects being loved; that is, if what he wishes to overcome is not a body but the Other's subjectivity as such. In fact the only way that he could conceive to realize this appropriation is to make himself be loved. Thus it seems that to love is in essence the project of making oneself be loved. Hence this new contradiction and this new conflict: each of the lovers is entirely the captive of the Other inasmuch as each wishes to make himself loved by the Other to the exclusion of anyone else; but at the same time each one demands from the other a love which is not reducible to the "project of being-loved." What he demands in fact is that the Other without originally seeking to make himself be loved should have at once a contemplative and affective intuition of his beloved as the objective limit of his freedom, as the ineluctable and chosen foundation of his transcendence, as the totality of being and the supreme value. Love thus exacted from the other could not ask for anything; it is a pure engagement without reciprocity. Yet this love can not exist except in the form of a demand on the part of the lover.

The lover is held captive in a wholly different way. He is the captive of his very demand since love is the demand to be loved; he is a freedom which wills itself a body and which demands an outside, hence a freedom which imitates the flight toward the Other, a freedom which qua freedom lays claim to its alienation. The lover's freedom, in his very effort to make himself be loved as an object by the Other, is alienated by slipping into the body-for-others; that is, it is brought into existence with a dimension of flight toward the Other. It is the perpetual refusal to posit itself as pure selfness, for this affirmation of self as itself would involve the collapse of the Other as a look and the upsurge of the Other-as-object—hence a state of affairs in which the very possibility of being loved disappears since the Other is reduced to the dimension of objectivity. This refusal therefore constitutes freedom as dependent on the Other; and the Other as subjectivity becomes indeed an unsurpassable limit of the freedom of the for-itself, the goal and supreme end of the for-itself since the Other holds the key to its being. Here in fact we encounter the true ideal of love's enterprise: alienated freedom. But it is the one who wants to be loved who by the mere fact of wanting someone to love him alienates his freedom.

My freedom is alienated in the presence of the Other's pure subjectivity which founds my objectivity. It can never be alienated before the Other-as-object. In this form in fact the beloved's alienation, of which the lover dreams, would be contradictory since the beloved can found the being of the lover only by transcending it on principle toward other objects of the world; therefore this transcendence can not constitute the object which it surpasses

both as a transcended object and as an object limit of all transcendence. Thus each one of the lovers wants to be the object for which the Other's freedom is alienated in an original intuition; but this intuition which would be love in the true sense is only a contradictory ideal of the for-itself. Each one is alienated only to the exact extent to which he demands the alienation of the other. Each one wants the other to love him but does not take into account the fact that to love is to want to be loved and that thus by wanting the other to love him, he only wants the other to want to be loved in turn. Thus love relations are a system of indefinite reference—analogue to the pure "reflection-reflected" of consciousness—under the ideal standard of the value "love;" that is, in a fusion of consciousnesses in which each of them would preserve his otherness in order to found the other. This state of affairs is due to the fact that consciousnesses are separated by an insurmountable nothingness, a nothingness which is both the internal negation of the one by the other and a factual nothingness between the two internal negations. Love is a contradictory effort to surmount the factual negation while preserving the internal negation. I demand that the Other love me and I do everything possible to realize my project; but if the Other loves me, he radically deceives me by his very love. I demanded of him that he should found my being as a privileged object by maintaining himself as pure subjectivity confronting me; and as soon as he loves me he experiences me as subject and is swallowed up in his objectivity confronting my subjectivity.

The problem of my being-for-others remains therefore without solution. The lovers remain each one for himself in a total subjectivity; nothing comes to relieve them of their duty to make themselves exist each one for himself; nothing comes to relieve their contingency nor to save them from facticity. At least each one has succeeded in escaping danger from the Other's freedom—but altogether differently than he expected. He escapes not because the Other makes him be as the object-limit of his transcendence but because the Other experiences him as subjectivity and wishes to experience him only as such. Again the gain is perpetually compromised. At the start, each of the consciousnesses can at any moment free itself from its chains and suddenly contemplate the other as an object. Then the spell is broken; the Other becomes one mean among means. He is indeed an object for-others as the lover desires but an object-as-tool, a perpetually transcended object. The illusion, the game of mirrors which makes the concrete reality of love, suddenly ceases. Later in the experience of love each consciousness seeks to shelter its being-for-others in the Other's freedom. This supposes that the Other is beyond the world as pure subjectivity, as the absolute by which the world comes into being. But it suffices that the lovers should be looked at together by a third person in order for each one to experience not only his own objectivation but that of the other as well. Immediately the Other is no

longer for me the absolute transcendence which founds me in my being; he is a transcendence-transcended, not by me but by another. My original relation to him—i.e., my relation of being the beloved for my lover, is fixed as a dead-possibility. It is no longer the experienced relation between a limiting object of all transcendence and the freedom which founds it; it is a love-as-object which is wholly alienated toward the third. Such is the true reason why lovers seek solitude. It is because the appearance of a third person, whoever he may be, is the destruction of their love. But factual solitude (e.g. we are alone in my room) is by no means a theoretical solitude. Even if nobody sees us, we exist for all consciousnesses and we are conscious of existing for all. The result is that love as a fundamental mode of being-for-others holds in its being-for-others the seed of its own destruction.

We have just defined the triple destructibility of love: in the first place it is, in essence, a deception and a reference to infinity since to love is to wish to be loved, hence to wish that the Other wish that I love him. A preontological comprehension of this deception is given in the very impulse of love—hence the lover's perpetual dissatisfaction. It does not come, as is so often said, from the unworthiness of being loved but from an implicit comprehension of the fact that the amorous intuition is, as a fundamental-intuition, an ideal out of reach. The more I am loved, the more I lose my being, the more I am thrown back on my own responsibilities, on my own power to be. In the second place the Other's awakening is always possible; at any moment he can make me appear as an object—hence the lover's perpetual insecurity. In the third place love is an absolute which is perpetually made relative by others. One would have to be alone in the world with the beloved in order for love to preserve its character as an absolute axis of reference—hence the lover's perpetual shame (or pride—which here amounts to the same thing).

Thus it is useless for me to have tried to lose myself in objectivity; my passion will have availed me nothing. The Other has referred me to my own unjustifiable subjectivity—either by himself or through others. This result can provoke a total despair and a new attempt to realize the identification of the Other and myself. Its ideal will then be the opposite of that which we have just described; instead of projecting the absorbing of the Other while preserving in him his otherness, I shall project causing myself to be absorbed by the Other and losing myself in his subjectivity in order to get rid of my own. This enterprise will be expressed concretely by the masochistic attitude. Since the Other is the foundation of my being-for-others, if I relied on the Other to make me exist, I should no longer be anything more than a being-in-itself founded in its being by a freedom. Here it is my own subjectivity which is considered as an obstacle to the primordial act by which the Other would found me in my being. It is my own subjectivity which above all must be denied by my own freedom. I attempt therefore to engage myself wholly in my

being-as object. I refuse to be anything more than an object. I rest upon the Other, and as I experience this being-as-object in shame, I will and I love my shame as the profound sign of my objectivity. As the Other apprehends me as object by means of *actual desire*, I wish to be desired, I make myself in shame an object of desire.⁴

This attitude would resemble that of love if instead of seeking to exist for the Other as the object-limit of his transcendence, I did not rather insist on making myself be treated as one object among others, as an instrument to be used. Now it is my transcendence which is to be denied, not his. This time I do not have to project capturing his freedom; on the contrary I hope that this freedom may be and will itself to be radically free. Thus the more I shall feel myself surpassed toward other ends, the more I shall enjoy the abdication of my transcendence. Finally I project being nothing more than an object; that is, radically an in-itself. But inasmuch as a freedom which will have absorbed mine will be the foundation of this in-itself, my being will become again the foundation of itself. Masochism, like sadism, is the assumption of guilt.⁵ I am guilty due to the very fact that I am an object, I am guilty toward myself since I consent to my absolute alienation. I am guilty toward the Other, for I furnish him with the occasion of being guilty—that is, of radically missing my freedom as such. Masochism is an attempt not to fascinate the Other by means of my objectivity but to cause myself to be fascinated by my objectivity-for-others; that is, to cause myself to be constituted as an object by the Other in such a way that I non-thetically apprehend my subjectivity as a *nothing* in the presence of the in-itself which I represent to the Other's eyes. Masochism is characterized as a kind of vertigo, vertigo not before a precipice of rock and earth but before the abyss of the Other's subjectivity.

But masochism is and must be itself a failure. In order to cause myself to be fascinated by my self-as-object, I should necessarily have to be able to realize the intuitive apprehension of this object such as it is for the Other, a thing which is on principle impossible. Thus I am far from being able to be fascinated by this alienated Me, which remains on principle inapprehensible. It is useless for the masochist to get down on his knees, to show himself in ridiculous positions, to cause himself to be used as a simple lifeless instrument. It is for the Other that he will be obscene or simply passive, for the Other that he will undergo these postures; for himself he is forever condemned to give them to himself. It is in and through his transcendence that he disposes of himself as a being to be transcended. The more he tries to taste his objectivity, the more he will be submerged by the consciousness of his subjectivity—to the point of anguish. Even the masochist who pays a woman to whip him

⁴ Cf. following section.

⁵ Cf. following section.

is treating her as an instrument and by this very fact posits himself in transcendence in relation to her.

Thus the masochist ultimately treats the Other as an object and transcends him toward his own objectivity. Recall, for example, the tribulations of Sacher Masoch, who in order to make himself scorned, insulted, reduced to a humiliating position, was obliged to make use of the great love which women bore toward him; that is, to act upon them just in so far as they experienced themselves as an object for him. Thus in every way the masochist's objectivity escapes him, and it can even happen—in fact usually does happen—that in seeking to apprehend his own objectivity he finds the Other's objectivity, which in spite of himself frees his own subjectivity. Masochism therefore is on principle a failure. This should not surprise us if we realize that masochism is a "vice" and that vice is, on principle, the love of failure. But this is not the place to describe the structures peculiar to vice. It is sufficient here to point out that masochism is a perpetual effort to annihilate the subject's subjectivity by causing it to be assimilated by the Other; this effort is accompanied by the exhausting and delicious consciousness of failure so that finally it is the failure itself which the subject ultimately seeks as his principal goal.⁶

II. SECOND ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS: INDIFFERENCE, DESIRE, HATE, SADISM

The failure of the first attitude toward the Other can be the occasion for my assuming the second. But of course neither of the two is really first; each of them is a fundamental reaction to being-for-others as an original situation. It can happen therefore that due to the very impossibility of my identifying myself with the Other's consciousness through the intermediacy of my object-ness for him, I am led to turn deliberately toward the Other and look at him. In this case to look at the Other's look is to posit oneself in one's own freedom and to attempt on the ground of this freedom to confront the Other's freedom. The meaning of the conflict thus sought would be to bring out into the open the struggle of two freedoms confronted as freedoms. But this intention must be immediately disappointed, for by the sole fact that I assert myself in my freedom confronting the Other, I make the Other a transcendence-transcended—that is, an object. It is the story of that failure which we are about to investigate. We can grasp its general pattern. I direct my look upon the Other who is looking at me. But a look can not be looked

⁶ Consistent with this description, there is at least one form of exhibitionism which ought to be classed among masochistic attitudes. For example, when Rousseau exhibits to the washerwomen "not the obscene object but the ridiculous object." Cf. *Confessions*, book III.

at. As soon as I look in the direction of the look it disappears, and I no longer see anything but eyes. At this instant the Other becomes a being which I possess and which recognizes my freedom. It seems that my goal has been achieved since I possess the being who has the key to my object-state and since I can cause him to make proof of my freedom in a thousand different ways. But in reality the whole structure has collapsed, for the being which remains within my hands is an Other-as-object. As such he has lost the key to my being-as-object, and he possesses a pure and simple image of me which is nothing but one of its objective affects and which no longer touches me. If he experiences the effects of my freedom, if I can act upon his being in a thousand different ways and transcend his possibilities with all my possibilities, this is only in so far as he is an object in the world and as such is outside the state of recognizing my freedom. My disappointment is complete since I seek to appropriate the Other's freedom and perceive suddenly that I can act upon the Other only in so far as this freedom has collapsed beneath my look. This disappointment will be the result of my further attempts to seek again for the Other's freedom across the object which he is for me and to find privileged attitudes or conduct which would appropriate this freedom across a total appropriation of the Other's body. These attempts, as one may suspect, are on principle doomed to failure.

But it can happen also that "to look at the look" is my original reaction to my being-for-others. This means that in my upsurge into the world, I can choose myself as looking at the Other's look and can build my subjectivity upon the collapse of the subjectivity of the Other. It is this attitude which we shall call *indifference toward others*. Then we are dealing with a kind of blindness with respect to others. But the term "blindness" must not lead us astray. I do not suffer this blindness as a state. I am my own blindness with regard to others, and this blindness includes an implicit comprehension of being-for-others; that is, of the Other's transcendence as a look. This comprehension is simply what I myself determine to hide from myself. I practice then a sort of factual solipsism; others are those forms which pass by in the street, those magic objects which are capable of acting at a distance and upon which I can act by means of specific conducts. I scarcely notice them; I act as if I were alone in the world. I brush against "people" as I brush against a wall; I avoid them as I avoid obstacles. Their freedom-as-object is for me only their "co-efficient of adversity." I do not even imagine that they can look at me. Of course they have some knowledge of me, but this knowledge does not touch me. It is a question of pure modifications of their being which do not pass from them to me and which are tainted with what we call a "suffered-subjectivity" or "subjectivity-as-object;" that is, they express what they are, not what I am, and they are the effect of my action upon them. Those "people" are functions: the ticket-collector is only the function of collecting tickets; the café

waiter is nothing but the function of serving the customers. From this point of view they will be most useful if I know their keys and those "master-words" which can release their mechanisms. Hence is derived that "realist" psychology which the seventeenth century in France has given us; hence those treatises of the eighteenth century, *How to Succeed* (*Le Moyen de parvenir*) by Beroalde de Verville, *Dangerous Connections* (*Les Liaisons dangereuses*) by Laclos, *Treatise on Ambition* (*Traité de l'ambition*) by Hérault de Séchelles, all of which give to us a practical knowledge of the Other and the art of acting upon him. In this state of blindness I concurrently ignore the Other's absolute subjectivity as the foundation of my being-in-itself and my being-for-others, in particular of my "body for others." In a sense I am reassured, I am self-confident; that is, I am in no way conscious of the fact that the Other's look can fix my possibilities and my body. I am in a state the very opposite of what we call *shyness* or *timidity*. I am at ease; I am not embarrassed by myself, for I am not outside; I do not feel myself alienated. This state of blindness can be maintained for a long time, as long as my fundamental bad faith desires; it can be extended—with relapses—over several years, over a whole life; there are men who die without—save for brief and terrifying flashes of illumination—ever having suspected what the Other is.

But even if one is entirely immersed in this state, one does not thereby cease to experience its inadequacy. And like all bad faith it is the state itself which furnishes us with the motives for getting out of it; for blindness as concerns the Other concurrently causes the disappearance of every lived apprehension of my objectivity. Nevertheless the Other as freedom and my objectivity as my alienated-self are there, unperceived, not thematized, but given in my very comprehension of the world and of my being in the world. The conductor, even if he is considered as a pure function, refers me by his very function to a being-outside—even though this being-outside is neither apprehended nor apprehensible. Hence a perpetual feeling of lack and of uneasiness. This is because my fundamental project toward the Other—whatever may be the attitude which I assume—is twofold: first there is the problem of protecting myself against the danger which is incurred by my being-outside-in-the-Other's-freedom, and second there is the problem of utilizing the Other in order finally to totalize the detotalized totality which I am, so as to close the open circle, and finally to be my own foundation. But on the one hand the Other's disappearance as look throws me back into my unjustifiable subjectivity and reduces my being to this perpetual pursued-pursuit toward an inapprehensible In-itself-for-itself. Without the Other I apprehend fully and nakedly this terrible necessity of being free which is my lot; that is, the fact that I can not put the responsibility for making-myself-be off onto anyone but myself even though I have not chosen to be and although I have been born. On the other hand although the blindness toward the Other

does in appearance release me from the fear of being in danger in the Other's freedom, it includes despite all an implicit comprehension of this freedom. It therefore places me at the extreme degree of objectivity at the very moment when I can believe myself to be an absolute and unique subjectivity since I am seen without being able to experience the fact that I am seen and without being able by means of the same experience to defend myself against my "being-seen." I am possessed without being able to turn toward the one who possesses me. In making direct proof of the Other as a look, I defend myself by putting the Other to the test, and the possibility remains for me to transform the Other into an object. But if the Other is an object for me while he is looking at me, then I am in danger without knowing it. Thus my blindness is anxiety because it is accompanied by the consciousness of a "wandering and inapprehensible" look, and I am in danger of its alienating me behind my back. This uneasiness can occasion a new attempt to get possession of the Other's freedom. But this will mean that I am going to turn back upon the Other-as-object which has been merely brushing against me and attempt now to utilize him as an instrument in order to touch his freedom. But precisely because I address myself to the object "Other" I can not ask him to account for his transcendence, and since I am myself on the level where I make an object of the Other, I can not even conceive of what I wish to appropriate. Thus I am in an irritating and contradictory attitude with respect to this object which I am considering: not only can I not obtain from him what I wish, but in addition this quest provokes a disappearance of the practical knowledge pertaining to what I wish. I engage myself in a desperate pursuit of the Other's freedom and midway I find myself engaged in a pursuit which has lost its meaning. All my efforts to bring back meaning to the pursuit result only in making me lose it further and provoking my bewilderment and my uneasiness—just as when I attempt to recover the memory of a dream and this memory melts between my fingers leaving me with a vague and irritating impression of a total knowledge but with no object, or just as when I attempt to make explicit the content of a false recollection and the very explanation causes it to melt away in translucency.

My original attempt to get hold of the Other's free subjectivity through his objectivity-for-me is sexual desire. Perhaps it will come as a surprise to see a phenomenon which is usually classified among "psycho-physiological reactions" now mentioned on the level of primary attitudes which manifest our original mode of realizing Being-for-Others. For the majority of psychologists indeed, desire, as a fact of consciousness, is in strict correlation with the nature of our sexual organs, and it is only in connection with an elaborate study of these that sexual desire can be understood. But since the differentiated structure of the body (mammalian, viviparous, etc.) and consequently the particular sexual structure (uterus, Fallopian tubes, ovaries, etc.) are in the

domain of absolute contingency and in no way derive from the ontology of "consciousness" or of the "Dasein," it seems that the same must be true for sexual desire. Just as the sex organs are a contingent and particular formation of our body, so the desire which corresponds to them would be a contingent modality of our psychic life; that is, it would be described only on the level of an empirical psychology based on biology. This is indicated sufficiently by the term sex instinct, which is reserved for desire and all the psychic structures which refer to it. The term "instinct" always in fact qualifies contingent formations of psychic life which have the double character of being co-extensive with all the duration of this life—or in any case of not deriving from our "history"—and of nevertheless not being such that they can not be deduced as belonging to the very essence of the psychic. This is why existential philosophies have not believed it necessary to concern themselves with sexuality. Heidegger, in particular, does not make the slightest allusion to it in his existential analytic with the result that his "Dasein" appears to us as asexual. Of course one may consider that it is contingent for "human reality" to be specified as "masculine" or "feminine"; of course one may say that the problem of sexual differentiation has nothing to do with that of Existence (Existenz) since man and woman equally exist.

These reasons are not wholly convincing. That sexual differentiation lies within the domain of facticity we may eventually accept. But does this mean that the For-itself is sexual "accidentally," by the pure contingency of having this particular body? Can we admit that this tremendous matter of the sexual life comes as a kind of addition to the human condition? Yet it appears at first glance that desire and its opposite, sexual repulsion, are fundamental structures of being-for-others. It is evident that if sexuality derives its origin from sex as a physiological and contingent determination of man, it can not be indispensable to the being of the For-Others. But do we not have the right to ask whether the problem is not perchance of the same order as that which we encountered apropos of sensations and sense organs? Man, it is said, is a sexual being because he possesses genitals. And if the reverse were true? If genitals were only the instrument and, so to speak, the image of a fundamental sexuality? If man possessed genitals only because he is originally and fundamentally a sexual being as a being who exists in the world in relation with other men? Infantile sexuality precedes the physiological maturation of the sex organs. Men who have become eunuchs do not thereby cease to feel desire. Nor do many old men. The fact of being able to make use of a sex organ fit to fertilize and to procure enjoyment represents only one phase and one aspect of our sexual life. There is one mode of sexuality "with the possibility of satisfaction," and the developed genitals represent and make concrete this possibility. But there are other modes of sexuality of the type which can not get satisfaction, and if we take these modes into account we are forced to

recognize that sexuality appears with birth and disappears only with death. Moreover neither the tumescence of the penis nor any other physiological phenomenon can ever explain or provoke sexual desire—no more than the vaso-constriction or the dilation of the pupils (or the mere consciousness of these physiological modifications) will be able to explain or to provoke fear. In one case as in the other although the body plays an important role, we must—in order to understand it—refer to being-in-the-world and to being-for-others. I desire a human being, not an insect or a mollusk, and I desire him (or her) as he is and as I am in situation in the world and as he is an Other for me and as I am an Other for him.

The fundamental problem of sexuality can therefore be formulated thus: is sexuality a contingent accident bound to our physiological nature, or is it a necessary structure of being-for-itself-for-others? From the sole fact that the question can be posited in these terms, we see that we must go back to ontology to decide it. Moreover ontology can decide this question only by determining and fixing the meaning of sexual existence for-the-Other. To have sexual organs means—in accordance with the description of the body which we attempted in the preceding chapter—to exist sexually for an Other who exists sexually for me. And it must be well understood that at first this Other is not necessarily *for me*—nor I for him—a heterosexual existent but only a sexed being. Considered from the point of view of the For-itself, this apprehension of the Other's sexuality could not be the pure disinterested contemplation of his primary or secondary sexual characteristics. My first apprehension of the Other as sexed does not come when I conclude from the distribution of his hair, from the coarseness of his hands, the sound of his voice, his strength that he is of the masculine sex. We are dealing there with derived conclusions which refer to an original state. The first apprehension of the Other's sexuality in so far as it is lived and suffered can be only *desire*; it is by desiring the Other (or by discovering myself as incapable of desiring him) or by apprehending his desire for me that I discover his being-sexed. Desire reveals to me simultaneously my being-sexed and his being-sexed, my body as sex and his body. Here therefore in order to decide the nature and ontological position of sex we are referred to the study of desire. What therefore is desire?

And first, desire of what?

We must abandon straight off the idea that desire is the desire of pleasure or the desire for the cessation of a pain. For we can not see how the subject could get out of this state of immanence so as to "attach" his desire to an object. Every subjectivist and immanentist theory will fail to explain how we desire a particular woman and not simply our sexual satisfaction. It is best therefore to define desire by its transcendent object. Nevertheless it would be wholly inaccurate to say that desire is a desire for "physical possession" of the desired object—if by "possess" we mean here "to make love to." Of course

the sexual act for a moment frees us from desire, and in certain cases it can be posited explicitly as the hoped-for issue of the desire—when desire, for example, is painful and fatiguing. But in this case it is necessary that the desire itself be the object which is posited as "to be overcome," and this can be accomplished only by means of a reflective consciousness. But desire by itself is non-reflective; therefore it could never posit itself as an object to be overcome. Only a *roué* represents his desire to himself, treats it as an object, excites it, "turns it off," varies the means of assuaging it, etc. But in this case, we must observe, it is the desire itself which becomes the desirable. The error here stems from the fact that we have learned that the sexual act suppresses the desire. We have therefore added on a bit of knowledge to the desire and from outside we have added pleasure as desire's normal satisfaction—for reasons external to the essence of desire (e.g., procreation, the sacred character of maternity, the exceptional strength of the pleasure provoked by ejaculation, the symbolic value attached to the sexual act). Thus the average man through mental sluggishness and desire to conform can conceive of no other goal for his desire than ejaculation. This is what has allowed people to conceive of desire as an instinct whose origin and end are strictly physiological since in man, for example, it would have as its cause the erection and as its final limit the ejaculation. But desire by itself by no means implies the sexual act; desire does not thematically posit it, does not even suggest it in outline, as one sees when it is a question of the desire of very young children or of adults who are ignorant of the "technique" of love. Similarly desire is not a desire of any special amorous practice; this is sufficiently proved by the diversity of sexual practices, which vary with social groups. In a general way desire is not a desire of *doing*. The "doing" is after the event, is added on to the desire from outside and necessitates a period of apprenticeship; there is an amorous technique which has its own ends and means. Therefore since desire can not posit its suppression as its supreme end nor single out for its ultimate goal any particular act, it is purely and simply the desire of a transcendent object. Here again we find that affective intentionality of which we spoke in preceding chapters and which Scheler and Husserl have described.

But what is the object of desire? Shall we say that desire is the desire of a body? In one sense this can not be denied. But we must take care to understand this correctly. To be sure it is the body which disturbs us: an arm or a half-exposed breast or perhaps a foot. But we must realize at the start that we desire the arm or the uncovered breast only on the ground of the presence of the whole body as an organic totality. The body itself as totality may be hidden. I may see only a bare arm. But the body is there. It is from the standpoint of the body that I apprehend the arm as an arm. The body is as much present, as adherent to the arm which I see as the designs of the rug, which are hidden by the feet of the table, are present and adherent to those designs which I see.

And my desire is not mistaken; it is addressed not to a sum of physiological elements but to a total form—better yet, to a form in situation. A particular attitude, as we shall see later, does much to provoke desire. Now along with the attitude the surroundings are given and finally the world. But here suddenly we are at the opposite pole from a simple physiological pruritus; desire posits the world and desires the body in terms of the world and the beautiful hand in terms of the body. It follows exactly the process which we described in the preceding chapter, that by which we apprehended the Other's body from the standpoint of his situation in the world. Moreover there is nothing in this which should surprise us since desire is nothing but one of the great forms which can be assumed by the revelation of the Other's body. Yet precisely for this reason we do not desire the body as a purely material object; a purely material object is not in situation. Thus this organic totality which is immediately present to desire is desirable only in so far as it reveals not only life but also an appropriate consciousness. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the Other's being-in-situation which desire reveals is of an entirely original type. Furthermore the consciousness here considered is still only one property of the desired object; that is, it is nothing but the sense of flow of the objects in the world, precisely in so far as this flow is cut off, localized, and made a part of my world. To be sure, one can desire a woman who is asleep, but one desires her in so far as this sleep appears on the ground of consciousness. Consciousness therefore remains always at the horizon of the desired body; it makes the meaning and the unity of the body. A living body as an organic totality in situation with consciousness at the horizon: such is the object to which desire is addressed. What does desire wish from this object? We can not determine this until we have answered a preliminary question: *Who is the one who desires?*

The answer is clear. *I am* the one who desires, and desire is a particular mode of my subjectivity. Desire is consciousness since it can be only as a non-positional consciousness of itself. Nevertheless we need not hold that the desiring consciousness differs from the cognitive consciousness, for example, only in the nature of its object. For the For-itself, to choose itself as desire is not to produce a desire while remaining indifferent and unchanged—as the Stoic cause produces its effect. The For-itself puts itself on a certain plane of existence which is not the same, for example, as that of a For-itself which chooses itself as a metaphysical being. Every consciousness, as we have seen, supports a certain relation with its own facticity. But this relation can vary from one mode of consciousness to another. The facticity of a pain-consciousness, for example, is a facticity discovered in a perpetual flight. The case is not the same for the facticity of desire. The man who desires exists his body in a particular mode and thereby places himself on a particular level of existence. In fact everyone will agree that desire is not only *longing*, a clear and

translucent *longing* which directs itself through our body toward a certain object. Desire is defined as *trouble*. The notion of "trouble" can help us better to determine the nature of desire. We contrast troubled water with transparent water, a troubled look with a clear look. Troubled water remains water; it preserves the fluidity and the essential characteristics of water; but its translucency is "troubled" by an inapprehensible presence which makes one with it, which is everywhere and nowhere, and which is given as a clogging of the water by itself. To be sure, we can explain the troubled quality by the presence of fine solid particles suspended in the liquid, but this explanation is that of the scientist. Our original apprehension of the troubled water is given us as changed by the presence of an invisible *something* which is not distinct from this water and which is manifested as a pure factual resistance. If the desiring consciousness is troubled, it is because it is analogous to the troubled water.

To make this analogy precise, we should compare sexual desire with another form of desire—for example, with hunger. Hunger, like sexual desire, supposes a certain state of the body, defined here as the impoverishment of the blood, abundant salivary secretion, contractions of the tunica, etc. These various phenomena are described and classified from the point of view of the Other. For the For-itself they are manifested as pure facticity. But this facticity does not compromise the nature of the For-itself, for the For-itself immediately flees it toward its possibles; that is, toward a certain state of satisfied-hunger which, as we have pointed out in Part Two, is the In-itself-for-itself of hunger. Thus hunger is a pure surpassing of corporal facticity; and to the extent that the For-itself becomes conscious of this facticity in a non-thetic form, the For-itself becomes conscious of it as a surpassed facticity. The body here is indeed the past, the passed-beyond. In sexual desire, to be sure, we can find that structure common to all appetites—a state of the body. The Other can note various physiological modifications (the erection of the penis, the turgescence of the nipples of the breasts, changes in the circulatory system, rise in temperature, etc.) The desiring consciousness exists this facticity; it is in terms of this facticity—we could even say through it—that the desired body appears as desirable. Nevertheless if we limited ourselves to this description, sexual desire would appear as a *distinct and clear desire*, comparable to the desire of eating and drinking. It would be a pure flight from facticity toward other possibles. Now everyone is aware that there is a great abyss between sexual desire and other appetites. We all know the famous saying, "Make love to a pretty woman when you want her just as you would drink a glass of cold water when you are thirsty." We know also how unsatisfactory and even shocking this statement is to the mind. This is because when we do desire a woman, we do not keep ourselves wholly outside the desire; the desire *compromises* me; I am the accomplice of my desire. Or rather the desire has fallen wholly into complicity with the body. Let any man consult his own

experience; he knows how consciousness is clogged, so to speak, by sexual desire; it seems that one is invaded by facticity, that one ceases to flee it and that one slides toward a passive consent to the desire. At other moments it seems that facticity invades consciousness in its very flight and renders consciousness opaque to itself. It is like a yeasty tumescence of fact.

The expressions which we use to designate desire sufficiently show its specificity. We say that it *takes hold of* you, that it *overwhelms* you, that it *paralyzes* you. Can one imagine employing the same words to designate hunger? Can one think of a hunger which "would overwhelm" one? Strictly speaking, this would be meaningful only when applied to impressions of emptiness. But, on the contrary, even the feeblest desire is already overwhelming. One can not hold it at a distance as one can with hunger and "think of something else" while keeping desire as an undifferentiated tonality of non-thetic consciousness which would be desire and which would serve as a sign of the body-as-ground. But *desire is consent to desire*. The heavy, fainting consciousness slides toward a languor comparable to sleep. Every one has been able to observe the appearance of desire in another. Suddenly the man who desires becomes a heavy tranquillity which is frightening; his eyes are fixed and appear half-closed, his movements are stamped with a heavy and sticky sweetness; many seem to be falling asleep. And when one "struggles against desire," it is precisely this languor which one resists. If one succeeds in resisting it, the desire before disappearing will become wholly distinct and clear, like hunger. And then there will be "an awakening." One will feel that one is lucid but with heavy head and beating heart. Naturally all these descriptions are inexact; they show rather the way in which we interpret desire. However they indicate the primary fact of desire: in desire consciousness chooses to exist its facticity on another plane. It no longer flees it; it attempts to subordinate itself to its own contingency—as it apprehends another body—i.e., another contingency—as desirable. In this sense desire is not only the revelation of the Other's body but the revelation of my own body. And this, not in so far as this body is an instrument or a point of view, but in so far as it is pure facticity; that is, a simple contingent form of the necessity of my contingency. I feel my skin and my muscles and my breath, and I feel them not in order to transcend them toward something as in emotion or appetite but as a living and inert datum, not simply as the pliable and discrete instrument of my action upon the world but as a passion by which I am engaged in the world and in danger in the world. The For-itself is not this contingency; it continues to exist but it experiences the vertigo of its own body. Or, if you prefer, this vertigo is precisely its way of existing its body. The non-thetic consciousness allows itself to go over to the body, wishes to be the body and to be only body. In desire the body instead of being only the contingency which the For-itself flees toward

possibles which are peculiar to it, becomes at the same time the most immediate possible of the For-itself. Desire is not only the desire of the Other's body; it is—within the unity of a single act—the non-thetically lived project of being swallowed up in the body. Thus the final state of sexual desire can be swooning as the final stage of consent to the body. It is in this sense that desire can be called the desire of one body for another body. It is in fact an appetite directed toward the Other's body, and it is lived as the vertigo of the For-itself before its own body. The being which desires is consciousness *making itself body*.

But granted that desire is a consciousness which makes itself body in order to appropriate the Other's body apprehended as an organic totality in situation with consciousness on the horizon—what then is the meaning of desire? That is, why does consciousness make itself body—or vainly attempt to do so—and what does it expect from the object of its desire? The answer is easy if we realize that in desire I make myself flesh in the presence of the Other in order to appropriate the Other's flesh. This means that it is not merely a question of my grasping the Other's shoulders or thighs or of my drawing a body over against me: it is necessary as well for me to apprehend them with this particular instrument which is the body as it produces a clogging of consciousness. In this sense when I grasp these shoulders, it can be said not only that my body is a means for touching the shoulders but that the Other's shoulders are a means for my discovering my body as the fascinating revelation of facticity—that is, as flesh. Thus desire is the desire to appropriate a body as this appropriation reveals to me my body as flesh. But this body which I wish to appropriate, I wish to appropriate as flesh. Now at first the Other's body is not flesh for me; it appears as a synthetic form in action. As we have seen, we can not perceive the Other's body as pure flesh; that is, in the form of an isolated object maintaining external relations with other things. The Other's body is originally a body in situation; flesh on the contrary, appears as the *pure contingency of presence*. Ordinarily it is hidden by cosmetics, clothing, etc.; in particular it is hidden by movements. Nothing is less "in the flesh" than a dancer even though she is nude. Desire is an attempt to strip the body of its movements as of its clothing and to make it exist as pure flesh; it is an attempt to *incarnate* the Other's body.

It is in this sense that the caress is an appropriation of the Other's body. It is evident that if caresses were only a stroking or brushing of the surface, there could be no relation between them and the powerful desire which they claim to fulfill; they would remain on the surface like looks and could not appropriate the Other for me. We know well the deceptiveness of that famous expression, "The contact of two epidermises." The caress does not want simple contact; it seems that man alone can reduce the caress to a contact, and then he loses its unique meaning. This is because the caress is not a simple stroking; it is a

shaping. In caressing the Other I cause her⁷ flesh to be born beneath my caress, under my fingers. The caress is the ensemble of those rituals which incarnate the Other. But, someone will object, was the Other not already incarnated? To be precise, no. The Other's flesh did not exist explicitly for me since I grasped the Other's body in situation; neither did it exist for her since she transcended it toward her possibilities and toward the object. The caress causes the Other to be born as flesh for me and for herself. And by flesh we do not mean a part of the body such as the dermis, the connective tissues or, specifically, epidermis; neither need we assume that the body will be "at rest" or dozing although often it is thus that its flesh is best revealed. But the caress reveals the flesh by stripping the body of its action, by cutting it off from the possibilities which surround it; the caress is designed to uncover the web of inertia beneath the action—i.e., the pure "being-there"—which sustains it. For example, by clasping the Other's hand and caressing it, I discover underneath the act of clasping, which this hand is at first, an extension of flesh and bone which can be grasped; and similarly my look caresses when it discovers underneath this leaping which is at first the dancer's legs, the curved extension of the thighs. Thus the caress is in no way distinct from the desire: to caress with the eyes and to desire are one and the same. *Desire is expressed by the caress as thought is by language.* The caress reveals the Other's flesh as flesh to myself and to the Other. But it reveals this flesh in a very special way. To take hold of the Other reveals to her her inertia and her passivity as a transcendence-transcended; but this is not to caress her. In the caress it is not my body as a synthetic form in action which caresses the Other; it is my body as flesh which causes the Other's flesh to be born. The caress is designed to cause the Other's body to be born, through pleasure, for the Other—and for myself—as a touched passivity in such a way that my body is made flesh in order to touch the Other's body with its own passivity; that is, by caressing itself with the Other's body rather than by caressing her. This is why amorous gestures have a languidness which could almost be said to be deliberate; it is not a question so much of taking hold of a part of the Other's body as of placing one's own body against the Other's body. Not so much to push or to touch in the active sense but to place against. It seems that I lift my own arm as an inanimate object and that I place it against the flank of the desired woman, that my fingers which I run over her arm are inert at the end of my hand. Thus the revelation of the Other's flesh is made through my own flesh; in desire and in the caress which expresses desire, I incarnate myself in order to realize the incarnation of the Other. The caress by realizing the Other's incarnation reveals

⁷ The pronouns in French are masculine because they refer to *autrui* (the Other) which may stand for either man or woman but which, grammatically, is masculine. The feminine sounds more natural in English. Tr.

to me my own incarnation; that is, I make myself flesh in order to impel the Other to realize *for-herself* and for me her own flesh, and my caresses cause my flesh to be born for me in so far as it is for the Other flesh causing her to be born as flesh. I make her enjoy my flesh through her flesh in order to compel her to feel herself flesh. And so possession truly appears as a double reciprocal incarnation. Thus in desire there is an attempt at the incarnation of consciousness (this is what we called earlier the clogging of consciousness, a troubled consciousness, etc.) in order to realize the incarnation of the Other.

It remains to determine what is the motive of desire—or if you prefer, its meaning. For anyone who has so far followed the descriptions which we have here attempted will have understood long before this that for the For-itself, to be is to choose its way of being on the ground of the absolute contingency of its being-there. Desire therefore does not come to consciousness as heat comes to the piece of iron which I hold near the flame. Consciousness chooses itself as desire. For this, of course, there must be a motive; I do not desire just anything at any time. But as we showed in Part One of this book, the motive is raised in terms of the past, and consciousness by turning back upon it, confers on the motive its weight and its value. There is therefore no difference between the choice of the motive of the desire and the meaning of the upsurge—in the three ekstastic dimensions of duration—of a consciousness which makes itself desiring. Desire—like emotions or the imagining attitude or in general all the attitudes of the For-itself—has a meaning which constitutes it and surpasses it. The description which we have just attempted would hold no interest if it did not lead us to pose a further question: why does consciousness nihilate itself in the form of desire?

One or two preliminary observations will help us in replying to this question. In the first place we must note that the desiring consciousness does not desire its object on the ground of a world which is unchanged. In other words, it is not a question of causing the desirable to appear as a certain "this" on the ground of a world which would preserve its instrumental relations with us and its organization in complexes of instrumentality. The same is true of desire as of emotion. We have pointed out elsewhere that emotion is not the apprehension of an exciting object in an unchanged world; rather since it corresponds to a global modification of consciousness and of its relations to the world, emotion expresses itself by means of a radical alteration of the world.⁸ Similarly sexual desire is a radical modification of the For-itself; since the For-itself makes itself be on another plane of being, it determines itself to exist its body differently, to make itself be clogged by its facticity. Correlatively the world must come into being for the For-itself in a new way. There is a world of desire. If my body is no longer felt

⁸ Cf. *The Emotions*.

as the instrument which can not be utilized by any instrument—i.e., as the synthetic organization of my acts in the world—if it is lived as flesh, then it is as a reference to my flesh that I apprehend the objects in the world. This means that I make myself passive in relation to them and that they are revealed to me from the point of view of this passivity, in it and through it (for passivity is the body, and the body does not cease to be a point of view). Objects then become the transcendent ensemble which reveals my incarnation to me. A contact with them is a *caress*; that is, my perception is not the utilization of the object and the surpassing of the present in view of an end, but to perceive an object when I am in the desiring attitude is to caress myself with it. Thus I am sensitive not so much to the form of the object and to its instrumentality, as to its matter (gritty, smooth, tepid, greasy, rough, etc.). In my desiring perception I discover something like a flesh of objects. My shirt rubs against my skin, and I feel it. What is ordinarily for me an object most remote becomes the immediately sensible; the warmth of air, the breath of the wind, the rays of sunshine, etc.; all are present to me in a certain way, as posited upon me without distance and revealing my flesh by means of their flesh. From this point of view desire is not only the clogging of a consciousness by its facticity; it is correlatively the ensnarement of a body by the world. The world is made *ensnaring*; consciousness is engulfed in a body which is engulfed in the world.⁹ Thus the ideal which is proposed here is being-in-the-midst-of-the-world; the For-itself attempts to realize a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world as the ultimate project of its being-in-the-world; that is why sensual pleasure is so often linked with death—which is also a metamorphosis or “being-in-the-midst-of-the-world.” There is, for example, the theme of “pseudo-death” so abundantly treated in all literatures.

But desire is not first nor primarily a relation to the world. The world here appears only as the ground for explicit relations with the Other. Usually it is on the occasion of the Other’s *presence* that the world is revealed as the world of desire. Accessorily it can be revealed as such on the occasion of the *absence* of a particular Other or even on occasion of the absence of *all* Others. But we have already observed that absence is a concrete existential relation between the Other and me, which appears on the original ground of Being-for-others. I can, of course, by discovering my body in solitude, abruptly realize myself as flesh, “suffocate” with desire, and experience the world as “suffocating.” But this solitary desire is an appeal to either a particular Other or the presence of the undifferentiated Other. I desire to be revealed as flesh by means of and for

⁹ Naturally it is necessary to take into account here as everywhere the coefficient of adversity in things. These objects are not only “caressing.” But within the general perspective of the caress, they can appear also as “anti-caresses”; that is, with a rudeness, a cacophony, a harshness which—precisely because we are in the state of desire—offend us in a way that is unbearable.

another flesh. I try to cast a spell over the Other and make him appear; and the world of desire indicates by a sort of prepared space the Other whom I am calling. Thus desire is by no means a physiological accident, an itching of our flesh which may fortuitously direct us on the Other’s flesh. Quite the contrary, in order for my flesh to exist and for the Other’s flesh to exist, consciousness must necessarily be preliminarily shaped in the mould of desire. This desire is a primitive mode of our relations with the Other which constitutes the Other as desirable flesh on the ground of a world of desire.

We are now in a position to make explicit the profound meaning of desire. In the primordial reaction to the Other’s look I constitute myself as a look. But if I look at his look in order to defend myself against the Other’s freedom and to transcend it as freedom, then both the freedom and the look of the Other collapse. I see eyes; I see a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. Henceforth the Other escapes me. I should like to act upon his freedom, to appropriate it, or at least, to make the Other’s freedom recognize my freedom. But this freedom is dead; it is no longer in the world in which I encounter the Other-as-object, for its characteristic is to be transcendent to the world. To be sure, I can grasp the Other, grab hold of him, knock him down. I can, providing I have the power, compel him to perform this or that act, to say certain words. But everything happens as if I wished to get hold of a man who runs away and leaves only his coat in my hands. It is the coat, it is the outer shell which I possess. I shall never get hold of more than a body, a psychic object in the midst of the world. And although all the acts of this body can be interpreted in terms of freedom, I have completely lost the key to this interpretation; I can act only upon a facticity. If I have preserved my awareness of a transcendent freedom in the Other, this awareness irritates me in vain by indicating a reality which is on principle beyond my reach and by revealing to me every instant the fact that I am missing it, that everything which I do is done “blindly” and takes on a meaning elsewhere in a sphere of existence from which I am on principle excluded. I can make the Other beg for mercy or ask my pardon, but I shall always be ignorant of what this submission means for and in the Other’s freedom.

Moreover at the same time my awareness is altered; I lose the exact comprehension of *being-looked-at*, which is, as we know, the only way in which I can make proof of the Other’s freedom. Thus I am engaged in an enterprise the meaning of which I have forgotten. I am bewildered confronting this Other as I see him and touch him but am at a loss as to what to do with him. I have barely preserved the vague memory of a certain *Beyond* which is beyond what I see and what I touch, a Beyond concerning which I know that this is precisely what I want to appropriate. It is now that I *make myself desire*. Desire is a conduct of enchantment. Since I can grasp the Other only in his objective facticity, the problem is to ensnare his freedom within this facticity. It is

necessary that his freedom be "caught" in it as the cream is caught up by a person skimming milk. So the Other's For-itself must come to play on the surface of his body, and be extended all through his body; and by touching this body I should finally touch the Other's free subjectivity. This is the true meaning of the word possession. It is certain that I want to possess the Other's body, but I want to possess it in so far as it is itself a "possessed"; that is, in so far as the Other's consciousness is identified with his body. Such is the impossible ideal of desire: to possess the Other's transcendence as pure transcendence and at the same time as body, to reduce the Other to his simple facticity because he is then in the midst of my world but to bring it about that this facticity is a perpetual appresentation of his nihilating transcendence.

But in truth the Other's facticity (his pure being-there) can not be given to my intuition without a profound modification of my own unique being. In so far as I surpass my personal facticity toward my own possibilities, so far as I exist my facticity in an impulse of flight, I surpass as well not only the Other's facticity but also the pure existence of things. In my very upsurge I cause them to emerge in instrumental existence; their pure and simple being is hidden by the complexity of indicative references which constitute their *manageability* and their *instrumentality*. To pick up a fountain pen is already to surpass my being-there toward the possibility of writing, but it is also to surpass the pen as a simple existent toward its potentiality and once again to surpass this potentiality toward certain future existents which are the "words-about-to-be-formed" and finally the "book-about-to-be-written." This is why the being of existents is ordinarily veiled by their function. The same is true for the being of the Other. If the Other appears to me as a servant, as an employee, as a civil servant, or simply as the passerby whom I must avoid or as this voice which is speaking in the next room and which I try to *understand* (or on the other hand, which I want to forget because it "keeps me from sleeping"), it is not only the Other's extramundane transcendence which escapes me but also his "being-there" as a pure contingent existence in the midst of the world. This is because it is exactly in so far as I treat him as a servant, or as an office clerk, that I surpass his potentialities (transcendence-transcended, dead-possibilities) by the very project by which I surpass and nihilate my own facticity. If I want to return to his simple presence and taste it as presence, it is necessary for me to reduce myself to my own presence. Every surpassing of my being-there is in fact a surpassing of the Other's being-there. And if the world is around me as the situation which I surpass toward myself, then I apprehend the Other in terms of his situation; that is, already as a center of reference.

Of course the desired Other must also be apprehended in situation: I desire a woman in the world, standing near a table, lying naked on a bed, or seated at my side. But if the desire flows back from the situation upon the being who is in

situation, it is in order to dissolve the situation and to corrode the Other's relations in the world. The movement of desire which goes from the surrounding "environment" to the desired person is an isolating movement which destroys the environment and cuts off the person in question in order to effect the emergence of his pure facticity. But this is possible only if each object which refers me to the person is fixed in its pure contingency at the same time that it indicates him to me; consequently this return movement to the Other's being is a movement of return to myself as pure being-there. I destroy my possibilities in order to destroy those of the world and to constitute the world as a "world of desire"; that is, as a destructured world which has lost its meaning, a world in which things jut out like fragments of pure matter, like brute qualities. Since the For-itself is a choice, this is possible only if I project myself toward a new possibility: that of being "absorbed by my body as ink is by a blotter," that of being reduced to my pure being-there. This project, inasmuch as it is not simply conceived and thematically posited but rather lived—that is, inasmuch as its realization is not distinct from its conception—is "disturbance" or "trouble." Indeed we must not understand the preceding descriptions as meaning that I deliberately put myself in a state of disturbance with the purpose of rediscovering the Other's pure "being-there." Desire is a lived project which does not suppose any preliminary deliberation but which includes within itself its meaning and its interpretation. As soon as I throw myself toward the Other's facticity, as soon as I wish to push aside his acts and his functions so as to touch him in his flesh, I incarnate myself, for I can neither wish nor even conceive of the incarnation of the Other except in and by means of my own incarnation. Even the empty outline of a desire (as when one absentmindedly "undresses a woman with one's look") is an empty outline of troubled disturbance, for I desire only with my trouble, and I disrobe the Other only by disrobing myself; I foreshadow and outline the Other's flesh only by outlining my own flesh.

But my *incarnation* is not only the preliminary condition of the appearance of the Other as flesh to my eyes. My goal is to cause him to be incarnated as flesh in his own eyes. It is necessary that I drag him onto the level of pure facticity; he must be reduced for himself to being only flesh. Thus I shall be reassured as to the permanent possibilities of a transcendence which can at any instant transcend me on all sides. This transcendence will be no more than this; it will remain inclosed within the limits of an object; in addition and because of this very fact, I shall be able to touch it, feel it, possess it. Thus the other meaning of my incarnation—that is, of my troubled disturbance—is that it is a magical language. I make myself flesh so as to fascinate the Other by my nakedness and to provoke in her the desire for my flesh—exactly because this desire will be nothing else in the Other but an incarnation similar to mine. Thus desire is an invitation to desire. It is my flesh alone which knows

how to find the road to the Other's flesh, and I lay my flesh next to her flesh so as to awaken her to the meaning of flesh. In the caress when I slowly lay my inert hand against the Other's flank, I am making that flank feel my flesh, and this can be achieved only if it renders itself inert. The shiver of pleasure which it feels is precisely the awakening of its consciousness as flesh. If I extend my hand, remove it, or clasp it, then it becomes again body in action; but by the same stroke I make my hand disappear as flesh. To let it run indifferently over the length of her body, to reduce my hand to a soft brushing almost stripped of meaning, to a pure existence, to a pure matter, slightly silky, slightly satiny, slightly rough—this is to give up for oneself being the one who establishes references and unfolds distances; it is to be made pure mucous membrane. At this moment the communion of desire is realized; each consciousness by incarnating itself has realized the incarnation of the other; each one's disturbance has caused disturbance to be born in the Other and is thereby so much enriched. By each caress I experience my own flesh and the Other's flesh through my flesh, and I am conscious that this flesh which I feel and appropriate through my flesh is flesh-realized-by-the-Other. It is not by chance that desire while aiming at the body as a whole attains it especially through masses of flesh which are very little differentiated, grossly nerveless, hardly capable of spontaneous movement, through breasts, buttocks, thighs, stomach: these form a sort of image of pure facticity. This is why also the true caress is the contact of two bodies in their mostly fleshy parts, the contact of stomachs and breasts; the caressing hand is too clever, too much like a perfected instrument. But the full pressing together of the flesh of two people against one another is the true goal of desire.

Nevertheless desire is itself doomed to failure. As we have seen, coitus, which ordinarily terminates desire, is not its essential goal. To be sure, several elements of our sexual structure are the necessary expression of the nature of desire, in particular the erection of the penis and the clitoris. This is nothing else in fact but the affirmation of the flesh by the flesh. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that it should not be accomplished *voluntarily*; that is, that we can not use it as an instrument but that we are dealing with a biological and autonomous phenomenon whose autonomous and involuntary expression accompanies and signifies the submerging of consciousness in the body. It must be clearly understood that no fine, prehensile organ provided with striated muscles can be a sex organ, a sex. If sex were to appear as an organ, it could be only one manifestation of the vegetative life. But contingency reappears if we consider that there are sexes and particular sexes. Consider especially the penetration of the female by the male. This does, to be sure, conform to that radical incarnation which desire wishes to be. (We may in fact observe the organic passivity of sex in coitus. It is the whole body which advances and withdraws, which carries sex forward or withdraws it. Hands

help to introduce the penis; the penis itself appears as an instrument which one manages, which one makes penetrate, which one withdraws, which one utilizes. And similarly the opening and the lubrication of the vagina can not be obtained voluntarily.) Yet coitus remains a perfectly contingent modality of our sexual life. It is as much a pure contingency as sexual pleasure proper. In truth the ensnarement of consciousness in the body normally has its own peculiar result—that is, a sort of particular ecstasy in which consciousness is no more than consciousness (of) the body and consequently a reflective consciousness of corporeality. Pleasure in fact—like too keen a pain—motivates the appearance of reflective consciousness which is “attention to pleasure.”

But pleasure is the death and the failure of desire. It is the death of desire because it is not only its fulfillment but its limit and its end. This, moreover, is only an organic contingency: it *happens* that the incarnation is manifested by erection and that the erection ceases with ejaculation. But in addition pleasure closes the sluice to desire because it motivates the appearance of a reflective consciousness of pleasure, whose object becomes a reflective enjoyment; that is, it is attention to the incarnation of the *For-itself* which is reflected-on and by the same token it is forgetful of the Other's incarnation. Here we are no longer within the province of contingency. Of course it remains contingent that the passage to the fascinated reflection should be effected on the occasion of that particular mode of incarnation which is pleasure (although there are numerous cases of passage to the reflective without the intervention of pleasure), but there is a permanent danger for desire in so far as it is an attempt at incarnation. This is because consciousness by incarnating itself loses sight of the Other's incarnation, and its own incarnation absorbs it to the point of becoming the ultimate goal. In this case the pleasure of caressing is transformed into the pleasure of being caressed; what the *For-itself* demands is to feel within it its own body expanding to the point of nausea. Immediately there is a rupture of contact and desire misses its goal. It happens very often that this failure of desire motivates a passage to masochism; that is, consciousness apprehending itself in its facticity demands to be apprehended and transcended as body-for-the-Other by means of the Other's consciousness. In this case the Other-as-object collapses, the Other-as-look appears, and my consciousness is a consciousness swooning in its flesh beneath the Other's look.

Yet conversely desire stands at the origin of its own failure inasmuch as it is a desire of taking and of appropriating. It is not enough merely that troubled disturbance should effect the Other's incarnation; desire is the desire to appropriate this incarnated consciousness. Therefore desire is naturally continued not by caresses but by acts of taking and of penetration. The caress has for its goal only to impregnate the Other's body with consciousness and

freedom. Now it is necessary to take this saturated body, to seize it, to enter into it. But by the very fact that I now attempt to seize the Other's body, to pull it toward me, to grab hold of it, to bite it, my own body *ceases* to be flesh and becomes again the synthetic instrument which I am. And by the same token the Other *ceases* to be an incarnation; she becomes once more an instrument in the midst of the world which I apprehend in terms of its situation. Her consciousness, which played on the surface of her flesh and which I tried to *taste* with my flesh,¹⁰ disappears under my sight; she remains no more than an object with object-images inside her. At the same time my disturbance disappears. This does not mean that I cease to desire but that desire has lost its matter; it has become *abstract*; it is a desire to handle and to take. I insist on taking the Other's body but my very insistence makes my incarnation disappear. At present I surpass my body anew toward my own possibilities (here the possibility of taking), and similarly the Other's body which is surpassed toward its potentialities falls from the level of *flesh* to the level of pure object. This situation brings about the rupture of that reciprocity of incarnation which was precisely the unique goal of desire. The Other may remain troubled; she may remain *flesh for herself*, and I can understand it. But it is a flesh which I no longer apprehend through my flesh, a flesh which is no longer anything but the property of an Other-as-object and not the incarnation of an Other-as-consciousness. Thus *I am body* (a synthetic totality in situation) confronting a *flesh*. I find myself in almost the same situation as that from which I tried to escape by means of desire; that is, I try to utilize the Other-as-object in order to call her to account for her transcendence, and precisely because she is *all* object she escapes me with *all* her transcendence. Once again I have even lost the precise comprehension of what I seek and yet I am engaged in the search. I take and discover myself in the process of taking, but what I take in my hands is *something else* than what I wanted to take. I feel this and I suffer from it but without being capable of saying what I wanted to take; for along with my troubled disturbance the very comprehension of my desire escapes me. I am like a sleeper who awakens to find himself in the process of gripping the edge of the bed while he cannot recall the nightmare which provoked his gesture. It is this situation which is at the origin of *sadism*.

Sadism is passion, dryness, and relentlessness. It is relentlessness because it is the state of a For-itself which apprehends itself as engaged without understanding in what it is engaged and which persists in its engagement without having a clear consciousness of the goal which it has set for itself or a precise recollection of the value which it has attached to this engagement. It is dryness because it appears when desire is emptied of its trouble. The sadist

¹⁰ Doña Prouhèze (Soulé de Satin, 11^e journée): "Il ne connaîtra pas le goût que j'ai." (He will not know the taste which I have.)

has reapprehended his body as a synthetic totality and center of action; he has resumed the perpetual flight from his own facticity. He experiences himself in the face of the Other as pure transcendence. He has a horror of troubled disturbance *for himself* and considers it a humiliating state; it is possible also that he simply can not *realize* it in himself. To the extent that he coldly persists, that he is at once relentlessness and dryness the sadist is impassioned. His goal, like that of desire, is to seize and to make use of the Other not only as the Other-as-object but as a pure incarnated transcendence. But in sadism the emphasis is put on the instrumental appropriation of the incarnated-Other. The "moment" of sadism in sexuality is the one in which the incarnated For-itself surpasses its own incarnation in order to appropriate the incarnation of the Other. Thus sadism is a refusal to be incarnated and a flight from all facticity and at the same time an effort to get hold of the Other's facticity. But as the sadist neither can nor will realize the Other's incarnation by means of his own incarnation, as due to this very fact he has no resource except to treat the Other as an instrumental-object, he seeks to utilize the Other's body as a tool to make the Other realize an incarnated existence. Sadism is an effort to incarnate the Other through violence, and this incarnation "by force" must be already the appropriation and utilization of the Other. Sadism like desire seeks to strip the Other of the acts which hide him. It seeks to reveal the flesh beneath the action. But whereas the For-itself in desire loses itself in its own flesh in order to reveal to the Other that he too is flesh, the sadist refuses his own flesh at the same time that he uses instruments to reveal by force the Other's flesh to him. The object of sadism is immediate appropriation. But sadism is a blind alley, for it not only enjoys the possession of the Other's flesh but at the same time in direct connection with this flesh, it enjoys its own non-incarnation. It wants the non-reciprocity of sexual relations, it enjoys being a free appropriating power confronting a freedom captured by flesh. That is why the sadist wants to make the flesh present to the Other's consciousness *differently*. He wants to make it present by treating the Other as an instrument; he makes it present in pain. In pain facticity invades consciousness, and ultimately the reflective consciousness is fascinated by the facticity of the unreflective consciousness. There is then indeed an incarnation through pain. But at the same time the pain is procured by means of instruments. The body of the torturing For-itself is no longer anything more than an instrument for giving pain. Thus from the start the For-itself can give itself the illusion of getting hold of the Other's freedom instrumentally; that is, of plunging this freedom into flesh without ceasing to be the one who *provokes*, who grabs hold, who seizes, etc.

As for the type of incarnation which sadism would like to realize, this is precisely what is called the Obscene. The obscene is a *species* of Being-for-Others which belongs to the genus of the ungraceful. But not everything

which is ungraceful is obscene. In *grace* the body appears as a psychic being in situation. It reveals above all its transcendence as a transcendence-transcended; it is in act and is understood in terms of the situation and of the end pursued. Each movement therefore is apprehended in a perceptive process which is in the present is based on the future. For this reason the graceful act has on the one hand the precision of a finely perfected machine and on the other hand the perfect unpredictability of the psychic since, as we have seen, the psychic is for others the *unpredictable object*. Therefore the graceful act is at each instant perfectly understandable in so far as one considers that in it which has elapsed. Better yet, that part of the act which has elapsed is implied by a sort of aesthetic necessity which stems from its perfect adaptation. At the same time the goal to come illuminates the act in its totality. But all the future part of the act remains unpredictable although upon the very body of the act it is felt that the future will appear as necessary and adapted once it too has elapsed. It is this moving image of necessity and of freedom (as the property of the Other-as-object) which, strictly speaking, constitutes grace. Bergson has given a good description of it. In grace the body is the instrument which manifests freedom. The graceful act in so far as it reveals the body as a precision instrument, furnishes it at each instant with its justification for existing; the hand is in order to grasp and manifests at the start its being-in-order-to-grasp. In so far as it is apprehended in terms of a situation which requires grasping, the hand appears as itself *required* in its being, as summoned. And in so far as it manifests its freedom through the unpredictability of its gesture, it appears at the origin of its being. It seems that the hand is itself produced as the result of a justifying appeal from the situation. Grace therefore forms an objective image of a being which would be the *foundation of itself in order to* ——. Facticity then is clothed and disguised by grace; the nudity of the flesh is wholly present, but it can not be seen. Therefore the supreme coquetry and the supreme challenge of grace is to exhibit the body unveiled with no clothing, with no veil except grace itself. The most graceful body is the naked body whose acts inclose it with an invisible visible garment while entirely disrobing its flesh, while the flesh is totally present to the eyes of the spectators.

The ungraceful, on the contrary, appears when one of the elements of grace is thwarted in its realization. A movement may become *mechanical*. In this case the body always forms part of an ensemble which justifies it but in the capacity of a pure instrument; its transcendence-transcended disappears, and along with it the situation disappears as the lateral over-determination of the instrumental-objects of my universe. It can happen also that the actions are abrupt and violent; in this case it is the adaptation of the situation which collapses; the situation remains but an hiatus slips in like an emptiness between it and the Other in situation. In this case the Other remains free, but

this freedom is apprehended only as pure unpredictability; it resembles the *clinamen* of Epicurean atoms, in short an indeterminism. At the same time the end remains posited, and it is always in terms of the future that we perceive the Other's gesture. But the fall from adaptation involves this consequence, that the perceptive interpretation by means of the future is always too broad or too narrow; it is an approximate interpretation. Consequently the justification of the gesture and the being of the Other is imperfectly realized. In the final analysis the awkward is unjustifiable; all its facticity, which was engaged in the situation, is absorbed by it, flows back upon it. The awkward one frees his facticity inopportunely and suddenly places it beneath our sight; hence where we expected to seize a key to the situation, spontaneously emanating from the very situation, we suddenly encounter the unjustifiable contingency of an unadapted presence; we are put face to face with the existence of an existent.

Nevertheless if the body is wholly within the act, the facticity is not yet flesh. The *obscene* appears when the body adopts postures which entirely strip it of its acts and which reveal the inertia of its flesh. The sight of a naked body from behind is not obscene. But certain involuntary waddlings of the rump are obscene. This is because then it is only the legs which are acting for the walker, and the rump is like an isolated cushion which is carried by the legs and the balancing of which is a pure obedience to the laws of weight. It can not be justified by the situation; on the contrary, it is entirely destructive of any situation since it has the passivity of a thing and since it is made to rest like a thing upon the legs. Suddenly it is revealed as an unjustifiable facticity; it is *de trop* like every contingent. It is isolated in the body for which the present meaning is walking; it is naked even if material covers it, for it no longer shares in the transcendence-transcended of the body in action. Its movement of balancing instead of being interpreted in terms of what is to come is interpreted and known as a physical fact in terms of the past. These remarks naturally can apply to cases in which it is the whole body which is made flesh, either by some sort of flabbiness in its movements, which can not be interpreted by the situation, or by a deformity in its structure (for example the proliferation of the fat cells) which exhibits a super-abundant facticity in relation to the effective presence which the situation demands. This revealed flesh is specifically obscene when it is revealed to someone who is not in a state of desire and *without exciting his desire*. A particular lack of adaptation which destroys the situation at the very moment when I apprehend it and which releases to me the inert expanding of flesh as an abrupt appearance beneath the thin clothing of the movements which cover it (when I am not in a state of desire for this flesh): this is what I shall call the obscene.

Now we can see the meaning of the sadist's demand: grace reveals freedom as a property of the Other-as-object and refers obscurely—just as do the

contradictions in the sensible world in the case of Platonic recollection—to a transcendent Beyond of which we preserve only a confused memory and which we can reach only by a radical modification of our being; that is, by resolutely assuming our being-for-others. Grace both unveils and veils the Other's flesh, or if you prefer, it unveils the flesh in order immediately to veil it; in grace flesh is the inaccessible Other. The sadist aims at destroying grace in order *actually* to constitute another synthesis of the Other. He wants to make the Other's flesh appear; and in its very appearance the flesh will destroy grace, and facticity will reabsorb the Other's freedom-as-object. This reabsorption is not annihilation; for the sadist it is the Other-as-free who is manifested as flesh. The identity of the Other-as-object is not destroyed through these avatars, but the relations between flesh and freedom are reversed. In grace freedom contained and veiled facticity; in the new synthesis to be effected it is facticity which contains and hides freedom. The sadist aims therefore at making the flesh appear abruptly and by compulsion; that is, by the aid not of his own flesh but of his body as instrument. He aims at making the Other assume attitudes and positions such that his body appears under the aspect of the *obscene*; thus the sadist himself remains on the level of instrumental appropriation since he causes flesh to be born by exerting force upon the Other, and the Other becomes an instrument in his hands. The sadist handles the Other's body, leans on the Other's shoulders so as to bend him toward the earth and to make his haunches stick up, etc. On the other hand, the goal of this instrumental utilization is immanent in the very utilization; the sadist treats the Other as an instrument in order to make the Other's flesh appear. The sadist is the being who apprehends the Other as the instrument whose function is his own incarnation. The ideal of the sadist will therefore be to achieve the moment when the Other will be already flesh without ceasing to be an instrument, flesh to cause the birth of flesh, the moment at which the thighs, for example, already offer themselves in an obscene expanding passivity, and yet are instruments which are managed, which are pushed aside, which are bent so as to make the buttocks stick out in order in turn to incarnate them. But let us not be deceived here. What the sadist thus so tenaciously seeks, what he wants to knead with his hands and bend under his wrists is the Other's freedom. The freedom is there in that flesh; it is freedom which is this flesh since there is a facticity of the Other. It is therefore this freedom which the sadist tries to appropriate.

Thus the sadist's effort is to ensnare the Other in his flesh by means of violence and pain, by appropriating the Other's body in such a way that he treats it as flesh so as to cause flesh to be born. But this appropriation surpasses the body which it appropriates, for its purpose is to possess the body only in so far as the Other's freedom has been ensnared within it. This is why the sadist will want manifest proofs of this enslavement of the Other's

freedom through the flesh. He will aim at making the Other ask for pardon, he will use torture and threats to force the Other to humiliate himself, to deny what he holds most dear. It is often said that this is done through the will to dominate or thirst for power. But this explanation is either vague or absurd. It is the will to dominate which should be explained first. This can not be prior to sadism as its foundation, for in the same way and on the same plane as sadism, it is born from anxiety in the face of the Other. In fact, if the sadist is pleased upon obtaining a denial by means of torture, this is for a reason analogous to that which allows us to interpret the meaning of Love. We have seen in fact that Love does not demand the abolition of the Other's freedom but rather his enslavement as freedom; that is, freedom's self-enslavement. Similarly the sadist does not seek to suppress the freedom of the one whom he tortures but to force this freedom freely to identify itself with the tortured flesh. This is why the moment of pleasure for the torturer is that in which the victim betrays or humiliates himself.

In fact no matter what pressure is exerted on the victim, the abjuration remains free; it is a spontaneous production, a response to a situation; it manifests human-reality. No matter what resistance the victim has offered, no matter how long he has waited before begging for mercy, he would have been able despite all to wait ten minutes, one minute, one second longer. He has *determined* the moment at which the pain became unbearable. The proof of this is the fact that he will later live out his abjuration in remorse and shame. Thus he is entirely responsible for it. On the other hand the sadist for his part considers himself entirely the cause of it. If the victim resists and refuses to beg for mercy, the game is only that much more pleasing. One more turn of the screw, one extra twist and the resistance will finally give in. The sadist posits himself as "having all the time in the world." He is calm, he does not hurry. He uses his instruments like a technician; he tries them one after another as the locksmith tries various keys in a keyhole. He enjoys this ambiguous and contradictory situation. On the one hand indeed he is the one who patiently at the heart of universal determinism employs means in view of an end which will be *automatically* attained—just as the lock will automatically open when the locksmith finds the "right" key; on the other hand, this determined end can be realized only with the Other's free and complete cooperation. Therefore until the last the end remains both predictable and unpredictable. For the sadist the object realized is ambiguous, contradictory, without equilibrium since it is both the strict consequence of a technical utilization of determinism and the manifestation of an unconditioned freedom. The spectacle which is offered to the sadist is that of a freedom which struggles against the expanding of the flesh and which finally freely chooses to be submerged in the flesh. At the moment of the abjuration the result sought is attained: the body is wholly flesh, panting and obscene; it holds the

position which the torturers have given to it, not that which it would have assumed by itself; the cords which bind it hold it as an inert thing, and thereby it has ceased to be the object which moves spontaneously. In the abjuration a freedom chooses to be wholly identified with this body; this distorted and heaving body is the very image of a broken and enslaved freedom.

These few remarks do not aim at exhausting the problem of sadism. We wanted only to show that it is as a seed in desire itself, as the failure of desire; in fact as soon as I seek to take the Other's body, which through my incarnation I have induced to incarnate itself, I break the reciprocity of incarnation, I surpass my body toward its own possibilities, and I orient myself in the direction of sadism. Thus sadism and masochism are the two reefs on which desire may founder—whether I surpass my troubled disturbance toward an appropriation of the Other's flesh or, intoxicated with my own trouble, pay attention only to my flesh and ask nothing of the Other except that he should be the look which aids me in realizing my flesh. It is because of this inconstancy on the part of desire and its perpetual oscillation between these two perils that "normal" sexuality is commonly designated as "sadistic-masochistic."

Nevertheless sadism too—like blind indifference and like desire—bears within itself the cause of its own failure. In the first place there is a profound incompatibility between the apprehension of the body as flesh and its instrumental utilization. If I make an instrument out of flesh, it refers me to other instruments and to potentialities, in short to a future; it is partially justified in its *being-there* by the situation which I create around myself, just as the presence of nails and of a picture to be nailed on the wall justifies the existence of the hammer. Suddenly the body's character as flesh—that is, its unutilizable facticity—gives way to that of an instrumental-thing. The complex "flesh-as-instrument" which the sadist has attempted to create disintegrates. This profound disintegration can be hidden so long as the flesh is the instrument to reveal flesh, for in this way I constitute an instrument with an immanent end. But when the incarnation is achieved, when I have indeed before me a panting body, then I no longer know how to utilize this flesh. No goal can be assigned to it, precisely because I have effected the appearance of its absolute contingency. It is there, and it is there for nothing. As such I can not get hold of it as flesh; I can not integrate it in a complex system of instrumentality without its materiality as flesh, its "fleshliness" immediately escaping me. I can only remain disconcerted before it in a state of contemplative astonishment or else incarnate myself in turn and allow myself again to be troubled, so as to place myself once more at least on the level where flesh is revealed to flesh in its entire "fleshliness." Thus sadism at the very moment when its goal is going to be attained gives way to desire. Sadism is the failure

of desire, and desire is the failure of sadism. One can get out of the circle only by means of satiation and so-called "physical possession." In this a new synthesis of sadism and of desire is given. The tumescence of sex manifests incarnation, the fact of "entering into" or of being "penetrated" symbolically realizes the sadistic and masochistic attempt to appropriate. But if pleasure enables us to get out of the circle, this is because it kills both the desire and the sadistic passion without satisfying them.

At the same time and on a totally different level sadism harbors a new motive for failure. What the sadist seeks to appropriate is in actuality the transcendent freedom of the victim. But this freedom remains on principle out of reach. And the more the sadist persists in treating the other as an instrument, the more this freedom escapes him. He can act upon the freedom only by making it an objective property of the Other-as-object; that is, on freedom in the midst of the world with its dead-possibilities. But since the sadist's goal is to recover his being-for-others, he misses it on principle, for the only Other with whom he has to do is the Other in the world who has only "images in his head" of the sadist assaulting him.

The sadist discovers his error when his victim looks at him; that is, when the sadist experiences the absolute alienation of his being in the Other's freedom; he realizes then not only that he has not recovered his being-outside but also that the activity by which he seeks to recover it is itself transcended and fixed in "sadism" as an *habitus* and a property with its *cortège* of dead-possibilities and that this transformation takes place through and for the Other whom he wishes to enslave. He discovers then that he can not act on the Other's freedom even by forcing the Other to humiliate himself and to beg for mercy, for it is precisely in and through the Other's absolute freedom that there exists a world in which there are sadism and instruments of torture and a hundred pretexts for being humiliated and for forswearing oneself. Nobody has better portrayed the power of the victim's look at his torturers than Faulkner has done in the final pages of *Light in August*. The "good citizens" have just hunted down the Negro, Christmas, and have castrated him. Christmas is at the point of death:

"But the man on the floor had not moved. He just lay there, with his eyes open and empty of everything save consciousness, and with something, a shadow, about his mouth. For a long moment he looked up at them with peaceful and unfathomable and unbearable eyes. Then his face, body, all, seemed to collapse, to fall in upon itself and from out the slashed garments about his hips and loins the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath. It seemed to rush out of his pale body like the rush of sparks from a rising rocket; upon that black blast the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful

valleys, beside whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring face of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. *It will be there, musing, quiet, steadfast, not fading and not particularly threatening, but of itself alone serene, of itself alone triumphant.* Again from the town, deadened a little by the walls, the scream of the siren mounted toward its unbelievable crescendo, passing out of the realm of hearing."¹¹

Thus this explosion of the Other's look in the world of the sadist causes the meaning and goal of sadism to collapse. The sadist discovers that it was that *freedom* which he wished to enslave, and at the same time he realizes the futility of his efforts. Here once more we are referred from the being-in-the-act-of-looking to the being-looked-at; we have not got out of the circle.

We have not thought by these few remarks to exhaust the problem of sex, still less that of possible attitudes toward the Other. We have wished simply to show that the sexual attitude is a primary behavior towards the Other. It goes without saying that this behavior necessarily includes within it the original contingency of being-for-others and that of our own facticity. But we can not admit that this behavior is subject from the start to a physiological and empirical constitution. As soon as "there is" the body and as soon as "there is" an Other, we react by *desire*, by *Love*, and by the derived attitudes which we have mentioned. Our physiological structure only causes the symbolic expression, on the level of absolute contingency, of the fact that we are the permanent possibility of assuming one or the other of these attitudes. Thus we shall be able to say that the For-itself is sexual in its very upsurge in the face of the Other and that through it sexuality comes into the world.

Obviously we do not claim that all attitudes toward the Other are reducible to those sexual attitudes which we have just described. If we have dealt with them at considerable length, it is for two reasons: first because they are fundamental, and second because all of men's complex patterns of conduct toward one another are only enrichments of these two original attitudes (and of a third—hate—which we are going to describe next). Of course examples of concrete conduct (collaboration, conflict, rivalry, emulation, engagement, obedience, etc.)¹² are infinitely more delicate to describe, for they depend on the historic situation and the concrete particularities of each relation of the For-itself with the Other; but they all include as their skeleton—so to speak—sexual relations. This is not because of the existence of a certain *libido* which

would slip in everywhere but simply because the attitudes which we have described are the fundamental projects by which the For-itself realizes its being-for-others and tries to transcend this factual situation.

This is not the place to show what of love and desire can be contained in pity, admiration, disgust, envy, gratitude, etc. But each man will be able to determine it by referring to his own experience, as well as to the eidetic intuition of these various essences. Naturally this does not mean that these different attitudes are simply disguises borrowed by sexuality. But it must be understood that sexuality is integrated in them as their foundation and that they include and surpass it just as the notion of a circle includes and surpasses that of a rotating line segment, one of whose extremities is fixed. These fundamental-attitudes can remain hidden just as a skeleton is veiled by the flesh which surrounds it; in fact this is what usually happens. The contingency of bodies, the structure of the original project which I am, the history which I historicize can usually determine the sexual attitude to remain implicit, inside more complex conduct. For example, it is only seldom that one explicitly desires an Other "of the same sex." But behind the prohibitions of morality and the taboos of society the original structure remains, at least in that particular form of "trouble" which is called sexual disgust. And it is not necessary to understand this permanence of the sexual project as if it dwelt "within us" in the unconscious state. A project of the For-itself can exist only in conscious form. It exists as integrated with a particular structure in which it is dissolved. This is what psychoanalysts have had in mind when they have made of sexual affectivity a "tabula rasa" deriving all its determinations from the individual history. Only it is not necessary to hold that sexuality at its origin is underdetermined; in fact it includes all its determinations from the moment of the upsurge of the For-itself into a world where "there are" Others. What is undetermined and what must be fixed by each one's history is the particular type of relation with the Other in which the sexual attitude (desire-love, masochism-sadism) will be manifested in its explicit purity.

It is precisely because these attitudes are original that we have chosen them in order to demonstrate the circle of relations with the Other. Since these attitudes are in fact integrated in *all* attitudes toward Others, they involve in their circularity the integrality of all conduct toward the Other. Just as Love finds its failure within itself and just as Desire arises from the death of Love in order to collapse in turn and give way to Love, so all the patterns of conduct toward the Other-as-object include within themselves an implicit and veiled reference to an Other-as-subject, and this reference is their death. Upon the death of a particular conduct toward the Other-as-object arises a new attitude which aims at getting hold of the Other-as-subject, and this in turn reveals its instability and collapses to give way to the opposite conduct. Thus we are indefinitely referred from the Other-as-object to the Other-as-subject and vice

¹¹ The italics are Sartre's. I have quoted directly from Faulkner rather than translating back into English from the French translation which Sartre used. Tr. William Faulkner, *Light in August*. New York: Modern Library. p. 407. Tr.

¹² Also maternal love, pity, kindness, etc.

versa. The movement is never arrested, and this movement with its abrupt reversals of direction constitutes our relation with the Other. At whatever moment a person is considered, he is in one or the other of these attitudes—unsatisfied by the one as by the other. We can maintain ourselves for a greater or less length of time in the attitude adopted depending on our bad faith or depending on the particular circumstances of our history. But never will either attitude be sufficient in itself; it always points obscurely in the direction of its opposite. This means that we can never hold a consistent attitude toward the Other unless he is simultaneously revealed to us as subject and as object, as transcendence-transcending and as transcendence-transcended—which is on principle impossible. Thus ceaselessly tossed from being-a-look to being-looked-at, falling from one to the other in alternate revolutions, we are always, no matter what attitude is adopted, in a state of instability in relation to the Other. We pursue the impossible ideal of the simultaneous apprehension of his freedom and of his objectivity. To borrow an expression from Jean Wahl, we are—in relation to the Other—sometimes in a state of *trans-descendence* (when we apprehend him as an object and integrate him with the world), and sometimes in a state of *trans-ascendence* (when we experience him as a transcendence which transcends us). But neither of these two states is sufficient in itself, and we shall never place ourselves concretely on a plane of equality; that is, on the plane where the recognition of the Other's freedom would involve the Other's recognition of our freedom.

The Other is on principle inapprehensible; he flees me when I seek him and possesses me when I flee him. Even if I should want to act according to the precepts of Kantian morality and take the Other's freedom as an unconditioned end, still this freedom would become a transcendence-transcended by the mere fact that I make it my goal. On the other hand, I could act for his benefit only by utilizing the Other-as-object as an instrument in order to realize this freedom. It would be necessary, in fact, that I apprehend the Other in situation as an object-instrument, and my sole power would be then to modify the situation in relation to the Other and the Other in relation to the situation. Thus I am brought to that paradox which is the perilous reef of all liberal politics and which Rousseau has defined in a single word: I must "force" the Other to be free. Even if this force is not always nor even very frequently exercised in the form of violence, nevertheless it still governs the relations of men with each other. If I offer comfort and reassurance, it is in order to disengage the Other's freedom from the fears or griefs which darken it; but consolation or reassuring argument is the organization of a system of means to an end and is designed to act upon the Other and consequently to integrate him in turn as an instrumental-thing in the system. Furthermore the comforter effects an arbitrary distinction between the freedom which he is identifying with the use of Reason and the pursuit of the

Good, on the one hand, and the affliction which appears to him the result of a psychic determinism. Therefore the problem is to separate the freedom from the affliction as one separates out each of two components of a chemical product. By the sole fact that the comforter is considering freedom as capable of being separated out, he transcends it and does violence to it, and he can not on the level where he is placed apprehend this truth: that it is freedom itself which makes itself the affliction and that consequently to act so as to free freedom from affliction is to act against freedom.

It does not follow, however, that an ethics of "*laissez-faire*" and tolerance would respect the Other's freedom any better. From the moment that I exist I establish a factual limit to the Other's freedom. I am this limit, and each of my projects traces the outline of this limit around the Other. Charity, *laissez-faire*, tolerance—even an attitude of abstention—are each one a project of myself which engages me and which engages the Other in his acquiescence. To realize tolerance with respect to the Other is to cause the Other to be thrown forcefully into a tolerant world. It is to remove from him on principle those free possibilities of courageous resistance, of perseverance, of self-assertion which he would have had the opportunity to develop in a world of intolerance. This fact is made still more manifest if we consider the problem of education: a severe education treats the child as an instrument since it tries to bend him by force to values which he has not admitted, but a liberal education in order to make use of other methods nevertheless chooses *a priori* principles and values in the name of which the child will be trained. To train the child by persuasion and gentleness is no less to compel him. Thus respect for the Other's freedom is an empty word; even if we could assume the project of respecting this freedom, each attitude which we adopted with respect to the Other would be a violation of that freedom which we claimed to respect. The extreme attitude which would be given as a total indifference toward the Other is not a solution either. We are already thrown in the world in the face of the Other; our upsurge is a free limitation of his freedom and nothing—not even suicide—can change this original situation. Whatever our acts may be, in fact, we must accomplish them in a world where there are already others and where I am *de trop* in relation to others.

It is from this singular situation that the notion of guilt and of sin seems to be derived. It is before the Other that I am guilty. I am guilty first when beneath the Other's look I experience my alienation and my nakedness as a fall from grace which I must assume. This is the meaning of the famous line from Scripture: "They knew that they were naked." Again I am guilty when in turn I look at the Other, because by the very fact of my own self-assertion I constitute him as an object and as an instrument, and I cause him to experience that same alienation which he must now assume. Thus original sin is my upsurge in a world where there are others; and whatever may be my further

relations with others, these relations will be only variations on the original theme of my guilt.

But this guilt is accompanied by helplessness without this helplessness ever succeeding in cleansing me of my guilt. Whatever I may do for the Other's freedom, as we have seen, my efforts are reduced to treating the Other as an instrument and to positing his freedom as a transcendence-transcended. But on the other hand, no matter what compelling power I use, I shall never touch the Other save in his being-as-object. I shall never be able to accomplish anything except to furnish his freedom with occasions to manifest itself without my ever succeeding in increasing it or diminishing it, in directing it or in getting hold of it. Thus I am guilty toward the Other in my very being because the upsurge of my being, in spite of itself, bestows on the Other a new dimension of being; and on the other hand I am powerless either to profit from my fault or to rectify it.

A for-itself which by historicizing itself has experienced these various avatars can determine with full knowledge of the futility of its former attempts, to pursue the death of the Other. This free determination is called hate. It implies a fundamental resignation; the for-itself abandons its claim to realize any union with the Other; it gives up using the Other as an instrument to recover its own being-in-itself. It wishes simply to rediscover a freedom without factual limits; that is, to get rid of its own inapprehensible being-as-object-for-the-Other and to abolish its dimension of alienation. This is equivalent to projecting the realization of a world in which the Other does not exist. The for-itself which hates consents to being only for-itself; instructed by its various experiences of the impossibility of making use of its being-for-others, it prefers to be again only a free nihilation of its being, a totality detotalized, a pursuit which assigns to itself its own ends. The one who hates projects no longer being an object; hate presents itself as an absolute positing of the freedom of the for-itself before the Other. This is why hate does not abase the hated object, for it places the dispute on its true level. What I hate in the Other is not this appearance, this fault, this particular action. What I hate is his existence in general as a transcendence-transcended. This is why hate implies a recognition of the Other's freedom. But this recognition is abstract and negative; hate knows only the Other-as-object and attaches itself to this object. It wishes to destroy this object in order by the same stroke to overcome the transcendence which haunts it. This transcendence is only dimly sensed as an inaccessible beyond, as the perpetual possibility of the alienation of the for-itself which hates. It is therefore never apprehended for itself; moreover it could not be so without becoming an object. I experience it as a perpetually fleeing character in the Other-as-object, as a "not-given," "undeveloped" aspect of his most accessible empirical qualities, as a sort of perpetual threat which warns me that "I am missing the point."

This is why one hates *right* through the revealed psychic but not the psychic itself; this is why also it is indifferent whether we hate the Other's transcendence through what we empirically call his vices or his virtues. What I hate is the whole psychic-totality in so far as it refers me to the Other's transcendence. I do not lower myself to hate any particular objective detail. Here we find the distinction between hating and despising. And hate does not necessarily appear on the occasion of my being subjected to something evil. On the contrary, it can arise when one would theoretically expect gratitude—that is, on the occasion of a kindness. The occasion which arouses hate is simply an act by the Other which puts me in the state of being *subject* to his freedom. This act is in itself humiliating; it is humiliating as the concrete revelation of my instrumental object-ness in the face of the Other's freedom. This revelation is immediately obscured, is buried in the past and becomes opaque. But it leaves in me the feeling that there is "something" to be destroyed if I am to free myself. This is the reason, moreover, why gratitude is so close to hate; to be grateful for a kindness is to recognize that the Other was entirely free in acting as he has done. No compulsion, not even that of duty, has determined him in it. He is wholly responsible for his act and for the values which have presided over its accomplishment. I, myself, have been only the excuse for it, the matter on which his act has been exercised. In view of this recognition the for-itself can project love or hate as it chooses; it can no longer ignore the Other.

The second consequence of these observations is that hate is the hate of all Others in one Other. What I want to attain symbolically by pursuing the death of a particular Other is the general principle of the existence of others. The Other whom I hate actually represents all Others. My project of suppressing him is a project of suppressing others in general; that is, of recapturing my non-substantial freedom as for-itself. In hate there is given an understanding of the fact that my dimension of being-alienated is a real enslavement which comes to me through others. It is the suppression of this enslavement which is projected. That is why hate is a *black* feeling; that is, a feeling which aims at the suppression of an Other and which qua project is consciously projected against the disapproval of others. I disapprove of the hate which one person bears toward another; it makes me uneasy and I seek to suppress it because although it is not explicitly aimed at me, I know that it concerns me and that it is realized against me. And in fact it aims at destroying me not in so far as it would seek to suppress me but in so far as it principally lays claim to my disapproval in order to pass beyond it. Hate demands to be hated—so that to hate is equivalent to an uneasy recognition of the freedom of the one who hates.

But hate too is in turn a failure. Its initial project is to suppress other consciousnesses. But even if it succeeded in this—i.e., if it could at this

moment abolish the Other—it could not bring it about that the Other had not been. Better yet, if the abolition of the Other is to be lived as the triumph of hate, it implies the explicit recognition that the Other *has existed*. Immediately my being-for-others by slipping into the past becomes an irremediable dimension of myself. It is what I have to be as having-been-it. Therefore I can not free myself from it. At least, someone will say, I escape it for the present, I shall escape it in the future. But no. He who has once been for-others is contaminated in his being for the rest of his days even if the Other should be entirely suppressed; he will never cease to apprehend his dimension of being-for-others as a permanent possibility of his being. He can never recapture what he has alienated; he has even lost all hope of acting on this alienation and turning it to his own advantage since the destroyed Other has carried the key to this alienation along with him to the grave. What I was for the Other is fixed by the Other's death, and I shall irremediably be it in the past. I shall be it also and in the same way in the present if I persevere in the attitude, the projects, and the mode of life which have been judged by the Other. The Other's death constitutes me as an irremediable object exactly as my own death would do. Thus the triumph of hate is in its very upsurge transformed into failure. Hate does not enable us to get out of the circle. It simply represents the final attempt, the attempt of despair. After the failure of this attempt nothing remains for the for-itself except to re-enter the circle and allow itself to be indefinitely tossed from one to the other of the two fundamental attitudes.¹³

III. "BEING-WITH" (MITSEIN) AND THE "WE"

One could probably point out to us that our description is incomplete since it leaves no place for certain concrete experiences in which we discover ourselves not in conflict with the Other but in community with him. And it is true that we frequently use the word "we." The very existence and use of this grammatical form necessarily refers us to a real experience of the *Mitsein*. "We" can be subject and in this form it is identical with the plural of the "I." To be sure; the parallel between grammar and thought is in many cases more than doubtful; in fact, the question should be revised completely and the relation of language to thought studied from an entirely new approach. Yet it is nonetheless true that the "we" subject does not appear even conceivable unless it refers at least to the thought of a plurality of subjects which would simultaneously apprehend one another as subjectivities, that is, as transcendences-transcending and not as transcendences-transcended. If the word "we" is not simply a *flatus vocis*, it denotes a concept subsuming an

¹³ These considerations do not exclude the possibility of an ethics of deliverance and salvation. But this can be achieved only after a radical conversion which we can not discuss here.

infinite variety of possible experiences. And these experiences appear *a priori* to contradict the experience of my being-as-object for the Other and the experience of the Other's being-as-object for me. In the "we," nobody is the object. The "we" includes a plurality of subjectivities which recognize one another as subjectivities. Nevertheless this recognition is not the object of an explicit thesis; what is explicitly posited is a common action or the object of a common perception. "We" resist, "we" advance to the attack, "we" condemn the guilty, "we" look at this or that spectacle. Thus the recognition of subjectivities is analogous to that of the self-recognition of the non-thetic consciousness. More precisely, it must be effected *laterally* by a non-thetic consciousness whose thetic object is this or that spectacle in the world.

The best example of the "we" can be furnished us by the spectator at a theatrical performance whose consciousness is exhausted in apprehending the imaginary spectacle, in foreseeing the events through anticipatory schemes, in positing imaginary beings as the hero, the traitor, the captive, etc., a spectator, who, however, in the very upsurge which makes him a consciousness of the spectacle is constituted non-thetically as consciousness (of) being a *co-spectator* of the spectacle. Everyone knows in fact that unavowed embarrassment which grips us in an auditorium half empty and, on the other hand, that enthusiasm which is let loose and is reinforced in a full and enthusiastic hall. Moreover it is certain that the experience of the we-as-subject can be manifested in any circumstance whatsoever. I am sitting in front of a café; I observe the other customers and I know myself to be observed. We remain here in the most ordinary case of conflict with others (the Other's being-as-object for me, my being-as-object for the Other). But suddenly some incident occurs in the street; for example, a slight collision between a carrier tricycle and a taxi. Immediately at the very instant when I become a spectator of the incident, I experience my self non-thetically as engaged in "we." The earlier rivalries, the slight conflicts have disappeared, and the consciousnesses which furnished the matter of the "we" are precisely those of all the patrons: "we" look at the event, "we" take part. It is this unanimity which Romans wanted to describe in *Vie unanime* or in *Vin blanc de la Villette*. Here we are brought back again to Heidegger's *Mitsein*. Was it worth while then to criticize it earlier?¹⁴

We shall only remark here that we had no intention of casting doubt on the experience of the "we." We limited ourselves to showing that this experience could not be the foundation of our consciousness of the Other. It is clear, in fact, that it could not constitute an ontological structure of human-reality; we have proved that the existence of the for-itself in the midst of others was at its

¹⁴ Part III, ch. I.

origin a metaphysical and contingent fact. In addition it is clear that the "we" is not an inter-subjective consciousness nor a new being which surpasses and encircles its parts as a synthetic whole in the manner of the collective consciousness of the sociologists. The "we" is experienced by a particular consciousness; it is not necessary that all the patrons at the café should be conscious of being "we" in order for me to experience myself as being engaged in a "we" with them. Everyone is familiar with this pattern of everyday dialogue: "We are very dissatisfied." "But no, my dear, speak for yourself." This implies that there are aberrant consciousnesses of the "we"—which as such are nevertheless perfectly normal consciousnesses. If this is the case, then in order for a consciousness to get the consciousness of being engaged in a "we," it is necessary that the other consciousnesses which enter into community with it should be first given in some other way; that is, either in the capacity of a transcendence-transcending or as a transcendence-transcended. The "we" is a certain particular experience which is produced in special cases on the foundation of being-for-others in general. The being-for-others precedes and founds the being-with-others.

Furthermore the philosopher who wants to study the "we" must take precautions and know of what he speaks. There is not only a We-as-subject; grammar teaches us that there is also a We-as-complement—i.e., a We-as-object.¹⁵ Now from all which has been said up till now it is easy to understand that the "we" in "We are looking at them" can not be on the same ontological plane as the "us" in "They are looking at us." There is no question here of subjectivities qua subjectivities. In the sentence, "They are looking at me," I want to indicate that I experience myself as an object for others, as an alienated Me, as a transcendence-transcended. If the sentence, "They are looking at us," is to indicate a real experience, it is necessary that in this experience I make proof of the fact that I am engaged with others in a community of transcendences-transcended, of alienated "Me's." The "Us" here refers to an experience of being-objects in common. Thus there are two radically different forms of the experience of the "we," and the two forms correspond exactly to the being-in-the-act-of-looking and the being-looked-at which constitute the fundamental relations of the For-itself with the Other. It is these two forms of the "we" which must be studied next.

A. The Us-object

We shall begin by examining the second of these experiences; its meaning can be grasped more easily and it will perhaps serve as a means of approach

¹⁵ Here the difference between English and French presents a certain difficulty for the translator since *nous* in French is used for both subject and object—i.e., "we" and "us." Tr.

to the study of the Other. First we must note that the Us-object precipitates us into the world; we experience it in shame as a community alienation. This is illustrated by that significant scene in which convicts choke with anger and shame when a beautiful, elegantly dressed woman comes to visit their ship, sees their rags, their labor, and their misery. We have here a common shame and a common alienation. How then is it possible to experience oneself as an object in a community of objects? To answer this we must return to the fundamental characteristics of our being-for-others.

Hitherto we have considered the simple case in which I am alone confronting the Other who is also alone. In this case I look at him or he looks at me. I seek to transcend his transcendence or I experience my own as transcended; and I feel my possibilities as dead-possibilities. We form a pair and we are in situation each one in relation to the Other. But this situation has objective existence only for the one or the Other. There is no reverse side to our reciprocal relation. In our description we have not yet taken into account the fact that my relation with the Other appears on the infinite ground of my relation and of his relation to all Others; that is, to the quasi-totality of consciousnesses. As a result my relation to this Other, which I experienced earlier as the foundation of my being-for-others, or the relation of the Other to me can at each instant and according to the motives which intervene be experienced as objects for Others. This will be manifested clearly in the case of the appearance of a third person. Suppose, for example, that the Other is looking at me. At this moment I experience myself as wholly alienated, and I assume myself as such. Now the Third comes on the scene. If he looks at me, I experience them as forming a community, as "They" (they-subject) through my alienation. This "they" tends, as we know, toward the impersonal "somebody" or "one" (on). It does not alter the fact that I am looked at; it does not strengthen (or barely strengthens) my original alienation. But if the Third looks at the Other who is looking at me, the problem is more complex. I can in fact apprehend the Third not directly but upon the Other, who becomes the Other-looked-at (by the Third). Thus the third transcendence transcends the transcendence which transcends me and thereby contributes to disarming it. There is constituted here a metastable state which will soon decompose depending upon whether I ally myself to the Third so as to look at the Other who is then transformed into our object—and here I experience the We-as-subject of which we will speak later—or whether I look at the Third and thus transcend this third transcendence which transcends the Other. In the latter case the Third becomes an object in my universe, his possibilities are dead-possibilities, he can not deliver me from the Other. Yet he looks at the Other who is looking at me. There follows a situation which we shall call indeterminate and inconclusive since I am an object for the Other who is an object for the Third who is an object for me. Freedom alone

by insisting on one or the other of these relations can give a structure to this situation.

But it can just as well happen that the Third looks at the Other at whom I am looking. In this case I can look at both of them and thus disarm the look of the Third. The Third and the Other will appear to me then as They-as-objects or "Them." I can also grasp upon the Other the look of the Third so that without seeing the Third I apprehend upon the Other's behavior the fact that he knows himself to be looked-at. In this case I experience upon the Other and apropos of the Other the Third's transcendence-transcending. The Third experiences it as a radical and absolute alienation of the Other. The Other flees away from my world; he no longer belongs to me; he is an object for another transcendence. Therefore he does not lose his character as an object, but he becomes ambiguous; he escapes me not by means of his own transcendence but through the transcendence of the Third. Whatever I can apprehend upon him and concerning him at present, he is always Other, as many times Other as there are Others to perceive him and think about him. In order for me to reappropriate the Other for myself, it is necessary for me to look at the Third and to confer an object-state upon him. But in the first place, this is not always possible; moreover the Third can be himself looked at by other Thirds; that is, can be indefinitely the Other whom I do not see. There results an original instability in the Other-as-object and an infinite pursuit by the For-itself which seeks to reappropriate this object-state. This is the reason, as we have seen, why lovers seek solitude.

It is possible also for me to experience myself as looked-at by the Third while I look at the Other. In this case I experience my alienation non-positionally at the same time that I posit the alienation of the Other. My possibilities of utilizing the Other as an instrument are experienced by me as dead-possibilities, and my transcendence which prepares to transcend the Other toward my own ends falls back into transcendence-transcended. I let go my hold. The Other does not thereby become a subject, but I no longer feel myself qualified to keep him in an object-state. He becomes a *neutral*; something which is purely and simply there and with which I have nothing to do. This will be the case, for example, if I am surprised in the process of beating and humiliating a man helpless to defend himself. The appearance of the Third "disconnects" me. The helpless man is no longer either "to be beaten" or "to be humiliated"; he is nothing more than a pure existence. He is nothing more, he is no longer even "a helpless man." Or if he becomes so again, this will be through the Third serving as interpreter; I shall learn from the Third that the Other was a helpless man ("Aren't you ashamed? You have attacked one who is helpless," etc.). The quality of helplessness will in my eyes be conferred on the Other by the Third; it will no longer be part of my world but of a universe in which I am with the helpless man for the Third.

This brings us finally to the case with which we are primarily concerned: I am engaged in a conflict with the Other. The Third comes on the scene and embraces both of us with his look. Correlatively I experience my alienation and my object-ness. For the Other I am outside as an object in the midst of a world which is not "mine." But the Other whom I was looking at or who was looking at me undergoes the same modification, and I discover this modification of the Other simultaneously with that which I experience. The Other is an object in the midst of the world of the Third. Moreover this object-state is not a simple modification of his being which is parallel with that which I undergo, but the two object-states come to me and to the Other in a global modification of the situation in which I am and in which the Other finds himself. Before the look of the Third appeared there were two situations, one circumscribed by the possibilities of the Other in which I was as an instrument, and a reverse situation circumscribed by my own possibilities and including the Other. Each of these situations was the death of the Other and we could grasp the one only by objectivizing the other. Now at the appearance of the Third I suddenly experience the alienation of my possibilities, and I discover by the same token that the possibilities of the Other are dead-possibilities. The situation does not thereby disappear, but it flees outside both my world and the Other's world; it is constituted in objective form in the midst of a third world. In this third world it is seen, judged, transcended, utilized, but suddenly there is effected a leveling of the two opposed situations; there is no longer any structure of priority which goes from me to the Other or conversely from the Other to me since our possibilities are equally dead-possibilities for the Third. This means that I suddenly experience the existence of an objective situation-form in the world of the Third in which the Other and I shall figure as equivalent structures in solidarity with each other. Conflict does not arise, in this objective situation, from the free upsurge of our transcendences, but it is established and transcended by the Third as a factual given which defines us and holds us together. The Other's possibility of striking me and my possibility of defending myself, far from being exclusive of one another, are now complementary to each other, imply one another, and involve one another for the Third by virtue of their being dead-possibilities, and this is precisely what I experience non-thetically and without having any knowledge of it. Thus what I experience is a being-outside in which I am organized with the Other in an indissoluble, objective whole, a whole in which I am fundamentally no longer distinct from the Other but which I agree in solidarity with the Other to constitute. And to the extent that on principle I assume my being-outside for the Third, I must similarly assume the Other's being-outside; what I assume is a community of equivalence by means of which I exist engaged in a form which like the Other I agree to constitute. In a word

I assume myself as engaged outside in the Other, and I assume the Other as engaged outside in me.

I carry the fundamental assumption of this engagement before me without apprehending it; it is this free recognition of my responsibility as including the responsibility for the Other which is the experience of the Us-object. Thus the Us-object is never known in the sense that reflection gives to us the knowledge of our Self, for example; it is never felt in the sense that a feeling reveals to us a particular concrete object as antipathetic, hateful, troubling, etc. Neither is it simply *experienced*, for what is experienced is the pure situation of solidarity with the Other. The Us-object is revealed to us only by my assuming the responsibility for this situation; that is, because of the internal reciprocity of the situation, I must of necessity—in the heart of my free assumption—assume also the Other. Thus in the absence of any Third person I can say, “I am fighting against the Other.” But as soon as the Third appears, the Other’s possibilities and my own are leveled into dead-possibilities and hence the relation becomes reciprocal; I am compelled to experience the fact that “we are fighting each other.” For the statement, “I fight him and he fights me” would be plainly inadequate. Actually I fight him because he fights me and reciprocally. The project of combat has germinated in his mind as in mine, and for the Third it is united into a single project common to that *they-as-object* which he embraced with his look and which even constitutes the unifying synthesis of this “Them.” Therefore I must assume myself as apprehended by the Third as an integral part of the “Them.” And this “Them” which is assumed by a subjectivity as its meaning-for-others becomes the “Us.”

Reflective consciousness can not apprehend this “Us.” Its appearance coincides on the contrary with the collapse of the “Us”; the For-itself disengages itself and posits its selfness against Others. In fact it is necessary to conceive that originally the belonging to the Us-object is felt as a still more radical alienation on the part of the For-itself since the latter is no longer compelled only to assume what it is for the Other but to assume also a totality which it is not although it forms an integral part of it. In this sense the Us-object is an abrupt experience of the human condition as engaged among Others as an objectively established fact. The Us-object although experienced on the occasion of a concrete solidarity and centered in this solidarity (I shall be ashamed precisely because we have been caught in the act of fighting one another) has a meaning which surpasses the particular circumstance in which it is experienced and which aims at including my belonging as an object to the human totality (minus the pure consciousness of the Third) which is equally apprehended as an object. Therefore it corresponds to an experience of humiliation and impotence; the one who experiences himself as constituting an Us with other men feels himself trapped among

an infinity of strange existences; he is alienated radically and without recourse.

Certain situations appear more likely than others to arouse the experience of the Us. In particular there is communal work: when several persons experience themselves as apprehended by the Third while they work in solidarity to produce the same object, the very meaning of the manufactured object refers to the working collectivity as to an “Us.” The movement which I make and which is required by the assembling to be realized has meaning only if it is preceded by this movement on the part of my neighbor and followed by that movement on the part of that other workman. There results a form of the “Us” more easily accessible since it is the requirement of the object itself and its potentialities and its coefficient of adversity which refer to us workmen as an Us-object. We have therefore experienced ourselves as apprehended as an “Us” through a material object “to be created.” Materiality puts its seal on our interdependent community, and we appear to ourselves as an instrumental disposition and technique of means, each one having a particular place assigned by an end.

But if some situations thus appear empirically more favorable to the upsurge of the “Us,” we must not lose sight of the fact that *every* human situation since it is an engagement in the midst of others, is experienced as “Us” as soon as the Third appears. If I am walking in the street behind this man and see only his back, I have with him the minimum of technical and practical relations which can be conceived. Yet once the Third looks at me, looks at the road, looks at the Other, I am bound to the Other by the solidarity of the “Us”: we are walking one behind the Other on *la rue Blomet* on a July morning. There is always a point of view from which diverse for-itselfs can be united in an “Us” by a look. Conversely just as the look is only the concrete manifestation of the original fact of my existence for others, just as therefore I experience myself existing for the Other outside any individual appearance of a look, so it is not necessary that a concrete look should penetrate and transfix us in order for us to be able to experience ourselves as integrated outside in an “Us.” So long as the detotalized-totality “humanity” exists, it is possible for some sort of plurality of individuals to experience itself as “Us” in relation to all or part of the rest of men, whether these men are present “in flesh and blood” or whether they are real but *absent*. Thus whether in the presence or in the absence of the Third I can always apprehend myself either as pure selfness or as integrated in an “Us.” This brings us to certain special forms of the “Us,” in particular to that which we call “class consciousness.”

Class consciousness is evidently the assuming of a particular “Us” on the occasion of a collective situation more plainly structured than usual. It matters little here how we define this situation; what interests us is only the

nature of the "Us" which is assumed. If a society, so far as its economical or political structure is concerned, is divided into oppressed classes and oppressing classes, the situation of the oppressing classes presents the oppressed classes with the image of a perpetual Third who considers them and transcends them by his freedom. It is not the hard work, the low living standard, or the privations endured which will constitute the oppressed collectivity as a class. The solidarity of work, in fact, could (as we shall see in the following section) constitute the laboring collectivity as a "We-subject" in so far as this collectivity—whatever may be the coefficient of adversity of things—makes proof of itself as transcending the intra-mundane objects towards its own ends. The living standard is a wholly relative thing, and appreciation of it will vary according to circumstances (it can be simply *endured* or *accepted* or *demand*ed in the name of a common ideal). The privations if considered in themselves have the result of isolating the persons who suffer them rather than of uniting them and are in general sources of conflict. Finally, the pure and simple comparison which the members of the oppressed collectivity can make between the harshness of their conditions and the privileges enjoyed by the oppressing classes can not in any case suffice to constitute a class consciousness; at most it will provoke individual jealousies or particular despairs; it does not possess the possibility of unifying and of making each one assume the responsibility for the unification. But the ensemble of these characteristics as it constitutes the *condition* of the oppressed class is not simply endured or accepted. It would be equally erroneous, however, to say that from the beginning it is apprehended by the oppressed class as *imposed* by the oppressing class. On the contrary, a long time is necessary to construct and spread a theory of oppression. And this theory will have only an *explicative* value. The primary fact is that the member of the oppressed collectivity, who as a simple person is engaged in fundamental conflicts with other members of this collectivity (love, hate, rivalry of interests, etc.), apprehends his condition and that of other members of this collectivity as looked-at and thought about by consciousnesses which escape him.

The "master," the "feudal lord," the "bourgeois," the "capitalist" all appear not only as powerful people who command but in addition and above all as *Thirds*; that is, as those who are outside the oppressed community and for whom this community exists. It is therefore *for* them and *in their freedom* that the reality of the oppressed class is going to exist. They cause it to be born by their look. It is to them and through them that there is revealed the identity of my condition and that of the others who are oppressed; it is for them that I exist in a situation organized with others and that my possibles as dead-possibles are strictly equivalent with the possibles of others; it is for them that I am a worker and it is through and in their revelation as the Other-as-a-look that I experience myself as one among others. This means that I discover the

"Us" in which I am integrated or "the class" *outside*, in the look of the Third, and it is this collective alienation which I assume when saying "Us." From this point of view the privileges of the Third and "our" burdens, "our" miseries have value at first only as a *signification*; they signify the independence of the Third in relation to "Us"; they present our alienation to us more plainly. Yet as they are none the less *endured*, as in particular *our work, our fatigue are none the less suffered*, it is across this endured suffering that I experience my being-looked-at-as-a-thing-engaged-in-a-totality-of-things. It is in terms of my suffering, of my misery that I am collectively apprehended with others by the Third; that is, in terms of the adversity of the world, in terms of the facticity of my condition. Without the Third, no matter what might be the adversity of the world, I should apprehend myself as a triumphant transcendence; with the appearance of the Third, "I" experience "Us" as apprehended in terms of things and as things overcome by the world.

Thus the oppressed class finds its class unity in the knowledge which the oppressing class has of it, and the appearance among the oppressed of class consciousness corresponds to the assumption in shame of an Us-object. We shall see in the following section what "class consciousness" can be for a member of the oppressing class. What is important for us here in any case and what is sufficiently illustrated by the example which we have just chosen is that the experience of the Us-object presupposes that of the being-for-others, of which it is only a more complex modality. Therefore by virtue of being a particular case it falls within the compass of our preceding descriptions. Moreover it incloses within itself a power of disintegration since it is experienced through shame and since the "Us" collapses as soon as the for-itself reclaims its selfness in the face of the Third and looks at him in turn. This individual claim of selfness is moreover only one of the possible ways of suppressing the Us-object. The assumption of the "Us" in certain strongly structured cases, as, for example, class consciousness, no longer implies the project of freeing oneself from the "Us" by an individual recovery of selfness but rather the project of freeing the whole "Us" from the object-state by transforming it into a We-subject.

At bottom we are dealing with a variation of the project already described of transforming the one who is looking into the one who is looked-at; it is the usual passage from one to the other of the two great fundamental attitudes of the for-others. The oppressed class can, in fact, affirm itself as a We-subject only in relation to the oppressing class and at the latter's expense; that is, by transforming it in turn into "they-as-objects" or "Them." The person who is engaged objectively in the class aims at involving the whole class in and by means of his project of reversal. In this sense the experience of the Us-object refers to that of the We-subject just as the experience of my being-an-object-for-others refers me to the experience of

being-an-object-for-others-for-me. Similarly we shall find in what is called "mob psychology" collective crazes (*Boulangism*, etc.) which are a particular form of love. The person who says "Us" then reassumes in the heart of the crowd the original project of love, but it is no longer on his own account; he asks a Third to save the whole collectivity in its very object-state so that he may sacrifice his freedom to it. Here as above disappointed love leads to masochism. This is seen in the case in which the collectivity rushes into servitude and asks to be treated as an object. The problem involves here again multiple individual projects of men in the crowd; the crowd has been constituted as a crowd by the look of the leader or the speaker; its unity is an object-unity which each one of its members reads in the look of the Third who dominates it, and each one then forms the project of losing himself in this object-ness, of wholly abandoning his selfness in order to be no longer anything but an instrument in the hands of the leader. But this instrument in which he wants to be dissolved is no longer his pure and simple personal for-others; it is the totality, objective-crowd. The monstrous materiality of the crowd and its profound reality (although only experienced) are fascinating for each of its members; each one demands to be submerged in the crowd-instrument by the look of the leader.¹⁶

In these various instances we have seen that the Us-object is always constituted in terms of a concrete situation in which one part of the detotalized-totality "humanity" is immersed to the exclusion of another part. We are "Us" only in the eyes of Others, and it is in terms of the Others' look that we assume ourselves as "Us." But this implies that there can exist an abstract, unrealizable project of the for-itself toward an absolute totalization of itself and of all Others. This effort at recovering the human totality can not take place without positing the existence of a Third, who is on principle distinct from humanity and in whose eyes humanity is wholly object. This unrealizable Third, is simply the object of the limiting-concept of otherness. He is the one who is Third in relation to all possible groups, the one who in no case can enter into community with any human group, the Third in relation to whom no other can constitute himself as a third. This concept is the same as that of the being-who looks-at and who can never be looked-at; that is, it is one with the idea of God. But if God is characterized as radical absence, the effort to realize humanity as ours is forever renewed and forever results in failure. Thus the humanistic "Us"—the Us-object—is proposed to each individual consciousness as an ideal impossible to attain although everyone keeps the illusion of being able to succeed in it by progressively enlarging the circle of communities to which he does belong. This humanistic "Us" remains an

¹⁶ Cf. the numerous cases of a refusal of selfness. The for-itself refuses to emerge in anguish outside the "Us."

empty concept, a pure indication of a possible extension of the ordinary usage of the "Us." Each time that we use the "Us" in this sense (to designate suffering humanity, sinful humanity, to determine an objective historical meaning by considering man as an object which is developing its potentialities) we limit ourselves to indicating a certain concrete experience to be undergone in the presence of the absolute Third; that is, of God. Thus the limiting-concept of humanity (as the totality of the Us-object) and the limiting-concept of God imply one another and are correlative.

B. The we-subject

It is the world which makes known to us our belonging to a subject-community, especially the existence in the world of manufactured objects. These objects have been worked on by men for they-subjects; that is, for a non-individualized and unnumbered transcendence which coincides with the undifferentiated look which we called earlier the "They." The worker—servile or not—works in the presence of an undifferentiated and absent transcendence and can only outline the free possibilities of this transcendence in a vacuum—so to speak—upon the object on which he is working. In this sense the worker, whoever he may be, experiences in work his being-an-instrument for others. Work, when it is not strictly destined for the ends of the worker himself, is a mode of alienation. The alienating transcendence is here the consumer; that is, the "They" whose projects the worker is limited to anticipating. As soon as I use a manufactured object, I meet upon it the outline of my own transcendence; it indicates to me the movement to be made; I am to turn, push, draw, or lean. Moreover we are dealing here with an hypothetical imperative; it refers me to an end which is equally in the world: if I want to sit down, if I want to open the box, etc. And this end itself has been anticipated in the constitution of the object as an end posited by some transcendence. It belongs at present to the object as its most peculiar potentiality. Thus it is true that the manufactured object makes me known to myself as "they"; that is, it refers to me the image of my transcendence as that of any transcendence whatsoever. And if I allow my possibilities to be channeled by the instrument thus constituted, I experience myself as any transcendence: to go from the subway station at "Trocadéro" to "Sèvres-Babylon," "They" change at "La Motte-Picquet." This change is foreseen, indicated on maps, etc.; if I change routes at La Motte-Picquet, I am the "They" who change. To be sure, I differentiate myself by each use of the subway as much by the individual upsurge of my being as by the distant ends which I pursue. But these final ends are only on the horizon of my act. My immediate ends are the ends of the "They," and I apprehend myself as interchangeable with any one of my neighbors. In this sense we lose our real individuality, for the project

which we are is precisely the project which others are. In this subway corridor there is only one and the same project, inscribed a long time ago in matter, where a living and undifferentiated transcendence comes to be absorbed. To the extent that I realize myself in solitude as any transcendence, I have only the experience of undifferentiated-being (e.g., if alone in my room I open a bottle of preserves with the proper bottle opener). But if this undifferentiated transcendence projects its projects, whatever they are, in connection with other transcendences experienced as real presences similarly absorbed in projects identical with my projects, then I realize my project as one among thousands of identical projects projected by one and the same undifferentiated transcendence. Then I have the experience of a common transcendence directed toward a unique end of which I am only an ephemeral particularization; I insert myself into the great human stream which from the time that the subway first existed has flowed incessantly into the corridors of the station "La Motte-Picquet-Grenelle." But we must note the following:

(1) This experience is of the psychological order and not ontological. It in no way corresponds to a real unification of the for-itselfs under consideration. Neither does it stem from an immediate experience of their transcendence as such (as in being-looked-at), but it is motivated rather by the double objectivizing apprehension of the object transcended in common and of the bodies which surround mine. In particular the fact that I am engaged with others in a common rhythm which I contribute to creating is especially likely to lead me to apprehend myself as engaged in a We-subject. This is the meaning of the cadenced march of soldiers; it is the meaning also of the rhythmic work of a crew. It must be noted, however, that in this case the rhythm emanates freely from me; it is a project which I realize by means of my transcendence; it synthesizes a future with a present and a past within a perspective of regular repetition; it is I who produce this rhythm. But at the same time it melts into the general rhythm of the work or of the march of the concrete community which surrounds me. It gets its meaning only through this general rhythm; this is what I experience, for example, when the rhythm which I adopt is *contre-temps*. Yet the enveloping of my rhythm by the rhythm of the Other is apprehended "laterally." I do not utilize the collective rhythm as an instrument; neither do I contemplate it—in the sense in which for example, I might contemplate dancers on a stage. It surrounds me and involves me without being an object for me. I do not transcend it toward my own possibilities; but I slip my transcendence into its transcendence, and my own end—to accomplish a particular work, to arrive at a particular place—is an end of the "They" which is not distinct from the peculiar end of the collectivity. Thus the rhythm which I cause to be born is born in connection with me and laterally as the collective rhythm; it is my rhythm to the extent

that it is their rhythm and conversely. There precisely is the motive for the experience of the We-subject; it is finally *our rhythm*.

Yet we can see that this can be only if by the earlier acceptance of a common end and of common instruments I constitute myself as an undifferentiated transcendence by rejecting my personal ends beyond the collective ends at present pursued. Thus whereas in the experience of being-for-others the upsurge of a dimension of real and concrete being is the condition for the very experience, the experience of the We-subject is a pure psychological, subjective event in a single consciousness; it corresponds to an inner modification of the structure of this consciousness but does not appear on the foundation of a concrete ontological relation with others and does not realize any *Mitsein*. It is a question only of a way of feeling myself in the midst of others. Of course this experience can be looked on as the symbol of an absolute, metaphysical unity of all transcendences; it seems, in fact, that it overcomes the original conflict of transcendences by making them converge in the direction of the world. In this sense the ideal We-subject would be the "we" of a humanity which would make itself master of the earth. But the experience of the "we" remains on the ground of individual psychology and remains a simple symbol of the longed-for unity of transcendences. It is, in fact, in no way a lateral, real apprehension of subjectivities as such by a single subjectivity; the subjectivities remain out of reach and radically separated. But it is things and bodies, it is the material channeling of my transcendence which disposes me to apprehend it as extended and supported by the other transcendences without my getting out of my self and without the others getting out of themselves. I apprehend through the world that I form a part of "we."

This is why my experience of the We-subject in no way implies a similar and correlative experience in others; this is why also it is so unstable; for it depends on particular organizations in the midst of the world and it disappears with those organizations. In truth, there is in the world a host of formations which indicate me as *anybody*: first of all, all instrumental formations from tools proper to buildings with their elevators, their water or gas pipes, their electricity, not to mention means of transportation, shops, etc. Every shop window, each plate of glass refers to me my image as an undifferentiated transcendence. In addition professional and technical relations with others make me known to myself as *anybody*: for the waiter I am *any* patron, for the ticket collector, I am *any* user of the subway. Finally the chance incident which suddenly takes place in front of the pavement of the café where I am sitting indicates me as an anonymous spectator and as a pure "look which *makes this incident exist*—as an outside." Similarly it is the anonymity of the spectator which is indicated by the theatrical performance which I am attending or the exhibition of pictures which I visit. And of course I make

myself anybody when I try on shoes or uncork a bottle or go into an elevator or laugh in the theater. But the experience of this undifferentiated transcendence is an inner and contingent event which concerns only me. Certain particular circumstances which come from the world can add to my impression of being part of the "we." But in every instance we are dealing with only a purely subjective impression which engages only me.

(2) The experience of the We-subject can not be primary; it can not constitute an original attitude toward others since, on the contrary, it must in order to be realized presuppose a twofold preliminary recognition of the existence of others. In the first place, the manufactured object is such only if it refers to the producers who have made it and to rules for its use which have been fixed by others. Confronting an inanimate thing which has not been worked on, for which I myself fix its mode of use and to which I myself assign a new use (if, for example, I use a stone as a hammer), I have a non-thetic consciousness of my self as a person; that is, of my selfness, of my own ends, and of my free inventiveness. The rules for using, the "methods of employing" manufactured objects are both rigid and ideal like *taboos* and by their essential structure put me in the presence of the Other; it is because the Other treats me as an undifferentiated transcendence that I can realize myself as such.

For a ready example, take those big signs which are above the portals of a station or in a waiting room and which bear the words "Exit" or "Entrance"; or again the directing hands on signboards which indicate a building or a direction. Here we are dealing once more with hypothetical imperatives. But here the formulation of the imperative clearly allows the Other to show through, the Other who is speaking and addressing himself directly to me. It is indeed to me that the printed sentence is directed; it represents in fact an immediate communication from the Other to me: I am *aimed at*. But if the Other aims at me, it is in so far as I am an undifferentiated transcendence. As soon as I avail myself of the opening marked "Exit" and go out through it, I am not using it in the absolute freedom of my *personal* projects. I am not constituting a tool by means of *invention*; I do not surpass the pure materiality of the thing toward my possibles. But between the object and me there has already slipped in a human transcendence which guides my transcendence. The object is already *humanized*; it signifies "human kindom." The "Exit"—considered as a pure opening out onto the street—is strictly equivalent to the "Entrance"; neither its coefficient of adversity nor its visible utility designates it as an exit. I do not submit to the object itself when I use it as an "Exit"; I adapt myself to the human order. By my very act I *recognize* the Other's existence; I set up a dialogue with the Other.

All this Heidegger has said and very well. But the conclusion which he neglects to derive from it is that in order for the object to appear as

manufactured, it is necessary that the Other be first given in some other way. A person who had not already experienced the Other would in no way be able to distinguish the manufactured object from the pure materiality of a thing which has not been worked on. Even if he were to utilize it according to the method foreseen by the manufacturer, he would be reinventing this method and would thus realize a free appropriation of a natural thing. To go out by the passage marked "Exit" without having read the writing or without knowing the language is to be like the Stoic madman who in broad daylight says, "It is day," not as the consequence of an objective establishment but by virtue of inner resources of his madness. If therefore the manufactured object refers to Others and thereby to my undifferentiated transcendence, this is because I already know Others. Thus the experience of the We-subject is based on the original experience of the Other and can be only a secondary and subordinate experience.

Furthermore, as we have seen, to apprehend oneself as an undifferentiated transcendence—that is, basically, as a pure exemplification of the "human species"—is not yet to apprehend oneself as the partial structure of a We-subject. For that, in fact, one must discover oneself as *any body* in the center of some human stream. Therefore it is necessary to be surrounded by others. We have seen also that the others are in no way experienced as subjects in this experience, but neither are they apprehended as objects. They are not posited at all. Of course, I proceed on the basis of their factual existence in the world and of the perception of their acts. But I do not apprehend their facticity or their movements *positionally*; I have a lateral and non-positional consciousness of their bodies as correlative with my body, of their acts as unfolding in connection with my acts in such a way that I can not determine whether it is my acts which give birth to their acts or their acts which give birth to mine. A few observations will suffice to make clear that the experience of the "We" can not enable me originally to know as Others the Others who make part of the We. Quite the contrary, it is necessary that first there should be some awareness of what the Other is in order for an experience of my relations with Others to be realized in the form of the *Mitsein*. The *Mitsein* by itself would be impossible without a preliminary recognition of what the Other is: "I am with —." Very well. But with whom? In addition even if this experience were ontologically primary, one cannot see how one could pass, without a radical modification of this experience, from a totally undifferentiated transcendence to the experience of particular persons. If the Other were not given elsewhere, the experience of the "We" when broken up would give birth only to the apprehension of pure object-instruments in the world circumscribed by my transcendence.

These few remarks do not claim to exhaust the question of the "We." They aim only at indicating that the experience of the We-subject has no value as a

metaphysical revelation; it depends strictly on the various forms of the for-others and is only an empirical enrichment of certain of these forms. It is to this fact evidently that we should attribute the extreme instability of this experience. It comes and disappears capriciously, leaving us in the face of others-as-objects or else of a "They" who look at us. It appears as a provisional appeasement which is constituted at the very heart of the conflict, not as a definitive solution of this conflict. We should hope in vain for a human "we" in which the intersubjective totality would obtain consciousness of itself as a unified subjectivity. Such an ideal could be only a dream produced by a passage to the limit and to the absolute on the basis of fragmentary, strictly psychological experiences. Furthermore this ideal itself implies the recognition of the conflict of transcendences as the original state of being-for-others.

This fact explains an apparent paradox: since the unity of the oppressed class stems from the fact that it is experienced as an Us-object in the face of an undifferentiated "They" which is the Third or the oppressing class, one might be tempted to believe that by a sort of symmetry the oppressing class apprehends itself as a We-subject in the face of the oppressed class. But the weakness of the oppressing class lies in the fact that although it has at its disposal precise and rigorous means for coercion, it is within itself profoundly anarchistic. The "bourgeois" is not only defined as a certain *homo oeconomicus* disposing of a precise power and privilege in the heart of a society of a certain type; he is described inwardly as a consciousness which does not recognize its belonging to a class. His situation, in fact, does not allow him to apprehend himself as engaged in an Us-object in community with the other members of the bourgeois class. But on the other hand, the very nature of the We-subject implies that it is made up of only fleeting experiences without metaphysical bearing. The "bourgeois" commonly denies that there are classes; he attributes the existence of a proletariat to the action of agitators, to awkward incidents, to injustices which can be repaired by particular measures; he affirms the existence of a solidarity of interests between capital and labor; he offers instead of class solidarity a larger solidarity, natural solidarity, in which the worker and the employer are integrated in a *Mitsein* which suppresses the conflict. The question here is not, as so often said, one of maneuvers or of a stupid refusal to see the situation in its true light; rather the member of the oppressing class sees the totality of the oppressed class confronting him as an objective ensemble of "they-subjects" without his correlatively realizing his community of being with the other members of the oppressing class. The two experiences are in no way complementary; in fact one may be alone in the face of an oppressed collectivity and still be able to grasp it as an object-instrument and apprehend oneself as the internal-negation of this collectivity; i.e., simply as the impartial Third. It is only when

the oppressed class by revolution or by a sudden increase of its power posits itself as "they-who-look-at" in the face of members of the oppressing class, it is only then that the oppressors experience themselves as "Us." But this will be in fear and shame and as an Us-object.

Thus there is no symmetry between the making proof of the Us-object and the experience of the We-subject. The first is the revelation of a dimension of real existence and corresponds to a simple enrichment of the original proof of the for-others. The second is a psychological experience realized by an historic man immersed in a worked up universe and in a society of a definite economic type. It reveals nothing particular; it is a purely subjective *Erlebnis*.

It appears therefore that the experience of the "We" and the "Us" although real, is not of a nature to modify the results of our prior investigations. As for the Us-object, this is directly dependent on the Third—i.e., on my being-for-others—and it is constituted on the foundation of my being-outside-for-others. And as for the We-subject, this is a psychological experience which supposes one way or another that the Other's existence as such has been already revealed to us. It is therefore useless for human-reality to seek to get out of this dilemma: one must either transcend the Other or allow oneself to be transcended by him. The essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not the *Mitsein*; it is conflict.

At the end of this long description of the relations of the for-itself with others we have then achieved this certainty: the for-itself is not only a being which arises as the nihilation of the in-itself which it is and the internal negation of the in-itself which it is not. This nihilating flight is entirely reapprehended by the in-itself and fixed in in-itself as soon as the Other appears. The for-itself when alone transcends the world; it is the nothing by which there are things. The Other by rising up confers on the for-itself a being-in-itself-in-the-midst-of-the-world as a thing among things. This petrification in in-itself by the Other's look is the profound meaning of the myth of Medusa.

We have therefore advanced in our pursuit: we wanted to determine the original relation of the for-itself to the in-itself. We learned first that the for-itself was the nihilation and the radical negation of the in-itself; at present we establish that it is also—by the sole fact of meeting with the Other and without any contradiction—totally in-itself, present in the midst of the in-itself. But this second aspect of the for-itself represents its *outside*; the for-itself by nature is the being which can not coincide with its being-in-itself.

These remarks can serve as the basis for a general theory of being, which is the goal toward which we are working. Nevertheless it is still too soon for us to attempt this theory. Actually it is not sufficient to describe the for-itself as simply projecting its possibilities beyond being-in-itself. This project of its possibilities does not statically determine the configuration of the world; it

changes the world at every instant. If we read Heidegger, for example, we are struck, from this point of view, with the inadequacy of his hermeneutic descriptions. Adopting his terminology, we shall say that he has described the *Dasein* as the existent which surpasses existents toward *their being*. And being, here, signifies the meaning or the mode of being of the existent. It is true that the for-itself is the being by which existents reveal their mode of being. But Heidegger passes over in silence the fact that the for-itself is not only the being which constitutes an ontology of existents but that it is also the being by whom ontic modifications supervene for the existent qua existent. This perpetual possibility of acting—that is, of modifying the in-itself in its ontic materiality, in its “flesh”—must evidently be considered as an essential characteristic of the for-itself. As such this possibility must find its foundation in an original relation of the for-itself to the in-itself, a relation which we have not yet brought to light. What does it mean to act? Why does the for-itself act? How can it act? Such are the questions to which we must reply at present. We have all the elements for a reply: nihilation, facticity and the body, being-for-others, the peculiar nature of the in-itself. We must question them once more.

Part IV

Having, Doing, and Being

“Having,” “doing,” and “being”¹ are the cardinal categories of human reality. Under them are subsumed all types of human conduct. Knowing, for example, is a modality of having. These categories are not without connection with one another, and several writers have emphasized these ties. Denis de Rougemont is throwing light on this kind of relation when he writes in his article on Don Juan, “He was not enough to have.” Again a similar connection is indicated when a moral agent is represented as doing in order to “do himself” and “doing himself” in order to be.

However since the reaction against the doctrine of substance has won out in modern philosophy, the majority of thinkers have attempted to do on the ground of human conduct what their predecessors have done in physics—to replace substance by simple motion. For a long time the aim of ethics was to provide man with a way of being. This was the meaning of Stoic morality or of Spinoza’s *Ethics*. But if the being of man is to be reabsorbed in the succession of his acts, then the purpose of ethics will no longer be to raise man to a higher ontological dignity. In this sense the Kantian morality is the first great ethical system which substitutes doing for being as the supreme value of

¹ *Avoir, faire, être*. It is difficult to know how to translate *faire* since Sartre gives to it all of the twofold significance of *doing* and *making* which the word carries in French. On the whole “doing” seems closer, especially since such expressions as “to do a book” or “to do a play” carry the same double meaning and make sense in English even though they are admittedly awkward. Tr.

KEY TO SPECIAL TERMINOLOGY¹

Abolition (*disparition*). The fact of ceasing to exist on the part of an object. This is, of course, from the point of view of the For-itself, not of the In-itself since Being does not increase or diminish.

Abschattungen. Used by Sartre in the usual phenomenological sense to refer to the successive appearances of the object "in profile."

Absurd. That which is meaningless. Thus man's existence is absurd because his contingency finds no external justification. His projects are absurd because they are directed toward an unattainable goal (the "desire to become God" or to be simultaneously the free For-itself and the absolute In-itself.)

Actaeon Complex. Totality of images which suggest that "knowing" is a form of appropriative violation with sexual overtones.

Anguish. The reflective apprehension of the Self as freedom, the realization that a nothingness slips in between my Self and my past and future so that nothing relieves me from the necessity of continually choosing myself and nothing guarantees the validity of the values which I choose. Fear is of something in the world, anguish is anguish before myself (as in Kierkegaard).

Apparition (*apparition*). The coming into existence of an object. This is only from the point of view of the For-itself since Being itself neither "comes" nor "goes."

Appearance (*apparition*). See "Phenomenon" and "Abschattungen."

Bad Faith. A lie to oneself within the unity of a single consciousness. Through

¹ This far from exhaustive list of terms will perhaps be confusing to the person who has read none of BEING AND NOTHINGNESS and will certainly appear inadequate to anyone who has completed the volume. I am nevertheless including it in the hope that these approximate definitions may serve as a guide for readers so that they may thus more easily attain for themselves a full comprehension of Sartre's philosophy. I am including here both technical terms coined by Sartre and familiar words to which he gives special meanings. All direct quotations are from *Being and Nothingness*. Tr.

bad faith a person seeks to escape the responsible freedom of Being-for-itself. Bad faith rests on a vacillation between transcendence and facticity which refuses to recognize either one for what it really is or to synthesize them.

Being (*être*). "Being is. Being is in-itself. Being is what it is." Being includes both Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself, but the latter is the nihilation of the former. As contrasted with Existence, Being is all-embracing and objective rather than individual and subjective.

Being-for-itself (*être-pour-soi*). The nihilation of Being-in-itself; consciousness conceived as a lack of Being, a desire for Being, a relation to Being. By bringing Nothingness into the world the For-itself can stand out from Being and judge other beings by knowing what it is not. Each For-itself is the nihilation of a particular being.

Being-in-itself (*être-en-soi*). Non-conscious Being. It is the Being of the phenomenon and overflows the knowledge which we have of it. It is a plenitude, and strictly speaking we can say of it only that it is.

Being-for-others (*être-pour-autrui*). The third ekstasis (q.v.) of the For-itself. There arises here a new dimension of being in which my Self exists outside as an object for others. The For-others involves a perpetual conflict as each For-itself seeks to recover its own Being by directly or indirectly making an object out of the other.

Cause. Occasionally used in the ordinary sense of physical cause and effect. In the human sphere cause (*motif*) is empty of all deterministic quality and stands for an objective apprehension of a situation which in the light of a certain end may serve as a means for attaining that end.

Coefficient of adversity. A term borrowed from Gaston Bachelard. It refers to the amount of resistance offered by external objects to the projects of the For-itself.

Cogito. Sartre claims that the pre-reflective cogito (see "consciousness") is the pre-cognitive basis for the Cartesian cogito.

There is also, he says, a sort of cogito concerning the existence of Others. While we can not abstractly prove the Other's existence, this cogito will disclose to me his "concrete, indubitable presence," just as my own "contingent but necessary existence" has been revealed to me.

Consciousness. The transcending For-itself. "Consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself." Like Husserl Sartre insists that consciousness is always consciousness of something. He sometimes distinguishes types of consciousness according to psychic objects; e.g. pain-consciousness, shame-consciousness. Two more basic distinctions are made:

(1) Unreflective consciousness (also called non-thetic consciousness or non-positional self-consciousness). This is the pre-reflective cogito. Here

there is no knowledge but an implicit consciousness of being consciousness of an object.

(2) Reflective consciousness (also called thetic consciousness or positional self-consciousness). For this see "reflection."

Contingency. In the For-itself this equals facticity, the brute fact of being this For-itself in the world. The contingency of freedom is the fact that freedom is not able not to exist.

Dasein. Heidegger's term for the human being as a conscious existent. Basic meaning is "Being-there."

Dissociation (*dédoublement*). The never completed split in consciousness attempted by consciousness in reflection. The two parts (if they were separated) would be the reflective consciousness and the consciousness reflected-on.

Distraction. An act by which consciousness in order to flee anguish forces itself to look on certain of its own future possibilities as if they were actually possibilities of someone else. Distraction as regards the Past tries to view the Self as a fully constituted personality and to hold that acts are free when in conformity with this Essence, thus avoiding a free, new choice of Being. More generally distraction is any act by which consciousness determines itself not to see certain of its own reactions.

Eidetic Reduction. (Husserl). The process of considering any object or isolated example of subjectivity as merely an example of what it is apart from any affirmation of its actual existence. Sartre refers to it as meaning simply that "one can always pass beyond the concrete phenomenon toward its essence."

Ekstasis. Used in the original Greek sense of "standing out from." The For-itself is separated from its Self in three successive ekstases:

(1) Temporality. The For-itself nihilates the In-itself (to which in one sense it still belongs) in the three dimensions of past, present, and future (the three temporal ekstases).

(2) Reflection. The For-itself tries to adopt an external point of view on itself.

(3) Being-for-others. The For-itself discovers that it has a Self for-the-Other, a Self which it is without ever being able to know or get hold of it.

Engage (*engager*). Includes both the idea of involvement and the idea of deliberate commitment. Thus the human being is inescapably engaged in the world, and freedom is meaningful only as engaged by its free choice of ends.

Epoché. Husserl's "putting into parentheses" all ideas about the existence of the world so as to examine consciousness independently of the question of any worldly existence. Sartre, of course, can not follow this procedure since his task is to examine consciousness in-the-world.

Essence. For Sartre as for Hegel, essence is what has been. Sartre calls it man's past. Since there is no pre-established pattern for human nature, each man makes his essence as he lives.

Existence. Concrete, individual being here and now. Sartre says that for all existentialists existence precedes essence. Existence has for them also always a subjective quality when applied to human reality.

External negation. "An external bond established between two beings by a witness."

Facticity (*facticité*). The For-itself's necessary connection with the In-itself, hence with the world and its own past. It is what allows us to say that the For-itself is or exists. The facticity of freedom is the fact that freedom is not able not to be free.

Finitude. To be carefully distinguished from "mortality." Finitude refers not to the fact that man dies but to the fact that as a free choice of his own project of being, he makes himself finite by excluding other possibilities each time that he chooses the one which he prefers. Man would thus because of his facticity be finite even if immortal.

Freedom. The very being of the For-itself which is "condemned to be free" and must forever choose itself—i.e., make itself. " 'To be free' does not mean 'to obtain what one has wished' but rather 'by oneself to determine oneself to wish' (in the broad sense of choosing). In other words success is not important to freedom."

Future. The "possibles" of the For-itself. The future is what the For-itself has to be. It is "the determining being which the For-itself has to be beyond being."

Historicize (state or quality, "historicity"; active process, "historization"). To become involved as a concrete existent in an actual world so as to have an "history."

Human-reality. Sartre's term for the human being or For-itself. Used both generally (like "mankind") and for the individual man.

Instant. Sartre denies that time is a succession of instants. The instant is psychologically important, however, as indicating the everpresent possibility that the For-itself may at any point suddenly effect a rupture in its existence by choosing a new project of being. The instant thus becomes simultaneously the final and the initial terms for the respective projects.

Internal negation. Found only in connection with the action of the For-itself. A negation which influences the inner structure of a being who or which is denied something. "Such a relation between two beings that the one which is denied to the other qualifies the other at the heart of its essence—by absence."

Jonah complex. Irrational desire to assimilate and to identify with oneself either the object of knowledge or a beloved person—without in any way impairing that object's character as an external object.

Made-to-be. An unsatisfactory translation of *est été*, literally "is been." Sartre's use of the verb "to be" as transitive is, so far as I know, unique.

Metaphysics. "The study of individual processes which have given birth to this world as a concrete and particular totality." Metaphysics is thus concerned with the problem of why concrete existents are as they are. Sartre says that metaphysics is to ontology as history is to sociology.

Mine. "A synthesis of self and not-self."

Motive (*mobile*). "The ensemble of the desires, emotions, and passions which urge me to accomplish a certain act." Sartre holds that these are freely constituted as a motive, not psychologically determined.

Nausea. The "taste" of the facticity and contingency of existence. "A dull and inescapable nausea perpetually reveals my body to my consciousness." On the ground of this fundamental nausea are produced all concrete, empirical nauseas (caused by spoiled meat, excrement, etc.).

Négativité. Sartre's word for types of human activity which while not obviously involving a negative judgment nevertheless contain negativity as an integral part of their structure; e.g., experiences involving absence, change, interrogation, destruction.

Nihilate. (*néantir*). A word coined by Sartre. Consciousness exists as consciousness by making a nothingness (*q.v.*) arise between it and the object of which it is consciousness. Thus nihilation is that by which consciousness exists. To nihilate is to encase with a shell of non-being. The English word "nihilate" was first used by Helmut Kuhn in his *Encounter with Nothingness*.

Noema (Husserl). The objective "pole" of conscious experience viewed after the epoché (*q.v.*); the object intended by consciousness—as it is in itself plus all its phenomenal essential features.

Noesis. Husserl's term for the intentional direction by consciousness toward an object external to it. The intending act as such with all its essential features.

Nothingness (*Néant*). Nothingness does not itself have Being, yet it is supported by Being. It comes into the world by the For-itself and is the recoil from fullness of self-contained Being which allows consciousness to exist as such.

Objectness. (*Objectité*). Not quite objectivity but rather the quality or state of being an object. Sometimes *objectité* is here translated as "object-state." "Objectivation" and "objectivize" are related words and refer to making an object out of something or someone.

Ontology. The study "of the structures of being of the existent taken as a totality." Ontology describes Being itself, the conditions by which "there is" a world, human reality, etc. Cf. "metaphysics."

Past. What the For-itself has been. The Past thus becomes Being-in-itself and is the For-itself's essence and substance as well as part of its facticity. This is

the only sense in which the For-itself has either essence or substance since in its living present it "is what it is not and is not what it is."

Phenomenon. Being as it appears or is revealed. Sartre uses the word in its usual phenomenological sense though he differs in his view of the transphenomenality of Being. He, of course, denies any distinction between phenomena and noumena.

Phenomenology. In general in speaking of the theory of phenomenology Sartre refers to the work of Husserl. It should be noted, however, that in spite of many points of disagreement with Husserl, Sartre considers his own work a phenomenological study. When he says that an idea merits phenomenological investigation, he means, of course, a study conducted according to his own method.

Possibilize (possibilise). Refers to the free act by which consciousness constitutes an action as capable of being performed or an attitude as capable of being assumed.

Possible (possible). A noun almost equal to "possibility." Sartre generally prefers "possible" which signifies a concrete action to be performed in a concrete world rather than an abstract idea of possibility in general. The For-itself makes itself by choosing its possibles and projecting itself toward those preferred.

Presence. Concerns the relation of the For-itself to the rest of Being and involves an internal negation. "Presence to — is an internal relation between the being which is present and the being to which it is present." "The For-itself is presence to all of Being-in-itself" by making Being-in-itself "exist as a totality."

Present. The Present is not. The For-itself is presence to Being-in-itself by means of an internal negation. But this very presence is a flight toward the Future as a further project of the For-itself.

Presentation. That which is present to the mind as an object of consciousness. Sometimes distinguished from *representation*. When this distinction is observed, *presentation* refers to actual objects of which the mind is conscious, *representation* to imaginary ones.

Probability. A potentiality which refers back to the object though it is not made by the object nor does it have to be. It belongs to the In-itself whereas possibility lies in the province of the For-itself.

Project. Both verb and noun. It refers to the For-itself's choice of its way of being and is expressed by action in the light of a future end.

Reflection (reflet). In the dyad "the-reflection-reflecting," the form in which the For-itself founds its own nothingness. "The For-itself can be only in the mode of a reflection causing itself to be reflected as not being a certain being." In other words consciousness exists as a translucent consciousness of being other than the objects of which it is consciousness.

Reflection (réflexion). The attempt on the part of consciousness to become its own object. "Reflection is a type of being in which the For-itself is in order to be to itself what it is." There are two types.

(1) Pure reflection. The presence of the reflective consciousness to the consciousness reflected-on. This requires a Katharsis effected by consciousness on itself.

(2) Impure (accessory) reflection. The constitution of "psychic temporality," the For-itself's contemplation of its psychic states.

Representation. See "Presentation."

Responsibility. "Consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or an object."

Serious. The "Spirit of seriousness" (*l'esprit de sérieux*) views man as an object and subordinates him to the world. It thinks of values as having an absolute existence independent of human-reality.

Situation. The For-itself's engagement in the world. It is the product of both facticity and the For-itself's way of accepting and acting upon its facticity.

Space. "The nothingness of relation apprehended as a relation by the being which is its own relation." Space is primarily subjective because it is the result of the For-itself's act of organizing relations between external objects—always in the light of the For-itself's own ends.

Survey, project of surveying (survoler, survol). Process of thought or perception such that objects are grasped in a global act and can not be separated into points or instants.

Temporality. Subjective process whereby the For-itself continuously lives its project of nihilating the In-itself. Through temporality the For-itself sets up its own measure for the duration and self-identity of things. Time is not in things but flows over them. The For-itself as what it has been (Past) is a flight (Present) toward what it projects to be (Future).

"There is" (*il y a*). Used by Sartre to indicate that the world and objects exist as a world and as objects rather than as meaningless, undifferentiated Being-in-itself. The "there is" results, of course from the upsurge into Being on the part of the For-itself.

Transcendence. Often refers simply to the process whereby the For-itself goes beyond the given in a further project of itself. Sometimes the For-itself is itself called a transcendence. If I make an object out of the Other, then he is for me a transcendence-transcended. On the other hand, the Being-in-itself which overflows all its appearances and all attempts of mine to grasp it is called a transcendent Being. The word "transcendence" is sometimes purely a substantive, sometimes refers to a process.

Transphenomenality. Refers to the fact that Being although coextensive with its appearance is not limited to it, that Being "surpasses the knowledge which we have of it and provides the basis for such knowledge."

Unrealizable. An ideal which although by nature unattainable dominates human conduct as man strives to realize this goal. Sartre uses this for ideals common to all human reality, not for concrete, individual goals which might be realized by some people and not by others.

Value. In general value arises as the For-itself constitutes objects as desirable. More specifically value is the "beyond of all surpassings as the For-itself seeks to be united with its Self. It is what the For-itself lacks in order to be itself.

World. The whole of non-conscious Being as it appears to the For-itself and is organized by the For-itself in "instrumental complexes." Because of its facticity the For-itself is inescapably engaged in the world. Yet strictly speaking, without the For-itself, there would be not a world but only an undifferentiated plenitude of Being.

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