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BHADRA, Mrinal Kanti, 1929-
   A CRITICAL STUDY OF SARTRE'S'ONTOLOGY OF
   CONSCIOUSNESS.

   The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1971
   Philosophy

University Microfilms, A **XEROX** Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SARTRE'S'

ONTOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

1971

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SARTRE'S'

ONTOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

APPROVED BY

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SARTRE'S

ONTOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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The common interpretation about Sartre's ontology is that it is not phenomenologically based, rather it is an a priori theory, with a rigid dualism between consciousness and material object.

It has been attempted to establish in the first chapter that Sartre tried to found his ontology on phenomenological studies of experience. With that end in view it is pointed out how Sartre's use of phenomenology differs from Husserl's and Heidegger's. Though Sartre is influenced by both of them, he goes beyond them to discover a new tool. Sartre's method has also been compared and contrasted with the phenomenological method of Merleau-Ponty as well as that of Linguistic Analysis. These studies only prepare us to establish that his phenomenological studies have led him to the ontological conclusions.

Sartre's dualism between Being-for-itself and Being-in-itself is then traced to the phenomenological investigations. But it is also pointed out that such dualism is not a rigid one of absolute separation. Rather, they are abstractions, while the fundamental reality is Being-in-the-world.

The next thing is an analysis of Sartre's theory of consciousness. This has been done in three chapters. First, Sartre's conception of consciousness, its differences from Husserl's, the different stages, the modes in which consciousness exists are analyzed. An examination of Sartre's definition of consciousness as what it is not and is not what it is, is done in relation to the major forms of conscious existence. Secondly, it is shown how Sartre's theory of consciousness is basically temporal. This is done by comparing Sartre's theory with Husserl's notion of time consciousness, Heidegger's notion of temporality, and Merleau-Ponty's idea of time. Thirdly, Sartre's idea of consciousness as freedom is analyzed and discussed. Here an attempt to remove a basic misunderstanding about Sartre's notion has been done.

The last chapter is devoted to a critical examination of Sartre's phenomenological studies. Without changing the major standpoint it is pointed out that in many cases Sartre has not followed the phenomenological investigations to their logical conclusions. We have tried to raise our objections in all the major areas of Sartre's investigation. Lastly, an analysis of the different senses of nothingness has been undertaken. In the concluding pages a comparative study between Sartre's ontology and the ontological theories

of some of the major schools of Indian philosophy has been done.

A comprehensive bibliography including the major publications by Sartre and on Sartre has been added at the end of the dissertation.

PREFACE

In this dissertation on Sartre, I have mainly con-
fined myself to the examination of his theory of conscious-
ness. In doing that, I have tried to make two points clear.
First, Sartre's ontology of consciousness, as I would call
it, has a definite phenomenological basis. Often it has
been maintained by critics like Hartman, Natanson, etc.
that Sartre's ontology is some sort of apriori theory, to
which he has afterwards tried to graft some form of pheno-
menological analysis. I have attempted to establish that
this is not a true explanation of Sartre's theory of con-
sciousness and the world. Second, critics like Merleau-
Ponty are of the opinion that Sartre's ontology is dualistic
which makes an incommunicable cleavage between consciousness
and the material world. My point is to formulate that
Sartre's philosophical investigations give us more of the
idea that Being-in-the-world is the fundamental reality,
while For-itself and In-itself are mere abstractions. The
whole world in which man lives is a dialectical development
between the two as two aspects of Being-in-the-world. I
have made an attempt to understand Sartre's theory of con-

sciousness in the context of such ideas and have felt that in this way much misunderstanding about Sartre can be removed.

I have included in my discussion the main ideas of Sartre's theory of consciousness, for which a clear understanding of Sartre's notions of temporality and freedom is essential. As Sartre understands the nature of consciousness, consciousness is to be what it is not. Thus the present is to be changed so that consciousness can be what it is not. But consciousness cannot negate the present unless consciousness is freedom. It may be expressed following the language of Sartre that one is not first consciousness and then free, but to be conscious and to be free are the two modes of the same form of existence. So I have tried to discuss the notions of temporality and freedom as thoroughly as possible, sometimes in comparison with other thinkers, especially, in the case of temporality. In the case of freedom, my main task has been to find out what Sartre means by absolute freedom, and so I have taken pains to analyze his main arguments in connection with freedom, as discussed in Being and Nothingness. I have pointed out the different senses in which Sartre uses the word freedom since critics often make mistakes in not keeping these different senses straight. It is also true that Sartre himself often does not remember the different senses. I have tried to represent

Sartre's arguments as faithfully as possible, before raising criticisms.

Though I think Sartre's ideas are phenomenologically based, in many cases, he has not been able to carry out the phenomenological implications to the full. For that I do not think Sartre's rationalism is responsible. On the other hand, my feeling is that his existentialist bias has in most cases influenced his phenomenological decisions.

In Being and Nothingness Sartre has tried to be honest to what is phenomenologically given to the lonely, cast-out individual in the hostile world. I have criticized Sartre for neglecting the phenomenologically given in the most general sense of the term. But still, I think Sartre has a point to make, and that is to draw the picture of the individual in the world of suffering and sadness. This may be a sad tale of human life, but it may not be untrue.

I have not drawn much of a parallel between Sartre the Novelist, the Playwright, and the Philosopher. I have often felt that Philosophers who indulge in literature are never taken seriously by the so-called Academicians of Philosophy. For this reason, I have tried to present Sartre's philosophical arguments without any help from his literature. It is not that I regard his literature unimportant from the point of view of philosophy. I think that his literature gives us a practical demonstration of his philosophical ideas,

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because he is a philosopher of lived experience.

I have mainly given references to the English trans-
lations of Sartre's works. Only where the English trans-
lation is not available, have I given the reference to the
French works. But I have always consulted the French texts.
Sometimes, I have drawn the references from the original
French, because I have felt the French to be more appropriate
in those cases, or I might have thought the French to be
more beautiful. I have also tried to keep very close to
the text in my exposition of Sartre's ideas.

The bibliography which I have added at the end of the
dissertation is a compilation from many different sources.
I have arranged Sartre's writings chronologically, after
Manser, while the works about Sartre are arranged alphabet-
ically. I have included Sartre's writings until January,
1970. In my work of compiling bibliography, I have derived,
perhaps, the most unforgettable help from Dr. R.W. Shahan's
personal collection of bibliography on Sartre. I express
my deep gratitude to him for letting me use his collection.

I am most grateful to my teachers and friends who spent
much of their valuable time in reading the dissertation.
Their suggestions about the improvement of the content and
the style of writing have been most helpful. I express my
deepest gratitude to the members of my dissertation committee,
Dr. K.R. Merrill, Dr. J.N. Mohanty, Dr. R.W. Shahan, Dr. W.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Sartre's works cited in the footnotes are abbreviated as follows:

Being and Nothingness . . . . B.N.

Critique of Dialectical Reason. . . . . Critique

L'Etre et le Neant. . . . . E.N.

Psychology of Imagination . . . . Psych. of Ima.

Search for a Method . . . . Search

Sketch of a Theory of Emotion . . . . . Sketch

Transcendence of the Ego. . . . . T.E.

Other works are cited in full.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SARTRE'S

ONTOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

CHAPTER I

SARTRE'S PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

1. Need for a Method

Sartre calls his major philosophical work Being

and Nothingness "Phenomenological Ontology."[1] The sub-

title of the book shows that his most important concern

is ontology. But it is an ontology of human existence,

not of some ultimate being. This type of ontology needs

an analysis of human life or reality, in all its various

aspects, like man's experience, perception, imagination,

emotion, and the varieties of mental life. It is not

possible to know human existence in all its significa-

tions, unless a detailed study of what a human being

experiences or how he behaves is possible.

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[1]J.P. Sartre, L'Être et Néant; essai d'Ontologie
Phénoménologique (Gallimard, 1943). English Transla-
tion. Barnes, H., Being and Nothingness (New York,
Philosophical Library, 1956; London, Methuen, 1957).

The earlier works of Sartre, like <u>The Transcendence</u>

<u>of the Ego</u>,[2] <u>Imagination</u>,[3] <u>Psychology of Imagination</u>,[4]

<u>Sketch for a Theory of the Emotion</u>,[5] and his first novel,

is <u>Nausea</u>,[6] are examples of exploration into the diverse

aspects of human experience and existence. These pre-

pared Sartre to reach his fundamental ontological conclu-

sions. Like every philosopher, Sartre is also aware of

the fact that ontological theories have to be established

on the basis of a philosophical method.

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[2]J.P. Sartre, <u>La Transcendance de l'ego; Esquisse</u>
<u>d'une description phénoménologique</u> (Recherches Philo-
sophiques, 6, 1936-37, p. 85-123) English translation -
Ward R. Kirkpatrick, <u>Transcendence of the Ego</u>, Noonday
Press, New York, 1969.

[3]J.P. Sartre, <u>L'Imagination; étude critique</u>
(Felix Alcan, 1936) English Translation - Williams, F.,
<u>Imagination: A psychological critique</u> (Ann Arbor, Mich.,
University of Michigan Press, 1962).

[4]J.P. Sartre, <u>L'Imaginaire: psychologie phénoméno-</u>
<u>logique de l'imagination</u> (Gallimard, 1940) English Trans-
lation - B. Frecht, <u>The Psychology of Imagination</u> (Lon-
don, Rider, 1949).

[5]J.P. Sartre, <u>Esquisse d'une theorie des emotions</u>,
(Actualites Scientific Industrielles, no. 834, Herman,
1939). English Translation - B. Frechtman, <u>Outlines of</u>
<u>a Theory of the emotions</u> (New York, Philosophical
Library, 1948); P. Mairet, <u>Sketch for a theory of the</u>
<u>emotions</u>, Methuen, 1964.

[6]J.P. Sartre, <u>La Nausée</u> (Gallimard, 1938) English
Translation - L. Alexander, <u>The Diary of Antoine</u>
<u>Roquentine</u> (London, John Leman, 1949).

Ontology is generally understood as the theory of
Being. It tries to understand the relationships between
beings as they are grounded in Being. Also, it seeks to
understand beings as manifestations of Being. Heidegger
understands the ordinary objects of the world as beings,
but why they are beings can be properly understood only
if we can realize how they reveal Being. Sartre does not
make a formal distinction between beings and Being. He
talks of human consciousness and material objects. Each
of them displays its own distinctive existence. So each
can be said to have its way of being. Ontology has to
take into account the different ways of being. As Being
is revealed in the things of experience and as they are
given in phenomena, we can understand the nature of Being
only through phenomenological investigations. Husserl
thinks that by phenomenological study we can reveal the
structure of beings of different regions. Thus there can
be different regional ontologies. In that case, the task
of phenomenology is to lay bare the structure of beings or
of Being. Sartre, as a thinker of the Husserlian-Heideg-
gerian tradition, begins with an analysis of conscious
experience in which consciousness is always conscious of
something. Sartre thinks that the analysis of the given
in experience will lead to two aspects of Being - for-

itself and in-itself. The analysis of the given makes

us understand the phenomenological foundation of ontology.

Sartre's phenomenology is not exactly the same method

followed by Husserl. His method is also different from

Heidegger's. But though he shares with Husserl and

Heidegger the basic ideas of phenomenology, he has de-

veloped his own method in a unique way.

In understanding the richness of human experience,

Sartre has carried his investigation into all the re-

gions of experience. He tried to give some idea of his

phenomenological method in a paper before the Sociéte de

Français in 1947, entitled Conscience de Soi et Connai-

ssance de Soi (which was published in the Bulletin of the

Society, vol. XLII, no. 3 April - June, 1948). But the

idea, as Spiegelberg says, is rather confusing[7]. Actually

Sartre has never given any clear systematic exposition

of his method. He has simply employed the method, and an

understanding of the different aspects of the method is

possible only through an examination of the application

of his philosophical method. It is not necessary to make

a detailed examination of how Sartre applies his method

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[7]Spiegelberg, ., The Phenomenological Movement,
Vol. II (Martinus Nijhoff, the Hague, 1960), p. 454.
Spiegelberg writes that Sartre proposed "a synthesis of
Husserl's contemplative and non-dialectical conscious-
ness ... with the activity of the dialectical but non-
consciousness and hence unfounded project that we find in
Heidegger, where we discover that the primary element is
transcendence."

in all the philosophical and literary works; for, while
the sphere of application may be different, the prin-
ciples of application are everywhere the same. We can
understand Sartre's phenomenological method with reference
to his analysis of human experience like imagination and
emotion better. In these cases he makes some explicit
comments on what he means by phenomenological method.

2. Opinion about Sartre's Method

Different commentators offer different opinions about
Sartre's philosophical method. Varet has identified him
as a phenomenologist of the Husserlian group[8], while
Spiegelberg calls him a French Heidegger[9], even though
he notices the difference between Heidegger and Sartre.
There are other commentators like Natanson[10], Hartmann[11],
and George Kline[12] who do not want to recognize Sartre
as a phenomenologist. Their idea is that Sartre has tried

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[8]G. Varet, L'Ontology de Sartre (Presses Univer-
sitaires de France, Paris, 1948), p. 23. "... en fin
de compte la phénoménogie est-elle vraiment pour Sartre
le procéde d'investigation critique de portée universelle
qu'elle est d'abord pour Husserl."

[9]H. Spiegelberg, Ibid., p. 454.

[10]M. Natanson, A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's
Ontology (University of Nebraska Studies, March, 1951,
New Series, No. 6) p. 69, 73.

[11]K. Hartmann, Sartre's Ontology (Northwestern
University Press, Evanston, 1966) p. 133-34.

[12]G. Kline, "The Existential Rediscovery of Hegel and

to combine Husserl's _phenomenology_ with Hegel's _dialectic_,
but has ended in failure. George Kline has gone to the
extent of saying that he is a "truncated dialectician[13]."
Merleau-Ponty also agrees with him. Maurice Merleau-Ponty
raises the same charge against Sartre and points out that
Sartre belongs to the same school of European rationalism
to which Descartes and Husserl belonged. Such rationalism
wants to judge the concrete phenomena of life in terms of
apriori categories[15]. We have to understand Sartre's
philosophical method in the face of these criticisms.
It will be clear, as we go farther in our analysis, that
these criticisms are unjustifiable, as these are based on
an inadequate understanding of Sartre's conception of reason.

Marx" in _Phenomenology and Existentialism_, edited by
Edwards, Lee and M. Mandelbaum (The John Hopkins Uni-
versity Press; Baltimore, 1967) p. 124.

[13]H. Spiegelberg, _Ibid._, p. 521. It is mentioned
here that in 1946, in an article on _Existentialism in
Hegel_ (Sens et Non-sens, p. 137f) Merleau-Ponty had ex-
pressed the view that whereas Hegel converts death into
higher life and passes from the individual to history, for
Sartre the contradiction between the self and others is
beyond remedy and hence his dialectics is truncated.
(trunquée)

[14]G. Kline, _Ibid._, p. 125.

[15]M. Merleau-Ponty, _The Visible and the Invisible_
(Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1968), p. 86.
"... beyond the visible one trusts entirely in what we
think under the terms of being and nothingness, one
practices an 'essentialist' thought which refers to signi-

It is curious to note that Sartre's first philoso-
phical treatise, The Transcendence of the Ego, and his
phenomenological critical study of the different theories
of image, Imagination, were published in the same year.
We learn from Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography that
Imagination is the first part of Sartre's detailed inves-
tigation of the nature of imagination, the second part
of which consists of a phenomenological analysis of the
nature of image[16]. It is quite evident that Sartre was
exploring the ontological region of consciousness together
with a phenomenological study of imagination. It may
be asked why Sartre chose the area imagination and not
any other.

3. The Early Stage of Sartre's Phenomenology

The question which we raised in the previous para-
graph may be answered in this way. It may be that to
Sartre the character of consciousness as nothingness be-
comes more clearly experienced in an image, as it can
posit an object as non-existent and/or existing else-

·ficance beyond experience and thus one conducts our
relations with the world."

[16]S. de Beauvoir, The Prime of Life (Trans. by
Green, P., New York; The World Publishing Company,
1962), p. 168-171.

where; it can also neutralize itself, that is, not posit
the object as existing. We should point out that in
The Transcendence of the Ego, Sartre was trying to under-
stand the nature of consciousness for the sake of onto-
logical clarification. He was trying to grasp the nature
of consciousness as it is. But the ontological study of
consciousness can be established on a secure foundation
on the basis of some concrete illustrations. That con-
sciousness is experienced as nothing is clear from Sartre's
acceptance of the theory of intentionality. According
to it, consciousness always points to an object external
to itself. It may be asked how Sartre comes to establish
consciousness as nothing from intentionality. We can
say that intentionality gives us the idea that conscious-
ness is not an object, from which reflection on the nature
of consciousness can establish that consciousness is
nothing. Sartre argues that consciousness has no con-
tent. It is transparent. It directs us to objects.
This is what is known as intentionality. All physical,
psycho-physical and psychic objects, all truths, all
values are outside consciousness. So consciousness is
nothing. One of the most important conclusions of
Sartre in The Transcendence of the Ego is that consciousness
is nothing, as it is consciousness of objects, of the

world[17]. It may be said that Sartre starts with the
presupposition of the intentional character of con-
sciousness. If so, then the Husserlian idea of inten-
tionality becomes a presupposition. But that is far
from being true, for Husserl had accepted the idea of
intentionality from the phenomenological datum of ex-
perience, as he would accept only that which was given
to consciousness. So what Sartre is doing in Imagination
and Psychology of the Imagination is that he is applying
the principle of intentionality to specific cases of
experience. He establishes the ontological nature of
consciousness from the phenomenological analysis of the
different aspects of conscious experience. But the phe-
nomenological studies are more detailed in his works
on imagination or emotion. In The Transcendence of the
Ego or Being and Nothingness, both ontological theorizing
and phenomenological investigation go together, for
there are brilliant examples of the phenomenological
analysis in Being and Nothingness, such as "bad faith",
"relations with the other", etc. But even then, the
ontological interest is more predominant. In The Trans-
cendence of the Ego ontology is concealed under pheno-
menological studies. But there are clear indications of

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[17]J.P. Sartre, T.E., p. 193.

phenomenological investigations, without which Sartre's
ontological conclusions would be meaningless. So it
would be more correct to say that Sartre tries to reach
his ontological conclusions with his phenomenological
method. But sometimes he has been interested either in
the ontological field or the phenomenological field.
In each case, phenomenological study has served the on-
tological purpose. In his phenomenological study of
emotion or imagination, he is more interested in what
the investigations lead to, about the nature of conscious-
ness or freedom or man's relation within the world.

4. Difference from Husserl

Sartre tries to understand the nature of conscious-
ness, in The Transcendence of the Ego, from what is
phenomenologically given. The transcendental "I" is
not given in our pre-reflective experience. If we take
into account only what is given immediately to our ex-
perience, then we have to reject the transcendental ego.
It is, in other words, called the "phenomenological
reduction". Husserl accepted the principle of epoché
with the idea of a thorough-going phenomenological
reduction, but, unlike Sartre, he did not carry the de-
mand of the epoché to its logical conclusion[18].

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[18] Ibid., p. 36.

In this respect Sartre can be compared with Hume, who carried out the logical implications of empiricism by denying a substantial ego. Husserl understands by the phenomenological epoché the bracketing of all pre-suppositions, including our belief in the reality of the world. Husserl's phenomenological epoché is not accepted by Sartre in the sense it is understood by Husserl. But Sartre too, wants to accept only what is given in immediate experience. If Sartre thinks that only that which is given in immediate experience can be accepted, then Husserlian notions like the transcendental ego cannot be accepted and belief in the existence of the world can not be suspended. Sartre would not object to bracketing off the presuppositions, but he thinks that the existence of the given can not be bracketed, for it is the most immediately given. So Sartre accepts the phenomenological epoché in a modified sense, as he says in his Psychology of Imagination, "So, we shall ignore theories" (p. 4). In that sense we not only experience the facts given to us, but we also experience them as existent in the external world. In fact, this is also the logical implication of Husserl's theory of intentionality. He points out there that Husserl has liberated us

from the "inward life"[19] and restored to us the reality

of the world of objects. But though consciousness of an

object points to the object in the world, Husserl did not

remain true to this experience of the given, as he kept

the existent world in suspense. Sartre thinks that once

the being of the world is bracketed, it is difficult to

return from the phenomenological epoché to the world.[20]

Maurice Merleau-Ponty also points out that a complete

bracketing is impossible, for experience is achieved

through a bodily perspective and that cannot be bracketed

off.[21].

Sartre's phenomenological method starts with:

1. intentionality of consciousness;
2. phenomenological epoche in the sense
   that nothing that is not immediately
   given in experience is accepted, and
3. rejection of Husserl's bracketing
   the world, as intentionality of
   consciousness implies that we are
   aware of objects as existent in
   the world.

5. Relation to Heidegger

Speigelberg points out that Sartre is more Hus-

serlian in the th ə earlier works (viz, his books on imagi-

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[19]J.P. Sartre, "Une Idée Fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: L'intentionalité" in Situations I, p. 31-35 (Gallimard, Paris, 1947).

[20]H. Spiegelberg, Ibid., p. 452.

[21]J. Edie, Phenomenology as a Rigorous Science in

nation and The Transcendence of the Ego), but that he
becomes more inclined to Heidegger's interpretation of
phenomenology in his later works beginning with his
Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions[22]. We have to see
whether this statement about Sartre is true; and to judge
it better we must mention the chief characteristics of
Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenology.

6. Husserl's Method

Husserl's phenomenology developed through three
stages:

1. descriptive phenomenology
2. transcendental phenomenology, and
3. phenomenology of The Lebenswelt.

In the first phase, Husserl was mainly concerned
with intuiting the essences through phenomenological
elucidation and description of the given. Though there
were other changes in his later phenomenological method,
phenomenological description has been the constant
feature. In the period of Logical Investigations Hus-
serl was interested in the knowledge of the essences which
he felt, could be arrived at only through phenomenological
description of the given. As yet, phenomenological re-
duction had not assumed any importance. Only when it

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[22]H. Spiegelberg, Ibid., p. 464.

dawned on Husserl that phenomenological description can
not give us the absolutely evident so long we remain con-
fined to the naturalistic standpoint, did he introduce
the principle of phenomenological epoché. Under the epoché,
belief in the reality of world is suspended, and only what
is transcendentally reduced is accepted as evident. Thus,
according to Husserl, the phenomena given to transcendental
consciousness are the pure given. Husserl, then, de-
velops his idea of phenomenological constitution by which
the givens are gathered together to give rise to the
meaning of the world. The givens are synthesized in
such a way that consciousness understands the meaning of
the world. It becomes clear that the world as meant is
constituted by consciousness. In the second phase of
Husserl's philosophical development, phenomenological
epoché, transcendental reduction and phenomenological
constitution are the most important elements, though pheno-
menological description continues to be the most impor-
tant step in connection with the transcendental reduction.
But above all, intentionality of consciousness is the
starting point for Husserl.

Towards the end of his life Husserl spoke of a
different phenomenology which should be conducted prior
to the transcendental-phenomenological investigations.

The world in which we live and which we believe to be real
is mixed up with the scientific categories that we have
taken for granted without a clear examination into their
structure and origin. These scientific categories, in
terms of which we understand the world, have their origin
in the immediate facts of experience. In such experience,
first, there is no subject-object distinction or mind-
body dualism. These scientific concepts are born of the
power of abstraction by intellect. So the first task of
phenomenology is to bracket off the abstract categories
of science so that it can be clearly shown how these con-
cepts of the natural world have their origin. Once the cate-
gories are understood in terms of immediate experience, a sec-
ond reduction, this time a transcendental reduction, takes
place to show how the structures of the Lebenswelt are the
achievements of a 'functioning intentionality.' Husserl
developed his theory of the Lebenswelt in his Die Krisis
der europäischen Wissenschaften und die tranzendentale
Phänomenologie, in which his investigations range over
three completely different levels:

    1.   the mundane phenomena of the Lebenswelt
        itself;
    2.   the realm of the objectivism of the
        sciences which remain presupposed in
        the real existing world; and

3. the subjectivity of the transcendental life of consciousness which precedes and constitutes the world[23].

But the phenomenological investigation of the Lebenswelt, even though it brackets off the scientific categories, does not deny the life-world in which man receives his experiences.

7. Heidegger's Method

Heidegger understands 'phenomenology' as a method. It, rather, expresses a maxim which can be formulated as "To the things themselves" in contrast to all the unsupported constructions, the accidental findings, the blind acceptance of concepts verified merely in appearance, and the pseudo-questions which often for generations strut about as problems[24]. "Phenomenon" for him means something "which shows itself" or "what shows itself in person" or "what is manifest." Heidegger does not accept Husserl's eidetic reduction, because the meaning of Being in which he is interested is not some general essence, but is something fundamentally individualized, particularly in the case of human being. He rejects the phenomeno-logical reduction also in the form of bracketing existence,

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[23]J.J. Kockelmans, A First Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology (Duquesne University Press, 1967), p. 311.

[24]H. Spiegelberg, Ibid., p. 320.

for the suspension of the being of phenomenon cannot

be of any help in exploring the nature of Being. Thus,

for Heidegger, eidetic and transcendental phenomenology

were useless, "at worst falsifying, when existence and

being were at stake." Heidegger distinguishes the

"phenomenological concept of phenomenon" from the "phe-

nomenon" in the ordinary sense. The ordinary concept

understands "phenomenon as that which shows itself in

itself." The phenomenological concept refers to that which

is encountered through that which shows itself. Heidegger

gives the illustration of the "symptoms of a disease." The

symptoms show themselves. But in showing themselves, they

indicate something which does not show itself. Heidegger

thinks that the example gives us an idea of "appearance."

But it announces something else. Thus it is a "phenomenon."

Taking the "phenomenon" and "logos" together Heidegger's

phenomenology means a method of making us see what is other-

wise concealed, "of taking the hidden out of the hiding and

of detecting it as "unhidden," i.e., as truth or (a-letheia).

It is the method of uncovering the hiding or "interpreta-

tion" which Heidegger also calls the "methodical meaning of

the phenomenological description." Heidegger defines philo-

sophy as "universal phenomenological ontology based on

the hermeneutics of human being."[25] For him, phenomenology

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[25]H. Spiegelberg, _Ibid._, p. 322.

is the one and the only philosophical method. Heidegger's phenomenology is also called _hermeneutics_ or hermeneutical phenomenology. Hermeneutics tries to study the relation between man's actions and the goal of his life.

We have seen that in the later writings of Husserl the concept of _Lebenswelt_ occupies an important place. According to him, we must return to the world as it manifests itself in pure experience of the _Lebenswelt_. Prior to the phenomenological investigation, the phenomenological reduction, and the constitutive analysis, we have to find the guiding clues by means of a new reduction which takes us from the cultural world as well as the scientific world to the original _Lebenswelt_. According to Heidegger, Being-in-the-world is the fundamental structure of _Dasein_*. His main task is to show the original relation between _Dasein_ and the world and to show "how _Dasein_, properly speaking, is mundane and how it has a world."

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* The word _Dasein_ means "being there." Heidegger
  uses this technical term to refer to human
  being. Man is a being with a distinctive
  mode of existence, because man has a possibi-
  lity and an awareness of _Being_ in his own
  existence. Heidegger wants to analyze the
  nature of _Dasein_ with a view to clarifying
  the nature of _Being_.

8. Sartre, Husserl, and Heidegger

From the foregoing analysis of Husserl's and
Heidegger's method it is clear that Sartre's method
contains elements from both of them. Still, it would
be a mistake to say that Sartre simply combines the
elements arbitrarily. On the contrary, he has effected
a novel synthesis due to which it is possible to have
a deeper understanding of human reality. Husserl's
phenomenological method is mainly concerned with the
analysis of the structures of consciousness that constitute
the world. But he does not show how that consciousness
is connected with the main purpose of life. Heidegger
shows how human life and purpose reveal the meaning
of Being, for _Dasein_ is a manifestation of Being. But
though Heidegger speaks of human purpose, goal, and
possibility, he never shows that human being can have a
purpose because of the spontaneous nature of consciousness.
Heidegger starts with the purposive nature of _Dasein_.
Dasein can have a meaning, because it has consciousness,
or because it is consciousness. Only through such
consciousness, can the different layers of meaning that
are hidden be uncovered. Sartre truly points out that
it is the nature of consciousness to be intentional,
to point to other things that are not conscious, but of
which it is conscious. By understanding the nature of

consciousness, we can realize what human reality is.
Sartre reveals the structures of consciousness with
reference to the final purposes of life that gives meaning
to all those structures. He shows also the develop-
ment of consciousness in relation to the environment
and to the ultimate possibility which can be understood
through phenomenological investigations.

It is not necessary in all these cases always to be
restricted to the given or just the phenomena. The
given may carry a meaning within itself, and such mean-
ing is to be uncovered with reference to the purpose
of life. The purpose originates in consciousness and
though it may not yet be present as an actuality, yet
consciousness is aware of its presence as a possibility.
Purpose cannot be present like an ordinary object. It
rather works like an attraction towards which the indi-
vidual is pulled. Consciousness feels its presence even
in the given phenomena. When Sartre defines self as
the goal[27] or the value, towards which the consciousness
is striving, he means that the given can be understood
with reference to the goal of life. Thus the given
manifests to some extent its relation to purpose. Hei-
degger does not establish how Dasein can have a purpose,

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[27]J.P. Sartre, B.N., p. 92.

because he never analyzes the structure of consciousness
which alone can explain relation to the purpose of life.

These statements about Sartre can be clearly under-
stood, if we try to give some examples of the appli-
cation of Sartre's phenomenological method. We can,
however, distinguish the following elements in Sartre's
method.

1. The notion of intentionality
2. Phenomenological epoché in a modified sense,
   according to which only that which is
   given in experience is to be accepted.
3. Phenomenological description
4. Idea of human reality
5. Hermeneutics, in order to understand
   what the phenomena signify or how
   they are related to the meaning
   of life.

   (A note has been added at the end of
   the chapter to point out the sense
   in which we can talk of hermeneutics in
   Sartre as distinguished from Heidegger's
   and Dilthey's.)
6. Phenomenological understanding of
   the development of conscious human
   reality through different aspects
   of life and environment towards the
   final goal.

A form of such phenomenological understanding is
found in Sartre's Existential Psychoanalysis, which tries
to establish the authentic human existence with refer-
ence to the ultimate goal of life. This existential
psychoanalysis furnishes an adequate understanding of
the relation between consciousness and object or for-

itself and in-itself, consciousness and other human
beings, their relations and conflicts. These relations
according to many commentators, show the dialectical
relationship of the Hegelian triads. So they think that
in understanding these relationships Sartre is applying
some form of Hegelian dialectic, but such interpreta-
tion, we hope to show, is misdirected.

9. Hegelian Interpretation of Sartre

The relations which Sartre describes in his Exis-
tential Psychoanalysis may reveal dialectic, but it is
an existential dialectic. The idea of existential dia-
lectic can be understood if we take into account Kier-
kegaard's criticism of Hegel.[28] Kierkegaard suggests
that one cannot enter a different existential plane with
merely the help of logical contradictions. The ethical
plane may be opposed to the aesthetic plane, but one
does not understand it simply by the rules of logic.
One has to live in the level of aesthetic existence to
know that it can not give one a fulfilled sense of
existence. One enters a different plane of existence by
a leap of faith, as Kierkegaard would say. Similarly,
Sartre can say that the individual experiences different

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[28] R. Bretall (ed.), Concluding Unscientific Post-
script in A Kierkegaardian Anthology, Modern Library,
N.Y., 1936, p. 196.

types of contradictions, such as the conflict between
individuals, the incomplete sense of existence in the
form of for-itself, the constant interplay between
authentic and inauthentic existence, etc. Such experiences
as these produce in the life of the individual a dia-
lectic. It may be said that it has a similarity to
logical dialectic, as all dialectic is a case of contra-
diction or an opposition between different poles, whether
that is logical or actual. Actual dialectic can give
us formulations of a logical shape, but actuality can
not be generated from logical dialectic. Sartre shows
how the dialectical relationships of the different forms
of existence can be understood through phenomenological
investigations. His uniqueness consists in giving a
phenomenological account of the dynamic and spontaneous
development of human reality towards the ultimate possi-
bility.

We have made these comments about Sartre, without
establishing them with reference to Sartre's application
of his method. We can point out the validity of these
statements, if we take into account some examples of
Sartre's phenomenological investigations.

Sartre states in the beginning of his <u>Psychology
of the Imagination</u> that there is a basic difference
between describing an image and drawing conclusions

regarding its nature. The first duty of the psychologist
is to formulate into concepts what is immediate and
certain. He has to ignore theories. We have to know
nothing about the image but only what analysis can teach
us. The method is simple:

> "We shall produce images, reflect upon
> them, describe them; that is, attempt
> to determine and to classify their
> distinctive characteristics."[29]

This method, by which Sartre analyzes the image-conscious-
ness, also accepts the intentionality of consciousness.
Sartre describes the characteristics of image by pheno-
menological description of what is immediately given.

In Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions, Sartre points
out that emotion cannot be understood apart from its
signification. He says that emotion signifies, in its
own way, the whole of human consciousness or human
reality. But human reality is not considered in ab-
straction from the world. Psychology of emotion is
interested in man in situations. Phenomenology to which
psychology is subordinate, can give us a positive study
of man in situations. It can elucidate the notions of
man, world, and being in the world.[30] Sartre's study of

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[29]J.P. Sartre, Psychology of the Imagination,
p. 4.

[30]J.P. Sartre, Emotions, p. 18.

emotion shows how it can be definitely understood, if
we know the purpose the emotion is going to serve.
Emotion is a transformation of the world,

> "When the paths traced out become difficult
> or when we see no path, we can no longer
> live in so urgent and difficult a world.
> All the ways are barred. However, we must
> act. So we try to change the world, that
> is, to live as if the connection between
> things and their potentialities were
> not ruled by the deterministic processes,
> but by magic."[31]

This shows that the behavioral phenomena in an emotion
may be truly given elements, but we cannot understand
them unless we realize what they signify. The signi-
fication is hidden in the phenomena, but they are pointed
to by the behavioral phenomena. This shows that Sartre
is not using "phenomenology" in the strict Husserlian
sense. Rather, his main idea is to show how human
reality can be properly grasped. He thinks that such
an understanding is possible, by laying bare the purpose.

In _Being and Nothingness_, many cases are found
where Sartre is following the hermeneutical method.
When he analyzes the structure of consciousness as some-
thing which is not what it is, he tries to explain his
statement by pointing out that consciousness is not a
material thing. So it cannot be what it is. At the same

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[31]_Ibid_., p. 58-59.

time he states that consciousness is what it is not,
because it has a possibility. The nature of consciousness
cannot be understood, if we do not try to grasp the
nature of this possibility or purpose. This possibility
is concealed by the given phenomena, but it is also
signified by the given.

We can understand Sartre's phenomenology, if we
follow his account of the relations of consciousness and
the world. This can be called dynamic phenomenology,
because Sartre is concerned to show how the authentic
project of human life and its development can be under-
stood through man's relation with the world and other
human beings. Though the world is independent of con-
sciousness, the world as such has no meaning for the
individual. It is the purpose of the individual which
creates a world for him. Though the individual has to
accept the facticity of the objective world, man can
construct a situation out of the objective factors.
It is the situation in which man lives.[32] It cannot
be denied that the facticity of the world has some influ-
ence over consciousness, but Sartre would always say
that man's freedom has the power to reorganize the situ-
ation. The facts that we know in our experience are

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[32]B.N., p. 461.

not objective phenomena as such, but are to be understood in terms of human purpose. The phenomena obtained in our experience lead us to understand the situation, but the situation can be fully grasped only in terms of the project. It shows that Sartre is concerned with the phenomenology of the existential human being insofar as he tries to establish his relation with the world. This is something novel in the history of phenomenology, for here phenomenology is applied to the sphere of the dynamic activities of life.

In Sartre's consideration of the problem of the relations with the other, the dynamism of his phenomenology is evident. His phenomenological study reveals to us the various attitudes the individual displays towards the other. Such attitudes cannot be properly interpreted, unless the individual's activities are analyzed with reference to the individual's situation or existence.

The idea of a dynamic phenomenology is best illustrated in Sartre's conception of existential psychoanalysis. To understand the individual for-itself, we have to realize the fundamental project, which is, to possess the world which the for-itself is lacking.[33] Because the for-itself is always on the move and always changing, it does not

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[33]Ibid., p. 565.

have the totality that will give it peace and tranquility.
Thus the for-itself feels a lack; it cannot reach the
totality towards which it is striving. The for-itself
wants a unification with the world, and it may be that
the attempt towards unification can be apprehended through
a particular contingent object. How the for-itself
wants to realize the fundamental project, how the ulti-
mate project can illuminate the whole of individual's
life, and how it is to be understood in synthetic connec-
tion with other subordinate projects - these are the most
important aspects of dynamic phenomenology. Sartre is
exploring all these aspects in his existential psycho-
analysis. He wants to discover the fundamental project
of the for-itself. As such discovery is possible, only
by a phenomenological analysis of the nature of desire
for a particular object, analysis of desire is a major
theme in his theory of psychoanalysis.[34] The discovery
of the various desires in man's life leads to the under-
standing of the fundamental project. But at the same
time, the various desires are the phenomenological data
that signify the ultimate project in the light of which
subordinate projects are fully grasped.

We have termed Sartre's phenomenology a dynamic
one, for it tries to understand the nature of human life

[34]Ibid., p. 564.

in its development to realize the ultimate projects of
life. Husserl's interest is understanding the nature of
essences through the analysis of consciousness. Hei-
degger is interested in the nature of _Being_, for which
a preliminary analysis of _Dasein_ is necessary. But
Sartre tries to understand the role of consciousness
in life and the world phenomenologically.

An examination of some of these examples from
Sartre's major philosophical work _Being and Nothingness_
would show clearly, we hope, that Sartre's phenomeno-
logical method, though inherited from Husserl and Hei-
degger, advances beyond both of them to establish a
dynamic phenomenology. In it the individual's relations
with the world, other human beings and realization of the
fundamental project are phenomenologically studied.
We have already tried to show that the phenomena are to
be taken into account, not only as they are given in
experience, but also as signifying what they really point
towards, along with the dynamic development of the indi-
vidual's life. We have also tried to establish that
the so-called dialectical relations of the individual
with the different aspects of life are not abstract and
logical, but existential. Sartre's study appears to be
dialectical for another reason, namely, that
the life of consciousness is dialectical; but that it is

not a dialectic of logic in which every contradiction is
resolved in a synthesis. Perhaps, the contradictions of
an individual's life are never resolved. This is what
a phenomenological study of consciousness shows. So
it would be a mistake to call Sartre's dialectic of the
for-itself and in-itself which moves through the concrete
experiences of life a form of Hegelian dialectic. Sartre
has been criticized for introducing many concepts that
have no phenomenological basis. Let us try to see if
such a criticism is just.

Natanson's criticism is that Sartre cannot derive
Being from phenomenological analysis, for he does not
make any phenomenological epoché.[35] We may point out
that if an epoché is to be made, then Being itself has
to be bracketed. But even Husserl in his theory of
Lebenswelt does not make any epoché of the being of the
world in which we live and have our experience. Rather,
he wants to understand how the world has its origin in
experience. In transcendental phenomenology, he speaks
of a bracketing of the natural world to show how the
structures of such a world are constituted in conscious-
ness. But Natanson nowhere discusses the Lebenswelt of
Husserl. Though he claims that Sartre's idea of Being
is not derived phenomenologically, he himself states,

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[35]Natanson, Critique, p. 70.

> "We are able to have knowledge of this trans-
> phenomenality of <u>Being</u>, since it is co-
> extensive with the phenomenon of Being
> and makes itself known to us by 'over-
> flowing'."[36]

Does not this statement make it clear that Being is derived phenomenologically? Natanson rejects Sartre's "ontological argument," though it is based on Husserl's theory of intentionality, as Sartre has not adopted transcendental reduction. But it seems that inten-tionality has nothing to do with reduction, for Husserl first accepts intentionality, which shows that conscious-ness is always consciousness of an object, and then tries to show how the intended object is constituted by the transcendental consciousness. Natanson rejects Sartre's conception of the existence of the other, for "... the other is encountered, but not constituted by the ego." But the existence of the other can be explained on the basis of intentionality which makes it clear that when I encounter the other, I encounter him as existent because I am conscious of him. Natanson calls Sartre's method quasi-phenomenological, but he never explains what he means by that term, for according to him, nothing can be called phenomenology if it does not con-form to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.

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[36]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 70.

The view of Natanson is also accepted by Hartmann,
who points out the parallels between Hegel's pheno-
menology and Sartre's phenomenological method citing
specific illustrations. His main argument is that Sartre
borrows the terms like "nothingness," "for-itself,"
"in-itself," "the other" from Hegel. But while Hegel
reaches a satisfactory solution through his logical
dialectic, Sartre fails to achieve a perfect harmony
of the conflicting terms.[37] This remark seems to be
based on a misunderstanding of the existential outlook
of Sartre, for Sartre wants to reveal to us what the
phenomena of experience show, and he is not interested
in an abstract logical synthesis. George L. Kline has
shown that Sartre's categories are nothing but the
French translations of the German terms.[38] But this
list of parallel concepts does not prove that Sartre is
a Hegelian. The concepts have assumed a concrete dimen-
sion in the hands of Sartre. It is their phenomenolo-
gically derived concrete nature in which Sartre is inter-
ested. Sartre has shown this in his treatment of the
Hegelian concept of nothingness. He points out that
according to Hegel, being because of its empty nature

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[37]Hartman, Sartre's Ontology, p. 135.

[38]Kline, Rediscovery, p. 125.

implies negation.[39] But for Sartre, nothingness is an

experienced phenomenon and this can be explained against

the background of expectation which is also an experienced

fact.[40] This is because in expectation what is expected,

negates the present situation or there is a denial of

the expected. In both cases, there is an experience of

nothingness. All the alleged Hegelian parallels in

Sartre's philosophy can be explained with reference to

the concrete experiences of phenomena.

10. Merleau-Ponty's criticism of Sartre

Merleau-Ponty points out that Sartre tries to

explain every thing in the world with the help of

his dualism between the for-itself and the in-itself.

Though Sartre speaks of the concrete nature of experience,

this sharp dualism on which Sartre's ontology is based

is abstract and false, for in life, the for-itself and

the in-itself are intermixed. All our experiences are

affected by this internal relation between consciousness

and body.[41] Against Merleau-Ponty, it can be pointed

out that Sartre, although he analyzes the for-itself and

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[39]Sartre, _B.N._, p. 13.

[40]_Ibid._, p. 24.

[41]Sartre, _Ibid._, p.3.

the in-itself separately, does not think of the separation as rigid. Man himself is an embodied consciousness, and Sartre wants to consider man as being-in-the-world.[42] Now it may be true that man's experiences are influenced by his nature as an embodied subject. But at the same time it cannot be denied that consciousness is not wholly body for it can overcome the influence of the body and establish new relations, taking into account the facticity of the body. Merleau-Ponty gives body too much importance, as a consequence of which, consciousness lacks an independence of its own. In this respect, Sartre's point of view seems to be nearer to experience. Consciousness, Sartre would say, makes use of the body, though the body is the center through which consciousness can operate. The charge that Sartre is a rationalist of the Cartesian type (as he is interpreting all aspects of life with the help of an apriori dualistic ontology) is also false. Sartre does not accept "for-itself" and "in-itself" as Cartesian innate ideas; rather, he accepts them to be true, because these are revealed by our experience.

We have tried to establish that Sartre is a phenomenologist, though he differs greatly from Husserl and

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[42] J.P. Sartre, *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Heidegger. At the same time he has accepted some of their basic ideas to develop a dynamic phenomenology of human reality. Though Sartre does not mention Husserl's Lebenswelt, he speaks of Heidegger's Being-in-the-world, and in the chapter 'Body' in Being and Nothingness, he speaks of the lived experience of the body in which consciousness lives the body. It appears certain that he agrees more with the mundane phenomenology of Husserl. Sartre's position can, perhaps, be more clearly understood, if we try to show the parallels between his phenomenology and another mundane phenomenology, that of Merleau-Ponty. In contemporary philosophical studies, linguistic analysis is another philosophical method and perhaps, a study of contrast with that method can throw some light on Sartre's phenomenological method. In the concluding pages of this chapter, we will try to show how Sartre's method compares with that of Merleau-Ponty and Linguistic Philosophy.

11. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Linguistic Analysis

Merleau-Ponty follows the phenomenological tradition of Husserl's last phase. He was inspired very much by the publication of Husserl's Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology in the new international magazine Philosophia (Belgrade) in 1936. He studied also Husserl's later unpublished manuscripts, to which he

refers extensively in his second work, Phénoménologie
de la Perception. Merleau-Ponty differs from Sartre
in the fact that he rejects the latter's dualism between
man and the "things" or between the free cogito and
Being-in-itself. According to him, Sartre's phenomeno-
logy suppresses the world of perception in its unity.
He rejects Sartre's theory of hostility between the
individuals, for he believes that the relations are not
of those of head-on collisions between two consciousnesses,
but the "dove-tailing into one another of two experiences
which, without ever coinciding, stem from one and the
same world."[43] Sartre accepts the Being-in-itself as
something opaque, the meaning of which depends entirely
on human freedom. Merleau-Ponty thinks that meaning is
born in the interplay of the human subject and the
objective world, with which the subject is inherently
related. He speaks of a very intimate connection with
which the body participates in the world. The objective
world itself is indeterminate and ambiguous, but it
assumes a meaning through the interaction between the
subject and the world. In Sartre's thought, Being-in-
itself being as it is, does not have the capacity to
effect a meaning. Meaning, according to Sartre, would

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[43]H. Spiegelberg, Ibid., p. 521.

always be definite, while Merleau-Ponty would say, the

world being indeterminate, the meaning that arises out

of the joint co-operation between the subject and the

object has always a tendency to be ambiguous. These

are the differences between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty,

as revealed by the latter's criticism of Sartre, in

Les Aventures de la dialectique and le Visible et

L'invisible.

It can be pointed out against Merleau-Ponty that

Sartre does not deny the role of the objective world in

the determination of meaning. The human purpose creates

a situation on the basis of the factually given. It

is also true that the situation does not have a permanent

meaning. Human freedom can have a new choice and under

the influence of choice, the same fact or phenomenon

can have a different meaning. Of course, it is true

that Merleau-Ponty gives greater importance to the role

of the indeterminate Being. He surely does not want to

say that Being-in-itself alone will give rise to meaning.

Nor does Sartre say that meanings are creations of human

freedom, without any objective basis. Merleau-Ponty

has given the objective world a more important place,

though he speaks of the inseparability of the subject

and object. Sartre, on the other hand, gives consciousness

a more important place, though he, too, accepts the

theory of <u>Being-in-the-world</u>. It is difficult to say
which is really more important in the determination
of meaning.

Merleau-Ponty gives an account of his phenomeno-
logical method in the preface to the <u>Phénoménologie de
la perception</u> in which he uses the principles of Husserl
in a rather novel way. He talks of phenomenological
description, which for Husserl, meant a scientifically
rigorous account of the phenomena. But it is understood
by Merleau-Ponty to be a return to the <u>Lebenswelt</u>, the
world as met in lived experience. But he refuses to
trace back this life-world to its roots in the subject.
By phenomenological reduction, Merleau-Ponty means the
abandonment of the habitual ties and scientific pre-
judices. He thinks that such attitude will lead us to
the spontaneity of the lived world. In his concept of
eidetic reduction, he wants to show the living relations
of experience that establish the reality of essences
in their intrinsic connection with the existent fact.
Merleau-Ponty broadens the concept of intentionality
which makes all relations of the embodied subject to the
world and other human beings intentional. Lastly, he
denounces the phenomenology of subjectivity and establi-
shes in its place a phenomenology of the subject that
is 'être-au-monde' (<u>Being-in-the-world</u>).

If we contrast these basic ideas of Merleau-Ponty's
phenomenology with those of Sartre, we find that there
are some fundamental similarities. Both accept the idea
of Being-in-the-world, though it may not be true to say
that both got the idea from the same source. It is
more likely that Sartre borrowed the idea of Being-in-
the-world from Heidegger, who was influenced by Husserl.
At least, Sartre mentions the name of Heidegger in
connection with the concept of Being-in-the-world, while
Merleau-Ponty refers to Husserl's Lebenswelt. Both
accept Husserl's phenomenological description.
By its help, Merleau-Ponty wants to uncover the struc-
ture of the Lebenswelt. But it is not clear whether
Sartre refers to the Lebenswelt. Of course, Sartre
speaks of the description of the phenomena as they are
given, but it is not clear whether the given are to
be studied in the context of the presupposed natural
world of the scientific belief. But in The Transcendence
of the Ego, where Sartre rejects the transcendental ego,
as it is not given in pre-reflective experience, it seems
probable that he wants to accept only those that are
immediately given, and not the scientific presupposi-
tions. Merleau-Ponty's concept of eidetic reduction is
some sort of reversal of Husserl's eidetic reduction.
It manifests one of Sartre's basic ideas common with

other existentialist thinkers, "Existence precedes
essence". Sartre calls essence the principle of the
series of the phenomena which shows the essence as some-
thing to be understood in terms of concrete experience.[45]
When Sartre speaks of consciousness striving towards the
ultimate goal, it seems that he also is using inten-
tionality in a broad sense. His idea of consciousness is
to be what it is not, of which it is conscious. These
similarities between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are not
intended to tone down the differences which have already
been noted. Only it is to be remembered that Merleau-
Ponty gives a systematic and definitive exposition of the
new idea of phenomenology which both seem to accept.
But Sartre is more inclined to analyze the structures
of consciousness, for even though consciousness is in
the world, all experiences are present to the conscious-
ness.

Though Merleau-Ponty analyzed the principles of
phenomenology, in his earlier books, he was not quite
ready to establish an ontology. On the other hand, he
was examining the traditional metaphysical assumptions
to show whether they can be based on the phenomenology
of perception of the subject who is in the world.

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[45]Sartre, Ibid., p. xlvi.

Whether all this subject-object participation leads to
some <u>Being</u> which can be discovered through the pheno-
menological explorations is not very clear in the <u>Phéno-</u>
<u>ménologie de la perception</u>. In his unfinished work,
<u>Le Visible et l'Invisible</u>, he reaches a theory of <u>Being</u>
through his phenomenological investigations of the re-
versibility of tactual and visual perception. But
though he gives us an idea of the <u>subject-object Being</u>, he
never clarifies the differences between subject and
object clearly, because, for him, there is a reversibi-
lity between the two. Sartre has, on the other hand,
given a clear picture of the structure of the subject and
the world, as <u>Being-in-the-world</u>.

It is really difficult to find a common meeting
ground between Sartre and Linguistic philosophers, for
linguistic philosophy believes that philosophical pro-
blems have their origin in misuse of words. But for
Sartre, philosophical problems are far deeper. They
cannot be dissolved just by pointing out the right use
of words. Even when we are aware that ordinary language
conceals the differences between the uses of words
and we are shown the contextual distinctions, our philo-
sophical questioning is not satisfied. Sartre would
rather say that philosophical problems are connected
with the very absurd existence of man. Man is thrown

into a world where his goals are always threatened with
destruction. But the linguistic philosopher returns
to the concrete uses of the words that are supposed to
give rise to philosophical problems. Such a philosopher
is not concerned with the abstract meanings, but the
concrete situations of life in which the words are used.
An analysis of the concrete cases of the application of
words resembles phenomenological description. Perhaps,'
this has led Austin to claim in his A Plea for Excuses
linguistic method as "Linguistic Phenomenology."
This love for the concrete and rejection of the abstract
and unexamined presuppositions are some of the common
features between linguistic philosophy and phenomeno-
logy. As Sartre belongs to the phenomenological group,
he shares them in common with the linguistic philosophers.

But both Sartre's basic terms 'Being' and 'Nothing-
ness' have been criticized by the linguistic philosophers.
Carnap and Ayer have criticized Heidegger's and Sartre's
conceptions respectively.[46] In spite of their criticism
that terms like "Being" and "Nothing" represent uncon-
ventional uses of language, it remains a fact that Sartre
is interested in the ontology of human existence, which
is Being-within-the-world. As such, he wants to analyze

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[46]A.J. Ayer, Novelist-Philosophers in Horizon,
xii, p. 18.

the structures of <u>Being</u> and the nature of <u>Nothingness</u>. But Sartre also believes that language has an ambiguity which can generate philosophical problems. He likes, however, to see that the problems are traced back to the problem of existence and purpose, which create the ambiguity in the use of words.

We have, thus, tried to give an idea of Sartre's philosophical outlook regarding his method until the publication of <u>Critique of Dialectical Reason</u>. In the latter book, he is concerned with the role of man in society, which is more of a problem for social philosophy than of ontology. The method which he follows there can be called "<u>Existential dialectical method with a phenomenological concreteness</u>." It is called by Sartre "the method of totalization" or "the <u>progressive-regressive method</u>."[47] In our discussion we will be mainly be concerned with the phenomenological method as used in the earlier works, though we will try to show that the earlier method is an implicit framework of the later developments.

12. <u>Remarks on Hermeneutics</u>

We mentioned something about hermeneutical elements in Sartre's method earlier. In this section, we are trying to clarify the notion of hermeneutics as found in Dilthey

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[47] J.P. Sartre, <u>Search for a Method</u> (Trans. Hazel Barnes, Vintage, 1968), p. 85.

and Heidegger. Also, we want to see in what sense the
notion can applied to Sartre's method.

Dilthey begins his hermeneutic method by a criticism
of Schleirmacher. Schleirmacher thinks that the indivi-
dual is an embodiment of the eternity of God. Dilthey
believes that the meaning of the individual is to be
discovered in his activities. We can understand the
unity of life, as the unity of a work of art. The factors
which affect the character of human life may come as well
from without as from within. The final unity crystalizes,
through the development of life. Dilthey is interested
in the relations between the inner life of the mind and
its outward expression in a visible form. The inner
unity of an individual's mind can be built on its outward
expressions. All interpretation involves the understanding
of the parts with reference to the whole and vice versa.
In understanding a literary work, we have to know the
language of the work, the circumstances, the ideas, and
the customs and the kind of society in which the artist
thought and lived. But the literary work differs from a
datum of natural science. In a work of art, we have to
understand the relation between the expressions and the
expressed. The meanings of words are specifically deter-
mined only by the context. The parts of a work of art
give us a preliminary sense of the whole, and the signi-

ficance of the whole helps determine precisely the sense
of the parts. Understanding then, proceeds to the crea-
tive mind; the particular work has to be seen in relation
to the life, outlook, and circumstances of the author. In
that case, the work appears no longer as a self-contained
unit, but as one moment in the living process which is
the history of art. Again, as understanding is not the
work of logical reflection, it is free from the limitations
of logical reflection and operates with the same creative
imagination from which the literary work originally pro-
ceeded. It can relive factors which were not present
to the explicit consciousness of the writer himself. As
Dilthey points out, "... at the root of every poem is an
idea; not, of course, a concept or set of propositions
consciously held by the writer and deliberately embodied
in his work, but a form of _unity in experience_, which his
creative imagination has brought without reflecting upon
it and proceeds, still without reflection, to express."[48]
"The idea (not as an abstract concept, but) in the sense
of an unconscious system, active in the organization of
the work and understood from its inner life is really
present; a poet need not be or rather never will entirely
be conscious of it; the interpreter elicits it, and

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[48]H.A. Hodges, _The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey_
(Routledge and Kegan Paul, London) p. 141.

that is perhaps the highest triumph of hermeneutics."[49]

Dilthey's idea of hermeneutics is clearly connected
with his conception of lived experience. "Erlebnis
denotes a part of the life-process ... which, teleologi-
cally regarded has a unity by virtue of structural relations
among its parts and especially the "presentness" of the
earlier of them in the latter."[50] A compound lived
experience cannot be apprehended as a whole without a
conscious recognition that some part of what is appre-
hended, is not present. Even a simple lived experience
may include some application of both of the past and
of the future.

Heidegger's hermeneutics is concerned with the
apprehension of _Being_. The given phenomena are studied
in relation to what they conceal, for that which is hidden
constitutes the meaning of what appears. The perfect
understanding depends on the relation between the given
and the uncovered truth about _Being_. In that respect,
the true nature of man is given, not in so far as the
life he lives, but in its openness to _Being_. Dilthey
is more interested in discovering the unity of human life

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[49] _Ibid._ p. 142.

[50] _Ibid._ p. 40.

that is expressed through the different aspects of
life. But he speaks also of the hidden idea that is not
revealed to the creator of the work of art, but can be
apprehended through reliving his lived experience through
imagination. Thus, both Heidegger and Dilthey emphasize
on the purpose of the life which is not always clear, but
which is to be understood through the given phenomena.
Dilthey uses the word "phenomenology" in his own sense
which he calls "reflections on the self" in order to
understand the unity of purpose in life. Heidegger
uses "Husserl's phenomenological description," but he
is not limited to mere description. Rather the descrip-
tion is subordinate to interpretation, for the phenomena
point to a hidden truth which cannot be understood with-
out a hermeneutic method.

Sartre does not speak of any revelation of Being
in Heidegger's sense. But his studies in Emotion and
Existential Psycho-analysis point out that any action of
the individual is to realize a project. Many such pro-
jects are constituted in a hierarchial order in relation
to the ultimate project, which gives unity to the whole
life. Sartre does not say that the ultimate project is
totally hidden from us, but he could say that we do not
have a clear consciousness of it. So, it is to be
grasped from a study of the individual projects which,

again, can be understood better in relation to the
fundamental project. What are expressions to Dilthey is
the individual project to Sartre, and the unity of the
expressions is equal to the ultimate project. As in
Heidegger, the phenomena indicate the way to _Being_ which
can be phenomenologically studied, the particular pro-
jects lead us to the ultimate project. Perhaps, in
this sense, we can talk of hermeneutic method in Sartre.

CHAPTER 2

SARTRE'S BASIC NOTIONS

1. The Order of Investigation and the Main Question

Sartre develops his ontology through phenomenological investigations, as we have tried to show in the last chapter. His ontology gets a definite shape in Being and Nothingness. But the concepts he finally arrives at in this book have already been indicated in the earlier works.

We think that Sartre's basic conception is "Being-in-the-world." Man as an existential being finds himself in the world. In this respect, his Transcendence of the ego and Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions are more important for us from the point of view of ontological understanding, than his Imagination works. It is in these two first mentioned books that Sartre emphasizes the idea that consciousness is in the world. If the ego is to be found anywhere, it is to be discovered in the world and not in the hidden transcendental center of consciousness. The book on Emotion also emphasizes the idea that consciousness wants to realize a project in the concrete situations of the world. But in Being and Nothingness, Sartre tries to

understand <u>Being-in-the-world</u> (as it seems to us) with re-
ference to the different aspects of Being. The question
may arise here: are <u>Being-for-itself</u> and <u>Being-in-itself</u>
two aspects of Being, or are they two different regions of
Being, or are they two different kinds of Being? We will
try to answer these questions in the concluding section
of this chapter. Though Sartre discusses them separately,
giving the impression that they are ultimately separate,
he does not in fact think them to be so. His main concern
is to show how consciousness and the world can be really
related to each other. This is the question which he
raises at the end of the introduction to <u>Being and Nothing-
ness</u>. Gilbert Varet in his <u>L'ontologie de Sartre</u> points
out, "Ainsi, l'être-en-soi et l'être-pour-soi ne sont plus
coupes l'un de l'autre. Ils ne le sont pa davantage que
le phénomenone et la chose; en realité, ils sont constament
correlatifs, l'un etant la dimension de transcéndance de
l'autre."(p.21)

The questions about the relation between the two
modes of <u>Being</u> are the most important ones in Sartre's
whole philosophy. Consciousness may be related to the
world, yet consciousness lacks the properties of <u>Being-
in-itself</u>. So, consciousness is existentially separate
from the world, though consciousness has a relation with

the world. This existential separation gives rise to two different regions of <u>Being</u>, and the efforts of Sartre are directed to reach an existential harmony that would establish that both are included in Being-in-the-world. Sartre's ontology is existentially oriented, and the ontological question can not be studied apart from the existential problem. It should be pointed out that Sartre's <u>Being and Nothingness</u> can be better called an existential ontology than a phenomenological ontology; for though phenomenological investigations have prepared the way for Sartre's ontological theories, the latter are established as existential structures. Existentially, consciousness and the world are separate. So they, though being related to each other in concrete reality, are thought as two ontological regions, in spite of the fact that there is a living unity between them. Their ontological unity can be understood only when it is realized that behind their existential estrangement they have a living bond. Sartre's existential concern has not led him in that direction, even though he understands the real, intimate conection of consciousness with the world. Thus, though <u>Being-in-the-world</u> is, for Sartre, the point from which he starts, he erects an ontological structure on the existential experience of consciousness and the world. He develops an ontology of <u>Being-for-itself</u> and

Being-in-itself. If we have to understand Sartre's ontology, we have to see how these two basic concepts are arrived at by him. It is not necessary to mention that these concepts are established by phenomenological investigations of the existential structures. In giving an exposition of these concepts, we will be mainly concerned with Sartre's treatment in the introduction to Being and Nothingness, though occasionally we will make references to the earlier phemenological studies, where some of the ideas related to the basic notions had their rudimentary formations. We have tried to discuss whether the criticism that he has grafted a preconceived ontology on phenomenological analysis is valid. We have also tried to show that Sartre's ideas are phenomenologically based. This was one of the main tasks that we preformed in the first chapter. But if we forget that these phenomenological studies emanate from an existential basis, many of the notions of Sartre may appear to be empty. It will be our main task in this chapter to show that it is Sartre's existential phenomenology and not some preconceived theory which has given rise to his ontology. Another thing we shall try to point out is that Sartre's dualism has to be understood with reference to his basic concept of Being-in-the-world, which is the more fundamental entity, while the dualistic concepts are mere abstractions, if we

forget their relation to the ultimate notion of <u>Being-in-the-world</u>.

2. <u>Rejection of the traditional dualism</u>

Before establishing consciousness and objects as the two ontological realms, Sartre is examining the different types of dualism held in philosophy. He wants to determine whether all of these dualisms can be reduced to one fundamental type.

Sartre says that modern thought has tried to reduce existence to a series of appearances that manifest it. The aim has been to replace a certain number of dualisms "by the monism of phenomenon."[1] The question arises: Has the attempt been successful? The dualism between the interior and the exterior of the object is, of course, eliminated, for "the appearances which manifest the existence are neither interior nor exterior: they are all equal, they all refer to other appearances and none of them is privileged."[2] Force was previously supposed to be a metaphysical entity behind its effects. But actually, it is the totality of effects. An electric current is "nothing but the unity of the physical-chemical actions which manifest it. It is true that one of the actions alone does not sufficiently

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[1] <u>B.N.</u>, p.xlv

[2] <u>Ibid.</u>, p.xlv

reveal it. But it refers to the total series of actions

and nothing behind them."[3]

Thus, the dualism between appearance and being no

longer holds logical status within philosophy. Appearance

refers to the total series of appearances, and not to a

hidden reality. For so long, appearance was thought to be

illusion and error or rather something which is not. But

once we reject the idea of being-behind-the-appearances,

appearances become full positively, and being is measured

in terms of appearances. The being of an existent is

exactly what it appears to be. Thus, we arrive at the

conception of the phenomenon such as is found in the

"phenomenology" of Husserl or Heidegger. The phenomenon

is relative-absolute - relative because it appears to some-

body and absolute because it reveals itself, as it is.

After rejecting the dualism between being and appear-

ances, Sartre proceeds to show the problems that occur if

we accept the dualism between potency and act. Act is

everything, as for example, the genius of Proust is "the

work, considered as the totality of the manifestations of

the person.[4] Similarly, the dualism of appearance and

essence can be rejected. Essence is not something that is

hidden in the existent; it is the manifest law which

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[3]Ibid., p.x$_1$vi

[4]Ibid., p.xlvi

presides over the succession of the appearances. Though

essence is nothing apart from the appearances, essence is

not just an appearance. It is the principle of the series

and as such the 'concatenation of the series'. Essence

being something manifested in the appearances, it is

possible to have an intuition of essences. Thus, Phenomen-

ology is different from Nominalism, as it accepts essence,

but essence being, "nothing but the well-connected series

of its manifestation,"[5] rejects the dualism between essence

and appearance. Even though Sartre speaks here of the in-

tuition of essence, it is certain that he does not mean by

it Husserlian rational or pure intuition of essence. What

he means is this, that in perception we are given the

particulars, or the appearances, which reveal to us

directly the nature of what is given in perception. If

Sartre means the rational perception of essence, he has

to say that essences have a different sort of being. That

means essence has no relevant connection with existence.

From this, perhaps, an opposite conclusion other than that

which is accepted by Sartre can be drawn, such as, "Essence

is prior to existence." Sartre understands essence to be

the principle of the series of the appearances. Now, appear-

ances are known by perception. If essence is known by some-

thing else, it becomes more important than appearances.

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[5]Ibid., p.xlvi

It may then, be thought that essence determines the appearances. But Sartre wants to establish that appearances in their unity constitute essence.

3. Dualism of the finite and the infinite

Though the dualisms - dualisms between being and appearance, potency and act, and essence and appearance - are rejected, a new dualism appears. It is that of "finite and infinite."[6] It is not possible to reduce the existent to a number of finite series of manifestations, since the existent can have constantly changing relations with the subject. There can be an infinite number of Abschattungen. Sartre understands by phenomenon Abschattung. As he says, "Let us assume that our theory of the phenomenon has replaced the reality of the thing by the objectivity of the phenomenon and that it has based this on an appeal to infinity."[7] The object is real and is not in me. This means that the series of the appearances is bound up by a principle and has nothing to do with me. The appearances without reference to the "series of which it was a part"[8] would be a subjective feeling. The phenomenon reveals something transcendent, and the subject himself transcends

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[6] Ibid., p.xlvii

[7] Ibid., p.xlvii

[8] Ibid., p.xlvii

appearance toward the total series. He may have an impression of red, but through it he seizes Red as something real. If the object is transcendent and causes the appearances which are to be transcended always to grasp the object, the series of the appearance would be infinite. Appearances are infinite in number but are to be understood, "as an appearance of that which appears."[9] These indicate an infinite series.

What thus appears is an aspect of the object, and the object, though present in that aspect, is also outside of it. It is within the appearance, as it manifests itself in that aspect; but it is also outside, for the series of the appearances can never be exhausted. This inexhaustibility implies a transcendence and a reference to the infinite. This new dualism, between the 'finite and the infinite,'[10] replaces the dualism of being and appearance.

Sartre now raises a new problem: if the essence of the appearance is an "appearing," which is no longer opposed to any being, there arises a legitimate problem concerning the being of appearing.[11]

Let us try to see if this idea of the object as an infinite series of appearances is something new in Being

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[9] Ibid., p.xlvii

[10] Ibid., p.xlvii

[11] Ibid., p.xlviii

and Nothingness. Actually, this is found much earlier

in the Psychology of Imagination, where Sartre is examining

the nature of images. He says that both in perception and

in image, "the object presents itself in profiles, in

projections, in what the Germans designate by the apt

term, 'Abschattungen.'"[12] In the world of perception every

"thing" bears an infinite number of relationships. There

is always, at each and every moment, infinitely more

than what we see. The wealth of my actual perception

cannot be exhausted, for that would require an infinite

time. In the Psychology of Imagination, Sartre is mainly

concerned with the phenomenological principles of Husserl

which he is applying to the understanding of images. The

ideas of object and appearances he presents there are

similiar to those of Husserl, though Sartre does not

accept Husserl's positing of noematic correlates as

intermediate entities.

4. Dualism of the being and phenomenon

The first ontological question that is raised by

Sartre is: what is the being of the appearance? It is

clear that the phenomenon is what manifests itself, and

as being manifests itself to all in some way, there must

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[12]Psychology of Imagination, p.10

be a phenomenon of being, which can be described as such.

Being is disclosed to us in some experiences such as

boredom, nausea, etc., and ontology will be a discription

of the phenomenon of being as it manifests itself. But

is the being which appears of the same nature as the

being of the existents which appear? Husserl speaks of

the concrete phenomenon from which it is possible to

pass towards the essence of the phenomenon. Heidegger

also speaks of the ontic phenomenon of human reality

from which it is possible to pass towards ontological

Being. In both cases, the passage is from the homogeneous.

But the passage from the existent to the phenomenon of being

is not the same as the passage beyond the particular towards

its essence.

In a particular object one can always apprehend

qualities, and they imply an essence as their meaning.

The essence is the meaning of the object, the principle

of the series of appearances which disclose it. But

being is neither one of the object's qualities, nor is

it a meaning of the object. The object does not refer to

being as to a signification, nor does it posses being,

nor is its existence a participation in being. The object

is. It does not hide being, for it is useless to push

aside certain qualities of the existent to discover

being behind them, for being belongs to them equally.

The object does not reveal being, for we do not apprehend
being, while we see an object. The existent is a pheno-
menon, and it expresses itself in an organized totality
of qualities. It does not designate being, for being
is simply the condition of all qualities. When an object
reveals itself to me as a phenomenon, I can surely
pass beyond the phenomenon and raise the question of the
being of the phenomenon. In that stage, we concentrate
on the phenomenon of being, but that is also as appear-
ance and needs in turn a being on the basis of which it
can reveal itself.

This analysis shows that the being of the pheno-
menon is not resolved in a phenomenon of being, but we
can not say anything about being without considering
the phenomenon of being. For this reason, the exact
relation between the phenomenon of being and the being
of the phenomenon must be determined first. Sartre
comes to the conclusion that knowledge can not give an
account of being; that is, it is not possible to reduce
the being of the phenomenon to the phenomenon of being.
The previous discussions show that the being of the pheno-
menon is co-extensive with the phenomenon, but it is not
subject to phenomenal conditions. The phenomenon of being
makes an appeal to being and it requires a foundation
which is transphenomenal. Thus, "it surpasses the know-
ledge which we have of it and provides the basis for

such knowledge."[13]

5. Attempt to reduce being to percipi and percipere

It may be pointed out that all we know about the being of the appearance is that it appears. We have knowledge of the phenomena only and we can only say that the phenomena are those that appear. So, if appearance has any being at all, it must consist in appearing. This, in fact, is nothing but the new formulation of the old Berkeyian thesis that "esse est percipi." Sartre thinks that Husserl is guilty of idealism, because of phenomenological reduction. He has robbed us of the reality of things, and the noema being phenomenon does not possess the reality of things. As the phenomena consist in appearing to the subject, their esse is percipi. But the being of the phenomenon cannot be reduced to the nature of percipi, and to prove his point, Sartre offers two reasons, one which concerns the percipi, the other percipere.

Idealism may be intent on reducing being to knowledge, but the knowledge itself must have some kind of being. If it is said that the knowledge is given and that it is not necessary to establish a basis for its being, then the "totality percieved-perception" lacks a relation to being and is reduced to nothingness. The being of knowledge can-

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[13] B.N., p.1

not be reduced to _percipi_. So, the being of the _percipiere_
and _percipi_ must be transphenomenal. It can be said that
the _percipi_ refers to a being that is not subject to the
laws of appearance, but it may still be held that such
a being is the being of the subject. Thus what is known
refers to knowledge and knowledge to the knower or con-
sciousness. This consciousness, according to Husserl,
"is the dimension of transphenomenal being in the subject."[14]
But consciousness is the knowing being in the capacity as
being. It is true that consciousness can know and know
itself. But it is itself something with a being other than
knowledge turned upon itself.

In his lecture before the Societé Français de philo-
sophie, Conscience de Soi et Connaissance de Soi, Sartre
considers the same question in the following terms. It
may be said that knowledge is the measure of being, but
knowledge itself is. So, the question arises: what is
the being of knowledge? But if being is reduced to know-
ledge, or if it is said that the "totality of things which
are said to be or exist are dissolved into the totality of
intellectual operations which we perform in order to know
them or to bind them together, it is to presume without

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[14]_Ibid._, p.li

saying it that there is a being of knowledge."[15]

6. Intentionality

As Husserl has shown, "all consciousness is con-
sciousness of something." Every consciousness posits
a transcendent object. Thus, all consciousness is posi-
tional in that it transcends itself in order to reach
an object. All the intentions of consciousness are direc-
ted outside itself. If there is anything as knowing
consciousness, it can be knowledge only of the object.
But for knowledge to be possible, every consciousness
must be conscious of itself as being that knowledge.
If consciousness of the table is not also a consciousness
of being conscious of the consciousness of the table,
then it would be a consciousness ignorant of itself.
The fact of being conscious of being conscious of the
table makes it possible for me to be conscious of the
table.

This consciousness of consciousness is not a know-
ledge of consciousness. Knowledge of the consciousness
of consciousness would be a case of positional conscious-
ness of consciousness, just like the positional conscious-
ness directed towards an object. Only in this case, in-
stead of an object, consciousness itself is the object.

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[15]J.P. Sartre, Conscience de soi et connassaince

Consciousness posits an object which it is not, and it
transcends itself to be exhausted in the object toward
which it is directed. When consciousness knows con-
sciousness, or if consciousness of consciousness is
knowledge of consciousness, consciousness becomes the
object of consciousness.

But Sartre does not accept the interpretation
of consciousness of consciousness as knowledge of
consciousness. If consciousness is reduced to knowledge,
the subject-object distinction which is typical of
knowledge enters into it. Then the knower-known dyad
is introduced, and the knower is to be known by a
third term. Thus, a dilemma arises:

> "Either we stop at any one term of the
> series - the known, the knower known,
> the knower known by the knower, etc.
> In this case the totality of the phe-
> nomenon falls into the unknown; that is,
> we always bump up against a non-self-
> conscious reflection and a final term.
> Or else we affirm the necessity of an
> infinite regress (idea ideae ideae, etc.),
> which is absurd."[16]

But consciousness of self does not have this duality.
There is an "immediate, non-cognitive relation of the
self to itself."[17]

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de soi, trans. by Mary Ellen and N. Lawrence in
Readings in Existential Phenomenology, edited by
Lawrence and O'Connor, Prentice-Hall, 1967, p. 120.

[16]Ibid., p. liii.

[17]Ibid., p. liii.

7. Two Levels of Consciousness

This consciousness is termed by Sartre the non-positional consciousness of itself. In the case of counting the cigarettes in a case, consciousness discloses an objective property of the cigarettes, such as they are a dozen. I do not have a positional consciousness of counting them. But at the moment the cigarettes are known as a dozen, I have a non-positional consciousness of counting the cigarettes. This consciousness is known by reflective consciousness, but it is not the reflection which reveals consciousness reflected-on to itself. On the other hand, the non-positional consciousness which is also non-reflective makes the reflection possible. Sartre calls the reflective consciousness the same as the Cartesian ego, and the Cartesian ego is possible by the pre-reflective cognito. This pre-reflective consciousness must be present to itself as something that is revealed in revealing.

This leads Sartre to the idea that every consciousness of consciousness is a consciousness of existing, for in it consciousness does not know anything, but exists as a consciousness. Thus this consciousness is not different from positional consciousness; rather at the same time, it is perception of object and consciousness (of) perception. Consciousness of self may be used to indicate this type of consciousness,

but such consciousness does not mean knowledge. It

only means consciousness as existing which is present

in the case of consciousness of something.

It is not necessary to say that this idea of

consciousness has been established by Sartre in his

Transcendence of the Ego. Consciousness is pre-reflec-

tive in the stage of consciousness of consciousness.

As he points out,

> "There is consciousness of the street-
> car-having-to-be-overtaken, etc. and
> non-positional consciousness of con-
> sciousness."[18]

Sartre denies that this non-thetic consciousness is

a quality of consciousness which is positional. In

that case, consciousness as knowledge would be more

fundamental. Moreover, that would make the psychic

event a thing of which consciousness is a quality. In

fact, pleasure and consciousness of pleasure are in-

dissoluble. Consciousness (of) pleasure constitutes

pleasure. There cannot be any pleasure before conscious-

ness of pleasure. Again, pleasure should not be de-

fined by consciousness which we have of it. This would

lead to idealism in which, again, the primacy of

knowledge would be asserted. There is not first a

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[18]T.E., p. 49.

consciousness which afterwards receives the 'affect'

pleasure. Pleasure and consciousness constitute an

indissoluble being, and that being is existence. As

Sartre makes the statement, "Pleasure is the being of

self-consciousness and this self-consciousness is the

law of being of pleasure."[19] Sartre refers to Heidegger

and points out that consciousness creates and establishes

its essence through its own possibility, because it

is conceived in terms of its existence.

This points out the fact that consciousness has

a being the existence of which implies its essence.

It is not that consciousness has its existence deduced

from an abstract possibility. Consciousness does not

owe its being to any other thing, but to itself. If

we have to limit consciousness, this has also to be

done by consciousness; for consciousness to be limited,

it is necessary to be consciousness of that by which

it is limited. Consciousness being a "plenum" of exis-

tence, this determination of consciousness by itself is

an essential characteristic of consciousness. Conscious-

ness is derived only from itself. If it is said that

consciousness comes from something else, this can only

mean that consciousness can be derived from the physio-

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[19] B.N., p. lv

logical state or from the unconscious. The difficulty
which, then, arises is this: that the physiological
state or unconscious being passive can not explain its
own existence and so, it remains inexplicable how
something passive can produce consciousness which is
completely opposed to passive object.

Sartre considers consciousness as an absolute,
but not a substantial absolute. The rationalists of
the seventeenth century like Descartes and Spinoza
thought consciousness to be a substance that acted as
the ground of knowledge. But Sartre considers con-
sciousness as the subject of most concrete experiences.
But the subject is experience itself, not something
which is subordinate to the non-experiencing subject.
So, consciousness is a non-substantial absolute. The
seventeenth century rationalists could not see that
the absolute is to be defined by the primacy of existence
over essence. Spinoza's notion of substance proceeds
by the definition that the essence of substance is to
exist. Whatever does not satisfy the essence of sub-
stance as independence does not exist. According to
Sartre, consciousness exists to the degree to which it
appears and so consciousness is appearance. As con-
sciousness has in it the total identity between appear-
ance and existence, it can be considered as absolute.

Sartre thinks that he has reached the goal of his inquiry. First, he has reduced things to the united totality of their appearances. Second, it has also been established that the appearances refer to a being which is no longer itself an appearance. Sartre calls such a being subjectivity, which is not subject to knowledge, but which founds knowledge. But Sartre asks now: Is consciousness sufficient to provide the foundation for the appearance as appearance?

8. Being of Consciousness and Being of the Perceived

As there is a being of the consciousness that perceives, similarly, there is a being of the thing perceived. I may try to reduce the table which I perceive to a series of subjective impressions, but still there remains something which is the "transcendent limit" of the synthesis, which is the reason for the table. The table exists prior to knowledge and cannot be identified with the knowledge of the table, for then, there would be its immanence in consciousness and it would disappear as a table. The table cannot be identical with the synthesis of subjective impressions with which I know the table. The object cannot be a synthetic activity of the mind. The known thus cannot be reabsorbed

into the knowing. It has a being of its own. As the
table cannot be reduced to a series of impressions or
representations, similarly, "... the being of the _percipi_
cannot be reduced to that of the _percipiens_ - i.e.
to consciousness."[20] Of course, the being of the _percipi_
is relative to the _percipiens_, in the sense that the
percipi can be manifested only to a perceiver.

The mode of the _percipi_ is passive. It is not
only passive, but also relative. Passivity implies the
state of being modified, of which the thing itself is
not the origin. I am passive, when I am affected by
something of which I am not the source. But to sup-
port this mode of being, I have to exist and to remain
active. "If I am to be for always 'the-one-who-has-
been-offended,' I must persevere in my being; that is,
I myself assume my existence. I cease to be passive
in relation to it."[21] Here is a choice of alternatives
- either I am not passive, in which case I have to be
the foundation of my affections, or my being is a received
being, and it falls into nothingness. Passivity is thus
a double relation, relative to the "activity of the one

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[20]_Ibid._, p. lviii

[21]_Ibid._, p. lviii

who acts and to the existence of the one who suffers."[22]
It is a relation of one being to another. Thus it is
not possible that "the percipere affects the perceptum
of a being, for in order for the perceptum to be affected,
it would of necessity have to be already given in some
way and exist before having received being."[23] We can
understand a type of creation in which the created being
tears itself away from the creator to assume its own
existence; it is in this sense that a book has a dis-
tinct existence from its author. If, on the other hand,
creation means an indefinite support of the created being,
then the creature is absorbed in the creator. There is
no true transcendence, and "the creator cannot have an
illusion of getting out of his subjectivity."[24]

The passivity of the recipient, at the same time,
demands an equal passivity on the part of the agent.
This is known as the principle of action and reaction,
for my hand can crush or grasp, because it can be
crushed or grasped. All knowledge is spontaneity.
Nothing can act on consciousness, because nothing can
get a grip on it. If the principle Esse est percipi

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[22]Ibid., p. lviii

[23]Ibid., p. lviii

[24]Ibid., p. lviii

is to be accepted as correct, then it has to give being
to some transcendent object, which because of its depen-
dence on consciousness becomes nothing, and at the same
time, it has to maintain its state of nothingness.

Husserl has introduced the hyle into consciousness,
which is supposed to be passive. But these so-called
contents of consciousness remain unintelligible. These
could not belong to consciousness, for then they would
disappear in the translucency of consciousness. If
these do not belong to consciousness, from where do they
derive their opacity? It is not clear how hyle preserves
the opacity of its nature, and subjectivity of thought.
Its ease cannot come from a _percipi_, since it is not
even perceived, for consciousness goes beyond it toward
the objects. But if it is self-derived, we have the
insoluble problem of the connection of existents inde-
pendent of it. Husserl gives hyle both the characteristics
of a thing and consciousness, and in doing so, he thought
he had an easy transition from one to the other. But
what resulted is a hybrid being, "which consciousness
rejects and which cannot be a part of the world."[25]

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[25]_Ibid._, p. lix

9. Transparency of Consciousness

Here Sartre's idea of consciousness is the same as what he had established in Transcendence of the Ego. For him, consciousness is mere revelation and is pure spontaneity. It has nothing in itself, for it is not a substratum. It cannot have any opacity in it, for there is no transcendental ego in consciousness; nor can there exist in consciousness noematic representations, which are not conscious, yet at the same time seem to be bound up with consciousness. This unholy combination is something absurd, for consciousness wholly transcends toward the things. Sartre has expressed this idea of consciousness very poetically in Situations I where he says,

> "Du même coup la conscience s'est puri-
> fiée, elle est claire comme grand vent,
> il n'ya plus rien en elle, sauf un mouve-
> ment pour se fuir, un glissement horse
> de soi; si, par impossible, vous entriez
> "dans" une conscience, vous seriez saisi
> par un tourbillion et rejeté au dehors,
> pres de l'arbre, en pleine poussier
> car la conscience n'a pas de "dedans;"
> elle n'est rien que le dehors d'elle-meme
> et c'est cette fuite absolue, ce refus
> d'être substance qui la constiuent comme
> une conscience."[26]

The percipi implies that the perceptum has a relative being. Is the being of the thing known relative to know-

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[26] J.P. Sartre, Situations, Vol. I, Gallimard, Paris, 1947, p. 31-32.

ledge? Relativity of being means that the existent
has its own being in something other than itself. The
perceived being is relative to consciousness. But con-
sciousness and the thing perceived are cut off from each
other. To be perceived, a thing has to stand in relation
to consciousness. But the being of the perceived is
separated from consciousness.

These determinations of relativity and passity
do not apply to being. The being of a phenomenon does
not consist in its being perceived. The transphenomenal
being of consciousness cannot provide for the trans-
phenomenal being of the phenomena. Or in other words,
the being of consciousness is not the same as that of
the being of the phenomenon. The phenomenalists are
mistaken when they identify the being of the object
with the succession of the connected series of the
appearances.

The being of the phenomenon is understood in
terms of an "ontological proof," which is derived from
the pre-reflective being of the percipiens.

10. <u>Ontological Argument - A Version of</u>
<u>Intentionality</u>

Sartre takes Husserl's principle of intentionality
that all consciousness is consciousness of something and

he understands it to mean either that consciousness is
constitutive "of the being of its object,"[27] or that
consciousness is relative to a transcendent being.
Sartre does not accept the first sense because the object which appears in phenomena has a being of its own.
He accepts the view that "to be consciousness of something is to be confronted with a concrete and full
presence which is not consciousness."[28] The being of
the phenomenon can, however, depend on consciousness,
as being distinguished from consciousness, by not
being consciousness. The object can be understood as
an infinite series of negations of consciousness. Infinite totality of the series of appearances constitutes
the object, for the being of the appearances is different from consciousness which has to go beyond its subjective appearance to be confronted with the object. When
consciousness intends its object, it is directed towards
this infinity of appearances, all of which are not given
at the same time. The impressions of an object, if
all of them were present before consciousness, may make
one think that they are subjective. There are impressions
which are absent, and it is these absent impressions which

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[27]B.N., p. lx.

[28]Ibid., p. lx.

[29]Ibid., p. lx.

have an objective being, because of the absence. Thus
the being of the object is pure non-being or a lack.
It is never given as a whole, but as that which escapes
consciousness and is offered only in "fleeting and suc-
cessive profiles."[29]

But if this interpretation is accepted, then non-
being becomes the foundation of being. It is true that
things are given in profiles, or by appearance, each of
which refers to the other appearances, whether present
or absent. If this is all that we have of the object,
we have to remain confined to appearance. This infinite
series of appearances may be a transcendence, but that
is "a transcendence in immanence." Actually, each of
the appearances is already in itself alone a transcendent
being, "not a subjective material of impressions."[30]
"It is a plenitude of being, not a lack, a presence,
not an absence."[31] Sartre is repeating here the same
assertion which he has made earlier that "the objective
will never come out of the subjective, nor the transcen-
dent from immanence, nor being from non-being."[32] Though

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[30]Ibid., p. lxi.

[31]Ibid., p. lxi.

[32]Ibid., p. lxi.

Husserl makes consciousness transcendent, he makes of

the noema an unreal correlate of the noesis, a noema

whose being is to be perceived, and thus he becomes un-

faithful to his principle.

Intentionality consists of the character of the

transcendence of consciousness. For Sartre, inten-

tionality and transcendence are same, and transcendence

is the "constitutive character of consciousness." Con-

sciousness always refers to something which is not it-

self. There cannot be any consciousness without refer-

ence to a real being. Sartre calls this characteristic

of consciousness his ontological proof, though we will

point out later that this has very little to do with

the classical ontological proof. Consciousness demands

that there be something of which it is conscious. Though

the demand itself does not imply that it ought to be

satisfied, this is what intentionality actually means.

Though Husserl misunderstood the nature of consciousness,

he realized that

> "for consciousness there is no being
> outside of that precise obligation to
> be a revealing intuition of something,
> i.e., of a transcendent being."

There can be pure subjectivity, when consciousness is

(of) consciousness. But for consciousness (of) conscious-

ness to be possible, there must be consciousness as a

revealing intuition of something; otherwise it is nothing.
The revealing intuition points out that there must be
something which is revealed. The subjectivity of con-
sciousness can have meaning only, "in the face of some-
thing revealed."[33] Sartre does not establish the being
of object against consciousness as a case of knowing.
He does not show like Kant that "the phenomena of inner
sense imply the existence of spatial phenomena,"[34] but
that the being of consciousness implies in its being "a
non-conscious and transphenomenal being."[35] For Sartre,
this is not an epistemological problem, but rather an
ontological conclusion. When it is said that conscious-
ness is consciousness of something, what is meant is
that it is a revealed-revelation of a being which is not
it and which is already existing, when it is revealed
by consciousness.

Thus, Sartre reaches the reality of both conscious-
ness and being, which are different in character. Con-
sciousness does not have any established essence, but
it realizes its essence. On the other hand, being is
already something with an essence, which suggests that

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[33]Ibid., p. lxi.

[34]Ibid., p. lxi.

[35]Ibid., p. lxi.

because there is a being, there will be such and such
phenomena. Being is something that is the condition of
phenomena, each of which lays claim to existence. In
the case of consciousness, it is found that it is a
Dasein whose being is not definite, but is always going
beyond what it is or its being is always in question.
Sartre gives a definition of consciousness which retains
this indefinite character of consciousness. "Conscious-
ness is a being such that in its being, its being is in
question insofar as this being implies a being other than
itself."[36]

This being which consciousness implies is the
transphenomenal being of phenomena. It is the being of
the whole world which transcends the appearances and
exists in itself and for itself.

Sartre's ontological argument has often been the
object of attack by critics, because he has made no real
use of the classical argument. The classical argument
seeks to establish the existence of God on the basis of
the inconceivability of the non-existence of the being
greater than which nothing can be conceived. Sartre's
problem is not the existence of God, but the existence
of a being other than consciousness. If it were just
an epistemological problem, then he could have said that

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[36]Ibid., p. lxi.

consciousness of an object implies that there is something

other than consciousness; otherwise consciousness cannot

strictly be called knowing. Now, that something is known

does not imply the independent existence of that which

is known. It may be that what is known is dependent for

its being on consciousness, even though in the case of

knowing, it appears to be different from consciousness.

In that case, Kant's intuition of inner phenomena can

only imply that unless phenomena are experienced to be

in outer space, we cannot have any experience of subjective

impressions. Though experience of things in outer space

is a necessary proof of things actually being in the

outside world, it is not a sufficient proof. It is'

also not always clear from Kant whether he means that

things exist in space or that things are perceived to be

so. Sartre wants to show that things are not only known

to be existing, but that they are actually independent of

consciousness. For this reason he needs the ontological

argument which can establish that inconceivability of the

non-existence of a thing other than consciousness, for

consciousness cannot come into being unless there is al-

ready something pre-existing. The parallels between the

ontological argument of St. Anselm and Sartre are neither

very clear nor very close, but not unimportant. Sartre

founds the being of object on something other than conscious-

ness, as it is difficult to cut the circle of subjectivity in consciousness. He has to establish the being of the object on the basis of the inconceivability of the non-existence of a being other than consciousness.

It may be pointed out against Sartre that by doing away with noema, he is making the complex phenomenon of knowledge simple. Actually Sartre does not find the necessity of a third entity between the Abschantungen of the object and consciousness. The object is nothing but an infinite totality of the series of Abschantungen, as pointed out by Sartre in Introduction to Being and Nothingness. If anybody likes, he can call them noema, for, to Sartre, it seems that noema and Abschantungen are the same. Husserl had to accept the noema as distinct from the object, because he had bracketed the reality of the world. In Husserl's thought Abschantungen are the various perspectives of the noematic correlate which constitute the noematic unity. But the object is the phenomenological object; it may be the same as the object before the epoche´ or it may not be the same. The question does not arise for Husserl, for he is not concerned with the real existence of the object. In the case of Sartre, the appearances are the real aspects of the object. The infinite synthesis of the aspects of the object gives rise to the real object. He thinks that consciousness being in immediate touch with objective reality,

the status of noematic correlates which are neither
states of consciousness nor parts of the object, remains
a problem. Sartre believes that consciousness is ac-
quainted with the perspectival aspects of the object.
But this idea raises the problem: which aspects of the
infinite series of appearances constitute what we
ordinarily call real object, because the real object
which we experience is a finite-infinite series of the
totality of the aspects. Sartre is silent on the pro-
blem, perhaps, because he is not interested in the epis-
temological question. But Merleau-Ponty's theory of
objects constituted by the practical or "horizontal
synthesis"[37] of the aspects is similar to Sartre's.
Merleau-Ponty solved the problem by the practical stan-
dards dependent upon the context of the observer. Thus
Sartre does not argue against the principle of noematic
correlates from the point of view of the principle of
economy or Occam's razor, rather from the different
standpoint of accepting intentionality without epoché.

Sartre's ontological theory is apparently duali-
stic, because he believes in the reality of both con-
sciousness and object. This may give rise to the charge
of "Ghost in the machine," or it can be said that he

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[37]M. Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception,
Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 15.

is bringing back the ghost of consciousness alive. It

is very difficult to say whether Sartre can really be

accused of the charge, because he does not believe like

Descartes in the existence of a substantial ego. His

consciousness is not a plenitude of being, but is not

the objects. If we have to describe it we can do so

with reference to objects of which it is conscious and

from which it is distinguished. Consciousness in the

philosophy of Sartre is in a paradoxical position. It

is the objects of which conscious experience is possible,

but it is also not the objects. Consciousness does not

have the privileged access, for consciousness is directed

to the objects. Sartre says in the Transcendence of

the Ego. "But if the I becomes a transcendent, it parti-

cipates in all the vicissitudes of the world. It is no

absolute; it has not created the universe; it falls

like other existences at the stroke of the epoché; and

solipsism becomes unthinkable from the moment that the I

no longer has a privileged status ... My I, in effect,

is no more certain for consciousness than the I of other

men. It is only more intimate." (p. 104). Ryle may deny

the ghost in the machine, but surely he would not deny

the difference between being conscious of an object and

the object. Sartre is making a distinction like that,

even though for him, consciousness ultimately takes on

an ontological status. Sartre believes in the reality of consciousness as distinguished from object, and there he can be accused of the dualism which he tries to reconcile in his Being-in-itself-for-itself. But so long we remain confined to the aspect of experience, Sartre cannot be accused of the evils of dualism. For him, experience of perception consists of the object in relation to a particular standpoint of consciousness, while the same object in a different relation is an object of memory or imagination. As we have already seen, he banishes the noema which introduces a third entity in consciousness, producing epistemological dualism. His rejection of Husserlian hyle is also for the same reasons. When Sartre talks of emotion, he explains it as a sort of adjustment of the individual to the environment.

The point of this discussion is not to establish whether Sartre's dualism can be defended or not. It is only to point out that Sartre brings consciousness in the world of objects. Nothingness is the character of consciousness, or its mode of being. But consciousness being a non-substantial absolute and the existing in the midst of objects, does not have the same difficulties, as Descartes' theory of substantial ego had to face.

11. Phenomenon of Being and the

Theory of Being

Sartre now reaches some definite conclusions about the phenomenon of being. Consciousness reveals things that exist, and in revealing them, reveals itself. Existents have a being independent of consciousness and they appear before consciousness. But the existent is never completely revealed. Consciousness can never seize the being of the existent, but it can grasp the meaning of being. The meaning as it is revealed to consciousness is the phenomenon of being. But the meaning itself has a being. The phenomenon of being indicates being, and this is justified by the ontological proof. Such a phenomenon is revealed to consciousness. We have, what Heidegger calls a pre-ontological comprehension of this phenomenon, even though it is not elucidated in terms of concepts. The elucidation of being in terms of concepts is possible in the case of the being of the existents, but not in the case of the being of consciousness, since consciousness has a radically different type of being.

There are two absolutely separated regions of being: the being of the pre-reflective ego and the being of the phenomenon. Though there is the division in the concept of being, we cannot truly grasp the meaning of either one, until we understand their connection with the notion of being in general and the relations which unite them.

The realistic conception of the relations between
the phenomena and consciousness holds that consciousness
completely depends upon the outward objects. Sartre
has proved the existence of the non-positional conscious-
ness which is not at all affected by the being of the
phenomenon. It has also been shown by him that conscious-
ness does not get out of its subjectivity and that it
does not act upon the transcendent being. Nor can it
be said that the passive elements of consciousness give
rise to a transcendent being. Thus, the idealist solution
of the problem is also rejected. Consciousness is reduced
to objective phenomena by the realist school, while the
idealist school reduces the objective world to the pro-
ducts of consciousness. Sartre wishes to avoid these two
extremes by accepting the fact that both consciousness
and the transcendent being are real, but it now seems
that these are two closed totalities without any communi-
cation between them. But it is not necessary that the
solution must be realistic or idealistic. It may be some-
thing else.

Sartre denies that the transcendent being is
created, for then it has no separated being apart from
divine subjectivity. Being is neither active nor passive.
These categories can be applied only within the human

context. Activity and passivity are understood in terms
of means and ends, as the human mind is active, and the
means he uses are passive. Being does not have any such
end, for to talk of an end of being is just meaningless.

Affirmation and negation are categories that do
not apply to being. In all cases of affirmation, the
thing affirmed must be distinguished from the affirming.
But such a distinction is not possible in the case of
being, because being is full plenitude. "It is" as
Sartre puts it, "noema in the noesis."[38] Being is imma-
nence, but that cannot be realized, for in it there does
not exist that slight withdrawal, which is necessary for
the realization. It is an affirmation which cannot
affirm itself, an activity which does not act, because
it is glued to itself. Being is itself.

It does not mean that it has to refer to itself,
just as in the case of self-consciousness. In fact,
being is filled with itself, which can be expressed by
saying that being is what it is. The statement may look
like an analytical statement, but as the question here
is of a regional principle, it is synthetical. "Being is
what it is." Sartre points out that the word "is" has
a special meaning. Beings have to be what they are. But

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[38] B.N., p. lxv.

the fact of being what they are is not an axiomatic
characteristic; it is a contingent principle of being-
in-itself. The in-itself is solid. It is the most
indissoluble of all; the synthesis of itself with it-
self.

The question of transition, becoming, etc. does
not occur in the case of being. But being is beyond
becoming and by itself it cannot even be what it is
not; it does not encompass any negation. It is what it
is and full positivity. It has no temporal character.
The character of temporality arises on the basis of
lack, but being has no lack.

The first characteristic of being-in-itself is
that it does not have either necessity or possibility.
It simply is. Necessity holds between ideal existents,
but being is contingent. Neither can it be derived from
a possibility. The possible is a structure of the for-
itself, and it belongs to the other region of being.
The question of possibility does not arise in the case
of being-in-itself. Being is "thus uncreated, without
reason for being, without any connection with another
being ... it is the de trop for eternity."[39]

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[39]Ibid., p. lxvi.

The characteristics that are revealed about Being-in-itself are:

1. Being is,
2. Being is in-itself, and
3. Being is what it is.

The examination of appearances has led progressively to point to two types of being - the in-itself and for-itself or consciousness. The questions which arise in this connection are:

"1. What is the ultimate meaning of these two types of being?
2. For what reasons do they both belong to being in general?
3. What is the meaning of that being which includes within itself these two radically separated regions of being?
4. If idealism and realism both fail to explain the relations which in fact unite these regions which in theory are without communication, what other solution can we find for this problem?
5. And how can the being of the phenomenon be transphenomenal?"[40]

These are the questions which Sartre says, he is interested to answer in Being and Nothingness.

Whether Sartre has really been able to answer all of these questions is another issue. But we have to examine here if the dualism which Sartre discerns between being and consciousness is phenomenologically justifiable.

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[40]Ibid., p. lxvii.

12. The Question of Dualism and its
Phenomenological Basis

The general opinion about Sartre's ontology is
that he is a dualist, as he speaks of two regions of
being-for-itself and being-in-itself. This seems to be
evident from the fact that Sartre starts from the con-
sciousness of an object. We have tried to indicate that
for Sartre, being-in-the-world is the ultimate being of
which the for-itself and the in-itself are aspects, and
so each independent of the other is an abstraction.
Against this it may be replied that consciousness can
exist within the world, but that does not prevent it
from being established as an independent reality. Whether
this is Sartre's intention, we have to see that. We
have also tried to hint that there is an idea of "lived
reality" in Sartre. Though Sartre is more explicit
about "lived reality" in his later writings, we hope
to discover its rudiments in Being and Nothingness. Our
contention is this: the for-itself and the in-itself
are abstractions; and being-in-the-world is the fundamental
reality. We will try to show that the development of
the concepts of for-itself and in-itself has a pheno-
menological basis in that they arise from the concrete
experience of the world. But at the same time, we have

to remember that their so-called independence is an

abstraction, which may be due to the activity of reflec-

tion. We are mainly choosing two illustrations from

Sartre's <u>Being and Nothingness</u>.

1. His analysis of the situation in
   which the human being works, and
2. his analysis of the body.

These two will make it clear that the idea of for-itself

and in-itself as completely independent are abstractions.

We may sometimes refer to Sartre's later work <u>Critique</u>

<u>of Dialectical Reason</u> to show how the implicit ideas of

<u>Being and Nothingness</u> have been made more concrete and

explicit there.

Sartre expresses the relation between <u>for-itself</u>

and <u>in-itself</u> by stating that consciousness can exist

only as engaged in this being which surrounds it on all

sides and which practically paralyzes it by its phantom

presence. This being is not posited through and before

consciousness. As the being is identified with conscious-

ness, there is no separate <u>consciousness of being</u> and

Sartre expresses this in his metaphorical language,

"... there is no consciousness of this being since it

haunts non-thetic self-consciousness."[41] This being

points to consciousness as the meaning of its being,

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[41]<u>B.N.</u>, p. 90.

and consciousness is no more aware of it than of itself.

But as consciousness enjoys being a consciousness of

being, this being is there. Without this being, conscious-

ness would not be consciousness - i.e., lack. On the

other hand, consciousness derives for itself its meaning

as consciousness from this being. This being comes

into the world along with consciousness, at once in its

heart and outside it; its absolute transcendence in ab-

solute immanence. It has no priority over consciousness,

and consciousness has no priority over it. This being

could not exist without the for-itself, but neither could

the for-itself exist without it. As Sartre tries to

elucidate this relation, he says, "Consciousness in

relation to this being stands in the mode of this being,

for this being is consciousness, but as a being which

consciousness cannot be. It is consciousness itself,

in the heart of consciousness and yet out of it."[42]

This passage from Sartre's Being and Nothingness is

not very clear about the relation between consciousness

and in-itself, but one thing is definite; namely, that

consciousness and being are related to each other in

an inseparable relation and that consciousness at the

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[42]Ibid., p. 91.

same time is both this being and not this being. Per-
haps that is why Sartre says that it is in the heart of
consciousness and yet outside it.

Let us try to see how this idea of inseparable
relation is most explicit in Critique of Dialectical
Reason. In this book Sartre is more concerned with the
relations between the individual and the collective, and
he wants to show that man works in a situation to work
out his project. The tendency to analyze human project
in terms of the environmental factors alone is called
by Sartre a wrong one, as it does not take into account
the human factor. On the other hand, the human factor
alone is not enough, for the instruments applied by the
human being and the conditions in which he works become
a part of the human situation. Thus a dialectic goes on
between the human being and the social and cultural
environment; and a clear understanding of the human role
is possible by what Sartre calls a progressive-regressive
method. In it the objective conditions are laid bare
only to show that these conditions are significant in
terms of the human project. As Hazel Barnes points out,
according to Sartre, man's way of being is his way of
relating himself to the world. There can be no relation
without the free consciousness which assumes a point of
view on the world. But man himself would be equally
unable to have any connection with matter, if he himself
did not possess materiality. Sartre defines human work

as follows:

> "The meaning of human work is the fact that man
> reduces himself to organic materiality in
> order to act materially upon matter and to
> change his material life. By transub-
> tantiation, the project, which by means
> of our body is inserted into the thing
> takes on substantial characteristics of
> that thing without entirely losing its
> original qualities."[43]

In any human activity in the world there is an interchange.
The person endows the thing with human significance, but
in return, his action, by becoming objectified in the
realm of matter, is at least in part reified, made into
a thing. Sartre states here that men are things to the
exact degree that things are human. It is only through
this "transubstantiation" that we can speak of a future
for either man or things.

This relation between material environment and
consciousness has its root in the passage we have quoted
from _Being and Nothingness_, though there Sartre is not
so clear about the relation. The dialectic between con-
sciousness and material reality is covered by his meta-
phorical language. But it is possible to determine the
idea that man is in an inseparable relation with his
body, and man-in-the-situation is ontologically ultimate.

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[43]_Search for a Method_, Introduction, p. xi.

Perhaps a better understanding of this relation
is possible if we try to state how Sartre analyzes situation in _Being and Nothingness_. Sartre points out that
although brute things (what Heidegger calls brute existent)
can from the start limit freedom of action, it is our
freedom itself which must constitute the framework, the
technique and the ends in relation to which they will
appear as limits. But even then we can think of an
unnamable and unthinkable residuum, but this residue is
far from being originally a limit for freedom. In fact,
it is thanks to this residue - that is, to the brute in-
itself as such - that freedom arises as freedom. The
situation is a common product of the contingency of the
in-itself and of freedom and it is "an ambiguous phenomenon
in which it is impossible for the for-itself to dis-
tinguish the contribution of freedom from that of the
brute existent."[44] Just as the freedom is an escape from
a contingency which it has to be in order to escape it,
so the situation is the free co-ordination and the free
qualification of a brute given, which does not allow it-
self to be qualified in any way at all. If a rock appears
to me as "not scalable," it is presented to me in the
light of a projected scaling - a secondary project which
finds its meaning in terms of an initial project which is
my being-in-the-world. The rock is carved out on the

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[44]_B.N._, p. 488.

ground of the world by the effect of the initial choice

of my freedom. On the other hand, what my freedom can

not determine is whether the rock "to be scaled" will

or will not lend itself to scaling. This is part of the

brute being of rock. Sartre thinks, thus, that it is

impossible to determine in each particular case what comes

from freedom and what comes from the brute being of the

in-itself. The given in-itself as resistance or as

aid is revealed only in the light of the projecting

freedom. But the freedom organizes the instruments such

that the in-itself is revealed by it as it is (i.e.

resisting or favorable). This shows that it is impossible

to determine apriori what comes from the brute existent

and what from freedom in the character of this or that

particular existent functioning as an absolute. The

paradox of freedom thus lies in this, that this freedom

is possible only in a situation and there is a situation

only through freedom. Human reality everywhere encounters

resistance and obstacles which it did not create, but

these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in

and through the choice which human reality is.

This is compatible with the point of view Sartre

adopts in the CRITIQUE where he says that history might

be said to be the story of how human praxis has inscribed

itself in the pratico-inerte (Sarte's term for material circumstances). The two terms, as Hazel Barnes suggests, are not to be equated with being-for-itself and being-in-itself, but there is a sense in which they hold equivalent positions in the later work. Praxis is any meaningful or purposeful human activity, an act which is not mere random undirected motion. The pratico-inerte is more than just matter, though it certainly includes the material environment. It includes all things which go to make man's experience of finitude. This pratico-inerte can also impose on my actions a "counter finality" which is the end result of human action and at the same time is opposed to that and which the agent had intended. The pratico-inerte is thus something more than the situation, because the situation is a meaningful organization of the given in terms of the human project. Sartre does not speak of "counter finality" in relation to the situation, though he seems to say that what resists or frustrates the end depends on its relation to the end. In his later work too, Sartre recognizes that praxis is at the start and also at the end. In the CRITIQUE Sartre speaks of a dialectic between the subjective and the objective. There is, as he says, a joint necessity of the "internalization of the external" and "the externalization of the internal." Praxis, indeed, is a passage

from objective to objective through internalization. The project is the subjective surpassing of objectivity toward objectivity and as "stretched between the objective conditions of the environment and the objective structures of the field of possibles represents in itself the moving unity of subjectivity and objectivity, those cardinal determinants of activity."[45]

If the material conditions which govern human relations are to become real conditions of praxis, they must be lived in the particularity of the particular situation. As Sartre states, "In the lived experience, the subjectivity turns back upon itself and wrenches itself from despair by means of objectification. Thus the subjective contains within itself the objective, which it denies and which it surpasses toward a new objectivity and this new objectivity by virtue of objectification externalizes the internality of the project as an objectified subjectivity. This means both that the lived as such finds its place in the result and that the projected meaning of the action appears in the reality of the world that it may get its truth in the process of totalization."[46] This dialectic between the praxis and the pratico-inerte can also be vaguely determined in the relation between freedom and situation.

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[45] Search, p.97-98

[46] Search, p.98

Another important aspect of existence in which con-
sciousness is found in a relation of unified lived experi-
ence is body. Sartre states that my body as I live it is
not a thing among other things in the world. I can touch
my body touching or see it seeing. "Either it is a thing
among things or else it is that by which things are revealed
to me."[47] From the point of view of the body-for-me, to
touch my body is to surpass towards my possibilities. But
if I percieve it as an object, then it is no longer my-
body-as-lived. As I objectify it, my possibilities are no
longer real, but dead possibilities. When my body is ob-
jectified, then its being is transformed. It is an object
as a revelation of its being, but only its being-for-other.
Thus, the study of the body must conform to the order of
being - being-for-itself and being-for-others. These are
genuinely ontological dimensions of the body and must not be
confused, as they are confused in Cartesian Philosophy.

> "Being-for-itself must be wholly body and it
> must be wholly consciousness; it cannot be
> united with a body. Similarly, being-for-others
> is wholly body; there are no psychic phenomena
> there to be united with the body. There is
> nothing behind the body. But the body is
> wholly 'psychic'."[48]

For Sartre, thus, insofar as consciousness is for-it-
self, it is its own body; insofar as it is for-others, it

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[47]B.N., p.304

[48]Ibid., p.305

is likewise its own body, but now in a different ontological
dimension.

Sartre thinks that Descartes was led to distinguish
in a radical manner between mind and body, as he thought
"mind is easier to know than the body." He discovered the
ideas which he thought were signs to indicate the body.
But the division between mind and body led to the consequence
that the body as it is experienced by consciousness was
suppressed. The separation of consciousness and body gave
rise to the pseudo-problem of re-uniting them. On the
other hand, the last dimension of the body can be recovered
in the primordial thrust of consciousness _for-itself_ as
being-in-the-world. We think a consideration of the body-
as-for-itself will disclose to us the inescapable bond be-
tween body and consciousness: consciousness and body in
the lived relation of being-in-the-world.

The for-itself is by essence a relation to the world,
as it makes there be a world, which it is not and by sur-
passing towards its possibilities, it reveals the 'thises'
of the world, the instrumental things. The things and the
relations that are in things are relative to "our first
engagement in the world." "Man and the world are relative
beings and the principle of their being is the relation."[49]

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[49]_Ibid._, p.308

Thus, to be engaged in the world is to be there. Though
it is necessary that the _Pour-soi_ be there, it is contingent
that it be there at all. It is also contingent that it be
'here', rather than 'over there'. But this two-fold con-
tingency constitutes the facticity of the _Pour-soi_, and it
is the fundamental stratum of the body-for-itself, i.e. the
body, as it is experienced concretely. I can not take my
body-for-itself as object, as I am it. Thus my body-as
lived, in so far as it is my point of view, is always what
is surpassed toward my possibilities. I am involved in
the world by means of my body. The world appears as an
order univocally referring back to my placement, to me as
embodied here. But while it is necessary that there be
some order it is again contingent that it is this rather
than that one.

My body-for-itself is the total system and center of
reference of things. Accordingly, to Sartre, objects are
what they are, only within a nexus of actual and possible
actions on them. Sartre maintains that perception is in no
way distinguished from the practical organizations of ex-
istents in the world. The characteristics which make a
hammer a hammer are disclosed, not in a conceptual con-
sciousness, but rather in a practical-using consciousness.
For only in the latter does the hammer refer to the nails,
to the board to be hammered into place and to the ultimate

project-at-hand. Only as such is the hammer a hammer.

Similarly, the space in which I live is not geometrical,

it is 'hodological' - furrowed with paths, places, routes,

ways of going and coming and the like. Thus, the world

for _Pour-soi_ in its upsurge is constituted as a concate-

nated texture of intermediaries. Acts refer to other

acts, point to other tools, to purposes for which they

were made, to others and so on. The world is thus conceived

as the correlate of my possible actions, the system of

possibilities which I am. The world is the skeleton of

my possible action, the outline which my actions fill in.

Perception is naturally surpassed towards action. My body

is a tool objectively defined by the instrumental fields

referring to it as the center, but a tool I can not use,

since,

> "... We should thus be referred to infinity.
> We do not use this instrument, for we are it.
> It is given to us in no other way than by the
> instrumental order of the world, by hodological
> space ... but it cannot be given to my action.
> I do not have to adapt myself to it nor to
> adopt another tool to it, but it is my very
> adaptation to tools, the adaptation which I am."[50]

The body is the instrument which I can not use in the way

I use any other instrument. It is the point of view on

which I can no longer take a point of view. I can not

take a point of view on my body without a reference to

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[50] _Ibid._, p.324

infinity. Therefore, the body can not be for me trans-
cendent and known; the spontaneous, unreflective conscious-
ness is no longer the consciousness of the body.

> "It would be best to say, using, 'exist' as a
> transitive verb - that consciousness exists
> its body. Thus the relation between the body-
> as-point-of view and things is an objective
> relation, and the relation of consciousness
> to the body is an existential relation."[51]

This means that consciousness can exist its body only as

consciousness. The body belongs to the structure of the

non-thetic self-consciousness. But it can not be identified

with pure and simple non-thetic consciousness as the free

project toward a possibility which is its own; that is, in

so far as it is the foundation of its own nothingness.

Non-positional consciousness is consciousness (of) the

body as being that which it nihilates by making itself

consciousness - i.e., as being something which conscious-

ness is without having to be it and which it passes over

in order to be what it has to be. In other words, con-

sciousness of the body is the neglected and yet the body

is what this consciousness is; "... it is not even any-

thing except body. The rest is nothingness and silence."[52]

Consciousness of the body cannot be compared to the

consciousness of a sign. The sign leads us to the

meaning. But consciousness (of) the body is a "lateral

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[51]Ibid., p. 329.

[52]Ibid., p. 330.

and retrospective consciousness" of what consciousness
is. But consciousness does not have to be body. Con-
sciousness (of) the body is a non-thetic consciousness
of the manner in which it is affected.

Thus, this relation of the body as a relation to
the world and as a center of the instrumental complexes
can be described as the intentionality of the body,
for the body is a point of view which is to be surpassed
towards my possibilities. As Sartre says, "The body
is not a screen between things and ourselves; it mani-
fests only the individuality and the contingency of our
original relation to the instrumental things."[53] But
the body is in no way apprehended for itself; it is a
point of view and a point of departure. It is a non-
thetic project of the for-itself. Sartre points out
that nowhere else shall we come closer to touching
that nihilation of the in-itself by the for-itself and
that apprehension of the for-itself by the in-itself
which nourishes the nihilation. Sartre in this way
recognizes a dialectic between body and consciousness,
as the for-itself lives its body. As he says, "To have
a body is to be the foundation of one's own nothing-
ness and not to be the foundation of one's being; I am

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[53]Ibid., p. 325.

my body to the extent that I am; I am not my body to
the extent I am not what I am."[54]

These considerations lead us to conclude that
phenomenologically Sartre starts with a lived experience
in which human reality is engaged in a concrete situation;
consciousness and in-itself form a dyad so that one is
an abstraction without the other, and the body as lived
is the same as consciousness. At the same time, Sartre
indicates the dialectic that occurs in all these cases,
and it appears that in discussing the dialectic, Sartre
has presented the two entities, as if they are separate.
Thus, the separation is a product of reflection, while
in actuality, human-reality-in-the-world is the only real
entity.

Sartre develops his idea of 'lived reality' in his
later writings, beginning with the CRITIQUE. We have
tried to indicate that there is some evidence of his
postulating "lived reality" or "lived experience" in
Being and Nothingness. The only difference is this that
in his earlier works, Sartre never made any explicit
statement about it. He mentions being-in-the-world,
but he does not always show clearly how for-itself and
in-itself can be deduced from the primary being, that
is being-in-the-world, though it cannot be denied that

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[54] Ibid., p. 326.

the examples we have given above, like the situation
or the body, are genuine cases of lived reality. In
these cases, the distinctive separation of each of the
realities is not so prominent. What we shall attempt
below is some sort of hypothetical deduction of the for-
itself and in-itself from the lived reality of being-in-
the-world, and we hope that it is not incompatible
with Sartre's main thesis.

Sartre begins his philosophical discussion with
a dualism, because he inquires into the epistemological
question first. If, instead, he had raised the question:
how is consciousness situated or where does it exist,
he would have come to state that consciousness arises
in the world or that consciousness is in the world. He
asserts something like this afterwards when he says that
consciousness cannot exist without the world or the
world without consciousness. But if we try to analyze
consciousness as it knows something, we have already
adopted a mode of distinction between the knower and the
known. This relation between consciousness and object
being intentional, it is said that consciousness implies
the existence of something of which it is conscious.
What Sartre is doing here is establishing his ontology
on the epistemological inquiry, just as Descartes did in
his _Meditations_. But for Sartre, this epistemological

study is the process of an abstraction, for he seems
to forget what he will mention afterwards that con-
sciousness is in the world. Sartre's ontology could
be established on this phenomenological insight, and it
could be shown that his epistemological theory is mainly
a limited idea of what actually is the case. What we
want to emphasize is that Sartre's dualism is a consequence
of his epistemological approach and that this is something
due to his reflection on the knowledge situation. We
hold that his phenomenological insight is not irrecon-
ciliable with his dualism of some type, but this appears
to have been lost, when he considers the two sides of
the epistemological situation as if they are fundamen-
tally incommunicable. In his concluding chapter, Sartre
tries to restore the unity to some extent, but through-
out the whole book, except in the discussion on body
and situation, the dualism is so predominant that intu-
itions of the intimate relation between the for-itself
and the in-itself are often ignored. The phenomeno-
logically given has a justification for a dualism of
a relative type to allow the dialectical relation to oper-
ate; but a strict dualism between the _for-itself_ and _in-
itself_ is not phenomenologically justifiable, as it
goes against the "lived reality" or "_being-in-the-world_."

CHAPTER III

CONSCIOUSNESS, NEGATION, AND HUMAN REALITY

1. The Ontological nature of Consciousness

Sartre understands consciousness as being in question, which, perhaps, means that consciousness is always trying to reach some state of finality, but is never able to reach it. The nature of consciousness is persistent striving. The initial difference between consciousness and object is that consciousness is not an object.

Our experience shows that consciousness is different from object, and the difference consists in the never-ending possibility of consciousness. But an object has no such possibility. Object cannot have any choice. Consciousness wants to become what it is not, and as such, it is a project, a task. Therefore, consciousness is always in question. If these two aspects of consciousness (namely, that consciousness is always consciousness of an object and that consciousness is in question all the time) are treated as a whole, we get what Sartre means when he says, "Consciousness is a being such that in its

being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself."[1]

Consciousness is described by Sartre as nothingness. What does this mean? This can be understood if we keep in mind the idea that consciousness is a possibility.[2] It is to realize a possibility that consciousness has to be what it is not. The negative character of consciousness can explain, Sartre thinks, the negative facts that we experience in our everyday life. Negation, according to Sartre is not a logical category, as with Hegel,[3] nor an ontological correlative principle with Being, as with Heidegger,[4] but is rather something which we experience as real. But even then, Being-in-itself can not explain negation, for what is, purely is and can not explain how negation arrives in the world. So, Sartre says,

"The Being by which nothingness arrives in is a being such that in its Being the nothingness of its Being is in question."[5]

It is true that by negation some actual being is denied or rejected, but this denial or rejection is possible

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[1]B.N., p.lxii

[2]Ibid,, p.99

[3]Ibid., pp.12-16

[4]Ibid., pp.16-21

[5]Ibid., p.5

only because some consciousness wanted to realize a possibility. Interrogation, destruction, and negative judgment are the basic examples of negatités. In interrogation, we ask a question and this presupposes ignorance. It is a non-being. The answer to the question may be either affirmative or negative. In the affirmative answer what we know is known as not being some other thing.[6] If somebody answers my question, "Is he rich?" "Yes, he is rich," I know it as "he is not poor," not as something positive. If the answer is negative, it is clear that we appear before some non-being. Destruction implies that a thing loses its present state. But that change can have meaning only before a witnessing consciousness. Negative judgment implies the expectation of something which is not fulfilled. Pierre absent in the cafe does not signify the rejection of his presence, unless somebody is there to look for him. This capacity of introducing negation in the world gives rise to another dimension of consciousness - consciousness is nothingness, It is what it is not and is not what it is. Consciousness is a lack. All these descriptions of consciousness are implied with one another.

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[6]_Ibid._, p.8

We can understand consciousness as nothingness

if we try to explain Sartre's puzzling description of

consciousness as a being which is what it is not and

which is not what it is.[7] This is the recurring theme

in the whole of Being and Nothingness, and Sartre has

tried to interpret it in different ways; viz., in

relation to:

1. object
2. project or temporality
3. the other
4. freedom
5. body

We must distinguish these different interpretations and

try to discover what Sartre really means by these apparently

self-contradictory statements. Naess, however, points

out that there is really no contradiction here. As he says,

> "It is not impossible to produce expressions
> related to - consciousness is what is not
> and is not what is - in which 'is' can mean
> the same in each of its occurrences, but such
> expressions are not necessarily such as break
> the law of identity: 'Consciousness is as
> for-itself, that which it is not as in-itself
> and is not, as for-itself what it is as in-
> itself. 'Consciousness (of) my cowardice
> is consciousness (of) this cowardice which it
> is not and consciousness (of) my cowardice
> is not the cowardice which it is not.[8]

1. Sartre holds, first of all, that consciousness

   is not to be identified with an object. Yet when

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[7]Ibid., p.87

[8]Naess, Four Modern Philosophers, University of
Chicago, 1968, p.318

consciousness knows an object, consciousness seems
to be identified with the object, for nothing
separates the consciousness from the object. But
really, consciousness is not an object. So con-
sciousness is an object first, but it is not really
that. This is what Sartre means when he says that
consciousness is what it is not (what-it-is-not)
or object. But consciousness is also realized as
separate from the object, and it is understood to
be not what it is, in which case it may mean that
though consciousness appears to be an object, it
is not that.

Or we may interpret in the way of Naess. Then
the first part may mean that consciousness as con-
sciousness is consciousness which is not an object;
i.e., that consciousness is not an in-itself. But
then the second part practically seems to say the
same thing as the first in a different formulation,
because the latter says that consciousness is not
what it is. If we understand by the word "it is"
en-soi (because Sartre's definition of en-soi is that
it is), it also means that consciousness is not an
object. We may wonder if Sartre is saying the same
thing in two ways or pointing out the two aspects

of consciousness that it is and is not.

2.   Sartre introduces his description of conscious-

ness as it is what it is not and is not what it is in

connection with human reality or the basic nature

of temporality, which he, after Heidegger, calls

ek-stasy. Human reality is a project, and it lives

in the present by negating the past so that what

will be can come only by not being what it is. Pro-

ject transcends toward future and the future is not

yet. But consciousness can only be what it is in

future, or what is not yet. Therefore, conscious-

ness is future realization of possibility, or it is

what it is not yet. But the present is not the nat-

ure of consciousness, nor is it the past. Conscious-

ness cannot be confined to what it is. It has to

go beyond the present. So, consciousness is not

what it is or something which remains fixed, perman-

ent, without a possibility. Thus consciousness is

the future of not yet and is not the past for the

present.[9] As Sartre says,

> "The past which I am, I have to be with-
> out possibility. Yet I cannot be anything
> other than it. On the other hand, I am
> not my past. The truth is that I have
> to be it in order not to be it and I have

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[9]B.N., p. 116.

not to be it in order to be it.[10]

About the present he says,

> "The for-itself is present to being in the
> form of flight ... the present is a per-
> petual flight in the face of being."[11]

About the future Sartre remarks,

> "The future qua future does not have to be.
> It is not in-itself and neither is it in
> the mode of being of the for-itself, since
> it is the meaning of the for-itself. The
> future is not, it is possibllized.[12]

As in the previous interpretation, this meaning

of consciousness can be explained in a different

way. Consciousness as present is not the unchanging

mass of the past or the present in its flight, and

it is what it is not. Again, consciousness is not

the past or the present, because consciousness is

not what it is.

3.   When the look of the other petrifies me into

an object, consciousness becomes an object, but it

is not the nature of consciousness to be an object.

So, consciousness is an object in the eyes of the

other, but in itself it is not an object. Thus,

first, it is what it is as an object transformed into

that condition by the look of the other. But it

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[10]Ibid., pp.117-119

[11]Ibid., p.125

[12]Ibid., p.126

can regain its true nature by snatching away its

freedom from the other. Then it is not what it is.

As Sartre points out,

> "Moreover, I cannot truly define myself
> as being in a situation; first, because
> I am not a positional consciousness of
> myself; second, I am my own nothingness.
> In this sense, ... and since I am what
> I am not and since I am not what I am,
> I can not even truly define myself as
> truly in the process of listening to
> the doors.[13]

A second interpretation may be applied as in the

earlier cases which will show that consciousness is

not the object of the other.

4.   In the case of freedom Sartre tries to describe

consciousness in his puzzling language in the same

way. In fact, freedom designates the true nature

of consciousness, according to Sartre, for freedom

is never at rest. Sartre speaks of freedom as follows:

> "This implies for consciousness the per-
> manent possibility of effecting a rupture
> with its own past, of wrenching itself
> away from its own past so as to be able
> to consider it in the light of a non-being."[14]

In freedom, consciousness has to be its negation

and thus it is what it is not. At the same time,

consciousness can not be identical with what it is

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[13]Ibid., p. 260

[14]Ibid., p. 436

or with the past, because it has to wrench itself
away from the past. In Sartre's language,

>"Human reality is free because it is not
>enough. It is free because it is per-
>petually wrenched away from itself from
>the past, and because it has been separated
>by a nothingness from what it is and from
>what will be."[15]

5.   About body Sartre says that the for-itself lives
the body; and so, consciousness may be the body, but
it is also not the body. Thus consciousness is body
which is what it is not, but at the same time, con-
sciousness is not body which it is. Being-for-itself,
as Sartre says, must be wholly body and must be
wholly consciousness; it can not be united with a
body.[16]

Consciousness is the body in so far as the
body is not distinct from the situation of the for-
itself. The for-itself"to exist and to be situated"
are one and the same. But the for-itself nihilates
the body, for body is "the in-itself which is sur-
pased by the annihilating for-itself. It is the fact
... that I am nothing without having to be what I am
and in so far as I have to be what I am, I am with-
out having to be."[17]

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[15]Ibid., p.453

[16]Ibid., p.497

[17]Ibid., p.309

We can mention here also the alternative
interpretation as in other cases. Consciousness
is that which it is not as a body, and conscious-
ness is not a body if we understand the two parts
of the statement about consciousness in a different
way. Which of these interpretations is acceptable,
perhaps, depends on emphasis. But Sartre says
something about the body which may point out the
adequacy of the first interpretation. He says,

> "I am my body to the extent that I am;
> I am not my body to the extent I am
> not what I am."[18]

Because the for-itself is a possibility, it
is a nothingness, it is a lack. It wants to be
something which is not yet realized. And this
unrealized totality is the in-itself which the for-
itself is not. As Sartre remarks, "The for-itself
is perpetually determining itself not to be the
in-itself."

But this in-itself is what consciousness lacks.
Being-in-itself is what has no lack, for it is full
positivity.

> "It is only in the human world that there
> can be lack. A lack presupposes a trin-
> ity; that which is missing, or 'lacking'
> that which misses, what is lacking or the

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[18]Ibid., p.326

'existing' and a totality which has been
broken by the lacking and which would be
restored by the synthesis of the 'lacking'
or the 'existing'. This is the lacked.[19]

Sartre illustrates the lack with the example of

the crescent moon. That the crescent moon lacks

something can be understood only with reference to

the full moon, which can be grasped by the human

consciousness as the foundation which will recon-

stitute the synthetic totality of the lacked. Again,

the existence of desire proves that human reality

is a lack.

"Desire is a lack of being. It is haunted
in its inmost being by the being of which
it is the desire. Thus, it bears witness
to the existence of lack in the being of
human reality."[20]

The for-itself denies or nihilates itself so

that it can be for-itself. The meaning of human

reality is constituted by this nihilation. Thus,

the self-as-being-itself is what human reality

lacks and what makes its meaning. As Sartre states,

"Human reality is its own surpassing to-
ward what it lacks; it surpasses itself
toward the particular being which it would
be, if it were what it is ... it exists
first as a lack and in immediate synthetic
connection with what it lacks ... In its

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[19]Ibid., p.86

[20]Ibid., p.88

> coming into existence, human reality
> grasps itself as an incomplete being."[21]

This lack of what the for-itself is lacking is

value, or what Sartre calls self.

2. Consciousness and Ego

The question may arise whether all these aspects of

consciousness are true of the pre-reflective or the reflec-

tive consciousness. The question as such is meaning-

less, for there is no intrinsic difference between the

two. It is the same consciousness looked at from two

different points of view. But all the aspects of con-

sciousness are revealed to us as a result of phenomenolog-

ical analysis, which is the stage of reflection. It does

not mean that these aspects of consciousness were not

present in the pre-reflective consciousness, but are

subsequently produced by a reflective gaze. Once we

remember this, it becomes clear to us that Sartre is using

"consciousness", "for-itself" and "human reality" to

designate the same being. In the very nature of con-

sciousness, there is a fissure, and this Sartre explains

with reference to the stage of reflection where con-

sciousness tries to realize its identity with what it is

conscious of. Belief is consciousness (of) belief and

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[21]Ibid., p.89

so, even if belief is possible without consciousness, if
we try to identify belief with consciousness, we find that
a duality has appeared. If we want to understand what be-
lief is, we have to refer to consciousness and if we want
to understand what consciousness is, we have to refer to
belief. We may try to grasp the two in one identity; but
in our attempt to do so, consciousness vanishes. This is
the fundamental difference of consciousness from en-soi,
which is pure identity. But consciousness, if we may use
a queer expression, is a differentiating difference.

In the pre-reflective consciousness, there is no ego.
But in the reflective consciousness, the ego appears. Where
does it come from? Only in the reflective consciousness
do we become conscious of the ego. But the ego is never
complete at any moment of our experience. It grows out
of our experiences of the different stages of our life,
our consciousness of the body, different states and quali-
ties.[22] It is going towards the ultimate ideal to achieve
completion.[23] But we can understand by the ego the unity
of all the experiences achieved up to the present. In this
way the ego lives through consciousness of the moment.

How, then, are we to understand the relation between
consciousness, ego, for-itself, and self? For-itself is

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[22]Ibid., p.461,465

[23]T.E., p.61,71,72

to be understood as opposed to in-itself in terms of its

project. That which for-itself seeks to realize is the

self or value. It is the ideal of in-itself-for-itself,

though, according to Sartre, it is an unrealizable ideal.[24]

But the for-itself is constantly going towards that ideal,

and only this ideal gives an objective unity to the world.

The for-itself cannot realize the ideal, unless it is con-

sciousness. Only consciousness has the virtue of denying

the present of things to realize the future ideal. So

for-itself is consciousness, if we understand it in terms

of its character of nothingness. But consciousness cannot

work unless it is the consciousness of a concrete individu-

al which develops through the different conscious experiences.

Ego is never complete. To be complete, it has to realize

the ideal of consciousness as for-itself. We can say that

the experience of the present is consciousness, and that

an individual experiening the consciousness is ego; and

as the ideal to be realized, the ego is towards self through

consciousness, but the ideal as concieved from the point

of view of consciousness is for-itself. So, the ego is

active through consciousness to realize the self as the

for-itself.

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[24]B.N., p.90

Does this description of Sartre's theory of consciousness need the opacity or passivity of the ego? If we
think of the ego as activating the consciousness, it may
be opaque. But we understand the ego as lived through consciousness and achieving its nature through different conscious states, though it is not actually so. The ego of
the present has been achieved through the result of past
experiences, but in the consciousness of the present this
achieved unity of past experience is active or living.
The present experience will, perhaps, reconsitute the ego
and in this way, the ego is constantly made and remade.
But it is never complete, until and unless the final unity
is realized. So, consciousness retains its spontaneity
and the ego realized through conscious experiences, though
it loses the spontaneity to some extent, has a borrowed
spontaneity. In so far as the unity of the ego represents
the unity of the experiences, it is "me;" but when it is
actively experiencing something or is working in the world,
it is "I." As Sartre says, the "me" and the "I" are the
two sides of the same unity.[25]

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[25]T.E., p.60

CHAPTER IV

CONSCIOUSNESS AND TEMPORALITY IN RELATION

TO HUSSERL, HEIDEGGER, AND MERLEAU-PONTY

In this chapter, we shall try to analyze Sartre's idea
of temporality, while the next chapter will be devoted to
a consideration of his notion of existential freedom. As
there are important phenomenological studies on the exper-
ience of time in Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, we
want also to show how Sartre shares their views in many
points and how he develops his own point of view, in har-
mony with his ontology.

1. Husserl's view on time-consciousness

Husserl speaks of "the lived experiences in which the
temporal in the objective sense arrears."[1] He first of all
criticizes the explanation of time-consciousness offered by
Brentano and others who conceive of temporal succession per-
ceived as several nows, since it is really a puzzle how these
separate nows can establish the unity and continuity of an
experience like a melody. As the sound is given, I exper-

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[1]E. Husserl, _The Phenomenology of Inner Time Conscious-
ness_, Midland Book, Indiana University Press, Second Edition,
1966, p.24

ience it as now, but I am also conscious of the contin-
uity of phases as "before". As Husserl says, "I am con-
scious of the sound and the duration which it fills in a
continuity of modes in a 'continuous flux'".[2] As I hear
a sound, every moment a new now presents itself, but each
now is changed into something that has been. This is
called "retention", and every consciousness undergoes a
modification, because the 'now' changes continuously from
retention to retention. As the sound continues, we have
a series of retentions going back to the point of origin.
Such retention is called by Husserl "primary remembrance".[3]

If we try to understand the experience of a temporal
event, we find that part of the 'same' tone which was
originally given as now, is in the second moment given
as "having been heard just now". Husserl calls this type
of retention also a mode of original giveness. If we use
the term "impression" for perception, we may say that an
impression of a temporal event must contain a retention.
Again when a new part of the same "tone" is also given
as now, that part which was given in a retention is also
retained - but in a retention of retention. When this
retention of the retention takes place, that which was

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[2]Ibid., p.44

[3]Ibid., p.88

given in an impression is now given in a retention itself.
The impression of the third part of the tone is given
together with the retention of the second and the retention
of the retention of the first, etc. In this way every
perception of something given as something in time implies
a series of retentions.

Husserl points out that every awareness of a temporal
event contains, apart from an awareness of what has been,
at the same time an awareness of what is to come. When
we try to recollect a forgotton tone, we find that the
recollection cannot be a literal reproduction of the
original experience. It will always be tinged by the mem-
ory of what followed, when we heard the part originally.
When I hear something for the first time, I do not know
what I am going to hear the next moment. But we cannot
reproduce literally this "not knowing" in reproduction.[4]
Let us suppose that when we heard the last part of the
tone "a", it suddenly broke off. I did not expect it to
break off in the next moment. I expected it to continue,
and this expectation is a positive character of the original
act of hearing. But in recollection of the original exper-
ience, I know already that it will break off in the next
moment. Thus, when I hear a certain part of a tone,

[4]P. Merlan, Time Consciousness in Husserl and Heideg-
ger, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol.8,
1947-48, p.24

I know in a way that either the tone will become stronger
or weaker and the possibilities I can think of character-
ize my expectation - an expectation that belongs to the
essence of the perception of the present event. The expect-
ation is rather vague. But in recollection, the expecta-
tion is already determined, and this change in expectation
is a change of the original impression. Expectation
constitutes a link by which each part of the tone is con-
nected to the part yet to be perceived. The expectation
is fulfilled by the subsequent act. We can say that
every perception of a temporal event necessarily contains
an expectation and is fulfilled, due to subsequent parts.
Due to the vague character of expectation, Husserl calls
it "protention". Thus, retention, protention and fulfill-
ment are essential in the structure of acts in and by
which something is perceived as a temporal event.

Husserl understands the nature of time-consciousness
as a fact of experience being constituted in the flux of
consciousness. First, he shows how the perception of the
now is constantly being modified by the retentions of what
has been and the protentions of what is to come. Time-
consciousness is thus a unity growing out of the inseparable
relation between the different phases. This unity is
better understood if we look to the flux of consciousness
which cannot be divided onto different phases, for to

speak of a division of the flow of consciousness is absurd.
Husserl is not interested to show what gives consciousness
a unity. Materal object has also unity, but Husserl says
that the unity of the material object is a meaning intended
by consciousness. The unity of consciousness is not under-
stood at all, unless we understand consciousness as some-
thing of the nature of a project. Because consciousness
is a project, it has unity, and that explains thoroughly
the unity of time-consciousness. This point is the main
theme of Heidegger's notion of temporality in his analysis
of Dasein, and we shall see afterwards that Sartre is
influenced both by Husserl and Heidegger, when he speaks
of temporality as an ek-static unity of the nature of
consciousness.

2. Heidegger's analysis of Temporality

Heidegger understands that "Dasein is an entity for
which, in its Being, that Being is an issue".[5] We can
understand the phrase "is an issue" if we remember that
Dasein is a self-projective Being towards its ownmost
potentiality-for-Being. This means that in each case
Dasein is already ahead of itself in its Being. But
this Being-ahead-of-itself does not signify an isolated

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[5] M. Heidegger, Being and Time, (Trans. Macquarrie,
J. and E. Robinson), Harper and Row Publishers, New York
and Evanston, 1962, p.76

tendency in a subject outside the world. This expresses

the fact that <u>Dasein</u> has already been thrown into a world.

The true characteristic of <u>Dasein</u> is thus ahead of itself-

being-already-in-the-world. This whole way in which <u>Dasein</u>

is concerned with the world, other beings, and its own

fate is ontologically a basic structure of <u>Dasein</u> and is

termed by Heidegger <u>Care</u> (<u>Sorge</u>).

<u>Dasein</u> has an authentic potentiality-for-being-a-

whole; and as death is the end for-being-a-whole, Heidegger

first of all shows that authentic Being-towards-death is

anticipation. He has also pointed out that <u>Dasein's</u>

authentic potentiality-for-being can be designated exis-

tentially as resoluteness. He wants to analyze the nature

of resoluteness phenomenologically to show that resolute-

ness in its ordinary manner points forward to "anticipatory

resoluteness as its ownmost authentic possibility".[6] Heideg-

ger points out that "Temporality gets experienced in a

phenomenally primordial way in <u>Dasein's</u> authentic Being-

a-whole, in the phenomenon of anticipatory resoluteness".[7]

This understanding of temporality is not accessible to

the ordinary notion of time. Rather, the primordial

phenomenon of temporality throws light on the way time is

ordinarily understood. As Heidegger understands, <u>Dasein</u>

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[6]<u>Ibid</u>., p.349

[7]<u>Ibid</u>., p.351

becomes essentially Dasein in that authentic existence

which constitutes itself as anticipatory resoluteness.

That which is projected in the primordial existential

projection of existence is revealed as an anticipatory

resoluteness. This anticipatory resoluteness is Being

one's ownmost, distinctive potentiality-for-Being. This

is possible only because Dasein can come toward itself in

its ownmost possibility as a possibility in letting itself

come toward itself. This is the primordial phenomenon of

the future as coming toward itself.

As Being-towards-death is Dasein's possibility, it

is possible as something futural. The "futural" is the

coming in which Dasein, in its ownmost potentiality-for-

Being, comes toward itself. Anticipation makes Dasein

authentically futural and in such a way that the anti-

cipation is possible only in so far as Dasein is coming

toward itself, in its Being. Anticipatory resoluteness

has to understand itself by taking over the throwness of

Dasein. Only in so far as Dasein is an "I-am-as-having

been" can Dasein come towards itself, futurally. In anti-

cipation of one's uttermost and ownmost possibility one

comes back understandingly to one's ownmost "been". The

character of "having been" arises, in a certain way, from

the future. Anticipatory resoluteness has to be concerned

with what is ready-to-hand in the enviroment. Dasein

can have a resoluteness of being-alongside what is ready-
to-hand in a situation by making such an entity present.
The character of "having been" arises from the future and
in such a way that the future which is in the process of
having been releases from itself the present. This pheno-
menon having the unity of a future which makes present in
the process of having been is designated "temporality".
Temporaluty revelas the being of <u>Care</u>.

<u>Dasein's</u> totality of Being as <u>Care</u> means, "ahead-of-
itself-already-being-in (a world) as Being-alongside
(entities encountered within-the-world)".[8] <u>Dasein's</u>
"Being-ahead-of-itself" is grounded in the future. Being-
already-in-the-world indicates the character of having
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projection upon the 'for-the-sake-of-oneself' is grounded

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[8]<u>Ibid.</u>, p.236

in the future and is an essential characteristic of
existentiality. The primary meaning of existentiality
is the future.[9] Similarly, "already" refers to the exist-
ential temporal meaning of the Being that has been thrown.
As long as Dasein factually exists, it is always in the
sense of "I-am-as-having-been". But the term "past" is
used with reference to things that are no longer present-
at-hand. Dasein finds itself as an entity which it still
is and already was - that is to say, "which it constantly
is as having been".[10]

The future, the character of having been, and the
present reveal the phenomenal characteristics of the "towar
oneself", "the back-to" and the "letting-oneself-be-
encountered-by". These phenomena of the future, the char-
acter of having-been, and the present are called by Hei-
degger the "ek-stases" of temporality. He thinks that in
enumerating the ek-stases, the future is to be mentioned
first, because the future has a priority in the ek-statical
unity of primordial and authentic temporality. Such tem-
porality temporalizes itself in terms of the authentic
future and in such a way that in its orientation towards
the future it first of all awakens the present.

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[9]Ibid., p.376

[10]Ibid., p.376

can have a resoluteness of being-alongside what is ready-to-hand in a situation by making such an entity present. The character of "having been" arises from the future and in such a way that the future which is in the process of having been releases from itself the present. This pheno-menon having the unity of a future which makes present in the process of having been is designated "temporality". Temporaluty revelas the being of <u>Care</u>.

.Dasein's totality of Being as <u>Care</u> means, "ahead-of-itself-already-being-in (a world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)".[8] <u>Dasein's</u> "Being-ahead-of-itself" is grounded in the future. Being-already-in-the-world indicates the character of having been. Being-alongside is possible in making present the entities with which Dasein is concerned in the situation. Though "ahead" includes the notion of "before", and "already" includes the notion of "earlier", <u>Care</u> is not conceived as an entity which runs its course in time, becouae then the Being of an entity having the character of <u>Dasein</u> would become something present-at-hand. The "before" and "ahead" indicate the future which makes it possible for Dasein to be such that its potentiality-for-Being is an issue. "Self-projection upon the 'for-the-sake-of-oneself' is grounded

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The future, the character of having been, and the present reveal the phenomenal characteristics of the "toward-oneself", "the back-to" and the "letting-oneself-be-encountered-by". These phenomena of the future, the character of having-been, and the present are called by Heidegger the "ek-stases" of temporality. He thinks that in enumerating the ek-stases, the future is to be mentioned first, because the future has a priority in the ek-statical unity of primordial and authentic temporality. Such temporality temporalizes itself in terms of the authentic future and in such a way that in its orientation towards the future it first of all awakens the present.

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[9] <u>Ibid.</u>, p.376

[10] <u>Ibid.</u>, p.376

The true understanding of the past is possible, when Dasein adopts the responsible acceptance of throwness which is possible only because of one's future. Dasein can be its own "as it already 'was'". Dasein can move towards itself in the mode of the "future" only by going backwards towards its past at the same time. For the temporality of Dasein the future is somehow the "guiding" and dominant mode. Only when the Dasein "runs forward" to its inmost potentiality can it really move backward in "understanding" to its own past. Only in so far as Dasein is of the future can it authentically be of the past. The "resolve running forward" discloses the concrete given situation in such a way that "Existence" acts with circumspection in its care of what is "Zuhanden". The resolute Being-concerned-with-what-is "Zuhanden" in such a concrete given situation is possible, only when this "Zuhanden" is rendered present.

The nature of temporality as analyzed so far helps us to understand the characteristics of the structural unity of Care. The Being-ahead-of-itself of Care is grounded in the future. The "future" makes it possible for Dasein to be concerned about its potentiality of Being and to "project" itself towards its innermost possibility. Thus, the inner possibility of "Existentiality" as such is the "future". Being-already-in-the-world is grounded in the

past, and the primary meaning of "facticity", with its throwness, is the past. Being-alongside the world is grounded in the present. It refers essentially to "rendering present" and the "Verfallen" or falling which is embedded in the future and the past. The resolute Dasein brings itself out of the "Verfallen" to establish its authentic being in a disclosed situation to live in the moment of vision (Augenblick). Another important thing to remember in this connection is that temporality is not at all anything that is in the sense of a "being". It, rather, produces Time. Temporality is, as Heidegger emphasizes, the original and fundamental "outside itself" in and for itself, As has been noted earlier, "Future", "Past", and "Present" are thus termed the ek-stases of Temporality.

3. Sartre's analysis of Temporality

In coming to Sartre's analysis of Temporality, we find that he makes use of Husserl's phenomenological investigation of time, inasmuch as he understands time as the unity of past, present, and future. The three phases are understood in relation to one another. Sartre, like Heidegger, tries to show that the being of human reality is itself time, though he disagrees with Heidegger about the nature of ultimate project. Heidegger points out that the Being of Dasein is grounded in Temporality, for the human self

is _Care_. But Sartre's definition of consciousness emphasizes

more clearly that we can not be conscious without being

temporal. The nature of _Dasein_ is brought out more clearly

if we remember that _Dasein_ can have a project because the

Being of _Dasein_ is consciousness, essentially different

from the other things which Heidegger includes in "Zuhanden"

and "Vorhanden".

Sartre tries to understand Temporality "... as the

structural moments of an original synthesis".[11] Tempor-

ality is to be approached as a totality which dominates

the secondary structures and confers meaning on them. He

first of all proceeds to analyze the being of the different

phases of time.

About the past, the question always arises: what is

the being of the past being? Some say that it is no longer,

in which case the being is attributed to the present alone.

It is suggested that the past persists by virtue of a pre-

sent modification of our being. Thus everything is present -

the body, the present perception, and the past as present

modification of the brain process. This raises a problem -

if everything is present, how can we explain the passivity

of memory? In memory, consciousness transcends the present

in order to aim at the event back there where it was. We are

not able to get out of the present to direct ourselves

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[11]_B/N._, p.107

toward the past. Sartre is of the opinion that if the past is not given in some manner, then no intellectual operation with reference to the "social contexts" can recreate it.

Sartre wants to attack the problem of the past in the perspective of intra-mundane being. The law of intra-mundane being is that Being is and such Being wholly exhausts itself in Being, and it cannot have any connection with what is no longer. If the past is considered as something in the world or something as present, then it is being-in-itself. Sartre thinks that the past is first of all my past. It is bound to a present and to a certain future, to both of which it belongs. The "myness" is an ontological relation which unites the past to the present. The past is never isolated and it is originally the past of this present. When we remember that Paul in 1920 was a student, we have to admit a recollecting synthesis which stems from the present in order to maintain its cotact with the past.[12] The past always is the past of something or somebody; one has a past. It is not that first there is a universal past which becomes particularized in the concrete parts. On the contrary, the particular parts are discovered first, and we have to see how these individual pasts are united to form the past. It may be said that

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[12] Ibid., p.111

the past can be understood with reference to the person

who still "exists", but how can we understand the past in

the case of a man who is dead? How can we say of the

deceased Pierre that he loved music? It cannot be in rela-

tion to a universal present which is a pure affirmation

of being: it must.be then the past of my actuality, for

Pierre has been for me and his existence formed a part of

a present "in the world, for me, and for-others" which was

my present during Pierre's life-time - a present which I

have been. The concrete objects which have disappeared

are past as they form a part of the concrete past of a

survivor. We have to understand that death reduces the for-

itself-for-others to the state of simple for-others.

Sartre remarks, "Today I alone am responsible for the Being

of the dead Pierre, I in my freedom".[13]

Sartre explains that one could not"have" a past, as

one "has" an automobile or a racing stable. The past can-

not be possessed by a being in the present which remains

external to it. Because of this, an in-itself whose pre-

sent is what it is can not "have" a past. The past is

possible only for a present which cannot exist without

being its past. Sartre makes it clear that "was" means

that the present being has to be in its being the founda-

tion of its past while being itself this past. Sartre

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[13]Ibid., p.112

points out that the term "was" indicates an ontological
leap from the present into the past and represents an
original synthesis of these two temporal modes. The term
"was" is a mode of being, and in this sense I am my past.

We are responsible for our past. The past has come
into the world by me. It is because I am my past that it
enters into the world, and it is in terms of its being-in-
the world that I can represent it to myself. The past is
that for which I have to assume responsibility, but it is
without possibility of any sort. I have to be the past
with no possibility of not being it.

Though I have to be my past, and though I am also
my past, it is also true that I am not my past. I am not
it because I was it. The truth of my existence is that I
have to be my past in order not to be it and I have not to
be it in order to be it. If I am not what I was, it is
because I am related to my being in the mode of an internal
bond of non-being. The for-itself is always beyond that
which it is by the very fact that it is for-itself and that
it has to be it. The past is the in-itself which I am,
but I have to go beyond this in-itself.

Sartre holds that the past as it is, at the same time
resembles value, for it represents a certain synthesis of
the Being which is what it is not and is not what it is -
with the being which is what it is. But, though it resembles

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cannot be at rest "in-itself". So, the present can be only the presence of the for-itself to being-in-the-itself. This table can be present to that chair in a world which human reality haunts as a presence. The for-itself is defined as presence to being. Beings are found as co-present in a world where the for-itself unites them with its own blood by that total ek-static sacrifice of the self which is called presence. The question arises: what is this presence? Originally the for-itself is presence to being in so far as the for-itself is to itself its own witness of co-existence. It is present being if it is intentionally directed outside itself upon that being. The for-itself has an adherence to being due to the fact that it realizes its birth in an original bond with being; "it is a witness to itself of itself as not being that being. Due to this fact it is outside that being, upon being, and within being as not being that being."[15]

The following conclusions as the meaning of presence can be deduced: "Presence to a being implies that one is bound to that being by an internal bond; otherwise no connection between present and being would be possible."[16]

About the future Sartre says that it is only by human reality that the future arrives in the world. In itself

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[15]Ibid., p.122

[16]Ibid., p.122

it is an actually. The future is possible only to a being which is its own future. There is no moment in my consciousness which is not defined by an internal relation to future. "When I write, when I smoke, when I drink, when I rest, the meaning of my consciousness is always at a distance down there, outside."[17] The future is what I have to be insofar as I can not be it. The for-itself flees the present towards its being; that is, toward the self which it will be by coincidence with what it lacks. The future is revealed to the for-itself as that which the for-itself is not yet insofar as it makes itself be as a project of itself outside the present toward that which it is not yet. The future cannot be without this revelation.

This world has meaning as future only insofar as I am present to it as another who I will be, in another position, physical, emotional, social, etc. Future as the future presence of a for-itself to a being drags being-in-itself along with it into the future. I give to the world its own possibilities in terms of the state in which I apprehend it. But the future is not solely the presence of the for-itself to a being situated beyond being. It is something which waits for the for-itself which I am, because I project myself toward the future in order to merge there with that

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[17]Ibid., p.125

which I lack. The project of the for-itself toward the future which it is, is a project towards the in-itself. But the "reuniting" of the for-itself with what it lacks is purely ideal; it is not really operative. The future does not allow itself to be rejoined; it slides into the past as a bygone future, and the present for-itself is revealed as the foundation of its own nothingness, and once again as the lack of new future.

Temporality is possible as the intra-structure of a for-itself. Temporality is the being of the for-itself insofar as the for-itself has to be its being ek-statically. Temporality is not, but the for-itself temporalizes itself by existing. And there is no ontological priority of for-itself over temporality. This conclusion is demonstrated by the phenomenological study of the past, the present, and the future.

Sartre points out that the for-itself rises into being as the nihilation of the in-itself, giving rise thereby to all the possible dimensions of nihilation. It introduces multiplicity at the heart of being. The in-itself is neither diversity nor multiplicity, and in order to receive multiplicity as the characteristic of being-in-the-midst-of-the world, "a being must arise which is simultaneously present to each in-itself isolated in its own identity."[18]

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[18]Ibid., p.137

In the first dimension the for-itself has to be its

own being, as that which it is without being the foundation

of it. This being is there, opposite it, but a nothingness

separates it from being. The for-itself as the foundation

of its nothingness is separated from the original contin-

gency in that it can neither get rid of it nor merge with

it. This is the unconditional necessity of for-itself, for

it is in one certain sense. But because it is for-itself,

it is never what it is. What it is is behind it as the past

and is a necessary structure of the for-itself. It can

exist only as a nihilating surpassing, and this implies

that something is surpassed. Sartre thinks that the for-

itself, because it has to be its past, comes into the world

with a past. The relation of pastness is primitive, which

is a relation between the for-itself and the pure in-itself.

The original being of the for-itself is this relation to a

being which is not consciousness, which exists in the total

night of identity and which the for-itself is nevertheless

obliged to be, outside and behind itself. The in-itself is

what the for-itself was before. We can think of a solidarity

with the foetus, in-itself, which we can neither deny nor

understand. We can understand birth as an ek-static rela-

tion of being to the in-itself which it is not, because to

be for-itself is to be born. It is through the for-itself

that the past in general can exist, and it is from the stand-

point of the for-itself that the past can be established.

As the in-itself is made co-present with the for-itself, a

world arises instead of isolated cases of in-itself. There

is a sense in which the for-itself appears as being born

from the world, for the in-itself from which it is born is

in the midst of the world. It is in terms of the world that

a for-itself arises which did not exist before and which has

been born. But in another sense, it is the for-itself which

causes the existence of a before in general, and there arises

a series of co-presents united in the unity of one past

world. Through the birth of the for-itself a past appears

in the world. We can point out here that "consciousness is

a being which rises to a being beyond an unalterable which

it is, and this unalterable inasmuch as it is behind the

for-itself in the midst of the world, is the past."[19]

In the second dimension, the for-itself experiences

itself as a lack. It is both the lack and the lacking, for

it has to be what it is not. When I am drinking, I am this

drinking which I have to be and which I am not. In the third

dimension, the for-itself is dispersed in the perpetual game

of reflection-reflecting and escapes itself in the unity of

one and the same flight. Being is everywhere and nowhere

and as one tries to seize it, it has disappeared. Thus, the

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[19] <u>Ibid</u>., p.140

for-itself disperses its being in three dimensions and is temporal, because it nihilates itself. None of these dimensions has ontological priority over another, but in spite of this Sartre puts emphasis to the present ek-stases and not to the future.

Sartre calls the past a fatality in reverse. The for-itself can make itself what it wishes, but the past is a for-itself which has fallen into the midst of the world. What I have to be I am as a presence to the world which I am not but which I was. "The for-itself falling into the past as an ex-presence-to-being becomes in-itself, becomes a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world and the world is retained in the past dimension as that in the midst of which the past for-itself is in-itself."[20] Sartre compares this situation of the for-itself to the Siren whose human body is completed in the tail of a fish. The for-itself is completed behind itself as a thing in the world. In the past the world surrounds me and I am lost in the universal determinism, but I can transcend my past toward the future to the extent that "I was it."

The for-itself not only changes, but also endures. If it did not endure, it might remain a negation of the transcendent in-itself, but it would be a given and would acquire the contingency of the in-itself. The for-itself would cease

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[20]Ibid., p.146

to be the foundation of its own nothingness. It would no longer be as having to be, but it would simply be. As Sartre remarks, "The flight of the for-itself is the refusal of contingency by the very act which constitutes the for-itself as being the foundation of its nothingness." The for-itself being always in the flight, the totality is never achieved, and it is a totality which is refused and which flees from itself. Sartre concludes with this remark,

> "Thus the time of consciousness is human reality
> which temporalizes itself as the totality which
> is to itself its own incompletion; it is nothing-
> ness slipping into a totality as a detotalizing
> ferment... There is never an instant at which
> we can assert that the for-itself is, precisely
> because the for-itself never is. Temporality, on
> the contrary, temporalizes itself entirely as the
> refusal of the instant."[21]

Sartre's idea of temporality agrees essentially with that of Heidegger in the sense that in both human reality in its basic character is temporality. Heidegger makes a distinction between authentic and inauthentic being and tries to point out that authentic existence lies in adopting the resolute nature of realizing the true nature of _Dasein_, which is oriented towards death. _Dasein_ has to be ahead of itself in order to understand its ultimate possibility. Because death lies in the future and _Dasein_ has to remain in the resoluteness of anticipation with reference to death, _Dasein_ has to be temporality. Sartre also speaks of the ultimate possib-

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[21]_Ibid._, p.149

ility of for-itself which is to be for-itself-in-itself
and because for-itself is on the path towards the ideal,
for-itself is temporal. In Heidegger's thought the ultimate
possibility, though uncertain about the time of its reali-
zation, is the most certain to be actualized. Thus, there
is a difference about the actualization of the ultimate
possibility between Heidegger and Sartre. But this differ-
ence does not affect the fact that human reality is a pro-
ject and is ahead of itself to realize its ideal. As pro-
ject, it is the future which gives meaning to the life of
the present and the past. There is difference in emphasis
on the phases of temporality, even though both Sartre and
Heidegger agree that temporality is an ek-static unity in
which each phase has to be understood in relation to the
other, as each is unsubstantial without the other phases.
Sartre calls such relationship between the phases an original
synthesis. Heidegger thinks that Dasein is in the world
with a past and Dasein's yet to be can be understood, because
it has already been. Again, the future project of the Dasein
makes the repetitions of the past intellegible. In the pre-
sent, Dasein renders itself present to the environment with
an anticipatory understanding of the future. Heidegger also
speaks of the guilt of the Dasein in the stage of having
been from which it has to be awakened. But it is not always
clear from his analysis what exact relation the past bears

to the present. In that respect, Sartre is much more

emphatic on the existential significance of the past, when

he says I am my past, and the present is always haunted by

the past, as it has to be responsible for the past.

Sartre gives more emphasis to the present, because it

is in the present that the for-itself feels that it is a

lack; only in the future can it be what it is. In Heidegger's

thought, the future is already definite, because every _Dasein_

is in its ultimate nature being towards death. So, the pre-

sent is only the stage of preparing the _Dasein_, and the

adoption of the resoluteness derives its meaning from the

future which makes the present dependent on future. Sartre

does not say that the future determines the present, though

the future gives a pre-outline of what the for-itself is to

be. But the for-itself has the freedom not to realize the

possibility. It is not clear what Sartre means by this

ideal of the for-itself-in-itself, but by its nature it is

a self-contradictory ideal. It may mean that the for-itself

becomes in-itself, but that is not possible; for the for-

itself, by its nature always escapes the situation. So,

the future ideal can give the present an impetus, but it is

the present which understands itself as the possible.

Sartre does not speak about authentic and inauthentic

existence in the sense of Heidegger, but he makes a distinction

between pure and impure reflection. It is pure reflection

which makes for-itself aware of temporality and, at the same time, recover its temporalization, as reflection can never grasp the for-itself as it is or in-itself. But in impure reflection, the flow of the for-itself is arrested and is transformed into a succession of "nows" that gives rise to the psychic objects. Psychic temporality is what we understand by the life of the ego in which the past, the present, and the future are gathered together in a sort of artificial unity. Though it is not clearly expressed, it seems sure that through this projection of psychic temporality, we come to understand everyday time, which Heidegger calls "public time" or the "time of Zuhanden and Vorhanden." Sartre speaks of the for-itself as historciity, but he never shows the relation between historicity and history, as Heidegger does. Yet the nature of the for-itself, consisting in temporalization, makes it clear that only with the birth of the for-itself the sense of time enters into the world. Thus, history, being a record of temporal events connected with the life of the for-itself, must have its foundation on the temporalizing of the for-itself.

Thus, Husserl and Heidegger's analysis have helped us understand Sartre's notion of temporality, for him, temporality is both a flow of consciousness and a project. Sartre's understanding of the for-itself is brought out clearly by the notion of temporality, for it is not that consciousness

lives in time, but rather that consciousness _is_ time. It
is not the apriori form of consciousness; rather conscious-
ness manifests itself in the different phases of what we
call the past, the present, and the future. We have tried
to show consciousness as a temporal unity, as Sartre's idea
of consciousness is always in the process to not be what
it is in order to be what it is not. And this is best mani-
fested in Sartre's understanding of temporality. We shall
close this discussion with a brief reference to Merleau-
Ponty, whose ideas on temporality may throw some light on
Sartre's notion.

4. Merleau-Ponty's notion of temporality

Merleau-Ponty states that if we look at the things
themselves, there are no successive events. "When I say
that the day before yesterday, the glacier produced the
water which is passing at this time, I am tacitly assuming
the existence of a witness tied to a certain spot in the
world and I am comparing his successive views."[22] But in
the world itself, there is simply one indivisible changeless
being. Time is, therefore, not an actual succession that I
am keeping record of. It arises from my relation to things.
Neither is the theory of the psychologists that time is in
consciousness satisfactory, because they try to explain the

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[22]M. Merleau-Ponty, _Phenomenology of Perception_,
Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963, p.411

memory of the past by means of physiological or psychic

preservation. But the truth is that the traces them-

selves do not refer to the past; rather the sense of

the past comes from myself, because what is past in

my life has a significance for me.

It is the field of presence which is the primary

experience in which time and its dimensions make their

appearance. It is here that we see a future sliding

into the present and on into the past. These dimensions

are not given to us through discrete acts; my day weighs

upon me with all its weight, it is still there. In the

same way, I do not think of the evening to come and

its consequences, and yet it is there, like the back of

a house of which I can see only the facade. The pro-

tentions and retentions run from my perceptual field

itself, "which draws along in its wake its own horizon

of retentions and bites into the future with its pro-

tentions."[23] With every new moment, its predecessor

undergoes a change. Though I have it in hand and it is

still there, it is already sinking away below the

level of presents. When a third moment arrives, the

second undergoes a new modification; from being retention

it becomes the retention of a retention, and the layer of

time between it and me thickens.

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[23]Ibid., p. 416.

Merleau-Ponty says that the past and the future

exist only when a subjectivity is there to disrupt the

plenitude of being-in-itself. A past and a future spring

forth when I reach out towards them. I am not, for myself,

at this very moment; I am also at this morning or at the

night which will soon be there. My present is this

instant, but it is equally this very day, this year

or my whole life. There is no external synthesis

which binds together the tempora into one single time,

because each of the tempora includes, beyond itself,

the whole open series of other tempora, in internal

communication with them, because the "cohesion of life"

is given with its ek-stase. The passage of one present

to the next is not a thing which is conceived by me nor

it is perceived by me as an onlooker. I perform it.

This is not to say that time is for someone, but rather

that time is someone. We have to understand time as

the subject and the subject as time. Primordial tem-

porality is not a juxtaposition of external events, as

it is the power which holds them together, while keeping

them apart. "In my present, if I grasp it while it is

still living and with all that it implies, there is

an ek-stase towards the future and towards the past which

reveals the dimensions of time not as conflicting, but

as inseparable."[24] Subjectivity lives through time

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[24]Ibid., p. 422.

and merges with the cohesion of life.

Consciousness is the very action of time - creation or temporalization - a self-anticipatory movement, a flow which never leaves itself. Time is the "affecting of self by self;" what exerts the effect is time as a thrust and a passivity towards future; what is affected is time as an unfolded series of presents. The affecting agent and affected recipient are one. This ek-stase is subjectivity. Time is a spontaneity which perpetuates itself in virtue of its being acquired. Time without its roots in a present and thence a past would not be time, but eternity. Heidegger's historical time, flowing from the future has its future in advance and rescues itself from disintegration. But it is impossible within the context of Heidegger's thought itself. If time is an ek-stase, if present and past are two results of this ek-stase, how can we stop seeing time from the point of view of the present and how is it possible to escape from the inauthentic? We are always centered in the present, and our decisions start from there. They can always be brought into relationship with our past, and they have to be subsequently carried forward. Time is the foundation and measure of our spontaneity and the power of outrunning and of "neantiser" which dwells within us and is ourselves. We are wholly active and passive, because we are the upsurge of time.

According to Merleau-Ponty, "the world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world which projects itself."[25] The subject is being-in-the-world and the world remains "subjective" since its style and the articulations are indicated by the subjects movement of transcendence. Merleau-Ponty thinks that his analysis of time has confirmed this new notion of significance and understanding.

The points of agreement between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty lie in both of their giving emphasis to the present. Merleau-Ponty does not speak about any ultimate possibility, like Heidegger and Sartre, but rather understands the subject as project. Insofar as the individual is a project, time is generated by the life of the subject. This does not mean that there was no time before the existence of human subject, but that time cannot be contemplated without reference to the subject and his cultural world. Merleau-Ponty mentions a close connection between the subject and the world, as both are inseparable from each other and the subject can have a project by being-in-the-world, for the project of the subject is to mould the world. Sartre wants to give the subject

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[25]Ibid., p. 430.

more freedom and therefore his subject, though living

in the world, is never bound by it. It refuses to be

limited by the in-itself. But Sartre would not deny that

the in-itself remains an unavoidable facticity in the

life of the subject, due to which his life is contingent.

It seems that the difference between Sartre and Merleau-

Ponty is one of emphasis, for Sartre does not think that

consciousness is actually separate from the in-itself;

only consciousness can understand itself as different

from the object and thus the project of the human subject

has no meaning, if it is thought of as isolated from the

world. Both Heidegger and Sartre speak of an authentic

or original temporality on the basis of which there is

inauthentic or psychic temporality. But for Merleau-

Ponty the subject always being inseparably connected

with all other things of the world, it does not make

any sense to talk of a pure subject or authentic subject,

for being-in-the-world is the concrete existence of the

subject. Only when we make abstractions from the con-

crete life, as done by sciences, do we have an inauthentic

picture. But Merleau-Ponty does not try to show how the

conception of time as understood by the sciences is de-

pendent on the nature of the human project.

CHAPTER V

CONSCIOUSNESS AND FREEDOM

1. The Cartesian Notion of Freedom

The nature of consciousness, as Sartre under-
stands it, is to go beyond itself, to be what it is
not and not to be what it is. In this sense, con-
sciousness exists in temporal dimensions. Temporali-
zation of consciousness is possible because conscious-
ness is free. We say rather that freedom is the in-
ternalization of temporalization. That consciousness
exists in the ek-static unity of past, present, and
future is possible, because consciousness is freedom.
This is made apparent by Sartre when he says,

> Man does not exist first in order to be
> free subsequently; there is no difference
> between the being of man and his being-
> free.[1]

Sartre points out that the question of freedom
was basically understood by Descartes. For him, free-
dom depended on the rational understanding of the
universe. Man, being finite, could not have the free-

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[1] B.N., p. 25.

dom of production - "ex nihilo." He had the freedom
to accept the necessary order of the world by his under-
standing. But this was not all. He had the power to
say "no" if in some cases, his reason was not satisfied
with the evidence to give his assent to what was thought
to be necessary. This refusal to accept something which
would be considered false is the essence of Cartesian
freedom. Man's nature, being finite, had the freedom
to agree with the divine order of things. Of course,
he did it with his power of reason. This freedom also
includes the fact that the truths discovered by man are
possible by the freedom of understanding.

Descartes was more interested in affirming the
responsibility of man in the presence of the true. Be-
fore I make a judgment, in which I adhere to my will and
make a free commitment of my being, there exist only
neutral and floating ideas which are neither true nor
false. Sartre says,

> "Man is thus the being through whom truth appears
> in the world. His task is to commit himself
> totally in order that the natural order of
> existents may become an order of truths."[2]

Descartes shows that freedom does not come from
man as he is, as a fullness of existence among other
fullnesses in a world without lacunae, but rather from

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[2]Sartre, "Cartesian Freedom," Literary and Philo-
sophical Essays, chapter 12, Collier Books, New York,
1955, p. 182.

man as he is not, from man as a finite, limited being. But he did not push his theory of negativity to the limit, for truth consists in <u>being</u> and falsehood in <u>non-being</u>. Man's power of refusal lies only in saying "no" to non-being. We are able to withhold our assent to the works of the evil spirit, because they are not, insofar as they relate falsely to objects that do not exist. Cartesian freedom wavers between the identification of freedom with

1. negativity or negation of being, and
2. the conception of free will as a simple negation of negation.

It is a strange freedom, as it ends by decomposing into two phases. At first, it is a negative one and autonomous, but its activity is confined to refusing our assent to error or confused thought. In the second, it is a positive adherence, but the will then loses its autonomy. The perfect clarity of understanding penetrates and determines the will. But it cannot be denied that Descartes had a true intuition of freedom, which he was forced to reduce to a merely negative power. Its function consisted merely in denying itself until it finally yielded and abandoned itself to the divine solicitude.

The Cartesian ideal of freedom - that human freedom is autonomous and its nature consists in negating being - finds its fulfillment in Sartre. According to him, the

rise of man in the midst of being causes a world to be
discovered. The most important element of this rise is
negation, and "Man is the being through him nothingness
comes into the world."[3] Freedom of man is the reason
why there is nothingness in the world. In other words,
the being that conditions the appearance of nothingness
is freedom. The condition due to which human reality
can deny the whole or part of the world is that human
reality carries within itself the nothingness which
separates its present from the past. Consciousness
constitutes itself in relation to its past as separated
from the past by a nothingness. Sartre expresses this
condition in his metaphorical language:

> "Freedom is the human being putting his
> past out of play by secreting his own
> nothingness. Consciousness continually
> experiences itself as the nihilation of
> its past being."[4]

2. Analysis of Action

In what follows we shall try to give an exposition
of Sartre's idea of freedom, as it expresses the onto-
logical dimension of consciousness. Sartre thinks that
freedom can be best understood by analyzing the structure

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[3] B.N., p. 24.

[4] Ibid., p. 28.

of action. Any act is a projection of the for-itself
toward what is not, and what is can in no way determine
by itself what is not. No factual state can determine
consciousness so as to define it. A factual state is
grasped only by means of the nihilating power of the
for-itself. It is only by a pure wrenching away from
himself and the world that the worker, for example, can
understand his suffering as unbearable and, as a result,
can make of it the motive of his revolutionary action.
Consciousness has the permanent possibility of effecting
a rupture with its past, of wrenching itself away from
the past so as to be able to confer on it the meaning
which it has in terms of the project of a meaning which
it does not have.

The determinists argue that there is no action with-
out a cause, while the proponents of free will are con-
cerned to find decisions for which there exists no prior
cause. But actually, every action must have an end,
and the end in turn is referred to a cause. The end
of my future implies a cause; it points toward my past,
and the present is the upsurge of the act. To speak of
an act without a cause is absurd. Sartre writes:

> "The essential question in fact lies beyond
> the complex organization 'cause-intention-

act-end;' indeed we ought to ask how
a cause (or motive) can be constituted
as such."[5]

In order to be a cause, the cause must be experi-
enced as such. This means that the for-itself must
confer on the cause its value as cause or motive. The
motive can be understood only by the end; that is, by
the non-existent. If I accept a low-paying job out
of fear, fear is a motive. But it is fear of dying
from starvation, and thus fear has meaning outside it-
self in an end ideally posited. It is understood only
in relation to the value which I implicitly give to
life. It is referred to the hierarchical system of ideal
objects which are values. Thus the motive is understood
as what it is by means of the ensemble of beings which
"are not" and by the future. The future turns back on
the past and the present in order to elucidate them.
Similarly, it is the ensemble of my projects which turns
back in order to confer upon the motive its structure
as a motive. The act, the motive, and the end are all
constituted in a single upsurge. Each of these three
structures claims the two others as its meaning. But
the organized totality of the three is not explained by
any particular structure, and the upsurge as the pure
temporalizing nihilation of the in-itself is freedom.

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[5] _Ibid._, p. 437.

Sartre has already pointed out that if negation comes into the world through human activity, the latter must be a being capable of realizing a "nihilating rupture with the world and with himself." The permanent possibility of this rupture is freedom. This implies for man a particular type of existence such that human reality is its own nothingness, and for it to be is to nihilate the in-itself which it is. It is because of this that the for-itself has to be what it is not and, "to say that it is what it is not, while not being what it is, is to say that in it, existence precedes essence."[6]

All this means the same thing: to be aware that man is free. There is no limit to my freedom and "I am condemned to be free."[7] If the for-itself wishes to hide its own nothingness from itself and to incorporate the in-itself as its true mode of being, it tries to hide freedom from itself. This is what happens in the determinist's attempt to explain the human action as an unbroken chain of causes. But nothing can compel a human action, and freedom cannot be stifled under the weight of being.

Sartre states that human reality is free, because it is not full and sufficient like in-itself, which he

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[6]Ibid., p. 439.

[7]Ibid.

expresses in other words, that it is not enough. As

man is incomplete, man has a possibility and he has the

power to choose. As Sartre says,

> "Freedom is precisely the nothingness
> which is made to be at the heart of man
> and which forces human reality to make
> itself, instead of to be."[8]

For human reality, to be is to choose oneself. Thus

freedom is not a being; it is the nothingness of being.

Sartre makes an emphatic statement,

> "Man cannot be sometimes slave and
> sometimes free; he is wholly and
> forever free or he is not free at all."[9]

3. Nature of Freedom

Sartre, in analyzing the relation between cause,

motive and end, points out that the cause is characterized

as the objective appreciation of the situation. Sartre

means by cause the objective appreciation of the situation.

It is an ensemble of factors that are utilized by the

agent. For example, in Macbeth's murder of the king, the

factual conditions were such as Macbeth could make use

of them. But the objective situation could be considered

as cause only in the light of an end. Sartre says,

> "We shall therefore use the term cause for
> the objective appreciation of a determined
> situation as the situation is revealed
> in the light of a certain end as being
> able to serve as the means of attaining
> this end."[10]

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[8]_Ibid._, p. 440.

[9]_Ibid._, p. 441.

The motive, on the contrary, is generally con-
sidered as a subjective fact. It is the ensemble of the
desires, emotions, and passions which urge me to accom-
plish a certain act. It is true that the cause is objec-
tive, as the state of contemporary things revealed to
a consciousness. But this state of affairs can be re-
vealed only to a for-itself, since in general the for-
itself is the being for which there is a world. The
objective situation can be cause, when it is possible to
transcend toward a particular potentiality. This poten-
tiality is revealed only if the situation is surpassed
towards a state of things that does not yet exist. Thus
the cause, instead of determining the action, arises only
in and through the project of an action. It is now pos-
sible to understand the relations of these three terms:
causes, motives, and ends.

"Just as it is the upsurge of the for-itself which
causes there to be a world, so here it is the very being
of the for-itself - insofar as this being is a pure pro-
ject toward an end - which causes there to be certain
objective structure of the world, one of which deserves
the name of cause in the light of this end."[11] The for-

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[10]Ibid., p. 446.

[11]Ibid., p. 449.

itself is the consciousness of this cause. But this is

a positional consciousness which is at the same time a

non-thetic consciousness of itself as project toward an

end. In this sense, it is a motive, as it experiences

itself non-thetically as a project at the very moment

at which it reveals the organization of the world as

causes. Cause and motive are the correlatives, just as

the non-thetic self-consciousness is the ontological

correlate, of the thetic consciousness of the object.

It has been pointed out that freedom is actually

the being of for-itself. It is free to the exact extent

that it has to be its own nothingness. It becomes its

own nothingness, first, by temporalizing itself - i.e.,

by remaining at a distance from itself, so that it can

never let itself be determined by a past to perform this

or that act: by rising up as consciousness of something

and (of) itself, and finally by being a transcendence,

i.e., a project. But this does not mean that every act

is capricious. Each of my acts is entirely free in the

sense of being understood in the light of the project

of the for-itself. But this does not mean that my act

can be anything whatsoever or that it is unforseeable.

A choice is free when it is such that it could have

been other than what it is. In starting out on a hike,

I become fatigued and I give up the journey. Someone
can point out that I was free and so could have succeeded
in resisting my fatigue. The problem is to be formu-
lated like this: Could I have done otherwise without
perceptibly modifying the organic totality of the pro-
jects which I am?

The fatigue by itself could not provoke my decision.
Fatigue is the way in which I exist "my body," and it
is the very facticity of my consciousness. As I hike
across the country, the surrounding world that is re-
vealed to me is the object of my consciousness. To the
extent that I appreciate the country side with my eyes,
my legs, etc. - I have a non-positional consciousness
of this body which directs my relations with the world
and establishes my engagement in the world, in the form
of fatigue. As I suffer the fatigue, it appears tolerable
or intolerable. It is the reflective for-itself which,
rising up, suffers the fatigue as intolerable. What
decision I take under the condition of fatigue is to
be understood in the perspective of a larger choice. My
companions are also fatigued, but if they decide to go on,
their fatigue is lived in a vaster project of sweet
mastery and appreciation of nature. It is only by means
of this project that the fatigue will be understandable
and that it will have meaning for them.

Like Freud, Sartre thinks that an act cannot be limited to itself; it refers to more profound structures. The act, for Freud, is symbolic. It expresses a more profound desire which, can be interpreted only in terms of an initial determination of the subject's libido. But Freud, though he avoids the theory of interpreting the action by mere antecedental circumstances, aims at constituting a deeper determinism. The ultimate cause in Freudian psychology being the libido, it seems that Freud has freed himself from what is known as horizontal determinism in which each action is determined by the previous circumstances, just as in the case of natural events. But the libido being dependent on the historical situation remains rooted in the horizontal determinism. Freud explains all actions in terms of the past complexes, and so the dimension of the future does not exist for psycho-analysis. Sartre wants to understand every act "integrated as a secondary structure in a global structure and finally in the totality which I am."[12] Every pattern of behavior, such as an inferiority complex, is a free and global project, the way in which I choose to assume my being-for-others. Every project is comprehensible as a project toward a possible.

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[12] _Ibid._, p. 456.

Let us return to the question which was asked
earlier: Could I have done otherwise than yielding to
fatigue? Sartre answers that the act was not gratuitous,
because it has to be interpreted in terms of an original
project of which it formed one integral part. Thus it
is evident that the act could not have been modified with-
out at the same time supposing a fundamental modification
of my original project. "Thus this possible - to stop -
theoretically takes on its meaning only in and through
the hierarchy of the possibles which I am in terms of
the ultimate and initial possible."[13] This does not
mean that it is necessary for me to stop, but merely
that I can refuse to stop only by a radical conversion
of my being-in-the-world.

4. Project and Freedom

The choice we make is injustifiable, and we realize
this in our anguish. Choice is not derived from any prior
reality; rather, it serves as the foundation for the
ensemble of significations that constitute reality. Our
existential freedom perpetually eats away the project, as
we realize that we are what we are by means of the future;
yet we do not have a grip on this future which remains

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[13]Ibid., p. 464.

always possible. Thus we are all the time threatened
by the nihilation of our choice and perpetually threatened
with choosing ourselves other than we are. But the
original choice creates all causes and motives that guide
us to particular actions. It also arranges the world
with its meaning, instrumental complexes, and its co-
efficient of adversity. The original choice is to be
conceived as unfolding time and as one with the unity of
the three ek-stases. To choose ourselves is to cause a
future to come to make known to us what we are by con-
ferring a meaning on our past. Sartre says, "Thus free-
dom, choice, nihilation, temporalization are all one
and the same thing."[14]

Sartre points out that the relation between the
secondary possibles and the fundamental possible is that
the meaning of the former always refers to the total
meaning which I am. But other possibles can replace the
present one without altering the total meaning. In the
ontological order of realization, they could just as well
have been projected as the means of attaining the totality
and in the light of this totality. This means that the
global project which I have chosen as my ultimate pro-
ject does not account for the choice of one possible
rather than another. Again, each "act" appears on the

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[14]Ibid., p. 465.

ground of the world and my facticity, but neither of these
makes it possible to understand why I grasp this glass,
rather than the inkwell. These are all indifferent
in relation to our freedom, and these free choices are
all integrated in the unity of my fundamental project.

Sartre comes to conclude that the for-itself is
free and causes there to be a world because the for-
itself is the being which has to be what it was in the
light of what it will be. As the for-itself never exists
as anything but a choice in the making and as choice is
made without a support, choice is absurd. But the choice
is absurd not because it is without reason, but because
there has never been any possibility of not choosing one-
self. The choice is absurd because it is that by which
all foundations and reasons come into being, and only by
it does the notion of the absurd receive a meaning.

According to Sartre, the free project is foundation-
al because it is my being. Ambition, passion, inferiority
are not fundamental projects; rather, they have to be
understood in terms of a primary project which can no
longer be interpreted in terms of any other project and
which is total. The explicit study of this original
project is treated by Sartre in the study of existential
psycho-analysis. This fundamental project is my total
being-in-the-world; and as the world itself is revealed

in the light of an end, this project posits as its end a certain relation which the for-itself wills to adopt. The choice must be a choice in the world. The project of the for-itself must be constantly renewed. We have to remember also that other choices are possible. This possibility of other choices is lived in the feeling of unjustifiability. This expresses the absurdity of choice and the being of for-itself. I am free and so I project my total possibility, but thereby I posit that I am free and I can always nihilate the first project and make it past.

Thus freedom is conceived only as the nihilation of a given and to the extent that it is an integral negation, it participates in the necessity that consciousness is consciousness of something. Freedom is the freedom of choosing, and not to choose is to choose not to choose. As the choice is the foundation of being chosen, it is absurd. There again we are referred to a given which is the very facticity of the for-itself. Lastly, the global project which illuminates the world in its totality can be made specific on the occasion of this or that element of the situation and on the basis of the contingency of the world. This brings up the relation of freedom to facticity.

5. <u>Facticity and Freedom</u>

Sartre, even though he advocates absolute freedom, understands that there are many things which handicap our exercise of freedom. Such obstacles to freedom can be categorized under five heads: my place, my past, my environment, other human beings, and my death.

The for-itself becomes free by negating the in-itself and the given is that nihilated in-itself. The body of the for-itself is a point of view on the world, and its past is the essence which the for-itself was. The given, the body, and the past are designations of a single reality. By the choice of its end, freedom causes the given or the datum to be revealed in this or that way. The given or the datum is never revealed as a brute existent in-itself, and it is discovered as a cause since it is revealed in the light of an end which illumines it. The for-itself finds itself "as engaged in being, hemmed in by being, threatened by being; it discovers the state of things which surrounds it as the cause for a reaction of defense or attack."[15] This shows that the situation, which is a product of contingency and the in-itself and of freedom, is something ambiguous in which it is impossible to separate the

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[15]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 481.

contribution of freedom from that of the brute existents.

Whether the rock is a resistance or not depends on whether

I have a desire to scale it. To a traveler who passes

over the road, it is neither scalable or not-scalable;

it is, perhaps, either beautiful or ugly. Thus the paradox

of freedom is this:

> "There is freedom only in a situation,
> and there is situation only through freedom.
> Human reality everywhere encounters
> resistance and obstacles, which it has
> not created but these resistances and
> obstacles have meaning only in and
> through the free choice which human
> reality is."[16]

6. My Place

"My place" refers to the present place I occupy,

but it presupposes another place until the first place,

the place of my birth, is received. It is from this

original place that I move to other places. This seems

to restrict my freedom, and the determinist points out

that the choice of a certain place excludes other pos-

sibilities and thus restricts my freedom. The advo-

cates of free will suggest that although I am in this

spot, I am always free to go to another place.

According to Sartre, both these views are mis-

taken. Place and space can be said "to be" only through

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[16]_Ibid._, p. 489.

humanity, as the occupation of a place is the result
of my organizing the world. While I consider several
this-es - like my city, the walls of the room, my table,
chair - I separate myself in a continual and multiform
negation, and thus I situate myself as a this among
other thises. Thus I constitute my place. The place
as my place can only be realized by a being who, although
here, is able to go beyond his place and to reach another
place which is there. One is here only because one can
be aware of a there. It is therefore, a human being
alone who can speak of a place. Being-in-itself is in
a place, if a for-itself takes up the attitude of world
organization and considers it as a certain "this" and
locates it.

7. My Past

According to Sartre, freedom means to be free
from all deterministic influences of the past. This
does not mean that freedom is possible without the
past. If I prepare myself for a particular profession,
it is always possible that I will join that particular
profession. Of course, I can always change it or I
can regret the acceptance of a particular job. But all
this presupposes the past.

The meaning of the past is strictly dependent on
my present project. This does not mean that I can make

the meaning of the past anyway I choose. Rather, it
means that "the fundamental project which I am decides
absolutely the meaning which the past I have to be can
have for me and for others."[17] I preserve the past
with me by projecting toward certain ends and I decide
its meaning by my action. Whatever I do, like the
educational aspect of a trip, the sincerity of a pro-
fession of love, or the purity of a past intention,
can be illuminated according to the ends I choose. It
is the future which decides whether the past is living
or dead. The past is originally a project, and to the
extent it is a project, it is an anticipation. If the
past slips wholly into the past, its absolute value
depends on the validation or invalidation of the pro-
ject which it anticipated. The force of the past comes
from the future. I can evaluate my past only in the
light of a project of myself toward the future.

8. My Environment

My environment consists of the things which sur-
round me with their coefficient of adversity and utility.
The tools have their value and resistance. But it is
my free will which organizes this world. I may plan to

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[17]Ibid., p. 448.

use my bicycle on a rough road in the hot sun to conquer

the "brute resistants." I may also act in a different

way and come back. But in all this, there is the exis-

tence of a free choice. Some relation develops between

the for-itself and the in-itself. Without the in-itself

there would be no choice or action. To be free means

to-be-free-in-the-world, or to-be-free-in-order-to-act.

I am born into a world which has already been

organized by others. Thus, there is a world-in-the-

presence-of-the-other. My existence among others has

a concrete and precise form. For example, I am an In-

dian, a Calcuttan, and a middle-class person. It is

evident that the fact of belonging to such a class and

to such a country puts me in a category of beings I

did not choose.

Sartre compares the relation between the individual

and a nation with the relation between grammar and lan-

guage. The big mistake is to put the grammar before the

language, to separate the language from the spoken and

the living word and to divorce the spoken word from the

concrete situation. All the linguistic frameworks by

themselves are "unselbständig" and are meaningful only

when incarnated in the living world and as such main-

tained by a free will. This is true of all human tech-

niques. We can make a scheme for certain things, but the scheme exists only in the materialization of the concrete act of the for-itself.

There is no human species, according to Sartre, prior to the concrete situations or incarnation in some individual. The for-itself thus is not dependent upon the human species or the nation. Instead, the for-itself in choosing itself presents us with the possibility of elaborating a scheme which is the human species or the national collectivity. It is because we accept ourselves as belonging to some nation, that there is a nation. As the for-itself is responsible for the existence of the human species, each individual through the fact that he admits of being a certain national, constitutes the nation.

It may be objected that language or any other technique is ready made for an individual when he is born into the world. Sartre thinks that there is indeed a pre-given "datum," which I cannot prevent. When I came into the world, the world was already organized, measured, etc. And yet, it is still my task to transform it into my own world. Once a technique has been interiorized, it is no longer a technique, but something incarnated and conducted by my free will towards an aim. My freedom mastes and exploits the technique in its own way. About the idea of

the nation, it is true that I cannot be a person without belonging to one form or another, but all these characteristics have nothing "substantial" about them. It is my personal world in its concrete form, and to be in a middle-class family is only a means of being myself. That which exists, according to Sartre, is the individual. The categorization of the individual comes later and is merely a human work.

9. The Other

It is true that the other limits my freedom through his presence, and thus, freedom is only restricted by freedom - in this case, my freedom by the freedom of the other. Appearance in the world as freedom before others implies that this freedom appears as object for the other and is thus in a certain sense alienated. But this alienation is unconscious. At the same time, I become, through him, conscious of my freedom. In this sense, I recover my freedom.

If the other claims that I am ugly, I ought to assume it, even when I myself do not see it. There are many such "unrealizables" in life. I have to assume them in pain or pleasure, in hate or joy. It is the view of the other on me, which in a certain sense restricts my freedom - not in its internal or essential dimension,

but as some external limitation through the power of
the other. Sartre thinks that these external limits of
freedom, precisely because they are external and are
interiorized only as unrealizables,will never be a real
obstacle for a freedom or a limit to be suffered.

10. My Death

The last obstacle to freedom is my death. The
question that arises is how far can death be considered
as a real obstacle? Heidegger's Dasein is a project
towards death. Death is not merely one of the possibi-
lities of the Dasein; it is even the possibility "par
excellence," the most personal and the most unavoidable
possibility. Sartre does not agree with Heidegger in
his conception of death, as he thinks that in Heidegger's
argument there is a circularity. Heidegger begins with
the understanding of death as the individualizing of the
death of each and then uses it to individualize the Dasein.
But death can be one individual's, because he is first
of all an individual. If death is taken as the ultimate
subjective possibility, then it is evident that nobody
can die for me. But this can be true for any of my
possibilities. Again, death is not some thing to be
awaited for, for we can 'wait for' only determined event.
Such an event is the result of equally determined pro-

cesses. In that respect, I can wait for a train, as I know that it has left the earlier station. Also one cannot wait for death, because we have every chance of dying before we have accomplished our task.

Further, death cannot confer meaning on life from the outside; a meaning can come only from subjectivity. But death does not appear 'on' the foundation of our freedom; rather, it removes all meaning from life. Death is absurd, as it is not only the always possible nihilation of my possibles; it is also the triumph of the point of the other point of view which I have toward myself. So long as the for-itself is "in life," it surpasses its past towards its future, and the past is that which the for-itself has to be. When the for-itself dies, the past is not thereby abolished; it is engulfed in the in-itself. The difference between life and death is that life decides its own meaning, because it is always in suspense; while death represents a total dispossession. The fact of death gives the complete and final victory to the point of view of the other by suddenly suppressing one of the combatants.

As death is always the possible nihilation of my possibles, it is outside my possibilities and therefore I cannot wait for it: that is, I cannot thrust toward it as toward one of my possibilities. Thus, death can-

not belong to the ontological nature of the for-itself.

So, Sartre concludes as against Heidegger that death, far from being my peculiar possibility is a contingent fact which as such on principle escapes me and originally belongs to my facticity. Death is as pure a fact as birth, and Sartre thinks that it comes to us from outside and it transforms us into an object. It is in no way distinguishable from birth in this respect and it is the identity of birth and death, which Sartre calls facticity.

Death is a permanent limit of my projects, and as such this limit is to be assumed. It is an exteriority which remains such even through the attempt of the for-itself, to realize it. It is the unrealizable to be realized. Death is a limit in a sense similar to that in which the for-itself chooses to be a freedom limited by the fact of other's freedom. Death is the limit of everything and in that sense it is the limit of my situation. I am not "free to die," but I am a free being who is mortal. As death is always beyond my subjectivity, there is no place for it in my subjectivity.

By the description of such circumstances as my place, my past, my environment, my death, and my fellow men, Sartre has attempted to give a clearer conception of

the "situation." He now proceeds to formulate more pre-cisely what he understand by being-in-situation.

11. Situation

First, I am an existent in the midst of other existents. My position in the world is defined by the relation between the instrumental utility or adversity of the objects and my facticity. I discover the world in the light of a radical nihilation of myself and of a radical internal negation of the in-itself - all effected from the point of view of a truly posited end. This is what is meant by the situation.

Secondly, the situation exists only in correlation with the surpassing of the given toward an end. The situation is neither subjective nor objective. It is not subjective, because it is not the sum or the unity of the impressions which the things make on us. It is the things themselves and myself among things, for my upsurge into the world causes there to be things, but it adds nothing. But neither can the situation be objective in the sense that a pure given would be, with which the subject is in no way engaged. In fact, the situation by the very meaning of the given reflects to the for-itself its freedom. The situation is a relation of being between a for-itself and the in-itself which the for-itself nihilates.

Sartre expresses this relation in his beautiful literary
style,

> C'est cette route poussiereuse et montaine,
> cette soif ardente que ce refuse des gens
> de me donner à boire parceque, je n'ai pas
> d'argent ou que je ne sui pas de leur
> race; c'est mon delaissement au milieu
> de ces population hostiles, avec cette
> fatique de mon corps qui m'empêchere
> peut-être d'atteindre le but que je
> m'etais fixé. Mais c'est précisement
> aussi ce but, non en tant que je le
> formule clairement et explicitement, mais
> en tant qu'il est la partous ces faits,
> ce qui les organise en une totalité
> descriptible au lie d'en faire un couche-
> mar en desordre.[18]

Thirdly, as the for-itself is nothing other than
its situation, it follows that being-in-situation defines
human reality by accounting both for its being-there
and for-its-being-beyond. Each of the objects in a
situation takes on its meaning only from the for-itself
in a situation and in terms of the free choice of its
ends.

Fourthly, as the situation is illumined by the
ends which are projected only in terms of being-there,
it is perceived as concrete. The concreteness of the
situation is revealed by the fact that the for-itself
never aims at ends which are fundamentally abstract and
universal. The end of the for-itself is lived and pur-
sued by the project. By it the for-itself surpasses and

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[18]E.N., p. 634; B.N., p. 549.

founds the real and it is revealed in its concreteness to the for-itself as a particular change in its own situation.

Fifthly, the situation is neither the result of a freedom nor the ensemble of the constraints to which I am subject. 'It stems from the illumination of the constraint by freedom which gives to its meaning as constraint.

Sixthly, the for-itself is a temporalization, which means that it makes itself. It should be noted that the free perseverance in a single project does not imply any permanence; it is really a perpetual renewal of my engagement. But the realities illuminated by a project present the permanence of the in-itself, and it frequently happens that we take their permanence for our own.

Finally, the changes in a situation can never provoke a change of my project, but on the foundation of my freedom they can effect a simplification or complication of the situation.

The relation between facticity and freedom makes it clear that though freedom is always in a situation, it is freedom which gives meaning to the situation. This seems to be an apparent paradox, as in one case it gives rise to a theory of absolute freedom, while on

in-itself-for-itself.

Desire is relative to a brute, concrete existent which is the object of desire. It may be anything - a slice of bread, or an automobile, women, or an object not clearly defined. Thus the structure of each desire expresses man's relation to one or many objects in the world. It is one of the aspects of Being-in-the-world. Desire can be either a wish to possess something or to do something or to be someone; indeed the three categories of human existence are to have, to do, and to be. In desire, there is an attempt to appropriate the object. But this appropriation is impossible.

The impossible synthesis of assimilation and an assimilated that maintains its integrity has close con- nection with basic sexual desire. The lover's dream is to identify the beloved object with himself and still preserve its own identity as individual being. This is similar to scientific research also, as the known object is within me, assimilated, transformed into myself; yet at the same time, it remains outside. The known object is my thought as a thing, and the desire to know is a form of appropriation. But in the desire to play, a man is not concerned with possessing a being-in-the- world. His goal is to attain a certain being - namely, his own being. The desire to do in the play is the desire

the other hand, it makes freedom dependent on the situation. We shall try to see later whether Sartre is really involved in a paradox or whether the charge of the critics that he is advocating a theory of absolute freedom is justifiable. The intimate relation between situation and freedom has also made it clear that the for-itself never exists isolated and apart from the objective realm. For-itself is truly a being-in-the-world in which case there is always a dialectical relation between the for-itself and the in-itself.

12. Analysis of Desire

Sartre points out that each desire expresses all human reality and that concrete desires manifest structures from which we can understand the nature of human being. Desire is a lack of being, and it is supported by the being of which it is a lack. This being is the in-itself-for-itself, consciousness-become-substance-as-cause-of-itself. But originally, the being of man is not a substance which is some complete being; it is a lived relation between the for-itself and the in-itself. The in-itself-for-itself is the ideal of the for-itself. Man is neither the in-itself nor the

to be. The task of the act in play is to make manifest to itself the absolute freedom of the person. Thus, a desire can be only the desire to be, or the desire to have. Though play is a desire to be, there is always in it an appropriation-component of transforming the worldly environment into an element of action. This makes play like a creative art.

In the relation of appropriation, the possessor and the possessed are united by an internal relation. They constitute ideally a unique reality. To possess is to be united with the object in the form of appropriation. Thus the desire to have is at bottom reducible to the desire to be related to a certain object in a certain relation of being. In the project of possession, there is a for-itself which is "unselbs tändig," separated by a nothingness from the possibility. This possibility is the possibility of appropriating the object. We meet in addition a value which stands as the ideal indication of the total being to be realized by the union of the possible and the for-itself. Thus appropriation would be a relation of being between a for-itself and a concrete in-itself.

In possession, I am my own foundation insofar as I exist as in-itself. But this is the project of the

in-itself-for-itself. This "ideal being is defined as
an in-itself which for-itself, would be its foundation, or
as a for-itself whose original project would not be a
mode of being, but a being precisely the being-in-itself
which it is."[19] Appropriation is thus the symbol of the
ideal of the for-itself. What we fundamentally desire
to appropriate in an object is its being, and the ulti-
mate object of desire is the appropriation of the world.
I search behind the phenomena to possess the being of
the phenomena.

We can now define the relation which unites the
two categories, to be and to have. Desire to be bears
directly on the for-itself and has the project of con-
ferring on itself, the dignity of in-itself-for-itself.
The desire to have aims at the for-itself in and through
the world. It is by the appropriation of the world that
the project to have aims at realizing the same value
as the desire to be. These two desires are inseparable,
since it is impossible to find a desire to be which is
not accompanied by a desire to have, and conversely.
These are the two ways of looking at the same situation,
the one tending to confer being on the for-itself without
any intermediary, the other inserting the world between
the for-itself and its being. As for the original situ-
ation, it is the lack of being which I am. But the
being of which I make myself a lack is individual and

concrete. It is the being which exists already and in
its midst I arrive as being its lack. The very nothing-
ness which I am is individual and concrete, as being
this nihilation.

According to Sartre, every for-itself is a free
choice and each of its acts expresses this choice.
This is our freedom, and our choice is a choice of being,
either directly or by the appropriation of the world
or rather by both at once.

13. Misinterpretation of Sartre's Theory

Sartre's theory of freedom has often been charac-
terized as absurd, because if man is absolutely free,
undetermined by any conditions, then he would be capable
of doing anything. But as this never happens, there is
something wrong in the theory. The critics of Sartre are
more or less agreed in their opinion that Sartre's theory
of freedom is paradoxical, because it promises something
which it cannot achieve.

It has been pointed out by Norman Mcleod that Sartre
uses the word "freedom" in three different senses.[20]
The first is existential freedom, the concept at the
basis of Sartre's ontology in Being and Nothingness - the
radical gap at the foundation of consciousness. In this

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[20]Mcleod, "Existential Freedom," Dialogue, vol. VII,
no. 1, 1968, p. 27.

sense, all men are always free, everywhere, and in every situation. To be human is to be free. Existential freedom is the freedom which releases us from the causal chain, defines us as the arbiter of every choice. The second sense is one in which Sartre exhorts us to realize our freedom, and here "freedom" is synonymous with "authenticity." It is the lucid awareness of our existential freedom and the governing of our lives without the guidance of an absolute value. In his political works, Sartre speaks of freedom in a way more akin to the commonsense use of the word, it is the power to do what we choose to do, which can be called "political freedom." In Being and Nothingness, he stresses the idea that man's freedom is the freedom to choose. Actually, this freedom to choose follows from the basic structure of human reality. If human reality is for-itself and consciousness, its nature must be different from entities like material objects.

Another justification for Sartre's conception of freedom is his theory of consciousness. According to him, consciousness is pure transparency, and there is nothing in it that can weigh down consciousness. Whether or not such a theory of consciousness is acceptable is a different issue. But if we start from Sartre's idea of consciousness, that it is only a revealing intuition

and a pure nothingness, then we have to accept the con-
clusion that consciousness is not limited by anything,
for it is not anything.

The question is not whether there are conditions
that determine man's free choice. Sartre would not deny
that there are factual givens which constitute the back-
ground against which we have to make a decision. But
the relation between the given and human being is not
unilateral, rather bi-lateral. An object is not my
obstacle or aid, unless I consider it in relation to my
end. So, it is difficult to separate in a given situation
the element of human contribution and the element of the
brute existent. Rather, the situation is something am-
biguous, in which man understands the world in relation
to his end. Once the significance of the situation is
clear, it is understood that objective causes as such
do not determine us, but that when they are illumined
in the light of our ends, they constitute the motive
for our action. But human nature being what it is, there
is no necessity that the motives selected and decided
upon will inevitably produce the expected result. I
may change my decision the next moment, because I can
invent a new end which will (or may) cancel the first
choice. This is the reason why Sartre calls our choice
absurd, which is another way of saying that our choice

does not have the necessity it should have. This is,

perhaps, nothing new, because all philosophers from Plato

to Hume agree that choice of a human being does not have

the necessity of logical or mathematical propositions.

But most often human beings forget this existential

freedom, for, according to Sartre, freedom is a burden.

When I understand in the crises of my life that it is

I who have to make a choice, I do not know whether my

choice will necessarily produce the result I expect.

As a result I am the victim of anguish. In all cases

of free choice, this anguish is present, and it reveals

the absurd character of freedom. Therefore very often

we try to hide this feeling of anguish, the uncom-

fortable consciousness of freedom. We think that we

are determined by objective conditions. This acceptance

of ourselves as being determined by the force of cir-

cumstances is also a free choice, but we do not recog-

nize it. Sartre calls this bad faith, but he points out

also the failure of bad faith, because we cannot remain

in the condition of in-itself for a long time, as our

consciousness is all the time nihilating the nature of

our being as it is in-itself. Sartre's dramas often

give illustrations of characters who act in bad faith,

like the only male character in <u>Huis Clos</u> and Franz in

<u>Les Sequestrés</u> d'Altona. But the character of Oresetes

in the Flies (Les Mouches), pursued by the Furies,

is the noble example of a free hero who realized authen-

tic existence in the anguished experience of freedom

and who is not afraid to bear the burden of respon-

sibility.

Sartre's existential freedom is not a freedom

in the sense that we can realize whatever we choose.

It actually gives us very little. It only makes us

aware that whatever be the circumstances, the decision

is ours. If we ignore this awareness, we are in bad

faith and we are no longer true to the nature of our

consciousness which is always in the movement to be

what it is not, by not being what it is.

It has been pointed out by some critics, specially

by Herbert Marcuse[21] in his critical review of L'Être

et le Néant, that Sartre's analysis of desire shows that

something very opposite of what he wants to establish

is true. Desire is a lack of being and appropriation.

In the case of concrete desires, the for-itself wants

to appropriate its object, but in the course of appropr-

ation, its nature is also affected. The desired object

in its turn transforms the for-itself because unless the

identification between the object and the for-itself is

established, desire is not fulfilled. Thus, in desire

the for-itself is reduced to in-itself. This does not

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[21]Marcuse, "Existentialism," Philosophy and Pheno-
menological Research, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 325-329.

appear to be a true representation of Sartre's analysis

of desire, for Sartre says that the object of desire,

though appropriated by the for-itself, has at the same

time an independent existence. It is like the case of

a work of art, in which situation the for-itself in

appreciation enters into a synthetic relation with it,

but in which the work of art retains its own existence.

So the independence and the nihilating character of

the for-itself are not affected at all.

Sartre points out also that in every case of desire,

there is a frustration, because a complete, permanent uni-

fication between the in-itself and the for-itself is not

possible. Marcuse thinks this idea that the for-itself

should be identified with the in-itself is misleading,

because it seems to suggest that for-itself realizes the

object of desire only by assuming the nature of the in-

itself. It is not sure whether Sartre intends this to be

the aim in the case of concrete and particular desires.

What he wants to say is, perhaps, that the for-itself

should be identified with the in-itself in the case of

concrete desires but at the same time should be free

from the in-itself to maintain its independence. But

Sartre speaks of another desire which is the ultimate

desire in which the for-itself wants to be identified

with the in-itself to become a for-itself-in-itself. But

this ideal is never fulfilled, for it requires that the for-itself be identified with the totality of in-itself and yet remain nothingness. The problem is that if the for-itself becomes identified with the whole world, then there is nothing it can negate and so, its existence becomes meaningless. Thus the ultimate desire is only an ideal - an ideal for which man strives in vain. Sartre calls man's ideal God, for only God can be immanent and transcendent inasmuch as the whole world does not limit God.

If we try to understand the distinction between the two kinds of desires - ultimate and concrete - we will realize that Sartre's doctrine of freedom is not inconsistent with what he says about desire. Man wants to realize his possibility through his desire; and as one object of desire is appropriated by him, he nihilates the present object to proceed to the next object of desire. Thus, though every desire produces an identification with the in-itself, for-itself is not it, because it is free. But the ultimate desire is to realize all the possibilities, to become the foundation of the world and yet to go beyond it. This is an ideal, because we can never think of the situations in which all the possibilities are realized and yet have a possibility remaining. So the desire to be for-itself-in-itself and yet

to remain a conscious, free project is unrealizable. If
we try to understand Sartre's analysis of desire and
freedom in this way, we can see that freedom is the nature
of for-itself and that to be free is the same thing
to be a for-itself. Thus freedom like temporality is
another dimension of the for-itself which reveals to us
what for-itself really represents.

CHAPTER VI

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

In the earlier chapters, we have tried to explain
Sartre's phenomenological method, his ontological con-
ceptions, his notions of temporality and freedom. We
have attempted an interpretation that Sartre's basic
concept is Being-in-the-world, while Being-for-itself
and Being-in-itself are abstractions. We have argued
that Sartre's conclusions are phenomenologically based.
In this chapter, we want to examine some of Sartre's
conclusions and wish to find out whether Sartre's investi-
gations are satisfactory. We will try to point out the
ambiguities in one of Sartre's fundamental notions,
namely, nothingness. The concluding section of the
chapter will be devoted to a comparative study of Sar-
tre's ideas with the philosophical thoughts of the major
schools of Indian Philosophy.

1. The Problem of "Knowing" Consciousness

Sartre is interested in man in the concrete. He
gives us an analysis of man as a being-in-the-world.
But in establishing the nature of consciousness, he

starts with the epistemological situation. He makes a

distinction between the knowledge of object and the

consciousness (of) self. Sartre thinks that the con-

sciousness (of) self is not knowledge proper. He calls

it apprehension or "a non-cognitive relation of the

self to itself." This relation can be described as the

lived awareness of the self. This analysis shows that

consciousness can never become an object. But Sartre

reaches an opposite conclusion, when he clarifies how

consciousness is "known."

In the pre-reflective level consciousness knows an

object. Such consciousness which is also consciousness

(of) self becomes an object of knowledge at the reflective

level. The important fact about knowledge is that the

known cannot be identified with the knowing. Yet Sartre

often suggests that nothing separates the object from

consciousness. At the same time Sartre establishes that

consciousness is not an object. What Sartre means to

say is that when consciousness knows an object, it is

identified with the object. But as consciousness is not

the object, it is not identical with the object. This

interpretation about the relation between the knowing

and the known raises no problem in the case of the know-

ledge of an object of the external world. It is not clear

why it will hold true in the case of "knowing" consciousness.

Sartre says that when consciousness "knows" belief, consciousness (of) belief and belief cannot be identified with one another. This means that consciousness and belief are absolutely different from each other, like consciousness and object. But there is a difference between the knowledge of object and the "knowledge" of consciousness. Sartre says that consciousness is not an object. But the consciousness known by another consciousness is reduced to an object. On the other hand, consciousness by nature is such that it can never be reduced to an object.

If consciousness is aware of itself, it is not necessary to know it by a second consciousness. We may make explicit what is in such awareness by an act of reflection. But as we cannot know something different from what we are aware of, the "knowledge" of consciousness at a second level is redundant.

2. Problem of the Relation with the Other

Sartre's notion of the other is that the other is known directly. He introduces the notion of shame in connection with our knowledge of the other. We know ourselves as objects, when we are ashamed before the other. Sartre thinks that the other is known either as a subject or as an object. If I know myself as an object, I know the other as a subject. When I think my-

self as a subject, I know the other as an object. But

the relation between myself and the other is never a

subject to subject relation. Sartre's analysis of the

concrete relations with the other illustrate his notion.

The unity between two subjects is, however, possible

before a third person.

This is what happens in "NO Exit" when two charac-

ters are united against the critical look of the other.

It is true that oppression forges a unity among the

oppressed, but that is the unity of "us" and not the

unity of "we". Sartre neglects so much the bright

side of life that he selects only the sad facts. But

if he takes into account all the concrete facts, he

can surely understand that 'joy, common ideals, etc.'are

the moments when human beings are united with one another

as subjects. It is not true that the unity is over,

when the common ideals are realized. It may be that be-

cause human beings shared in a common ideal, the memory

of a glorious past would closely knit together the bond

of friendship.

Sartre speaks of the dialectics in human relation-

ship in which human beings are always in conflict with

one another. This is not something based on the experi-

ence of history. What Sartre says goes against the finding

of the psychologists that animals, including men, have

both a self-preservative and a gregarious instinct. It

is not possible to explain the gregarious instinct on

the basis of self-preservation instinct, for there are

many cases where man works for a social ideal while

sacrificing his own personal gain. Sartre might say

that the individual in that case was not explicitly

aware of his personal gain. But we cannot deny that

there are ideals of friendship and unity in which human

beings recognize themselves as individuals. If all

men are free in the Sartrean sense, and each of them has

a need, it is quite possible that they can freely choose

an ideal that would promote social harmony. Conflict

between individuals may be there, but that is not the

whole story. This only prompts us to say that Sartre

has not made full use of the phenomenological method,

although his conclusions are based on the phenomenological

analysis of some of the concrete aspects of life.

3. Problem of Freedom

Sartre's analysis of freedom, as we have noted

earlier, brought forth the strongest criticism, which we

think rests on a misunderstanding. But we are not

quite sure whether the word "freedom" is used in the

sense Sartre understands his existential freedom to be.

Instead of saying that in existential freedom, a man

has always the capacity to make a new choice, he could
have said something else. He might have said that he
was giving an analysis of the factors of human existence
in the realm of action. When a human being acts, he
acts with reference to an end. The end is selected by
him on the basis of the objective situation. But the
situation is not the same as we find in the area of
natural events. This would be an analysis of the exis-
tential human situation. This shows that in all cases
human beings act with a purpose. Even when the situation
is such that it does not offer many choices, man tries
to adjust himself to the environment. This is a funda-
mental truth of human life, and if it means that human
being is condemned to life of its own choice, it is nothing
wrong. But this is saying something totally different
from what Sartre in fact says. To say that human being
is absolutely free is something very different from the
statement that human being has always to make choice.
At least Sartre could have made it clear that he was
using the word "freedom" in a totally new sense.

My freedom to choose, or existential freedom, is
not at all affected, if I recognize that there are some
objective factors that orient me to a particular end.
It is encouraging to note that Sartre has realized the
importance of both these factors of end and situation in

his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where he speaks

of both a "a horizontal and a vertical dialectics"

in the case of human choice.** It is true that there

are historical and natural conditions which predispose

the individual to a certain choice, but it depends

on the individual how he will interpret the objective

conditions in the light of his further projects.

4. Problem of the Analysis of Desire

One of the most important stumbling-blocks in

the philosophy of Sartre is his analysis of desire.

We have tried to distinguish between two kinds of

desire - particular concrete desire and ideal desire.

It is not clear what Sartre means by the ideal desire for-

itself-in-itself. The usual criticism against him is

that he creates an irreconcilable dialectic between

consciousness and the world, for in his opinion conscious-

ness aspires to become the foundation of the world and

at the same time to retain its capacity of "néantisation."

This is impossible, since once consciousness is absorbed

in the world, its translucency is destroyed. There re-

mains no longer what we understand to be consciousness.

**By horizontal causation Sartre refers to the objective
conditions of a historical situation, and by vertical
dialectic he means the goals of the men living under
those conditions. His idea is that in any situation

The question that is raised is: is this ideal a plausible one? Sartre defines desire as a lack; to desire for him is to possess or to appropriate. But when an object of art is appropriated, the work retains its existence outside, even though consciousness appropriates it. If the world is outside me and I want to possess it in the form of appropriation, it is possible that it continues to exist outside even after the appropriation by consciousness. Both consciousness and the world may remain outside each other and yet the appropriation be possible. Sartre's illustration of love to show that such an appropriation is impossible rests on a misunderstanding of the nature of love. Sartre thinks that the object of love is an in-itself and that if it becomes a subject, the relation is lost. But another alternative is possible. In love the object of love is both subject and object at the same time. Love is not just a passive relation, but an active-passive relation in which two persons are involved. The model on which Sartre establishes his ideal of desire is based on his inaccurate understanding of the nature of love.

As we have pointed out earlier, if the ideal desire means the realization of all possibilities and yet having

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these two aspects react on one another. This is developed in the first part of the Critique.

a possibility, then we cannot conceive of such a situation. In that sense, the ideal is unrealizable, because it is self-contradictory. But the ideal can be interpreted in the sense of desire in which the desired object is appropriated, yet at the same time it has an existence of its own. The for-itself which desires is also independent of the object of desire. The world, being the object of desire, can be appropriated, yet it can be independent of the for-itself, in the theoretical sense, though the practical realization is doubtful.

We can try to understand the ideal in three different senses.

1. For-itself-in-itself in which the for-itself is the foundation of the world in which it finds itself to cause its own being. Such an ideal is impossible to be realized, for the for-itself arises in the world as being the negation of the in-itself.

2. The ideal may mean the realization of all the possibilities and the possibility of there being some other possibility. This is also impossible for if all possibilities are realized, it is inconceivable how there can still be another possibility.

3. The ideal may mean the same thing as a concrete particular desire, in which the object of desire, though appropriated, remains independent of the person who desires and the person too exists independent of the object of desire. In this sense the for-itself may try to appropriate the world, yet retain its own independence. This ideal is theoretically conceivable,

but its practical realization is,
perhaps, impossible.

It is not clear which of the these senses of the
ideal Sartre has in mind, but we can always point out
that at least in one sense the ideal can be conceived
to be possible. It thus appears that Sartre has not
carried out the existential implications of the desire
to be for-itself-in-itself, though he tries to give a
phenomenological analysis of desire.

5. Problem of Dualism

The next controversial question in Sartre's
philosophy is his dualism. His treatment of the for-
itself and the in-itself as two ontological entities
suggests that he is a dualist. At the same time, when
he has to describe the for-itself as an ontological
entity, he also points out that it is nothing. If he
is then a dualist, he is dualist of a peculiar type in
which nothing is one entity of the ontology, while
the other part is occupied by being.

Sartre tries to analyze the question of dualism
in the concluding chapter of Being and Nothingness.
He says that we have discovered two types of being:
Being-for-itself, which has to be what it is not, and
Being-in-itself, which is what it is. Has the discovery

of these two types of being resulted in establishing a
hiatus that would divide being into two regions between
whom there is, and can be, no communication? Sartre
answers that both "for-itself" and "in-itself" are reunited
by a synthetic connection which is the same as for-itself,
as it is nothing but the nihilation of the in-itself.
By this nihilation an upheaval happens to the in-it-
self, and that is the world. The for-itself is not nothing-
ness in general, but is the nihilation of an individual
and particular in-itself. From the beginning, it
refers to the thing. For consciousness there is no
being other than the revealing intuition of something.
It has a borrowed existence relative to the in-itself,
though it is constituted by an internal negation.
Sartre thinks that consciousness has a borrowed being,
as non-being is other than being. But insofar as con-
sciousness is relative to in-itself, it is affected with
facticity. But it makes itself and so it is absolute.
Thus, the for-itself is an absolute Unselbständig, and
its reality is purely interrogative, because it is
always in question.

Ontology, according to Sartre, teaches us two
things.

>   1.   If the in-itself has to found itself,
>   it could do so only by making itself
>   consciousness.

2. Consciousness is in fact a project
of founding itself, that is, of attaining
to the dignity of for-itself-in-itself.

Ontology shows that through the for-itself the possi-

bility of a foundation comes to the world. It limits

itself to declaring that "everything takes place as if

the in-itself in a project, to found itself gave it-

self the modification of the for-itself."[1] But it

is up to metaphysics to form the hypotheses which will

allow us the possibility of unifying the givens of

ontology.

If the in-itself and for-itself are two modalities

of being, is there not a hiatus at the core of being?

Sartre answers the question by pointing out that the

in-itself and the for-itself are not merely "juxtaposed."

On the contrary, "the for-itself without the in-itself

is an abstraction: it could not exist any more than

a color could exist without form or sound without pitch

and timbre."[2] Consciousness is bound up with the in-

itself by an internal relation which constitutes a tota-

lity, and this totality can be called being. The for-

itself is in a priori unity with the in-itself. But

again one may ask: inasmuch as the for-itself is pre-

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[1]B.N., p. 621.

[2]Ibid., p. 621.

cisely the nothingness of this in-itself, which one of
the two shall we call real? The pure in-itself of the
in-itself surrounded by that shell of nothingness which
has been designated by the name "for-itself?"

For Sartre, an existent which is to be considered
as a totality must be such that the diversity of its
structures be held within a unitary synthesis in such
a way that each of them considered apart is only an
abstraction. It is true that consciousness considered
apart is an abstraction, but the in-itself has no need
of the for-itself in order to be. "The phenomenon of
the in-itself is an abstraction without consciousness,"
but its being is not an abstraction.

Sartre points out that it is the perpetual failure
to reach a unity which explains both the indissolubility
of the in-itself and of the for-itself and at the same
time their relative independence. The totality we are
considering is in perpetual disintegration and "it is
in the form of a disintegrated ensemble that it presents
itself to us in its ambiguity - that is, so that one can
ad libitum insist on the dependence of the beings under
consideration or on their independence. There is here
a passage which is not completed, a short circuit."[3]

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[3]Ibid., p. 623.

This idea leads to the notion of detotalized totality. The characteristic fact is that the for-itself makes itself other in relation to the in-itself, but that the in-itself is in no way other than the for-itself in its being; the in-itself is precisely and simply is. In this internal negation, the relation is not reciprocal, and I am both one of the terms of the relation and the relation itself. I apprehend being and I am the apprehension of being. But the being does not apprehend me in turn. Its being also does not coincide in any way with being-apprehended. "The question of the totality does not concern ontology, for which the only regions of being which can be elucidated are those of the in-itself, of the for-itself, and the ideal region of the self-cause."[4] It is the task of metaphysics to consider whether it shall deal with a being with two dimensions of in-itself and for-itself. Ontology can only point out that it can make use of the notion of disintegrated totality both in terms of immanence and transcendence.

Sartre has introduced here mainly two concepts -

1. an idea of a totality and
2. the idea of a detotalized totality.

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[4]Ibid., p. 624.

The first can be described as the ideal towards which the for-itself is striving but can never achieve. On the other hand, the actual existent is a detotalized totality in which the for-itself is nihilating an in-itself to cause the world to rise. Sartre is concerned with the ontological elucidation of the phenomenologically given, which consists in systematizing and generalizing the concrete facts of experiences. Human experience reveals two things:

1. it is conscious only insofar as it is related to something, and
2. there is a primordial unity between the object and consciousness.

But experience also reveals that this unity is often broken, because consciousness has to negate the in-itself to become the for-itself; and the relation by which consciousness is related to the object is a relation of negation. Thus, for consciousness to be related to a thing and to negate it is one and the same thing. This can be called the conception of the detotalized. But in cases of knowing an object, consciousness is reduced to an object by being the revelation of the object. In such cases, consciousness and the object are united, and nothing separates them. This is, perhaps, what Sartre has in mind when he says that in the form of a detotalized totality, consciousness and in-itself are in an ambiguous relation, either they are dependent or independent.

From an analysis of Sartre's viewpoint as found in the conclusion of <u>Being and Nothingness</u>, it seems more reasonable to designate Sartre as an advocate of "detotalized totality." This concept is further developed in <u>Critique of Dialectical Reason</u> in which human being which is a praxis is said to be in a relation of unity with pratico-inerte, which can be called the given situation. Thus, at every step of human life, a totality is constituted in which the two factors are united, but at the same time human praxis detotalizes this totalization to constitute a further totality, in which case there is a break or disintegration in the unity of the first totality. But throughout all the chapters of <u>Being and Nothingness</u> there has been such an emphasis on the phenomenon of disintegration that Sartre has, perhaps, been in an important sense called a dualist. We need not here go into the details of these cases of disintegration like the nature of for-itself, relation with others and freedom, but it is clear that Sartre has always been much preoccupied with the purity and translucency of the for-itself. Thus he knows full well that to treat the for-itself independently of the relation to in-itself is to make it an abstraction. He has nevertheless practically permitted himself to understand that the for-itself, as if it were completely independent of the in-itself.

Sartre has spoken of both pure and impure reflection, and it seems that he himself has been subject to impure reflection.

Sartre thinks, perhaps, that consciousness being not what it is, is to be treated as independent of the in-itself, and to grasp this is the understanding of pure reflection. But in fact, his pure reflection turns out to be a case of impure reflection. If Sartre would accept the data of phenomenological analysis, he could come to a theory of the for-itself related to the in-itself in which the for-itself undertakes a project on the basis of the in-itself to go beyond it to establish a new totality. The in-itself modifies the unity, but what is established as a totality depends on the free undertaking of the for-itself in consideration of the situational unity of the in-itself and for-itself. Such a unity may be ambiguous, but it need not be absolutely equivocal like the participation of for-itself in Being in the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty. What Sartre vaguely hints at in <u>Being and Nothingness</u>, finds its concrete realization in <u>Critique of Dialectical Reason</u>.

Sartre's philosophy, we have commented earlier, has a phenomenological justification for the development of two ontological entities from the unity in which both are related to each other. This is evident from Sartre's

idea of being-in-the-world, and we have tried to suggest
that the concept of being-in-the-world, which Sartre
borrows from Heidegger, represents the idea of lived
experience, comparable to Husserl's "Lebenswelt" and
Merleau-Ponty's "lived reality." This idea of Sartre's
is most clearly evident in his analysis of "situation"
and man's experience of his body. Sartre in recent years,
specially from the time of Critique of Dialectical Reason
onwards has come closer to the conception of "lived
reality." In an interview with the New Left Review reprinted
in New York Review of Books Sartre says,

> "... The individual interiorizes his
> social determinations; he interiorizes the
> relations of production, the family of
> his childhood, the historical past, the
> contemporary institutions, and he then
> re-exteriorizes these in acts and options
> which necessarily refer us back to them.
> None of this existed in L'Être et le
> Néant."[5]

He says further that in a way his first philosophical
treatise itself should have been the beginning of a
discovery of this power of circumstances, since he had
already been made a soldier when he had not wanted to
be one. His aim is to give man both his autonomy and

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[5]Sartre's interview in New York Review of Books,
vol. XIV, no. 6, March 26, 1970.

his reality among real objects, avoiding idealism without

lapsing into a mechanical materialism. He points out,

"In my present book on Flaubert I have replaced my earlier

notion of consciousness (although I use the word a lot),

with what I call le vécu - lived experience."[6] Sartre

describes this lived experience as precisely the ensemble

of the dialectical process of psychic life, insofar as

this process is obscure to itself, because it is a

constant totalization which cannot be conscious of what

it is. One can be conscious of an external totaliza-

tion, but one cannot be conscious of a totalization which

also totalizes consciousness. Lived experience in this

case is perpetually susceptible of comprehension, but

never of knowledge. The conception of "lived experience,"

as Sartre says, marks his change since Being and Nothing-

ness. His early work, he thinks, was a rationalist

philosophy of consciousness. His notion of "lived

experience" represents an effort to preserve that pre-

sence to itself which is indispensable for the existence

of any psychic fact, while at the same time this presence

is so opaque and blind before itself that it is also

an absence from itself. "Lived experience is always

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[6]Ibid., p. 25.

simultaneously present to itself and absent from it-
self."[7]

We may agree with Sartre's main contention that
in _Being and Nothingness_, he was more concerned with a
philosophy of consciousness and that the concept of
"lived experience" was not present. But we may also
point out that Sartre's phenomenological studies had
revealed to him many of the aspects of what he now calls
"lived experience," but he could not always carry out
their implications. As has been pointed by Alphonse
de Waelhens in his book on Merleau-Ponty _Une Philo-
sophie d'ambiguité_,[8] Sartre's phenomenological studies
are often in conflict with his ontological conclusions.

The two notions we may consider in this connection
are Sartre's concept of the situation and the body.
The word "situation" does not mean simply the brute
given existents into which human reality is thrown.
In fact, the environment in which the for-itself tries
to realize his project is the brute given world modified
by the meaning contributed by the individual. It seems
to us that in _Being and Nothingness_, Sartre has gone to
one extreme in his understanding of the relation between
the for-itself and the in-itself, while Merleau-Ponty

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[7]_Ibid._, p. 30.

[8]A. de Waelhens, _Une Philosophie d'ambiguité_,
Lovaine: Editions E. Nauwlaerts, 1958, p. 5.

represents the other extreme. In Merleau-Ponty's
philosophy, the for-itself is so enmeshed in the imma-
nence of being that it is difficult for it to establish
its own independence. Perhaps, the correct position
would be one in which it cannot be denied that the
situation in which the for-itself is trying to realize
its project is ambiguous, but at the same time, the hu-
man reality is such that it can negate the situation
to create a new one. Our earlier analysis of Sartre's
concept of the situation brings out one important
point: his distinction between the for-itself and the
in-itself as abstractions in the form of two entities
has its basis in the lived experience of the situation
in which the two are related in an ambiguous and unstable
unity.

Thus it becomes clear that though Sartre speaks
of two ontological entities, at bottom they are united
in a fundamental Being and that Being is <u>Being-in-the-</u>
<u>world</u>.

Perhaps the best illustration of Being-within-
the-world is Sartre's conception of embodied consciousness.
As has been shown earlier, Sartre does not raise the
question, how body and consciousness come to be united
in the human reality; for according to Sartre, we

are, in fact, our body, and our consciousness of the
body is not a kind of knowledge of an external object,
rather it is a lived experience.

Body as the lived reality is the natural unity
of the for-itself and in-itself and, as Sartre points
out, the body is the contingency or the facticity of the
for-itself. There are different dimensions of the body
like the body-for-itself, the body-for-others, and the
body-I-exist-for-myself as known by the other. These
three dimensions have already been analyzed, and it can
be pointed out that consciousness living as a body is
the lived existential reality in which the two regions
of reality come to meet. But here again Sartre is not
deeply aware of the existential implications of the
lived body, for if the body and consciousness are united
in a living relationship, they are in mutual participation.
Instead, he thinks that consciousness can negate the
participation in the body totally and surpass the body.
How far this surpassability can go can be a matter of
investigation, but Sartre thinks that though conscious-
ness is in a living bond with the body, still it can be
not the body. There is no doubt a dialectic between
the body and consciousness in which one modifies the
other. But Sartre's idea is to give consciousness an

absolute power to transcend the limitations of the body.
It is, perhaps, for this reason that Merleau-Ponty has
accused Sartre of a theory of all-seeing consciousness,
a kind of cosmic seer, which is not affected by parti-
cipation in the body.

We thus see that though Sartre's conclusions have
a phenomenological basis, in each case, perhaps, he
has gone beyond the phenomenological evidence. This
has led many to conclude that Sartre is a covert ra-
tionalist and in fact, we have found that Sartre has
also agreed with this charge in the New York Review
interview referred to earlier. We have pointed out
already that this accusation overlooks the important
fact that Sartre is an existentialist. The phenomeno-
logy of Husserl is a rationalistic attempt to recon-
struct the essential from the actually given with the
help of rational intuition. But an existentialist
need not be bound by the rationalist norms. On the
other hand, he is concerned with the individual's
crisis, feelings of tragedy, hopes, and fears. In his
everyday life, the individual realizes that though
he is born into the world, there is no rational connec-
tion between his life and the world. Thus, when Sartre
finds that consciousness has to be responsible for the

world into which it is thrown and consciousness has
always to make its own choice, for there is nothing
rational in the order of the event, he realizes the
unhappy and absurd nature of consciousness. It is such
that though consciousness is in the world, yet it is not
bound to the world by anything necessary. The absolutely
contingent character of human reality, perhaps, sharpens
the feeling that consciousness is alone in the world in
which it has to build up its own fate. Thus even though
we are not always sure of the phenomenological order of
the conclusions. Sartre reaches, his theory can have a
justification if we try to understand his ideas both
existentially and phenomenologically.

6.   Different Senses of Nothingness

Much criticism has been made against Sartre's
conception of consciousness as nothingness. The logical
Positivists like Ayer have pointed out that Sartre
misuses the word "not," which is a logical sign indi-
cating the absence of something, transforming it into
some sort of entity. Whether that criticism is justi-
fiable or not is another issue, but when Sartre speaks of
consciousness as "nothingness", he seems to be saying so
many things that it is difficult to distinguish in which
sense he understands consciousness as a nothing. At

least the following senses of nothingness can be dis-

tinguished:

1. Consciousness is not an object.
2. Consciousness is empty.
3. Consciousness is not a substantial
   unity.
4. Consciousness is the nihilation of
   its object.
5. Consciousness is not what it is.

Let us try to see if we can discover some common

meaning in these different ideas of nothingness. When

it is said that consciousness is not an object, what

Sartre has in mind is, perhaps, that consciousness

is distinguished from an object, because an object is

what it is, like an ink-well is always an ink-well, but

consciousness being a project or a possibility is always

changing. It is going to be something. This sense of

nothingness implies that consciousness is different from

an object. Of course, difference is a sort of negation;

but when we try to understand "different" in the sense

that a thing is <u>not</u> that from which it is different, we

are making an emphatic use of the word "not".

In the second sense, consciousness is nothing

because it does not have any content in it. In Sartre's

theory, consciousness is revealing-intuition of things

like a searchlight. It falls upon things and illumines

them. It enters directly into the world, and there is

no intermediate entity between the object and consciousness.

Consciousness is not a container. If consciousness is
obscured by the presence of contents, then consciousness
loses its translucent character and becomes weighed
down by things that destroy its direct relation with
the world, as well as its nihilating power. This sense
of nothingness makes one point clear, namely, that
consciousness has nothing in it and it is the direct
illumination of things. It sometimes leads Sartre to
say that consciousness being nothing, there is nothing
between consciousness and objects. Consciousness is
constituted of objects of which it is conscious. As
Sartre sometimes puts it, nothing separates consciousness
from the objects. This actually may mean that conscious-
ness being not, there is only being. This is really a
strange use of the word "nothing." It may also be pointed
out that from the fact that consciousness has nothing
in it, it does not follow that consciousness is nothing.

The third sense is a criticism of the substantial
or transcendental ego theory. Sartre has pointed out
both in his Transcendence of the Ego and Being and
Nothingness that consciousness does not issue forth
from an eternal and massive source. The reason is that
our first consciousness is of the objects and not of
an "I." The "I" is constituted out of the different
experiences of states, qualities and actions. Thus con-

sciousness does not depend on any ego, rather an ego

depends on consciousness. Sartre makes consciousness a

non-substantial absolute, but in this sense also negation

takes on the sense of difference, because consciousness

is not an ego, but absolutely different from it.

The fourth sense is the sense of destruction.

Consciousness may in one moment of existence be identified

with what it does or what it knows. For example, the

cafe waiter through play-acting by bad faith may identify

himself with the waiter itself. But any moment he can

refuse to identify himself with such a situation and

declare his independence. The best illustration of con-

sciousness becoming an object is the status of conscious-

ness in the eyes of the other. In an act of shame, the

other metamorphoses me into an object. But this meta-

morphosis can not be permanent, for consciousness is by

nature - nihilating, and thus consciousness in turn makes

the other an object by nihilating its condition as an

object.

Sartre raises the question: how does negation or

nothingness arrive in the world? His answer is such

that nothingness arrives in the world by a being whose

nature is nothingness. Such a being is an upsurge in

the plenum of being and not only by its appearance there

is negation, but by negation there is also the world.

Practically, Sartre would think that affirmation and

negation at bottom are one, for by affirming I have

to say about an object that it is different from another

and similarly, in the case of negation, I have to say

that a thing is not such and such. Thus, consciousness

not only produces negation, but it is also nothingness,

because it is always destroying the present state of

things. In this sense, practically, two things are

included - one, implies that consciousness is always

changing and so its nature is destructive or negative;

further, consciousness understands every object in relation

to other things from which it is different. The idea

of difference which is a sense of negation is the basis

of affirmation, while a judgmental sense of negation

also involves negation. Thus, this sense of negation is

a complex notion of destruction, difference and absence.

The last sense of negation lies in the definition

of consciousness which suggests that consciousness is

not like a material object. Consciousness has a possibility

and its existence is at issue. The true nature of con-

sciousness lies in future which is yet to be. This nature

of consciousness is, perhaps, best illustrated by Sartre

when he says that consciousness is a lack and that to do

away with the lack consciousness has to move from what

is to what it is not. This sense of consciousness as a

lack of something to be realized is the possibility of

consciousness. To say that consciousness is a possibility

is to indicate that it is free, capable of negating

the present state to bring about the future.

Thus, the idea of negation includes the ideas of

"difference," "emptiness," "destruction," "nihilation,"

and "lack." But all these different senses, perhaps,

depend on the fundamental sense, which, in our opinion,

is lack. Consciousness being a lack must try to realize

what it lacks. This accounts for its character as a

possibility and as a free project. The different senses

of negation may be traced back to this one sense.

The point is that though lack is a negative term,

is it to be understood merely negatively? When it is

said he lacks; the question immediately arises, what does

he lack? As Sartre has pointed out, "A lack pre-supposes

a trinity; that which is missing or the 'lacking,' that

which misses, what is lacking, or 'the existing,'

and a totality which has been broken by the lacking and

which would be brought back by the synthesis of 'the

lacking' and 'the existing.'"[9] Thus, a lack presupposes

that something or some form of the totality is existing,

though it is not complete. From this we can only point

out that consciousness is not a self-complete, permanent

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[9] B.N., p. 86.

thing like the plenum of being, but it is a broken

totality which it is trying to repair. Now to call

such an incomplete and broken totality "nothing"

is to work with a presupposition that something unchan-

ging is real being, while that which changes all the time

is nothing. It is true that change cannot come into

existence without negating the totality, or the totality

cannot be restored unless there is a lack. But in

either case, we have to take into account the present

state of things from which we have to start. It thus

seems to us that Sartre is using a very strange word to

explain the meaning of change and lack, and these perhaps

can be explained without using a negative terminology.

In fact, Sartre uses on many occasions positive des-

criptions of consciousness like possibility and freedom.

It may be that these words are more negative in their

real meaning, yet it cannot be denied that we understand

something definite by these words. Sartre does not want

to label consciousness as something definite and deter-

minate, and therefore he has selected words that do not

describe anything definitely.

It is true that consciousness has such an ambiguous

character, but then Sartre could have pointed out that

the nature of consciousness moves between two dialectical

poles of affirmation and negation in which affirmation

is negation and negation is affirmation. This is in
accord with one of the definitions of consciousness
that he has given: consciousness, first of all, is
what it is not and again, consciousness is not what it
is. This is not a negative description, nor an affir-
mative one, but both in one.

7. Sartre and Indian Philosophy

Sartre's ontology of consciousness has interesting
parallels with some of the basic ideas of the major
schools of philosophy in India. Such a comparative study
itself could be the subject for an elaborate discus-
sion. (Being brought up in the traditions of Indian
Philosophy, I think it may help my understanding of
Sartre's philosophy, if it is possible to discover
some parallels between Sartre's ideas and some of the main
thoughts of the major schools of Indian Philosophy.)
The schools between which such comparisons are sought
to be established are the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṃkara,
the Sāmkhya-Yoga and the philosophy of Buddhism.

In Advaita Vedānta of Śaṃkara, consciousness is
the ultimate reality[10] and the world that we experience

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[10]S. Radhakrishnan, _Indian Philosophy_, vol. 2,
Macmillan, George Allen, 1962, p. 562.

or the objects that we encounter in our everyday life
are projections due to ignorance.[11] This consciousness
is self-revealing, and when in the state of ignorance
we experience objects, it reveals or illumines the
objects.[12] The self-revealing character of consciousness
is its true nature and the other-revealing character is
illusory. In the language of Sartre, it can be said
that to be aware of consciousness does not need a separate
act, because consciousness is self-illuminating, translucid
or transparent. In criticism of the Nyāya thinkers who
hold that a second consciousness is needed for knowing
the first consciousness, a Vedāntin would answer that
in that case the second consciousness would need a third,
the third a fourth, so on ad infinitum, but this would
lead to the fallacy "anabasthā" or infinite regress.
Of course, the Vedāntin would not object to the contention
that consciousness itself can be a subject for reflection.
The major difference between Śaṁkara and Sartre lies,
perhaps, in the concept of intentionality. For Sartre,
consciousness is always consciousness of something.
That means, the positing of the world is of primary impor-
tance, but for Śaṁkara, consciousness by itself is not

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[11]Ibid., p. 562.

[12]Ibid., p. 478.

intentional. Only in the level of Vyāvahārika or practical experience, which is, of course at the level of illusory existence, consciousness is consciousness of something and then surely, consciousness in knowing an object is consciousness of itself. I am not entering into a detailed study of the knowledge situation in Vedānta philosophy, but one thing that strikes us here is that like Sartre, the Vedāntin would say that consciousness is empty of contents; and consciousness in the empirical level is out in the world, where the contents are identified with objects or assume the shape of the objects. The Vedāntin, of course, would say that consciousness is empty of contents; and consciousness in the empirical level is out in the world, where the contents are identified with objects or assume the shape of the objects. The Vedāntin, of course, would say that consciousness need not always be conscious of something, for in suṣupti or dreamless sleep[13] there is consciousness but there is no consciousness of object. It appears therefore, that Sartre's theory of consciousness accords well with the Vedānta theory of consciousness of the empirical level. Another difference that may be pointed out is that for Sartre, consciousness is not a substance, though it is in itself an absolute. On the other hand, the Vedāntin would say that consciousness is eternal,

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[13]*Ibid.*, p. 478.

true being, and as such, is a substance or is the only
true substance which is the locus of the whole universe.[14]
Though the Vedāntin would deny any content in conscious-
ness, he would not say that consciousness is nothing.
He would rather say that the realization of consciousness
is the realization of a positive existence and bliss.
Perhaps, these differences are due to the difference in
the background of the two philosophical trends.

Again, for Sartre a man lives authentic existence
only when he realizes that he is free, and to be free
and to be conscious being one and the same thing, for
Sartre authentic existence means to be aware of one's
consciousness. For the Vedāntin, in our everyday life,
we forget our true existence which is the realization
of pure consciousness. Thus authentic existence, for
the Vedāntin which he calls pāramārthika satta or ulti-
mate existence is the realization that one is pure
consciousness, which is pure delight.[15] The word "pure"
introduces a great deal of difference between Śaṃkara
and Sartre, for Sartre will never say that only conscious-
ness is the ultimately real entity, though he wants to
distinguish between the world, consciousness, and the
body in which consciousness exists. However, both
Sartre and Śaṃkara would deny complete identification

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[14]Ibid., p. 573.

[15]Ibid., p. 626.

of consciousness with a material object, or physical object, for, according to Sartre, consciousness is not the world, nor the body, but it nihilates both of them. If we consider the goals of life, we find a great difference between Samkara and Sartre, for according to Samkara, the ultimate goal of life is moksa or liberation which can come only with the realization of the identity between the finite consciousness and the infinite consciousness, which in other words, means realization of the truth which is existence, consciousness, and bliss. This ideal is completely different from Sartre's, according to whom our ultimate project is to be for-itself-in-itself, but the ideal itself is unrealizable, because it is self-contradictory. For Sartre it is, of course, difficult to conceive of a consciousness which is so pure that it regards the material object as illusory. Sartre wants to maintain both the independence of consciousness as well as its dependence on material object.

Perhaps the closest expression of Sartre's philosophy can be found in Sāmkhya-Yoga metaphysics. In Sāmkhya, there are two independent realities, Puruṣa or consciousness and Prkriti or[16] material world. The

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[16]Ibid., p. 280.

world is that which serves the purpose of Purusa, but

without the appearance of Puruṣa, the world will not

evolve into the series of the objects.[17] Sartre also

understands the basic dimension of man in terms of

consciousness. He points out that consciousness by

its nature implies that there is something which is

not itself. It is pure subjectivity which in itself can

never be an object. The world in itself is a solid

being, and all distinctions and differentiations occur

when consciousness arises. Thus there are, according

to Sartre, two basic kinds of being: the for-itself and

the in-itself. A further similarity between Sāṁkhya

and Sartre is that for Sāṁkhya, Purusa is something like

the simple fact of consciousness stripped off all thought,

ego-sense, etc. For Sāṁkhya, the ego-sense is a later

product, just as Sartre would say, at the pre-reflective

level, there is no ego; the ego appears on the reflective

level. Of course, in Sāṁkhya, we do not discover such

distinctions of the levels of consciousness, as Sartre

understands. Sāṁkhya understands consciousness as a

witness, and through its witnessing function, the world

evolves. Due to ignorance, Puruṣa appears as identified

with the world which it is not.[18] But this is in a

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[17]Ibid., p. 266.

[18]Ibid., p. 267.

sense necessary, because only after such identification, the Puruṣa is able to remove its ignorance and to realize that it is not the world.[19]

Sāṃkhya views conform to Sartre's theory of intentionality, because, according to it, Puruṣa can only be aware of what it is not. Though this is somewhat stretching the idea of intentionality, it cannot be denied that some sort of a theory of intentionality can be worked out in the conceptual framework of Sāṃkhya. The approximate idea of intentionality can be found in Nyāya school of Indian philosophy, according to which the nature of consciousness is to reveal an object.[20] To return to the concept of consciousness as witness, Sartre also says, "... the for-itself realizes its birth in an original bond with being; it is a witness to itself of itself as not being that being. Due to this fact it is outside that being, upon being and within being as not being that being."[21] Neither Vedānta nor Sāṃkhya would say that consciousness is nothing, but in facing difficulties about describing the nature

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[19]Ibid., p. 313.

[20]Ibid., p. 151.

[21]B.N., p. 122.

of consciousness, they have often suggested that con-
sciousness is nothing. specially, when the Vedāntin
says that the ultimate reality is such that for it every
determination is negation. Perhaps, such a characteri-
zation of Sartre's idea of consciousness is not inaccu-
rate, as Sartre in many cases points out that conscious-
ness is not a thing or nothing. We have pointed out
that for Sāmkhya, the whole manifest world functions
for the sake of the Puruṣa: Puruṣartha. In the same
way, Sartre's interest in the world is from the per-
spective of individual consciousness.

The ultimate purpose of the Sāmkhya is to remove
or eliminate the fact of suffering in man's life.
Similarly, Sartre discovers the life in the world as
suffering. Sāmkhya states that suffering is a result
of Puruṣa not distinguishing itself from Prkriti or
appearing as what it is not - i.e., as bound up and
determined by the world. When man realizes this dis-
tinction between Puruṣa and Prkriti, he is able to be
free; because there is this split and the split is often
confused as identity, man suffers. Sartre's notion
of suffering is based on his notion of duality.

> "The being of human reality is suffering,
> because it rises in being as perpetually
> haunted by a totality which it is without
> being able to be it; precisely because

it could not attain the in-itself without
losing itself as for-itself. Human reality
therefore is by nature an unhappy con-
sciousness with no possibility of sur-
passing its unhappy state."[22]

For Sāmkhya, the end of suffering comes through
viveka-jñana or intuitive discrimination, which gives
one the knowledge that leads to salvation. Such reali-
zation that consciousness is completely free from the
bindings of the materialization leads to mokṣa. Sartre
also realizes that the freedom of the individual and
his consciousness exist apart from the determinations
of the worldly factors and man's own past. He says,

"To say that the for-itself has to be what
it is, to say that it is what it is not,
while not being what it is, to say that
in it existence precedes essence and
conditions essence - all this is to say
one and the same thing: to be aware
that man is free."[23]

But we must remember a fundamental difference between
Sāmkhya and the thought of Sartre. Sartre could
never allow the possibility that consciousness could
exist in a state of isolation, apart from what it is
conscious of. There is for Sartre no way out of

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[22]Ibid., p. 90.

[23]Ibid., p. 439.

suffering. Man's freedom consists in discrimination
or realization that his consciousness is not determined
by the world, but this freedom cannot exist apart from
the world. Thus suffering is the basic unalterable
fact of existence, and man is condemned to be free
within this suffering. Man is, as Sartre would say,
a useless passion. Thus though there are some similari-
ties between the analysis of human existence in Sāmkhya
and Sartre's phenomenological ontology, nevertheless
they are quite different with respect to the solution
of the basic problem.

Sartre's ideas about consciousness can also be
interestingly compared with the Buddhist theory of
consciousness. All schools of Buddhism object to the
theory of a permanent soul substance, on the ground that
the existence of such a substance is not certified by
our experience. The Buddhist believes in a continuity
of the states of consciousness, as in the case of the
flame of a candle or the current of a river.[24] Each
flicker of the flame of a candle is different from the
successive one or each wave of the stream is a different
wave. So what we call consciousness is a process from
the past to the present and then to the future. The

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[24]S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I,
p. 373.

previous theories of consciousness, as advocated by

Vedānta and Sāṁkhya give us an idea of eternal conscious-

ness like the transcendental ego that has often been

criticized by the Buddhists. The Buddhists reject the

theory of a permanent consciousness on the ground that

for anything to exist, it must have a capacity to pro-

duce an effect, and if something exists for more than

a moment, then it is either producing an effect in the

second moment or it is not producing. If it does not

produce anything, then it does not exist, and if it

produces an effect, then it undergoes a change, for

to produce an effect while remaining unchanged is

impossible.[25] Thus, everything of the world is involved

in a creative process, and every moment something is

produced which on its part produces something else.

This is the character of every object in the world

including consciousness, and the Buddhists call this

theory "Kshanikatā-vāda" or the doctrine of momentari-

ness.[26] It is important to note that the doctrine of

momentariness is dependent on another doctrine known as

"Pratityasamutpāda"[27] or the doctrine of dependent

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[25]Ibid., p. 373.

[26]Ibid., p. 372.

[27]Ibid., p. 410.

origination. According to this later doctrine, all objects of the world are causally determined by the previous moment and the Buddhists give a twelve-membered chain of causation which traces the suffering or duksa of our life to our birth and subsequently to trsna or desire, or thirst, and then to ignorance.[28] The Buddhists thus come close to Sartre's characterization of consciousness as temporalization. But there are fundamental differences between the Buddhist idea of time and the phenomenological-existential analysis of time. Though the ideal of human life is the end of suffering or Nirvāna, it cannot be clearly stated what would be the relation between "Artha-kriyākāritā" or the capacity to produce an effect and the ultimate project of life. But it cannot be denied that the Buddhist idea of the capacity to produce an effect is not incompatible with Sartre's idea that consciousness is always on the path to realize a possibility.

What Sartre calls human reality is an embodied consciousness in which the psychological states, qualities, dispositions, and temeraments are hypostasized along with the corporeal factors. Sartre speaks of a "constitution of ego" which is a combination of the

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[28]Ibid., p. 412.

different factors of our experience. The Buddhist
idea of self as a combination of the five factors known
as the five "skandhas", or groups of psychical elements
is similar to Sartre's idea of the constitution ego.

One important difference from Sartre's philosophy
would, perhaps, be the idea of universal causation.
In the Buddhist thought every event is causally deter-
mined by the previous event. But the interesting fact
is that this entire causal process has its beginning in
the individual's desire and ignorance. This shows that
it is the individual who can so determine his desire
that there will be suffering or there will be cessation
of suffering. Sartre will not object to this kind of
causal determinism where individual's desire determines
or initiates everything. But he may not agree to the
rigidity in which desire seems to operate in the Buddhist
system. Desire being the first in the chain of causation
may also be called unreasonable or unjustifiable, and
it is from desire, according to Buddhism, springs all
suffering. Sartre can also say that our desire being
absurd, points to the absurdity of our whole life. But
all Indian philosophy ends with an optimistic note and
similarly, the Buddhist philosophers will say, when
desire is destroyed, there will be no longer suffering.
It is difficult to understand whether Sartre can con-

ceive of an existence without desire, because for him,
to be human being and to be free to choose are syno-
nymous. If a human being has no desire, he does not
have the freedom to choose and such an existence is,
perhaps, super-human.

These are some ideas that may strike one in
studying the philosophy of Sartre. One may wonder
that Sartre does never mention anything about Oriental
philosophy and yet he seems to speak often in the lan-
guage of the mysterious East. The reason may be found
in the existential quest of the contemporary human
being of whom Sartre is a major representative.

It is the Vedic philosophers who first of all
raised the question, "Who am I?" and tried to realize
the answer in the spiritual revelation of the identi-
fication between the finite and the infinite - in the
truth "That thou art" or "I am He." The same quest
has stirred the minds of the modern philosophers of
the Existentialist school. Though the philosophers of
India moved on a different plane, modern existentialism
is concerned with all the levels of human existence.
But each existentialist thinker has concentrated on a
particular aspect. Sartre's search has been the authentic
existence of the human individual through his essential

characteristics of freedom and consciousness. We

have tried in our discussion to unravel the different

dimensions of this consciousness.

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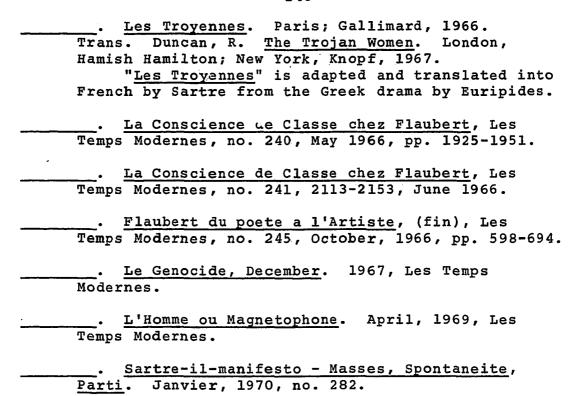_____. _Sartre-il-manifesto - Masses, Spontaneite,
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