To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Barry F. Ball entitled "Self-Division and Escape from Self: A Study of Sartre's Being and Nothingness." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Philosophy.

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SELF-DIVISION AND ESCAPE FROM SELF: A STUDY OF SARTRE'S BEING AND NOTHINGNESS

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ABSTRACT

In his ontology Sartre finds human beings to be characterized by an awesome degree of freedom. Man is able to choose among alternatives satisfying a given goal; able even to choose among the goals which may satisfy and to choose that individual human nature which is to be satisfied. Consequently there is no limitation placed upon man's freedom, and those who argue for psychological determination are simply attempting to escape responsibility for their choices.

Frequently the freedom of man includes choices that involve moral or ethical concerns. It is in avoidance of the weight of the moral concerns that Sartre claims man seeks an escape from his freedom. There is a sense, however, in which man is his freedom, thus to seek escape from freedom is to seek escape from self. But this escape is doomed to failure.

One form this escape from freedom takes is bad faith. In bad faith one hides a truth from oneself. Another form of escape is reflection. In reflection I seek an "objective" view of my situation, as opposed to the "subjective" view garnered through the experience of the ego-centered self. The third form of escape for Sartre is being-for-others. In being-for-others I seek a flight from myself in undertaking to perceive myself as someone else does.

The concept of freedom and the things which are impediments to it constitute the psychology of persons for Sartre.

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INTRODUCTION

One commentator has stated that "Being and Nothingness is generally acknowledged to be Sartre's greatest philosophical work. It is, I think, also one of Sartre's most troubled texts, a veritable jungle (it might even be read as a philosophical systematization of a paranoid-schizophrenic world view)."[1] Being and Nothingness is, it seems, Sartre's statement about the nature of persons--that nature involving freedom--and a discussion of the difficulties which can impede that freedom. This is where the "paranoid-schizophrenic" notion comes in; Sartre seems to be claiming that in escaping that freedom, the individual is, in one way or another, involved in a "paranoid-schizophrenic" situation.

The concept of freedom and the things which are impediments to it, taken together, constitute the psychology (and also the ontology) of persons for Sartre. Being and Nothingness is an analytical, philosophical statement about human psychology, and in this sense it may be thought of as an "analytical psychology" about the nature of that consciousness peculiar to human existence. Sartre employs a catch-all phrase to express this nature: man "is what he is not and is not what he is." This is the formula of self-division which will underlie, to some extent, each of the following chapters.

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[1]Dominick LaCapra, A Preface to Sartre (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1978), p. 122.

The words are used by Sartre to describe consciousness and the different ways in which consciousness presents itself to the world.

It is quite clear that the treatment Sartre gives most issues--and certainly the ones I've chosen to discuss--involve the person as a divided sort of entity. The problem of self-division seems to be the most important, and for me the most interesting. If a person is exercising choice (thereby using or involving himself with inner-direction,[2] then that person will have encountered the feeling of being (self-)divided about something, i.e., goals, actions, thoughts, etc. The inner-directed man will see the self-division which T. E. Lawrence claims to have seen in the people he fought with in the Arab Revolt against the Turks, as narrated in the Seven Pillars of Wisdom: "[t]heir thoughts were at ease only in extremes. They inhabited superlatives by choice. Sometimes inconsistents seemed to possess them at once in joint sway; but they never compromised: they pursued

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[2]Freedom involves choice, and for a person to choose, to know himself well enough to commit himself to a choice, he must have some inner-direction. For a sound treatment of "inner-direction," see Colin Wilson, Age of Defeat (Victor Gollancz, LTD, 1959). (It is possible, I suppose, that someone might fail to choose; but for Sartre, failing to choose is still choosing, in a sense.) Through inner-direction, through knowledge of himself, man may successfully pursue the particular goals desired. This seems to be the proper psychology for the Twentieth Century Man, as seen by Sartre, when considering his philosophy as a whole. For more on this Twentieth Century attitude, see Jacques Guicharnaud, "Those Years" Existentialism 1943-45," in Edith Kern, ed., Sartre (Prentice-Hall, Inc., N.J., 1962), pp. 15-20.

the logic of several incompatible opinions to absurd ends, without perceiving the incongruity."[3]

The self-division Lawrence is talking about and what I am driving at is not the usual notion of not being sure whether or not you want, say, a jazz piano or a classical piano recording. This is common to us all and is a more trivial example of self-division (if it can be called that at all). It is not indicative of too much other than "making up one's mind." There is a stronger type of self-division which was touched on both by LaCapra (in my introductory quotation) and Lawrence; this second type of self-division belongs to

> the man who is torn between two visions: an internal world, where a new sensitivity and knowledge give strange glimpses of immortality, and an external world, where he is increasingly a misfit. One day he feels himself to be a god; the next, an insect. The poles draw wider apart, and the tension between them becomes greater. Man's dual nature, his "greatness and misery" (to borrow Pascal's phrase) obstructs every attempt to arrive at some clear, simple assessment of his place in the universe.[4]

Sartre's existentialism involves "man's dual nature" in searching for a "simple assessment of his place in the universe." It is an attempt to understand self-division and freedom. (There is a sense for Sartre in which man is his freedom; thus escape from self is escape from freedom.)

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[3]T. E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom (Penguin Books, United States, Dallas, Penn., 1979), p. 36.

[4]Colin Wilson, Age of Defeat (Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1959), p. 87. This is Wilson's comment on Faust in light of Spengler.

CHAPTER I

CONSCIOUSNESS AS "NO-THING" BUT THE OBJECT OF PERCEPTION

To gain the proper perspective on self-division in Sartre's philosophy, the question that must be asked of consciousness is this: "what is the nature of consciousness that it can be self-divided?" Sartre begins by accepting the notion that consciousness is intentional or has an "aboutness" to it; "all consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness of something."[1] Consciousness aims at or intends an object outside itself. Consciousness thereby separates itself from that which it is aware of as not it. A more technical way that Sartre sometimes has of expressing this point is that no consciousness lacks the "positing of a transcendent object." However, Sartre goes further. Not only is consciousness, in positing an object, aware of its not being that object, it is also unaware of being anything "in-itself," of having any "internal content." "All consciousness is positional in that it transcends itself in order to reach an object, and it exhausts itself in this same positing."[2] When I intend an object I do not do so, according to Sartre, by means of some inner mental representations of that object. In claiming

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[1]Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (Washington Square Press, N.Y., 1956), p. 11.

[2]Ibid., p. 11.

that consciousness "exhausts itself" in positing an object, Sartre means that consciousness is not a remaining thing in addition to the object intended. The object is not a mental representation in consciousness nor is consciousness something left over in the intentional act. There is nothing in intentionality outside the object intended. Consciousness is empty and cannot contain anything. Not only is the "transcendent object" not in consciousness--nothing is.

By what might appear as a kind of paradox, however, Sartre also insists on another point. Even though, on his view, consciousness has no internal content or nature of its own apart from its transcendent object, he still insists that all consciousness of a transcendent object is a consciousness of itself. He does not mean by this what he calls "reflective consciousness," a consciousness known by means of a consciousness knowing it. There is, rather, some sort of inner "reverberation" going on all the time within consciousness.[3] Consciousness must be aware of itself while it is directed toward the object intended. Otherwise, Sartre insists, it would be unconscious or a conscious unconscious. This is absurd because then consciousness would be "blind" or "ignorant." This sort of "unknowing" self-consciousness, then, is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for consciousness to be a "knowing" consciousness of the object posited.

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[3]Margorie Grene, Sartre (New Viewpoints, Franklin Watts, Inc., N.Y., 1973), p. 122.

> The necessary and sufficient condition for a knowing consciousness to be knowledge of its object is that it be consciousness of itself as being that knowledge. This is a necessary condition, for if my consciousness were not consciousness of being consciousness of the table, it would then be consciousness of that table without consciousness of being so. In other words, it would be a consciousness ignorant of itself, an unconsciousness--which is absurd. This is a sufficient condition, for my being conscious of being conscious of that table suffices in fact for me to be conscious of it.[4]

Sartre thus seems to claim two things: (1) Consciousness cannot be conscious of an object without simultaneously being conscious of that fact as such. From this he then seems to infer, as will become clearer as we proceed, (2) that consciousness cannot be conscious of an object without simultaneously being conscious of the fact that it is not the object and, presumably, without being conscious of its not being anything else either. A stronger way of putting this is that consciousness is conscious of being "nothing" more than its object. Let us turn to the former point now.

Sartre claims that consciousness is somehow aware, though not through reflection, of the fact that it is conscious of this, that or the other thing. In knowing an object, in being intentional, consciousness must also be aware that it is intentional. But this "awareness" does not mean consciousness is stepping back behind itself or that another consciousness is directed toward it. For then an infinite regress would result. "If we wish to avoid an infinite regress, there must be an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the

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[4]Sartre, p. 11.

self to itself."[5] If, in fact, we thought that the only way consciousness could be aware of itself while it was positionally aware of the table in front of it was by a new (even if simultaneous) act of awareness, making itself a positional object for itself, then we would be sold to an infinite regress. Thus the awareness consciousness has of an object and the awareness of that intentionality are not merely simultaneous. Somehow they are different aspects of one single "act" of consciousness.

Care must thus be taken not to understand the "relation of the self to itself," this immediate consciousness of consciousness, as a consciousness-knowing and a consciousness-known. This reduction of self-consciousness to knowledge of consciousness drags in a subject-object dualism Sartre wishes to avoid. If this knower-known dyad is required for self-consciousness, then we will require a third term so that the knower (i.e., knowing consciousness) can become, in turn, known by a further knower (i.e., knowing consciousness). We would, in essence, have "the known, the knower, the knower known by the knower etc. . . . 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."[6] Thus the non-cognitive relation that consciousness must have with itself is some type of inner "reverberation" within the original consciousness itself.

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[5]Ibid., p. 12.

[6]Ibid.

Some commentators have voiced certain difficulties with Sartre's argument. It would be profitable to examine these more closely at this point. It was seen that Sartre claimed that a consciousness which is not also conscious, or aware of itself (as being conscious of an object) would then be an unconsciousness. A. C. Danto[7] suggests that what Sartre might be thinking, in making this claim, is that the term "unconsciousness" is tantamount to "not conscious." He holds that Sartre's argument is "exceedingly poor" precisely because it overlooks the main point of consciousness--that consciousness is essentially the intending of something. One could maintain against Sartre that, for example, when I am conscious of a tree I need only be "intending" the tree, and I could be conscious of, or intending, the tree while remaining unconscious (unaware) of intending that object. Thus I would not be unconscious per se, as Sartre insists. I would merely be unaware or unconscious of the fact that I am conscious of the tree. To some extent then, I would still be conscious (of the tree). Another commentator also makes the same point: even though "consciousness is defined as other-directed, that doesn't make it unconscious when lacking the alledged non-cognitive relation with itself. On the contrary, it is just its vectorial character, its consciousness of what it is not itself,

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[7]Arthur C. Danto, Jean-Paul Sartre (The Viking Press, Inc., N.Y., 1975), p. 52.

and therefore, one might suppose, its lack of consciousness of itself, its "ignorance" of itself if you will, that makes it conscious."[8]

Even though Sartre has not provided a strong argument for this point, I think he is trying to bring out something which many other writers and philosophers feel is a reality in some way. He wants to say that consciousness can and must be somehow subliminally aware of itself no matter what object it contemplates as a "positional consciousness." This is what he tries so tenaciously to hold with his comment that "there must be an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself."[9] This is also what he means when he says, "every positional consciousness of an object is at the same a non-positional consciousness of itself."[10] Sartre seems able to communicate, in his own unclear way, the reality of some sort of inner reverberation of consciousness, some sort of tacit self-awareness even if he has trouble providing a good argument for it.

And Sartre seems to be in good company on this point. Jacques Salvan, for example, marshals some interesting notions about the relationship between existentialism and mysticism, with respect to this issue of tacit, subliminal, or non-cognitive awareness.[11]

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[8]Grene, p. 120.

[9]Sartre, p. 12.

[10]Ibid., p. 13.

[11]Jacques Salvan, The Scandalous Ghost (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1967), Salvan's chapter 6 deals with this point at

He thinks that existentialism and mysticism say compatible things, and he pursues lines of thought from thinkers such as St. Augustine, William James, Henri Bergson and Rudolf Otto to substantiate his claims. Salvan quotes James' Varieties of Religious Experience, for example, where James claims ". . . a conscious field plus its object as felt or thought of plus an attitude towards the object plus the sense of self to whom the attitude belongs--such a concrete bit of personal experience may be a small bit, but it is a solid bit as long as it lasts; . . . ."[12]

What is important here are the words "the sense of self to whom the attitude belongs." The "sense" of self is presumably not a reflective sense; it is rather similar to the non-cognitive inner reverberation mentioned earlier. Salvan comments that "knowledge" or awareness of this type "would aim at recovering within ourselves the operation of life." This "operation of life" would appear to be precisely that non-cognitive awareness of self making all cognitive awareness possible in the first place. It must be emphasized that a great portion of what Salvan presents in the relation of existentialism and mysticism aims at the notion of "the cosmos" or "world mind." But how he gets there is through the exploration of the awareness of

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length. For a novel approach to this issue, see Colin Wilson, Religion and the Rebel (The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1957). Wilson holds that for both existentialism and mysticism the self is derivative, appearing alone for reflexive consciousness (reflection), and we can't infer either the world from the self or self from the world. They must arise together, in a correlation.

[12]Salvan, p. 121.

the non-reflective self; hence I do not think that I'm doing too much violence to his position in taking him from his context. The difference between Salvan's discussion and Sartre's is that the former wants to get to "world mind," similar to Hegel, in talking about a non-cognitive awareness, while Sartre is only interested in the non-cognitive awareness itself as a dimension of finite existence.

Still another commentator[13] puts his finger on what Sartre struggles to say. This relates to the following example offered by Sartre:

> If I count the cigarettes which are in this case, I have the impression of disclosing an objective property of this collection of cigarettes: they are a dozen. This property appears to my consciousness as a property existing in the world. It is very possible that I have no positional consciousness of counting them. Then I do not know myself as counting. . . . Yet at the moment when these cigarettes are revealed to me as a dozen, I have a non-thetic consciousness of my adding activity. If anyone questioned me, indeed, if anyone should ask, "What are you doing there?" I should reply at once, "I am counting." This reply aims, not only at the instantaneous consciousness which have passed without being reflected-on, those which are forever not-reflected-on in my immediate past. Thus reflection has no kind of primacy over the consciousness reflected-on to itself. Quite the contrary, it is the non-reflective i.e., non-positional self consciousness which renders the reflection possible; there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito.[14]

Sartre intends his example to be a further strengthening of the claim that non-cognitive or pre-reflective self consciousness

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[13]Fred Kersten, "Can Sartre Count?" in Philosophical and Phenomenological Research

[14]Sartre, p. 13.

renders reflection possible. Fred Kersten elaborates on the example:

> In the presentation of a pair, we discriminate not only the perceiving, grasping and objectivating "This" and "That," each as self-identical numerically distinct from one another, but we also can discriminate the active grasping of "This" in grip, but still keeping "This" and "That" separate.[15]

It is as if consciousness, in counting, has two "hands": one "holds" what has been enumerated, grasped or picked up intentionally while the other picks up (i.e., intentionalizes) a new object.[16] The process goes on until twelve separate objects have been intentionalized into the collective whole "dozen." It is just this point that Sartre tries to establish by making the pre-reflective consciousness aware of itself while being positionally conscious of an object. In counting it seems that consciousness can be positionally conscious of twelve cigarettes one after the other and also be aware of having positionally "consciousized" the group as a whole, or more precisely, constituted the group per se. We can therefore say that to count it is necessary to be conscious of counting.

Now Sartre says someone may object to this:

> Of course, someone may say, but this makes a circle. For is it not necessary that I count in fact in order to be conscious of counting? That is true. However there is no circle, or if you like, it is the very nature of consciousness to exist "in a circle." The idea can be expressed in these terms: Every conscious existence exists as a

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[15]Kersten, p. 342.

[16]Wilson advances this view in his novel The Philosopher's Stone (Warner Books, Inc., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, N.Y., N.Y. 10019).

> consciousness of existing. We understand now why the first consciousness of consciousness is not positional: it is because it is one with the consciousness of which it is consciousness. At one stroke it determines itself as consciousness of perception and as perception.[17]

As we have seen, the relationship between an intentional act and the non-reflective consciousness of it is not that between two distinct acts of consciousness. Sartre holds that "This self-consciousness we ought to consider not as a new consciousness, but as the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of something."[18] Just as an object must exist in three dimensions, one might say, an intuition, pleasure or grief must exist as "immediate self-consciousness."

This suggests that non-reflective self-consciousness is an "essential quality" of an act of consciousness. But this raises a serious difficulty. In what sense can consciousness have "qualities" for Sartre? He insists, after all, that it is "nothing" over and above its transcendent object. Sartre is insistent upon one point. The "quality" of self-consciousness is not to be regarded as a quality or from which any kind of "material" exists, in the way that, for example, three-dimensionality is the way in which some sort of material exists. Just as the positional consciousness of a table does not have the quality of self-consciousness added to it, a psychic act such as a pleasure, says Sartre, "can not be

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[17]Sartre, pp. 13-14.

[18]Ibid., p. 14.

distinguished--even logically--from consciousness of pleasure. Consciousness (of) pleasure is constitutive of the pleasure as the very mode of its own existence, as the material of which it is made, and not as a form which is imposed by a blow upon a hedonistic material."[19] In one sense, then, Sartre seems to be holding that self-consciousness is present in positional consciousness in a way compatible with calling self-consciousness a "quality" of it. Yet he also seems to be maintaining that self-consciousness can't be a quality of consciousness, because consciousness can't have any "qualities." As the act of consciousness doesn't stand as something over and above its object, it follows that it is not "something" for self-consciousness to be a quality of: when consciousness is non-reflective consciousness of pleasure or grief there is "an indivisible, indissoluble being--definitely not a substance supporting its qualities like particles of being, but a being which is existence through and through."[20]

We need to reflect further on Sartre's claims about the non-being or nothingness of consciousness. As we have seen, consciousness is always aware of what it is not (e.g., a table, tree, etc.) and is not what it is aware of. This is, of course, the relatively commonplace or superficial side of Sartre's claim. But if we probe deeper and ask what his full reasoning is, an interesting model of his

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[19]Ibid., p. 14.

[20]Ibid., p. 15.

philosophy of consciousness emerges. This model may be related to Sartre's "formula of self-division," which he expresses by saying that consciousness "is what it is not and is not what it is." In order, however, to discuss the view Sartre seems to be advancing, a brief excursus into the nature of "appearances" is necessary.

Sartre rejects the Kantian notion of the "noumenon"--the thing "behind" the object that appears to us, the "thing-in-itself." Instead, the new focal point is the contrast between the finite and the infinite. The dualism of appearances and essences is absorbed into the finite/infinite contrast: "The appearance does not hide the essence, it reveals it; it <u>is</u> the essence. The essence of an existent is not longer a property sunk in the cavity of this existent; it is the manifest law which presides over the succession of its appearances, it is the principle of the series."[21] The series of appearances must be infinite, now, because (a) each appearance appears to a subject, and (b) if the series was not infinite, then "the first appearances do not have the possibility of reappearing, which is absurd, or they can be all given at once, which is still more absurd."[22] Obviously, "perceiving" for Sartre means that there is always a possibility of objects' manifesting themselves through any number of aspects or profiles--even if one profile is always perceived at a moment. This possibility of a series of appearances is relevant

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[21]Ibid., p. 5.

[22]Ibid., p. 5.

to understanding how perceivable things or appearances have objectivity. We don't need to appeal to any object behind the appearances. It turns out, however, that we still do need to appeal to some kind of being, though not an object that is in some way "behind" appearances. This is because, even apart from questions concerning the objectivity of appearances--even, for example, when dealing with mere hallucinations--we are dealing with a transcendent being. Neither appeal to a noumenal "object" or "thing," nor appeal to further appearances can help here. This being according to Sartre, is the only "substantial" being there is to consciousness, and it, of course, is outside of consciousness, as a dimension or condition of its transcendent object. Thus the being of any single phenomenon, e.g., an appearance of a table, or an appearing aspect of the table is a being, Sartre wants to say, that transcends consciousness, even if it is not itself an object (like a table itself) that transcends consciousness. The being other than consciousness is being "as such," or what Sartre calls "being-in-itself," which he contrasts with the "being-for-itself" of consciousness. This being is the being of this perceived table, or even of any of its possible appearances.

Sartre argues that being, i.e., being-in-itself (as opposed to being-for-itself) is itself (i.e., undivided) and hence it "can not be causa sui in the manner of consciousness."[23] Being is neither passive nor active, because these notions are human, designating

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[23]Ibid., p. 27.

aspects of human conduct. Being is not connected with itself--"it is itself"--for if it were connected, this would imply, for Sartre, that it could be separated from itself. Being-in-itself "is an immanence which can not realize itself; an affirmation which can not affirm itself; an activity which can not act [and these three characterizations obtain] because it is glued to itself."[24]

These aspects of being-in-itself are expressed by the "is" in the phrase "being is what it is." With this word Sartre tries to designate the opacity--or denseness--of being-in-itself, the opacity by which appearances are simply there for us. These appearances, one might say, have no "needs" or "obligations" in regard to themselves: unlike consciousness, which is "obliged" constantly to refer to itself, and hence be in some way constantly outside of itself. The dual nature of within/without has no place in being-in-itself. The within/without distinction obviously connotes some sort of secrecy for Sartre. He claims that "the in-itself has nothing secret; it is solid."[25] It can be designated as a synthesis, but only if, by this, is understood that "the synthesis [is] of itself with itself."[26] Being-in-itself is, then, isolated in its being, there is no connection with itself; whatever permits the thought that being is not at any time what it is--that, in effect, it will become something

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[24]Ibid., p. 27.

[25]Ibid., p. 28.

[26]Ibid., p. 28.

other than (or in addition to) what it is--is in principle forbidden because being is beyond becoming.

> It is what it is. This means that by itself it can not even be what it is not; we have seen indeed that it can encompass no negation. It is full positivity. It knows no otherness; it never posits itself as other-than-another-being. It can support no connection with the other. It is itself indefinitely and it exhausts itself in being.[27]

Being-in-itself is: this means that being is not a derivative of the possible, nor can it be reduced to the necessary. Being-in-itself is contingent because one existing phenomenon can not be derivative from some other existent qua existent. The possible is also ruled out, for it concerns relations obtained among ideal propositions. Being-in-itself can not be derived from a possibility or, presumably, from possibility as a whole, since the realm of possibility concerns only being-for-itself, the other region of being: "being-in-itself is never either possible or impossible. It is. . . . Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, being-in-itself is de trop [literally "of too much," or "superfluous"] for eternity."[28] Thus the appearance, or at least its being-in-itself, is stable and solid and needs no support from the for-itself or consciousness.

The appearances of this book in front of me--these book appearances--are thus somehow more than pure appearances for Sartre. They are full-blown being, even though throughout history

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[27]Ibid., p. 29.

[28]Ibid.

philosophers use the term "appearance" to designate something not as concretely real as essence or being. For Sartre, these appearances *are* being just as much as (indeed more than) consciousness is being.

The situation with consciousness is somewhat more involved. Consciousness is essentially a "reflection" *on* being-in-itself, hence Sartre's constant claim that consciousness is *per se* an emptiness, a nothingness. "Consciousness is consciousness *of* something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is born *supported by* a being which is not itself."[29] Furthermore, to "say that consciousness is consciousness of something is to say that it must produce itself as a revealed-revelation of a being which is not it and which gives itself as already existing when consciousness reveals it."[30]

Consciousness, then, (a) depends for its existence upon the being-in-itself of appearances, and (b) is itself *pure* appearance "in the sense that it exists only to the degree to which it appears."[31] Claims (a) and (b) are quite different. Claim (a) holds that consciousness depends on the being-in-itself of appearances, whereas (b) holds that consciousness has no "substance" of its own *apart* from that dependent "relation." Claim (b) would seem to suggest that consciousness in some way exists as a dimension of being-in-itself, rather than as something that "depends" on it in an external way.

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[29]Ibid., p. 23.

[30]Ibid., p. 24.

[31]Ibid., p. 17.

It is almost as if consciousness is a "quality" of being-in-itself (or, conceivably, a "fact about" it)--the quality of its being "revealed" as a world of appearances: and yet there is no independent "subject" to whom it is revealed.

The model of consciousness that Sartre is arguing for seems to be very different from what other commentators have taken Sartre's position to be. Beginning with the concept of intentionality, Sartre follows Husserl in claiming that consciousness is always intentional, always conscious of some object. Generally interpreted, the intentionality thesis is thought to be the thesis that the thing which has consciousness directs a "beam" of awareness, or is always focusing, on one or another of the objects around it. This might be symbolized as follows: $\underline{x} \rightarrow \underline{o}$, where $\underline{x}$ is the thing having the consciousness, the arrow is the mental act and $\underline{o}$ is the object. This is what shall be referred to as the "flashlight" view of consciousness. Colin Wilson, for example, usually describes consciousness in terms of a flashlight when discussing this view. The flashlight model of consciousness unfortunately leads to the notion of intentionality being a relational "property" or a "quality" possessed by something having the consciousness. As we saw, this seems to be incompatible with Sartre's view: the only being on which consciousness depends is that of its <u>object</u>, not a "subject."

On a second view, intentionality might be seen as a property of an <u>act</u> of consciousness rather than a "subject": $\underline{x} \rightarrow \underline{o}$, where $\underline{x}$ is itself a mental act that apprehends $\underline{o}$. This is also not Sartre's view. For it continues to attribute an independent being to

consciousness. Rather, for Sartre, any conscious act directed toward the object is more like a fact about that object. The whole being of the act is somehow put into the object. The act is not an additional thing over and above the object. Consciousness doesn't merely "reveal what it is not"; in some way it is nothing more than what it reveals. Consciousness is not an additional entity with the "quality" of intentionality.

Consciousness as a concrete entity, or as a relation involving distinct entities "connected" by intentionality, disappears in Sartre's view. When Sartre says, then, that consciousness "is what it is not" he seems to mean that even though consciousness appears to be an additional entity apprehending the book, it is not. Consciousness is involved in the awareness of the book-appearance, but is itself neither a relation between the appearance and something else nor itself something else. When Sartre says, conversely, that consciousness "is not what it is" he means that consciousness is nevertheless somehow more than the book-appearance. For it is precisely the fact of that appearance being revealed, of that appearance being lifted out of the otherwise indifferent blankness of being-in-itself.

(It might be possible to hold a weaker interpretation of Sartre: consciousness is merely not aware of any term of the intentional relation other than the intentional object itself, not that it is not in fact something "other" than that object. I don't think that this interpretation would be correct. For in that case, Sartre seems reduced to the position from which he has tried to

escape: an unconscious consciousness, i.e., consciousness that would not even be aware of itself.)

The awareness consciousness has of the book-appearance must be different from the book-appearance considered "in-itself": "otherwise it [the book-appearance] would be consciousness" and disappear as book-appearance.[32] Consciousness of book-appearance is different from the book-appearance, i.e., being-in-itself. Thus while consciousness is not something over and above the book-appearance, yet it is more than that appearance. It is, of course, this "more" that is supposed to be the "object" of non-reflective self-consciousness.

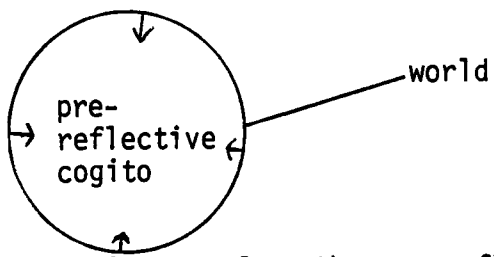
Of consciousness Sartre claimed, as we have seen, that "every consciousness exists as a consciousness of existing." It seems to me that he is thereby trying to "give back" to consciousness what we have just now seen he has taken away from it. To guarantee that consciousness is indeed something "more" than its object he introduces, after all, a "quality" distinguishing them. A distinguishing characteristic is needed, and thus consciousness as a conscious existence is given the special "quality" of consciousness of that existence. For apart from that quality, one might just as well have regarded the appearance as aware of itself, rather than speaking of "consciousness" as aware of it. Thus, to distinguish the "appearance" of the conscious sort from those of the "in-itself"

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[32]Ibid., p. 18.

sort, Sartre must hold that the former "know" that they are or have being, or exist. But, of course, they can not "know" that via reflection, for reasons given above concerning the infinite regress. Thus the only form of self-reference available is the non-cognitive sort of awareness customarily allied with the pre-reflective cogito.

What I have tried to accomplish thus far is point out a groundwork that will support a possible model or map of Sartre's view of consciousness. Basically, Sartre's position seems to be this: the appearances encountered by the pre-reflective cogito somehow hold or support it in virtue of the being-in-itself, in its capacity as awareness of that being-in-itself. Recalling the flashlight model of consciousness, we can revise it as follows:



We see that the arrows point not from the pre-reflective cogito, but from the appearances. This expresses the fact that consciousness or awareness is supported in its being by a web-work of appearances and that it is in some way nothing more than the appearing of those various appearances. On the other, it is important to understand that the appearances do not cause this pre-reflective awareness to exist, for we saw that Sartre claims that "the existence of consciousness comes from consciousness itself." Additionally, Sartre claims, "consciousness is consciousness

through and through. It can be limited only by itself."[33] Consciousness is a self-determination, not a becoming. If consciousness were a becoming, says Sartre, we would be forced to conclude "that consciousness is prior to its own existence":

> Consciousness is a plenum of existence, and this determination of itself by itself is an essential characteristic. It would even be wise not to misuse the expression "cause of self," which allows us to suppose a progression, a relation of self-cause to self-effect.[34]

This point is essential to the interpretation of Sartre's position I am trying to advance. Consciousness, as that which reveals (or rather as revelation itself) immediately and necessarily, adverts to something which it is not, i.e., the appearances surrounding it. In turn, the appearances, as the revealed, immediately and necessarily advert to the no-thingness of the pre-reflective cogito.

However, while the pre-reflective cogito and those appearances are thus finite and merely "relative" (to each other), the "relationship" between them--the basic fact that revelation occurs at all--is in a sense infinite and absolute: it is the absolute event of an infinite being-in-itself revealing itself <u>as</u> such and such a set of appearances. This "act" of revelation, as we have seen, is neither the act <u>of</u> being-in-itself as an active being nor the act of any being other than being-in-itself.

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[33]Ibid., p. 15.

[34]Ibid., p. 16.

What I am advancing as Sartre's position may be made clearer by the following considerations. M. C. Escher made a lithograph in 1948 entitled Drawing Hands. This lithograph involves a left hand drawing a right hand, while the right hand draws the left hand. Each hand, while itself finite, refers infinitely back to that which it is not. Obviously this back and forth reference could go on and on, but what finally brings this lithograph into perspective is the fact that I am looking at it from the outside.[35] What puts Sartre's model of consciousness and appearances into perspective is that it too can be looked at from the outside, that is, through reflection. (Reflection is the topic of the next chapter.)

For Sartre, as for Escher's hands, no one half of the total picture or model stands over and above the other. Each is separate in itself but adverts to something else. But let us not forget that even though the "hands" are things, or terms at the end of a relationship, the pre-reflective cogito is not a thing or term at the end of a relation. Of course, denying that the pre-reflective cogito is a thing makes it hard to say that there is a relation between the appearance and the pre-reflective cogito in the first place. For usually "relation" signifies an independent x and y existing in a certain juxtaposition. But Sartre is muddying the water by claiming that the x is no-thing while the y is. How we

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[35]Douglas R. Hofstadter, Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid (Vintage Books, Random House, N.Y., N.Y., 1980), pp. 13-20.

should consider this issue is not by any means clear. But certainly we might want to say that if y is a thing and x is not, then we have no relation at all, at least not as the term is commonly understood. This is simply another way of expressing the paradox of the being and the nothingness of consciousness.

For Sartre consciousness is defined, in part, as an identity-denied--an identity which nihilates. Hence Sartre claims that "consciousness 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 negativity is also the essence of freedom for Sartre. The nature of consciousness involves spontaneity as well as (and in virtue of) nihilation: "consciousness on a pre-reflective level is immediate, spontaneous and lived. It is always beyond the situation of which it is conscious through its projects that required a nihilation of the given."[37]

Sartre takes the "drastic step" as George Stack has it, of formulating an extreme conception of the nature of consciousness. Stack is reacting to Sartre's description of consciousness as "negating" and as a "nothingness" which somehow involves spontaneity.[38] Stack sees Sartre's view of imagination as playing a role here. Negation and imagination are in fact inextricably woven together. In the words of Salvan, "to Sartre, imagination is

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[36]Ibid., p. 24.

[37]LaCapra, p. 135.

[38]George Stack, Sartre's Philosophy of Social Existence (Warren H. Green, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri, 1977), p. 5.

intentional consciousness directed at an absent object and is therefore an expression of our freedom; . . . ."[39] According to Stack, Sartre tries to reason from imagination through to the "being" which is accountable for the acts of imagination. What he argues then, according to Stack, is "that in imagination we posit an image which is a construct of consciousness: this activity involves the negation of the real. The denial that an imagined object (or, for that matter, a sequence of events) belongs to the real is tantamount to negating the real by positing this object."[40] "Through these intentional acts of consciousness (i.e., acts of imagination), consciousness can bring into the world what is not. Now this is an interpretation of consciousness in the terms of its objectivity to both create and apprehend negativity, apparently in virtue of being itself essentially negative. Imagination is, for Sartre, "the paradigmatic form of 'nihilation.'"[41] Unfortunately, what Sartre has forgotten, Stack holds, is that this view

> ignores the dependence of imagination on previous sensations or perpetual experience. For, without a recollection of sensations or perceptions already experienced, imagination would lack a content and would, strictly speaking, be impossible. Thus, it is more plausible to assume that consciousness is capable of intending sensory experience prior to its later capacity to construct the "non-existent."[42]

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[39]Stack, p. 6; Salvan, p. 63.

[40]Stack, p. 7.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

This is not, in fact, what Sartre has in mind by the essentially negative nature of consciousness. On Stack's interpretation consciousness is negative only in that it adopts a certain sort of negative position in regard to the world. But this would be perfectly compatible with regarding consciousness in precisely the "entitative" sorts of ways that Sartre is rejecting. With respect to Stack's view of Sartre's position on the relation between sensations, imagination and negation, Sartre could reply that sensation is the awareness of sensory qualities and that such awareness is therefore not those qualities. But neither is it something with qualities of its own; hence it is "nothing."

One could grant a kind of "spontaneity" to consciousness without holding to as radical a position as Sartre's own. According to Stack Sartre's conception of the spontaneity of consciousness simply relates to what Husserl called "intentional shifts"; that is, consciousness seems to "surge" toward a world of multifarious objects. Wilson places emphasis on Sartre's metaphor of consciousness as a "wind blowing toward objects."[43] This metaphor, he suggests, may have deceived him into saying that consciousness is nothingness while the objects it intends are something. Consciousness, in this sense, appears very unlike a thing. As things are attributed the status of "being-in-themselves," being with "full posivity" and "full concreteness" which "is itself in itself," the

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[43]Colin Wilson, Beyond the Outsider (Arthur Barker, Ltd., London, 1965), p. 44.

opposite must be the nebulous realm of non-being. But the spontaneity of consciousness may not in fact entail that consciousness is a nothingness in any more radical a sense than what Stack brings out. This leads to what I suggest is a watered-down interpretation of Sartre's conception. At the very most, if Sartre's view is consistent with Stack's interpretation, all he seems able to claim of consciousness is that "its relational being seems to be intermediate between non-being and the being [being-in-itself] which are disclosed to it."[44] As I have contended, Sartre's conception seems more radical than this, although in that case it must perhaps be admitted that Sartre has failed to provide an adequate argument for the correctness of the conception.

In conclusion, we saw Sartre define human existence, or that consciousness peculiar to human existence, "as being what it is not and not being what it is." Further, "consciousness is a being, the nature of which is to be consciousness of the nothingness of its being."

Sartre relates his conception of such nihilation to a conception of human existence as a kind of "flight": human existence is, by its own nature, an escape or fleeing from itself. For, after all, the very being of consciousness, as we have seen, lies in its "relation" to the being of the world outside itself: its "inside" is nothing but this "relation" to an outside. But this kind of

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[44]Stack, pp. 7-8.

"escape," interestingly enough, leads precisely to another kind of escape. Human existence is flight and escape by its very nature. But this is, to many people, a disquieting state of affairs. We want to be, not to flee. Hence human consciousness devises ways precisely to escape from its radical freedom, its nothingness. Human existence is, by its own nature, an escaping or fleeing from itself.

What I am trying to do here is bring out the dual role of the nature of "escape" in Sartre. On the one hand there is (a) freedom and nothingness as escape and on the other (b) escape from freedom and nothingness. The former is self as escape, the latter escape from self. This self-escape takes several different routes, namely "reflection," "bad faith" and "being-for-others." These will be the object of our studies, respectively, in the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER II

REFLECTION AND DISCOINCIDENCE FROM SELF

We are now in a position to become clearer about escape from self, and can ask "what it means for consciousness that it must necessarily be what it is not and not be what it is."[1] What this means, for Sartre, is that the being of consciousness does not coincide with itself in a full equivalence. In turn, part of what Sartre means is that the being of consciousness exists in the mode of escaping or transcending from what it is to what it is not. This Sartre takes to follow from the fact that consciousness is always "present" to itself. The law of being of the for-itself, he maintains, "is to be itself in the form of presence to itself."[2] The for-itself exists in the mode of being at a distance from itself because "presence to always implies duality, at least virtual separation. The presence of being to itself implies a detachment on the part of being in relation to itself."[3]

What Sartre calls being-for-itself is, as we have seen, very different from being-in-itself, for the latter type of being most certainly does have full equivalence with itself. It is what it is with no emptiness or distance within itself. In other words,

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[1]Sartre, p. 120.

[2]Ibid., p. 124.

[3]Ibid.

being-in-itself is completely and utterly identical with itself. Consciousness or being-for-itself, on the other hand, has a very distinguishing and deciding characteristic which Sartre terms a "decompression of being." As a consequence of this difference, the in-itself, unlike the for-itself, has no posited goal of unity. Only a for-itself could posit for itself a goal of unity and, ironically enough, only an in-itself can "achieve" that goal! Of a physical object such as a table one can only comment that it is this table (basking in the fullness of its being) and the matter is settled. In the realm of the for-itself or consciousness, we see that things are different. Sartre gives the example of belief.

Belief, Sartre says, is always "one" with itself and yet distant from itself: "I cannot limit myself to saying that my belief is belief; my belief is the consciousness (of) belief."[4] The pre-reflective cogito is once again alluded to here. For beliefs stand in need of a witness before or prior to the act of reflection. We must not think, however, that consciousness senses itself as a believing being and then directs itself toward the belief as if the latter were its mere object. The pre-reflective cogito rather adopts the perspective of its "content" or would be object. (We must remember that, strictly speaking, consciousness has no content as such.) The pre-reflective cogito identifies with what it is said to believe. The "what" of which pre-reflective consciousness is conscious, the

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[4]Ibid., p. 121.

belief itself, in some sense is the consciousness-of-belief. That is to say, consciousness-of-belief is not a "state of consciousness" distinct from and directed toward a belief, but rather itself a translucent awareness of what is believed qua believed.

The pre-reflective cogito is aware of belief only by nihilating itself or separating itself from what it is conscious of, and yet the "separated" terms are in some sense one for Sartre. Thus "nothingness" creeps in as a fissure of the pre-reflective cogito and the belief qua "what" or "object" for consciousness-of-belief.

> Thus by sole fact that my belief is apprehended as belief, it is no longer only belief; that is, it is already no longer belief, it is troubled belief. Thus the ontological judgment "belief is consciousness (of) belief" can under no circumstances be taken as a statement of identity; the subject and the attribute are radically different though still within the indissoluble unity of one and the same being.[5]

Sartre replies to what he thinks someone may object to his position: someone may hold that consciousness-of-belief is consciousness-of-belief, thereby positing the rediscovered identity as an in-itself. But this is an illicit move, according to Sartre, for to say that consciousness-of-belief is only consciousness-of-belief is then to make the belief in question into "an object for the level of reflection and dissociating consciousness from belief":

> The consciousness (of) belief, while irreparably altering belief, does not distinguish itself from belief; it exists in order to perform the act of faith. Thus we are obliged to admit that the consciousness (of) belief is belief. At its origin we have apprehended this double game of references: consciousness (of) belief is belief and belief

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[5]Ibid., p. 122.

> is consciousness (of) belief. On no account can we say that consciousness is consciousness or that belief is belief. Each of the terms refers to the other and passes into the other, and yet each term is different from the other.[6]

If we consider what Sartre says about consciousness in a certain perspective, some light can be shed on the above claims. Consciousness-of-belief and belief are one and the same being because, as we have already seen, consciousness is nothing other than what it is conscious of. To take the consciousness-of-belief as a distinct entity would, of course, be to mistake it for a kind of "thing" and a mode of being-in-itself. The pre-reflective cogito and the world of appearances are original upsurges of, or the basis of, being-in-itself. In the "relation" thereby constituted, neither is caused or produced by the other, though they have a relationship of continuous references adverting to each other. The pre-reflective cogito refers us to the appearances around it and the appearances advert to the pre-reflective cogito. In an analogous manner consciousness-of-belief refers to belief "and passes into the other," while belief refers to consciousness-of-belief, "yet each term is different from the other." Once again we are reminded of M. C. Escher's lithograph, Drawing Hands. Belief and consciousness-of-belief each represent one "hand" that draws the other, yet each is different from the other. A similar situation is embodied by Sartre in his description of presence to self. It is to this topic which we will now turn.

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[6]Ibid.

To be present to something means that one is not that something to which one is present. Consciousness exists as a presence to itself at an ideal or metaphysical distance from itself. It exists as its own negation, as not being itself. I am calling this distance within the for-itself a "metaphysical" distance because, whatever Sartre means it to be, it is definitely not like the distance between, say, myself (my body) and the door to the room I write these words in. That is, Sartre's "distance" is not a physical state of affairs. I do not like calling it an "ideal" distance as Sartre has it, for the concept of the "ideal" seems to be too nebulous.

The principle of identity cannot apply to consciousness, for it "can denote only the relation of being with the external, exactly because it [the principle] presides over the relation of being with what it is not."[7] The principle of identity is more properly the negation of any relation within being-in-itself. We recall that being-in-itself "is full of itself, and no more total plentitude can be imagined, no more perfect equivalence of content to container."[8] The principle of non-contradiction also deals with external relations and has no jurisdiction pertaining to the internal relations of being:

> Presence to self, on the contrary, supposes that an impalpable fissure has slipped into being. If being is

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[7]Ibid., p. 124.

[8]Ibid., p. 120.

> present to itself, it is not wholly itself. Presence is an immediate deterioration of coincidence, for it supposes separation.[9]

Now notice how the last sentence in this quotation can be re-cast: escape from self is an immediate deterioration of coincidence, for it supposes metaphysical distance. What separates the self from self is self-nihilation; the self distinguishes itself from itself through an internal negation. This is why the two principles discussed above cannot touch the realm for the for-itself. What Sartre says about belief furnishes us with an example or parallel case:

> in the case which concerns us, nothing can separate the consciousness (of) belief from belief, since belief is nothing other than the consciousness (of) belief. . . . The separation which separates belief from itself cannot be grasped or even conceived in isolation. If we ask to reveal it, it vanishes.[10]

Belief and consciousness-of-belief seem to be two different sorts of "things," as we have seen, and yet in some way they are not different at all. The nothingness which separates belief from consciousness-of-belief is the same sort of nothingness that separates the self from itself. I think that this is the point Sartre is trying to make. Belief, consciousness-of-belief, nothingness and presence to self all telescope together in Sartre's philosophy to explain the immediate structure of the for-itself. Consequently,

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[9]Ibid., p. 124.

[10]Ibid., p. 125.

> the nothingness which arises in the heart of consciousness is not. It is made-to-be. Belief, for example, is not the contiguity of one being with another being; it is its own presence to itself, its own decompression of being. Otherwise the unity of the for-itself would dissolve into the duality of two in-itselfs. Thus the for-itself must be its own nothingness.[11]

For Sartre, the for-itself is a being that determines itself or conserves itself in existence only insofar as it can not coincide with itself. This distance, this "fissure" as Sartre has it, is where nothingness comes in. Consciousness carries nothingness in its "heart" by nihilating its identity as a being like being-in-itself. Consciousness is not an in-itself and does not have or share the type of identity of the in-itself; thus it negates the identity of an in-itself. This negative stance allows consciousness to somehow realize or become aware of the recognition of nothingness within it. Since consciousness is nothing-in-itself it does not coincide with itself as a thing would. The in-itself does not have the ability to be other than what it is; but the for-itself, according to Sartre, does. Since it is not any one thing as the in-itself is, it can, and must, determine itself (i.e., as we shall see, pursue itself); it can, and must, exist for "itself." As it determines itself, however, it also determines its own nothingness. This might be why Sartre suggests that the nothingness of consciousness is not--it is, instead, made to be. Nothingness comes from consciousness and not from some other source. And nothingness comes to be, of course,

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[11]Ibid.

through the ontological act, "the perpetual act by which the in-itself degenerates into presence to self. . . ."[12] Consciousness does not upsurge into the world as a "this" or a "that" in the mode of an in-itself. It does not make itself be whatever it is qua in-itself. When we say that the for-itself makes itself exist as "this" or "that" we mean something other than what we mean when we say the in-itself is "this" or "that."

More should be said about the self's escape from itself. The notion of presence to self becomes more detailed through Sartre's claims about the "self," for the notion of self which we will study defines the very being of consciousness.

"Self" refers to the subject and indicates a certain type of relationship between the subject and himself. The notion of self is reflexive in the sense that it pinpoints a duality in the subject's relationship to himself--it pinpoints "a particular duality since it requires particular verbal symbols."[13] The word "self" does not somehow designate consciousness as either a subject or a predicate. If the self were purely the subject, then the subject would be without a relationship to himself, claims Sartre, and would fold or collapse or be condensed (i.e., compressed) into a mode of being or identity similar to that of the in-itself. And this, of course, is impossible for Sartre. If, on the other hand, the self were a predicate, then

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[12]Ibid., p. 126.

[13]Ibid., p. 122.

the subject himself would appear behind himself. A predicate analysis of self cannot be a "consistent articulation of the real":

> In fact, the self cannot be apprehended as a real existent; the subject cannot be self, for coincidence with self, as we have seen, causes the self to disappear. But neither can it not be itself since the self is an indication of the subject himself. The self therefore represents an ideal distance within the immanence of the subject in relation to himself, a way of not being his own coincidence, of escaping identity while positing it as a unity--in short, of being in a perpetually unstable equilibrium between identity as absolute cohesion without a trace of diversity and unity as a synthesis of multiplicity.[14]

It must be understood--in order to understand the nature of awareness as a presence to itself--that consciousness can never be "one" with itself in the sense that being-in-itself is "one" with itself. This presumably is the same way believing consciousness, through believing, is not totally "one" with its belief.

The self (the subject) has a "free relation with itself," as Sartre puts it, and seems to hover over being through constant movement between extremes. Nevertheless, the swing between extremes seems to be what the self is--for if we identify it strictly with either extreme (being a self as a thing, an in-itself; or having no selfness whatsoever) are we not up against the charge of bad faith? (See Chapter III.) The self cannot be apprehended as a real existent; hence it is an ideal limit, as Sartre calls it, or a "metaphysical" distance as I pointed out. The fact that consciousness can't identify completely, in good faith, with either pole, but must be

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[14]Ibid., pp. 123-24.

only "for itself" means for Sartre that it must be only as present to (for-) itself. And yet, obviously, Sartre does not mean that consciousness is not a self, and hence "itself," because it would then be as completely disconnected from selfness as the material appearances which appear to it, i.e., the in-itself.

As being-in-itself and being-for-itself are both being (just as in the last chapter they were both understood to be "appearances" of a certain sort), Sartre must find some distinguishing characteristic for them. The two realms of being are different, though they telescope together by way of the ontological act:

> nothingness is this hole in being, this fall of the in-itself toward the self, the fall by which the for-itself is constituted. . . . This perpetual act by which the in-itself degenerates into presence to itself we shall call an ontological act. Nothingness is the putting into question of being by being--that is, precisely consciousness or for-itself.[15]

Nothingness is the only possibility and a unique possibility for being. Being-in-itself is isolated in its being because of total positivity, and nothing happens to it except for nothingness. This nothingness comes only from being--"[o]f course it comes to being through a particular being, which is human reality." Thus "[h]uman reality is being insofar as within its being and for its being it is the unique foundation of nothingness at the heart of being."[16]

There seems to be a problem with what Sartre is saying here. He seems to be saying that one type of being, the in-itself, turns

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[15]Ibid., p. 126. My underscoring.

[16]Ibid.

into the other type of being, the for-itself--much the way a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. He says that the in-itself degenerates into the for-itself. The ontological act appears to be a process or event of some sort whereby the for-itself springs from the in-itself. Yet what causes this event? Sartre says that nothing does!

To assess this, we need to note three types of "nothingness" in Sartre. Nothingness has a sense first of all, which refers to the "separation" of consciousness from the appearances manifested to it. This was considered in Chapter I. Nothingness also has an "existential" sense, that is, a sense relating to a certain futility of the human reality. To a large extent, we will see this in Chapter IV. But nothingness also means, most certainly, consciousness itself. That is, nothingness is considered as internal to the for-itself. In the quoted passage Sartre is dealing with the third of these senses. If we ask what transforms the in-itself into the for-itself, Sartre says that it "comes from" the particular "nothing" which we know as the human reality. This may be misleading. Obviously nothingness is internal here. The nothingness that "makes" the in-itself for-itself simply is the for-itself: the for-itself is the in-itself as present to itself, hence as no longer being-in-itself.

The self, for Sartre, is in some way a sort of diaphanous veil that shields the for-itself from the world. But how can we even say this? For Sartre rejects the notion that the self is an immaterial substance, which my remark might be interpreted as maintaining.

The unity which connects the various acts of consciousness is therefore not a "substantial" one. It is rather a function of the fact that individuals are able to identify with some substantial self that they consider themselves to be: dissatisfied by the lack of a concrete self, they yearn for a "self" which is full of itself like the in-itself. Each individual, then, disturbed by this lack of concreteness in recognizing that there is no substantial self, chooses some ideal self or model that will have the characteristics that a substantial self might have, such as permanence and identity; it can be seen here why Sartre calls the self an ideal limit. In performing some action, then, like writing this chapter, I think of myself as acting in order to finish. Sartre's position appears to be this: though I say it was myself who did that work, I am really aware that an ideal or metaphysical distance separates this (real) action--which is a mode of consciousness--from some ideal "me" at which this consciousness is aiming. This separation of self from self, Sartre seems to say, is on a deeper level the ontological separation of being-it-itself from itself!

Whatever Sartre means by his use of "self," there can be no doubt that it is highly important, and that he does not deny there is such a "thing":

> the self on principle can not inhabit consciousness. It is if you like, the reason for the infinite movement by which the reflection refers to the reflecting and this again to the reflection; . . . . Thus from its first arising, consciousness by the pure nihilating movement of reflection makes itself personal; for what confers personal existence on a being is not the possession of an Ego--which is only

> the sign of the personality--but it is the fact that the being exists for itself as a presence to itself.[17]

This brings us to escape from self through reflection.

Sartre's discourse on reflection is very complex and at least as confusing as the rest of his philosophy. It would, therefore, serve no purpose to wade through it all. What is important is to see how reflection furthers our theme of escape from self. Sartre claims that "the first condition of all reflection is a pre-reflective cogito."[18] The pre-reflective cogito is immediately a consciousness-of-an-object and it is also a self-awareness. If it were not such, then consciousness would be "blind," as we saw in Chapter I. Thus even in immediate awareness it can be seen that consciousness involves self-awareness. But it also seeks, as we have seen, to escape from the "self" it is thus aware of, to escape toward a self that is more substantial. One way it does this is through reflection.

"Reflection is the for-itself conscious of itself."[19] However, there are two sorts of reflection that must be distinguished. Both are distinguished from that immediate "reflection" of the self to itself which may be termed "intuitive" reflection and which is simply the dimension of the non-positional self-consciousness which was examined earlier in Chapter I. There is a more deliberate sort

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[17]Ibid., pp. 156-57.

[18]Ibid., p. 121.

[19]Ibid., p. 212.

of reflection, a cognitive reflection or "positional" reflection. This is what Sartre usually calls "reflection" (and this is how I shall be using the term). This reflection is a deliberate mental act. It may, according to Sartre, be either pure or impure.

> Impure reflection tries
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> to apprehend the reflected-on as in-itself in order to make itself be that in-itself which is apprehended. . . . This means that three forms exist in impure reflection: the reflective, the reflected-on, and an in-itself which the reflective has to be insofar as this in-itself would be the reflected-on, an in-itself which is nothing other than the For of the reflective phenomenon.[20]

In impure reflection being-for-itself--the For of the reflective phenomenon--is seen as the quest of an unattainable self. Reflection becomes impure when it seeks to apprehend the for-itself qua in-itself. Impure reflection wants the for-itself considered as containing various emotional states, desires and qualities or acts of the psychic life. Impure reflection tries to make being-for-itself the psyche. The psyche, of course, is the ego and the qualities and acts manifested by it. "This should not surprise us. Since psychic temporality is the product of impure reflection, it is natural that it is made-to-be what it is not and that it is not what

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[20]Ibid., p. 224. In addition to impure reflection, Sartre also names a pure reflection. "Here we are then in the presence of two temporalities: the original temporality of which we are the temporalization, and psychic temporality which simultaneously appears as incompatible with the mode of being of our being and as an intersubjective reality, the object of science, the goal of human acts (in the sense, for example, that I do everything possible to "make Annie love me," to "endow her with love for me"). This psychic temporality, which is evidently derived can not stem directly from original temporality; the latter constitutes nothing other than itself."

it is made to be."[21] To the extent that consciousness is engaged in impure reflection, it is also engaged in bad faith. (See Chapter III). "In a word, reflection is in bad faith insofar as it constitutes itself as the revelation of the object which I make-to-be-me."[22]

Pure reflection, on the other hand, does not involve bad faith. In pure reflection there is no attempt by consciousness to regard itself as the predicate of a "substantial" self, or a state of such a thing. Thus in pure reflection there is no haven for consciousness to reside qua for-itself-in-itself. Pure reflection seems aimed at grasping only a mental act in progress. The mental act tries to grasp itself as a being.

Consciousness is a reflection, but as such it is a reflecting. This strange state of affairs, this duality as it were, arises from presence to self in the for-itself. It is on this point that Sartre insists many philosophers have been confused. They have been confused by the original non-positional consciousness of consciousness and have erroneously concluded that consciousness must reflect, by its nature, on the self as an object and thus be aware of itself. But for Sartre, reflected awareness of the self is derived knowledge of the self-as-an-object.

There is, however, an element of nothingness in reflection: "reflection is one being, just like the unreflective for-itself, not

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[21]Ibid., p. 233.

[22]Ibid., p. 226.

an addition of being; it is a being which has its own nothingness. It is not the appearance of a new consciousness directed on the for-itself but an intrastructural modification which the for-itself realizes in itself; . . . ."[23] It is a "deeper" nothingness which separates the self-consciousness reflecting and the self-consciousness-reflected-on than the nothingness which separates the pre-reflective self-consciousness from its objects, i.e., "belief."

But the reflecting consciousness and the reflected-on consciousness are a witness to themselves. Sartre, with his novelist's eye and penchant for powerful descriptions, employs a good analogy here: "The reflected-on knows itself observed. It may best be compared--to us a concrete example--to a man who is writing, bent over a table, and who while writing knows that he is observed by somebody who stands behind him."[24] A way that we might make this a bit more comprehensible is to think of reflecting as what the pre-reflective cogito does in reflection and reflected-on is what the pre-reflective cogito is. In this light the reflected-on and reflecting consciousness seem to be different aspects of the act of reflection.

The reflecting and reflected-on advert to the self, as Sartre has it, which they would be but are not.

> By reflection the for-itself, which has lost itself outside itself, attempts to put itself inside its own being. Reflection is a second effort by the for-itself to found itself; that is to be for-itself what it is. . . . The goal in short is to overtake that being which flees itself

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[23]Ibid., p. 215.

[24]Ibid., p. 214.

> while being what it is in the mode of not-being and which flows on while being its own flow, which escapes between its own fingers; the goal is to make of it a given, a given which is what it is; . . . .[25]

Reflection is an "upsurge" in the for-itself as a nihilation of a self-consciousness trying to identify with an object from which it yet attempts to distinguish itself, just as the for-itself itself is an upsurge in the original ground of an in-itself, which it is not, yet in some way is nothing more than. Consciousness fails in complete identification with itself. Inasmuch as it fails it succeeds most at reflection. That is, reflection is the result of the for-itself's failure to be a for-itself that is also something in-itself. This is what Sartre means when he says that reflection is not a new for-itself but a nihilation within a nihilation.[26]

Sartre seems to be saying that reflective consciousness, in failing at identifying with itself as a self, exists as fleeing itself, i.e., "to recover and to dominate within itself its own flight, finally to be that flight . . ."[27] just as non-reflective consciousness could only exist as a flight. For, after all, the reflecting consciousness is always also a pre-reflective, i.e., non-positional consciousness--as mode of being-for-itself, not being-in-itself. The attempt that consciousness makes at becoming

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[25]Ibid., p. 216.

[26]Joseph Catalano, A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness (Harper and Row Publishers, N.Y., N.Y., 1974), pp. 53-77.

[27]Sartre, p. 216.

"positional" to itself provides the condition for the being of reflection. It fails in this attempt because it is nothing. Reflection springs up from the failure of the for-itself to be a for-itself in the way the in-itself is an in-itself.

Reflection, or discoincidence of self with self, refers us to "being-for-others." Reflection puts the for-itself into contact with its psychic states as "objects." The psychic states are considered exterior to the subjectivity of the self, thus, for instance, when I say that "hate made me act this way," I am thus making an effort to see myself as others do, according to Sartre. Thus being-for-others is the upshot of reflection for Sartre. So is Bad Faith. I shall turn to the latter in Chapter III and to the former in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

BAD FAITH: ESCAPE TO FACTICITY

The notion of bad faith involves Sartre's more colorful characterizations of human existence. In its most generalized formulation, "bad faith" is the unsuccessful attempt that consciousness makes at trying to escape the anguish with which it is confronted when it discovers or comes face to face with its own freedom. As conscious beings, humans are essentially free, and freedom carries responsibilities. The flight to escape the responsibilities for one's existence, i.e., anguish, leads directly to bad faith; in general, consciousness reacts to the anguish freedom brings by creating the attitude of bad faith. Conversely, Sartre asks what makes bad faith possible in the first place: "What are we to say is the being of a man who has the possibility of denying himself?"[1] We are to say, as Sartre advocates, that man "is not what he is and is what he is not." This self-contradictory notion both provides what one flees in bad faith, as well as providing for the very possibility of bad faith.

Bad faith is some sort of "lie" to oneself, but as such should be distinguished from lying in general. Bad faith is, of course, a "negation" too. But in the case of lying in general "this negation

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[1]Sartre, p. 87.

does not bear on consciousness itself; it aims at the transcendent."[2] That is, the lie aims at depicting the world as being such-and-such for another consciousness, i.e., for the "not self," the Other. "The lie," holds Sartre, "is a behavior of transcendence."[3] So

> [t]he ideal description of the liar would be a cynical consciousness, affirming truth within himself, denying it in his words, and denying that negation as such. Now this double negative attitude rests on the transcendent, the fact expressed is transcendent since it does not exist, and the original negation rests on a truth; that is, on a particular type of transcendence. As for the inner negation which I effect correlatively with the affirmation of myself of the truth, this rests on words; that is, on an event in the world.[4]

The real truth of a lie implies, of course, that the liar takes himself to be in possession of the truth, for one does not lie about what one does not oneself believe. The inner disposition of the liar is positive because it can be made into the object of an affirmative judgment. That is to say, the liar takes himself to have recourse to the truth and, obviously, either his actions will reveal this belief, i.e., he will act in accord with what he believes, or else he will act falsely. Acting falsely comes about when the individual wishes to deceive someone in conduct as well as in words. For our purposes then, the normal lie presupposes the existence of (a) me, and (b) the Other to whom I have lied.

> Thus there is no difficulty in holding that the liar must make the project of the lie in entire clarity and that he

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 88.

[4]Ibid., pp. 87-88.

> must possess a complete comprehension of the lie and of the truth which he is altering. It is sufficient that an overall opacity hide his intentions from the Other; it is sufficient that the Other can take the lie for truth. By the lie consciousness affirms that it exists by nature as hidden from the Other; it utilizes for its own profit the ontological duality of myself and myself in the eyes of the Other.[5]

Now all this changes in bad faith, for bad faith is a "lie" to oneself. What changes everything is the fact that bad faith maintains that the truth I hide, I hide from myself. There is then no duality of the deceiver and the deceived of the sort manifested in the lie to another, though there is instead a duality within the single consciousness. Bad faith presupposes that there is, in essence, a unity of a single consciousness. Additionally, bad faith is in some way "inherent" in the human reality, for it "does not come from outside to human reality. One does not undergo his bad faith; one is not infected with it; it is not a state."[6] As Sartre tries to maintain, consciousness affects itself with bad faith; bad faith, like reflection, does not come from outside consciousness.

> There must be an original intention and a project of bad faith; this project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness as affecting itself with bad faith.[7]

Two obvious points follow from this, namely: (a) that the teller or perpetrator of the lie and the one lied to are one and the same, "which means that I must know in my capacity as deceiver the

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[5]Ibid., pp. 88-89.

[6]Ibid., p. 89.

[7]Ibid.

truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived," and (b) that the consciousness affecting itself with bad faith is conscious of that fact, "since the being of consciousness is consciousness of being."[8] It follows that, in some sense, to the extent that I am aware of the situation so described, I am apparently in "good faith" of a sort, because I am at least conscious of my self-deception. However, Sartre does not pursue this aspect of bad faith.

The upshot of the project of bad faith is failure. We must acquiesce to the fact that if we attempt cynically and deliberately to lie to ourselves we must fail in the undertaking--"the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look; it is ruined from behind by the very consciousness of lying to myself."[9] Nevertheless, according to Sartre, it is possible for someone to live in bad faith and "it can even be the normal aspect of life for a very great number of people," through this does not mean that one cannot have "abrupt awakenings to cynicism or to good faith." That is, bad faith can be in some cases a style of life, in the same sense that there are other lifestyles.

What is interesting about bad faith is that it is difficult to understand how, when we are conscious of our lies, we can nonetheless be fooled into believing them. Sartre discusses the Freudian answer to the difficulty but ultimately finds it unsatisfactory. Sartre

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

takes issue with Freudian psychoanalytical theory on the ground that what Freud has done is to "cut the psychic whole into two. I am the ego but I am not the id. I hold no privileged position in relation to my unconscious psyche."[10] The Other--the psychoanalyst, in this case--must appear as a mediator who is able to affect a synthesis of the unconscious thesis with the conscious antithesis. The upshot here is that I must stand in relation to my own id as an Other. Sartre does not deny the possibility of being one's own psychoanalyst, "but this attempt can succeed only if I distrust every kind of intuition, only if I apply to my case from the outside, abstract schemes and roles already learned":[11]

> Thus psychoanalysis substitutes for the notion of bad faith, the idea of a lie without a liar; it allows me to understand how it is possible for me to be lied to without lying to myself since it places me in the same relation to myself that the Other is in respect to me; it replaces the duality of the deceiver and the deceived, the essential condition of the lie, by that of the "id" and the "ego."[12]

It may seem clear on such a view how the consciousness peculiar to human existence can come to believe in its own lies--the "self" or "I" is in its awareness very effectively split off from its unconscious as if it were a different person altogether. However, the consistency of the view requires, for Sartre, that consciously there must be a "censor" which is conscious of itself as such. The censor

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[10]Ibid., p. 91.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 92.

must be aware or conscious of its doings, otherwise how could it hide or repress only some things? It is in a position capable of making decisions and knowing how to discriminate between various sorts of things to repress and various others from whom to repress "this" or "that" fact. Thus the type of self-consciousness the censor has "must be the consciousness (of) being conscious of the drive to be repressed, but precisely in order not to be conscious of it. What does this mean if not that the censor is in bad faith?"[13] All that has really been accomplished, then, is that the problem of bad faith has in psychoanalytic theory been pushed back to the level of the censor. The censor is in bad faith, for even though it is consciousness of the material it represses, it presents that material to itself as something not to be conscious of.

The very notion of trying to hide something from oneself is a reflexive idea implying on the one hand the attempt to locate the thing concealed and on the other an attempt to repress and/or disguise it. Unfortunately, "psychoanalysis has merely localized this double activity of repulsion and attraction on the level of the censor."[14] In short, the subconscious cannot adequately account for bad faith. The problem of bad faith must of necessity be confronted on the conscious plane.

Before discussing the specific "patterns" of bad faith which Sartre delineates, more should be said about anguish and freedom.

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[13]Ibid., p. 94.

[14]Ibid.

This may allow us to see why bad faith is supposed to be involved in a triangular relationship between anguish, negation and freedom.

It is the nature of conscious beings to be free, to act as they choose, and to be free to categorize the world under various and sundry classifications. What is important for Sartre is the effect upon that consciousness peculiar to human existence that the contemplation of such freedom has. He maintains that we are responsible for everything. But the burden of this responsibility is just too much for us, it is more than we can adequately bear; hence we employ various devices for evading responsibility. In general, according to Sartre, what we are really doing in succumbing to bad faith is pretending both to others and to ourselves that a situation cannot or should not be other than it is, that there is no escape <u>even if we wanted to escape</u>. This is the paradox of bad faith: we pretend that there is no escape from a situation and yet we admit that there is <u>by falling into bad faith precisely as an escape</u>.

Now, as freedom contains the possibility of saying "no" to any and every suggestion about what we should do, we can safely say that freedom is essentially nihilating. Anguish is thus, according to Sartre, the recognition of the inevitable gap between myself (i.e., consciousness) and my possibilities. Consciousness has no fixed essence to determine the behavior it participates in; it creates its essence as it goes along by consciously choosing this or that to "fill up" the gap between itself and a future. (Thus "existence precedes essence.") Anguish is the awareness of this lack of "essential" being.

All this is not to say that one must suffer in anguish all, or even any, of the time. It is simply that thinking out a set of actions in relation to the self, in a reflective manner, can make one liable to suffer anguish. For instance, in writing this chapter I apply myself to writing the next word, the next sentence, the next paragraph in order to finish the page; I try to finish each page in order to finish the chapter, and each chapter must be finished for the work as a whole to be complete. For me to be in anguish with respect to my project, the project must appear or be given in relation to some object with which I attempt to identify (insofar as I may appear to myself as object), namely "me":

> On the one hand, I must discover my essence as what I have been--I have been "wanting to write this book," . . . . On the other hand, I must discover the nothingness which separates my freedom from this essence: I have been "wanting to write," but nothing, not even what I have been, can compel me to write it. Finally, I must discover that the permanent possibility of abandoning the book is the meaning of my freedom.[15]

Thus anguish is the reflective apprehension of freedom itself. Remaining absorbed in my project, and not reflecting on "myself" as absorbed in them, the non-positional consciousness that I would thus have of my freedom apparently does not necessarily involve anguish. Anguish and bad faith, it seems, are two sides of the same coin. For bad faith is the very attempt to reflect on some "object" with which I would identify myself; anguish is the awareness that this cannot succeed. Thus it seems, contrary to what Sartre may

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[15]Ibid., p. 75.

seem to suggest, that bad faith--which arises as an attempted escape from my freedom--cannot be understood in the first instance as an attempted escape from anguish.

The two forms of bad faith examined by Sartre strike him as particularly significant in explaining how man can lie to himself. But it must be remembered that these patterns of bad faith are meant as "descriptions": Sartre's approach here is not deductive, but rather phenomenological.

Sartre illustrates the first pattern with the example of a woman who has gone out with a man for the first time. Sartre portrays her as in bad faith not merely with respect to her own existence, but also with respect to the man's behavior. The woman knows that there is a mutual attraction between them, and she knows that sooner or later she must make a decision about their relationship, dates, and the possibility of imminent sexual advances. But she attempts to escape from the reality of the situation. "If he says to her, 'I find you so attractive!' she disarms this phrase of its sexual background; . . . . The man who is speaking to her appears to her sincere and respectful as the table is round or square as the wall covering is blue or grey."[16] She takes his behavior as "thing-like," not as a mode of human existence; she takes it as "being what it is" in the mode of the in-itself. Thus she is aware of the desire she inspires in the man but does not want to face one or another possible temporal developments in their

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[16]Ibid., pp. 96-97.

relationship. Her choices are (a) to take her hand from his--thereby ruining the intimate charm of the moment--or (b) leave it there and acquiesce in his will--thereby committing herself to him in another way. We know what happens next, Sartre says: she leaves her hand in his but does not notice this fact. She does not notice because the moment is for her "all intellect." Thus in the same manner that the man's existence is reduced to mere inert "presence," in abstraction from the pursuit of goals, her own concrete existence is likewise reduced. She

> draws her companion up to the most lofty regions of sentimental speculations; she speaks of Life, of her life, she shows herself in her essential aspect--a personality, a consciousness. And during this time the divorce of the body from the soul is accomplished: the hand rests inert between the warm hands of her companion--neither consenting nor resisting--a thing.[17]

This woman is in bad faith because she has reduced her awareness of her own and of her companion's actions merely to what they are "in themselves." Pre-reflectively she is aware of her own and her companion's desires with respect to those actions. She understands that their desires and actions are not mere present things, like tables and chairs, which one can contemplate as being present independent of some conscious aim that transcends them. But yet she continually tries to persuade herself that they are merely present things and are not "in themselves" anything beyond mere presence. Thus she keeps herself in bad faith by reducing the actions of her companion to exist just as they are. That is, his actions exist,

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[17]Ibid., p. 97.

for her, in the mode of being-in-itself. At the same time, by contradiction, she allows herself to enjoy his desire for her, which of course he can only do "to the extent that she will apprehend it as not being what it is, and will recognize its transcendence."[18] Additionally, she senses the presence of her own actions, and her own body--to which his actions are ultimately directed--and realizes herself as not-being it. She contemplates it from "above," as if it too were a passive object "to which events can happen" from without. Thus what we find in this example/description of bad faith "is a certain art of forming contradictory concepts which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea."[19]

It is at this point that Sartre introduces two concepts which are quite important to the notion of bad faith. They are "facticity" and "transcendence." Facticity refers to certain things which pertain to human existence in a "factual" way, such as one's body, weight, hair-color, bone-structure, where one was born, what one has actually done and what has actually happened to one (insofar as the latter might be described in "factual" terms). Human existence is, strictly speaking, never perfectly identified with its facticity, since each of us is more than a body or a past. This transcendence of our own facticity makes it possible, then, for our consciousness to "contemplate" its facticity as it would in fact contemplate a table or a chair or some such object. This is possible because

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[18]Ibid., pp. 97-98.

consciousness necessarily knows that it is not completely identified with its facticity. But this "contemplative" attitude really involves an illegitimate abstraction. For we are what we are, for Sartre, precisely in terms of our transcendence of just those facticities with respect to an as yet uncertain but possible future. (In speaking of transcendences here Sartre does not mean some sort of remote "logical" possibilities, but possibilities which are in some way real for us.) Consequently, in bad faith,

> the basic concept which is thus engendered utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a facticity and a transcendence. These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of a valid coordination. But bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them or to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences. It must affirm facticity as being transcendence and transcendence as being facticity in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends the one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other.[20]

What Sartre is trying to say is that one keeps bad faith in existence by making transcendencies into facticities (i.e., the projection of possibilities into mere present or past "facts") and by divorcing facticities from the transcendencies which define their meaning (i.e., divorcing "facts" from the real "possibilities" inherent in them). In the example of the couple, we might say that the woman struggles to transform facticity into transcendence, and vice versa, by trying to convince herself that she really is a sort of pure intellect--similar to a "Cartesian mind"--merely externally

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[20]Ibid.

attached to a body. The "transcendence" of her own body is viewed as no more than the transcendence of some foreign object. At the same time the transcendence is itself turned into a kind of facticity, as she attempts to regard her "mental life" as itself a kind of thing, rather than regarding it in terms of the real possibilities of some thing, namely of her own body. However, on the other hand, she is aware of what is actually the case. But she blots this knowledge out in attempting to transform facticity into transcendence. In a similar way her companion's action is not seen as an actual advance towards her. Hence divorced from any perception of the real possibilities inherent in it, her hand is no longer held by his hand, but merely by a hand! After all, her own hand is no longer her hand either:

> If I were only what I am, I could, for example, seriously consider an adverse criticism which someone makes of me, question myself scrupulously, and perhaps be compelled to recognize the truth in it. But thanks to transcendence, I am not subject to all that I am. . . . I am on a plane where no reproach can touch me since what I really am is my transcendence. . . . But the ambiguity necessary for bad faith comes from the fact that I affirm here that I am my transcendence in the mode of being a thing. . . . It is in this sense that our young woman purifies the desire of anything humiliating by being willing to consider it only as pure transcendence, which she avoids even naming.[21]

Before we leave this pattern of bad faith for our next case, we must point out what might appear to be a deficiency or oversight, in Sartre's rendering of facticity and transcendence. Facticity involves, as was seen earlier, such things as one's body, hair-color and bone-structure. But it also involves things like one's actions. It involves, for example, the "fact" that the woman's companion

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[21] Ibid., p. 99.

has in fact placed his hand in hers. These seem to be two very different types of things. Though an action might, of course, be considered as a mere "thing" in itself, it seems not to be such a thing at all. Actions, strictly speaking, involve freedom and the possibility of anguish and bad faith. Can we say the same for my hair-color? If I fail school by my actions, or lack thereof, my family and friends will say, "But you could have tried harder" and expect me consciously to have tried to straighten out. But if I turn prematurely gray or my hair falls out in five years, no one will seriously think I can have consciously acted to change that fact (other than through the obvious artificial means). Additionally, don't we usually "identify" in fundamentally different ways when identifying with our hair color and our actions? It seems that Sartre has allowed too much into the class of "facticity," too many kinds of things which really do not fit together except under the one heading: "being able to be made into an object for reflection." Fitting them all under this heading doesn't necessarily mean that we can act toward one item of the class in exactly the same way that we do toward the other. We must at least hold that they are very different kinds of facticity, if Sartre insists on calling them all facticity.

In fairness to Sartre, though, we might concede that in some sense all actions which have occurred do not in fact have an existence more meaningful than the "fact" of my body weight or the gray wall-coloring. That is, actions which have taken place are not

only subject to reflection in the same way the wall is, but also just as "external" to me. Past actions, reduced to this fundamental level, lack that "extra" something which we usually consider present or future actions to have and which make them "part of us." An action which has happened can be reflected on just as a table or chair, just as being-in-itself is reflected on. To that extent it is, like any sort of "facticity," part of me only to the extent that, and with respect to the specific way that, I am transcending it.

There is also another point. Sartre's woman is in bad faith because she tries to transform transcendence into facticity. Sartre suggests that what this essentially involves is escaping from certain "factual" possibilities pertaining to the physical world into a world of pure intellect. But it is, of course, possible that someone could attempt to transform transcendence into facticity precisely by attempting to identify with certain specific "factual" possibilities. Thus the woman would have been equally in bad faith by identifying, for example, with the desire to have a sexual relationship with this man, or a man. Or to get married. Or to have a home, car and the national average of 2.3 children. She will, that is, be in bad faith if she took such desires as mere "facts," mere given components of her "psychical" make-up, rather than as free transcendencies of anything that is given. The suggestion is misleading, similarly, that the only transcendence available for conversion into a kind of "Cartesian essence" with which we try, in bad faith, to identify involves something purely intellectual.

The fact rather seems to be that any "projection" into some envisioned future is a candidate for bad faith for Sartre. Now we will turn to the other pattern of bad faith--"playing a part."

Let us consider a waiter in a cafe. We see that his movements are very quick, very precise, and very rapid. Everything he does--his step toward the patrons, his eagerness to take the order and even the set of his eyes (being "a little too solicitous for the order of the customer")--betrays his attempt "to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of a tight-rope walker by putting it in a perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually re-establishes by a light movement of the arm and hand."[22] His whole behavior seems, according to Sartre, to be some sort of game, for he applies himself to what he does by mechanical movements "the one regulating the other." He certainly does seem to be playing and/or amusing himself, but just what is he playing at?

> We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at <u>being</u> a waiter in a cafe. There is nothing there to surprise us. The game is a kind of marking out and investigation. The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the waiter in the cafe plays with his condition in order to realize it. This obligation is not difficult from that which is imposed on all tradesmen. Their condition is wholly one of ceremony. The public demands of them that they realize it as a ceremony; there is the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavor to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer.[23]

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[22]Ibid., p. 101.

[23]Ibid., p. 102.

The waiter is not immediately a cafe waiter as, say, an inkwell is an inkwell, for an inkwell does not "play" at being anything. The inkwell is what it is as being-in-itself. But I can only play at being a waiter (-in-himself), I can only imagine myself to be him "as the actor is Hamlet," by utilizing typical gestures which we have already described:

> Yet there is no doubt that I am in a sense a cafe waiter--otherwise could I not just as well call myself a diplomat or a reporter? But if I am one, this cannot be in the mode of being-in-itself. I am a waiter in the mode of <u>being what I am not</u>.[24]

A distinction should be made, then, between the two patterns of bad faith. In the second example the cafe waiter pretends to be a "thing" of some sort by pretending to be nothing other than what his behavior makes it possible for others to label him to be. The case with the woman is a bit different, for she doesn't pretend to be completely a thing of that sort, only her <u>hand</u>, for example, is taken to be such a thing.

As Sartre has suggested, "playing a role" is not always in bad faith, for it is a large part of what it is to be human. Consider for a moment how children play and, as educators tell us, learn. They learn by imitation, they play parts in order to learn. Similarly, we all must play roles in order to perpetually learn or realize our condition. For instance, if I did not continually <u>play at</u> being a student--a student writing a thesis--then I would

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[24]Ibid., p. 103.

not be writing my thesis. But the role playing examined in bad faith is different. It is different in the sense that its goal is not simply the pursuit of some desireable end (such as having written a thesis). Its goal "is to put oneself out of reach; it is an escape."[25] Now it might seem that bad faith enters into my playing at being-the-writer-of-a-thesis just in case I try to regard myself as being nothing but a writer of a thesis. However, even if I took myself to be a thesis-writer and something else, I could still be in bad faith. This could be so, namely, if I took my thesis writing, together with that "something else," as mere "facts" about me, rather than as my active transcending of any given fact. This has obvious connection with Sartre's conception of human freedom (and human values):

> To believe that a certain way of life is valuable in-itself, independently of our thinking it so, is to fall into the "spirit of seriousness"; and this is identical with Bad Faith. For it leads us once again into the belief that we must behave this way rather than that, that we are really bound by our obligations and undertakings; whereas in truth we are fulfilling them because we want to, and because we choose to live in this way rather than that.[26]

Thus, as M. Natanson comments, the spirit of seriousness is tantamount to bad faith because consciousness is "nothingness," and thus it cannot appeal to any a priori "human nature" for guidance to action in choosing.

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[25]Ibid., p. 110.

[26]Mary Warnock, The Philosophy of Sartre (Hutchinson University Library, London, 1965), p. 60.

As was mentioned in Chapter I, consciousness directs negations both outward and inward. But at bottom, for Sartre, negative attitudes or "negations" are really a manifestation of the fundamental nothingness within consciousness. Thus consciousness does not, for example, restrict itself to merely envisioning a negatite (negation). Rather consciousness constitutes itself precisely as nihilation:

> For that reason it must arise in the world as a No; . . . . There are even men (e.g., caretakers, overseers, goalers), whose social reality is uniquely that of the No, who will live and die, having forever been only a No upon the earth. Others, so as to make the No part of their very subjectivity, establish their human personality as a perpetual negation.[27]

Bad faith, then, is a specific instance of a negative attitude adopted precisely toward the fundamental negativity within oneself. It is a fundamental "synthesis" of facticity and transcendence in which each of these terms derives its significance from not being the other. Bad faith is unable to accept such a "balance." Thus consciousness, having infected itself with bad faith, must constantly go from one to the other in the manner of a see-saw. Consciousness, aware that both facticity and transcendence are essential aspects of human reality, tries to allow one of them to play the total role. Thus in bad faith consciousness tries to keep separate what it "is" from what it "is not." But this cannot work: consciousness is "what it is not" in the sense that it is its possibilities, i.e., freedom--the nothingness in being.

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[27]Sartre, pp. 86-87.

By the same token, consciousness is not "what it is," i.e., it is not merely the body, the environment, or its own past; it is all these things (facticities) being transcended.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESCAPE OF SUBJECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS TO BEING-FOR-OTHERS

It was discussed in Chapter II how consciousness can be "presented" to itself only insofar as it is not wholly itself. However, the for-itself engages in reflection upon itself and a new structure arises. This new structure arises, as Sartre claims, from the attempt by consciousness to become aware of itself from a position "outside" itself which will somehow allow for its presentation as a whole being. But according to Sartre the subjectivity of the subject can never be genuinely presented in this way: the subject can never really be an object to itself (though in bad faith it may suppose that it is). This dilemma leads Sartre to discuss what he calls "being-for-others." Being-for-others is a mode of "being," according to Sartre. It is indeed a way in which one can in fact be as a kind of "object." One can do this, Sartre claims, only through a structure that involves the "presence" of others in our consciousness, as in some sense part of our being. For only for others can I be as an object.

Strictly speaking, being-for-others is not a kind of reflective self-awareness, though its goal is the same as that of reflective self-awareness: to be both subject and object. Non-reflective being-for-others somehow involves, for Sartre, my becoming aware of myself as an object without "turning around" and

making myself into an object. In some sense, one might say, I become an "object" for myself without becoming an object for myself (being so only for the others who are thereby "present" in my consciousness):

> Without going outside our attitude of reflective [phenomenological] description, we can encounter modes of consciousness which seem, even while themselves remaining strictly in for-itself, to point to a radically different type of ontological structure. This ontological structure is mine; it is in relation to myself as subject that I am concerned about myself, and yet this concern (for-myself) reveals to me a being which is my being without being-for-me.[1]

Sartre seems to be saying that in addition to the "outside" standpoint that I attempt to achieve in reflection, there is another kind of experience that involves a way of getting "outside" of myself, i.e., outside the nothingness of my own subjectivity. Somehow, it is an awareness of my being as an object, without that object actually being an object for me.

Consciousness, Sartre maintains, is primarily aware of its being-for-others through notions such as shame or pride. With shame, for example, "we are dealing with a mode of consciousness which has a structure identical with all those which we have previously described. It is a non-positional self-consciousness, conscious (of) itself as shame. . . ."[2] Even though shame can appear at the level of reflection, it is not as such a phenomenon of reflection. Shame,

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[1]Sartre, p. 301.

[2]Ibid.

and the being-for-others it involves, thus originally arises as an intimate relation of myself to myself that is pre-reflectively apprehended by consciousness. The "outside" of experience which the for-itself thereby discovers is a different "outside" than the one discovered in reflection. Or, at least, the "outside" discovered in reflection is discovered in a different manner from the "outside" discovered more intimately in being-for-others. (Sartre doesn't seem to be very clear on this point.)

Perhaps the notion of this "outsidedness" can be gleaned when we recall Sartre's notion of that distance of the self from itself involved in "presence to self." I referred to the "distance" as a "metaphysical distance." The "outside" that consciousness discovers in being-for-others is perhaps a merely "metaphysical" outside. It is obvious, in any case, that Sartre does not mean to refer to a physically qualitative distance between one "body" and another, for he is talking strictly about consciousness. That is, he seeks to lay bare the nature "of the relation of my being to the being of the Other." So consciousness, in finding an "outside" to itself in being-for-others, finds a metaphysical outside similar, it seems, to the metaphysical distance in "presence to self." But the difference here is that, in our previous discussion, the "outside" being from which being-for-itself was at once somehow both more than and yet not more than seemed to be the being-in-itself of the world, presented as object to consciousness: consciousness was somehow both more than yet "nothing" more than the (its) world. But now

Sartre tells us that the being which is presented as both "outside" and yet "mine" is precisely not presented as an explicit "object" at all. But then again, of course, in some sense it is supposedly presented as an object: the object that I am.

The experience of the Other, then, puts consciousness in the position of experiencing itself as an "object"--the object which is to appear to the Other. Consciousness recognizes that it is indeed as the Other sees it. The image the Other has, is, however, not an "empty" image in the mind. If it were such, then it could have no bearing whatsoever on the for-itself. It could not "touch" the for-itself. The image might be similar to a bad portrait, but even then it would not touch the for-itself in the same manner as shame. By its nature shame is recognition. The for-itself comes to "know" what it is through the Other. It does not, in appearing for the Other, reside in the Other.

> What I constantly aim at across my experiences are the Other's feelings, the Other's ideas, the Other's volitions, the Other's character. This is because the Other is not only the one whom I see but the one who sees me.[3]

There is, then, a double attitude of the for-itself: being-for-myself and being-for-the-other. In the former, I consider myself as I "know" myself; in the latter I consider myself as "known" by the Other (i.e., the "outside" mentioned earlier). But the problem is that I am (or at least "experience" myself as) an "object" to myself only through the awareness of my objecthood for others. To determine

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[3]Ibid., p. 310.

my own existence as an object would thus require determining that "other" who makes me an object: "Therefore as the subject of knowledge I strive to determine as object the subject who denies my character as a subject who himself determines me as object."[4] This, obviously, is impossible. Hence Sartre's pessimistic treatment of human relations.

Sartre takes great pains to present his view while avoiding what he thinks are pitfalls. These pitfalls arise from attempts to solve the "problem of other minds," attempts which lead to solipsism in Sartre's opinion. For Sartre there cannot be the problem of other minds which has confused philosophers and thinkers throughout history. The problem is supposedly this: my awareness of the world is based on sensations of which I am completely sure, but these do not yield the knowledge that other humanoid configurations presented in sensations are in the least way different from various other objects; I am only aware of them from the outside, hence, not being aware of <u>their</u> consciousness nor <u>their</u> supposed sensations, I cannot legitimately assume that they are in any way capable of thought or feeling.

A valid theory of the existence of others, Sartre holds, does not need to prove the other's existence, nor for that matter provide "an argument better than any other against solipsism." From the point of view of proof or argument, "the Other's existence will always be in

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[4]Ibid.

doubt." But the affirmation of the Other's existence rather involves the "implicit comprehension of his existence," i.e., a "pre-ontological" comprehension. This is possible, Sartre claims, precisely because a fundamental structure of one's own consciousness points to the Other, just as it points to the in-itself defining the original "contingency" of one's own existence:

> and this must be done not by revealing to me an a priori structure of myself which would point toward an equally a priori Other but by disclosing to me the concrete, indubitable presence of a particular, concrete Other, just as it has already revealed to me my own incomparable, contingent but necessary and concrete existence. Thus we must ask the For-itself to deliver to us the For-others; . . . .[5]

Thus for Sartre, no proof of the Other's existence is satisfactory. Instead, he tries another method which is not an argument in the logician's sense. An argument for the existence of the Other would doubtlessly be based on "knowledge." Sartre, however, contrasts "being" and "knowing." Rather than a knowing-to-known relationship between me and the Other, Sartre refers to a being-to-being relationship. Previously, Sartre had begun with the original being of a self-contained pre-reflective cogito of which the "consciousness of self" is the focal point for all intentionality (as directed both outward as well as inward through reflective thought). The strategy now is to move from this pre-reflective cogito to one which reveals the Other as part of itself. One experience, then, which reveals this "second cogito" is, as we have seen, shame. Being is

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[5]Ibid., p. 338.

revealed to being through such emotions. It is not, for Sartre, revealed to knowledge.

But this leaves Sartre with a problem: If the basis of my awareness of the other is not some inference from a concrete perception of data in the environment, then at best our awareness of others would be very generalized. How, then, does this general "sense" of the presence of others in fact connect with our specific perception of objects in space? What are we really aware of, for instance, when we say that those things are others? Sartre himself seems to grant that the problem is insoluble:

> This woman whom I see coming toward me, this man who is passing by in the street, this beggar whom I hear calling before my window, all are for me objects--of that there is no doubt. Thus it is true that at least one of the modalities of the Other's presence to me is object-ness. But we have seen that if this relation of object-ness is the fundamental relation between the Other and myself, then the Other's existence remains purely conjectural.[6]

Obviously, a consideration of Others qua physical objects alone or a consideration of Others as a "metaphysical" presence alone (i.e., a consciousness for which I am supposedly an object) is not enough. The Other must be considered both as a physical object and a presence. So Sartre still needs to deal with the difference between objects such as the tables and chairs which I see and objects like people, which I also see. That is, Sartre needs to show how there can be a specific "other" involved in being-for-others, and not merely the generalized kind of experience that he describes as in

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[6]Ibid., p. 340.

the case of shame: not just the experience of being an object, but being this one for that one.

Examining how the Other appears as object ought, one would think, lead to a clearer understanding of the Other as a person, i.e., subjective consciousness. Sartre does deal with this question. He does try to show that there is something special about the perception of others as objects in my environment. The main point he develops is that my perception of the Other as physical objects, as physical men or women somehow indicates a special environmental organization around those objects. The environment organizes itself, in perception, in a way that it does not around other sorts of objects. To perceive something as a man in a spatial relation to a chair, for example, "is not to apprehend an additive relation between the chair and him; it is to register an organization without distance of the things in my universe around that privileged object."[7] This privileged object brings to the world an "orientation which flees from me."

The awareness of the Other as an object thus generates the feeling that something is definitely different. We become aware of the Other through an awareness that something is somehow incomplete or lacking in the environment. We are aware of something that partially eludes us. This awareness is not mysterious or occult; it is a form of perception, and it seems in fact to point

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[7]Ibid., p. 341.

precisely where we are looking, to the "presence" of the other as another subject in the field of perception:

> In order to understand it I must question more exactly this ordinary appearance of the Other in the field of my perception: since this appearance refers to that fundamental relation of the Other as subject for me as object, the appearance must be capable of revealing to us, at least as a reality aimed at, the relation to which it refers.[8]

But unfortunately, Sartre proceeds to tell us, we are still dealing only with objects--with, for example, a certain perceivable relationship that exists between me and the man which does not exist between me and the chair and also between the man and the chair and does not exist between two chairs. The relationship in question is a special relationship (or set of them) presented as uniting perceivable objects in the environment. Since we are still dealing with objects, then, Sartre himself insists we are at most dealing with something that points to (not something that actually presents) the experience we are seeking, the experience of the others as a subject.

The world-for-me can of course only "flee" to and "reorganize itself" around an object which is radically different from objects like tables and chairs. That is, the world does not escape from me to mere being-in-itself. Hence these objects which "occasion" the escape in question have a "something" additional to them besides their mere objectness. The additional something is grasped, Sartre claims, only through a "radical conversion" in which I am now "occasioned" to experience myself as an object:

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[8]Ibid.

> [i]t is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject. . . . I have observed that I can not be an object for an object. A radical conversion of the Other is necessary if he is to escape objectivity.[9]

Sartre introduces the notion of the other's "look" at this point. When I am an object for the "look" of the Other, the Other is then first perceived by me as a subject. In perceiving this object as a man I perceive the world in a certain way. In Sartrean terms, I perceive the things in it not only as existing at a certain distance from me, but as existing at a certain distance from him. Perceiving (or undergoing) the "look" of the Other, however, is not compatible with perceiving the other as an object. Rather, I "perceive" (undergo) myself as an object and the other, for the first time, as an alien subjective consciousness:

> I should willingly say here: we cannot perceive the world and at the same time apprehend a look fastened upon us: it must be either one or the other. This is because to perceive is to look at and to apprehend a look is not to apprehend a look-as-object in the world (unless the look is not directed upon us); it is to be conscious of being looked at.[10]

Naturally Sartre relates his claims about the look to his view about freedom and transcendence in the for-itself, i.e., about human existence as escaping all "objective" determination and yet at the same time as perpetually striving to achieve such determination. When I feel the look of the Other--when I am hanging on the end of someone's gaze--I escape myself (my nothingness) through the other-as-

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[9]Ibid., pp. 344-45.

[10]Ibid., p. 347.

subject. The "object" the other makes me to be permits this escape, it seems, precisely because the Other is now experienced as a free subject. Thus that being whose very being is an escape from being tries to escape from that very contradiction, with the help of the Other.

It is when I feel (in the special non-reflective way in question) that the Other looks at me that I am conscious of myself escaping myself. The Other's look, in Sartre's terms again, puts me at once beyond this world and in this world. The Other's look makes me flow outside myself. Everything in the world that was for me, including myself, changes and becomes for-the-Other. I become thinglike just as the wall is a certain color.

Thus the presence of the other-as-subject arrests my freedom and transcendence. What the other-as-subject does is nail down and neatly package my freedom, like a person dangling on the end of a hangman's rope. The Other uses his freedom to deny me mine, to interpret my situation at the keyhole and "stamp" me with his judgment. I am an object, both physically and "psychologically." I am a transcendence-transcended:

> being-seen constitutes me as a defenseless being for a freedom which is not my freedom. It is in this sense that we can consider ourselves as "slaves" insofar as we appear to the Other.[11]

The other, then, allows me to experience my "outside" or "nature," on a pre-reflective level. Thus the "recognition" of

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[11]Ibid., p. 358.

myself as having an objectness is, in a certain sense, not on the level of knowledge. If it were, then the Other would only be known as an object (and also as a merely probable existent). "We must remember," Sartre says, "that through the look, I am aware of myself as objectivized and of the other-as-a-subject, and in knowing the other, I fail to know him as a subject."[12] It is in my awareness of the Other-as-subject, i.e., an alien freedom, that I become aware of my objectness. The pre-reflective cogito reveals a freedom that is not my own and it also reveals itself as thereby modified by this alien freedom. The other-as-subject is not "known," but rather experienced as the alienation of my possibilities, my freedom and my transcendence on the level of the pre-reflective cogito.

Presumably, in claiming that I have been made into an object for the Other's subjectivity, Sartre does not simply mean that I apprehend myself as an inert physical object. That would be too much of a sacrifice of my own freedom. It would ignore my freedom and transcendence altogether. Rather Sartre speaks of an experience in which my freedom and transcendence are indeed still experienced by me, but in a new way, as neutralized by the other: a transcended-transcendence. It is clear however, that the other as subject is nevertheless a person who in some sense sees me and who sees what I am! I am an object for him because I have an aspect that allows me to be seen. And I become aware or conscious of this aspect

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[12]Ibid., p. 167.

because of his look. Hence the objective body is at least part of what is in question for Sartre.

The for-itself has been claimed by Sartre to be the nihilation of the in-itself. One's body is the in-itself as nihilated: "the body is the neglected, the "passed by in silence." And yet the body is what this consciousness is; it is not even anything except body. The rest is nothingness and silence."[13] This seems to be parallel to what we saw in Chapter I. We may say that consciousness is nothing more than consciousness of body; yet by that very fact it is nothing more than body itself! The human reality must simultaneously be consciousness and body; it must simultaneously "be" nothingness and being-for-itself and in-itself. The latter necessity, obviously, is what also posits it to be being-for-others. Of course this seems to give a whole new meaning to the nature of "body." It is no longer to be viewed as an inert physical object. Precisely as "nihilated" by (or in) the for-itself, it is itself to be regarded as a "structure" of the for-itself:

> it is evident that consciousness can exist its body only as consciousness. Therefore my body is a conscious structure of my consciousness. But precisely because the body is the point of view in which there can not be a point of view, there is on the level of the unreflective consciousness no consciousness of the body. The body belongs then to the structure of the non-thetic self-consciousness.[14]

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[13]Ibid., p. 434.

[14]Ibid.

My body, viewed as inert thing, is not what I experience in experiencing my subjecthood. That inert thing would only be a possible object for reflection on my part.

The body is a source of concrete instrumentality for Sartre. The world, experienced through the body, is thus necessarily experienced as a system of relations which are directed toward the body qua concrete source, or center for that system. The body is non-reflectively experienced not as a thing that has a certain location. Rather it is itself experienced merely as a center of locations indicated by the possibilities of instrumental action in the world surrounding that center:

> Man and the world are relative beings, and the principle of their being is the relation. It follows that the first relation proceeds from human-reality to the world. To come into existence, for me, is to unfold my distance from things and thereby to cause things "to be there." But consequently things are precisely "things-which-exist-at-a-distance-from-me." Thus the world refers to me that univocal relation which is my being and by which I cause it to be revealed.[15]

Thus my place in the world is experienced concretely, but the concreteness arises not from my awareness of that particular object that is my body, but from my awareness of the set of possibilities (transcendences) that I perceive in the world. The body is simply my point of view on the world. Consciousness can not be considered as observing the world from an absolute vantage point. Consciousness does not witness the world as a system of absolute relations.

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[15]Ibid., p. 407.

This sort of "pure knowledge" is contradictory, according to Sartre. Pure knowledge or an absolute vantage point would entitle consciousness "to be a knowledge without a point of view" which is still knowledge, but is "on principle located outside the world." Thus the for-itself exists as body precisely because it can not choose itself "all at once": it must choose this or that. Human reality must choose many times from many perspectives. That consciousness is "nothing" other than body, then, is simply the ontological necessity that one exist some place as a point of view (not merely as a "thing" in a point of view or location):

> Thus knowledge can be only an engaged upsurge in a determined point of view which one is. For human reality, to be is to-be-there: that is, "there in that chair," "there at that table," "there at the top of that mountain, with these dimensions, this orientation, etc." It is an ontological necessity.[16]

Somehow, then, the experience of the other as subject must make me aware of my objecthood by altering the way I perceive my possibilities in the world, not by making me aware of my body as a thing (though this could of course happen as a secondary reflective occurrence).

The Other, in Part Three of Being and Nothingness, takes the place of the in-itself in the Introduction. As hinted at earlier, the relationship between the for-itself and the for-others is analogous to the separation between the for-itself and the in-itself. The Other as object is an in-itself for my for-itself because there

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[16]Ibid., p. 407.

can only be a subject-object relationship between us, not an object-object or a subject-subject relationship. Thus if I recognize the Other qua for-itself (i.e., "subjective consciousness" of freedom and transcendence) then I am, perforce, reduced to the level of the in-itself. If, on the other hand, I recognize the Other qua in-itself then I continue to be a pure freedom and transcendence; the Other, in turn, ceases to be another subject.

Thus, "in view of the Medusa-like "look" of the "other," interpersonal relations are a zero-sum game whose rule is petrify or be petrified,"[17] and concrete relations with others inevitably involve conflict. This is not surprising, for if the for-itself tries to escape itself (which can be considered as a type of conflict with itself) then it seems logical that it ought to relate to Others in conflict also. "the latent 'schizophrenic' split between prereflective and reflective consciousness is materialized, and it is supplemented by a 'paranoid' relation to others."[18] The term "schizophrenic" is probably not too strong a term to employ, for in recognizing myself qua being-for-others, I must negate myself qua subjective consciousness. And to recognize myself qua subjective consciousness (or freedom and transcendence) I must negate the Other. The idea here is similar to that of a man who wants to kill someone and failing that, kills himself. With Sartre, the weapon is negation.

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[17]LaCapra, p. 134.

[18]Ibid., p. 135.

There is a stronger way of making the point, I think, which justifies the use of such terms as "schizophrenic" and "paranoid" with respect to our relations with Others. The Other reveals himself by robbing me of my freedom. The freedom I must now live is his, not mine. This is also embodied quite famously by Sartre in the maxim, "Hell is Other people." The cogito for-itself falls into the world of the cogito for-others. This is the "second" cogito. On the one hand I experience a state of being-for-others that will introduce a sense of "thingness" for me; and yet at the same time I need to influence the way in which that thingness gets perceived so that I won't be at the mercy of Others. Attempts at influencing Others involves approaching them as objects and dissolves my experience of myself as object. In trying to achieve a sort of contradictory state in which both aspects are present we are indeed on the borderline of the "schizophrenic."

Sometimes by the term "schiziphrenia" we mean "dual" personalities such as "Jekyll-Hyde" character aberrations, so-called "split personalities" often alluded to by novelists and journalists. But there is another, more technical meaning, involving a schism between functions of emotions and functions of thinking.[19] In the specific case of shameful being-for-others, we might then say, I experience myself emotionally as a shameful object for the Other. But on the level of "thinking" (or "knowing") I, of course, "know" that I am

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[19]Psychology 73/74 Encyclopedia (Duskhin Publishing Group, Inc., Gilford, Conn., 1973), p. 242.

more than this shamed thing, indeed that in some sense I am not it. In being-for-others I shift back and forth between thought and emotion, just as in schizophrenia. This is no doubt what Dominick La Capra had in mind when he claimed that Being and Nothingness can be understood as the "systematization of a paranoid-schizophrenic world view."[20]

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[20]LaCapra, p. 122.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Being and Nothingness is a book about persons, human reality. Sartre fails to some extent in giving an account of what a person is. He lapses into the dualism of body and consciousness. Of course, many would argue that you can't account for persons without recognizing such a "dualism." But for Sartre this dualism is a mistake, and he began Being and Nothingness with the promise to shove this dualism (among others) aside. However, this failure is somewhat insignificant when considered in relation to what is really the main issue. That main issue is escape from self.

In The Doors of Perception, Aldous Huxley commented briefly on escape from self:

> We now spend a good deal more on drink and smoke than we spend on education. This, of course, is not surprising. The urge to escape from selfhood and the environment is in almost everyone all the time.[1]

This is an example of what is commonly understood as a method of escape from self--drug use. Sartre, being a terribly cerebral thinker, does not deal with the usual items which we might think contribute to escape from self. Instead, he focuses on austere psychological themes that require a more refined development and appreciation. It would, in one sense, be true to say that for Sartre

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[1]Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception (Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., N.Y., N.Y.), p. 63, my underscoring.

the "history" of any individual's life necessarily involves subtle psychological devices for the avoidance of recognition of complete responsibility. The escape from self is dealt with in psychological terms. At the same time, Sartre builds a whole philosophical system around the issue.

In Sartre's terms a person doesn't merely observe the world, is not merely immersed in the world (as we mistakenly tend to think of consciousness as "instantiated" in a body). A person is the world by virtue of the fact that consciousness is coeval with its sense of being-in-the-world as a "psychic body." Consciousness "exists" the body in a situation and is its world in virtue of being the one solely responsible for its own situation(s). The total responsibility which consciousness has for what it is leads to anguish for Sartre. Recognition of its ultimate freedom to act on its world seems to involve anguish for the for-itself.

It might be objected that freedom can be dealt with in other ways rather than in terms of anxiety and anguish:

> Why did Sartre feel so free during the war when he might be arrested at any moment? Because the danger made him keep alert--that is, put more interest into seeing and doing. Normal consciousness is shy and lazy and mole-like, hardly putting any effort into living. We allow habit to tempt us into developing experience.[2]

For Wilson in this passage, a sense of freedom is characterized by interest in life and the world, not by anguish. The opposite of interest is boredom. When consciousness is bored with the world it

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[2]Colin Wilson, The Occult (Vintage Books, Random House, N.Y., N.Y.).

tends to devalue the world. It languishes in its own selfness because it puts less into perception and gets less out. It becomes locked into a vicious circle. For Sartre, it might be objected, experience of freedom is too interiorized from the start: consciousness seems only able to look at its own immediate choices and possible actions, and then it becomes anguished. That is, consciousness takes a "worm's eye view" of itself and its world (i.e., facticity) and such up-closeness breeds anguish. On the other hand, as we have seen, Sartre himself also seems to grant that anguish only arises on a reflective level. So if we don't reflect, and do remain "absorbed" in the world and the situation--remain "interested" in it--perhaps he would agree that anguish would not arise. In any case, the desire to escape the anguish consciousness locks itself into, and thus to escape the self in question, takes a purely psychological route for Sartre. Hence he steers clear of discussion on drugs and mental intensity which others treat as basic factors in overcoming anguish. Escape from selfness is considered only in narrow terms: bad faith and being-for-others.

The main thrust of the psychological aberrations is that to avoid the challenge of existence, consciousness yearns to be like the things of the world--brute in-itselfness. Thus, there is a failure on its part to understand what it "is." It has, and can have, no nature as we might say an electron has a nature. The for-itself is freedom, and this is its only "nature." But this freedom is unsatisfactory: it is simply the freedom, or rather the necessity, of pursuing a continuously fleeing goal which is terminated only by death.

The for-itself--not being what it is--must constantly struggle with the psychological aberrations precisely because it must constantly struggle to create its own self. This self is inextricably interwoven into all of its chosen goals. Self and world arise correlatively, as we saw earlier.

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