

PART THREE

Being-for-Others

CHAPTER ONE

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 in 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 *éxis* 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 *éxis* 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? 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 re-

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

fers 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 obtain knowledge of my emotions or of my empirical thoughts. The Other is a phenomenon which refers to other phenomena—to a 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 web 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 pre-established 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 consciousness. 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 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 is not presented as being like those scientific notions (imaginary ones, for example) or like instruments which intervene in the course of a physical calculation, which are not presented in the empirical statement of the problem and which 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 indicated by diverse series of phenomena 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,

² Even if we agreed to 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.

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 *εποχή*⁹ 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 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

⁹Tr. Correction for *επέχη*.

system 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 position with respect to 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 indiffer-

ent 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 ekstastic 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; it is concealed in 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 al-

ways 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 two 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*.