

## 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 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 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 upsurge 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 flees 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 across 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 emptying across the distances which I originally established between things. It stands as a background of things, a back-

ground 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 place itself on 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, extra-mundane 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 farmhouse which is outlined against the sky at the top of a little hill. It is obvious that the object thus constituted still manifests the look as being probable. 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"<sup>16</sup> 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; he seems to go *in front*

<sup>16</sup> Tr. Literally, "put out of circuit" (*mise hors circuit*).

*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.<sup>17</sup> 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

<sup>17</sup> *L'Imaginaire*. 1940.

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 in 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 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 in the form of an object and 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 find 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 indeterminateness, 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 indeterminateness 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 consciousness, 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 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 suddenly the alienation of myself, which is the act of being-looked-at, involves 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 Other<sup>18</sup> 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 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.

<sup>18</sup> Tr. The French has *Fauteur*, "the author," which I feel sure must be a misprint for *Fautrul*, "the Other."

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 toward——," 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 left 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). In addition this specification is not merely 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 abrupt 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 possi-

bilities 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 the 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, nor 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 defense 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 categorical* 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 by 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 cannot 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 my 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 naïvely 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 or of 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*.<sup>19</sup>

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 this concrete proof of freedom which I can effect by myself is the 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 consciousness. 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 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 con-

<sup>19</sup> Tr. Correction for ἐπέχῃ.

trary 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 else," 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* not evil any more than I *am* 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. 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 impassable 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 toward . . . 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 can not 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 deter 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 every causal

state, therefore, 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, for the perceptions which I have of my own body (when I see my hand, for example) are subject to error. Therefore if the act of 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 a Platonist 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