

Symposium

2. It is as if the alteration of the Image occurs when *I am ashamed* for the other (the fear of this shame, according to Phaedrus, kept the Greek lovers in the ways of the Good, each obliged to care for his own image in the other's eyes). Now, shame comes from subjection: the other, because of a trivial incident which only my perspicacity or my madness apprehend, suddenly appears—is revealed, is exposed, in the photographic sense of the term—as *subjected* to an instance which is itself of a servile order: I suddenly see the other (a question of *vision*) busily or frenziedly or just insistently abiding by, respecting, yielding to worldly rites by which some sort of recognition is hoped for. For the bad Image is not a wicked image; it is a *paltry* image: it shows me the other caught up in the platitude of the social world—commonplace. (Or again: the other alters if he or she sides with the banalities the world professes in order to depreciate love: the other becomes gregarious.)

Heine

3. Once, speaking to me of ourselves, the other said: "a relation of quality"; this phrase was repugnant to me: it came suddenly from outside, flattening the specialty of the rapport by a conformist formula.

Quite frequently, it is by language that the other is altered; the other speaks a different word, and I hear rumbling menacingly *a whole other world*, which is the world of the other. When Albertine drops the trivial phrase "get her pot broken," the Proustian narrator is horrified, for it is the dreaded ghetto of female homosexuality, of crude cruising, which is suddenly revealed thereby: a whole

Proust

HEINE: "Sie sassen und tranken am Teetisch . . ." ("Lyrisches Intermezzo").

PROUST: *The Captive*.

scene through the keyhole of language. The word is of a tenuous chemical substance which performs the most violent alterations: the other, long maintained in the cocoon of my own discourse, suggests, by a word escaping unchecked from his or her lips, the languages which can be *borrowed*, and which consequently others have lent.

4. Sometimes, too, the other appears to me as subjected to a desire. But what then constitutes the corruption is not in my eyes a desire which is formed, named, proposed, aimed—in which case I would be, more simply, jealous (which derives from another tonality); it is only a nascent desire, a whiff of desire which I detect in the other, without the other's being really conscious of it: I see the other, in conversation, stir, multiply, *perform to excess*, assume a position of demand with regard to a third party, as though hung upon that third party in order to seduce him. Observe any such encounter carefully: you will see this subject (discreetly, mundanely) infatuated by this other, driven to establish with this other a warmer, more demanding, more flattering relation: I surprise the other, so to speak, in the act of self-inflation. I perceive *an infatuation of being*, which is not so far from what Sade would have called *an effervescence of countenance* ("I saw the sperm shooting from his eyes"); and, should the solicited partner respond in the same manner, the scene becomes ridiculous: I have the vision of two peacocks spreading their tails, each in front of the other. The image

Flaubert

FLAUBERT: "A sudden gust of wind lifted the cloths, and they saw two peacocks, a male and a female. The female crouched motionless, legs bent, rump in the air. The male strutted around her, fanning out his tail, puffing his feathers, clucking, then leaped upon her, spreading his wings until he covered her like a cradle, and the two huge birds swayed together . . ." (*Bouvard et Pécuchet*).

is corrupted, because the person I suddenly see is then *another* (and no longer the other), a stranger (and mad?).

Gide

(For example, in the train from Biskra, Gide, in complicity with the three Algerian schoolboys, "gasping, panting" before his wife, who was pretending to read, looked like "a criminal or a madman." Is not any other desire but mine *insane*?)

Werther

5. The lover's discourse is usually a smooth envelope which encases the Image, a very gentle glove around the loved being. It is a devout, orthodox discourse. When the Image alters, the envelope of devotion rips apart; a shock capsizes my own language. Wounded by a remark he overhears, Werther suddenly sees Charlotte in the guise of a gossip, he includes her within the group of her companions with whom she is chattering (she is no longer the other, but one among others), and then says disdainfully: "my good little women" (*meine Weibchen*). A *blasphemy* abruptly rises to the subject's lips and disrespectfully explodes the lover's benediction; he is possessed by a demon who speaks through his mouth, out of which emerge, as in the fairy tales, no longer flowers, but toads. Horrible ebb of the Image. (The horror of spoiling is even stronger than the anxiety of losing.)

GIDE: *Et nunc manet in te.*

To Be Ascetic

askesis

Whether he feels guilty with regard to the loved being, or whether he seeks to impress that being by representing his unhappiness, the amorous subject outlines an ascetic behavior of self-punishment (in life style, dress, etc.).

1. Since I am guilty of this, of that (I have—I assign myself—a thousand reasons for being so), I shall punish myself, I shall chasten by body: cut my hair very short, conceal my eyes behind dark glasses (a way of taking the veil), devote myself to the study of some serious and abstract branch of learning. I shall get up early and work while it is still dark outside, like a monk. I shall be very patient, a little sad, in a word, *worthy*, as suits a man of resentment. I shall (hysterically) signify my mourning (the mourning which I assign myself) in my dress, my haircut, the regularity of my habits. This will be a gentle retreat; just that slight degree of retreat necessary to the proper functioning of a discrete pathos.

2. Askesis (the impulse toward askesis) is addressed to the other: turn back, look at me, see what you have made of me. It is a blackmail: I raise before the other the figure of my own disappearance, as it will surely occur, if the other does not yield (to what?).

Waiting

attente / waiting

Tumult of anxiety provoked by waiting for the loved being, subject to trivial delays (rendezvous, letters, telephone calls, returns).

Schönberg

1. I am waiting for an arrival, a return, a promised sign. This can be futile, or immensely pathetic: in *Erwartung* (*Waiting*), a woman waits for her lover, at night, in the forest; I am waiting for no more than a telephone call, but the anxiety is the same. Everything is solemn: I have no sense of *proportions*.

2. There is a scenography of waiting: I organize it, manipulate it, cut out a portion of time in which I shall mime the loss of the loved object and provoke all the effects of a minor mourning. This is then acted out as a play.

The setting represents the interior of a café; we have a rendezvous, I am waiting. In the Prologue, the sole actor of the play (and with reason), I discern and indicate the other's delay; this delay is as yet only a mathematical, computable entity (I look at my watch several times); the Prologue ends with a brainstorm: I decide to "take it badly," I release the anxiety of waiting. Act I now begins; it is occupied by suppositions: was there a misunderstanding as to the time, the place? I try to recall the moment when the rendezvous was made, the details which were supplied. What is to be done (anxiety of behavior)? Try

another café? Telephone? But if the other comes during these absences? Not seeing me, the other might leave, etc. Act II is the act of anger; I address violent reproaches to the absent one: "All the same, he (she) could have . . ." "He (she) knows perfectly well . . ." Oh, if she (he) could be here, so that I could reproach her (him) for not being here! In Act III, I attain to (I obtain?) anxiety in the pure state: the anxiety of abandonment; I have just shifted in a second from absence to death; the other is as if dead: explosion of grief: I am internally *livid*. That is the play; it can be shortened by the other's arrival; if the other arrives in Act I, the greeting is calm; if the other arrives in Act II, there is a "scene"; if in Act II, there is recognition, the action of grace: I breathe deeply, like Pelléas emerging from the underground chambers and rediscovering life, the odor of roses.

Winnicott

Pelléas

(The anxiety of waiting is not continuously violent; it has its matte moments; I am waiting, and everything around my waiting is stricken with unreality: in this café, I look at the others who come in, chat, joke, read calmly: they are not waiting.)

3. Waiting is an enchantment: I have received *orders not to move*. Waiting for a telephone call is thereby woven out of tiny unavowable interdictions *to infinity*: I forbid myself to leave the room, to go to the toilet, even to telephone (to keep the line from being busy); I suffer torments if someone else telephones me (for the same reason); I madden myself by the thought that at a certain (imminent) hour I shall have to leave, thereby running the risk of missing the healing call, the return of the

WINNICOTT: *Playing and Reality*.

Mother. All these diversions which solicit me are so many wasted moments for waiting, so many impurities of anxiety. For the anxiety of waiting, in its pure state, requires that I be sitting in a chair within reach of the telephone, without doing anything.

4. The being I am waiting for is not real. Like the mother's breast for the infant, "I create and re-create it over and over, starting from my capacity to love, starting from my need for it": the other comes here where I am waiting, here where I have already created him/her. And if the other does not come, I hallucinate the other: waiting is a delirium.

Winnicott

The telephone again: each time it rings, I snatch up the receiver, I think it will be the loved being who is calling me (since that being should call me); a little more effort and I "recognize" the other's voice, I engage in the dialogue, to the point where I lash out furiously against the importunate outsider who awakens me from my delirium. In the café, anyone who comes in, bearing the faintest resemblance, is thereupon, in a first impulse, *recognized*.

And, long after the amorous relation is allayed, I keep the habit of hallucinating the being I have loved: sometimes I am still in anxiety over a telephone call that is late, and no matter who is on the line, I imagine I recognize the voice I once loved: I am an amputee who still feels pain in his missing leg.

5. "Am I in love? —Yes, since I'm waiting." The other never waits. Sometimes I want to play the part of the

WINNICOTT: *Playing and Reality*.

one who doesn't wait; I try to busy myself elsewhere, to arrive late; but I always lose at this game: whatever I do, I find myself there, with nothing to do, punctual, even ahead of time. The lover's fatal identity is precisely: *I am the one who waits.*

(In transference, one always waits—at the doctor's, the professor's, the analyst's. Further, if I am waiting at a bank window, an airport ticket counter, I immediately establish an aggressive link with the teller, the stewardess, whose indifference unmasks and irritates my subjection; so that one might say that wherever there is waiting there is transference: I depend on a presence which is shared and requires time to be bestowed—as if it were a question of lowering my desire, lessening my need. *To make someone wait*: the constant prerogative of all power, “age-old pastime of humanity.”)

E.B.

6. A mandarin fell in love with a courtesan. “I shall be yours,” she told him, “when you have spent a hundred nights waiting for me, sitting on a stool, in my garden, beneath my window.” But on the ninety-ninth night, the mandarin stood up, put his stool under his arm, and went away.

E.B.: Letter

Dark Glasses

catcher / to hide

A deliberative figure: the amorous subject wonders, not whether he should declare his love to the loved being (this is not a figure of avowal), but to what degree he should conceal the turbulences of his passion: his desires, his distresses; in short, his excesses (in Racinian language: his *fureur*).

1. X, who left for his vacation without me, has shown no signs of life since his departure: accident? post-office strike? indifference? distancing maneuver? exercise of a passing impulse of autonomy (“His youth deafens him, he fails to hear”)? or simple innocence? I grow increasingly anxious, pass through each act of the waiting-scenario. But when X reappears in one way or another, for he cannot fail to do so (a thought which should immediately dispel any anxiety), what will I say to him? Should I hide my distress—which will be over by then (“*How are you?*”)? Release it aggressively (“*That wasn't at all nice, at least you could have . . .*”) or passionately (“*Do you know how much worry you caused me?*”)? Or let this distress of mine be delicately, discreetly understood, so that it will be discovered without having to strike down the other (“*I was rather concerned . . .*”)? A secondary anxiety seizes me, which is that I must determine the degree of publicity I shall give to my initial anxiety.

Mme de
Sévigné

2. I am caught up in a double discourse, from which I cannot escape. On the one hand, I tell myself: suppose

the other, by some arrangement of his own structure, needed my questioning? Then wouldn't I be justified in abandoning myself to the literal expression, the lyrical utterance of my "passion"? Are not excess and madness my truth, my strength? And if this truth, this strength ultimately prevailed?

But on the other hand, I tell myself: the signs of this passion run the risk of smothering the other. Then should I not, *precisely because of my love*, hide from the other how much I love him? I see the other with a double vision: sometimes as object, sometimes as subject; I hesitate between tyranny and oblation. Thus I doom myself to blackmail: if I love the other, I am forced to seek his happiness; but then I can only do myself harm: a trap: I am condemned to be a saint or a monster: unable to be the one, unwilling to be the other: hence I tergiversate: I show my passion a little.

Balzac

3. To impose upon my passion the mask of discretion (of impassivity): this is a strictly heroic value: "It is unworthy of great souls to expose to those around them the distress they feel" (Clotilde de Vaux); Captain Paz, one of Balzac's heroes, invents a false mistress in order to be sure of keeping his best friend's wife from knowing that he loves her passionately.

Yet to hide a passion totally (or even to hide, more simply, its excess) is inconceivable: not because the human subject is too weak, but because passion is in essence made to be seen: the hiding must be seen: *I want you to know that I am hiding something from you*, that is the active paradox I must resolve: *at one and the same time* it must be known and not known: I want you to

BALZAC: *La Fausse maîtresse*.

Descartes

know that I don't want to show my feelings: that is the message I address to the other. *Larvatus prodeo*: I advance pointing to my mask: I set a mask upon my passion, but with a discreet (and wily) finger I designate this mask. Every passion, ultimately, has its spectator: at the moment of his death, Captain Paz cannot keep from writing to the woman he has loved in silence: no amorous oblation without a final theater: the sign is always victorious.

4. Let us suppose that I have wept, on account of some incident of which the other has not even become aware (to weep is part of the normal activity of the amorous body), and that, *so this cannot be seen*, I put on dark glasses to mask my swollen eyes (a fine example of denial: to darken the sight in order not to be seen). The intention of this gesture is a calculated one: I want to keep the moral advantage of stoicism, of "dignity" (*I take myself for Clotilde de Vaux*), and at the same time, contradictorily, I want to provoke the tender question ("But what's the matter with you?"); I want to be both pathetic and admirable, I want to be at the same time a child and an adult. Thereby I gamble, I take a risk: for it is always possible that the other will simply ask no question whatever about these unaccustomed glasses; that the other will see, in the fact, no sign.

5. In order to suggest, delicately, that I am suffering, in order to hide without lying, I shall make use of a cunning preterition: I shall divide the economy of my signs. The task of the verbal signs will be to silence, to mask, to deceive: I shall never account, *verbally*, for the excesses

of my sentiment. Having said nothing of the ravages of this anxiety, I can always, once it has passed, reassure myself that no one has guessed anything. The power of language: with my language I can do everything: even and especially *say nothing*.

I can do everything with my language, *but not with my body*. What I hide by my language, my body utters. I can deliberately mold my message, not my voice. By my voice, whatever it says, the other will recognize "that something is wrong with me." I am a liar (by preterition), not an actor. My body is a stubborn child, my language is a very civilized adult . . .

6. . . . so that a long series of verbal contentions (my "politenesses") may suddenly explode into some generalized revulsion: a crying jag (for instance), before the other's flabbergasted eyes, will suddenly wipe out all the efforts (and the effects) of a carefully controlled language. I break apart:

Connais donc Phèdre et toute sa fureur.

Racine. Now you know Phaedra and all her fury.

The Heart

coeur / heart

This word refers to all kinds of movements and desires, but what is constant is that the heart is constituted into a gift-object—whether ignored or rejected.

1. The heart is the organ of desire (the heart swells, weakens, etc., like the sexual organs), as it is held, enchanted, within the domain of the Image-repertoire. What will the world, what will the other do with my desire? That is the anxiety in which are gathered all the heart's movements, all the heart's "problems."

2. Werther complains of Prince von X: "He esteems my mind and my talents more than this heart of mine, which yet is my one pride . . . Ah, whatever I know, anyone may know—I alone have my heart."

Werther

You wait for me where I do not want to go: you love me where I do not exist. Or again: the world and I are not interested in the same thing; and to my misfortune, this divided thing is myself; I am not interested (Werther says) in my mind; you are not interested in my heart.

3. The heart is what I imagine I give. Each time this gift is returned to me, then it is little enough to say, with Werther, that the heart is what remains of me, once all the wit attributed to me and undesired by me is taken away:

the heart is what remains *to me*, and this heart that lies heavy on my heart is heavy with the ebb which has filled it with itself (only the lover and the child have a heavy heart).

(X is about to leave for some weeks, and perhaps longer; at the last moment, he wants to buy a watch for his trip; the clerk simpers at him: "Would you like mine? You would have been a little boy when they cost what this one did," etc.; she doesn't know that *my heart is heavy within me.*)

“What is to be done?”

conduite / behavior

A deliberative figure: the amorous subject raises (generally) futile problems of behavior: faced with this or that alternative, what is to be done? How is he to act?

Werther

1. Should one continue? Wilhelm, Werther's friend, the man of Ethics, the unpersuadable science of behavior. This ethic is actually a kind of logic: either this or else that; if I choose (if I determine) this, then once again, this or that: and so on, until, from this cascade of alternatives, appears at last a pure action—pure of all regret, all vacillation. You love Charlotte: *either you have some hope and then you will act; or else you have none, in which case you will renounce.* That is the discourse of the “healthy” subject: *either / or.* But the amorous subject replies (as Werther does): I am trying to slip between the two members of the alternative: i.e., *I have no hope, but all the same . . .* Or else: I stubbornly choose not to choose; I choose drifting: *I continue.*

2. My anxieties as to behavior are futile, ever more so, to infinity. If the other, incidentally or negligently gives the telephone number of a place where he or she can be reached at certain times, I immediately grow baffled: should I telephone or shouldn't I? (It would do no good to tell me that *I can* telephone—that is the objective, reasonable meaning of the message—for it is precisely this *permission* I don't know how to handle.)

What is futile is what apparently has and will have no consequence. But for me, an amorous subject, everything which is new, everything which disturbs, is received not as a fact but in the aspect of a sign which must be interpreted. From the lover's point of view, the fact becomes consequential because it is immediately transformed into a sign: it is the sign, not the fact, which is consequential (by its *aura*). If the other has given me this new telephone number, what was that the sign of? Was it an invitation to telephone *right away*, for the pleasure of the call, or only *should the occasion arise*, out of necessity? My answer itself will be a sign, which the other will inevitably interpret, thereby releasing, between us, a tumultuous maneuvering of images. *Everything signifies:* by this proposition, I entrap myself, I bind myself in calculations, I keep myself from enjoyment.

Sometimes, by dint of deliberating about “nothing” (as the world sees it), I exhaust myself; then I try, in reaction, to return—like a drowning man who stamps on the floor of the sea—to a *spontaneous* decision (spontaneity: the great dream: paradise, power, delight): *go on, telephone, since you want to!* But such recourse is futile: amorous time does not permit the subject to align impulse and action, to make them coincide: I am not the man of mere “acting out”—my madness is tempered, it is not seen; it is *right away* that I fear consequences, any consequence: it is my fear—my deliberation—which is “spontaneous.”

Zen

3. *Karma* is the (disastrous) concatenation of actions (of their causes and their effects). The Buddhist wants to withdraw from karma; to suspend the play of causality; he wants to vacate the signs, to ignore the practical question: what is to be done? I cannot stop asking it,