

# **Behavior in Public Places**

*Notes on the Social  
Organization of Gatherings*

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### ***Introductory***

#### ***Definitions***

**THE** exchange of words and glances between individuals in each other's presence is a very common social arrangement, yet it is one whose distinctive communication properties are difficult to disentangle. Pedantic definitions seem to be required.

An individual may give information through the linguistic means formally established in society for this purpose, namely, speech or recognized speech substitutes such as writing and pictorial signs or gestures. One speaks here of an individual sending messages to someone who receives them. But the individual may also give information expressively, through the incidental symptomatic significance of events associated with him. In this case one might say that he emits, exudes, or gives off information to someone who gleans it. Linguistic messages can be "about" anything in the world, the sender and the subject matter having no necessary connection, coinciding only when autobiographical statements are being made. Expressive messages are necessarily "about" the same causal physical complex of which the transmitting agency is an intrinsic part. Consensus as to the meaning of linguistic messages seems more firmly established than it is in regard to that of expressive messages. Linguistic messages can be translated, stored, and held up as legal evidence; expressive messages tend to be ones for which the giver cannot

be made legally responsible, it being usually possible for him to deny that he meant quite what others claim he meant. Linguistic messages are felt to be voluntary and intended; expressive messages, on the other hand, must often preserve the fiction that they are uncalculated, spontaneous, and involuntary, as in some cases they are.<sup>1</sup> Every linguistic message carries some expressive information, namely, that the sender is sending messages. In any case, most concrete messages combine linguistic and expressive components, the proportion of each differing widely from message to message.

The information that an individual provides, whether he sends it or exudes it, may be *embodied* or *disembodied*.<sup>2</sup> A frown, a spoken word, or a kick is a message that a sender conveys by means of his own *current* bodily activity, the transmission occurring only during the time that his body is present to sustain this activity. Disembodied messages, such as the ones we receive from letters and mailed gifts, or the ones hunters receive from the spoor of a now distant animal, require that the organism do something that traps and holds information long after the organism has stopped informing. This study will be concerned only with embodied information.

No ordinary English verb seems to cover all the senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—that restrict the media and provide the receiving equipment through which an individual is able to obtain information. Terms such as “perceive,” which have a special visual reference, have had to be used in a wider way, while terms such as “experience” have had to be used more narrowly. Some terms, such as “audit” or “monitor,” have had to be manufactured.

In everyday thinking about the receiving senses, it is felt that ordinarily they are used in a “naked” or “direct” way. This apparently implies a restriction on boosting devices—mechanical,

1. The dichotomy “voluntary-involuntary” is one of the least innocent in our trade. Later in this report an effort will be made to suggest some of the problems it raises.

2. Compare the usage by T. S. Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (New York: Hoeber-Harper, 1961), p. 116 ff.

chemical, or electrical—except as these raise the faulty senses of a particular individual to average unassisted strength: glasses, for example, but not binoculars; hearing aids but not microphones. Electric lighting would have to be allowed as merely raising a room to day-time standards.

When one speaks of experiencing someone else with one's naked senses, one usually implies the reception of embodied messages. This linkage of naked senses on one side and embodied transmission on the other provides one of the crucial communication conditions of face-to-face interaction. Under this condition any message that an individual sends is likely to be qualified and modified by much additional information that others glean from him simultaneously, often unbeknownst to him; further, a very large number of brief messages may be sent.

Now the individual can, of course, receive embodied messages by means of his naked senses without much chance of these communication roles being reversed, as when he spies on persons through a crack in the wall or overhears them through a thin partition.<sup>3</sup> Such asymmetrical arrangements may even be established as part of an occupational setting, as in the procedure by which psychoanalysts or priests observe their clients without being as easily observed in return. Ordinarily, however, in using the naked senses to receive embodied messages from others, the individual also makes himself available as a source of embodied information for them (although there is always likely to be some differential exploitation of these monitoring possibilities). Here, then, is a second crucial communication condition of face-to-face interaction: not only are the receiving and conveying of

3. An asymmetrical communication relation of this kind, Polonius notwithstanding, is of course more practical when boosting devices, such as concealed microphones, are employed. In Shetland Isle pocket telescopes were commonly used for the purpose of observing one's neighbors without being observed in the act of observing. In this way it was possible to check constantly what phase of the annual cycle of work one's neighbors were engaged in, and who was visiting whom. This use of the telescope was apparently related to the physical distance between crofts, the absence of trees and other blocks to long-distance perception, and the strong maritime tradition of the Islands. It may be added that every community and even every work place would seem to have some special communication arrangements of its own.

the naked and embodied kind, but each giver is himself a receiver, and each receiver is a giver.

The implications of this second feature are fundamental. First, sight begins to take on an added and special role. Each individual can *see* that he is being experienced in some way, and he will guide at least some of his conduct according to the perceived identity and initial response of his audience.<sup>4</sup> Further, he can be seen to be seeing this, and can see that he has been seen seeing this. Ordinarily, then, to use our naked senses is to use them nakedly and to be made naked by their use. We are clearly seen as the agents of our acts, there being very little chance of disavowing having committed them; neither having given nor having received messages can be easily denied, at least among those immediately involved.<sup>5</sup>

The factor emerges, then, that was much considered by Adam Smith, Charles Cooley, and G. H. Mead; namely, the special mutuality of immediate social interaction. That is, when two persons are together, at least some of their world will be made up out of the fact (and consideration for the fact) that an adaptive line of action attempted by one will be either insightfully facilitated by the other or insightfully countered, or both, and that such a line of action must always be pursued in this intelligently helpful and hindering world. Individuals sympathetically take the attitude of others present, regardless of the end to which they put the information thus acquired.<sup>6</sup>

4. In the asymmetrical case, where a person is being spied upon by direct or indirect means, he may greatly modify his conduct if he suspects he is being observed, even though he does not know the identity of the particular audience that might be observing him. This is one of the possibilities celebrated in Orwell's *1984*, and its possibility is one of the forces operative in socially controlling persons who are alone.

5. When two-way television is added to telephones, the unique contingencies of direct interaction will finally be available for those who are widely separated. In any case these mediated "point-to-point" forms of communication can be characterized by the degree to which they restrict or attenuate the communicative possibilities discussed here.

6. As R. E. Park suggested in "Human Nature and Collective Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology*, 32 (1927), 738:

In human society every act of every individual tends to become a gesture, since what one does is always an indication of what one intends to do. The conse-

I have cited two distinctive features of face-to-face interaction: richness of information flow and facilitation of feedback. I suggest that these features have enough structuring significance to provide one analytical rationale for the separate treatment this report gives to the social norms regulating behavior of persons immediately present to one another.

The physical distance over which one person can experience another with the naked senses—thereby finding that the other is “within range”—varies according to many factors: the sense medium involved, the presence of obstructions, even the temperature of the air. On Shetland Isle, during cold nights, mainland visitors walking together along the bay in apparent isolation who laughed loudly by the strict local standards could cause Shetlanders an eighth of a mile away to raise their eyebrows. Conversely, when an individual whispers or uses eye expressions, his body acts as a focusing barrier, effectively restricting the usual sphere of propagation of sense stimuli, so that reception is limited to those very close to him or directly in front of him.

The full conditions of *copresence*, however, are found in less variable circumstances: persons must sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sensing of being perceived. In our walled-in Western society, these conditions are ordinarily expected to obtain throughout the space contained in a room, and to obtain for any and all persons present in the room. On public streets (and in other relatively unobstructed places) the region of space in which mutual presence can be said to prevail cannot be clearly drawn, since persons who are present at different points along the street may be able to observe, and be observed by, a slightly

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quence is that the individual in society lives a more or less public existence, in which all his acts are anticipated, checked, inhibited, or modified by the gestures and the intentions of his fellows. It is in this social conflict, in which every individual lives more or less in the mind of every other individual, that human nature and the individual may acquire their most characteristic and human traits.

different set of others. This qualification aside, I shall use the term *gathering* to refer to any set of two or more individuals whose members include all and only those who are at the moment in one another's immediate presence. By the term *situation* I shall refer to the full spatial environment anywhere within which an entering person becomes a member of the gathering that is (or does then become) present. Situations begin when mutual monitoring occurs, and lapse when the second-last person has left. In order to stress the full extent of any such unit, I will sometimes employ the term *situation at large*.

Along with "gathering" and "situation," another basic concept must be tentatively defined. When persons come into each other's immediate presence they tend to do so as participants of what I shall call a *social occasion*. This is a wider social affair, undertaking, or event, bounded in regard to place and time and typically facilitated by fixed equipment; a social occasion provides the structuring social context in which many situations and their gatherings are likely to form, dissolve, and re-form, while a pattern of conduct tends to be recognized as the appropriate and (often) official or intended one—a "standing behavior pattern," to use Barker's term.<sup>7</sup> Examples of social occasions are a social party, a workday in an office, a picnic, or a night at the opera.

For the course of a social occasion, one or more participants may be defined as responsible for getting the affair under way, guiding the main activity, terminating the event, and sustaining order. Also, a differentiation is sometimes found among full-fledged participants and various grades of onlookers. Further, between beginning and end there is often an "involvement contour," a line tracing the rise and fall of general engrossment in the occasion's main activity.<sup>8</sup>

Some social occasions, a funeral, for example, have a fairly sharp beginning and end, and fairly strict limits on attendance

7. R. Barker and H. Wright, *Midwest and Its Children* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, n.d.), p. 7 and pp. 45-46.

8. An illustration of social occasion analysis may be found in D. Riesman, R. Potter, and J. Watson, "The Vanishing Host," *Human Organization*, 19 (1960), 17-27.



and tolerated activities. Each class of such occasions possesses a distinctive ethos, a spirit, an emotional structure, that must be properly created, sustained, and laid to rest, the participant finding that he is obliged to become caught up in the occasion, whatever his personal feelings. These occasions, which are commonly programmed in advance, possess an agenda of activity, an allocation of management function, a specification of negative sanctions for improper conduct, and a preestablished unfolding of phases and a highpoint. Other occasions, like Tuesday afternoon downtown, are very diffuse indeed, and may not be seen by participants as entities with any appreciable development and structure of their own that can be looked forward to and looked back upon as a whole. (Here the individual may see a line of development in his own period of participation but not in the occasion as a whole.) In these cases the very useful term employed by Barker and his associates, *behavior setting*, might be sufficient.<sup>9</sup> Diffuse social occasions can, of course, develop a structure and direction as they go along.

Some social occasions, often called "unserious" or "recreational," are felt to be ends in themselves, and the individual avowedly participates for the consummate pleasure of doing so. Other occasions, called "serious," are officially seen as merely means to other ends. Finally, some occasions are seen as "regular" ones—instances that form part of a series of like occasions, the series being seen as a unit, and developing as such, in terms of a daily, weekly, or annual cycle, often with the same participants. Other occasions, such as spur-of-the-moment parties, are one-shot affairs, or their series-like character is not perceived as such.

There are many complications associated with the concept of social occasion,<sup>10</sup> but some such term must be used, for when a gathering occurs it does so under the auspices of a wider entity

9. Barker and Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-10 and 45-50. The authors provide a very useful review of the conceptual problems involved in the use of such a term.

10. A description of the general characteristics of social occasions is attempted in "Communication Conduct," Chap. 9. A very good presentation of the complexities involved can be found in K. L. Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior* (Glendale, California: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1954), Part 1.

of this kind. I hope it will become apparent that the regulations of conduct characteristic in situations and their gatherings are largely traceable to the social occasion in which they occur.

Since different participants in a social occasion may perform quite different roles, it might be argued that what is an occasion of play for one individual may be an occasion of work for another, as in the case of the guest and the servant at a party. Nevertheless, too much relativity is not justified. However differently participants may feel about a past social occasion, they can presumably agree as to which occasion they are talking about. Further, he who must work during and at an occasion defined for play still knows that his job locates him in a play occasion, not in a serious one, the fact that it does being an important job-contingency for him.

There is another sense, however, in which multiple social realities can occur in the same place. Once a social situation is referred back to the social occasion that sets the tone for the gathering in it, we must admit the possibility that the same physical space may be caught within the domain of two different social occasions. The social situation then may be the scene of potential or actual conflict between the sets of regulations that ought to govern. Note the famous conflict of definitions in the situation between summer tourists, who would like to extend summer-resort informality to the stores in the local town, and the natives, who would like to preserve proper business decorum in such places. Even within the same social establishment it is possible to find these overlapping definitions in the situation. Thus, in an office building or library where a rather strict decorum may obtain, the maintenance crews may see the occasion quite differently: they may work in profane clothing, run down the hallway when a quick repair is required, enter rooms at will, shout easily down the hall, plug a portable radio into the outlet nearest to their work, and maintain a level of conversational loudness quite prohibited to the office staff. Here we find something more than different roles in the same occasion, for no single main activity may be accorded precedence, at least in the

short run. The social situations that occur in these overlapping behavior settings support gatherings that possess a special type of normative disorganization.

The possibility that the same physical space can come to be used as a setting for more than one social occasion, and hence as a locus for more than one set of expectations, is regularly recognized in society and typically restricted. Thus, in the important case of public streets, there is a tendency in Western society to define these places as the scene of an overriding social occasion to which other occasions ought to be subordinated. Potentially competing definitions in the situation then give way to a kind of public decorum. This decorum itself, of course, is typically subverted momentarily by parades, convention antics, marriage and funeral processions, ambulances, and fire trucks, all of which impress their special tone upon the public ear for a brief time.

It is situations and their gatherings, not social occasions, that we will mainly consider here, but for this a few terms must be introduced to help us distinguish between what is and what is not relevant in situations.

The term *situated* may be used to refer to any event occurring within the physical boundaries of a situation. Accordingly, the second person upon a scene transforms everything done by himself and by the one already there into situated activity, even though there may be no apparent change in the way the person already present continues with what he had been doing. The newcomer, in effect, transforms a solitary individual and himself into a gathering.

When we look at situated activity we often find that one component of it could just as well have occurred outside of situations, with no persons, or only one person, present. Thus, *some* of the loss an individual sustains when he is robbed at gunpoint in his house he could lose if his house were ransacked while he was away on vacation. Likewise, *some* of what is conveyed in a conversation could be conveyed through correspondence. Work tasks that an individual performs while others are present he can sometimes perform equally well when alone. This aspect of ac-

tivity may occur *in* situations but is not *of* situations, characteristically occurring at other times outside situations. This unblushing part of reality I will refer to as the *merely-situated* aspect of situated activity. This component of activity comes under normative regulation, allowing us to speak of obligations and offenses that are merely-situated. But my only interest in such matters will be to be able to segregate them analytically from the component of situated activity that will concern us here; namely, the part that could not occur outside situations, being intrinsically dependent on the conditions that prevail therein. This part will be referred to as the *situational* aspect of situated activity. The risk to one's body when one is being robbed at gunpoint of household effects is situational; the loss of effects, as was previously suggested, is merely-situated. Some of the meaning of words conveyed in conversation is merely-situated; the coloration given these words by bodily expressed emotion, however, is distinctly situational. Similarly, for example, a member of the public in a reference library is expected to draw out and use a book, and not to spend his time in other pursuits, as adolescents learn from the librarian if they noisily employ the library as a place of assignation. Here we have the situational aspect of conduct. Within certain limits, however, the individual's choice of particular books to read, his skill at reading, and the profit to which he puts what he has learned from reading are his own business, or that of the persons who may have assigned him a reading task. This is the merely-situated aspect of his library activity.

Once we distinguish clearly between the merely-situated and the situational, we can return to consider the idea of public order. Copresence renders persons uniquely accessible, available, and subject to one another. Public order, in its face-to-face aspects, has to do with the normative regulation of this accessibility.

Perhaps the best explored face-to-face aspect of public order as traditionally defined is what is sometimes called "public safety." Its basic rules are few and clear, and, in Western society

today, heavily reinforced by police authority. Here the focus of regulation is upon the use that an individual can make of his body as a physical object or of instruments he can manipulate with his body. In going about their separate businesses, individuals—especially strangers—are not allowed to do any physical injury to one another, to block the way of one another, to assault one another sexually, or to constitute a source of disease contagion. While this kind of “King’s Peace” currently prevails at most hours in most of our streets in most of our cities and towns, there are still neighborhoods where this order is not well guaranteed, and certainly in our past there have been times and places where such a guarantee was the exception rather than the rule.<sup>11</sup> A version of this safety problem can be found today on back wards of mental hospitals, where some patients understandably acquire the reputation of being “food throwers,” bringing to ward mealtime a special kind of disorder. And, of course, in the lay notion that mental patients cannot be trusted not to strike out at others unexpectedly, there is an active reminder of ingredients of public order that might otherwise be taken for granted.

The harm produced by physical interference in any of its forms is partly due to the social humiliation of being seen as helpless by the offender and possibly by others, and so has distinctly social-psychological components. Other important ways in which the regulations ensuring physical safety impinge upon nonphysical matters will be considered later.

For our present purposes, the aspect of public order having to do with personal safety will be passed by. I will be concerned with the fact that when persons are present to one another they can function not merely as physical instruments but also as communicative ones. This possibility, no less than the physical one, is fateful for everyone concerned and in every society ap-

11. For medieval England see, for example, L. O. Pike, *A History of Crime in England* (2 vols.; London: Smith, Elder, 1873), esp. 1, 242-254. A view of public order in the East End of London near the turn of the century may be found in Arthur Morrison’s novel *A Child of the Jago* (first published 1896; London: Penguin Books, 1946).

pears to come under strict normative regulation, giving rise to a kind of communication traffic order. It is this aspect of order that is mainly to be considered in this report. (Incidentally, it is in this aspect of public order that most symptoms of mental disorder seem to make themselves felt initially.) The rules pertaining to this area of conduct I shall call *situational proprieties*. The code derived therefrom is to be distinguished from other moral codes regulating other aspects of life (even if these sometimes apply at the same time as the situational code): for example, codes of honor, regulating relationships; codes of law, regulating economic and political matters; and codes of ethics, regulating professional life.<sup>12</sup>

The communicative behavior of those immediately present to one another can be considered in two steps. The first deals with *unfocused interaction*, that is, the kind of communication that occurs when one gleans information about another person present by glancing at him, if only momentarily, as he passes into and then out of one's view. Unfocused interaction has to do largely with the management of sheer and mere copresence. The second step deals with *focused interaction*, the kind of interaction that occurs when persons gather close together and openly cooperate to sustain a single focus of attention, typically by taking turns at talking. Where no focused interaction occurs, the term *unfocused gathering* can be used. Where focused interaction occurs, clumsier terms will be needed.

Given the definitions at which we have now arrived, it is possible to take another tentative step in the analysis of situational proprieties and to suggest one general element of proper conduct. In American society, it appears that the individual is expected to exert a kind of discipline or tension in regard to his body, showing that he has his faculties in readiness for any face-to-face interaction that might come his way in the situation. Often this kind of controlled alertness in the situation will

12. See the interesting comments by G. Simmel, "Morality, Honor and Law," from his *Soziologie* (3rd. ed.; Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1923), pp. 403-405, trans. E. C. Hughes (mimeographed, University of Chicago).

mean suppressing or concealing many of the capacities and roles the individual might be expected to display in other settings. Whatever his other concerns, then, whatever his merely-situated interests, the individual is obliged to "come into play" upon entering the situation and to stay "in play" while in the situation, sustaining this diffuse orientation at least until he can officially take himself beyond range of the situation. In short, a kind of "interaction tonus" must be maintained. I would like to add that in considering the conduct through which this aliveness to the situation is demonstrated it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that an attachment to, and respectful regard for, the situation's participants and the encompassing social occasion is being avowed. And in considering the marked infractions of these rules in mental hospital wards, it is difficult to escape the conclusion, as we shall see later, that failure to exhibit "presence" is a normal, understandable expression of alienation from, and hostility to, the gathering itself and the officials in it.

One of the most evident means by which the individual shows himself to be situationally present is through the disciplined management of personal appearance or "personal front," that is, the complex of clothing, make-up, hairdo, and other surface decorations he carries about on his person. In public places in Western society, the male of certain classes is expected to present himself in the situation neatly attired, shaven, his hair combed, hands and face clean; female adults have similar and further obligations. It should be noted that with these matters of personal appearance the obligation is not merely to possess the equipment but also to exert the kind of sustained control that will keep it properly arranged. (And yet, in spite of these rulings, we may expect to find, in such places as the New York subway during the evening rush hour, that some persons, between scenes, as it were, may let expression fall from their faces in a kind of temporary uncaring and righteous exhaustion, even while being clothed and made up to fit a much more disciplined stance.)

I have already suggested that a failure to present oneself to a

gathering in situational harness is likely to be taken as a sign of some kind of disregard for the setting and its participants; gross cultural distance from the social world of those present may also be expressed. These expressive implications of well or badly ordered personal appearance are often discussed in etiquette books, sometimes quite aptly:

But even in a casual encounter, and upon occasions when your habit can have no connexion with the feelings and sentiments which you have towards those whom you meet, neat and careful dressing will bring great advantage to you. A negligent guise shows a man to be satisfied with his own resources, engrossed with his own notions and schemes, indifferent to the opinion of others, and not looking abroad for entertainment: to such a man no one feels encouraged to make any advances. A finished dress indicates a man of the world, one who looks for and habitually finds, pleasure in society and conversation, and who is at all times ready to mingle in intercourse with those whom he meets with; it is a kind of general offer of acquaintance, and provides a willingness to be spoken to.<sup>13</sup>

An interesting expression of the kind of interaction tonus that lies behind the proper management of personal appearance is found in the constant care exerted by men in our society to see that their trousers are buttoned and that an erection bulge is not showing.<sup>14</sup> Before entering a social situation, they often run through a quick visual inspection of the relevant parts of their personal front, and once in the situation they may take the extra precaution of employing a protective cover, by either crossing the legs or covering the crotch with a newspaper or book, especially if self-control is to be relaxed through comfortable sitting. A parallel to this concern is found in the care that women take to

13. Anon., *The Canons of Good Breeding* (Philadelphia: Lee and Blanchard, 1839), pp. 14-15.

14. The difficulty of engaging in this kind of protective concealment is one of the contingencies apparently faced by men with leg paralysis. See E. Henrich and L. Kriegel, eds., *Experiments in Survival* (New York: Association for the Aid of Crippled Children, 1961), p. 192.



see that their legs are not apart, exposing their upper thighs and underclothing. The universality in our society of this kind of limb discipline can be deeply appreciated on a chronic female ward where, for whatever reason, women indulge in zestful scratching of their private parts and in sitting with legs quite spread, causing the student to become conscious of the vast amount of limb discipline that is ordinarily taken for granted. A similar reminder of one's expectations concerning limb discipline can be obtained from the limb movements required of elderly obese women in getting out of the front seat of a car. Just as a Balinese would seem ever to be concerned about the direction and height of his seat, so the individual in our society, while "in situation," is constantly oriented to keeping "physical" signs of sexual capacities concealed. And it is suggested here that these parts of the body when exposed are not a symbol of sexuality merely, but of a laxity of control over the self—evidence of an insufficient harnessing of the self for the gathering.

As has been suggested, the importance of a disciplined management of personal front is demonstrated in many ways by the mentally sick. A typical sign of an oncoming psychosis is the individual's "neglect" of his appearance and personal hygiene. The classic home for these improprieties is "regressed" wards in mental hospitals, where those with a tendency in this direction are collected, at the very same time that conditions remarkably facilitate this sort of disorientation. (Here, dropping of personal front will be tolerated, and sometimes even subtly approved, because it can reduce problems of ward management.) Similarly, when a mental patient starts "taking an interest in his appearance," and makes an effort at personal grooming, he is often credited with having somehow given up his fight against society and having begun his way back to "reality."

One of the most delicate components of personal appearance seems to be the composition of the face. A very evident means by which the individual shows himself to be situationally present is by appropriately controlling through facial muscles the shape and expression of the various parts of this instrument.

Although this control may not be conscious to any extent, it is none the less exerted. We have party faces, funeral faces, and various kinds of institutional faces, as the following comments on life in prison suggest:

Every new inmate learns to dog-face, that is to assume an apathetic, *characterless* facial expression and posture when viewed by authority. The dog-face is acquired easily when everyone freezes or relaxes into immobility. The face is that typical of streets, of social occasions, of all concealment. Relaxation comes when inmates are alone: there is an exaggeration of the smiling effervescence of the "friendly" party. The face that is protective by day is aggressively hardened and hate-filled by night, against the stationed or pacing guard. Tensity and dislike follow assumption of the face, guards react with scrupulous relaxedness, holding the face "soft" with an effort often accompanied by slight trembling of hands.<sup>15</sup>

An interesting fact about proper composition of the face is that the ease of maintaining it in our society would seem to decline with age, so that, especially in the social class groupings whose women long retain an accent on sexual attractiveness, there comes to be an increasingly long period of time after awakening that is required to get the face into shape, during which the individual in her own eyes is not "presentable." A point in age is also reached when, given these youthful standards of what a face in play should look like, there will be viewing angles from which an otherwise properly composed face looks to have insufficient tonus.

The disciplined ordering of personal front is one way, then, in which the individual is obliged to express his aliveness to those about him. Another means is the readiness with which he attends to new stimuli in the situation and the alacrity with which he responds to them with body movements. I think that the individual so generally maintains a proper motor level in

15. B. Phillips, "Notes on the Prison Community," in H. Cantine and D. Rainer, eds., *Prison Etiquette* (Bearsville, New York: Retort Press, 1950), pp. 105-106.

situations that this is one type of propriety that is very difficult indeed to become aware of. Here again mental wards help us. For example, a common symptom displayed by persons diagnosed as schizophrenic consists of very slow body movements as shown, say, during hallway pacing. While thus engaged, the patient may respond to a question from an attendant by turning his head slowly in the direction of the voice, and this only by moving his whole trunk, as if his neck were completely stiff, while keeping his face immobile. (This kind of conduct is somewhat similar to the kind that is popularly thought to occur in sleepwalking, and calls forth a similar response; namely, the feeling of someone being in the situation physically but not fully present for purposes of interaction.) Bleuler has given us fine descriptions of the extremes of this deadness to the situation, as he has with so many schizophrenic symptoms, pointing to the inward emigration that presumably occurs at these times:

Autism is also manifested by many patients externally. (Naturally, this is, as a rule, unintentional.) Not only do they not concern themselves with anything around them, but they sit around with faces constantly averted, looking at a blank wall; or they shut off their sensory portals by drawing a skirt or bed clothes over their heads. Indeed, formerly, when the patients were mostly abandoned to their own devices, they could often be found in bent-over, squatting positions, an indication that they were trying to restrict as much as possible of the sensory surface area of their skin.<sup>16</sup>

It should be added that this lack of presence may be nicely demonstrated in establishments that are not medical but are none the less similar in many ways to mental hospitals:

About the prison yard and the shops one sees inmates for whom smiles, small talk, alertness, and attention to the environment come easily. One also sees about half as many men who seldom smile, who seldom talk, who stumble as they walk in lines, whose errors in

16. E. Bleuler, *Dementia Praecox or the Group of Schizophrenias*, trans. J. Zinkin (New York: International Universities Press, 1950), pp. 65-66.

their tasks cause small concern, and who respond normally to social stimuli only when a stimulus is strong or different. Status or social approbation is as nothing. It is reverie-plus that controls them.<sup>17</sup>

In general, then, if the individual is to be in the situation in full social capacity, he will be required to maintain a certain level of alertness as evidence of his availability for potential stimuli, and some orderliness and organization of his personal appearance as evidence that he is alive to the gathering he is in. A problem for analysis, of course, is to go on to isolate analytically the various ways in which insufficient presence may be manifested.

17. D. Clemmer, *The Prison Community* (reissue; New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1958), p. 244.