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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF SARTRE'S
CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM.

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF SARTRE'S
CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF SARTRE'S
CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the development of the notion of freedom in the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre. We shall attempt to discover the origin of Sartre's notion of freedom with reference to his theory of consciousness and intentionality. Our studies lead us to the conclusion that the notion of freedom in Sartre germinates from his psycho-ontological confrontation with the world and not from his ontological outlook. We hold that the inner motivations of Sartre's ontological concern are fundamentally psychological and not ethical or metaphysical, a position which stands in opposition to those of various interpreters of Sartre. In order to clarify and to substantiate our claim, we shall evaluate these other views logically and systematically. The ethical view is represented by Robert Champigny and Alvin Plantinga, and the metaphysical view by Fred Newman.

We shall devote the first section of this work to an examination of the validity of these views and to an exposition of our own view in contradistinction to their conclusions. The second section will be directed toward an analysis of Sartre's pre-ontological works and their relationship to his phenomenological ontology.

This analysis should serve two purposes: a) to show that there is a direct connection between Sartre's pre-ontological works and Being and Nothingness, b) to show that an understanding of his pre-ontological works is prerequisite to the understanding of his ontology. In Chapter III we shall see that the major concepts of Being and Nothingness were first developed in his works The Psychology of Imagination and The Psychology of Human Emotions.

As a result of this analysis we arrive at the conclusion that Sartre's psychological modes of being-in-the-world cannot be divorced from his confrontation with the other. This will support our contention that Sartre's conception of freedom from the other in-the-world is basically related to his psychological modes of experiencing the other and not, in its inception anyway, to any ontological ground. Thus, the origin of Sartre's conception of freedom appears to be psychological and not ontological.

In the first two chapters we attempt to refute different assumptions made in regard to the nature and origin of Sartre's philosophy. The first of these assumptions is made by Fred Newman, who claims that Sartre's philosophy is basically metaphysical in its origin and also ethically relativistic, and that the relativism is derived from his ontology. We will evaluate Newman's argument, and we shall demonstrate the discrepancies of his argument, and we shall defend the view that Sartre's ontology is neither relativistic nor

objectivistic, but humanistic; and that his ontological humanism is based on a form of intersubjectivity which, in our view, differs greatly from relativism.

The second view is represented by Alvin Plantinga and Robert Champigny, who claim that Sartre's philosophy is essentially ethical in its origin, and that ethical concerns are the dominant theme in his philosophy. It should be noted here that while these two figures make the same claim, they differ in their approach to the problem. While Plantinga pursues his argument from an analyst's approach, Champigny develops his position from a literary perspective. Because of this variation in methodology we will examine their arguments independently, and each on its own level.

Concerning Plantinga we shall show the contradiction which takes place in his arguments, and we shall also examine his claim about the nature of some Sartrean notions (bad faith, anguish, and responsibility), which he interprets to be essentially ethical notions. As a result of an intensive analysis of these notions, we conclude that they are fundamentally psychological in origin and not ethical.

In regard to Champigny's argument the error, as we conceive it, is related chiefly to viewing Sartre's philosophy from one side, namely, its effects or implications, and not in the light of its causes or motivations. We will conclude this analysis by pointing out that if an understanding of Sartre's conception of freedom is to be hoped for, then an

understanding of his philosophy, as a whole, is needed. In the light of this approach it will be possible to trace the origin and nature of Sartre's conception of freedom.

In the third chapter we will evaluate Sartre's pre-ontological work in relation to his ontology. Our purpose is twofold: the first is to show the continuity between his pre-ontological works (which consist mainly of his psychology) and his ontology. The second purpose is to point out that the key concept of Being and Nothingness is originally discovered in his psychology. At this point we can clearly see that while Sartre's basic concepts, for example, nothingness, for-itself, in-itself, intentionality, are discovered and defined in his psychology, they are simply applied in Being and Nothingness. This supports our thesis that the origin of Sartre's philosophy is not ethical or metaphysical, but psychological. In order to demonstrate our claim we feel that it is necessary to examine Sartre's notion of the other, which, as we shall see, bears a psychological impact.

The purpose of chapter four is to show the struggle between the for-itself and the for-other. This struggle is mainly a struggle of self-identity and of freedom. The other, to Sartre, appears to be the hindrance to achieving this goal. Why? Because the for-other is another consciousness which tends to affirm its subjectivity and its freedom by objectifying the for-itself. In order to reach the goal one of the others has to be annihilated. As a result of this,

Sartre does not foresee any "peaceful coexistence" between the for-itself and the for-other. As a result of this the other remains a hindrance to my freedom as much as I remain a hindrance to the freedom of the other.

As we examine Sartre's analysis we arrive at two conclusions: the first is that Sartre's ontology is not free from his psychology; the second is that Sartre's phenomenological ontology cannot be understood independently from his psychology. We justify this claim by tracing the psychological modes in which Sartre experiences the other, and which also show the influence of his psychological states on his ontology. We also point out that while Sartre makes an ontological claim about shame and the look, he pursues the analysis of these two notions chiefly from a psychological approach. Thus, when Sartre describes the ontological relation with the other his description does not appear to be free from his psychological awareness of the other. This brings us to our claim that for this reason Sartre's ontology is an expression of his psychology; this is also related to his notion of freedom.

In the conclusion we shall attempt to specify the difficulties which we feel remain unresolved in Sartre's philosophy, and which, therefore, need further exploration and interpretation.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF SARTRE'S
CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM

CHAPTER I

AN EXPOSITION OF SARTRE'S ONTOLOGY

The Existentialists and especially Jean-Paul Sartre have received almost universal notoriety. It is almost impossible to find a philosophical movement or figure that has attracted such approval and criticism. It is impossible to disassociate the name of Jean-Paul Sartre from existentialism or existentialism from Jean-Paul Sartre, and it is almost as difficult to find an objective interpretation and a clear understanding of the major philosophical insights of Sartre, especially his conception of the nature of freedom. In spite of all the essays and commentaries, we feel that the treatments are arbitrarily critical at times, and at other times naively glorified. Alfred Stern, for example, describes Sartre, in the introduction of his book Sartre: His Philosophy and Psychoanalysis, as a cafe habitue with a tendency toward pornographic taste. -- -

We shall see later that to Freud's Oedipus complex, to Adler's inferiority complex, and to Bachelard's Prometheus complex, Sartre adds his own Aetna and Jonah

complex. There may exist even another complex, from which Sartre himself is suffering, and which may be called the "Pascal complex." With this name we do not refer to France's great philosopher and mathematician, but to the Armenian trader, Pascal, who in 1672 opened the first Parisian cafe near Saint Germain des prés.¹

This is not provocative but ironic, and the irony of the matter is that we find Alfred Stern making assumptions about Sartre's cafe complex for three and a half pages, and then exhausting his analysis of existence and essence in three pages. For this reason and other similar reasons² we feel that an objective attempt to analyze Sartre's philosophy is still needed, and we will attempt to clarify the origin of Sartre's conception of freedom.

Various commentators interpret the nature of freedom from different viewpoints. Some emphasize its ethical origin, and others conceive of it within a metaphysical or an ontological framework. Our thesis is that freedom in Sartre is an outgrowth of his psychology, from which ontological and ethical meaning emerges. In order to clarify this claim we shall examine other views which are made in regard to these concepts in Sartre's philosophy, and we shall also test the conclusions which are reached in relation to the nature of freedom.

¹Alfred Stern, Sartre: His Philosophy and Psychoanalysis (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1953), p. xvi.

²For example Marjorie Grene, Dreadful Freedom (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 41-43, 53. Marjorie Grene's evaluation of Sartre's conception of God, pp. 41-43, and her evaluation of freedom, p. 53, represent another misunderstanding of Sartre's philosophy.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is "An Examination of Newman's Approach to Sartre's Ontology." Fred Newman claims that Sartre's ethical relativism is an outgrowth of his ontological relativism. Our intention here is to show the invalidity of this notion.

In the second section we shall describe the nature of Sartre's ontology with the purpose of demonstrating that relativism is not a characteristic of Sartre's ontology or ethics.

An Examination of Newman's Approach to Sartre's Ontology

In a recent paper Fred Newman discusses the origin of Sartre's existentialism, and he attempts to demonstrate the following claim.

The relativism that provokes the existentialistic response is an ontological rather than an ethical one. Perhaps disagreement between people or peoples over ethical issues--a fact on which ethical relativists focus--interests the existentialist. But the existential attitude does not evolve from series of perceptual observations of the world. It is not based on empirical facts. It is not contingent. God's death was not seen. Precisely for this reason existentialism is a philosophical position. And only in so far as it focuses on a supposed feature of the nature of things does it remain a philosophical view.³

This exposition conveys the following propositions:

- (1) The existentialist response to the human situation emerges from the ontological outlook rather than from the ethical situation. (2) Ethical relativism in existentialism

³Fred Newman, "The Origins of Sartre's Existentialism," Ethics, LXXVI (April, 1966), 178.

is an outgrowth of ontological relativism. (3) The existentialism is a philosophical position.

As we proceed in our discussion we shall demonstrate that at least two of these propositions are false: namely, those alleging that Sartre's ethics rests upon ontological relativism and that he denies perception as a way of observing the world. This will show that Newman's conclusion (existentialism is a philosophical position) appears to be based on false premises.

The problem that we encounter in Newman's argument can be related to two sources: (a) the classifications and the categories which Newman uses in his approach to the problem, and (b) the questionable nature of these classifications with respect to Sartre's original view. In regarding the former (a), we find it very difficult to discuss existential problems from a preconceived structured framework; but that is just what Newman does in order to press his view that both the analyst and the existentialist agree fundamentally with what he calls ontological relativism. "But this view that provokes the attitude is shared by the existentialist and the analyst."⁴ With reference to the latter point (b), we question whether Sartre espouses the views which Newman claims in propositions two and three, namely, that ethical relativism is an outgrowth of ontological relativism and that the existentialist

⁴Ibid., p. 179.

observations of the world are not based on perceptual observations.⁵

At first glance when one reads Newman's description of existentialism in general and Sartre's philosophy in particular, one cannot but be stunned by this misleading representation. After careful interpretation we cannot but arrive at the conclusion that a basic misunderstanding of Sartre's existentialist view of the world is occurring. Thus if we test the validity of Newman's argument in the light of Sartre's philosophy, we find that this argument not only misrepresents Sartre's view of the world, but that it also contradicts and violates the fundamental philosophical concerns which Sartre has developed. In order to refute this argument we do not need to go to Sartre's major work, although in the following sections of this dissertation we shall give this work our consideration.

We believe that Sartre answered this question long ago in his pre-ontological treatises L'Imagination, The Transcendence of the Ego, and La Nausée. In The Transcendence of the Ego Sartre establishes his empirical position in relation to his ontological phenomenology. While he expresses agreement with Husserl that consciousness is always a consciousness of something, he rejects the Husserlian hypothesis which posits the transcendence of the ego in consciousness.⁶ Sartre

⁵Ibid., p. 178.

⁶Jean-Paul Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, trans.

clearly indicates what he is attempting to demonstrate in the opening of The Transcendence of the Ego: "We should like to show here that the ego is neither formally nor materially in consciousness: it is outside, in the world. It is a being of the world, like the ego of another."⁷ This implies that the ego is extrinsic in quality and in relation to consciousness; it is extrinsic because it cannot possibly exist before the confrontation of consciousness with the world. Therefore the ego is nothing but whatever consciousness nihilates⁸ of the world through its own activities. Now it is these activities of consciousness which are in question. If we accept Newman's explanation (namely, that the ego does not evolve from perceptual observation of the world), then the ego should possess some innate qualities which enable man to experience the world without any perceptual observations. But if this were the case, there would be no reason for Sartre to write The Transcendence of the Ego to clarify what he accepts and rejects from Husserl and Descartes.

On the contrary, Sartre emphasizes that perception is a fundamental mode of experiencing the world, but perception to Sartre does not appear passive as in Locke and Hume. Rather, perception appears in the presence of consciousness where the

Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957), p. 46.

⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁸"Nihilation" in the Sartrean sense means whatever consciousness is able to grasp or to know from the world.

individual perceiver is engaged in the act of perceiving. In this respect Sartre could be considered as non-empirical in the traditional sense only, where the ontological relation between mind and matter is explained in terms of the phenomenal spontaneity of cause and effect, where material objects appear to be the cause of the phantasms and the images of the mind. But in the real sense Sartre is not non-empirical, because the empirical world is the only world where consciousness performs its activities in an empirical manner; in fact the world is always the object for consciousness. Sartre explains his views on the matter in the following: "Perception is articulated only on the ontological foundation of presence to the world, and the world is revealed concretely as the ground of each individual perception."⁹ Whether this is true or not is not our concern at the moment, but it is our concern to make it clear that Sartre considers perception a fundamental phenomenon through which man articulates his relationship with the world.

So far we have shown that Newman's claim about the existentialist way of observing the world is not true. This appears to be the case, at least with Sartre, who emphasizes perception as a way of experiencing both the world and the other. To perceive the world is to know the world, and knowing the world is contingent upon our willingness to articulate

⁹Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 181.

its presence through perception; and this is precisely what Sartre means by contingency, the notion which seems to be unclear to Newman.¹⁰

Perception to Sartre is not imposed on consciousness, nor is it produced by the world or material stuff in order to avail itself and make itself present to consciousness; rather, the reverse is true. The world appears to us when we are present in it. When we become aware of the vitality of perception through consciousness, then we realize the presence of the world. It is in this sense that Sartre talks about the contingency of existence when he confronts the chestnut tree in the park at Beauville.¹¹

I was there, motionless and icy, plunged in a horrible ecstasy; I understood the Nausea, I possessed it. To tell the truth, I did not formulate my discoveries to myself. But I think it would be easy for me to put them in words now. The essential thing is contingency. I mean one cannot define existence as necessity. To exist is simply to be there; those who exist let themselves be encountered, but you can never deduce any thing from them. I believe there are people who have understood this, only they tried to overcome this contingency by inventing a necessary, causal being.¹²

The message which Sartre is delivering here is that existence is contingent upon our presence, for if we are not present in the world there will be no consciousness; and if consciousness is absent, there will be no way to affirm the

¹⁰Newman, Ethics, LXXVI, 179.

¹¹Jean-Paul Sartre, Nausea, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1964), p. 172.

¹²Ibid., p. 176.

presence of existence. Consciousness is the key to existence. To be present and to be conscious, therefore, mean the same thing. For to be present we have to be present in relation to something which is consciously affirmed. Only our articulation of the present can signify our presence. A student, therefore, who raises his hand when his name is called is not necessarily totally present, nor are those present who are simply sitting in the classroom. For even though they occupy a location in the space of the classroom, it does not follow that they are there, because they might be there in body, which is occupying a definite location in space, but absent in consciousness; and if they are absent in consciousness, there will be no way for them to articulate the present nor to affirm existence. In this way existence appears to be contingent to Sartre, namely, contingent upon our willingness to be.

To be means to exist; to exist is to be present; and to be present implies to be conscious of being immersed in the world. It is also in this sense that existence does not appear as a necessity to Sartre because he does not see any primordially in being before consciousness, nor does he see any intrinsic constructive pattern within consciousness. For this purpose Sartre explains consciousness in terms of its intentionality or in its willingness to bring itself out into the world.¹³ It should be understood that consciousness is

¹³Jean-Paul Sartre, L'imaginaire (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1940), p. 22.

always a consciousness of something which is a representational phenomenon of consciousness. Sartre explains, "Percevoir, concevoir, imaginer, tels sont en effet les trois types de consciences par lesquelles un même objet peut nous être donné."¹⁴ This, we hope, explains Sartre's position on man's relation to the world. It is a relation which is grounded in empirical phenomenal experiences and not as Fred Newman presupposed it to be.¹⁵ Also it should be clear that Sartre views existence as contingent and not as necessary.¹⁶

It is interesting here to contrast John Wild's description of existentialism with Newman's. Wild in expressing his views about existentialism takes a radically opposite view to that of Newman.

The existentialist philosophers accept the radical empiricism of Kierkegaard. They are not interested in artificial problems, nor in theoretical constructions. They are interested rather in the concrete data of immediate experience, and in describing these data so far as possible exactly as they are given. This is the phenomenological method. They have applied this method to many regions not previously explored, but especially to the pervasive data of existence, awareness, and human value which lie at the root of the disciplines of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. In all their fields, their descriptions have revealed certain facts which are quite at variance with major trends of modern thought and contemporary analytic philosophy.¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁵Newman, Ethics, LXXVI, 178.

¹⁶Sartre, Nausea, p. 176.

¹⁷John D. Wild, "The New Empiricism," Sartre: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Edith Kern (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 136.

We are not stating Wild's explanation in order to find support for our argument, but to show the extreme opposite views that each individual interpreter is making in regard to existentialism. We will not attempt to analyze John Wild's statement here, because his generalized view is not pertinent to the major problem with which we are dealing in this dissertation, and also because Wild's misleading statements are so enormous; to dwell on evaluating their authenticity would be a tremendous project in itself.

The major theme that the existentialists in general and Sartre in particular would like to emphasize in regard to this problem is not in carefully describing the concrete data of immediate experience,¹⁸ nor simply in analyzing the nature of our experience to find out whether it is empirical or non-empirical.¹⁹ Rather, the fundamental concern which Sartre, as other existentialists, expresses here is the question of how man can establish concrete relations with the world. This leads us to evaluate another notion which Newman assumes, namely, that Sartre's ontology is relativistic, and that ethical relativism is an outgrowth of his ontological relativism. In the following we shall demonstrate that this interpretation of Sartre is misleading.

From his earliest works, Sartre accepted the Husserlian

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Newman, Ethics, LXXVI, 179.

explanation of the nature of consciousness; that is, "consciousness is always a consciousness of something," which implies that consciousness cannot exist without being directed to something. The upsurge of consciousness is realized, therefore, by its being in the world, and without the world there would be no consciousness. Furthermore, Sartre's phenomenological ontology in Being and Nothingness is fundamentally concerned, as we see it, with describing the ontological relations between consciousness and the world, or between the for-itself and the in-itself.

The for-itself is responsible in its being for its relation with the in-itself or, if you prefer, it produces itself originally on the foundation of a relation to the in-itself. This is what we already anticipated when we defined consciousness as a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself.²⁰

In this sense we view Sartre's shaping of the project of his ontology as an attempt to find the fundamental co-relation between the for-itself and the in-itself or between consciousness and the world.²¹ Accordingly, the claim that Newman makes in regard to what he considers an "ontological relativism" in Sartre is misleading, especially if we take seriously his assumption that this doctrine should be considered the cornerstone of Sartre's philosophy.²²

²⁰Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 172.

²¹Ibid., pp. 626-632.

²²Newman, Ethics, LXXVI, 174.

Newman's interpretation of Sartre is not only misleading, but also misrepresents the fundamental outlines which Sartre attempts to design for phenomenological ontology. For if it is true that Sartre's ontology is relativistic, he would not be so concerned with bringing about a reconciliation between the *for-itself* and the *in-itself*; in fact, through ontology Sartre hopes to study the structures of being in its totality and as a synthetic unity of consciousness and the world. To say that Sartre's ontology is relativistic is to imply that consciousness constructs its own concepts of the world as it pleases. As a matter of fact Newman explains ontological relativism as a form of intellectual activity in which the mind imposes certain categories or concepts on the given.²³ To our understanding this type of interpretation reflects a strong form of conceptualism which does not have any relevance to any existentialist position because at heart existentialism represents a reaction against any form of reductionism or abstraction from reality. The difference, therefore, between ontological relativism and existentialism is that, according to the former view, the mind appears as arbitrarily imposing its concepts upon the world and determining the structures of values; whereas, according to the latter, consciousness appears as an explorer of itself in the *in-itself*, or rather consciousness appears searching for

²³Ibid., 181.

itself in the world. The world does not appear in the form of concepts or categories, but as a concrete presence which is revealed through consciousness. The consequence of this position is that since all consciousness is temporal, finite, and limited in its comprehension of the world, and also since it derives its judgment solely from itself and not from any eternal all-comprehensive Being, whatever appears to be revealed through consciousness has to appear subjectively and not otherwise.

To be subjective and to be relativistic do not mean the same thing. The misunderstanding which arises in Newman's argument is partly due to his failure to make distinction between a subjective judgment and a relativistic one. A subjective judgment, from the existential viewpoint, means that the subject alone is responsible for making decisions in relation to the human situation. The vision of the subject involved and his feelings are the only ground for decision-making. The value of this subjective activity is not measured in the light of the well-being only of the individual subject involved, but in the light of the well-being of all other subjects as well. The relative judgment is that through which we view the interest of the individual subject as the only concern. If we borrow Kant's way of evaluating moral judgments, the subjective judgment in Sartre appears similar to the categorical imperatives; whereas the relative judgment seems to be similar to a hypothetical category.

In the preceding evaluation we have shown that Newman's argument does not correspond to the basic notions of Sartre's philosophy. His claim of ontological relativism appears to be false. His assumption that the existential attitude in observing the world is not based on perceptual observation is also false.

In the following we will sketch Sartre's ontology, with an attempt to show its intersubjective element, which we believe reflects the true nature of Sartre's ontology.

Why Intersubjectivity?

While in the previous section we attempted to show that Sartre's ontology is not relativistic, in the ensuing one we will attempt to expose its intersubjective nature.

The inescapability of subjectivity could not be related to the ontological relativistic incentives of the for-itself; rather, subjectivity appears as the only way in which the for-itself can articulate the other in the world. It is therefore the I, as a subjective consciousness, which emerges out of itself as a possibility in making judgments and decisions. Subjectivity (in this sense) and ontological relativism do not mean the same thing; and the difference is that between one who conceptualizes the world according to his own arbitrary liking and one who finds himself in the midst of the world and accepts the risks and the responsibilities involved in relating himself to the world. Thus Sartre's assertion

that "existence precedes essence" conveys the ontological nature of his subjectivity.²⁴ This subjectivity is related to man's thrownness into the world, in which man appears as the maker of his own essence.

Furthermore, if Sartre proclaims ontological relativism, why should he be concerned with viewing the ontological ground of the for-itself, as well as its ethical judgments in correlation with others? Insofar as the ontological question about being is concerned, Sartre affirms that this question has meaning only if it is posited in a world.²⁵ After this proposition Sartre proceeds in his analysis of the problem. The following statement should be helpful in clarifying this statement. "The original presence of the for-itself is presence to being. Shall we say then that it is presence to all being?"²⁶ This implies that the activity of consciousness is the factor which brings man into the present.

That means that the for-itself as a realizing presence to all being realizes itself as a realizing presence to the "thises," and as a realizing presence to the "thises" it realizes itself as a realizing presence to all being. In other words, the presence of the for-itself to the world can be realized only by its presence to one or several particular things, and conversely its presence to a particular thing can be realized only on the ground of a presence to the world.²⁷

²⁴Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, trans. Bernard Frechtman and Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), p. 17.

²⁵Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 180.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 180-181.

This passage does not seem to convey any relativistic view of the world, but rather emphasizes that the only possibility for the for-itself to realize itself as a being in the world is through the dialectical dimensions of the presence in which the "thises" and the world appear articulated in the presence of the for-itself.

Thus Sartre interprets the world through totalization, and it should be clear that the process of this totalization is neither Hegelian in its objectivity nor Kierkegaardian in its subjectivity, but a synthesis of both. It is what Sartre calls intersubjectivity. Sartre explains the term in the following:

The other is indispensable to my own existence as well as to my knowledge about myself. This being so, in discovering my inner being I discover the other person at the same time, like a freedom placed in front of me which thinks and wills only for or against me. Hence, let us at once announce the discovery of a world which we shall call intersubjectivity; this is the world in which man decides what he is and what others are.²⁸

The axiological modes of Sartre's intersubjectivity appear explicitly expressed in two ways. The first way occupies his ontological description of the for-itself in its relationship to the in-itself; whereas the second way appears to be carried out in his ethical concerns, in expressing the freedom of the individual in correlation with a sense of responsibility to others. In the following we shall attempt to show Sartre's notion of intersubjectivity as it appears

²⁸Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 38.

directing his ontological approach as well as his ethical concerns.

His ontological descriptions can be glimpsed in the following:

It is through the world that the for-itself makes known to itself as a totality detotalized, which means that by its very upsurge the for-itself is a revelation of being as a totality inasmuch as the for-itself has to be its own totality in the detotalized mode. Thus the very meaning of the for-itself is outside in being, but it is through the for-itself that the meaning of being appears.²⁹

Ontologically, so to speak, the for-itself appears to be causing its own emergence in the world, and this emergence into the world is caused by its pure nothingness. Paradoxically, out of this nothingness the for-itself hunts for its own being in the world. Hence the world appears as the only possibility, a possibility not for its own but for the for-itself to hunt its own being. The world, therefore, appears as the ground for being, or the project³⁰ which the for-itself is aiming at, namely, to come into possession of a being which is what it is.

If we reflect seriously on Sartre's ontological projects for the for-itself, we can find an element of projective idealism through which the for-itself is projecting in the world.³¹ What we mean by saying that we find an element of

²⁹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 181.

³⁰"Project" in this context is meant to signify the ontological concern of man, namely, his infinite desire to become what he is not.

³¹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 181.

projective idealism in Sartre is that the for-itself appears to be faced with the imposition upon itself of an infinite desire to be what it is not. Sartre defines the for-itself as being what it is not, and not being what it is, while he defines the in-itself as being what it is.³² The for-itself, therefore, faces its own lack, its own incompleteness, or its own detotalization. As a result of this confrontation, the for-itself emerges in consciousness to desire what it lacks, namely, the permanence of the in-itself. Ostensibly, the desire to nihilate the world becomes a permanent desire.

In other words the for-itself projects being as for-itself, a being which is what it is. It is as being which is what it is not, and which is not what it is, that the for-itself projects being what it is. It is consciousness that it wishes to have the impermeability and infinite density of the in-itself.³³

The totalization with the world appears to be the ideal which the for-itself is striving to fulfill. Thus when Sartre says "To be man means to reach toward being God or if you prefer, man fundamentally is the desire to be God,"³⁴ it corroborates our contention that Sartre represents man as a being who projects himself toward an ideal. The ideal does not appear in abstract categories in the form of necessity, but in the concrete sense of contingency, namely, the contingency which rests upon man's desire to be what he is not.

³²Ibid., p. lxv.

³³Ibid., p. 566.

³⁴Ibid.

Sartre does not offer any synthesis in Being and Nothingness between the for-itself and the in-itself (the desire and what is desired); but he states the ultimate goal of man's desire: the desire to be God. The important point in regard to this analysis is to find out how the for-itself should fulfill its desire for the in-itself. Should it be executed arbitrarily? The answer is negative. Sartre rejects this approach because the for-itself appears to be asserting, if not dictating, what the in-itself ought to be, or at least appears to be abstracting an image from its totality through which the in-itself appears according to whatever the for-itself assumes it to be.

Sartre's objection to this view is based on his rejection of any solipsistic description of the world. For this reason we find it difficult to see the validity of Newman's consideration of Sartre's "ontological relativism" (as we have shown in the previous section of this chapter), because "ontological relativism" cannot escape solipsism, the position which Sartre strongly rejects.³⁵

Accordingly, if Sartre rejects solipsism it would hardly be possible to imagine that he accepts "ontological relativism." The for-itself does not intend to conceptualize the in-itself according to its own arbitrary judgment, but to know it as it is. Paradoxically, while the major objective

³⁵Ibid., p. 229.

of the for-itself is knowledge, and knowledge, as Sartre puts it, is the world,³⁶ this objective cannot be achieved without subjectivity.

Yet it is not a purely subjective modification of the for-itself since it causes all subjectivity to be possible. But if the for-itself is to be the nothingness whereby "there is" being, then being can exist originally only as totality. Thus knowledge is the world. To use Heidegger's expression, the world and outside of that--nothing. But this "nothing" is not originally that in which human reality emerges. This nothing is human reality itself as the radical negation by means of which the world is revealed.³⁷

The goal that Sartre is seeking in his ontology is not to postulate references about the in-itself according to what might be conceptualized through the volitions of the for-itself; rather, Sartre is looking to know the world as it is. Knowing the world appears to be an ontological possibility, and through ontology Sartre attempts to actualize this possibility. The major goal of knowing is, therefore, objective; likewise objectivity is the end of ontology.

But ontology as such is a subjective undertaking. It is so, and it cannot be otherwise because there is no way to carry out an ontological plan without the involvement of a subject. The subject, or the for-itself, through its own negation, appears to be the only possibility which is aware of itself as consciousness. Accordingly, since ontology is a project which could not be carried out by the computer, or

³⁶Ibid., p. 181.

³⁷Ibid.

mathematical abstraction, or logic and scientific method, it has to be carried out by man as a subject. Now one might ask why it could not be carried out other than by a subject? The answer is that ontology is fundamentally based on man's concern about his relationship to the world, and that this concern can only be expressed through the existential modes of man as a subject when he confronts the world face-to-face. It is from this confrontation that the for-itself becomes aware of itself as a being whose nothingness is in question; and it is only man as a subject who is concerned with questioning the nature of his own being. Ontology, therefore, cannot escape subjectivity because of its nature; and the nature of ontology is not constructed in a dialogue form, but rather as a monologue; so it is not dialectical in a sense because it is one-sided. That is, the for-itself alone does the reflection, while the in-itself is only an object for reflection. Consequently, de facto subjectivity remains as long as the for-itself does not become united with the in-itself.³⁸ Sartre, in this respect, is not Hegelian simply because synthesis does not take place between the for-itself and the in-itself or between mind and reality. For this reason Sartre emphasizes that the for-itself can only become a de-totalized totality, namely, being in the world, while at the same time having a certain autonomy within it.³⁹

³⁸Ibid., p. 618.

³⁹Ibid., p. 181.

In the light of the preceding discussion we feel that Sartre's ontological position is clarified, at least in respect to Newman's claim that Sartre espouses an "ontological relativism" from which he substantiates his ethical relativism.

We have attempted to convey to the reader that Sartre's subjectivity should be considered a means toward objectivity. This illustrates what we mean by the term intersubjectivity, namely, when consciousness opens up to the world and attempts to see it as it is, and not as consciousness conceives it at will or as it pretends to see it. In view of these intentions, Sartre attempts to carry out his ontological plan. For this reason we claim that Sartre's ontology is neither relativistic nor ultimately subjectivistic, but intersubjective, which means that while the subject is the only being through which the knowledge of the world is revealed, this knowledge is not arbitrarily conceptualized by the subject, but only discovered. For this reason we claim that intersubjectivity, and not relativism, characterizes Sartre's ontology.

In the preceding discussion we have observed how intersubjectivity is carried out in Sartre's ontology, and in the following we shall attempt to demonstrate how it is carried out in his ethics.

Humanism and not Relativism: the Ground
for Ethical Action

In the following we shall show the element of inter-subjectivity in Sartre's ethical thought. First, we would like to clarify the meaning of (and to justify the use of) our term "Sartre's ethical thought," instead of "Sartre's ethics." This clarification has a direct bearing on illuminating the misunderstanding which so many interpreters fall into in their evaluation of Sartre's philosophy and its direction. We do not use the term "Sartre's ethics" simply because Sartre has not confirmed his ethical thinking yet in any conclusive way. Thus, when we speak of Sartre's ethics or someone's ethics, we would appear to be referring to a standard of reference to check against in case we would like to know the notions of right and wrong, good and evil, or one's duties, responsibilities and moral obligations. We feel that the term "ethical thought" expresses more flexibility or at least some openness to what may be conceived at any particular situation or another: whereas when we say "ethics" it implies that our ethical thinking is already made, or that it is already conceptualized conclusively. It is this type of ethics that Sartre is hesitant to embrace, in spite of the fact that he concludes Being and Nothingness with a promise to devote his future work to ethics.⁴⁰

However, Sartre, as it is well known, has not fulfilled

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 628.

his promises yet, and he probably never will. Instead of devoting his future work to ethics, he presented his largest work, Saint Genet, in 1952, and then followed with his masterpiece, Critique de la raison dialectique, in 1960. In the interim between these works he wrote the first three volumes of his long-range autobiography, Situations; and then after the publication of Critique de la raison dialectique he wrote another three volumes of the Situations and the short autobiography of his childhood and adolescent years, Les Mots, the latter in 1964.

Sartre has not confined his ethical ideas in any specific structure which represents, as we said, his ethic, but this does not imply that Sartre does not have any ethics. To hold this position would be evidence of total ignorance, because in the main Sartre's work is infused with an ethical concern about the individual man and all men: humanity. Sartre's ethical concern is thematic rather than systematic; that is to say, it constitutes a fundamental theme throughout his works, as in his philosophical work Being and Nothingness, in his literary The Dirty Hands, No Exit, and the Respectable Prostitute, and in his psychological work Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions. In all of these Sartre expresses his ethical concerns only indirectly; it is in his short essay L'existentialisme est un humanisme, that he makes his most direct pronouncements about existential ethics.

If existentialism concerns itself with human reality,

it does not have to presuppose a teleological goal for this reality: and if it does so, basically it would not be different from Kantian idealism, the philosophy which Sartre attempted to reject, although he could not totally free himself from its influence. The influence of Kant upon Sartre's ethical thought can be clearly recognized in the address that he made about his existential position.

Quand nous disons que l'homme se choisit, nous entendons que chacun d'entre nous, se choisit, mais par là nous voulons dire aussi qu'en se choisissant il choisit tous les hommes. En effet, il n'est pas un de nos actes qui, en créant l'homme que nous voulons être, ne crée en même temps une image de l'homme tel que nous estimons qu'il doit être. Choisir d'être ceci ou cela, c'est affirmer en même temps la valeur de ce que nous choisissons, car nous ne pouvons jamais choisir le mal; ce que nous choisissons, c'est toujours le bien, et rien ne peut être bon pour nous sans l'être pour tous.⁴¹

This proclamation is clearly reminiscent of Kantian idealism in laying down the universal moral law under which all men are treated as ends.

In fact, here Sartre goes a little further than Kant. While Kant considers the kingdom of ends as the ideal for which rational beings ought to be striving, Sartre affirms this ideal as a living reality in the decisions that we make in our confrontation with the human situation. Thus, the ideal does not remain any more a mere possibility, but appears in actuality incorporated in our activities while we execute our decisions which ought to be good for us as well as for

⁴¹Jean-Paul Sartre, L'existentialisme est un humanisme (Paris: Les Editions Nagel, 1963), p. 25.

others. Through decisions the ideal and the practical become synthesized in our actions, and outside of this there is nothing. In other words, there is no independent good which is good in itself. There is only the good of human reality, and this good is the manifestation of good decisions. Before this activity there is no good, only self-deception and bad faith.

While Sartre agrees with Kant that we should not treat others as means toward our ends but as ends in themselves, he rejects the notion of a priori "decisions" or judgments, on the ground that it does not answer all the problems involved in human situations.⁴² Therefore, the subject involved in any given human situation cannot escape subjectivity because there is no other possibility. Decisions are not made in heaven, nor already conceptualized in a given moral law; they are man-made, and they are made by man in relation to human situations.⁴³ When Sartre was approached by one of his students asking him for help in deciding whether he should stay with his old and ill mother or join the underground to fight the Germans, Sartre refused to make the decision for the student, and referred him to his own emotions in the light of which a decision should be made.⁴⁴ It is only according to human compassion that we can take the decisive forward steps

⁴²Ibid., p. 42.

⁴³Ibid., p. 43.

⁴⁴Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotion, pp. 24-26.

in making a commitment.

Traditional morality, according to Sartre, cannot provide an answer for a case like this. Sartre assumes that it is only man's feelings and sentiment that can dictate the direction which he should follow.⁴⁵ For this reason Sartre has been accused of anti-intellectualism and of radical subjectivism. This would appear to be the case if one does not reflect enough on the nature of this philosophy to realize the importance of its ethical involvements. Traditionally we are told to be involved rationally, and probably spiritually, in our ethical life; whereas involvement in feeling, compassion, and emotion are minimized if not rejected. But Sartre emphasizes the acceptance of whatever feeling dictates in making judgments.

It is very conceivable that the accusation of anti-intellectualism is based on Sartre's consideration of human feeling in decision making. It is obvious that this misconception appears magnified if we do not understand clearly the nature of feeling, on one hand, and its relation to consciousness on the other. The nature of feeling could not be comprehended without taking into consideration its basic activities. This activity can be viewed in two ways: (1) as related to reflective consciousness within feeling; (2) as related to what man feels his situation to be with others in

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 26.

the world. In regard to the first, it must be clear that existentialism in general and Sartre in particular would like to emphasize the wholeness of man as an existential possibility.

For Sartre man as body, man as consciousness, and man as a being in the world are all considered equally important modes of man's existentiality.⁴⁶ Thus, man as mind is equally important as body, and also man as body is as uniquely important as mind.⁴⁷ If we view Sartre from this perspective we should be able to recognize that he is attempting to replace the traditional ethical activities, which are based on a universal rational measurement of good and evil, with judgments which are made according to our reflective activities within the particular situation.

⁴⁶Sartre, Being and Nothingness, pp. 303-359.

⁴⁷There is no priority of mind over matter, nor does such a division take place intrinsically or extrinsically simply because there is no substance that determines the status of man's being; nor are there any preconceived directions for man's projects because before consciousness there was only spontaneity, and in spontaneity there is no "I". The "I" can break through the continuity of spontaneity and become aware of itself as a subject only after reflection. Sartre emphasizes that there is no "I" on the unreflective level; it is out of reflective consciousness that the I as a synthetic unity emerges in the world (Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotion, p. 23). What is important here is Sartre's attempt to escape idealism and solipsism in his formulation of the "I" as consciousness (Sartre, Transcendence of the Ego, pp. 48-104). In doing so Sartre is able to place the ethical feeling of man between the passive and the active form of feeling. The passive feeling lacks the reflection of consciousness, whereas the active feeling involves reflection. As a result of this activity a person can appear as a subject who assumes responsibilities and is willing to risk making decisions in relation to himself and to others.

From these activities the "I" emerges as an activity of consciousness which is not concerned about itself in isolation, but about its relationship to others in the world. The element of irrationalism on the part of the subject exists on the pre-reflective level only; whereas on the reflective level the wholeness of one's being appears to be engaged in the ethical act. Now this wholeness is in question, and from this question arises the basic difference between some traditional views and existentialism. Reason is expected to prevail for the traditional rationalist, and idealist as well, and also the human situation should be viewed according to the justification of a rational judgment. Reason always tends to be optimistic about the fate of man, and so reason affirms this optimism by emphasizing what appears to be rational and denouncing what appears to be contrary.

But existentialism holds that this image of man represents only one-half of the picture. An existentialist can see that man's fate also unavoidably involves anguish and despair, fear and trembling, sickness and death, loneliness and alienation. All of these modes are situations that man lives through, and through which consciousness experiences the human situation. Feeling, then, appears to be important to Sartre because through feeling man is aware of his immediate relations with the world.

Sartre may appear, to some extent, similar to Whitehead in emphasizing feeling as a fundamental mode of experiencing

reality. For Whitehead, however, feeling is in fact a mode of ingression of an eternal object into the actual occasion.⁴⁸ And for Sartre feeling has priority in experiencing the world and also in making ethical decisions.⁴⁹ But the basic difference between Whitehead and Sartre is that, to Whitehead, feeling does not necessarily involve consciousness; whereas for Sartre it does. This represents, in the main, the basic difference between the Whiteheadian organic philosophy, which emphasizes the continuity of nature, and the Sartrean phenomenology, which attempts to represent consciousness as a power which breaks out of nature to create its own identity within it.

Consciousness is, therefore, the means by which the freedom of the subject becomes a possibility. In fact consciousness is freedom, and it is considered so because the realization of one's freedom becomes a possibility through the activity of consciousness. Without consciousness the for-itself would not be what it is not, because it would have been, like the in-itself, determined to be what it is. In other words, without consciousness man would have been like any other natural entity, determined to be what he is according to his location in space and time; or he would have been an objectified entity known to be what he is, not according

⁴⁸Afred North Whitehead, Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 131.

⁴⁹Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 26.

to his individuality, but an instance of a generalized classification. Without consciousness there would be no individuality.

However, the truth of the matter, as Sartre would say, is the converse. That is, there is an individuality because there is consciousness, and since consciousness is not for itself its own object, the object of consciousness by nature exists outside of it.⁵⁰ In short, individuality cannot be its own object either. While on the ontological level Sartre reminds us that to be conscious is always to be conscious of the world,⁵¹ on the ethical level, according to what we can infer from his essay on existentialism, there is the implication that to be conscious is to be conscious of humanity.⁵² Newman's charge of "ethical relativism" cannot be justified, because the subject involved does not appear to make judgments according to his own arbitrary interest, but with the intention of being in the interest of all men. (When I am choosing my freedom, I am choosing the freedom of all men.) This is the basic difference between intersubjectivity in ethics and ethical relativism. From the previous exposition it should be clear that Sartre expresses his ethical concern in an intersubjective, and not in a relative, manner.

⁵⁰Sartre, Transcendence of the Ego, p. 41.

⁵¹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 334.

⁵²Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, pp. 38-39.

Another major point should be clear, and that is that Sartre is not an exponent of atomistic individualism. If this were the case he would not emphasize intersubjective relations in the human situation, nor would he reject the Husserlian transcendental "I".⁵³

In the following we shall attempt to bring the notion of intersubjectivity into focus within the human situation. Simone de Beauvoir's explication of Sartre's ethical thought is valuable in clarifying this point.

If this kind of ethics individualistic or not? Yes, if one means by that that it accords to the individual an absolute value and that it recognizes in him alone the power of laying the foundations of his own existence. It is individualism in the sense in which the wisdom of the ancients, the Christian ethics of salvation, and the Kantian ideal of virtue also merit this name; it is opposed to the totalitarian doctrines which raise up beyond man the mirage of Mankind. But it is not solipsistic, since the individual is defined only by his relationship to the world and to other individuals; he exists only by transcending himself, and his freedom can be achieved only through the freedom of others. He justifies his existence by a movement which, like freedom, springs from his heart but which leads outside of him.

This individualism does not lead to the anarchy of personal whim. Man is free; but he finds his law in his very freedom. First, he must assume his freedom and not flee it; he assumes it by a constructive movement; one does not exist without doing something; and also by a negative movement which rejects oppression for oneself and others. In construction, as in rejection, it is a matter of reconquering freedom on the contingent facticity of existence, that, of taking the given, which, at the start, is there without any reason, as something willed by man.⁵⁴

⁵³Sartre, Transcendence of the Ego, p. 40.

⁵⁴Simone de Beauvoir, The Ethics of Ambiguity, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: The Citadel Press, 1948), p. 156.

This is a condensed description of Sartre's ethical thought toward others. It is in this humanistic sense only that man can reach out for his being. Man in this sense is inseparable from humanity. To put it more precisely, man is humanity inasmuch as humanity is all men. Nothing intervenes which separates man from his total humanistic conditions, nor are there any factors, as intellectual or spiritual substances, which determine man's ethical and humanistic attitude. There is only consciousness, a consciousness of man as a being in the world whose being always stands outside of himself with others and among others, and also man as consciousness who always is in a human situation. Sartre describes this case in the following:

Car l'homme n'est pas ramassé en lui-même, mais dehors, de ciel à la terre. Le galet a un intérieur, l'homme non: mais il se perd pour que le galet existe. Et tous ces hommes "infects" que Ponge veut fuir ou supprimer, ils sont aussi "rats, lions, filets, diamants." Ils le sont, précisément parce qu'ils "sont-dans-le-monde." Seulement ils n'y prennent pas garde. Il faut le leur révéler. Ainsi s'agit-il moins, à mon avis, d'acquiescer des sentiments nouveaux que d'approfondir notre condition humaine.⁵⁵

This presents us with a vivid picture of man as a subject who searches for himself among others and who also discovers others as he discovers himself.⁵⁶ This interplay between oneself and others appears to be dialectical necessity

⁵⁵Jean-Paul Sartre, Situations, I (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 291.

⁵⁶See also Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 38.

for authenticity. Others, that is to say, are important for the surge of man's individuality inasmuch as man is important for others. This is the human condition; it is rather an imperative mode for individuality in which we encounter ourselves if we become aware of our individuality. Individuality appears to be possible only within these conditions, namely, within a human situation and not outside of it.

The ensuing question is related to how individuality as a potentiality can be actualized. Sartre's answer to this question is clear: by means of reflection. At this point we need to emphasize, as we previously stated, that Sartre does not see any possibility for individuality to surge forth without reflection. There is no "I" in the unreflective consciousness, he declares.⁵⁷ However, Sartre asserts that consciousness is absolute in itself; namely, it is its own structure which is defined by intentionality.⁵⁸ (In Chapter IV we shall devote some attention to defining intentionality.) Sartre does not bother to clarify ontologically the nature of this intentionality in consciousness, as Husserl attempts to do, but rather accepts the hypothesis in relation to the nature of consciousness as given.

Sartre does not seem to be able to escape circularity in defining his notion of consciousness. This is partly because Sartre is committed to reject any generic formulation

⁵⁷Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 47.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 38.

of consciousness which makes consciousness definable in terms of social characteristics (as with George Herbert Mead) or in terms of drives and needs (as with psychological behaviorism) or even in the light of Husserl's Erlebnis. Contrary to these approaches, Sartre does not define consciousness as other than what it is. In this respect, his definition resembles G. E. Moore's definition of the Good. The Good is simply the Good; and Sartre similarly is declaring the same by stating that the existence of consciousness is an absolute because consciousness is consciousness of itself,⁵⁹ and as such it is also a consciousness of something.

But if consciousness is consciousness of itself, it is still not simply closed up within itself in isolation from the world, but as a result of being conscious of itself it comes to be conscious of the world. This is precisely what Sartre means when he defines consciousness in terms of intentionality. "By intentionality consciousness transcends itself. It unifies itself by escaping from itself."⁶⁰ Unquestionably this is a strong statement as to what intentionality can do in relation to the loneliness of consciousness, because it appears clear that without intentionality consciousness would have been determined to be an entity defined simply in terms of what it is and not in terms of what it is

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 40.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 38.

not. Intentionality appears to be a directive force of consciousness toward the world. But Sartre does not explain the origin or the nature of this self-directiveness in consciousness which appears to be generated out of intentionality. Does intentionality imply being, or does it have any intrinsic characteristic which makes it what it is? Does intentionality replace Parmenides' dilemma between non-being and being, or is it the leap that consciousness sees itself through in order to escape its total nothingness? We do not know whether these questions can be answered simply because Sartre himself does not elaborate on this issue in spite of its pertinence to the ontological problem.

The point which we would like to emphasize in regard to the nature of consciousness is that intentionality has to be considered the directive force through which consciousness comes to see itself as a possibility which is stretching between its present isness and the future of its becomingness. Therefore, we assume that because of intentionality consciousness comes to be identified as a being which is not what it is. Sartre makes one point clear in regard to consciousness as it appears before and after the act of reflection. On the unreflective level consciousness stands as absolute inwardness in the scheme of spontaneity.⁶¹ On this level we suggest that consciousness is passive, or at least is not aware

⁶¹Ibid., p. 41.

of its intricate relationship to the world. The individual involved could not be viewed as an individual human personality but as an objectified identity, or perhaps as a member of a species.

For this reason most existentialists express concern for the problem of individuality. This concern is related to the possibility of depersonalization or of the dehumanization of man. This process of depersonalization can take place if consciousness remains a mere "spontaneity," in Sartre's meaning of the term. "Spontaneity" can be considered synonymous with collectivity. To break through "spontaneity" or collectivity can only be possible in reflection. For this reason Sartre points out that on the reflective level only does the "I" emerge. To be a collective personality or an individual personality is then totally related to whatever the individual consciousness actualizes out of itself. On the collective level we suggest that the individual is unconsciously socialized, whereas on the reflective level the individual consciously emerges in the process of socialization and totalization. A misunderstanding of this point in Sartre leads some interpreters to conceive of Sartre's position as a philosophy of individual atomism, and others to look upon it as a philosophy of sociologism.⁶²

The crux of the issue at this point is that while Sartre strives for socialization and humanization, he also

⁶²Ibid., p. 46.

rejects the element of ought in them. Thus, socialization does not appear an inevitability for the "I," but a choice. It is not an inevitability in the sense that external collective forces do not and cannot make the actualization of the "I" possible. Rather, the external forces which emerge out of the social and political institutions, as well as from the industrial and technological complex, create tempting modes for the "I" to negate itself and to surrender in its struggle to become. This is undoubtedly the collectivity in which the organization man is born instead of the individual man.⁶³ Sartre emphatically rejects this type of socialization in which the "I" does not appear as a reflective subject which makes its own project and accepts the responsibility of making its own decision in regard to what it wills to be and to do, but rather appears nihilated from its own intentionality, robbed of its individuality, and swallowed up in total objectification.

The difference between the two types of socialization--namely, the spontaneous or the collective and the reflective processes--is that, in the former, the "I" as consciousness will never emerge to the level of self-realization; and the individual in this mode of actualization appears as an entity objectified by the collective totality without projects or

⁶³William H. Whyte, The Organization Man (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1956) gives a comprehensive description of man's alienation in the organization.

decisions of his own. In the second form of socialization the "I" finds itself through reflection in the midst of the whole, and then consciously, reflectively, and responsibly views itself as an entity, standing in relation to other entities in some form of existential necessity, or as an individual who finds himself among others and realizes that the existence of others is as indispensable to his own existence as his existence is to others.⁶⁴ From reflection, the "I" arises not with the feeling of autonomy, but with the feeling of the necessity of being with others. But this necessity does not bar the "I" from its own freedom to be what it wills to be.

Contrary to what has been told, therefore, it is on the reflected level that the ego-life has its place, and on the unreflected level that the impersonal life has its place (which naturally does not mean that all unreflected life is necessarily altruistic).⁶⁵

This leads us to the conclusion that reflection is as essential to individuality as individuality is to freedom. Without reflection the "I" cannot become fully aware of its total ontological situation, namely, as a being in the world. For if the "I" remains on the unreflective level, consciousness is concerned solely with itself and for itself and not for the in-itself and others. But since consciousness is always a consciousness of something, the question of

⁶⁴Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 38.

⁶⁵Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 58.

individuality and freedom arises only when consciousness becomes conscious of something other than itself. It is in this respect that the ontological question is directed, it is hoped, to find out whether there is such a thing as human reality. We have to stress again that the goal which Sartre is seeking in ontologizing is an objective goal. However, since the "I," which is striving for this goal, is limited to its own nothingness and to its own subjectivity, this goal appears unattainable.

At this point we should point out that the feeling of Nausea, the confrontation with the absurd, the encounter with anguish and despair appear to be the existential modes which man faces when discovering the truth of his paradoxical nature, namely, the fact of the nothingness which he is and the desire to be God which he is not. It is between this nothingness and its desire that the authentic individual fulfills his desire to be God, and he cannot be considered an abstraction of scientific data which function according to a definite law of cause and effect. Man is reflected upon as man, as emotion and compassion, as love and hate, as limited and finite, as consciousness of what he is and what he is not, and as freedom. As such Sartre attempts to describe the ontological image of man in which he hopes to show the realistic elements of all men.

But we have to realize that while the artist attempts to perceive the given, he does not become a part of what is

given but only a recipient. As such, the artist reflects upon the object in question with the aim of interpreting its real nature. Similarly, Sartre emphasizes that the subject engaged in the act of reflection and the object reflected upon remain separated. Consciousness is what it is, and the objects for consciousness are what they are. The for-itself hopes to nihilate the in-itself, but its hope vanishes in despair. The impasse remains as strong as ever. Accordingly, in this respect Sartre does not accept "La disponibilité" of Marcel, in which the synthesis between the subject and the object takes place in the creative act of participation.⁶⁶ Nor does he accept in this respect the I-Thou relationship of Buber.⁶⁷ These notions, in a sense, have a mystical flavor over consciousness, and Sartre does not see anything before or after consciousness which might encompass its manifestations.

Consciousness is then all alone searching for its authenticity in the world, and out of feeling its loneliness, its upsurge becomes possible. The search for authenticity is an ontological excursion. In other words, through ontology Sartre hopes to find the authentic roots of human existence. We conclude this chapter by suggesting that authenticity is revealed as a possibility when man discovers his ontological

⁶⁶Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, I, trans. G. S. Fraser (Chicago, Illinois: Henry Regnery Co., 1960), 1954-181.

⁶⁷Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald G. Smith (New York: Scribners, 1958).

situation. We believe that man's ethical life is to be considered the expression of his authenticity. Without authenticity there is no ethics; conversely, without ethics man cannot express his authenticity. Because of this fact the existentialism of Sartre is considered a philosophy of action, since without action all philosophical speculation would be guilty of bad faith.

In this chapter we have dealt with two issues. First, we analyzed Fred Newman's argument and we showed that his claim--that Sartre's ethical relativism is an outgrowth of his ontological relativism--is inconsistent with the essence of Sartre's philosophy. Secondly, we attempted to set forth some major concepts of Sartre's philosophy, with an emphasis on showing its intersubjective nature. With this in mind, we traced intersubjectivity in Sartre's ontology and ethics. Although, at first glance, this chapter may not appear directly related to the theme of this thesis, we believe it is important in order to settle the question of the image of man in Sartre before we attempt to interpret this image. For this reason we have dealt with such notions as the for-itself and the in-itself, consciousness and intentionality, since an understanding of these notions is prerequisite to an understanding of man in Sartre. In other words, these are the characteristics of the "I", and an understanding of these would facilitate our understanding of the "I".

We have concluded this chapter with the suggestion that

the "I" is all alone, unfolding its own nothingness in the world. The way this "I" experiences the world is neither teleologically determined nor ontologically presupposed. For this reason, the "I" is an absolute freedom. Our task in the coming chapter is to examine the nature and the origins of freedom, which we believe are psychological. We shall attempt to demonstrate two points. First, we shall defend our thesis that Sartre is first and foremost an ontologist and that through ontology he attempts to discover existential humanistic truths, against the assumptions of Robert Champigny and Alvin Plantinga, who assume that Sartre's philosophy is ethical through and through. Secondly, we shall examine the nature of Sartre's ontological motives, which we feel contain psychological overtones. This appears clear when we examine the notions of bad faith, responsibility, and anguish.

CHAPTER II

THE PSYCHO-ONTOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF SARTRE'S ETHICS

In the previous chapter we examined Newman's argument that Sartre's ontology is relativistic in nature and that this ethical relativism is the by-product of his ontological relativism. We demonstrated the invalidity of this conclusion, and also we pointed out the intersubjective element in both Sartre's ontology and his ethics.

In this chapter we will be concerned with evaluating two arguments about the nature of Sartre's philosophy. The first argument is represented by Robert Champigny, and the second by Alvin Plantinga. These two arguments express a common agreement about the nature of Sartre's philosophy. Both of them contend that Sartre's philosophy is ethical through and through. But while Champigny affirms the positive nature of Sartre's ethics, Plantinga claims that Sartre's ethics is not consistent with any kind of morality. Our endeavor is devoted to demonstrating three major points: (1) to refute the claim made by Champigny and Plantinga in regard to the nature of Sartre's philosophy by showing systematically the invalidity of this claim; (2) to refute Plantinga's assumption that the nature of Sartre's morality

is amoral; (3) to trace the psychological origins of certain Sartrean notions, as bad faith, responsibility, anguish, which are considered ethical notions by Plantinga.

Examination of Robert Champigny

A one-sided approach in viewing Sartre's philosophy seems very common among Sartre's interpreters, and unfortunately we find some reputable figures raising serious issues in Sartre's philosophy through this approach. Among these figures is Robert Champigny, whom we consider among the best literary interpreters of Sartre. Champigny's weakness, however, lies in viewing Sartre's philosophy, as a whole, from the literary perspective. In an article on Sartre, Champigny states the following.

The main perspective in Sartre's philosophy is moral. This has become more and more obvious in the works which have followed L'être et le néant. L'être et le néant itself, in which the concept of freedom is indissolubly linked to that of responsibility, was intended to set the stage for an examination of moral questions.¹

Then Champigny goes on to affirm that being and non-being suddenly appear in a glaring moral light and that being is identified with the good and non-being with evil.²

Champigny has written a comprehensive essay entitled "Stages on Sartre's Way," and this essay is among the best

¹Robert Champigny, "Translations from the Writings of Contemporary French Philosophers," The Journal of Philosophy, LIV (May, 1957), 314.

²Ibid., 314-335.

literary interpretations of Sartre, not only in its lucid and vivid descriptions of Sartre's style, but also in its comprehensive analysis of the major characters involved in Sartre's literary writing.³ But the shortcoming of this analysis is the one-sidedness which Champigny betrays in his interpretations of Sartre's work.

The purpose of this essay is to trace the development of Sartre's thought through his most significant works from 1938 to 1952. Sartre has often been commented upon from a purely philosophical point of view. This point of view generally produces a static picture, since the philosophical critic confines himself to the study of L'être et le néant. Our own perspective will be broader. Most of the essay will be devoted to an examination of Sartre's literary work.

The moral question dominates Sartre's production. It will also be the central theme of our study. In this introduction we propose to determine how the moral question arises out of Sartre's view of the human condition, as it is expounded in L'être et le néant.⁴

According to this exposition it should be clear that Champigny believes that the ethical or the moral question dominates Sartre's literary work, and at the same time he does not allude to any other question or issue which might appear to be taking Sartre's consideration. This view of Sartre's literature is both one-sided and misleading. If we examine Sartre's literary works reflectively, we find that the moral question comes up only indirectly, as in L'être et le néant,

³Robert Champigny, Stages on Sartre's Way: 1938-1952 (Indiana University Publications: Humanities Series, No. 43; Bloomington, Indiana; Indiana University, 1959), p. 1.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Jean-Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1943).

in which he never discusses directly any moral issues, but only furnishes the background for such an issue to be analyzed in future work, which has never been handled, at least directly. Champigny acknowledges this in the first statement, in which he says that L'être et le néant is intended to set the stage for an examination of moral questions.⁶ But later, in his most elaborate way, he claims that the moral question which arises from Sartre's view of the human condition is expounded in L'être et le néant.⁷

Our purpose here is not really directed toward finding a possible logical contradiction, but to refute the claim that Sartre's literary work is dominated by a moral question. While we claim that Sartre's literary works in some cases are suffused with metaphysical and ontological overtones, as in La Nausée,⁸ in other cases he pursues an existential psychoanalytical approach in which his characters appear to be psychological cases struggling for freedom through subjectivity, as in No Exit,⁹ or for self identity through self-assertion, as in Saint Genet.¹⁰ The moral question does arise in Le

⁶Champigny, Journal of Philosophy, LIV, 316.

⁷Champigny, Stages on Sartre's Way, p. 1.

⁸Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausee (Paris: Gallimard, 1938).

⁹Jean-Paul Sartre, No Exit: and Three Other Plays, (New York: Vintage Books, 1946).

¹⁰Jean-Paul Sartre, Saint Genet, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: The New American Library, 1963).

Putain respectueuse,¹¹ but only indirectly through the particular mode in which the character is involved. For this reason we cannot consider Roquentin in La Nausée as being directly involved with the moral question, but rather with an ontological search for his relationship to the world.¹² Therefore, we cannot accept Champigny's interpretation of La Nausée, namely, that its significance is moral, because we believe that its ontological meaning cannot be confined to morality alone. Champigny states his concluding or definitive about La Nausée in the following:

Thus La Nausée, though it is mainly descriptive, has a moral significance which will be echoed in all the subsequent works of Sartre: the rejection of the morals of being, of the morals of essence. Two forms of this type of morals have been indicated and to these two forms correspond the two aspects of the significance of Nausea.

The first form is hieractic morals. This concept of morals is fashioned by the spirit of seriousness. Humor, irony, disgust have dealt with it . . . This type of morals is essentially passive, sometimes exhibitionistic, as in the case of the "leaders."

The second form is theatrical morals. It is more active. The actor has to interpret the role. But the actor is not an agent. Even when there is no script, as in the case of Anny's perfect moments, the actor has somehow to incarnate the esthetic essence in his own flesh.

From the morals of being, Roquentin turns to the morals of doing.¹³

If this is the case, then La Nausée as a whole is interwoven with the moral question, out of which the

¹¹Jean-Paul Sartre, Theatre (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

¹²Jean-Paul Sartre, Nausea, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1964), p. 173.

¹³Champigny, Stages on Sartre's Way, p. 36.

ontological precariousness of morality appears to be dissolved in action. But in fact La Nausée is not at all so precisely structured on the moral question, because both the climate and the climax of La Nausée are not surrounded by moral decisions, but rather by the anxiety of the ontological absurdity which is expressed in Roquentin's dialogue with himself and human existence. In fact, when La Nausée was presented for the first time to Gallimard¹⁴ as "Melancholia," it was not recommended by Paulhan¹⁵ for publication because of Sartre's style of expressing metaphysical truth in literary form.

Simone de Beauvoir makes the following remarks in regard to this case:

Sartre was not too cheerful either. Quite apart from his setback over the trip, he suffered another rebuff which affected him even more. The manuscript--entitled Melancholia because of the Dürer engraving which he loved so much--had been sent to Nizan to one of Gallimard's readers. Sartre received a note from Paulhan advising him that, despite certain qualities it possessed, the work had not been accepted. He had taken the refusal of La Légende de la vérité cheerfully enough; but he had put four years' work into Melancholia, and the book had come out exactly as he had planned it: in his own opinion, and in mine, he had achieved a success. Paulhan, it appeared, disapproved of Sartre's central purpose--that is, the expression in literary form of metaphysical truths and feelings. But the plan was deeply rooted in Sartre's mind, and too long established, for him to accept this condemnation. All the same, it disconcerted us both.¹⁶

¹⁴Gallimard: A Parisian publisher.

¹⁵Paulhan: an editorial advisor who worked for Gallimard.

¹⁶Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, trans. Peter Green (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Co., 1962), p. 227.

This explanation should at least provide us with a different perspective about La Nausée from the one adopted by Champigny, namely that the ontological question of existence appears to be the most pertinent issue overwhelming Roquentin's curiosity. When Roquentin analyzes the people of Beauville from a distance, how they act, how they live, how they go to work and come back home, he does not view them in the light of whether they are leading an ethical or non-ethical life. Rather he attempts to examine the value and meaning of their existence, and whether they are leading an authentic or a non-authentic life. The immediate concern is not directly related to an ethical issue, but to the ontological meaning of the human situation. It is a question of being or non-being in the ontological sense (not in the moral sense), or simply of being an existing individual who affirms his being according to what he wills and decides, of being a collective member of the little bourgeois society of Beauville, or of being an individual. The ethical question, in this respect, arises indirectly, whereas the ontological meaning of one's individuality appears to be the primary concern.

Furthermore, what Roquentin dislikes about the people of Beauville is not what they do but how they do it. The objectified, collective, and impersonalized bourgeois standard of doing things nauseates Roquentin; and these, essentially speaking, are not viewed from a moral perspective, but

from the ontological perspective of human existence. It is, therefore, the ontological meaninglessness, and not the immoral act, which brings nausea. The most pertinent issue in La Nausée is ontological and not moral.

Another problem we encounter in reading Champigny is his serious acceptance of the notions of good and evil as synonymous with being and non-being.¹⁷ It would be illogical to identify being with good and non-being with evil, because being as such does not appear in the form of an actuality, but only as a possibility. The for-itself remains continuously searching for this possibility without ever reaching its actualization. It follows also that the good never becomes an actuality.

Sartre suggests that in spite of the incomplete status of the for-itself (its inability to become what it is), it is still possible to make a distinction between good and evil. This capacity is related to consciousness in its ability to affirm itself and to escape from itself, that is, to affirm itself in terms of its responsibility, and to escape from itself in order to negate its responsibility. Action or non-action appears to be equated with good and evil more than with being and non-being. To act in good faith or in bad faith is the border line between morality and immorality for Sartre. (In our evaluation of Plantinga below we shall

¹⁷Champigny, Journal of Philosophy, LIV, p. 318.

explore further the meaning of the notion of good and bad faith.) Champigny's argument is misleading because he conceptualizes his conclusion--the main perspective in Sartre's philosophy is moral--before analyzing the nature of his premise: being is identified with the good and non-being with evil.

The following analysis of Plantinga's exposition of Sartre should be helpful in determining the nature of Sartre's philosophy.

Examination of Alvin Plantinga

Alvin Plantinga has written an article in which he attempts to analyze the nature of Sartre's existentialism. In this analysis Plantinga makes two claims: the first that Sartre's philosophy is through and through ethical, the second that in spite of the ethical nature of Sartre's philosophy, its moral implication is not consistent with anything like the ordinary sense of morality. He concludes that Sartre's theory of freedom is quite inconsistent with morality.¹⁸

We will evaluate Plantinga's argument with two objectives in mind. First, we will demonstrate that these conclusions are not only false but that they totally misrepresent the image of Sartre's philosophy. Secondly, in the

¹⁸Alvin Plantinga, "On Existential Ethics," Review of Metaphysics, XII (1958-1959), 235-256.

course of examining Plantinga's assumptions, we will expose the psycho-ontological origins of Sartre's ethics.

Alvin Plantinga's exposition of Sartre's philosophy is summarized in the following:

Contemporary existentialist philosophy appears to be fundamentally ethical in its origin and motivation. Essentially concerned with man's status in the universe and its implications for behavior, the existentialist often adopts the tone of the Old Testament prophets. He extolls the virtues of authenticity and legitimate anguish; the life of bad faith, the attempted escape from freedom, warrant his scornful disapproval. The moral--and perhaps moralistic--aspect of existentialism is pervasive and unmistakable.

This is especially clear in the case of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy of freedom. Existentialists in general and Sartre in particular argue that an analysis, not of human nature, indeed, but of, say, "the universal human condition" reveals that certain kinds of behavior are morally appropriate and others morally reprehensible. My aim in this paper is to show that Sartre's analysis of "the universal human condition" is quite inconsistent with morality in anything like the ordinary sense. We might think that attempt otiose in view of Sartre's notorious rejection of "absolute values." But in spite of his claim to dispense with absolute morality, Sartre's philosophy, like other existentialist philosophies, is through and through ethical. A concern with the human condition and its implications for morality is the moving force behind Sartre's thought. "Bad faith," "responsibility," "anguish," these and other ethical notions play a central role in Sartre's philosophy of freedom.¹⁹

Plantinga's conclusion is that

Sartre's theory of freedom is quite inconsistent with morality. Any choice is as good as any other: there is no possibility of making a moral mistake. And that is fatal to morality. An absolute freedom, like a thoroughgoing determinism, undercuts the very possibility of morality.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid., p. 235.

²⁰Ibid., p. 250.

Before we begin to analyze the major assumptions made by Plantinga in regard to Sartre's philosophical position, we will attempt to clarify the existentialists' position in general and Sartre's in particular in relation to values. Plantinga states that Sartre rejects "absolute values" without giving an explanation of his rejection. Since we feel that a clarification of this issue is central to our argument, we will make a short exposition of Sartre's position on values.

If we examine the existential approach to values, we find a new development which represents a departure from traditional metaphysics. This departure is exemplified in the expressions of the metaphysical concern itself. While traditional metaphysics expresses its concerns in searching for being qua being, existential metaphysics expresses its concern generally in searching for man qua being or for man qua freedom and authenticity. This transformation in metaphysics also expresses a transformation in values. To the traditionalist, values are absolutely independent of human experience, whereas the existentialist emphasizes the meaning of values within human experience. It appears clear that as a result of this transformation, an existential metaphysics cannot possibly be formulated without taking into account the meaning of values with reference to a humanistic expression. Man becomes the center in defining his existential situation; this inverts the traditional approach which emphasizes

discovering and knowing certain independent metaphysical truth in order to understand and define man. While the traditional metaphysician seeks to understand man through certain independent metaphysical entities, the existentialist would rather begin his search for authenticity with man-in-the-world, because the meaning of existence lies in the meaning which man makes out of himself in his relation to the world, and not in the things themselves.²¹

Sartre can be credited with developing, if not pioneering, this existential notion of metaphysics through which man is not treated in abstraction from his human situation but in a concrete dialogue with the human situation. Metaphysics in this respect is an engagement with oneself in searching for himself in the world, and to be in the world for Sartre means to be in a concrete situation in the world and not in isolation from it.

While metaphysics deals with defining or describing man's situation and his relation to the world, ethics deals with analyzing how man actually relates himself to humanity and with the type of undertaking he assumes in participating in the human situation.

In view of the above, it is clear that Plantinga fails to see that Sartre's rejection of "absolute value" is not based on his rejection of value as such,²² but it is based on

²¹Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 38.

²²See pages 55-56.

his rejection of the absolute in traditional metaphysics from which all values are supposed to be derived. Man, for Sartre, assumes the role of the absolute in traditional metaphysics. As such he is the creator and the cognizer of values, for without man there would not be any source of values nor any agent to recognize their meaning. This concentration on man as a judge and as a value-maker is followed by another: man as a decision-maker and the source of all ethical norms.

Man is, therefore, free, because there is nothing which determines his choice, and at the heart of this freedom lies his responsibility: a responsibility which man cannot escape regardless of whether he assumes the responsibility to make a choice or not. Plantinga's accusation of "nihilism"²³ is not justified, because freedom is always associated with responsibility.

This leads us to the major argument of Plantinga, from which we can deduce the following propositions: (1) if any choice is as good as any other, it would be fatal to morality; (2) since Sartre considers that any choice is as good as any other, Sartre's morality is inconsistent with any morality.

We shall demonstrate that Sartre does not consider that any choice is as good as any other because one can make a choice in good faith or in bad faith, choosing to assert oneself in the face of one's responsibilities or deceiving

²³Plantinga, Review of Metaphysics, XII, 250.

oneself in order to escape responsibility. One can make a choice to face his human situation or to negate his presence in the human situation. Also one can arbitrarily choose his own subjective interest over the interest of others, or one can choose his interest with the interest of others. None of these issues escape Sartre's attention. In fact he has expressed serious concern for such issues. His opinion can be summed up in the following:

This does not entirely settle the objection to subjectivism. In fact, the objection still takes several forms. First, there is the following: we are told, "So you're able to do anything, no matter what!" This is expressed in various ways. First we are accused of anarchy; then they say, "You're unable to pass judgment on others, because there's no reason to prefer one configuration to another"; finally they tell us, "Everything is arbitrary in this choosing of yours. You take something from one pocket and pretend you're putting it into the other."

These three objections aren't very serious. Take the first objection. "You're able to do anything, no matter what" is not to the point. In one sense choice is possible, but what is not possible is not to choose. I can always choose, but I ought to know that if I do not choose, I am still choosing. Though this may seem purely formal, it is highly important for keeping fantasy and caprice within bounds. If it is true that in facing a situation, for example, one in which, as a person capable of having sexual relations, of having children, I am obliged to choose an attitude, and if I in any way assume responsibility for a choice which, in involving myself, also involves all mankind, this has nothing to do with caprice, even if no a priori value determines my choice.

If anybody thinks that he recognizes here Gide's theory of the arbitrary act, he fails to see the enormous difference between this doctrine and Gide's. Gide does not know what a situation is. He acts out of pure caprice. For us, on the contrary, man is in an organized situation in which he himself is involved. Through his choice, he involves all mankind, and he can not avoid making a choice; either he will remain chaste, or he will marry without having children, or he will marry and have children; anyhow, whatever he may do, it is impossible

for him not to take full responsibility for the way he handles this problem.²⁴

If responsibility and action are inseparable parts of our choice, whatever we choose involves responsibility and action. It also implies that when we choose responsibly, we always choose what is good for us and for all men. Thus "whatever we choose cannot be as good as any other choice," especially when we choose not to choose, or when we choose to be indifferent to the human situation, in contrast to choosing responsibly and affirming our responsibility in a human situation.

Sartre clarifies these two points in Being and Nothingness and in Anti-Semite and Jew. In the first he makes an illustration of the possibility of a psychological negation of oneself when confronted with a crucial situation; in the second he makes an analysis of one who attempts to escape from his situation and from himself in order to escape from what he is.

In Being and Nothingness Sartre describes the following case:

Take the example of a woman who has consented to go out with a particular man for the first time. She knows very well the intentions which the man who is speaking to her cherishes regarding her. She knows also that it will be necessary sooner or later for her to make a decision. But she does not want to realize the urgency; she concerns herself only with what is respectful and discreet in the attitude of her companion. She does not apprehend this conduct as an attempt

²⁴Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, pp. 40-42.

to achieve what we call "the first approach"; that is, she does not want to see possibilities of temporal development which his conduct presents. She restricts this behavior to what is in the present; she does not wish to read in the phrases which he addresses to her anything other than their explicit meaning. If he says to her, "I find you so attractive!" she disarms this phrase of its sexual background; she attaches to the conversation and to the behavior of the speaker, the immediate meanings, which she imagines as objective qualities. The man who is speaking to her appears to her sincere and respectful as the table is round or square, as the wall coloring is blue or gray. The qualities thus attached to the person she is listening to are in this way fixed in a permanence like that of things, which is no other than the projection of the strict present of the qualities into the temporal flux. This is because she does not quite know what she wants. She is profoundly aware of the desire which she inspires, but the desire cruel and naked would humiliate and horrify her. Yet she would find no charm in a respect which would be only respect. In order to satisfy her, there must be a feeling which is addressed wholly to her personality--i.e., to her full freedom--and which would be a recognition of her freedom. But at the same time this feeling must be wholly desire; that is, it must address itself to her body as object. This time then she refuses to apprehend the desire for what it is; she does not even give it a name; she recognizes it only to the extent that it transcends itself toward admiration, esteem, respect and that it is wholly absorbed in the more refined forms which it produces, to the extent of no longer figuring anymore as a sort of warmth and density. But then suppose he takes her hand. This act of her companion risks changing the situation by calling for an immediate decision. To leave the hand there is to consent in herself to flirt, to engage herself. To withdraw it is to break the troubled and unstable harmony which gives the hour its charm. The aim is to postpone the moment of decision as long as possible. We know what happens next; the young woman leaves her hand there, but she does not notice that she is leaving it. She does not notice because it happens by chance that she is at this moment all intellect. She draws her companion up to the most lofty regions of sentimental speculation; she speaks of Life, of her life, she shows herself in her essential aspect--a personality, a consciousness. And during this time the divorce of the body from the soul is accomplished; the hand rests inert between the warm

hands of her companion--neither consenting nor resisting--a thing.²⁵

This is a real example of a person who chooses not to choose, and also who chooses to negate herself from the presence of a human situation in order to escape making a choice. But this escape from making a choice is a choice in itself, and it is a choice of bad faith. A choice of this kind unquestionably is a bad choice, and it is bad in spite of absolute freedom. To be absolutely free does not grant fallibility or infallibility, authenticity or inauthenticity. But to be free means that man is the master of his choice. Freedom does not justify the assumption that any action is as good as any other, but freedom, in this respect, is a form of awakening which brings man closer to himself and closer to his inescapable responsibility to be himself in making his own choice in the human situation. Thus, to be absolutely free does not imply that we are absolutely good, nor does it mean that since we are free, any choice is as good as any other. But it does mean simply that we are free to do this or that, to act or not to act, to affirm our existence or to negate our presence, to be or not to be within a human situation.²⁶

If it is agreed that man may be defined as a being having freedom within the limits of a situation, then it is easy to see that the exercise of this freedom may be considered as authentic or inauthentic according to

²⁵Sartre, Being and Nothingness, pp. 55-56.

²⁶Jean-Paul Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 90.

the choices made in the situation. Authenticity, it is almost needless to say, consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it involves, in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate.²⁷

The choice which we make is not independent from the human situation. In fact it is our situation, according to Sartre, which determines the value of our actions. Escaping from one's situation or consciously accepting one's responsibilities can only be related to our free choice. But the difference between escaping and accepting is the difference between inauthenticity and authenticity. Sartre makes this distinction in describing the inauthentic and the authentic Jews.

What characterizes the inauthentic Jews is that they deal with their situation by running away from it; they have chosen to deny it, or to deny their responsibilities, or to deny their isolation, which appears intolerable to them.²⁸

Sartre further states:

Jewish authenticity consists in choosing oneself as Jew--that is, in realizing one's Jewish condition. The authentic Jew abandons the myth of the universal man; he knows himself and wills himself into history as a historic and damned creature; he ceases to run away from himself and to be ashamed of his own kind. He understands that society is bad; for the naive monism of the inauthentic Jew he substitutes a social pluralism. He knows that he is one who stands apart, untouchable, scorned, proscribed--and it is as such that he asserts his being.²⁹

²⁷Ibid., p. 90.

²⁸Ibid., p. 92.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 136-137.

This should be sufficient to show that, for Sartre, freedom to make choices does not necessarily determine the nature of our choices, or imply that because we are absolutely free, "any choice is as good as any other." On this ground we have shown that Plantinga's argument is not justified. In the following we will evaluate Plantinga's consideration of the nature of Sartre's philosophy.

Plantinga has stated that Sartre's philosophy, like other existentialist philosophies, is through and through ethical; concern with human conditions and their implications for morality are the moving forces behind his thought.³⁰ Plantinga also stresses the fact that "bad faith," "responsibility," "anguish," and other ethical notions play a central role in Sartre's philosophy of freedom.³¹ Unquestionably these notions play a central part in Sartre's philosophy of freedom, but we do not agree with Plantinga's views about their ethical origins. It is our contention that these notions are basically psychological and not ethical, and that out of the inward psychological tension a great deal of both Sartre's ontology and ethics are developed. In order to make our point clear and logically sound, we will devote the rest of this chapter to a clarification of the nature of these notions.

³⁰Plantinga, Review of Metaphysics, XII, 235.

³¹Ibid., p. 235.

Bad Faith

It is inevitable that a layman will infer an ethical meaning when confronted with someone talking about "good faith." It does sound ethical, the particular interpretation varying and according to the intentions of the person involved. For example, while the term "Good Faith" to the Muslim means to be straightforward, to the Christian it could mean to be humble and forgiving. Consequently, the term, as such, if it is used according to the traditional language of religion and ethics, could signify more than one meaning; but the term "Bad Faith" in Sartre's ontology expresses a central psychological attitude which one takes in relation to himself. This attitude could be investigated in terms of "self-deception," which term undoubtedly expresses the psychological state of the person involved, not only in viewing himself, but also in conceiving his relationship to others and to the world. "Bad Faith" is generated when someone is deceptively convinced by his own lie. And then after he is convinced he will feel certain that the other is convinced also.

This is clear in a love relationship when the lover convinces himself that he is greatly needed by the one he loves. Basically the lover is in need of being needed; so he feels that he is wanted and that he is indispensable to someone's life. But the lover does not acknowledge this need because he feels that his ego is threatened by the fear of not being wanted; so he reverses his attitude desperately to convince

himself that he is needed by the other and that his obligation rests upon fulfilling the need of the other. What the lover is doing is simply attempting to assert himself negatively or in self-deception; accordingly he convinces himself of his own lies in order to feel his self-importance. The roots of bad faith appear to be in the psychological relation of oneself to himself, in which consciousness fades away in order to give room to the illusion of the unconscious. For this reason Sartre considers the act of bad faith a lie.³²

One does not undergo his bad faith; one is not infected with it; it is not a state. But consciousness affects itself with bad faith. There must be an original intention and a project of bad faith; this project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such and a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness as affecting itself with bad faith. It follows first that the one to whom the lie is told and the one who lies are one and the same person, which means that I must know in my capacity as deceiver the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived.³³

This passage clearly supports our claim that the notion of bad faith is not fundamentally ethical, but originates out of the psychological attitudes of oneself through which the person involved looks into himself and others. The following makes this point clearer.

To this difficulty is added another which is derived from the total translucency of consciousness. That which affects itself with bad faith must be conscious (of) its bad faith since the being of

³²Sartre analyzes this problem comprehensively in Being and Nothingness, pp. 364-376. This illustration is our own, although it reflects the influence of Sartre.

³³Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 49.

consciousness is consciousness of being. It appears then that I must be in good faith, at least to the extent that I am conscious of my bad faith. But then this whole psychic system is annihilated. We must agree in fact that if I deliberately and cynically attempt to lie to myself, I fail completely in this undertaking; the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look, it is ruined from behind by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes itself well within my project as its very condition.³⁴

And the following affirms even more unmistakably the point that bad faith is a psychic state out of which the individual conceives himself and the world around him.

Even though the existence of bad faith is very precarious, and though it belongs to the kind of psychic structures which we might call "metastable," it presents nonetheless an autonomous and durable form. It can even be the normal aspect of life for a very great number of people. A person can live in bad faith, which does not mean that he does not have abrupt awakenings to cynicism or to good faith, but which implies a constant and particular style of life. Our embarrassment then appears extreme since we can neither reject nor comprehend bad faith.

To escape from these difficulties people gladly have recourse to the unconscious.³⁵

The unconscious appears as an escape, an escape from oneself and also an escape from reality. The unconscious, as such, does not exist; it is only a phantasy, a phantasy which is made by man in order to take refuge when man attempts to escape from himself, from his situation, from his responsibilities and from his freedom. Sartre rejects the notion of the unconscious on the ground that it cannot exist as an

³⁴Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³⁵Ibid., p. 50.

independent psychical entity before consciousness, because the psychic always acts coextensively with consciousness.³⁶ When Sartre announces that man is condemned to be free, he means simply that man cannot escape from choosing: whether he chooses to choose or chooses not to choose, he is still choosing.³⁷ Whether he chooses to be in bad faith or to attempt to be in good faith, it is still his own choice. And also if man chooses to live in self-deception or attempts to live in self-assertion, he still exercises his own freedom, and no "omen" can determine his choice to act or not act except himself.

For the above reasons we maintain that bad faith is fundamentally a psychological notion which expresses the unauthentic attitude of man toward himself and the human situation. Bad faith and good faith are, therefore, existential modes which man adopts in conceiving himself and the world, and from these modes the individual generates his actions. The actions which reflect good faith are ethical actions, and those which are motivated by bad faith are unethical actions. Hence good faith and bad faith are the modes which reflect the inner exigencies of man to himself, and it is according to these exigencies that ethical activities are, in part, determined.

An example will help clarify what is at stake. Let us

³⁶Ibid., p. 570.

³⁷Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 23.

suppose that two alumni of the same institution are requested to donate money to this institution. Both of these persons give whatever they can: the act of giving itself can be considered ethically good. We assume that these persons' behavior can be considered a good moral act, and it follows that both of them are morally good persons. But in fact, the act of giving itself cannot exhaust the ethical content of an act, simply because the psychological motivation of giving is as important as the act of giving itself, and it is in part according to these inner motivations that the external activities must be evaluated. Outwardly, when these two alumni are asked to offer some financial help they respond identically, but with different motives. One, who is practicing medicine in the neighborhood of the institution, acts out of vanity and self-interest. First, he acts to see his name printed among the so-called benefactors of the community; so while he performs his act, his motivations are not really focused on the cause of learning. His motivations are focused on the value of the publicity of such an endeavor and his expectations of good business from this act. The second person, on the contrary, acts with spontaneity and a sense of participation in something worth-while. When he pays his share he does not expect to be granted salvation, nor does he have any expectations other than expressing a feeling of gratitude to an institution which has helped him to realize his potential. The act of giving is an end in itself and not a means for

glorification and self-interest. It is clear, then, that while the two persons involved perform in the same manner, we cannot classify their acts on the same level, because the first acts in bad faith and the second in good faith.

The difference between the two men in our example is not a difference in action but in motivation. For this reason we insist that the inner motivations of the individual should be considered a determining factor in analyzing the nature of an act. The analysis of these motivations can be approached in terms of the concepts of good faith and bad faith, which to some extent are considered a major part of Sartre's contribution to ethical theory. This leads us to analyze the notion of responsibility, as it appears to be another ethical notion, but which cannot be ascertained independently of the psychological motivations.

Responsibility

If the individual negates consciousness in bad faith, in responsibility he attempts to affirm it. Also if in bad faith he escapes from the present, in responsibility he acts in order to assert himself in the present. For this reason Sartre emphasizes freedom and responsibility as the coördinating forces of human activities, because it is only in freedom with responsible actions that the individual can make out of himself what he conceives himself to be. To conceive is not enough, because it is also through willing and acting upon whatever one conceives himself to be that the thrust

toward meaningful existence becomes possible.³⁸ Thus when we say that man is condemned to be free, we do not mean that this freedom is already granted. We simply mean that man is condemned to choose his freedom or not to choose his freedom.

To be free implies that the individual is a possibility to be actualized but not already actualized. It is possible that this possibility will remain only a possibility as much as that it will become an actuality. It is only through self-actualization that the individual marches toward freedom, and self-actualization can only take place in active involvement with others in the world. Thus, to be free is a state of being an undetermined possibility, and man in this respect represents his own possibilities; but real freedom requires an actualization of whatever these possibilities may be. To use Sartre's language, these possibilities are considered to be the projects which man has planned for himself, and actualization means the authentication of man through his projects. Authenticity is a mode of achievement, of involvement, of commitment in doing and acting in good faith. For this reason existentialism in general and Sartre in particular dislike quietism.³⁹ And for the same reason we believe that existentialism is not nihilism, but rather a positive philosophy of action, of seriousness, and of

³⁸Ibid., p. 15.

³⁹Ibid., p. 35.

involvement within a human situation.⁴⁰

Those who conceive existentialism as an escape from responsibilities and as nihilism are in error and/or bad faith (in Sartre's meaning of the latter term). This group could be divided into two classes. The first class we will call the outsiders and the second the insiders. The outsiders do not consider themselves existentialists, but they feel confident that they know what existentialism is all about. So from the outside they look into the inside of certain existential approaches, and they usually come up with a definitive conclusion. This conclusion often appears to be based on preconceived notions, disconnected from any logical considerations. The insiders are those who, fortunately or unfortunately, consider themselves existentialists, not only in theory but in practice. How they understand existentialism as a theory is a mystery open for speculation, but our view is that their understanding of existentialism is most likely based on a series of terms which are used by existentialist thinkers, e.g., absurd, freedom, authenticity, despair, and anguish. They then interpret these terms according to their pathetic illusions of reality, and live according to their interpretation of reality by withdrawing and escaping from responsibility. Thus, the common agreement between these two classes is that both of them look at existentialism from

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 36.

a negative attitude and come up with a negative impression and a negative meaning. But while the first class, or the outsiders, curse existentialism on the ground that it is a negative philosophy, the second group, or the insiders, accept it because intentionally or unintentionally they feel more at home with a negative view which justifies their escape from reality. While the first group is in error in interpreting existentialism, the second group is in error and also in bad faith.

In order to make our point clear we shall use some illustrations which exemplify the attitude of both of these classes. It should be mentioned that these illustrations are real and not fictitious, and therefore we can support these cases with verifiable facts. As a student, the writer can distinctly recollect different instances in which various college professors have made remarks concerning existentialism. For example, a professor in education gave a lecture on the increase of juvenile delinquency in this century. He emphasized that the increase of delinquency is partly due to the spread of existentialism. Another, a social science professor, once utilized an hour's lecture to convey to the students that existentialism and democracy are irreconcilable because the first emphasizes ultimate individual freedom, disregarding social and political institutions, whereas the second emphasizes constructive freedom within the framework of social and political responsibilities. One time the

writer attended a convocation at a church in Oklahoma City, at which the preacher gave his sermon on the ills of the century which cause the decadent morality of our time. It was not a surprise when he included existentialism as one of these ills. So far these illustrations convey one major theme in utilizing existentialism as a scapegoat. In 1965, a sociology professor gave a lecture to the philosophy club at the University of Oklahoma. His lecture was entitled "Escape." It was rather shocking to hear him classify existentialism as a form of escape. The writer suggested to the lecturer that existentialism is aware of this problem and that for this reason it is a philosophy which emphasizes self-direction, self-assertion and action, and that its major task is to orient the individual to the possibilities of existence and to create a thrust within him through self-awareness and to make him feel responsible to authenticate himself. The lecturer was stunned for a while, and then he said, "Is that so!" The writer substantiated what he said by referring to the chapter on freedom and responsibility in Being and Nothingness, in which Sartre does not allow excuses for any form of escape.⁴¹ The lecturer was forced to admit his insufficient knowledge of existentialism, and he expressed himself in good faith, and said that he should know more about it and that he should devote some time for that in the future.

⁴¹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, pp. 553-556.

These are factual examples which show how different individuals from different professions interpret existentialism with preconceived notions, without justifying these notions on any logical ground.

But this class, namely the outsiders, do not appear to be deceiving themselves as seriously as the second class or the insiders. While the first class is partly dominated by preconceived notions about existentialism and partly by incompetent or scanty scholarship, the second class is dominated by an illusion of existence and by self-deception and lies. The illusions which overshadow their perceptions prevent them from accepting life or its challenge. On the one hand, they tend to impress others that they are disinterested observers of the world and its artificial mechanism; but on the other hand, they desperately desire to be observed, to be noticed, and to be given attention. These descriptions have been gathered by the writer from his experience in the East Village of New York and from his confrontations with different individuals on different campuses who can be classified under these categories.

What is so pathetic is that this group of individuals are so fond of existentialism and especially Sartre, and their attachment to Sartre is fundamentally related to his emphasis on freedom. But their conception of freedom does not include responsibility, but irresponsibility--a freedom to be nothing and to do nothing, a freedom without commitment

and without obligation to oneself or to others. Existentialism seems to them to be a free game where all kinds of tricky justifications can be applied for the purpose of escaping responsibilities and also for escaping from the world. Freedom in this sense is an escape, whereas the true existential meaning of freedom is responsibility--responsibility in doing, in engagement, and in actions. Sartre puts it this way:

The essential consequence of our earlier remarks is that man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being.⁴²

The meaning of freedom lies in the positive attitude from which the individual assumes his undertaking. This attitude is responsibility itself, through which and out of which consciousness affirms its being. Hence, to have good intentions without feeling responsible to act accordingly does not save us from being in bad faith. It is only through our responsible engagement and actions that we can express the value of these intentions, and, consequently, it is, only through actions that we can make these intentions an act of good faith. And Sartre is quite clear on this issue: he does not allow any "excuse" for not acting or not deciding upon what should be decided or acted upon.⁴³ In

⁴²Ibid., p. 553.

⁴³Ibid., p. 555.

fact Sartre takes an extremely radical stand in affirming that man is the beginning and the end; he is the master who directs the human situation. There is no non-human situation, nor are there accidents in life which have any bearing upon the human situation in one way or another.⁴⁴ Thus, while Sartre acknowledges certain impassable barriers which prevent man from reaching his authenticity,⁴⁵ he does not allow any excuses that prevent man from exercising his freedom in making his own choices.

Thus there are no accidents in a life: a community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves me in it does not come from the outside. If I am mobilized in a war, this is my war: it is in my image and I deserve it. I deserve it first because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion; these ultimate possibles are those which must always be present for us when there is a question of envisaging a situation. For lack of getting out of it, I have chosen it.⁴⁶

Here Sartre expresses a radical sense of determining the human situation; he does not allow any events or any things--other than man himself--to determine the outcome of any given situation. In this respect there will be no excuse for tragedies either, because if man is the master of all his situation, there will be no reason for uncontrollable happenings or events which might get out of hand in any

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 554.

⁴⁵These barriers are explained in terms of facticity, namely, my past, my environment, my place, my death.

⁴⁶Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 554.

given situation. We feel that this positive assessment of man's autonomy over his situation is somehow questionable, and this appears more so if we take into consideration the power of the social and the racial structure of a society to restrict the freedom of the individual in determining his situation. In different cases we find that these structures can create impassable barriers which cannot be overcome in spite of freedom of choice in directing the human situation. Paradoxically, Sartre gives consideration to the ontological facticities, which include these social barriers, as the forces which prevent the for-itself from achieving its authenticity. But on the same level Sartre does not allow man to use the same barriers as causes which prevent him from directing his situation in any given circumstance. Man is an absolute choice, and as such he determines his situation absolutely. At this point he disregards the forces of circumstances in leaping out into events.

Finally, as we pointed out earlier, each person is an absolute choice of self from the standpoint of a world of knowledges and of techniques which this choice both assumes and illumines; each person is an absolute upsurge at an absolute date and is perfectly unthinkable at another date.⁴⁷

This is man's responsibility, to look for no hope other than himself, to look for no circumstances other than what he makes out of his presence. Each instance counts, and each

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 555.

action reflects the wholeness of man's being. There is no apology, and no escape, not only from responsibilities, but also from determining the events of the human situation. Sartre represents responsibility in the most serious way possible. It takes more of a stoic than an existentialist to be able to pursue its ruggedness in terms of self-discipline and seriousness in devotion. But all this seems possible for him. If the for-itself is in good faith with itself, then carrying out one's projects responsibly appears not only natural but also spontaneous. It is only when we attempt to deceive ourselves with lies that the abrupt conflict between decision and actions takes place, and out of this comes the birth of the "unhappy consciousness." Hegel in this respect is right in his definition of the "unhappy consciousness" as the "alienated soul in which the consciousness of self appears as a divided nature, a doubled and merely contradictory being."⁴⁸ This description coincides very clearly with what Sartre characterizes as "bad faith." In fact, when the for-itself lives in bad faith it appears to be a form of "unhappy consciousness," because the individual who lives in bad faith does not live with his total self as a totality; but as he lives with himself he escapes from himself deceptively to live in a shadow of a self other than himself.

⁴⁸G. W. F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baillie (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1949), p. 251.

Thus the individual attempts not to reflect what he really is, but whatever he is deceptively convincing himself that he is. It is like the liar who is conscious of his lies and yet tries to convince others that he is not lying. The irony occurs when the liar consciously attempts to believe that he is not lying; when he is faced with the truth, he consciously escapes to the unconscious in order to avoid admitting his lies to himself. At this point we can summarize the phenomenological relation between bad faith and responsibility in the following.

It is clear that when the for-itself decides not to face itself in its presence in the human situation, naturally it tends to escape from facing the present. Bad faith appears to be the stance which the for-itself adopts in order to escape from itself and from the given situation. Thus, when bad faith is present in the for-itself, responsibility is absent, because responsibility comes to be an actual awareness in acting only when the for-itself wills to bring itself out in the world and assumes the responsibilities of being there. And to act as a total self implies being in good faith. Thus, responsibility appears to be an ought or an ethical category only outwardly, that is to say, as an effect of an act and not as a cause.

Moreover, the cause which motivates the for-itself to assume its responsibility is ontological and not ethical, an ontological awareness which ruptured out of the psychological

modes of the for-itself in its confrontations with itself and the world. Plantinga fails to see the inward motivations of the for-itself while it assumes responsibilities, and as a result of this failure he interprets responsibility as an ethical category without taking into account its inward psychological implications: the approach which we believe can provide us with a better understanding of Sartre.⁴⁹

Anguish

It is impossible to discuss anguish with reference to existential thought without discussing Søren Kierkegaard. In fact Sartre points out that "the existentialists' feeling of anguish is that of Kierkegaard."⁵⁰ For this reason we feel it is necessary to contrast Sartre's and Kierkegaard's views on this notion.

Kierkegaard credited Abraham with being the father of faith, and we shall give credit to Kierkegaard as the father of anguish in existential thought. Although anguish and the

⁴⁹In fact Plantinga is not the only one who conceives bad faith and responsibility in terms of the ethical meaning alone. Hazel E. Barnes, for example, has made a comprehensive study of bad faith in her book The Literature of Possibility (Lincoln, Nebraska; The University of Nebraska Press, 1959); yet the study appears mostly descriptive and not reflective. In other words, she emphasizes extensively the implications of bad faith in different human situations, for example in politics, in religion, and in human relations. But in spite of her comprehensive study of this notion she does not consider analyzing it from the psychological or the ontological motives.

⁵⁰Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 19, and also Being and Nothingness, p. 29.

feeling of despair in Kierkegaard stem from the paradoxical nature of man, which appears as a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, this synthesis never reaches the infinite, nor does the infinite deign to conceal itself in the finite; for this reason man finds himself in despair when he becomes aware of his unfinished self.

Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short it is a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two factors. So regarded, man is not yet a self.⁵¹

Despair arises in the soul when man becomes aware of his lack, namely, the lack of what he desires to be. Kierkegaard desires to overcome his sickness, the sickness of man's finitude by embracing his infinitude; whereas to Sartre these desires are basically the desires which emerge out of the for-itself to be God.⁵² Hence the object of desire, intentionally, so to speak, is the same for Kierkegaard and for Sartre. The difference is only one of degree. For Kierkegaard the absurd results from what man discovers about himself, namely, the synthesis which he is, with a never-ceasing desire of the finite to embrace the infinite. "For the self is a synthesis in which the finite is the limiting factor and the infinite is the expanding factor. Infinitude's despair is

⁵¹Søren Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, trans. Walter Lowrie (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1941), p. 146.

⁵²Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 566.

therefore the fantastical, the limitless."⁵³ Despair is, therefore, incurable simply because the self never becomes itself; it will never actualize its desire, and for this reason it can never overcome its sickness. This is, then, the sickness unto death which will never depart from man's soul as long as man exists because as long as man exists the self constantly strives for its becoming, or constantly strives to overcome its sickness. Salvation remains a possibility for the self and this is not related to the actualization of the self for itself but only as a hope. Overcoming sickness can only be a possibility when the self embraces its infinitude. The feeling of despair is also a feeling which man experiences in the presence of God. Thus we can assume that it is only in death that this sickness departs man--in total death, or in the possibility of overcoming death in the eternal.⁵⁴

Sartre's analysis of the feeling of anguish proceeds along the same lines, but it takes a different direction. In Kierkegaard the self directs itself toward a promised infinitude which never becomes fulfilled, and despair in this sense is the result of feeling this lack, namely, the lacking possibilities of fulfillment. In Sartre, on the other hand, the for-itself considers itself finite, and out of its finite nature it proceeds toward finite projects. Anguish arises in

⁵³Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, p. 163.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 146, 147, 150, 153, 162, 163. In these pages we can find support for our discussion of Kierkegaard's views on despair.

the for-itself when it faces its unlimited responsibilities and desires with its own limitation. Since there is no God, the for-itself cannot expect help from anywhere in facing its responsibilities. Thus the feeling of incompleteness, of inaptitude, of being under the burden of facticity, and the feeling of alienation give rise to the feeling of anguish.

Anguish is not, therefore, simply an ethical awareness which can be spotted in our ethical activities; it is a psycho-ontological state which springs out of the inner awareness of one's being. It is psycho-ontological in a sense because while it ruptures out of man's inwardness, on the one hand, it appears to constitute the mode of being, on the other. To be and to be in anguish are one and the same thing, because to be and to exist are the same thing; and since the very fact of existing involves an anxiety about one's presence, it is hardly possible to imagine a being who exists without being anxious about his existence. Anguish in this sense is the feeling of being alienated from the possibilities of completeness. "Anguish is precisely my consciousness of my being my own future, in the mode of not being."⁵⁵ For Sartre as well as for Kierkegaard anguish appears to be a permanent mode of being.

We have shown previously why the feeling of despair in Kierkegaard is incurable and the reasons why it is considered

⁵⁵Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 32.

a sickness unto death. It is the same for Sartre. The feeling of anguish is a permanent state of being, and thus it cannot be overcome except by suicide or by bad faith.⁵⁶ With suicide, being ceases and anguish ceases; but in bad faith consciousness fades away from the present, and the feeling of anguish fades away with consciousness. It is like a tranquilizer for a cancer pain, negating the permanent sickness until the sickness becomes spread through the body and suddenly the cancer gets rid of the pain and the body. Consciousness attempts to escape anguish by eliminating it. But then it appears that anguish cannot be eliminated because it is an intrinsic part of being. Hence at this point the truth of the matter is that consciousness commits itself to be, to exist, and to affirm its existence; then it has to go through anguish; otherwise it has to get rid of its being. This is precisely what bad faith is all about, a way of getting rid of anguish and of oneself hypnotically.

Such then is the totality of processes by which we try to hide anguish from ourselves; we apprehend our particular possible by avoiding considering all other possibles, which we make the possibles of an undifferentiated Other. The chosen possible, we do not wish to see as sustained in being by a pure nihilating freedom, and so we attempt to apprehend it as engendered by an object already constituted which is no other than ourselves, envisaged and described as if it were another person. . . . Thus we flee from anguish by attempting to apprehend ourselves from without as an Other or as a thing. What we are accustomed to call a revelation of the inner sense or an original intuition of our freedom contains nothing original; it is an already constructed

⁵⁶Ibid.

process, expressly designed to hide from ourselves anguish, the veritable "immediate given" of our freedom.⁵⁷

This clearly illustrates the phenomenon of anguish, through which and out of which the awareness of freedom becomes a task to be realized. We incarnate our anguish in freedom, and then we manifest our freedom in anguish; the more anguish, the more freedom, and the more freedom, the more anguish. This is so because in freedom we realize our responsibilities, and then when we feel our incompetence in fulfilling our responsibilities anguish arises. Sartre is definitely like Kierkegaard in emphasizing the unavoidability of anguish. The following is Kierkegaard's position on this point.

This comes from the fact that despair is a qualification of spirit, that it is related to the eternal in man. But the eternal he cannot get rid of, no, not to all eternity; he cannot cast it from him once for all, nothing is more impossible; every instant he does not possess it he must have cast it or be casting it from him--but it comes back, every instant he is in despair he contracts despair. For despair is not a result of the disrelationship but of the relation which relates itself to itself. And the relation to himself a man cannot get rid of, any more than he can get rid of himself, which moreover is one and the same thing, since the self is the relationship to oneself.⁵⁸

This is also Sartre's position, as the following quotation will attest.

I can in fact wish "not to see" a certain aspect of my being only if I am acquainted with the aspect which I

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 43.

⁵⁸Kierkegaard, Op. Cit., p. 150.

do not wish to see. This means that in my being I must indicate this aspect in order to be able to turn myself away from it; better yet, I must think of it constantly in order to take care not to think of it. In this connection it must be understood not only that I must of necessity perpetually carry within me what I wish to flee but also that I must aim at the object of my flight in order to flee it. This means that anguish, the intentional aim of anguish, and a flight from anguish toward reassuring myths must all be given in the unity of the same consciousness. In a word, I flee in order not to know, but I cannot avoid knowing that I am fleeing, and the flight from anguish is only a mode of becoming conscious of anguish. Thus anguish, properly speaking, can neither be hidden nor avoided.⁵⁹

Anguish is here to stay. Whenever consciousness reflects upon itself, it experiences anguish. In order to escape from it, consciousness has to escape from itself, but it is like trying to escape from one's shadow.

So far we have shown the similarity in respect to the origin of anguish in Kierkegaard and in Sartre, and how man experiences anguish in Kierkegaard and Sartre. In the following we will attempt to explore this notion a little further in Sartre. At this point we should reiterate that anguish is an inward state of the for-itself which grows out of being conscious of itself. The mere fact of consciousness entails anguish, because without consciousness there is no anguish, and without anguish there would be no sign of consciousness. Therefore, anguish can be considered an integral attribute of consciousness, without which consciousness does not become conscious of itself in the world. It is anguish, therefore,

⁵⁹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 43.

which radiates awareness within consciousness; so consciousness becomes aware of itself as a consciousness of something.

The for-itself experiences anguish fundamentally in two ways. The first way the for-itself experiences anguish is in its attempt to nihilate the in-itself. When this hope appears far from being realized, the for-itself unfolds itself in anguish. The second way the for-itself experiences anguish is in its discovery that self-realization is a process which can only be undertaken with others. Responsibilities toward the others, on the one hand, and the others' threat in objectifying the for-itself, on the other hand, create a paradoxical situation out of which the for-itself encounters itself with anguish. In the former the for-itself experiences anguish on the ontological level, whereas, in the latter, the for-itself experiences anguish on the ethical level.

On the ontological level the for-itself cannot escape anguish inasmuch as it cannot escape its freedom and responsibility which emerges out of its nothingness. In fact, anguish is the realization which the for-itself experiences when it becomes aware of its pure nothingness. It is through nothingness that the for-itself confronts itself all alone in absolute freedom, and it is in this feeling of absolute freedom that anguish is rooted. Hence, anguish, freedom, and responsibility are to be considered the dialectical dimensions of consciousness without which consciousness cannot articulate the possibilities of its own being. It is, then, through

these dimensions that consciousness manifests its own activities, and also it is through these activities that consciousness faces its paradoxical becomingness.

Thus we are fully conscious of the choice which we are. And if someone objects that in accordance with these observations it would be necessary to be conscious not of our being-chosen but of choosing ourselves, we shall reply that this consciousness is expressed by the two-fold "feeling" of anguish and of responsibility. Anguish, abandonment, responsibility, whether muted or full strength, constitute the quality of our consciousness in so far as this is pure and simply freedom.⁶⁰

In this sense it is paradoxical that consciousness finds itself determined to choose, and that when it chooses the best of its projects, namely the project to be God, it finds itself choosing its own nihilation.⁶¹ Thus when the for-itself exercises its potential in nihilating the in-itself in order to pursue its projects, it finds itself constantly nihilating itself also; and consequently, since the for-itself never reaches the stage of synthesizing itself with the in-itself, and never will reach an agreement with itself to resign from nihilating itself, inevitably the for-itself remains facing its own nothingness with anguish. Anguish in this respect is identical with the feeling of alienation--the alienation of the for-itself from its projected being and from itself. This causes a negative and a positive feeling--negative because the for-itself can never satisfy itself,

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 464.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 566.

and positive because, prodded by this dissatisfaction, the for-itself continues to reach out for the projected self. The for-itself, however, remains in anguish because it never becomes a finished self.

Paradoxically, in spite of the fact that the for-itself realizes its limited possibilities, it never becomes satisfied with what it is. Struggling to become what it is not creates the feeling of anguish. At this point we suggest that anguish is the radiating energy within consciousness, without which consciousness cannot continue transcending itself into new possibilities. Without anguish it would hardly be possible to conceive the for-itself in the light of what it is not, simply because without anguish the for-itself would not hesitate to conceive itself in terms of what it is. Moreover, it is through anguish that consciousness reveals to itself its own subjectivity, and as such it appears as a subject who confronts existence responsibly in the world of anguish.

Conversely, without anguish the for-itself appears like a thing, or like an object objectified in an objective world where the for-itself appears in the shadow of the ISNESS and not in the light of its becomingness. In anguish, therefore, man not only becomes aware of the possibilities which lie ahead of him, but also he becomes aware of his freedom, his dignity, his creativity. Precisely speaking, the involvement with anguish is an involvement with creativity and authenticity.

The anguish which, when this possibility is revealed, manifests our freedom to our consciousness is witness of this perpetual modifiability of our initial project. In anguish we do not simply apprehend the fact that the possibles which we project are perpetually eaten away by our freedom-to-come; in addition we apprehend our choice--i.e., ourselves--as unjustifiable. This means that we apprehend our choice as not deriving from any prior reality but rather as being about to serve as foundation for the ensemble of significations which constitute reality.⁶²

The ontological experience of anguish is then an experience which takes place between consciousness and its being, a being whose actualization will never come to pass, but which at the same time continues to strive for the fulfillment of this possibility. The ontological feeling of anguish is, therefore, a mode in which the for-itself confronts its inescapable responsibility to fulfill a justified but non-attainable project. Hence, between responsibility and unattainability anguish persists.

The one who realizes in anguish his condition as being thrown into a responsibility which extends to his very abandonment has no longer either remorse or regret or excuse; he is no longer anything but a freedom which perfectly reveals itself and whose being resides in this very revelation. But as we pointed out at the beginning of this work, most of the time we flee anguish in bad faith.⁶³

And bad faith in this respect undoubtedly is ontological suicide. This leads us to analyze the ethical experience of anguish.

It was not a matter of accident that we looked into the ontological experience of anguish before examining the

⁶²Ibid., p. 464.

⁶³Ibid., p. 556.

ethical side of it. We purposely planned this because we feel that describing anguish in the light of ethical experience does not appear relevant if we do not understand its ontological foundations. For this purpose we concentrated in our presentation on the ontological aspect which, we believe, cannot be separated from the inner psychic awareness of oneself. And for this reason we used the phrase "psycho-ontological awareness of anguish." This approach appears to be in agreement with Sartre's own: If we read Being and Nothingness carefully, we can see the continuity of this theme clearly, developing with the ontological analysis of anguish. As we mentioned previously, Sartre attempts to separate the ontological discourse from ethical imperatives.⁶⁴

But at the same time he is strongly convinced that the ontological mode of the for-itself has definite implications for the nature of its ethical involvement.⁶⁵ In the same manner, there is some form of distinction in the nature of anguish between its ontological modes and its ethical modes. But this distinction by no means implies a substantial separation between the correlative modes of anguish. On the ontological level the for-itself experiences anguish as a result of discovering its absolute freedom, which is revealed

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 625.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 625-628.

by discovery of its absolute nothingness; whereas on the ethical level the for-itself experiences anguish when it faces the human situation with its own nothingness. By not having an established standard, or certain given a priori categories from which the for-itself derives its actions, the for-itself finds itself totally responsible for the resoluteness of its situation. The uncertainty which is the unavoidable outcome of its nothingness creates anguish. Sartre explains this point in the following:

The existentialists say at once that man is anguish. What that means is this: the man who involves himself and who realizes that he is not only the person he chooses to be, but also a lawmaker who is, at the same time, choosing all mankind as well as himself, can not help escape the feeling of his total and deep responsibility. Of course, there are many people who are not anxious; but we claim that they are hiding their anxiety, that they are fleeing from it.⁶⁶

How can they flee from anguish on the ethical level? The answer is, simply by fleeing from the human situation, and this is possible by veiling the for-itself so that it appears abstracted and isolated from others. Then, this artificial abstraction and isolation will be utilized by the for-itself cunningly in order to convince itself that this situation is not "mine," which deception will be followed by another deceptive assumption, that since it is not mine, it is not my responsibility.

This meta-ethical phenomenon is predominant in this

⁶⁶Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 18.

century, especially among people who are spoiled by the psychology of the time which emphasizes superficial tranquility and normality of behavior. As a result of this mechanized brain-washing ethics, most people tend to lead the so-called normal life, and this is possible by avoiding exposure to curious things, to difficult things, to emotional things, and to all things that might be above the normal. This is so because all these things pertain to anxiety, and anxiety is not desirable according to the everyday psychology; so in order to avoid anxiety people have to detach themselves from their situation, from their responsibility, and finally from themselves. Thus, by attempting to avoid anguish, inevitably we will avoid involvement, which sooner or later will also be followed by avoiding ourselves. And this is ethical suicide.

This is so because the self cannot become aware of its responsibilities, nor can it realize the meaning of involvement in the human situation, without anguish. For these reasons existential psychoanalysis differs from traditional psychoanalysis. The former emphasizes a positive orientation of the for-itself to itself in the concrete situation, whereas the latter takes a negative attitude in abstracting the for-itself from its situation through a tranquilizing methodology of escape. In the former the attempt is to bring man face to face with his own self-realization, out of which the adjustment to the human situation can only be possible. In the latter we find a tendency not to help man to articulate his

situation, but rather to escape from it in order to face himself. Thus the self appears abstracted from the situation.

But ontology and existential psychoanalysis (or the spontaneous and empirical application which men have always made of these disciplines) must reveal to the moral agent that he is the being by whom values exist. It is then his freedom will become conscious of itself and will reveal itself in anguish as the unique source of value and the nothingness by which the world exists.⁶⁷

It should be clear that anguish is not only an ethical notion, as Plantinga emphasizes in his analysis of the existentialist's ethics.⁶⁸ Anguish is, rather, grounded in man's nature before even reaching the ethical stage. For this reason Sartre proclaims that man is anguish.⁶⁹ Consequently, when man becomes conscious of himself, he also becomes conscious of his anguish. For this reason we consider anguish an inward psychological mode of man's being, out of which the for-itself attempts to manifest itself in the world. And thus, the for-itself experiences anguish as it attempts to manifest itself ontologically, ethically, or even aesthetically in Kierkegaard's sense.

We should remind the reader that in the same perspective we previously viewed the notions of bad faith and responsibility, and that they have to be considered unseparated modes of consciousness because they are dialectically synthesized

⁶⁷Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 627.

⁶⁸Plantinga, Review of Metaphysics, VII, 235.

⁶⁹Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 18.

in the activities of consciousness itself. Hence, they are basically interior qualities of consciousness which have to be reflected externally in order to give them an existential value. Thus, when we feel responsible we cannot consider ourselves responsible unless we act on the responsibility that is in question. This question of our responsibility cannot be evaluated in terms of the external act alone, but also in the light of the internal feeling as it becomes externalized in the activities of our undertaking. To view these notions as strictly ethical notions would be similar to saying that the effect of an action is its own cause.

Our intention in this argument is to show that the cause of an action and the action itself are two different things in spite of the fact that they appear fundamentally related. This is so because the cause of an action primarily is grounded in the intentionality of consciousness, whereas the action itself is an activity of the will, which appears responsible for any accountable activity. For this reason we hold that the inward psychological modes in Sartre cannot be divorced from the external activities of consciousness in forming the ontological and the ethical points of view. In the following chapter we shall attempt to show the connection of Sartre's pre-ontological works--namely his work on psychology--to his ontological phenomenology.

In the two preceding chapters we have demonstrated two points: (1) the misunderstanding of Sartre's interpreters

in regard to the nature of his philosophy, (2) that beyond Sartre's ontology and ethics there are inward psychological modes which help make Sartre's ontology and ethics what they are. We have attempted to interpret the second point without falling into ontological relativism, the notion which is supported by Fred Newman.

In regard to the first point we have examined the major arguments in regard to the nature of Sartre's philosophy:

a) Newman's claim that Sartre's ethics is basically relativistic and that this relativism is an outgrowth of his ontological relativism; b) Champigny's assumption that "Sartre's philosophy is dominated by an ethical concern"; c) Plantinga's argument that in spite of the fact "that Sartre's philosophy expresses a moral concern through and through" his morality is not really a morality. And we demonstrated the invalidity of their conclusions.

In regard to the second point we have discussed this notion in the first chapter by attempting to understand the nature of the "I." The "I" does not appear to possess any immediate purpose, any ontological nature, or any teleological structure. The "I" appears to be naked with its own nothingness and intentionality. How does this "I" experience the world and the other? We suggested that the immediate spontaneous experiences are psychological and that out of the psychological modes the "I" (in Sartre) formulates its ontological relation with the world and its ethical activities

with the other. In order to make this claim clear we devoted a section in the second chapter to show how the "I" interprets certain existential notions, e.g., bad faith, responsibility, and anguish, in the light of its psychological modes. This seems to support our thesis that the I in Sartre interprets its relationship with the world primarily in the light of its psychological modes. This position obviously stands in opposition to the views held by Newman, Champigny and Plantinga.

In the following chapter we shall demonstrate systematically the relationship of Sartre's pre-ontological work to L'être et le néant. It is anticipated that this critical exposition will clarify the relationship of Sartre's psychology to his phenomenology of existence.

La Transcendence
de l'ego

establishes the notion of nothingness in consciousness by demonstrating that consciousness does not possess any intrinsic substance; formulates the notion of intentionality of consciousness as a self-directive force in the world as freedom.

L'imagination

a psychological analysis of consciousness in relation to knowing; more specific analysis of neantization and intentionality.

La Nausée

the psycho-ontological encounter with the world. The literary form is utilized as a means to express this encounter. Formulates the notion of subjectivity as the only possibility in experiencing the world.

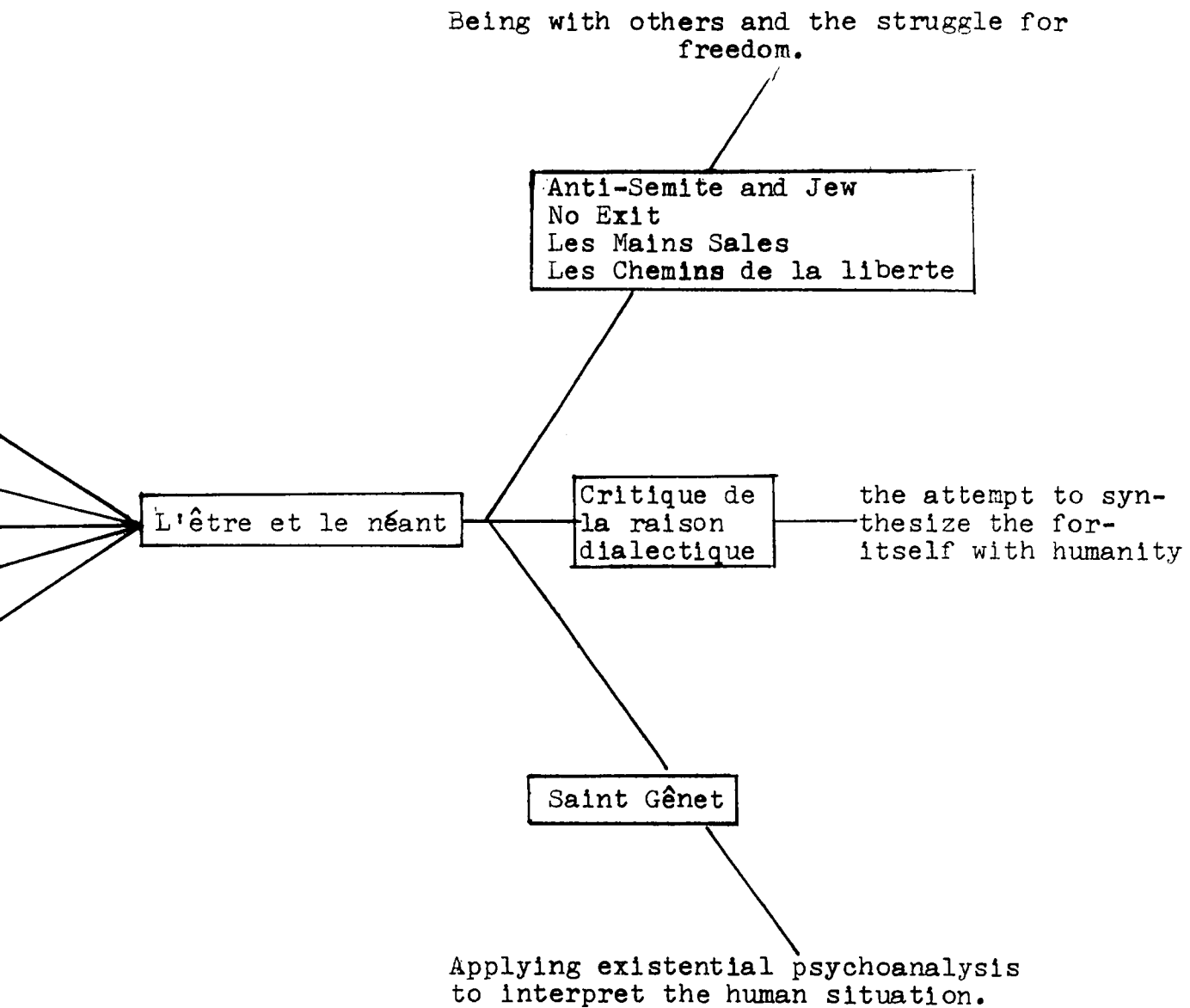
L'imaginaire

establishes the dialectical relation between the for-itself and the in-itself as a way of knowing.

Esquisse d'une
théorie de l'émotion

establishes the psychological background of human emotion as it stands in relation to the human situation, utilizing Heidegger's notion of Dasein, man as a being in the world.

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CHAPTER III

THE RELATION OF SARTRE'S PRE-ONTOLOGICAL WORK TO L'ÊTRE ET LE NÉANT

Unquestionably the climax of Sartre's popularity on one hand, and his contribution to the popularity of the existentialism on the other, rest primarily on his work L'Être et le néant and his defense of existentialism. This defense, which was later printed in a pamphlet entitled L'existentialisme est un humanisme, represents the peak of Sartre's popularity.¹ It is not our interest here to discuss the causes of Sartre's popularity nor the situations which probably have made him the most popular existential philosopher, but to point out that Sartre's acclaim is, to a great extent, attributable to his most popular works L'Être et le néant and L'existentialisme est un humanisme. This is particularly true if we consider Sartre's prestige as a philosopher and not as a playwright or as a literary figure, because before writing L'Être et le néant Sartre had already established his literary reputation on the Parisian scene, not only as a writer but also as a

¹Jean-Paul Sartre, L'existentialisme est un humanisme (Paris: Editions Nagel, 1963).

director of his own plays, and as a literary and a political critic.²

If this is the case in relation to Sartre's prestige in Europe, in the United States the case is slightly different. Because the name of Sartre has been associated more with Being and Nothingness in the United States than with La Nausée, The Wall, or The Transcendence of the Ego, Sartre's popularity in the United States has been more related to his atheistic existentialism than to his literary and political involvement. Not before the publication of Being and Nothingness in the English language did the name of Sartre become well known to the literary elite, and then the literary circle became more interested in Sartre's writing in general. The Transcendence of the Ego, which was written in 1936, did not become circulated in the English language until 1957;³ L'Imagination did not appear in English until 1962.⁴ And L'Imaginaire which was written in 1940 was first translated and published in 1948 by the Philosophical Library. This survey of Sartre's translated work could support the notion that Sartre's popularity as a philosophical figure in the

²For a detailed description of Sartre's development, see Francis Jeanson's book Sartre par lui-même (Paris: Ecrivains de Toujours, 1965), in which we find a vivid and an objective description of Sartre's activities in general.

³Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego.

⁴Jean-Paul Sartre, Imagination, trans. Forrest Williams (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1962).

United States began when Being and Nothingness became available in the English language, thanks to Hazel Barnes' effort in translating this work, after which the American readers and publishers became more interested in Sartre's writing in general.

This representation does not express any philosophical judgment in itself, and we do not intend to make it so. The purpose of this illustration is simply to show that the curious impulse of those who express an interest in Sartre is usually directed toward Sartre's conception of nothingness, freedom, and anguish; and these, as we know, constitute an essential theme in his ontology. What appears to be most appealing and probably most interesting is Sartre's ontology. For this reason, presumably, his pre-ontological works not only appear neglected, but also disconnected from Sartre's ontological position.

In this chapter it is our intention to show the connection between Sartre's pre-ontological work, which is an exploration in the field of psychology of the imagination, to his phenomenological ontology. Our endeavor does not stop with showing this connection; we also want to show that the themes of Sartre's ontology are the continuation of the psychological exploration which he attempted to pioneer in his work on imagination and the psychology of human emotion. It should be stressed, however, that we are not attempting to reduce Sartre's ontology to psychologism as Marvin Farber

did to Husserl in his interpretation of Husserl in his recent work The Aim of Phenomenology.⁵ What we are interested to show is that Sartre's ontological speculation cannot be divorced from his psychological attitude. In the following we will attempt to show systematically the continuity between Sartre's pre-ontological works and Being and Nothingness, and in the fourth chapter we will show the impact of Sartre's psychological attitudes in conceiving the world and others.

The Discovery of Nothingness in
The Transcendence of the Ego

To most commentators and to most people who are interested in Sartre, Being and Nothingness is undoubtedly Sartre's magnum opus. We are willing to accept this estimate, and we are also willing to go further in saying that without Being and Nothingness Sartre would never have had the philosophical importance which he is enjoying at the present. We cannot agree, however, with the claim of some writers that Being and Nothingness, as well as other writings of Sartre, grew and matured out of the cafe atmosphere.⁶

Our claim is that Being and Nothingness did not originate casually. Rather, the basic ontological themes which make Being and Nothingness what it is are themes which occupied Sartre's attention for almost a decade before the

⁵Marvin Farber, The Aims of Phenomenology (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 4,5.

⁶We refer to Alfred Stern's introduction to his book, Sartre: His philosophy and Psychoanalysis, pp. 3-7.

publication of Being and Nothingness. The second volume of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography, The Prime of Life, gives an accurate account of Sartre's intellectual struggle in forming his ideas from an earlier time which goes back almost two decades before the publication of Being and Nothingness. Thus, while the climax of Being and Nothingness is known by most interpreters to be based on the discovery of the notion of nothingness in consciousness, and that freedom emerges out of this nothingness, we find almost no endeavor by commentators to trace the origin of nothingness in Sartre. We claim that this is as important in Sartre as the notion of freedom itself, because unless the notion of nothingness is established the nature of freedom cannot be fully understood. This is so because freedom in Sartre is the mere recognition of nothingness in consciousness. If something is intrinsically contained in consciousness, it cannot be considered as freedom, nor would it be possible to conceive of existence before essence.

This self-determination of consciousness must not be conceived as a genesis, as a becoming, for that would force us to suppose that consciousness is prior to its own existence. Neither is it necessary to conceive of this self-creation as an act, for in that case consciousness would be conscious (of) itself as an act, which it is not. Consciousness is a plenum of existence, and this determination of itself by itself is an essential characteristic. . . . The existence of consciousness comes from consciousness itself. By that we need not understand that consciousness "derives from nothingness." There can not be "nothingness of consciousness" before consciousness. "Before" consciousness one can conceive only of a plenum of being of which no element

can refer to an absent consciousness.⁷

This exposition of consciousness did not generate suddenly in Being and Nothingness, and this becomes more clear if we consider the notion of nothingness in consciousness as it develops in The Transcendence of the Ego, and its implications for Being and Nothingness. The Transcendence of the Ego should be considered more than a brief prolegomenon for Sartre's ontology of consciousness which is developed in Being and Nothingness, because in spite of its brief and sketchy analysis it contains the most fundamental elements of Sartre's conceptions of consciousness. Hazel Barnes recognized the importance of The Transcendence of the Ego to Being and Nothingness.

In an article called "La transcendance de L'ego" (1936) Sartre, while keeping within the general province of phenomenology, challenged Husserl's concept of the transcendental Ego. The article does more than to suggest some of the principal ideas of Being and Nothingness. It analyzes in detail certain fundamental positions which though basic in the later work are there hurriedly sketched in or even presupposed.⁸

Moreover, our emphasis on The Transcendence of the Ego is based not only on its unique contribution to Being and Nothingness and to the notion of freedom, but is also based on our claim that The Transcendence of the Ego has more of the pure Sartrean qualities than any of his other works, namely, that it represents the most unique contribution of

⁷Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. lv.

⁸"Translator's Introduction" in Ibid., p. ix.

Sartre to the theory of consciousness. In other words, if we were asked to make a judgment on what is the most original contribution of Sartre and which work of Sartre is more Sartrean than the others, our answer would be The Transcendence of the Ego. This conclusion is made as a result of our study of the certain peculiarly existential themes which were developed and formulated before Sartre, but to which he has nevertheless contributed his share in expressing his thoughts about them. For example, if we review these themes and their origins we find that Sartre's criticism of the notion of a transcendental ego is not only new but also revolutionary.

For most philosophers the ego is an "inhabitant" of consciousness. Some affirm its formal presence at the heart of Erlebnisse, as an empty principle of unification. Others--psychologists for the most part--claim to discover its material presence, as the center of desires and acts, in each moment of our psychic life. We should like to show here that the ego is neither formally nor materially in consciousness: it is outside, in the world. It is a being of the world, like the ego of another.⁹

For this reason we are claiming that The Transcendence of the Ego can be considered the most Sartrean in origin, and it could be considered the most unique contribution of Sartre to the history of philosophy. We make this claim because if we study other themes or concepts which Sartre analyzes in his philosophical and literary works, we find that they do not really originate with Sartre but are rather interpreted by him in his particular way. For example, if we review

⁹Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 31.

different themes, as anguish, being in the world, acting and doing, the absence of God, the for-itself, and the in-itself, and even the definition of consciousness, we find that these themes and others were discovered and analyzed before Sartre. This does not imply that Sartre accepts these notions as they were conceptualized or previously defined. What we mean to say is that the influence upon Sartre of those who developed these notions or themes cannot be totally ignored.

In order to make our generalization clear, we will briefly schematize the relationship of these different themes (e.g., anguish, being in the world . . .) to the philosophy of Sartre. In relation to anguish, Sartre points out, more than once, that it is the anguish of Kierkegaard which the for-itself or consciousness experiences when it is confronted with its responsibilities.¹⁰ Also we have shown in the preceding chapter how the ontological meaning of anguish was transformed from Kierkegaard's vertical and infinite religious experience to Sartre's horizontal and finite humanistic experience. The dialogue between consciousness and anguish is the same in Kierkegaard and in Sartre except for the fact that anguish or despair in Kierkegaard stems from the lack of infinitude;¹¹ whereas in Sartre it originates from the lack of being, namely from its nothingness in consciousness.¹²

¹⁰Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 19. See also Being and Nothingness, p. 29.

¹¹Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death, p. 162.

¹²Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 35.

If the ontological meaning of anguish is derived from Kierkegaard, the ontological structure of being in the world unquestionably is inspired by Heidegger. Sartre makes this clear in more than one instance in Being and Nothingness as well as in other works. In his early work on the psychology of emotion, Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions,¹³ Sartre adopts Heidegger's view of being in the world.

Or l'homme est une être du même type que le monde, il est même possible, comme le croit HEIDEGGER, que les notions de monde et de "réalité-humaine" (Dasein) soient inséparables. Précisément pour cela la psychologie doit se résigner à manquer la réalité-humaine, si du moins cette réalité-humaine existe.¹⁴

In Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions Sartre repeatedly endorses Heidegger's position. Sartre describes man as an emotional being in the world who should be viewed as such, and not in separation from, or in duality with, the world.¹⁵ And the strongest endorsement of Heidegger's theory comes in L'existentialisme est un humanisme, when Sartre needs to strengthen his position in regard to man as being determined to be free. Thus in order to place man in the world free from the laws of causality, he accepts Heidegger's notion of man's throwness into the world.

"C'est ce que j'exprimerai en disant que l'homme est

¹³Sartre, Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions (Paris: Hermann, 1939).

¹⁴Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 15.

condamné à être libre. Condamné, parce qu'il ne s'est pas créé lui-même, et par ailleurs cependant libre, parce qu'une fois jeté dans le monde, il est responsable de tout ce qu'il fait."¹⁶ Moreover, Sartre again utilizes Heidegger's notion of being in the world when he defends his atheistic existentialist position.

L'existentialisme athée, que je représente, est plus cohérent. Il déclare que si Dieu n'existe pas, il y a au moins un être chez qui l'existence précède l'essence, un être qui existe avant de pouvoir être défini par aucun concept et que cet être c'est l'homme ou, comme dit Heidegger, la réalité humaine.¹⁷

Thus far we have seen how Sartre synthesizes Kierkegaard's subjective religious view of man's situation, on one hand, with Heidegger's notion of man as being in the world, on the other. From Kierkegaard Sartre accepts the ontological situation of man in relation to himself and in relation to what he lacks; namely his being, or the synthesis between the temporal and the eternal in order to become a self. It should be clear that despair for Kierkegaard is the outcome of man's ontological situation. The feeling of despair burst into man's situation when man realized his alienation from his total self and God. Thus, the self remains suspended between two worlds: the temporal and the eternal. It should be noted that it is the same in Sartre; the self, consciousness, or the for-itself never ceases its struggle to nihilate

¹⁶Sartre, L'existentialisme est un humanisme, p. 37.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 21.

the in-itself, nor does the synthesis between the for-itself and the in-itself ever take place. For this reason consciousness remains threatened by anguish, which is the same in Kierkegaard's self. The difference between the two is that for Sartre the struggle takes place within the spatio-temporal, whereas for Kierkegaard the struggle takes place between the temporal and the eternal.

In the light of this brief contrast between Sartre and Kierkegaard, on one hand, and between Sartre and Heidegger, on the other, we can conclude that while Kierkegaard furnishes Sartre with the inward subjective ontological image of the self, Heidegger has helped Sartre to construct the outward ontological relation of the self to the world. In spite of this influence, which is acknowledged by Sartre on various occasions, we find Sartre shifting his ontological position from that of Heidegger, just as he shifted from Kierkegaard. (We discussed the ontological transformation from Kierkegaard to Sartre in the preceding chapter.)

For Heidegger the encounter of Dasein is with the world; for Sartre the immediate encounter of consciousness is with the human situation. Hence, while the ultimate concern of consciousness for Sartre is directed to human reality, to Heidegger this concern is directed to the whole world by which human reality is conditioned. Chapter Three in Being and Time, "The Wordhood of the World," exemplifies this notion, which can be epitomized in the following:

Our method has already been assigned (Anweisung). The theme of our analytic is to be Being-in-the-world, and accordingly the very world itself; and these are to be considered within the horizon of average everydayness--the kind of being which is closest to Dasein. We must make a study of everyday Being-in-the-world; with the phenomenal support which this gives us, something like the world must come into view.¹⁸

Sartre also speaks of being-in-the-world, but the world to Sartre is focused upon through the human situation.

Nous demeurons d'accord que la psychologie ne met pas l'homme en question ni le monde entre parènteses. Elle prend l'homme dans le monde, tel qu'il se présente à travers une multitude de situations: au café, en famille, à la guerre. D'une façon générale ce qui l'intéresse c'est l'homme en situations.¹⁹

Man's ultimate concern, therefore, shifts from the world as a whole to his concern with others. This claim is verified in the way Sartre pursues his ontological analysis of the other in Being and Nothingness, in which the for-itself appears to be viewing the world; or, to put it differently, man appears to be viewing the world from his human situation.²⁰

In spite of some transformation in relation to the ontological relation of man and the world, Sartre's ontological view of man is quite developed out of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. As we mentioned earlier, from Kierkegaard Sartre has developed the notion of the inwardness of man's subjectivity in viewing himself as related to himself; whereas from

¹⁸Martin Heidegger, Being and Time (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 44.

¹⁹Sartre, Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions, p. 17.

²⁰Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 481.

Heidegger he has developed the outwardness of man in his projection upon the world. This brief analysis should be sufficient to cast doubt upon the thesis of the dividing lines in existentialism, the religious line which is supposed to have been developed from Kierkegaard, and the atheistic line which is supposed to have grown out of Nietzsche. What we are suggesting is that such a division is at least questionable, because if we view Sartre as he considers himself, representing atheistic existentialism, we find that his ontological image of man substantially grew out of Kierkegaard's theism.

What is left to be related to Nietzsche's influence upon existentialism in general and upon Sartre in particular, is not ontological or metaphysical, but something of an ethical significance. We are not including the theme of the death of God, simply because if this is truly the most influential theme upon atheistic existentialism, then why not consider other philosophers who proclaim similar notions. The theme of the death of God in Nietzsche is different from the proposition that God does not exist in Sartre. If we assert that God is dead, we assume that once God existed. If this is the case, then when God existed he could have had something to do with the essence of man. This certainly violates the notion of nothingness in Sartre as well as his radical notion of freedom. What we are suggesting at this point is that the usual acceptance of the notion that Sartre's atheism is the continuation of Nietzsche's discovery of the death of

God is questionable. This appears even more clearly if we view the idea symbolically in its ontological meaning and not factually in the form of a personal death.

Why atheism today? The "father" in God is thoroughly refuted, likewise the "judge" and the "rewarder." Also his "free will"--he does not hear us, and even if he heard us he could not help. The worst of it is that he seems to be incapable of communicating clearly. Is he unclear?--this is what I have found out from many questions and conversations as to the cause of the decline of European theism. It seems to me that the religious instinct is growing powerfully but is rejecting theistic gratification with deep distrust.²¹

This quotation really does not help us decide the nature of the death of God, but at least it represents the symbolic nature of Nietzsche's writing, from which it will be difficult to make an affirmative statement as to whether God's death is an ontological death, which symbolizes the death of values and the meaning of existence, or a personal death in the factual sense of the term. Neither interpretation really changes the course of our investigation because we cannot see any acceptable construction which justifies an ontological connection to Sartre.

On the contrary, we can see in Nietzsche's theory more of an ethical directive force which moves the human will to assert itself in existence. Nietzsche brings out the thrust of the will in acting and doing in the here and now. Man in Nietzsche appears with a gigantic will with nothing to negate

²¹Friederich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil (Chicago: Henry Regney, 1955), p. 60.

its activity from asserting itself. Certainly Sartre glorified this energy which would help make possible whatever man may project out of himself. "Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence."²² The decisions in acting and doing, the emphasis on the here and now in self-assertion and self-direction might very well be inspired, if not by Nietzsche's symbolic writing, by his life itself. In short, what we are claiming in regard to the influence of Nietzsche upon Sartre is that this influence is more ethical than ontological. We shall not pursue this exposition any further because it is not basically connected with the theme of this chapter. However, since we could not analyze the ontological background of Sartre without bringing up Nietzsche, we confined our analysis to the most direct issues. For the same reason we shall bring up Hegel's notion of consciousness.

If we analyze the ontological development of consciousness and the modes of its activities, we find that Hegel's influence can be recognized in his notions of consciousness and its relation to the other. It is ironical that while most existentialists reject Hegel's objectivity, at the same time they are found caught in the "pliers" of his dialectic. This appears to be true in the systematic as well as in the descriptive relation of being and reality (the world).

²²Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, p. 15.

Thus, the influence of Hegel upon Sartre appears not only in the dialectical structure of relating consciousness to the world, but also in the borrowed Hegelian terminology which names this relationship. The Pour-Soi, which is defined as consciousness, or as the knowing subject, and the En-Soi, which exists independent of consciousness, but as a possibility for consciousness to be known, are the Sartrean equivalents of Hegel's an sich and für sich.²³ The basic difference between Hegel's an sich and Sartre's En-Soi is that while Hegel considers an sich a possibility for the other, it is also a form of consciousness itself.²⁴ Sartre accepts the fact that the En-Soi is a possibility for the other, but it is void of consciousness.²⁵ Further, as far as we can see, the Pour-Soi in Sartre and the für sich in Hegel can hardly be distinguished except for the fact that while the für sich in Hegel possesses an intrinsic quality of being,²⁶ the Pour-Soi in Sartre possesses nothing. It is simply a consciousness of something, namely of the in-itself.²⁷

Ontologically or even phenomenologically, Hegel as well as Husserl and Heidegger should be credited for his influence

²³Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1961), pp. 218-223.

²⁴Ibid., p. 218.

²⁵Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 177.

²⁶Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, p. 223.

²⁷Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 173.

upon Sartre. This appears more so if we compare the descriptions of the ego as they occur in Hegel and Sartre. It is doubtful that the similarity can be simply coincidental.

Hegel wrote: "Ego is the content of the relation, and itself the process of relating. It is Ego itself which is opposed to another and, at the same time, reaches out beyond this other, which other is all the same taken to be only itself."²⁸

In spite of some awkwardness in the translation, this passage clearly explains that the ego is the content of something other than itself; namely, it is the content of the relationship between the an sich and the für sich, or between consciousness and the world. This corresponds to Sartre's argument in The Transcendence of the Ego that the notion of a transcendental ego is false. "We should like to show here that the ego is neither formally nor materially in consciousness: it is outside in the world. It is a being of the world, like the ego of another."²⁹ Moreover, the ego in Hegel appears to be an actualization arising from the dialectical relation between the an sich and the für sich, which is the same in Sartre.

The basic difference is that consciousness in Hegel implies being or an intrinsic content which is manifested as a potentiality, whereas to Sartre consciousness implies nothingness. There is only consciousness with no-thing in it. There is only the intentionality of consciousness which

²⁸Hegel, p. 219.

²⁹Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 31.

appears to be like an attribute of consciousness--indeed, like its essence.

Sartre's basic departure from Hegel, Heidegger, Kierkegaard and Husserl is related to the notion of nothingness in consciousness, which is, in our view, the foundation of Sartre's radical position on freedom. As we suggested earlier, The Transcendence of the Ego is more Sartrean than any of his other works because the primary notion of the work, namely, that of nothingness, cannot be traced to any western source as far as we can see. This conclusion does not include the eastern trend of thought, because the notion of nothingness is a characteristic of Buddhism, Brahminism, and the Vedic traditions. In this work we will not be concerned with comparing Sartre's notions and the eastern trends of thought, because it is neither essential nor relevant to this particular problem. Hence, we shall accept the conclusion that Sartre should be credited with the discovery of nothingness in consciousness and with the methodology implied in analyzing consciousness from this perspective.

It is in this sense that we are interested in viewing the relationship between The Transcendence of the Ego and Being and Nothingness. The former, in our estimation, should not be viewed as only a prolegomenon to the latter, but also as its foundation. This claim can be supported by considering the notion of consciousness in the two works. In The Transcendence of the Ego Sartre conceptualizes the nature of

consciousness, and in Being and Nothingness he applies it. There is nothing discovered about consciousness in Being and Nothingness which was not stated in The Transcendence of the Ego. The difference between the two works is analogous to setting the rules or axioms of a problem and then attempting to solve this particular problem according to these rules. If The Transcendence of the Ego represents the rules of the problem of consciousness, Being and Nothingness represents the operations of these rules in problem-solving.

In order to clarify the issue and to substantiate our thesis, we shall make a brief survey of the problem. In The Transcendence of the Ego Sartre acknowledges his debt to Husserl in regard to the function of consciousness; namely, all consciousness is consciousness of something.³⁰ Thus, all consciousness is "positional" in relation to itself, which fact implies that it transcends itself in order to nihilate an object. Without object, consciousness cannot pursue its activities, nor can it become aware of itself as an ego, because the ego is outside in the world.³¹ It is, in fact, whatever consciousness is able to nihilate out of the world.

This position is adopted and developed in the introduction of Being and Nothingness. Sartre states the following:

³⁰Ibid., p. 44.

³¹Ibid., p. 31.

All consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness of something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not a positing of a transcendent object, or if you prefer, that consciousness has no "content." We must renounce those neutral "givens" which, according to the system of reference chosen, find their place either "in the world" or "in the psyche."³²

It is clear that Sartre is in total agreement with Husserl at this point, and also that he is applying his own fundamental notions, which are explained in the "Transcendental Ego," in Being and Nothingness. Paradoxically, what he appears to reject in Husserl is not the phenomenal activities of consciousness, but its nature in relation to its transcendental ego. For Sartre, as we pointed out earlier, the ego is not constitutive of consciousness in any intrinsic fashion; rather, consciousness itself constructs its ego out of its relation to external objects. To Husserl the "I," or ego, is transcendental. Sartre states Husserl's position in the following: "This I would be, so to speak, behind each consciousness, a necessary structure of consciousness, whose rays (Ichstrahlen) would light upon each phenomenon presenting itself in the field of attention."³³

The basic difference, then, between Husserl and Sartre is related to the nature of the ego, which affects the notion of freedom itself. The reason for this is that if the ego is transcendental or intrinsically constitutive in consciousness, consciousness itself simultaneously would have to be directed

³²Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. li.

³³Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 37.

according to the will of the transcendental ego. This will have an effect on the whole notion of freedom, simply because freedom must be affected by any reduction of the ego to an ontological or a psychological state.

The ego is nothing outside of the concrete totality of states and actions it supports. Undoubtedly it is transcendent to all the states which it unifies, but not as an abstract X whose mission is only to unify; rather, it is the infinite totality of states and of actions which is never reducible to an action or to a state.³⁴

Undoubtedly this has a bearing on the notion of freedom and a bearing on the way we conceive the individual ego, namely as a subject or as an object. Further, if the ego is reducible to any particular state, then it can be reduced to an object determined by its particular state. This is in fact deterministic behaviorism, the psychology which treats man in terms of his states of need, out of which the ego appears as an object reduced to its needs. Sartre, seemingly, was well aware of the problem of the ego with respect to freedom and determinism. His undertaking in The Transcendence of the Ego shows not only the nothingness in consciousness, from which freedom ruptures, but also that the ego which comes into being out of consciousness is not an entity or subject which is reducible to any deterministic causality.

Hence, without the help of the Kantian noumenal nature, Sartre attempts to show that freedom is possible within causal

³⁴Ibid., p. 74.

phenomena, and within the spatio-temporal world, in spite of the fact that consciousness is only a consciousness of these phenomena. Kant considers man to be free only noumenally, not free phenomenally, because he is subject to the law of causality; Sartre, on the contrary, tries to show that consciousness can become aware of itself and of its freedom only phenomenally. This is so because there is nothing before consciousness, nor anything in consciousness before it becomes conscious of the world. In fact, if consciousness is free only noumenally, it is not free at all, because man's choices and actions would in that case be determined by his noumenal essence. Any preconceived essence, before the act of consciousness itself, is an unnecessary deterministic element of consciousness. Furthermore, while Kant views man as a unification or as a synthesis of a noumenal supersensible nature and of a phenomenal sensible nature, Sartre views man as consciousness which makes its own unity possible. Whatever consciousness is able to unify in its confrontation of the world will be considered the so-called ego. The ego, in other words, is the nexus of a unified complex united by consciousness.

The ego is a virtual locus of unity, and consciousness constitutes it in a direction contrary to that actually taken by the production: really, consciousnesses are first; through these are constituted states; and then, through the latter, the ego is constituted.³⁵

This is the major undertaking of The Transcendence of

³⁵Ibid., p. 81.

the Ego, a theme which is pursued in terms of its implications in Being and Nothingness. In the former work Sartre attempts to define consciousness; in the latter work he tries to analyze the phenomenon of consciousness at work. The following illustration presents a picture of consciousness in its activities, which will also show the continuation of the notions discovered in The Transcendence of the Ego.

It would be in vain to imagine that consciousness can exist without a given; in that case it would be consciousness (of) itself as consciousness of nothing--that is, absolute nothingness. But if consciousness exists in terms of the given, this does not mean that the given conditions consciousness; consciousness is a pure and simple negation of the given, and it exists as the disengagement from a certain existing given and as an engagement toward a certain not yet existing end. But in addition this internal negation can be only the fact of a being which is in perpetual withdrawal in relation to itself. If this being were not its own negation, it would be what it is--i.e., a pure and simple given. Due to this fact it would have no connection with any other datum since the given is by nature only what it is.³⁶

This description of the activities of consciousness, which can be found in many other passages in Being and Nothingness, expresses clearly the continuation of the rule which was affirmed in The Transcendence of the Ego; namely, consciousness is always a consciousness of something. However, it should be stated that the given is nothing more than whatever is revealed out of the in-itself to consciousness. The in-itself stands as possibilities to be interpreted and realized by consciousness. Thus, it is through consciousness

³⁶Sartre, Being and Nothingness, pp. 478-479.

that the in-itself can be represented as a given, inasmuch as it is through the in-itself that consciousness can become aware of itself as consciousness. This is so because consciousness is always a consciousness of something.³⁷

But if consciousness is always a consciousness of something, how is it possible for different consciousnesses to experience whatever may be revealed out of the in-itself in the form of individuality? Does the in-itself posit its meaning upon consciousness? Or does consciousness give meaning to the in-itself? All these axiological questions--axiological because they involve a value question--are hypothetically resolved in Sartre by his positing the notion of intentionality. Because of intentionality each individual consciousness experiences the in-itself on its own terms. This appears to be like the Leibnizian monads, with a little difference. To Leibniz each monad contains its own essence which determines its individuality, whereas to Sartre consciousness contains nothing. Its existence is an absolute in-itself, which is its own nothingness.³⁸

Since consciousness contains no-thing, it is totally free and independent from any possible determination in conceiving itself. For this reason Sartre claims that consciousness has no *raison d'être*.³⁹ Further, in spite of the

³⁷Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 44.

³⁸Ibid., p. 44.

³⁹Ibid., p. 40.

fact that consciousness contains no-thing, it is the unifying power which makes the unity of the personality of the "I" possible. In this respect Sartre is a devoted Cartesian, because the discovery of Cogito is as important as the discovery of consciousness.⁴⁰ To Descartes the Cogito unifies the I; to Sartre it is consciousness. The major difference in this respect consists in Sartre's rejection of the impersonalized Cogito, which lacks the personal motivations which make the unification of the ego possible.⁴¹ The difference between Sartre and Descartes in this respect is based on the fact that the Cogito in Descartes expresses the mere spontaneity of consciousness, whereas to Sartre the ego emerges out of the intentionality of consciousness. Moreover, it is through intentionality that consciousness comes to be aware of itself as a personality. Intentionality represents the individuality of consciousness; through intentionality each individual consciousness experiences its own relation to the world in its own way.

Now, it is certain that phenomenology does not need to appeal to any such unifying and individualizing I. Indeed, consciousness is defined by intentionality. By intentionality consciousness transcends itself. It unifies itself by escaping from itself.⁴²

While the notion of intentionality plays a very important

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 40.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 40.

⁴²Ibid., p. 38.

role in Sartre's ontology, we find it difficult to understand its ontological nature. Unfortunately, in The Transcendence of the Ego, Sartre seems to be postulating the notion of intentionality as if it were an attribute of consciousness without devoting much effort to describing its nature.

At this point there is no reason to raise the question which we have raised earlier in the first chapter concerning the nature of intentionality; but there are reasons to question whether Sartre obeyed the continuity of logical reasoning in analyzing this notion. From our previous exposition it seems that Sartre arrived at his definition of intentionality by postulation, not by analysis. Nevertheless, if we turn to The Transcendence of the Ego and to some extent to L'imaginaire, we find Sartre attempting to define intentionality; whereas in Being and Nothingness we find that intentionality is applied throughout in interpreting the ontological relation of Dasein and the world.

Intentionality appears as a projective force which directs the modes of consciousness in a particular way or another. There is no way to deny this, especially if we accept a personalized form of consciousness, as Sartre does. There seems to be no way to escape our definition of intentionality because the distinction of one conscious personality from another can only be possible through the intentionality of each individual consciousness.

We can conclude our inquiry by saying that since nothingness is the original state of consciousness, it follows that we cannot predicate of intentionality any ontological or any teleological directive forces. It can, however, be defined in terms of the psychological awareness of man's state in the world. This should not be interpreted as psychologism, because we are not attempting to reduce man's relation to the world to psychological determinism. What we mean is that the inward psychological awareness of man of himself is reflected upon the intentionality of consciousness in relating itself to the world. This appears consistent with the notion of freedom and also with the ontological analysis in Being and Nothingness. This we will postpone exploring to the following chapter.

L'imagination and Its Relation to Being and Nothingness

In the previous section we have shown that the notion of nothingness was not originally developed in Being and Nothingness but in The Transcendence of the Ego. What we have seen of nothingness in Being and Nothingness is its implications for man's ontological situation and not its formulation. Thus, Being and Nothingness should be considered as a continuation of The Transcendence of the Ego as far as the notions of nothingness and of intentionality are concerned, and the same can be said of Sartre's pre-ontological work L'imagination.⁴³

⁴³Jean-Paul Sartre, L'imagination (Paris: Presses Universitaires De France, 1963).

In this work Sartre has attempted to accomplish two major goals. First, he attempts to evaluate different theories of imagination which have been developed by various philosophers, as Hume, Bergson, Taine, and others. His dissatisfaction with these theories basically is related to their failure to draw distinctions between images and things and between imagining and perceiving. Second, Sartre attempts to formulate his own theory of imagination: a theory based on a new approach to the psychology of imagination.

In the opening of L'imagination Sartre immediately begins his analysis with the problem of perception of relation to objects. Unquestionably the clarification of this problem is pertinent to the problem of knowledge. For this reason (probably) Sartre has devoted a great deal of his time and effort to rescuing this problem from its ambiguities and inconsistencies. We feel that this work in some respects is a continuation of his essay The Transcendence of the Ego, since in the latter work Sartre appears to be postulating the notion of nothingness in consciousness; whereas in L'imagination he attempts to define its nature and analyze its phenomena through experience. Thus, the notion of nothingness which was extrapolated from The Transcendence of the Ego and applied in Being and Nothingness is actually defined experimentally in L'imagination. Moreover, in L'imagination for the first time Sartre introduces the Hegelian an sich and für sich⁴⁴ with his own meaning of these terms as consciousness

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 1.

and as object for consciousness.

Being and Nothingness then is indebted to L'imagination in two ways: first, in defining the notion of nothingness, and second, in introducing and explaining the actions of the for-itself and the in-itself. The following should justify this claim:

Je regarde cette feuille blanche, posée sur ma table; je perçois sa forme, sa couleur, sa position. Ces différentes qualités ont des caractéristiques communes: d'abord elles se donnent à mon regard comme des existences que je puis seulement constater et dont l'être ne dépend aucunement de mon caprice. Elles sont pour moi, elles ne sont pas moi. Mais elles ne sont pas non plus audrui, c'est-à-dire qu'elles ne dependent d'aucune spontanéité, ni de la mienne, ni de celle d'une autre conscience. Elles sont présentes et inertes à la fois. Cetter inertie du contenu sensible, qu'on a souvent décrite, c'est l'existence en soi. Il ne sert à rien de discuter si cette feuille se réduit à un ensemble de représentations ou si elle est et doit être davantage. Ce qui est certain, c'est que le blanc que je constate, ce n'est certes pas ma spontanéité qui peut le produire. Cette forme inerte, qui est en deca de toutes les spontanéités conscientes, que l'on doit observer, apprendre peu à peu, c'est ce qu'on appelle une chose. En aucun cas, ma conscience ne saurait entre une chose, parce que sa façon d'être en soi est précisément un être pour soi. Exister, pour elle, c'est avoir conscience de son existence. Elle apparaît comme une pure spontanéité, en face du monde des choses qui est pure inertie. Nous pouvons donc poser des l'origine deux types d'existence: c'est en effet, en tant qu'elles sont inertes que les choses échappent à la domination de la conscience; c'est leur inertie qui les sauvegarde et qui conserve leur autonomie.⁴⁵

The above constitutes the core of Sartre's view of the dialectical relations between the for-itself and the in-itself, and also the fundamental ground for his phenomenological

⁴⁵Sartre, L'imagination, pp. 1-2.

analysis of consciousness and for his notion of freedom. We mentioned earlier that in spite of his utilization of Hegel's terminology in describing the dialectical relations of consciousness and nature, Sartre gives these terms a new meaning. While in Hegel we find a consciousness which transcends both the for-itself and the in-itself, in Sartre we find only one consciousness which appears to be only conscious of itself and of the in-itself. While the in-itself appears as the content of perception, and also as the object of consciousness, it yet lacks the power of perception and the awareness of itself as consciousness. It is the for-itself which perceives and conceives the in-itself according to its own intentionality.

We suggest that Sartre is not a "substance philosopher" because he rejects any external possibility in directing the for-itself in perceiving the in-itself. There is no Hegelian absolute or Lockean substratum or any other substantial reality which stands between the for-itself and the in-itself. To Sartre there is nothing between the for-itself and the in-itself which determines the relation of the one to the other. Sartre's notion of consciousness stems directly from this conclusion. Since, on the one hand, the for-itself is defined in terms of consciousness, and consciousness is always conscious of itself or something other than itself, and since, on the other hand, the in-itself is inert and only an object for consciousness, it follows that there is no causal

relationship between the in-itself and the for-itself in the way of determining the direction of consciousness. The in-itself on this level appears as mere passive possibilities. As possibilities the in-itself can be present, if and only if, the for-itself becomes consciously aware of these possibilities. Hence, consciousness is free because there is nothing intrinsically contained in it to direct its awareness, nor is there any power within the in-itself which might affect the for-itself. Between the two there is a complete separation. The in-itself cannot become the for-itself, and also it cannot exert force in directing the awareness of the for-itself; nor can the for-itself become the in-itself or a "thing," simply because the nature of the for-itself is consciousness. It cannot be at the same time a thing and a consciousness. For this reason, Sartre rejects the notion of the unconscious. Forrest Williams summarizes this relation clearly in the following:

There are realities which exist in themselves; i.e., in their being they are "wholly at one with themselves." Such is everything except consciousness, whose being is always and necessarily "for itself," a spectator of itself, so to speak, and thus "outside" itself rather than "in itself." Sartre's rejection of the notion of unconscious mind is based on the impossibility of anything being at once "in itself" and "for itself," at once a thing and a mental act.⁴⁶

According to this account, consciousness is autonomous and independent of the world, at least in terms of its

⁴⁶Sartre, Imagination, pp. 147-148.

functional nature. Freedom originates with the independence of consciousness of the world. What is worth pointing out in this respect is that the roots of freedom in Sartre are discovered in his psychology and not in his ontology. One might object that Sartre's work on imagination should not be considered a psychological treatise but a phenomenological analysis of the psychology of imagination.⁴⁷ To this we would reply that we are not concerned with the methodological approach to the problem but with the nature of the problem itself.

The problem involved in this argument seems to turn on the claims of phenomenology: (a) is it a science which claims priority over all the various fields of scientific inquiry? or (b) is it a methodological form of inquiry in arriving at the truth of the question involved? We object to the former definition, but we are willing to accept the latter. Our objection to the former definition is that it would be unfair to make an issue of a particular area, analyze it phenomenologically, then claim that this area is within the domain of phenomenology. This particular confusion is most likely to happen in the area of the social sciences, as psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, and political science. Our acceptance of the latter definition of

⁴⁷Ibid. While the sub-title of the English translation by Forrest Williams is A Psychological Critique, in the introduction the translator states that "a psychology of imagination must first of all be phenomenology" (p. vii).

phenomenology is based on the ground that a given empirical fact about a certain case does not exhaust the problematic nature of the case. Thus, phenomenology, as a method of inquiry about the essence of things, may be helpful in finding the truth about that particular case. Further, while phenomenology depends on intuition in compounding the empirical data and judging their relations as objectively as possible, we do not claim that intuitive judgment is a priori or final.⁴⁸ Given this definition, phenomenology can be considered a methodological inquiry which helps the investigator to get closer to the truth and to grasp better the problem involved than to depend on mere disconnected empirical data.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Pierre Thevenas, What is Phenomenology? trans. James M. Edie (Chicago: Quadrangle Book Inc., 1962), p. 37. Thevenas describes the definitive problem in relation to the nature of phenomenology in the chapter "What is Phenomenology?" "This question is as irritating for the layman, who hearing the word would like to know at least roughly what it means, as it is for the historian of philosophy or the philosophical specialist who has the feeling of pursuing an elusive doctrine, never clearly defined during the fifty years of its rich evolution, which from Husserl leads through Scheler, Heidegger, Sartre, and many others up to Merleau-Ponty. Phenomenology seems to be a Proteus which appears now as an objective inquiry into the logic of essences and meanings, now as a theory of abstraction, now as a deep psychological description or analysis of consciousness, now as speculation in 'the transcendental Ego,' now as a method for approaching concretely lived existence, and finally, as in Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, seems to blend purely and simply with existentialism."

⁴⁹Edmund Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 48. Husserl defined phenomenology in a more radical way as the science of essences. The following throws light on his position. "The psychologists think that they owe all their psychological knowledge to experience, thus to

Phenomenology, then, can be utilized in psychology, sociology, and even in some medical cases. As such, we believe Sartre utilized it before he developed his ontology. While L'imagination deals with the psychology of imagination, Sartre has utilized a phenomenological method in approaching the problem. For this reason we claim that the discovery of nothingness in consciousness, the development of dialectical relations between the for-itself and the in-itself, and also the notion of freedom are all basically psychological in origin, but phenomenologically analyzed. This does not imply that they are psychological in the behavioristic or determinist sense, but that they are only as a mode of orientation to the world and others.

Sartre's philosophical development is like that of other philosophers who have made their philosophical departure from a neighboring field of inquiry, as Descartes, whose knowledge in geometry helped him to establish his metaphysics; Kant, whose dissatisfaction with physics led him also to metaphysics; and Husserl, whose knowledge in

those naive recollections or to emphatic penetration into recollections, which by virtue of the methodical art of experiment are to become foundations for empirical conclusions. Nevertheless the description of the naive empirical data, along with the immanent analysis and conceptual grasp that go hand in hand with this description, is affected by virtue of a fund of concepts whose scientific value is decisive for all further methodical steps. And here is the place for phenomenological analysis of essence, which, however strange and unsympathetic it may sound to the naturalistic psychologist, can in no way be an empirical analysis."

mathematics helped him to combat psychologism and to establish his phenomenology. Parallel to these philosophers we can see Sartre's departure taking place from a speculative view into psychology, which leads him into phenomenology, and then to ontology. Simone de Beauvoir notes in the second volume of her autobiography, that during the period Sartre was involved in writing L'imagination he became interested in analyzing dreams, and in the light of dreams he induced imagery (with drugs) and the phenomena of perceptions. During this period, Sartre decided to conduct his experiments on himself. De Beauvoir describes the situation in the following:

Sartre had completed the critical chapters of the book on L'imagination that Professor Delacroix had commissioned from him for the Alcan series, and was now embarked upon a second and far more original section. In this he followed the problem of the image back to its basic origins, utilizing for the purpose phenomenological concepts such as purposiveness [intentionnalité] and hylism. It was now that he crystallized the first key concepts of his philosophy: the conscious mind as tabula rasa, and its capacity for annihilation [néantisation]. This line of research where he had to formulate both method and content, drawing on personal experience for all his material, required considerable concentration. Since there were no formal considerations to hold him up, he wrote with incredible speed, breathlessly driving his pen in pursuit of his thoughts. This hasty yet sustained creative effort, in contrast to his more literary labors, drained him of energy. He took a marked interest in dreams, dream-deduced imagery, and anomalies of perception. In February, one of his former fellow students, Dr. Lagache (who had passed his state examinations the year Sartre failed, qualified as a medical practitioner, and specialized in psychiatry) suggested that he should come to Sainte-Anne's Hospital and undergo a mescaline injection. This drug induced hallucinations, and Sartre would be able to observe the phenomenon in himself. Lagache warned him that it would

be a mildly disagreeable experience, although not in the least dangerous. The worst that could happen was that Sartre might "behave rather oddly" for a few hours afterwards.⁵⁰

The result of this experiment turned into a serious psychological disorder in which Sartre experienced hallucinations in the most frightening manner. At times he believed that he was a victim of a chronic hallucinatory psychosis, an illness which in a period of ten years would inevitably produce total insanity.⁵¹ Mlle. de Beauvoir's observation clearly describes Sartre's involvement in psychological inquiry with an attempt to arrive at certain factual observations of mental phenomena. These observations, we believe, corroborate our thesis of his departure from psychology into phenomenology, and then ontology. Moreover, if we study certain specific problems in his ontology, we find that the personal psychological impact is to a great degree dictating the ontological categories by which he describes his relationship to the other and to the world. It will be our attempt to show this in the following chapter. At present, however, we will continue with our study of his pre-ontological works, with the aim of discovering the significance of certain themes which were developed in his pre-ontological works and carried over into his ontology.

⁵⁰De Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, pp. 168-169.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 170.

L'imaginaire and its Relation to
Being and Nothingness

At first it may appear that L'imaginaire is an independent work but actually it is not. According to Mlle. de Beauvoir, L'imaginaire was supposed to have been a second section of L'imagination, but because of publication problems it was postponed for a few years.

Now at the age of thirty he was setting out upon a fore ordained road, and his only adventures would consist of the books he wrote. The first had been turned down; the second still needed work done on it. As for his book L'image, Alcan had kept only the first part, which was published as L'imagination; and he foresaw that the second section, which interested him much more, would not be published for a very long time.⁵²

In fact it did actually take four years for the second section to be published under the title L'imaginaire. What is of some importance here is Mlle. de Beauvoir's description of L'imagination. She points out clearly that it is a work on "the psychology of imagination." This description should include both sections, namely the works published as L'imagination in 1936, and as L'imaginaire, published in 1940. But when L'imaginaire was published it was sub-titled "Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination." This comparison is not intended merely to supply biographical or bibliographical data, but to show that while the second section of L'imagination was specifically labeled as a "psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination," the first section was

⁵²De Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p. 171.

not specified in any manner. We can presume, then, that it was simply a work on the "psychology of imagination." This transformation supports our claim that Sartre's philosophical development began with psychology, proceeded to phenomenology, and ended in ontology. The last statement of the first section of L'imagination confirms this transformation.

Elle ne peut entrer dans le courant de la conscience que si elle est elle-même synthèse et non élément. Il n'y a pas, il ne saurait y avoir d'images dans la conscience. Mais l'image est un certain type de conscience. L'image est un acte et non une chose. L'image est conscience de quelque chose.

Nos recherches critiques ne sauraient nous conduire plus loin. Il faudrait à présent aborder la description phénoménologique de la structure "image". C'est ce que nous tenterons dans un autre ouvrage.⁵³

This autre ouvrage (another work) was in fact L'imaginaire. The introduction of this work sounds like a continuation of the previous one; in fact, in L'imaginaire Sartre begins exactly where he left off in L'imagination.⁵⁴

Now if we consider how Mlle. de Beauvoir describes the nature of this work in general, we find that her description is somehow divided between two forms. In the first, she declares that Sartre attempts to establish his concept of the conscious mind as "tabula rasa," and in the second he

⁵³Sartre, L'imagination, p. 162.

⁵⁴He concluded L'imagination by saying that there are not and never could be images in consciousness, because an image is a certain type of consciousness, an act, not something. An image is a consciousness of some thing. In the introduction of L'imaginaire he explicates again what he has already defined in L'imagination.

tries to explain the activity of the conscious mind in the light of its "intentionality" and its capacity for nihilation.⁵⁵ This is exactly what takes place between the two sections of L'imagination. In the first section, or in L'imagination, Sartre establishes the notion of nothingness in consciousness (this we have shown earlier); and in the second section, or in L'imaginaire, Sartre develops the notion of intentionality and of judgment. (This we will explore in the following.) By this we mean that he attempts to analyze through a form of applied psychology the phenomenon of consciousness in constructing its images. In previous works Sartre explained his views only theoretically; in L'imaginaire he utilized experimental cases as well.

We believe that L'imaginaire is the most technical work of Sartre. This claim can be verified in the chapter "From Sign to Images," in which Sartre rejects Husserl's notion of the image. To Husserl the image is a replacement of its object, whereas to Sartre the image is a unified representation of the given grasped by intuition.

L'image, dit Husserl, est un "remplissement" (Erfüllung) de la signification. L'étude de l'imitation nous a plutôt donné à croire que l'image est une signification dégradée, descendue sur le plan de l'intuition. Il n'y a pas remplissement: il y a changement de nature. L'étude des consciences de dessins schématiques va nous confirmer dans cette opinion. Dans ceux-ci, en effet, l'élément intuitif est considérablement réduit, et le rôle de l'activité consciente croît en importance: ce qui constitue l'image et supplée à toutes les défaillances de la perception, c'est l'intention.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Simone de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p. 168.

⁵⁶Sartre, L'imaginaire, p. 46.

In the following pages Sartre continues his illustration of how objects become reduced to the intentionality of perception. "L'intention de perceptive devient imagée."⁵⁷ Sartre concludes this from his brief experiment on perception and images, and in the experiment he clarifies the difference between images and the objects themselves.

At this point, in our opinion, Sartre is able to clarify his position in relation to Husserl, and is also able to see the discrepancies among the philosophers who express concern for the problem. The major difference from Husserl could be roughly stated as follows: Husserl's phenomenological analysis of perceptions and images seems to be based on a priori intuitive propositions, while Sartre's phenomenological analysis of perceptions and images seems to be based on verified empirical data. Hence, the difference between the teacher and the student is reminiscent of Plato and Aristotle, a difference in the approach to knowing the essence of things. To Husserl, things do have essences, and the major task for the phenomenologist is to grasp these essences; whereas to Sartre things are what they are, with no essences behind them or between them and the mind. There is only the intentional power of the mind which can reproduce as images whatever is given through perception. When Sartre

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 47. Also we refer the reader to pp. 46-52 in order to see Sartre's illustrations, which resemble those of a professional psychologist more than those of a phenomenologist.

accepts the fact that consciousness is always a consciousness of something, he also means to say that whatever consciousness is conscious of, is heterogeneous and extrinsic in its relation to consciousness. That is to say, whatever consciousness is conscious of, it is conscious of something outside of itself and in the world.

L'image est une conscience sui generis qui ne peut en aucune façon faire partie d'une conscience plus vaste. Il n'y a pas d'image dans une conscience qui renfermerait, outre la pensée, des signes, des sentiments, des sensations. Mais la conscience d'image est une forme synthétique qui apparaît comme un certain moment d'une synthèse temporelle et s'organise avec d'autres formes de conscience, qui la précèdent et la suivent, pour former une unité mélodique. Il est aussi absurde de dire qu'un objet est donné à la fois en image et en concept que de parler d'un corps qui serait à la fois solide et gazeux.⁵⁸

This discovery was kept in mind throughout in Being and Nothingness. In fact, it was the very foundation of the ontological negation pursued by the for-itself in its attempt to nihilate the in-itself. The following should place this claim beyond any doubt:

All consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness of something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not a positing of a transcendent object, or if you prefer, that consciousness has no "content." We must renounce those neutral "givens" which, according to the system of reference chosen, find their place either "in the world" or "in the psyche." A table is not in consciousness--not even in the capacity of a representation. A table is in space, beside the window, etc. The existence of the table in fact is a center of opacity for consciousness;

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 27.

it would require an infinite process to inventory the total contents of a thing.⁵⁹

It should be noted that the only difference in describing the relationship between consciousness and things in L'imaginaire and Being and Nothingness is one of approach and not of principle. In L'imaginaire the approach is more or less technically psychological, whereas in Being and Nothingness it is ontological. But in spite of this difference in technicalities, it is clear that the same principles are applied in both. However, if we view L'imaginaire in the light of Being and Nothingness we find that, in the former work, consciousness is conceived as a synthesizing power which unifies its perceptive awareness in images. Thus, the image, which is taken as a representation of the object in consciousness, is in fact a unified synthesis accomplished by consciousness itself. On this ground consciousness cannot be actually a consciousness without being conscious of something. Images in this respect are considered to be the synthetic representation of consciousness.

Disons-nous que l'image, c'est l'organisation synthétique totale, la conscience? Mais cette conscience est une nature actuelle et concrète, qui existe en soi, pour soi et pourra toujours se donner sans intermédiaire à la réflexion. Le mot d'image ne saurait donc désigner que le rapport de la conscience à l'objet; autrement dit, c'est une certaine façon qu'a l'objet de paraître à la conscience, ou, si l'on préfère, une certaine façon qu'a la conscience de se donner un objet.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. li.

⁶⁰Sartre, L'imaginaire, p. 17.

The possibility of synthesizing the experience of consciousness, which exists in L'imaginaire, seems to have been postponed in Being and Nothingness. The for-itself appears always to be in contradiction with the in-itself, and a feeling of threat or a feeling of carefulness dominates the ontological modes of the for-itself. This feeling seems to prevent the for-itself from emerging into the in-itself. While consciousness in L'imaginaire tends to unify and to synthesize its experience of the world in images, in Being and Nothingness the only desire which seems to animate the for-itself is to nihilate the in-itself. This attitude of the for-itself is, in our estimation, essential in developing the conception of freedom. We feel that this attitude of the for-itself in creating a dichotomy in its relationship with the in-itself is partially responsible for generating the problematic situation between the individual involved and the other.

Since we will be devoting the following chapter to a discussion of this problem, at the moment we will not go into any detailed analysis of it. But we would like to suggest that the conception of freedom to a great extent expresses our attitudes toward the world and the other. Thus our attitude fundamentally influences our conception of freedom and a consideration of its nature. The attempt to be free from, or free with, the other is naturally related to our attitude toward the other, namely, whether the other is

considered as a threat or as possibilities to participate in the values of freedom. Unquestionably, Sartre conceives the other as a threat, and this we feel is not related to the intrinsic nature of the other, but to Sartre's psychological attitude toward the other.

Before we go further, it might be worth pointing out that L'imaginaire expresses clearly some fundamental psychological notions which are directly related to the origin of the concept of freedom. This can be deduced after an understanding of the psychological function of consciousness in relation to its intentionality. Freedom and determinism as an issue is as old as the history of philosophy itself. However, it is not our concern in this work to attack the problem of freedom and determinism from its traditional perspective. The reason for this is fundamentally related to the traditional concept of man, in which man generally appears to possess certain qualities or essences which are not his own making, but are already made for him. As a result of this inherited, pre-formed nature, it is hardly possible for man to escape some form of determinism. This should include spiritualism, materialism, rationalism, idealism, and even empiricism. All these views affirm explicitly or implicitly, a certain notion of substance which has something to do with the human personality. In clear opposition to this view, Sartre declares that "existence precedes essence." Man, consequently, appears naked and free from any element which

might determine his personality. Since man does not inherit any essence, he is free, and his freedom can be realized in consciousness. Consciousness is, indeed, the road to freedom.

In the previous sections of this chapter we have shown that in consciousness there is no-thing which determines its activities or directions, except itself. Consciousness is an absolute freedom, simply because its existence is absolute. If consciousness is free in its pure spontaneity, we shall attempt to find out how this freedom is carried out in its activities and in its confrontations with the external world.

While consciousness is empty of any pre-formed being, it appears also independent in its activities from all other beings, which implies that consciousness is ultimately reduced to the I, and to the I alone. Thus when consciousness becomes aware of itself, it becomes aware of its own individuality as totally independent from all other individualities. In this way, consciousness comes to be aware of its relations to the world. In this respect Sartre definitely objects to George Herbert Mead's social self, which develops out of an organic social whole.

A self can arise only where there is a social process within which this self has had its initiation. It arises within that process. For that process the communication and participation to which I have referred is essential. That is the way in which selves have arisen. That is where the individual is in a social process in which he is part, where he does influence himself as he does others.⁶¹

⁶¹George Herbert Mead, On Social Psychology (Rev. ed., Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1964), p. 42.

To Sartre, it is true that man is always in a "human situation" with the other in the world. But the other, or the "human situation," does not help the self to become conscious of itself because it is considered a temptation for the self to become objectified, and thus to conceive itself as an object or a thing and not as a subject.

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 who denies my character as subject and who himself determines me as object.⁶²

Therefore, to Sartre the other is not as much help for the becoming of the self, as Mead suggests, nor can the other bring consciousness into its reflective state wherein it can become conscious of itself. Consciousness in Sartre, then, appears more autonomous over its individuality, and this radical individuality is rooted in the intentionality of consciousness. Further, while consciousness is always a consciousness of something, each individual consciousness projects itself toward what it is conscious of in its own manner. "Toute conscience pose son objet, mais chacune à sa manière."⁶³ The difference in the manner of interpreting the confronted object is a difference which is rooted in the intentionality which directs the prehensive act of consciousness in this way or that way. Moreover, while intentionality

⁶²Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 228.

⁶³Sartre, L'imaginaire, p. 24.

according to Sartre is in the center of consciousness, it has also to be considered the primordial instance of individuality, and also as the condition for freedom.

Sans abandonner le domaine de la description pure, on peut tenter d'expliquer cette propriété caractéristique de l'image. Dans l'image, en effet, une certaine conscience se donne un certain objet. L'objet est donc corrélatif d'un certain acte synthétique, qui comprend, parmi ses structures, un certain savoir et une certaine "intention". L'intention est au centre de la conscience: c'est elle qui vise l'objet, c'est-à-dire qui le constitue pour ce qu'il est. Le savoir, qui est indissolublement lié à l'intention, précise que l'objet est tel ou tel, ajoute synthétiquement des déterminations.⁶⁴

Accordingly, we believe that intentionality should not only be viewed as a psychological or an epistemological frame of reference for consciousness, but also as an ontological demarcation of the human personality. Without intentionality, consciousness would have remained passive, or pure spontaneity. This is not the case with intentionality, because in this situation consciousness appears as active and directive in reflecting upon its concern. In short, intentionality must be considered as an ontological attribute, since without it consciousness would not have any ontological significance.

In the light of these considerations we conclude that intentionality is a condition for freedom, because without intentionality consciousness would have remained pure spontaneity. Through intentionality, then consciousness

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 22.

exercises its individuality and actualizes its identity.

("Toute conscience pose son objet, mais chacune à sa manière."⁶⁵) Since without intentionality, identity is not possible, and since freedom without identity is meaningless, freedom is conditioned upon intentionality. We conclude, therefore, that while consciousness stands as a potentiality for individuality, it is only through intentionality that individuality is actualized.

It may be useful and instructive to call attention to some historical parallels to Sartre's views on these matters. If intentionality possesses any pre-established essence, it is equivalent in character to the Leibnitzian monads. However, if a comparison is to be suggested, we feel that a case can be made for relating Sartre's psychology of imagination not to Descartes only but also to Locke. From Locke Sartre accepts the notion of the tabula rasa,⁶⁶ but he rejects its passivity, on the one hand, and the notion of the material substance (substratum), on the other. Against Descartes, he rejects the notion of innate ideas and of substances, and accepts the activity of the mind and its reflective ability in discovering the cogito. However, we do not mean to say that Sartre's effort is a mere synthesis, because undoubtedly his contributions and creativity represent something more than his ability to synthesize the

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁶De Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p. 168.

negative with the positive. At this point we can say about Sartre something similar to what Frederick Copleston said about Kant; namely, that he submits to critical evaluation both rationalism and empiricism and works out his own philosophy, not as a synthesis of these two movements, but as a triumph over them.⁶⁷ This we apply to Sartre also, although we must make one comment. Kant postulates the noumena as the guarantee for freedom: Sartre posits intentionality in the center of consciousness in order to explain its activities. Kant humbly enough acknowledges the limitations of human reasoning in explaining the nature, or the whatness, of the noumena.

Although we are closing our discussion of this problem in Sartre we still do not have a precise account of the nature of intentionality. The following characterization is not by any means an exact definition, but it will serve to sum up what we have learned about Sartrean intentionality: the unified expression of the I in consciousness without which the upsurge of consciousness into the world would be impossible.

L'esquisse d'une théorie des émotions in Relation
to Being and Nothingness

In Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions, Sartre sets himself two projects. First, he elaborates his objections

⁶⁷Frederick Copleston, S.J., History of Philosophy (Westminister, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1961), VI, 428.

to the traditional psychological view of human emotions. Second, he clarifies his position in relation to Husserl and Heidegger.

His major objection to the traditional psychological treatment of emotion is similar to Husserl's objection to psychologism. Sartre's dissatisfaction with traditional psychology is related to the reductionist approach which is commonly used in interpreting human emotion. To take the empirical experimental method as the only approach to understand man's emotional state, Sartre feels, is to reduce man's total situation to something less than human. Thus, we assume that "une mère a triste parce qu'elle pleure."⁶⁸ This conclusion in regard to the emotional state of a mother is based on the outward act which can be observed empirically, but this does not satisfy Sartre because the outward empirical appearance of a person does not exhaust his inward psychological and emotional state. For this reason Sartre objects to behavioristic psychology.⁶⁹ In order to establish a comprehensive psychological view of man, Sartre argues, we should attempt to combine the outward empirical situation of man as a spatio-temporal being with his inward conscious state as well. The one is complementary to the other.⁷⁰

While Sartre may appear to sound like a traditional

⁶⁸Sartre, Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions, p. 11.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 33-38.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 7.

Husserlian, in the following pages of his work he attempts to clarify his position in relation to those of Husserl and Heidegger. It turns out that Sartre is more allied with Heidegger than with Husserl. In fact, it is in this work that Sartre declares his endorsement of Dasein as a being in the world.⁷¹ Moreover, it is in this work that Sartre accepts Heidegger's interpretations of the relationship of Dasein and the world; it is here that Sartre announces that reality is essentially human reality, and that there is no division between Dasein and the world.

A cela il faut répondre que les sciences de la nature ne visent pas à connaître le monde mais les conditions de possibilité de certains phénomènes généraux. Il y a beau temps que cette notion de monde s'est évanouie sous la critique des méthodologistes et cela précisément parce qu'on ne saurait à la fois appliquer les méthodes des sciences positives et espérer qu'elles conduiront un jour à découvrir le sens de cette totalité synthétique qu'on appelle monde. Or l'homme est un être du même type que le monde, il est même possible, comme le croit HEIDEGGER, que les notions de monde et de "réalité-humaine" (Dasein) soient inséparables. Précisément pour cela la psychologie doit se résigner à manquer la réalité-humaine, si du moins cette réalité-humaine existe.⁷²

This position reflects some change from The Transcendence of the Ego and L'imaginaire, in which consciousness does not appear to be identified with the world, but stands as an independent entity from the world. In L'imaginaire it is clear that consciousness synthesizes its experience of the world in constructing images; these images are considered

⁷¹Ibid., p. 10.

⁷²Ibid.

to represent the unity of consciousness, on the one hand, and the world, on the other.

It should be mentioned, however, that the notion of consciousness itself remains the same: nothingness remains as the ontological status of consciousness. However, while in L'imaginaire consciousness conceptualizes its experience of the world through the actualized intentionality, in Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions consciousness depends on emotions in apprehending the world. "L'émotion se présente comme une nouveauté irréductible par rapport aux phénomènes d'attention, de mémoire, de perception, etc."⁷³ Then Sartre goes on to say that "L'émotion est une certaine manière d'appréhender le monde."⁷⁴ Hence, emotion is not only a state of one's being in the world, as love, hate, anger, happiness, but also as a mode in which one may apprehend his relationship to the world. For this reason Sartre has stated that "La conscience émotionnelle est d'abord conscience du monde."⁷⁵ Considering man as a being in the world, we can describe him as a being who feels, conceives, and perceives his relationship to the world. Consciousness, therefore, cannot be posited independently of this relation, but as a result of this relation. Sartre rejects the transcendental

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 39.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 38-39.

notion of consciousness in Husserl, because Husserl appears to posit its cognizance of the world independently of it, whence it follows that man appears in isolation, or in separation from the world.

Si nous voulons fonder une psychologie il faudra remonter plus haut que le psychique, plus haut que la situation de l'homme dans le monde, jusqu'à la source de l'homme, du monde et du psychique: la conscience transcendente et constitutive que nous atteignons par la "réduction phénoménologique" ou "mise du monde entre parenthèses". C'est cette conscience qu'il faut interroger et ce qui donne du prix à ses réponses c'est qu'elle est précisément miennne. Ainsi HUSSERL sait tirer parti de cette proximité absolue de la conscience par rapport à elle-même, dont le psychologue n'avait pas voulu profiter.⁷⁶

This not only distorts consciousness, but also makes it impossible for the psychoanalyst to understand in isolation from his situation. Sartre is more inclined to align with Heidegger than with Husserl on this issue, because in the former the revelation of man as consciousness takes place as a result of man's encounter: the world--the human reality.

Joseph P. Fell summarizes the difference between Husserl and Sartre in the following:

In Being and Nothingness Sartre seeks to bring phenomenology back to the "world" from which it is divorced by Husserl; hence the subtitle, An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology. Clearly Husserl's and Sartre's purposes are very different. While Husserl's and Husserl's program is a carefully delimited one, elucidation of the a priori constitutive structures of human consciousness, Sartre's "phenomenological ontology" is an attempt to develop a general theory

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 13.

of human experience. Hence Sartre must study consciousness not in isolation, but in situations.⁷⁷

The point which we are stressing is that the integration of man and the world takes place in Sartre's thought before Being and Nothingness; Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions asserts this claim. In fact, one may complain that Sartre in L'émotion went a little too far in the process of integration. He was more a German Heideggerian than a French Cartesian. This is clear when he declares that: "Or l'homme est un être du même type que le monde, il est même possible, comme le croit HEIDEGGER, que les notions de monde et de réalité-humaine (Dasein) soient inséparables."⁷⁸ On the contrary, in Being and Nothingness Sartre's position is more Cartesian than Heideggerian. While man is a being in the world, at the same time he is not identified with it. The for-itself is what it is, and the in-itself is what it is. A synthesis does not take place in Being and Nothingness. Sartre closes the curtain while the struggle to nihilate the in-itself still goes on. This does not mean that man escapes from the world or isolates himself from it, but simply that man realizes his encounter, the world, and that through self-realization man attempts to affirm his being: a being whose freedom is in question.

In this chapter we have shown the relationship of

⁷⁷Joseph P. Fell, Emotions in the Thought of Sartre (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 52-53.

⁷⁸Sartre, Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions, p. 10.

Sartre's pre-ontological works to his ontology (L'être et le néant), and we have also indicated the correlation between the former and the latter: the former contributed to the latter's ontological stage. In the course of our analysis we have pointed out at various times the psychological nature of Sartre's pre-ontological works, which we believe have a strong influence on Sartre's ontological perspective, e.g., the notions of intentionality, images, individuality, and freedom.

In the following chapter we will interpret the ontological ethos through which Sartre conceives his relationship to the world and the other. We intend to trace the psychological attitudes and involvements which Sartre's writing manifests in relating man to the other. This will strengthen or confirm our contention that Sartre's psychological attitude permeates and directs his ontology, which we also maintained in previous chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF FREEDOM AND
SUBJECTIVITY AS IT APPEARS REFLECTED
IN SARTRE'S RELATION TO THE
WORLD AND THE OTHER

In the previous chapter we discussed the relationship of Sartre's pre-ontological work to his phenomenological ontology. This undertaking was motivated by the notion that an understanding of Sartre's ontology could not be achieved without an understanding of his psychology. However, it should be understood that we are not reducing his ontology to his psychology; we are merely pointing out that his ontology cannot be divorced from his psychology, since there is a concrete continuity between his pre-ontological works and his phenomenological ontology.

We have also demonstrated that the notion of freedom does not first appear in Being and Nothingness, but in such pre-ontological works as the Transcendence of the Ego and L'imaginaire. Our contention is that Sartre's radical conception of freedom is fundamentally related to his notion of nothingness. While this notion is formulated in L'imaginaire and the Transcendence of the Ego, we claim that in

Being and Nothingness it is applied. Our project in this chapter shall be devoted to illustrating how the psychological orientation of Sartre has a direct influence on his ontological conception of freedom. We shall pursue this goal by evaluating his ontological analysis of the other.

Sartre's Objection to the Realist and the
Idealist Notion of the Other

Sartre claims that the problem of the other is entirely neglected in the history of philosophy. In fact it did not appear to be important in spite of its direct ontological relationship to the "me" in which the other appears as an inescapable reality.

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.¹

The other to Sartre appears to be more important than reality itself, because the other is another for-itself which stands against, or in relation to, "mine" as a possible nihilation. Reality, or the in-itself, on the contrary, is in this respect passive; therefore, it does not represent any threat in nihilating "me" or the other. For this reason Sartre emphasizes that "being in the world" implies being

¹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 223.

with others, and it is in this light that ontological relationship between the for-itself and the for-others should be analyzed. Sartre at this point raises two fundamental questions which he attempts to answer: "first that of the existence of the other, then that of the relation of my being to the being of the other."²

Looking at these two questions from a historical framework, Sartre concludes that while the latter question has been totally neglected in traditional philosophy, the former appears naively abstracted. As a result of this abstraction, the for-itself has also been conceived as being abstracted from the other. For this reason Sartre is dissatisfied with both the realist and the idealist approach to the other.

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 ~~essence~~ 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.³

Thus the realists not only negate the presence of the other's body as a possibility for perception, but they also claim the feasibility of comprehending the other within the spatio-temporal encounter. For this reason they tend to abstract from the other a supersensible entity, which can only be approached as an objective universality, and not as a concrete

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 224.

individual. Hence the attempt to comprehend the other does not appear to rest upon a concrete empirical relationship, but upon analogy and mental abstraction.⁴ Sartre draws the following conclusion:

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 realist 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.⁵

Sartre's dissatisfaction with the idealist's approach to the other seems to be similar to his dissatisfaction with the realist's. More specifically, the Kantian approach does not appear to be any better than the realist. Categorically, by minimizing the phenomenal encounter and emphasizing the noumenal structure of being, the other appears abstracted also. This abstraction takes place when the individual subject appears as only a part of a comprehensive whole and when the individual conceives himself in the light of the universal moral law rather than in his own subjectivity.

Actually it would be completely erroneous to put the problem of the Other and that of noumenal realities on the same footing. . . . 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

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

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.⁶

Sartre's major objection to Kant at this point is based on Sartre's interpretation of the noumenon which seems to appear separated from the phenomenon as an independent and intelligible reality. In the light of this interpretation it is true that an abstraction and even some form of duality between the for-itself and the other occurs. Sartre's criticism of Kant is based on this ground, where consciousness appears to abstract its relations with the other independently from empirical experience. Sartre states the following in relation to Kant:

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.⁷

We feel that Sartre's interpretation of Kant needs some clarification. It is true that some form of abstraction takes place between the for-itself and the other. This abstraction cannot be overcome in spite of Kant's declaration

⁶Ibid., pp. 225-226.

⁷Ibid., p. 227.

that each individual should be treated as an end in himself, not as a means to an end. This does not completely save the individual from being abstracted as an entity which expresses the universal will, namely, the universal law. But at the same time we feel that the gap between the elements of man's being is exaggerated. Thus, while Kant speaks of man as free in his noumenal nature, he is nonetheless determined phenomenally, because in this respect he is subject to the causal law.⁸ The origin of freedom, according to Kant, is related to the spiritual part of man, or the noumena, and determinism to the empirical element of man or the phenomena. Accordingly when Kant declares man to be noumenally free, it means that man as a rational being is free; thus man appears capable of freedom only when he utilizes his noumenal nature of his rational faculty (Geist) in making judgments. In this respect, man transcends the phenomenon only in so far as he transcends the immediate passivity of the senses into an intuitive act. Therefore man is noumenally free because he possesses a rational faculty which enables him to direct his senses or his phenomenal nature in the light of reason.

Accordingly, we feel that Sartre is right in accusing Kant of abstraction, but he is wrong in his exposition of Kant's notion of causality and its relationship to freedom.⁹

⁸Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman K. Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1961), pp. 468-469.

⁹Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 226.

The Kantian metaphysics is considered a metaphysics of freedom by some existentialists. Nicholas Berdyaev, for example, proclaims that it is Kant who makes existential metaphysics a possibility,¹⁰ for the obvious reason that Kant holds man to be, at his center, a rational being, and from this assertion it is possible to assume that he is free to shape his own destiny. In this respect Berdyaev considers himself indebted to Kant. "Kant was a metaphysician of freedom, even it may be, the only metaphysician of freedom, and in this respect my attempt to set forth my own metaphysics of freedom will be derived from Kant."¹¹

Berdyaev, therefore, accepts most of Kant's metaphysics, and his distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal world, but he is not satisfied with the hypothesis that man can only explore the phenomenal world because the noumenal sphere lies beyond man's phenomenal capacities. Berdyaev's argument is that if the mind can transcend the world of appearance through reason, then the noumenal world, which represents the spiritual nature, must be cognized through spiritual experience. Thus Berdyaev, at this point, rejects the Kantian notion of experience, which is based upon the senses, in which the world of appearance is the only ground for the given. This, according to Berdyaev, would isolate man from

¹⁰Nicholas Berdyaev, The Beginning and the End, trans. R. M. French (New York: Harper and Row, 1952), p. 4.

¹¹Ibid., p. 8.

spiritual experience, the givens of which are noumenal.¹² Berdyaev argues that since man is part finite and part infinite, or phenomenon and noumenon, it would not be logical or natural to limit his experience to one world and isolate him from the other.

Man is a tragic being for the simple reason that he finds himself placed on the frontier between two worlds, a higher and a lower, and he includes both worlds in himself. He cannot be entirely adapted to the lower world, a fact which is plain from the revelation of human nature in history.¹³

Ironically, while Sartre considers Kant a little too naive in positing a transcendental identity of man from which freedom emerges, Berdyaev's objection to Kant is related to the fact that Kant limits man's experience to one part of his nature and neglects the other. This difference of opinion is related to the difference in conceptualizing the image of man and the world. Berdyaev conceives the world and man from a Christian point of view. The double nature of man and of the world give rise to a dualism. Berdyaev is also a traditional Christian in his conception of freedom. True freedom is freedom of spirit; his dissatisfaction with Kant is based on the fact that Kant does not give enough weight to man's "noumenal capacity" or spiritual capacity, in Berdyaev's sense of the word, in experiencing the noumenal world. This for Berdyaev

¹²Ibid., pp. 14-17.

¹³Nicholas Berdyaev, Truth and Revelation, (London: Geoffery Bles, 1957), p. 16.

is an arbitrary limitation of man's freedom. Since true freedom is unlimited, and the unlimited element in man is his spirit, the only possibility for man to exercise his unlimited freedom is through his spirit, in the spiritual world. This to Sartre is not freedom at all because the true meaning of freedom should be incarnated in the present, in the here and now in which consciousness can affirm itself and actualize itself within the spatio-temporal mode of its being. The only possible freedom is that of a finite consciousness in a finite situation; any transcendental or spiritual conception of freedom is not only a negation of the only possible freedom, but also an escape from the real situation. For this reason Sartre concludes that a complete analysis of freedom cannot be obtained from man's relationship with the other. This leads us to the second question: namely, the "relation of my being to the being of the other."¹⁴

Sartre's Evaluation of Husserl, Hegel, and
Heidegger's Notion of the Other

From the previous analysis we can conclude that Sartre's rejection of both the realist and the idealist is based on the fact that both conceive the relation with the other as an external relation in which the for-itself appears abstracted from the other. For this reason Sartre contends that the realist and the idealist do not express any concern

¹⁴Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 223.

for the other¹⁵ simply because they cannot see the pertinence of the problem in a concrete situation. The problem of the other was first given importance by Hegel and then Husserl and Heidegger, whose theories have had a direct influence upon Sartre, and from which he has been able to construct his own.

Sartre's dissatisfaction with Husserl's notion of the other is related primarily to the latter's unsuccessful attempt to escape solipsism. According to Sartre, Husserl attempts to refute solipsism by claiming that the ego intrinsically implies the existence of the other. Since the other, according to Husserl, is "the indispensable condition for the constitution of the world,"¹⁶ there is no way to doubt the existence of the other. "Hence my empirical ego and the ego of the other emerges in the world at the same moment."¹⁷ Sartre sets forth Husserl's position in the following: "For Husserl the world as it is revealed to consciousness is intermonadic. The Other is present in it not only as a particular concrete and empirical appearance but as a permanent condition of its unity and of its richness."¹⁸ Therefore phenomenologically self awareness is also an awareness of the other.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁷Wilfrid Desan, The Tragic Finale (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 62.

¹⁸Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 233.

"And since our psychophysical self is contemporary with the world, forms a part of the world, and falls with the world under the impact of the phenomenological reduction, the Other appears as necessary to the very constitution of the self."¹⁹ Husserl's representation unquestionably helps Sartre to see the inescapable and intricate relationship between the for-itself and the other, and what helps Sartre the most is to become aware of the dividing line in Husserl's phenomenology which separates his Cartesianism from his Kantianism. At this point, undoubtedly, Husserl's notion of the ego is more Kantian than Cartesian, Kantian because he emphasizes the transcendental subject which appears similar to that of Kant.²⁰ Furthermore Sartre declares that Husserl's attempt to escape solipsism by accepting the other as the ground of knowledge was in vain.²¹ The failure to overcome solipsism is related to the failure of the transcendental subject itself to clarify the identity of the for-itself as it stands in relation to the other.

Hegel's observation of the problem of the other seems to be more concrete and also more explicit in its analysis of the phenomenon of consciousness. Sartre is inclined to accept the psychological tension which Hegel introduced in

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 234.

²¹Ibid., p. 235.

conceiving the identity of consciousness in relation to the other. With this in mind the other is considered a dialectical necessity when the for-itself emerges in building up its identity.

I can only be I because there is an Other which is not I. There is thus an "internal negation" constituted as "conditio sine qua non" of the Ego. The Ego assumes its value through the other; it is to the heart of the Ego that the other penetrates.²²

Sartre is definitely more Hegelian than Cartesian on this point. The "I think therefore I am" reveals an exclusion of the cogito from the other; consciousness reveals itself to itself as distinct from the other. Sartre is indebted to Hegel here for pointing out that consciousness could not possibly be an object for itself, and thus it can become aware of itself as subject and as object only when it confronts another consciousness.

Here Hegel takes his stand on the ground not of a univocal relation which goes from me (apprehended by the cogito) to the Other, but of the reciprocal relation which he defines as "the self-apprehension of the one in the other." In fact it is only in so far as each man is opposed to the Other that he is absolutely for himself. . . . Thus the cogito itself can not be a point of departure for philosophy; in fact it can be born only in consequence of my appearance for myself as an individual, and this appearance is conditioned by the recognition of the Other.²³

This brings us to the classical Hegelian example of the master-slave relationship. Each depends on the other

²²Desan, Tragic Finale, p. 62.

²³Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 236.

for self-affirmation, and each is in need of the other for self-recognition. The master needs the slave for self-assertion as much as the slave needs the master for self-negation. The one without the other would make self-realization impossible. "Thus Hegel's brilliant intuition is to make me depend on the other in my being. I am, he said, a being for-itself which is for-itself only through another."²⁴

Although Sartre accepts the dialectical relation of being and the other in Hegel, he rejects the foundation upon which this relation is structured. In regard to this point Hegel is like Husserl in emphasizing the knowing element. "I know that another knows me as me."²⁵ This to Sartre is an exaggerated epistemological optimism which cannot be considered a factual ground for relation. "Between the Other-as object and Me-as subject there is no common measure, no more than between self-consciousness and consciousness of the other."²⁶ Another type of optimism in Hegel is what Sartre calls an ontological optimism. This to some degree is related to the former, although the outcome is different. If on the epistemological level Hegel expresses confidence that the other knows me as I am and I know the other as he is, on the ontological level Hegel affirms that a unification of all consciousness becomes an actuality as a universal

²⁴Ibid., p. 237.

²⁵Desan, Tragic Finale, p. 63.

²⁶Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 243.

whole in which the "individual consciousnesses are moments in the whole, moments which by themselves are unselbstandig, and the whole is a mediator between consciousness."²⁷ This for Sartre is an impossibility, because as long as consciousness exists a final synthesis could not be possible.²⁸

On the whole the fundamental mistake which is shared by Husserl and Hegel is that they conceive the relation of consciousness and the other in the light of knowing to knowing. Sartre proposes that if we intend to refute solipsism, this relation ought to be approached from being to being.²⁹

Heidegger comes closest to solving the problem of being and the other. In fact he is the first to realize that the relation of being and the other should be a relation of being to being, and not a relation of knowledge. This approach to some degree helps Sartre to establish his own view on the problem, in spite of the fact that Sartre has some objections to the Heideggerian approach similar to those he makes against Hegel and Husserl. Sartre gives credit to Heidegger for his discovery that "the relation between human realities" must be a relation of being; this relation must cause "human realities" to depend on one another in their essential being."³⁰ This relation, in other words, is conceived ontologically as "being with," not epistemologically as "being for."

My being with others is an unquestionable certainty to

²⁷Ibid. ²⁸Ibid., p. 244. ²⁹Ibid. ³⁰Ibid.

Heidegger; it is as certain as the existence of the world.

Thus human reality designates "being-in-the-world."

Heidegger defines "being-in" as Befindlichkeit and Verstand; the world as that by which human reality makes known to itself what it is; and "being," or being-with, means Mit-Sein.³¹ This Mit-Sein ontologically constitutes the modes of being; it is similar to a collectivity of beings which are the one and the many at the same time. In a sense it is a form of incarnation of the many in the one, and likewise the one in the many. Thus, being-without-the-other is impossible; being-with-other can only be ontologically conceived. By affirming the structure of being as being-with or Mit-Sein, Heidegger discloses the dialectical tension between being and other, on one hand, and disregards the possibility of solipsism, on the other. In this way the other is no more a problem for my being, simply because the recognition of the other is also a recognition of my own being.

Sartre summarizes Heidegger's position on this point in the following:

To be sure, Heidegger does not take his departure from the cogito in the Cartesian sense of the discovery of consciousness by itself; but the human-reality which is revealed to him and for which he seeks to fix the structures in concepts is his own. "Dasein ist je meines," he writes. It is by making explicit the pre-ontological comprehension which I have of myself that I apprehend being-with-others as an essential characteristic of my being. In short I discover the

³¹Ibid.

transcendental relation to the Others as constituting my own being, just as I have discovered that being-in-the-world measures my human-reality. Hencforth the problem of the Other is a false problem.³²

The problem of the other is a false problem because when consciousness emerges into self-realization it does not do so as an independent identity from the consciousness, but as an identity which grows out of the relationship to other consciousnesses. Thus, the I does not appear to be standing in a conflicting duality with other I's, but as a continuation of emergence without which my I would not be possible. Furthermore, while Sartre accepts Heidegger's primary notion concerning the relation of being, he rejects the pre-ontological manifestation of being on the ground that it would be impossible for the I to become aware of itself as an I if we emphasized the collective emergence of consciousness. In that case my consciousness would be a consciousness of the WE instead of the I.

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

³²Ibid., p. 245.

world (spectators, performance, etc.) which is profiled on the horizon.³³

This rather dramatic illustration of Heidegger's position conveys Sartre's objections. First, Sartre supposes that Heidegger's position inevitably lead to monism.³⁴ Second, when we understand by that I am the being for whom there is for me another human reality, this is a structured monism. Third, if we mean that I am the being by whom there are in general others, we fall back into solipsism.³⁵ Fourth, Sartre proclaims Heidegger's failure in his attempt to escape idealism, maintaining that Heidegger's "flight outside the self, as an a priori structure of his being, isolates him as surely as the Kantian reflection on the a priori conditions of our experience."³⁶

Thus far we have witnessed Sartre's evaluation of his predecessors in regard to the problem of the other. We have also seen what he accepts and what he rejects from their discoveries. It seems that Sartre is influenced by Hegel in accepting the necessity of a dialectical relation between being and the other, and this tension appears as a primary step for consciousness to become aware of itself as a self in relation to another. Sartre rejects Hegel's ontological and epistemological optimism, according to which the other appears to know me as I am and I to know the other as he is.

³³Ibid., pp. 246-247. ³⁴Ibid., p. 247.

³⁵Ibid., p. 248. ³⁶Ibid., p. 249.

This to Sartre is an impossibility because consciousness cannot be conscious of itself and conscious of the other at the same time and in the same manner. Sartre accepts Heidegger's notion of transforming the relation with the other from knowing to being, and also his fundamental notion of being-in-the world. But at the same time he rejects Heidegger's pre-ontological structure of being, and also his collective form of self-awareness, which leads to some form of monism or altruism if it is taken seriously. Sartre also rejected Husserl's transcendental position which in his opinion fails to bring the other into a concrete relation. In the following we shall attempt to investigate how Sartre attacks the problem.

Sartre and the Problem of the Other

From the previous discussion we can conclude that Sartre's major objection to the way the other is treated by certain other thinkers is directed mainly against the tendency to abstract the other in terms of knowing, on one hand, and against the tendency to solipsism, on the other. We can assume, therefore, that Sartre's major concern in his treatment of the other is twofold: first, to avoid the mistakes of his predecessors, and second, to reconstruct a theory which can meet the authentic existential phenomenon of being-and-the-other.

It is worth-while to point out here that Sartre expresses a concern to refute solipsism as early as the

Transcendence of the Ego. "He then believed that by making the Ego a part of the psychic and hence an object in the world, he could refute solipsism. But then later in Being and Nothingness he states that his earlier view had been too optimistic."³⁷ If this is the case, how could Sartre then refute solipsism, especially after his refusal of Heidegger's notion of the pre-ontological disposition of being-in-the-world. This notion, as we saw earlier, considers being ontically, so to speak, rooted with other beings. Hence, being-in-the-world and being-with-others simultaneously imply the same thing.

Sartre's objection to this notion is based on the fact that the cogito seems to be nihilated before it realizes itself. According to Sartre any relationship with the other has to have its starting point with the cogito.³⁸ Therefore Heidegger's departure is false.

Granting the notion that the cogito has to be the point of departure in formulating the relation with the other, one might inquire into the ground on which the cogito establishes its relation. The immediate answer ought to be that it is on the concrete ground of being, and not on the abstract forms of knowledge. Fundamentally, Sartre agrees with Heidegger on this point, but he objects to Heidegger's notion of being.

³⁷Hazel Barnes, "Translator's Introduction" to Being and Nothingness, p. XL.

³⁸Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 251.

Thus, we find Sartre willing to accept Heidegger's ontological structure of being-in-the-world, but unwilling to give up the Cartesian cogito. The dichotomy which we feel arises at this point is one of attempted reconciliation between establishing an ontological relation with the other and the subjective individuality of the cogito. This problem becomes more abstruse when we consider the modification of the cogito in Sartre's terms.

To Descartes the essence of the cogito is thinking; therefore through thinking the cogito can establish its relation with the other. But to Sartre the essence of the cogito is being, and it is through being to being that the cogito is expected to establish its relation with the other. For this reason the problem appears more difficult in Sartre. This difficulty arises as a result of Sartre's acceptance of the cogito as a point of departure for establishing the relation, and also as a result of his rejection of knowing as the basis of this relation. It is also more difficult for Sartre than for Heidegger to establish an ontological relation with the other because in Heidegger being is pre-ontologically directed toward the other simply because the ontic structure of being is intrinsic to being-with-the-other; whereas in Sartre the cogito reveals itself to itself through its own nakedness, without any ontic existentiality. Thus, in spite of its nakedness and absolute nothingness, Sartre expects his cogito to establish an ontological

relation with the other. The crucial question at this point is, how can the cogito establish an ontological relation with the other without falling into solipsism, personalism, or even some minor form of psychologism? With this in mind we shall attempt to pursue our evaluation of Sartre and the problem of the other.

The Psychological Modes of the "Look" and the Other

If we attempt to answer the question raised above, we find it difficult to conceive any ground upon which the for-itself establishes its relation with the other, other than its own intentionality. By rejecting the "knowing" approach to the other and replacing it with being, Sartre puts his being in the position of facing the other with nothing except his own attitude toward the other. In all fairness we cannot see any other way or means which can help the for-itself to relate itself to the other except its own psychological states, from which the conception of the other is constructed. While Sartre attempts to formulate his phenomenological description of the other, these descriptions can only express Sartre's own attitude toward the other. There might be some correspondence of description between one for-itself and another in characterizing the other, but this is not essentially the rule. If it is true that each "consciousness has its own manner in relating itself to the world,"³⁹ it should

³⁹Sartre, L'imaginaire, p. 24.

follow that each consciousness has its own manner in relating itself to others.

But the fundamental problem which Sartre faces at this point is that when the for-itself confronts the in-itself, it does not face any challenge; whereas when the for-itself confronts the other it faces a challenge because the other is another for-itself. For some reason Sartre conceives this confrontation as a threat of nihilation and objectification instead of a hope for affirmation and authentication. This threat is directly revealed in the look. For the look to Sartre is a magic power; it nihilates one's being; it objectifies one's personality; it penetrates one's depth; and it shatters one's ego; it brings shame; it alienates one's self from himself; but it never expresses a feeling of affirmation, of appreciation, or of participation in one's doing and being. Hence the other is a look inasmuch as I am a look. We are looking at each other with one single attitude, to objectify each other, and to destroy each other's being, because only by destroying the other's being can my being be affirmed.

We shall cite here a few passages from Sartre's literary works which confirm our description of the look.

In the Reprieve we find the following:

They see me--no, not even that: it sees me. He was the object of looking. A look that searched him to the depths, pierced him like a knife-thrust, and was not his own look; an impenetrable look, the embodiment of night, awaiting him in his deepest self and

condemning him to be himself, coward, hypocrite, pederast, for all eternity. Himself, quavering beneath that look, and defying it. That look! As if night was the look. I am seen. Transparent, transparent, trans-fixed. But by whom? "I am not alone," said Daniel aloud.⁴⁰

This passage exemplifies the effectiveness of the other's look upon one's being. The other in this respect goads the for-itself to become conscious of itself and of its relation to the other. Furthermore, when the for-itself feels itself being pierced by the other's look, it also becomes aware of its "transparency"; namely, that the for-itself is not closed in upon itself in its location in space, but that it is open and accessible for the other. Hence, as a result of feeling its accessibility to the other, the for-itself becomes aware of the privation of one's freedom. Since the other is the cause of this privation, naturally it follows that the for-itself finds itself compelled to protect itself from being invaded by the other. Since this is not possible, because the for-itself is constantly in immediate confrontation with the other in space and time, there is no way to escape from the other.

Sartre describes this salient dialogue with the other in No Exit.

(Garcin) This bronze. (Strokes it thoughtfully.)
Yes, now's the moment; I'm looking at this thing on
the mantelpiece, and I understand that I'm in hell.

⁴⁰Jean-Paul Sartre, The Reprieve, trans. Eric Sutton (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1947), pp. 135-136.

I tell you everything's been thought out beforehand. They knew I'd stand at the fireplace stroking this thing of bronze, with all those eyes intent on me. Devouring me. (He swings round abruptly.) What? Only two of you? I thought there were more; many more. (Laughs) So this is hell. I'd never have believed it. You remember all we were told about the torture-chambers, the fire and brimstone, the burning marl. Old wives' tales! There's no need for red-hot poker. Hell is-- other people!⁴¹

In The Flies Aegisteus expresses his concern about the other's look as follows:

(Aegistheus) Alike? a god likening himself to me--what freak of irony is this. Since I came to the throne, all I said, all my acts, have been aimed at building up an image of myself. I wish each of my subjects to keep that image in the foreground of his mind, and to feel, even when alone, that my eyes are on him, severely judging his most private thoughts. But I have been trapped in my own net. I have come to see myself only as they see me. I peer into the dark pit of their souls, and there deep down, I see the image that I have built up. I shudder, but I cannot take my eyes off it. Almighty Zeus, who am I? Am I anything more than the dread that others have of me?⁴²

As we stated earlier, an interpretation of one's relation to the other is essentially a reflection of the personality involved in its confrontation with the other. Since we cannot see any objective methodology, other than the intentionality of consciousness, in describing this relation, we cannot avoid assuming that the observations made are strictly subjective and personal. This point may very well be criticized on the ground that Sartre is not actually

⁴¹Jean-Paul Sartre, No Exit, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage Book, 1949), pp. 46-47.

⁴²Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Flies," in No Exit, p. 103.

recording his own impressions of the other, but the data of his phenomenological ontology. Our answer is that phenomenological ontology is an undertaking which cannot be accomplished independently of the participation of consciousness itself. In fact it is through the activities of consciousness that the method of "reduction" can be applied, and without consciousness the intuitive grasp of the phenomenon observed cannot be apprehended. For this reason subjectivity and some form of arbitrariness in describing the other appears to be an inescapable fact. It follows that when Sartre describes his observations of the other, these observations do not have to be considered a universal truth about the inner being of all others, nor is it necessarily implied that all consciousnesses experience the other in the fashion that Sartre describes.

The following lengthy description of the other's look expresses not only the personal and subjective element, but also some form of paranoia in relation to the other.

You must have experienced, in a subway, in the foyer of a theater, or in a train the sudden and irksome sense that you were being looked at from behind. You turn around, but the observer has buried his nose in a book; you can't discover who was looking at you, there's a faint tingling all over your back, like a sudden twitch of all your tissues. Well, that is what I felt for the first time, on September 26, at three o'clock in the afternoon, in the hotel garden. No one was there, you understand, Mathieu, no one at all. But the look was there. Understand me well; I did not see it, as one sees a passing profile, a forehead, or a pair of eyes; for its essential character is to be beyond perception. But I became more compact and concentrated, I was both transparent and opaque, I existed

in the presence of a look. Since then I have been continually under observation, even in my solitary room; sometimes, the consciousness of transfixion by that sword-blade, of that eye upon me while asleep, awoke me with a start. I have, in fact, almost entirely lost the capacity for sleep. Ah, Mathieu, what a discovery! I was seen, I struggled to know myself, I seemed to be slipping out of my extremities, I claimed your kindly intercession, and all the time I was seen, the inexorable look, an invisible steel blade, was on me. And you too, skeptic and scoffer as you are, you are seen. But you don't know it. I can easily describe that look: it is nothing; it is a purely negative entity: imagine a pitch-dark night. It's the night that looks at you, but it's a dazzling night, in fullest splendor; the night behind the day. I am flooded with black light; it is all over my hands and eyes and heart, and I can't see it. Believe me, I first loathed this incessant violation of myself; as you know, I used to long to become invisible, to go and leave no trace, on earth or in men's hearts. What anguish to discover that look as a universal medium from which I can't escape! But what a relief as well! I know at last that I am. I adapt for my own use, and to your disgust, your prophet's foolish wicked words: "I think, therefore I am." I need no longer bear the responsibility of my turbid and disintegrating self: he who sees me causes me to be: I am as he sees me. I turn my eternal, shadowed face towards the night, I stand up like a challenge, and I say to God: Here I am. Here am I as you see me, as I am. What can I do now!--you know me, and I do not know myself. What can I do except support myself. And you, whose look eternally creates me--do support me. Mathieu, what joy, what torment! At last I am transmuted into myself. Hated, despised, sustained, a presence supports me to continue thus forever. I am infinite and infinitely guilty. But I am, Mathieu, I am. Before God and before men, I am. Ecce homo.⁴³

It is almost pathological for Mathieu to conceive of himself as an object for the other, continuously watched, observed, and objectified. It is tiring for one to be so self-conscious, as if the other is no longer another, but a shadow of the for-itself. For Sartre it is a natural state in

⁴³Sartre, The Reprieve, pp. 406-407.

which the for-itself finds itself continuously confronting itself, the in-itself and the other. It is in fact the paradox of the human situation. It is a paradox because on the one hand, without the other the for-itself does not become aware of itself as reflective consciousness and as freedom and because, on the other hand, the other is the constant threat to the freedom and subjectivity of the for-itself. While the for-itself as subject faces another for-itself as another subject, a battle to objectify the other takes place. Thus, while the other attempts to assert his subjectivity by objectifying me and robbing me of my freedom, I tend to do the same thing. The conflict between the for-itself and the other is an essential conflict, because without the other there would be no challenge for the for-itself to assert itself, and to exercise its freedom.

It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject. For just as the Other is probable object for me-as-subject, so I can discover myself in the process of becoming a probable object for only a certain subject.⁴⁴

The most probable relation is therefore the relation of a subject to an object. Sartre in this respect does not see any possibility for intersubjective relations in which the for-itself as a subject relates itself to the other as another subject, like the I-Thou relationship in Buber. It is also impossible to establish an objective relation, in a

⁴⁴Sartre, Being and Nothingness, pp. 256-257.

Spinozistic sense, in which the individual person establishes his relation with another person, preserving the willingness to respect and to accept with openness the personality of the other according to its own identity. This type of relation would probably be considered by Sartre to be too intellectualistic, the association being based too much on thought qua thought, and not on being or on awareness qua awareness.

We cannot help questioning Sartre's conception of the other, which is represented as a threat to one's freedom and subjectivity, whether it is structured according to his own subjective attitude toward the other or in the light of his phenomenological discovery. In either way it appears to us that personal experience cannot be totally eliminated in conceiving the threat which the other represents. This seems to be very possible in Sartre's situation. In his autobiography, The Words, he describes his childhood experience which reveals the psychological tension inflicted by the other upon him. In writing about his father and mother, he notes that

The death of Jean Baptiste was the big event of my life: it sent my mother back to her chains and gave me freedom.

There is no good father, that's the rule. Don't lay the blame on me but on the bond of paternity, which is rotten. To beget children, nothing better; to have them, what iniquity! Had my father lived, he would have lain on me at full length and would have crushed me. As luck had it, he died young.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Sartre, The Words, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, 1964), pp. 18-19.

Our penetrating the veil of the past and using illustrations from his childhood does not imply that we intend to psychoanalyze Sartre's personality in view of his experience with the other. It should be clear that this is not our goal, nor do we intend to reduce his phenomenological description of the other to mere psychological data. But what we would like to point out is that Sartre's life itself reveals a silent struggle against the other. As the only child of a typical French bourgeois family, Sartre was the main object of the family's interest. Each member of the family is described in The Words as having something to do with Sartre, the child, the object of interest for all the family. Sartre at moments evinces a feeling of being almost suffocated by the other; yet even so, Sartre never brought his inner tension, which is produced by the other, into the open. He never acts rudely or violently, he is not rebellious or malicious, but he impresses the reader as a shy lonely child who is encountered by an authoritarian other, expected to be what the other is hoping for him. Facing these situations, Sartre, the perceptive and highly intelligent child, instead of revolting and expressing his own views about himself vis-à-vis the other, escapes into his own inwardness. Thus outwardly Sartre gives in to the other, while inwardly he lives his own life.

I led two lives, both of them untrue. Publicly I was an imposter: the famous grandson of the celebrated Charles Schweitzer; alone, I sank into imaginary

moping. I corrected my false glory by a false incognito. I had no trouble shifting from one role to the other; just as I was about to make my secret thrust, the key would turn in the lock, my mother's hands would suddenly be paralyzed and rest motionless on the piano, I would put the ruler back into the study and rush into my grandfather's arms.⁴⁶

In another instance Sartre states that he used to defend himself with his imagination,⁴⁷ but the following passage reflects clearly the inner psychological struggle which Sartre experienced in his childhood.

It was a pure object, doomed par excellence to masochism if only I could have believed in the family play acting. But no. It perturbed me only on the surface, and the depth remained cold, unjustified. The system horrified me. I developed a hatred of happy swoons of abandonment, of that caressed and coddled body, I found myself by opposing myself.⁴⁸

During his childhood, and to some extent in his maturity, Sartre's experience of the other is most negative and non-appreciative. The other, as it appears manifested at times as his immediate family, is for Sartre, the threat to his freedom, the power which objectifies him, the external tension which forces him to be what he is not. Simone de Beauvoir also alludes to the pressure that Sartre faced from his mother and friends through his late twenties, whenever he faced a situation where decision was needed.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 133. ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 113. ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 113.

⁴⁹De Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, p. 210. Mlle. de Beauvoir describes the following situation: "Sartre was due to leave Le Havre the following year. For some reason I cannot now remember - doubtless a matter of doubling up two appointments - a new philosophy instructor was being brought in. In exchange Sartre was offered a job in Lyon, preparing pupils for the Ecole Normale entrance. Both his parents and Madame Lemaire put strong pressure on him to accept."

pressure from the other, which evolves into objectifying forces, is thematic in Sartre's life. For this reason the other appears as a threat to his freedom: to be at once an object and to be free is contradictory. Thus since it is the other who threatens my subjectivity and my freedom by reducing me into an object, it is my responsibility to save myself from the other.

Sartre concludes The Words with the following:

What I like about my madness is that it has protected me from the very beginning against the charms of the "élite": never have I thought that I was the happy possessor of a "talent"; my sole concern has been to save myself - nothing in my hands, nothing up my sleeve - by work and faith. As a result, my pure choice did not raise me above any one. Without equipment, without tools, I set all of me to work in order to save all of me. If I relegate impossible salvation to the propproom, what remains? A whole man, composed of all men and as good as all of them and no better than any.⁵⁰

Ironically enough, Sartre ends his autobiography on a humble tone which makes the reader nostalgically recall the conclusion of Spinoza's Ethics.⁵¹ Both of them are concerned with salvation, and also they express an ultimate commitment and devotion to labor for the cause of salvation. But unquestionably salvation means different things for Sartre and Spinoza. As far as Sartre is concerned we suggest that salvation is authenticity--the authenticity of the for-itself

⁵⁰Sartre, The Words, p. 255.

⁵¹Benedict Spinoza, Selections, ed. John Wild (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1930), p. 400.

in relation to itself, to the other, and to the world. The authenticity of the for-itself in relation to itself is indefinitely hindered by the other; and since the for-itself is constantly in encounter with the other, the for-itself can never overcome the hindrance exerted by the other; and thus it remains alienated from itself as subject, and from its authenticity. For Spinoza, on the other hand, salvation is achieved through knowledge, a knowledge of man's passion and emotion, a knowledge of the external causes which enslave the human intellect and prevent it from exercising its freedom, and a knowledge of the world which allows human intellect to rise above the immediacy of the senses to emerge into the intellectual love of God.

It is interesting to note the difference between Sartre and Spinoza on how man relates himself to the other and to the world. While Sartre holds that the relationship with the other should be a relationship of being to being, Spinoza affirms that this relationship should be of understanding to understanding. The difficulties encountered in Sartre's approach are related to the fact that while he emphasizes the ontological relationship with the other, he does little to clarify the nature of this relation. Granting the fact that ontology deals with describing the existential relationship of beings, we have no guarantee that the individual involved in describing this relation is not inserting his own attitudes. This in fact appears to be the case with Sartre.

The quotations in the preceding discussion illustrate the strong impact of the other on Sartre. Certainly he is objectified and robbed of his subjectivity and possibly of his freedom; but if this is the unfortunate case with Sartre, it may not be the same universally. Sartre's description of the other cannot be considered universally valid, because experience shows that while some feel themselves objectified, and feel that their freedom is threatened by the other's look, others can absorb the other's look without any such shattering effect upon the orientation of their being. For this reason, we believe that the psychological attitudes developed out of oneself and the other have a strong influence upon the construction of the ontological relation with the other. This is certainly the case with Sartre, and for this reason we claim that his ontological conception of freedom cannot be separated from the inwardness of his psychological awareness. It is out of the psychic, and out of the intentional quality of consciousness, that the individual projects himself into the world in some way or another. As we have already stated, we are not reducing Sartre's conception of the other and of freedom to psychologism; we are simply stating the fact that in the Sartrean scheme there is no way to separate the immediate psychological awareness of one's situation from his orientation to the other. This claim will appear more justified when we explore, in the following section, the feeling of shame in Sartre. But before we do

so we shall continue our discussion of Sartre and Spinoza and the problem of the other.

As we mentioned earlier, while Sartre emphasizes that the relationship with the other should be a relation of being to being, to Spinoza this relation should be of understanding to understanding. This is the message which we gather from his treatise The Improvement of the Understanding and from his Ethics as well. A commitment to understanding ourselves and to understanding the other is prerequisite for any ethical life; without knowledge man is a passive creature and a slave of his emotions and passions. Freedom to Spinoza can only be arrived at through knowledge, through knowing ourselves and the others, and through directing and relating ourselves to the other and the world rationally. Through knowledge, therefore, we can be free, because on the level we are exercising our rational activity in directing ourselves. In ignorance we are determined because on this level it is our passion and subjective emotions which direct our actions. For this reason we can suggest that knowledge is freedom and ignorance is determinism to Spinoza. One who is ignorant of his nature is determined by the immediacy of his fluctuating passions and also by their external causes such as the hate or the love or even the look of the other.

Conversely, the one who knows himself and his nature can be free from his passions and from their external causes by directing himself rationally through them. Thus, to

Spinoza, subjectivity is related to the exertion of one's passion in decision making, and objectivity is related to one's ability to make a rational judgment independent of the immediacy of compassion. Erich Fromm in The Art of Loving gives us an interesting illustration.

In all these cases the person is the slave of a passion, and his activity is in reality a "passivity" because he is driven; he is the sufferer, not the "actor." On the other hand, a man sitting quiet and contemplating, with no purpose or aim except that of experiencing himself and his oneness with the world, is considered to be "passive," because he is not "doing" anything. In reality, this attitude of concentrated meditation is the highest activity there is, an activity of the soul, which is possible only under the condition of inner freedom and independence. One concept of activity, the modern one, refers to the use of energy for the achievement of external aims; the other concept of activity refers to the use of man's inherent powers, regardless of whether any external change is brought about. The latter concept of activity has been formulated most clearly by Spinoza. He differentiates among the affects between active and passive affects, "actions" and "passions." In the exercise of an active affect, man is free, he is the master of his affect; in the exercise of a passive affect, man is driven, the object of motivations of which he himself is not aware. Thus Spinoza arrives at the statement that virtue and power are one and the same. Envy, jealousy, ambition, any kind of greed are passions; love is an action, the practice of a human power, which can be practiced only in freedom and never as the result of a compulsion.⁵²

If we apply Spinoza's principles in establishing a relationship with the other, the other does not appear subject to personal jurisdiction and involvement, but as an object of knowledge. We know the other first, as objectively as possible, the willingness to accept him, according to what

⁵²Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956), p. 18.

he is--this is prerequisite to any sound ethical relation. The Spinozistic system is more than fair in establishing relationships with the other, but in spite of its fairness it lacks personal involvement; the other appears to be an abstraction from the concrete human situation.

If Sartre's conception of the other represents the thesis, then Spinoza's approach is the antithesis. What we feel is necessary is to come up with a synthesis of these two approaches. A synthesis is important because when Sartre emphasizes a relation of being to being, this relationship appears to be based on and interpreted according to personal involvement and awareness of the situation. Thus, while Sartre's program is directed toward establishing an ontological relation, we feel that in actuality this relation never surpasses the subjective psychological moods from which the one establishes his relationship with the other. In our judgment, the conflict between the one and the other, which dominates Sartre's outlook, is fundamentally related to the lack of rational basis, without which psychological immediacy cannot be transformed into an ontological relation.

With this in mind we approach Spinoza because we feel that the rational openness expressed in his writings is needed in order to establish an authentic human relation. For one thing, Spinoza seeks to understand the situation of the other and the modes of human personality as objectively as possible, and then to deal with the other according to

what he is. We find Sartre positing an image of the other according to his own immediate psychological awareness, without considering that the other may be other than what he makes out of him. For this reason, the other appears threatened by me as much as I appear threatened by the other. For I can only be a subject in the face of an object; thus objectifying the other is essential to my subjectivity. A synthesis between my subjectivity and the subjectivity of the other is not possible for the reason that my relation with the other is an either/or proposition: either my subjectivity and the objectivity of the other, or vice versa; between the two inevitably I choose to save myself, and in order to save myself I have no choice but to objectify the other. On the whole, we feel that this picture is an exaggerated psychological dualism which does not appear necessary or essential for authenticating myself. But on the other hand the problem which we encounter in Spinoza's rationalism is the unavoidability of abstraction in human relations. This abstraction takes place as a result of regulating or of controlling the emotional element of man by means of the intellect. In so doing man does not appear involved in his total nature with the other, but only as intellect. We find in Spinoza a stoical tendency to distrust human emotions as a way of knowing and judging the other. Accordingly, abstraction takes place not only in the way of knowing, but also in the way of commitment to, and involvement with, the

human situation. In this respect, we are inclined to agree with Sartre's description of the human engagement in the human situation, and to agree that human emotion cannot be neglected as a concrete way to apprehend the world.

Thus, while we find Sartre convincing in his description of man's existential involvement in the human situation, we find some difficulty with Spinoza, a difficulty which is related to his tendency to abstract man from his total situation. Conversely, while Sartre appears inflexible and unwilling to reconcile his subjectivity with the other, we find Spinoza helpful in his attempt to establish an open relationship based on objectivity and understanding. Thus, a relationship of being to being does not appear contradictory to a relationship of understanding to understanding. As a matter of fact, we claim that it is necessary to construct a synthesis of the two views. From the former view man becomes aware of his concrete relationship to the other and to human existence; from the latter view, man will be able to regulate the immediacy of his intuition and perception of the other by an objective understanding. With this in mind, we shall attempt to interpret the notion of "shame" in Sartre, which will show us that some form of objective understanding is essential to an authentic relationship with the other.

Shame

In the previous section we attempted to show that a rational understanding is needed as much as the immediate

being-to-being relationship in order to render possible the establishment of an authentic relation with the other. With this in mind, we believe that it is possible for the individual to transmute the immediate psychological effect of the look into a rational judgment in which the look of the other is understood before it penetrates the being of the person in question. In other words, a rational understanding of oneself and of the other helps to establish an inner psychological immunity to the invasion of the other's look. If this principle is applied, the feeling of shame cannot take place, nor can the deprivation of one's freedom be accomplished.

Let us look more closely at the Sartrean notion of shame. For Sartre the feeling of shame is a recognition that I am as the other sees me.⁵³ If it is true that in shame I recognize myself as the other sees me, this appears in contradiction to the notion of self-identity: If it is true that I am whatever the other conceives me to be, then what is the use of accepting the cogito? Certainly Sartre must realize this possibility; for this reason he concludes that the for-itself remains in total separation from the for-others. This separation negates any possibility of reconciling or synthesizing with the other. In order to recover from this inner destruction, the for-itself retaliates

⁵³Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 222.

against the other by objectifying the other and destroying his inner unity. The nature of this warfare between the for-itself and the for-others is strictly psychological, not social or political--a view that Edward Tiryakian supports in his book Sociologism and Existentialism.⁵⁴

. . . It follows that the freedom of the self is contingent upon the freedom of all other men, although, paradoxically, man's freedom is not contingent upon any metaphysical being. Consequently, Sartre's view on intersubjective relationships comes to be virtually identical with the Hobbesian notion of the war-of-all against all: every consciousness is in potential conflict with every other consciousness. His social philosophy, if one can call it that, is summarized best in his own play, No Exit: Hell is others.⁵⁵

This is a very simplified exposition of Sartre's social philosophy. However, two points need to be clarified. First, it is true that in Sartre we find an element of the Hobbesian urge for self-survival; but while in Hobbes this urge is toward the preservation of livelihood through social and political power, in Sartre it is more of a struggle for psychological survival. Second, it can hardly be justified to assume that No Exit "summarizes best" Sartre's social philosophy, neglecting La Critique de la Raison Dialectique,⁵⁶ which was written for this purpose. To return to the first point: when we tell someone to be careful or to be watchful

⁵⁴Edward A. Tiryakian, Sociologism and Existentialism (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962).

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 133.

⁵⁶Jean-Paul Sartre, La Critique de la Raison Dialectique (Paris: Gallimard, 1960).

of others, this means, in Hobbes' view, to protect oneself from the other, so the other does not take one's property or livelihood; whereas, according to Sartre, this simply means to be aware not to become objectified or nihilated by the other. The psychological motivations can hardly be separated from the existential confrontation with the other in Sartre: it is almost an obsession, in which one feels that he is continuously being invaded by spying eyes--eyes that stare and penetrate to his inner being. "The look does not carve me out in the universe; it comes to search for me at the heart of my situation and grasps me only in irresolvable relations with instruments."⁵⁷ The problem involved here is that when the look locates me in my situation it does not leave me unscarred. On the contrary, when I grasp or become aware of the other's look, I feel that my freedom is escaping me,⁵⁸ and that I become solidified and alienated from my possibilities.⁵⁹ What makes me aware and wrapped up in self-consciousness because of the other's look? It is shame, Sartre announces, "it is shame or pride which reveals to me the other's look and myself at the end of that look."⁶⁰ In shame I lose myself by objectifying myself to myself and to the other; in shame, therefore, I conceive myself not as I was,⁶¹ but as

⁵⁷Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 263.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 261. ⁵⁹Ibid., p. 263.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 261. ⁶¹Ibid., p. 263.

the other sees me, as a prostitute, a homosexual, or an inkwell. Thus while the other sees me as an object objectified by his look, I become determined to conceive myself through the eyes of the other, not through my own eyes. For this reason, the feeling of shame is actually the feeling of losing my freedom and of being shattered and objectified.

For the Other I am seated as this inkwell is on the table; for the Other, I am leaning over the keyhole as this tree is bent by the wind. Thus for the Other I have stripped myself of my transcendence.⁶²

This is a lucid and imaginative description of how the other sees me. The question involved here is, how can I grant that the other truly sees me as an object, say, as an inkwell, and not as a subject or simply as a human being? The answer might be discerned in two questions: 1) Is it because I see the other as an object and therefore presume that the other sees me in the same manner? 2) Is it because I am so self-conscious of what I am that I feel that I am transparent, so that when the other looks at me I feel that he is penetrating me and discovering my inner self? One might argue either way, or in other ways; but it is probably unsafe to be dogmatic one way or another, or to make a final generalized conclusion about how the other sees me. In order to escape these questions, one may say that the description of the other is independent of all this. Assuming that it is an accurate description discovered through the

⁶²Ibid.

phenomenological method, we can ask how this accuracy is arrived at. Is the phenomenological method an objective method? If this is the case then do we say that it is independent of the psychological ethos of the person involved in this inquiry? The answer is negative, because the phenomenological method is not an objective method, nor was the inquiry independent of the psychological moods of the inquirer. For this reason we claim that Sartre's treatment of the other is more or less based on his own psychological experience, from which the other appears as an aggressor of his rights, and as an invader of his freedom. The feeling of shame cannot be dissociated from these feelings, because it is in shame that I locate the other's look which is locating me in my shame. The question involved here is whether the feeling of shame is ontological, psychological, cultural, or personal. In Sartre we believe it is psychologically felt and ontologically defined.

Shame is the feeling of an original fall, not because of the fact that I may have committed this or that particular fault but simply that I have "fallen" into the world in the midst of things and that I need the mediation of the Other in order to be what I am.

Modesty and in particular the fear of being surprised in a state of nakedness are only a symbolic specification of original shame; the body symbolizes here our defenseless state as objects. To put on clothes is to hide one's object-state; it is to claim the right of seeing without being seen; that is, to be pure subject. This is why the Biblical symbol of the fall after the original sin is the fact that Adam and Eve "know that they are naked." The reaction to shame will consist exactly in apprehending as an object the one who apprehended my own object-state.⁶³

⁶³Ibid., pp. 288-289.

This exposition not only conveys an ontological description of shame, but also indicates an element of inevitable universality in which the feeling of shame is revealed to consciousness with the discovery of man's fall into the world. Of course, Sartre's conception of the "fall" is more Heideggerian than Christian, but regardless of its source, shame remains to be defined ontologically. But if we review Sartre's phenomenological analysis of shame as a whole, we find that his approach is based primarily on the involved person's immediate psychological reaction to the other, and not on his ontological outlook. In other words, Sartre appears to be guilty of accentuating this point, namely, analyzing his subjective experience of shame and then establishing a universal and an ontological definition of shame, which seems to us to be fallacy involved.

Looking into the notion of shame, we feel that shame differs from anguish as much as ontology differs from psychology. Thus, while we consider anguish to be an ontological state of man as a being-in-the-world, we hold that shame does not reach the ontological level, because it is the product of immediacy and as such is a psychological reaction of man as a being-with-other. However, we are not attempting to draw a sharp line between the psychological and the ontological. What we are stressing is that in shame there is an element of a psychological passivity in which consciousness is not actually reflective in relation to the other. The other

appears to be objectifying the for-itself and nihilating its freedom.

Furthermore, we contend that, if "consciousness is absolute" and as such is freedom, it should follow that freedom is the manifestation of reflection. In other words, through reflection consciousness actualizes itself in freedom. Hence reflection should be a sign of an existing I. An I, therefore, is an incarnation of reflection. This is precisely what we call an ontological actualization of consciousness. On this level it would be absurd to say that reflection is a sign of an I and of a non-I, as much as it would be to say that consciousness is a subject and a non-subject. Further, if it is true that reflection is an activity, it would be absurd not to use this activity when the for-itself is invaded by the other. Consequently, since shame is an effect caused by the other, this effect should only take place in the passive state of immediacy and spontaneity when consciousness appears to be affected by external forces. The look of the other is one of these sources, although the response to the look, in our opinion, cannot be analyzed without taking into consideration the personal, the psychological, and the cultural situation of the individual involved. Hence if a homosexual is looked at, the response to the look varies with the variations of the state of his personality. Thus, while in some cases a homosexual feels that he is objectified and nihilated from his freedom when he is looked at, to

another the look does not have any effect at all. In fact, Jean Genet is a good example of the latter case.

It can also be argued that the feeling of shame and guilt varies not only with the psychological make up of our personality, but also from one culture to another. Thus, while we do not believe in cultural determinism, we find ourselves forced to acknowledge certain deterministic forces acting upon the human personality. But we believe that these deterministic forces can operate only on the unreflective level, where consciousness is still mere "spontaneity" and where the I is not really certain of its ontological identity. For this reason we believe that Sartre is right in considering the other to be the origin of shame, but we object to giving shame an ontological status. When reflection takes place, consciousness does not conceive itself through the look of the other, but through its own. It follows that reflection may conquer shame and forces its ontological identity on the other. Thus since in reflection the I does not see itself through the eyes of the other, but through its own, it would be contradictory to say that on the reflective level the I experiences shame.

Our disagreement with Sartre's notion of the other is related to his strong emphasis on the other as a determining factor in conceiving oneself to the extent that the other appears as a constant threat to one's freedom and as another form of "facticity." In fact, in his book Anti-Semite and

Jew he utilizes his notion of the other as a form of facticity.⁶⁴

The Jew, because he knows he is under observation, takes the initiative and attempts to look at himself through the eyes of the others. This objectivity toward himself is still another ruse of inobjectivity: while he contemplates himself with the "detachment" of another, he feels himself in effect detached from himself; he becomes another person, or pure witness.⁶⁵

Oddly enough, Sartre does not acknowledge any internal causes for being a Jew, and he rejects consideration of any historical, social, political, or religious factor which makes the Jew ("it is the anti-Semite who makes the Jew,"⁶⁶) or the other.⁶⁷ The other appears to be "pliers" in which the individual is caught, with almost no hope for escape from its grip. Can this situation be true in reality? Our answer is yes and no. Yes, if consciousness remains on the spontaneous level, and yes also if consciousness is in reflection hesitant to affirm itself in the world. But the answer is no if consciousness becomes aware of its ontological dignity and wills to affirm itself against the other. If I were fated

⁶⁴Jean-Paul Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1966).

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 97.

⁶⁶Joseph Sungolowsky, "Criticism of Anti-Semite and Jew," Yale French Studies, No. 30 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press), pp. 68-72.

⁶⁷This problem is not our concern in this work, and we will not attempt any comprehensive analysis. Our interest is only to show the extent of Sartre's emphasis on the other as a power of objectification and nihilation.

to be a Negro in the South, I could either accept whatever the white southerner thinks about me as a Negro, and consider that it is my fate to be in shame, or I could will to choose my own image, and to reach out for my dignity with an attempt to affirm the image which I make of myself for myself and pity those who think that I am an object for them. This is the ontological level, where man becomes aware of himself and of his indissoluble identity in the world. This, we realize, is a difficult task to achieve, and we repeat with Spinoza, "all noble things are as difficult as they are rare."⁶⁸

Thus on the ontological level man does not experience shame, simply because he has already surpassed the passive state in which he has experienced objectification. On the ontological level, however, man remains in anguish. The more reflection, the more anguish, not shame. Job did not experience shame, but he experienced anguish. Abraham did not experience shame, but anguish. Adam did not really experience shame, as Sartre states, but a sense of guilt associated with anguish. Nakedness, in this respect, did not symbolize Adam's nudity before the other, because Eve symbolically was a part of him; therefore he experienced nudity before himself and God. It was an ontological nudity associated with anguish and fear of the unknown future.

This analysis should reveal one major point; namely,

⁶⁸Spinoza, Selections, p. 400.

that Sartre confuses the psychological experience with ontological reflection and considers whatever man experiences psychologically as an ontological mode of being-in-the-world. For this reason, we claim that his psychological awareness of the other and of the world can hardly be separated from his ontology. Sartre ontologizes his psychological states and attempts to universalize what is psychologically given.

This is Sartre's weakness and may also be his greatness. His weakness rests in not being able to see the other with an objective eye and an open heart, and his greatness lies in his perceptive power which enables him to see things objectively or subjectively. Whether to see them wrongly or rightly is not the question; but to will to see things, to be involved and to dwell on things, is all that man can do, and this is the irony of it all: a desire to be God with all finiteness.

CONCLUSION

This analysis has demonstrated two important views which are related to the nature of Sartre's philosophy. The first is that Sartre's conception of freedom emerges basically from his psychological awareness of the world and the Other--not from any ontological disposition. The second view is that Sartre's ontology is basically an expression of his psychology and not the other way around. Since these views appear to stand in opposition to the predominant views of Sartre's interpreters, we felt it would be worth-while to examine the arguments of different interpreters and to show the invalidity of their conclusions.

This task has been achieved in the first two chapters. We have examined the metaphysical arguments made by Fred Newman¹ and the moral arguments made by Alvin Plantinga and Robert Champigny.² In the course of examining these arguments we have shown the psychological expressions of certain Sartrean notions, and we have also shown the psychological expressions which are revealed throughout Sartre's ethics

¹By metaphysical argument we mean the arguments of those who consider Sartre's philosophy as metaphysical in origin and nature.

²By moral argument we mean the arguments of those who consider Sartre's philosophy as moral in origin and nature.

and metaphysics.

In the third chapter we have shown systematically and chronologically the continuity between Sartre's pre-ontological works (which in our view represent Sartre's psychology to a large extent) and his phenomenological ontology. Our evaluation not only shows the continuity between his pre-ontological and his ontological works, but it also shows that the essential notions which are used in Being and Nothingness and applied in the form of phenomenological ontology were discovered and defined in his pre-ontological work.

In the final chapter we have examined Sartre's approach in relating himself to the world and to the Other, with an attempt to understand the nature of this relationship. We argued that the perspective through which Sartre conceives the world and the Other is fundamentally structured out of his own psychological attitude. For this reason we feel that Sartre does not actually describe the Other in the light of whatever the Other may be, but rather describes the Other according to his speculative intuition, which is primarily based on his psychological prehension of the Other. This in our opinion constitutes the failure of Sartre's ontology: a failure because in the practical implications of his ontology Sartre fails to achieve an openness to the Other as the Other really is.

We conclude this work by suggesting that Sartre's conception of freedom entails a freedom from the Other. This

is revealed not only in his philosophy but also in his life. The Other is always a burden upon him. He always feels as if the Other is choking him, objectifying him, and robbing him of his freedom. This message can be clearly gathered from The Words, where the struggle of escaping the Other's grip and of running from the Other suffuses the whole book. In short, freedom and the Other are irreconcilable. To be free presupposes being free from the Other. The individual cogito can never collectively pursue its becoming nor be objectified, for if the cogito hopes to be free it has to remain a detotalized totality. The one is always struggling against the other because the other appears to be always threatening in objectifying the one. This notion is not accidental in Sartre's thought, but thematic. We have shown its roots germinating in L'imagination and L'imaginaire, growing and spreading out in Being and Nothingness, applied in his literary works (for example, No Exit and The Reprieve) and carried out in his social and political philosophy in La Critique de la raison dialectique.

Because we have been concerned in this work only with discovering the origins of Sartre's conception of freedom, we have not dealt with its applications. This undoubtedly deserves study; but a cursory reading of La Critique de la raison dialectique reveals that Sartre's attempt to synthesize existentialism with Marxism does not actually result in a synthesis but an intermarriage arranged by the groom

which suits his own outlooks and desires. Sartre's Marxism in La Critique is not actually Marx's Marxism but that of Sartre. The individual does not appear to emerge in the group, but rather remains hesitant, cautious, and unwilling to give up his own interpretation of the world and the Other. The process of socialization remains individuation, and the dialogue between the one and the many never is actualized. Thus the cogito remains within the sphere of a monologue in interpreting the world and the Other according to its idiosyncratic categories. For this reason the ego does not become totalized, but remains a detotalized totality. Cartesianism yes, Marxism no.

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