From Rousseau to Sartre

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Liberal political theory is all contained within the dichotomy "man versus the state". This assumes the existence of an individual who can be comprehended independently of the community of which he or she is a part, and further, that the problem of "the good society" is the problem of devising political institutions which will protect each individual from the incursions of other individuals or of the state.

The significance of Rousseau's work lies in the fact that he shows that the dichotomy individual-society is false, and that therefore problems of moral duties and political freedom have to be analysed within a different problematic. By showing that humans are social and historical beings, and that reason and the possibility of freedom develop through the struggle with nature, Rousseau formulated a new way of approaching human reality, and on the basis of this he was at least able to formulate the principle of the good society; a society in which the rational co-ordination of interdependence is both the condition for and the consequence of the development of reason through unconstrained communication.

But in order to give an account of the nature of such a society and of how it might come into being, many problems remained to be clearly formulated and solved. These include:

a) giving an adequate account of the precise nature of the relation between freedom and reason.

b) giving an adequate account of the relation between humans as (potentially) free and rational, and humans as natural material beings.

c) a resolution of the contradition between Rousseau's radical critique of contemporary society and the factual quietism resulting from his inability to historicise the present and the future as well as the past; to explain how the move from the present corrupt society to the good society might be possible,

d) giving some account of the actual institutions which might make the good society possible.

These issues are in important ways interdependent. The question of the relation between freedom and reason and the question of the relation between rationality and materiality in human reality are both linked with the problem of giving an account of the way in which societies change or can be made to change. The model of a good society must be derived both from an

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analysis of the historical process of change which will move towards it, and from the theoretical account of the relation between freedom-reason- materiality. All these questions are related to the question of identity: how do individuals establish and change their identity through time, both with and against society, other individuals [2] and the material world?

Kant represents both an advance beyond and a regression behind Rousseau. Through the idea of the Kingdom of Ends and the Categorical Imperative he clarifies the notion of the General Will and shows why freedom and reason must be identical. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he shows that an empiricist or mechanical materialist epistemology is impossible, and that knowledge and human experience are only conceivable if human consciousness can go beyond what is immediately given in experience. However, he is unable to go beyond this to develop a dialectical concept of the identity of the subject through time because he is trapped within the assumptions of the sense-datum theory. He can give no coherent account of the relation between the I as spontaneity and sensation as given, or between the moral will as autonomous and free and the body as heteronomous and determined.

Instead, the unity of experience is guaranteed by an atemporal transcendent I, and the idea of a subject which creatively establishes its identity through time is lost. In consequence, Kant has to place his Kingdom of Ends in the hereafter, and to rely on God and immortality of the soul as guarantors of moral behaviour and of the perfectibility of reason.

These problems can only be overcome by attempting to rehistoricise the subject. There are two possible ways of doing this. One way is to scrap the sense-datum approach and to attempt a new description of the material basis of experience. But Kant himself suggests a second, idealist approach with his idea of the *intellectus archetypus*, a subject which creates the object of its knowledge at the same time as it knows it. This theory makes it possible to dissolve Kant's residual in itself entirely, but at the cost of making matter unreal and producing serious theoretical problems in accounting for relations between subjects. On the other hand, it at least invites an historical account of the development of reason in society, for otherwise the passive element in experience become inexplicable; it has to be seen as a residue which will be overcome in the full course of historical development. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel develop this idea of a subject which both creates its object and becomes conscious of its object in time, in history. The historical process is the gradual becoming self-conscious of this historical subject.

In Hegel's work this is expressed in a detailed analysis of the way in which the categories of the human mind develop dialectically one from another; a Rousseauian corrective to Kant's simple affirmation of Aristotle's set of categories; and (b) in an account of the development of reason as culture in the history of human societies. However, this idealist position contains two weaknesses which make it difficult to carry Kant's Kingdom of Ends on into the future. Firstly, it makes it difficult to give any account of the concrete materiality of the individual subject, and hence [3] finally to resolve the problem of individual freedom. Secondly, it makes it difficult to think the future at all, because it implies (a) that the *intellectus archetypus* only becomes fully conscious of itself at the end of the historical process (because the development of self-consciousness is identical with the historical process), but that the theory is itself a full account of the nature of absolute mind, that is is therefore the expression of the self-consciousness of the *intellectus archetypus,* and that therefore history has ended.

To put it another way, Hegel fully establishes the historicity of human experience, but does so in such a way as to deprive that history of any real subject, or any real ontological foundation. To comprehend history as present and future, as well as past, it is necessary to take account of the dialectic: individual-society-culture. That is, it is necessary to show the ontological roots of social formations in individuals as subjects and as objects, and to show the way in which culture arises within social formations as a material expression of consciousness, and as such in turn determines the consciousness of the individuals in which that social formation is ontologically rooted. Hegel's idealism

(a) removed the ontological anchor of the whole process in individual experience; and

(b) inverted the relation between culture and society, making the social reality a function of the historical level of self-consciousness reached by mind, rather than showing culture in its relation to the historical level of development of the society. But in spite of this he was able to illuminate aspects of the individual-society dialectic, both in general and in the concrete situation of early capitalist civil society.

Marx is therefore able to speak of putting him back on his feet by accepting the analysis of civil society, and of the historical formation of capitalism, but interpreting it in materialist terms. But the problem of providing an adequate foundation for materialism still remains. Kant has shown the impossibility of empiricism as a theory of knowledge which claims that all thought-categories can be derived from the here-now of sense impressions. In the first thesis on Feuerbach Marx accepts this:

> The chief defect of all previous materialism (including Feuerbach's) is that the object, actuality, sensuousness is conceived only in the form of the *object or perception,* but not as *sensuous human activity, praxis,* not subjectively. Hence in opposition to materialism the active side was developed by idealism - but only abstractly, since idealism does not know actual sensuous activity as such. (ed. Easton and Guddat, p. 400)

But he does not attempt to work out the implications of this, and when Engels attempts to do so, he falls into the same trap. [4] In effect, by inverting Hegel's relation between culture and society Marx joins him in failing to give an account of the human subject in which both are rooted. This is not important while Marx is dealing with analyses of specific formations or modes of production. But it produces problems at the metatheoretical level, and these give rise to further problems in attempting to think the Kingdom of Ends. Habermas has known that the failure to give an account of the nature of the individual human subject makes it impossible for the theory to comprehend itself. It ends in a positivism which renders the idea of liberation incoherent. This means that the relations between revolution as process and revolution as invention is not thought clearly, and this opens up possibilities of confusion (to say the least) about the role of "revolutionaries" and of the party. Lacking a clearly articulated notion of individual freedom in the Kingdom of Ends it also makes it possible to conceive of post-capitalist society in purely economistic terms, as a society in which planned economic growth (of course in the interests of the proletariat) replaces the disorder and waste of capitalist society. It thereby replaces the problem of liberatory political institutions with the problem of productive economic institutions.

Thus the problems of the "vanguard party" and of state bureaucracy can be seen to be connected to the theoretical lacunae in Marx's own critique of Hegel. (To say what they were caused by these lacunae would be to return to Hegelianism with a vengeance - but it is nevertheless important to give some account of the relation between the theoretical weaknesses and the phenomenon of Stalinism). To overcome these theoretical problems we need to return to the question of the nature of the human subject. We have to accept Kant's criticism of empiricist-materialism, but also, against Hegel, we have to accept Kant's defence of the in-itself. We have to give an account which:

(a) shows that human reality exists in relation to a material world which is other than it; that is, we have to give an account of being-in-itself; and

(b) which at the same time makes it possible to understand the categories of human knowledge through which human experience always goes beyond the here-now given. That is, we have to develop a notion of the dialectical identity of the I through time - reversing Kant's foundation of the unity of time on the analytical identity of the transcendental ego.

Kant started with an assumption about the nature of what is given here-now: the assumption of the sense-datum theory. Sartre rejects that assumption, and attempts a presuppositionless (phenomenological) description of experience.

For Kant, what characterised experience was "the universally valid and necessary connection of the given perceptions". Because he saw the given as a sequence of sense-data he argues that the necessity could only come from the subject, but at the same time he was unable to account for the sensations themselves. [5] Sartre argues that we must reopen this question of necessity, and that in fact the necessity does lie in the in-itself, not in the subject. Sartre's conclusions can be briefly stated:

1) Being in itself exists quite independently of human consciousness - idealism is false.

2) In the light of this, experience is only possible if we conceive of consciousness as a free project beyond the here-now which, by its synthesising activity, makes experience possible.

3) The world as we experience is not "in itself" - but neither is it an unreal distinct from the in-itself. Consciousness does not make the world be; but it makes it "be there". Consciousness is a perspective, and the world is always experienced from a perspective. The categories of knowledge are a function of this. Human knowledge is not "absolute knowledge" but situated knowledge of the world.

4) Consciousness is nothing but the project of itself beyond the here-now. The concrete individual is defined in terms of the body, the past and the social and material environment from which it projects itself.

5) Individual identity is constituted by this projection and by the process of pure or impure reflection which are available to it as a result of its necessary self reference.

The first four points define Sartre's philosophy as a materialism. The fifth point provides the ontological basis for the idea of history as a dialectical process, and hence for a non-positivist historical materialism. [6]

> Je pense qu'effectivement une théorie de la liberté qui n'explique pas en même temps ce que sont les aliénations, dans quelle mésure la liberté peut se laisser manipuler, dévier, retourner contre elle, une telle théorie peut très cruellement tromper quelqu'un qui ne comprend pas tout ce qu'elle implique et qui croît que

la liberté est partout.
Mais si on lit bien j'ai écrit, je ne crois pas qu'on puisse faire une telle erreur.
Le Nouvel Observateur, 7 Juilliet 1975[1] [7]

1 "I think that a theory of freedom that does not explain what alienation is, to what extent freedom can be manipulated, diverted, turned against itself, can very cruelly deceive someone who does not understand all that it implies and who believes that freedom is everywhere.
But if you read what I wrote carefully, I don't think it's possible to make such a mistake."

Chapter 1

The Problems

Before approaching Sartre's writings it will be useful to have a schematic outline of the range of problems with which he is dealing and of the relation between these various problems. Since we are concerned here with the way in which Sartre uses his philosophical concepts to theorise about politics, I shall begin by taking a specific issue of political policy and I shall show how an analysis of this issue leads into the set of theoretical problems with which Sartre is dealing.

Let us, therefore, consider an apparently relatively technical problem with which any government might be faced - 'the housing problem'.

1. Firstly, what is implied when a government recognises a particular state of affairs as constituting a 'housing problem'? There are at least three sets of assumptions involved.

(a) A certain standard of acceptable accommodation is being postulated. It is assumed that people have certain accommodation needs, and these needs in turn are to be understood in relation to a whole set of other needs, These needs can be defined in various ways and in different societies or at different times are defined in various ways. That is, it is not simply a question of an observation of the type 'without petrol this motor won't go'. It is an evaluation and as such has ultimately to be justified by reference to some set of norms. It is in terms of these norms of individual need that a particular housing situation is constituted as a housing shortage.

(b) What makes a housing shortage into a problem for the government, rather than just for those people who have inadequate accommodation? We shall assume here that it is the housing situation itself, rather than some by-product, such as popular revolutionary discontent, which is recognised as constituting the problem. In this case it is assumed that the government has certain kinds of responsibility to those who have bad housing and this assumption in turn derives from an assumption about responsibilities which people have towards one another, since the decision-makers in the government, whether it be an absolute monarch, a bourgeois democracy or a socialist government, never themselves build houses. They act, in various ways, as a mediating device through which resources are distributed in

such a way that, in our example, houses are built. Once more, ideas about the responsibility of the government for its citizens, or of the citizens for one another, vary in both time and space, and can be argued about.
(c) Related to the set of assumptions about duties is a set of assumptions about houses. Why are certain people without houses? Is it their own fault?

Are they as individuals improvident and irresponsible? Or is it the regretted but inevitable outcome of some set of natural laws? [8] In the first case it might be decided that although individuals have responsibilities for one another, these only apply when the beneficiaries themselves act responsibly. It might be argued that when someone has, for the fourth time, burnt down his/her own house, or acted in some other way to produce an equivalent result, then anybody else's responsibility, for providing a new house, lapses. In the second case it might be argued, as it was in the period of *laissez-faire* economic theory, that the optimum distribution of goods in society results from the unfettered operation of the market mechanism of supply and demand. Therefore those who do not have houses do not have them because of the working of objective laws, and any attempt to interfere with those laws would produce worse consequences.

In both of the above cases it is the question of the factual responsibility for the situation which is at stake. The cases are not strictly equivalent because in the first case one might argue that one has a moral duty to help even those who absolutely refuse to help themselves, whereas in the second case if something is the result of the inescapable operation of natural laws, then there is nothing that anybody else can do about it. Once X has jumped I cannot be said to have any further responsibility to try to stop him being killed when he reaches the bottom of the cliff, since I cannot interfere with the law of gravity.

But, leaving aside this difference, the point I wish to make is that in any such situation, there are an interrelated set of personal, natural and social causes operating.

The judgement as to whether the situation constitutes a problem for the government and for the people not directly affected, will therefore always depend, at least in part, on an assessment of the relative weight of these three factors. If the situation is seen to be caused socially, that is, directly or indirectly through the actions of other people, then of course the case for the ethical, as opposed to the factual, responsibility of other people is also strengthened.

Thus it is in terms of judgements of factual responsibility, and of norms of interpersonal moral responsibility that the housing shortage is constituted as a political *problem.*

2. Having decided that there is a housing problem, the government then has to decide what can or cannot be done to solve it. The decision here also involves implicit reference to the above assumptions, as well as to some new assumptions. Let us assume that there is a shortage of 100,000 houses. Are these to be built immediately, gradually over a shorter or longer period or, regretfully, not at all? The answer to this question will be partly determined by technical-economic issues. What is the present availability and allocation of resources? How can those resources be reallocated to deal with the housing problem, and what impact would the various [9] possible methods of reallocation have on the economy and on the society as a whole? Non-technical problems intrude on two different levels here.

(a) There is obviously the question of who is going to lose what benefits as a result of the necessary reallocation of resources. In a real situation the government has to consider both the needs and the power of the various gainers and losers concerned. Further, what impact will the reallocation have on the social behaviour of all the actors concerned? If executives have to be taxed more heavily to pay for workers' housing, will this act as a disincentive to the executives, thus causing them to work less, slowing down economic growth and causing the workers to suffer from unemployment? Or will it make them work harder to maintain their standard of living? Will the added security given the workers by better housing make them lazy, or make them better workers? These issues transcend technical economic problems and raise questions about the nature of just rewards, about the meaning of work and about the nature of human motivation.

(b) Furthermore, technical economic problems of efficiency and distribution are always embedded within the assumption of a particular type of economic system. Let us assume that the government decides that the reallocation of resources required to immediately build 100,000 houses would involve (i) raising taxes and so discouraging investment and (ii) controlling resources in such a way as to dislocate the market mechanism, and that it is therefore impossible. What is meant by this impossibility here? What is meant is that (i) within the framework of a predominantly capitalist economy this is impossible and (ii) that some type of economic system, such as a socialist economy, is undesirable and/or impossible. This involves implicit answers to a number of difficult theoretical questions.

(a) Why do we have a capitalist economy at the moment? How, historically, has it come into being and how is it maintained in existence? What is the nature of the laws which operate in a capitalist economy?

(b) What effect would a change in the economic structure have on other elements of the society and so on other social values? How are economy,

polity, family, culture, religion, related to one another? Are they independent or interdependent and if they are interdependent in what way are they interdependent? How is the housing problem related to other social problems?

(c) Once more, what are human needs and what motivate human action? For example, is the collective action implied by socialism possible or are human beings competitive individualists? Is capitalism the necessary result of some element of human nature or are the motivational patterns characteristic of individuals in capitalistic societies, the product of a specific historical situation?

That is, the technical possibility or impossibility of building the 100,000 houses turns out to be not just a question of applied science but to have hidden references to problems of social theory and to moral values. [10] Finally, let us consider a group of people, other than the government, who recognise the existence of the housing problem. In addition to the issues to which I've already referred, they are faced with problems of political strategy.

(a) What are the power relationships involved? Whose interests are opposed to the desired change and what power do these opponents have? Is it merely a question of changing the government or would any government be faced with the existence of extra political power groups making it difficult for them to act? If so, what other groups could be mobilised to act in favour of the proposed change, what power potential do these groups have and in what sphere does their power lie? What is the relation between the different forms of power available in the society?

(b) How does one communicate with these groups? How are interests and beliefs formed and changed? How do human beings learn? What motivates them to act?

Thus the particular strategy which the group adopts in the attempt to carry out its policy is also a function of a large number of assumptions about how people and societies work.

Naturally I do not wish to argue that the government or the opposition group necessarily thinks out answers to all the questions to which I have referred. The point I wish to make is that any policy necessarily assumes answers to those and other similar questions. All practical decisions are made within the context of implicit theory.

What I have said so far may appear to be so obvious as to be not worth mentioning. And in a sense it is obvious. But it is not sufficiently obvious not to be frequently denied, both at a popular level and by theoreticians. This occurs because what is not explicitly stated comes to be taken for

granted. Within any particular society or culture taken-for-granted or common-sense answers to these questions arise and are accepted. Particular values or particular ways of behaving are taken for granted as being so obvious as not require any theoretical analysis. They are 'facts', not 'theories'. But the trouble with the 'common-sense' 'factual' approach is that what is accepted as 'common-sense' or 'fact' varies drastically from society to society. Amongst white South Africans it is 'fact' that black South Africans are intellectually inferior and 'common-sense' that they should be treated differently from whites. Amongst blacks, however, this is not 'common-sense' at all. In some societies it is common-sense that homosexuality or head-hunting or fasting, are normal activities. In other societies heterosexual monogamy or napalm bombing or fighting elections or overeating are the common-sense ways of behaving. Thus what is obviously a problem for one person often refers to something which is taken for granted by another person.

Let us now try to classify the various rather heterogeneous questions already referred to.

(1) Some of them are straightforward empirical questions. For example, the opposition political group referred to above can commission an opinion survey to [11] discover how many people read political advertisements, in newspapers as opposed to how many watch them on television, and can use this information to help conduct its campaign. Similarly, one can reach some conclusions as to the distribution of power in a given society by analysing how previous important decisions have been made. Who made them, under what pressures and in whose interests?

(2) But some of the other questions are not so straightforward. In the two examples mentioned above what is involved is a process whereby generalisations, or general laws, are arrived at through the observation of various events and are then used to predict what will happen on other future occasions, given certain initial conditions. For example, one observes that on all previous occasions when bills to improve medical care have been introduced, the American Medical Association has used all its power in an attempt to defeat the bill. On the basis of this generalisation one then predicts that one's main enemy in the attempt to pilot such a bill through Congress will be the A.M.A. Similarly, if a survey, based on a sample of a few thousand, shows that only 16% of the sample read the newspapers at all, whereas 48% watch political advertisements on television, one generalises from this and uses the generalisation to predict that, at another time, a whole lot of other people not included in the sample will watch one's advertisements in roughly the same proportion.

These are very crude examples of the sort of 'laws' which a social scientist may uncover. They are principles which can be used to predict the behaviour of certain classes of actors in certain kinds of situations. Obviously we all use such principles to predict other people's behaviour all the time and social scientists are, at this level merely to discover and to use techniques which can refine and improve upon these ordinary predictions. Their activity is similar to that of the natural scientist who is also trying to establish hypothetical laws. On the other hand the laws which the natural scientists formulate are assumed to apply universally to similar objects at other times and in other places. The law of gravity applies in the same way to all of a very large class of objects. Laws like those referred to above, however, are usually each understood to refer to a class of individuals limited in both space and time. U.S. doctors today behave politically in a way very different from Chinese doctors and, with luck, differently from the way in which U.S. doctors will behave in 20 years time.

There are two different possible explanations for this. The first is that we just have not as yet discovered the basic laws. The fact that a metal sphere of fixed mass will fall faster in a vacuum at the equator than in a snow storm at the north pole does not mean that it is subject to a different law of gravity at the two points. It means that the initial conditions in which the law of gravity operates are different. Similarly, we might be able to discover a law of doctors' political behaviour which, together with the different initial conditions in the two societies, could in fact be used to predict the different behaviour of Chinese and U.S. doctors. [12]

However, the other alternative is that the laws themselves actually do change - that human beings are not subject to laws in the same way as are natural objects. If we accept this alternative, then we have to be able to give some account of the nature of those laws in terms of which people do at least seem to act. If these descriptive generalisations are not universal laws of 'human nature' but, nevertheless, can be used in the relevant historical and social situation to explain and predict human actions, how and why do they operate? What is the ontological status of the laws formulated by social scientists?

Whichever of these alternatives we accept, the fact is that 'the housing problem' has lead us to raise fundamental questions about the existence and nature of laws of human behaviour. Furthermore, it is important to realise that, although we can use the descriptive generalisations about the viewing habits or the political behaviour of doctors as guides for short term, narrow objective practical action, we cannot integrate them within a

more comprehensive theoretical view of human behaviour until we have decided what the status of such generalisations is.

The question about the ontological status of the descriptive generalisations of the social sciences is a question about the nature of human reality. In what ways are human beings subject to laws? What kind of thing is a human being? This question is related to the last set of questions raised by the housing problem - questions about the needs of human beings, about interpersonal moral responsibility, about the meaning of work and about the nature of human motivation. At first sight this list might appear to confuse two different kinds of question: (a) empirically decidable questions - such as, what do people need and what motivates them to act? and (b) ethical questions, which cannot be answered empirically, not about what individuals are but about how individuals ought to behave towards one another. However, closer analysis will show that these two apparently different kinds of question are in fact very closely related.

(a) What kind of question are we asking when we say 'What are human needs'? If we treat it as a purely empirical question, we soon see that what are felt as needs vary enormously from society to society. [13] Tribal Australian aborigines experienced themselves as needing a very different range of spiritual and material goods from those which white urban South Africans experience themselves as needing. Perhaps we could by-pass this problem by formulating the question as follows - "What are the minimum conditions for human survival?" This question could be answered in terms of a certain minimum food intake, a certain volume of living space and so on. However, the minima are far below the norms for developed societies. Also they only refer to physiological needs, and it is arguable that people have other kinds of need which cannot be empirically quantified in this way.

Many 'need' statements are formulated in hypothetical terms 'If you want to climb that mountain then you need heavy boots and a rope'. Are there any, as it were, non-hypothetical need statements for human beings? Even a statement such as 'You need water' can be non-trivially converted into the hypothetical form 'If you wish to remain alive then you need water.' It is not trivial to put it in this form since a person about to commit suicide does not in any sense 'need' water. For human beings staying alive or dying can be a choice. Naturally I do not wish to argue that all people are always posing this choice to themselves, or even that many people ever do so. The point is that the fact that this issue can be raised by human beings, and that a number have, in fact, decided that imprisonment or loneliness or poverty or the betrayal of comrades is a worse fate than death, raises impor-

tant problems about the nature of human beings and of human need. The most important of these problems is whether we can both discover the range of choices available to human beings and suggest some criteria in terms of which to choose. The question of need turns out to be not simply an empirical question, but a question with a strong 'ought' element. Ought I to want to stay alive in this particular set of circumstances? Or 'If I want to become a Rising Young Executive I need a University education - but ought I to want to become a Rising Young Executive?'

People can, and in fact sometimes do, reflect on what they have always thought they needed and decide that they do not in fact need it, or that they ought not to want it. The question 'What do I need?' seems to depend in important ways on the prior question "What ought I to want?"

(b) How then is the kind of ought question which arises from a reflection on the concept of 'need' related to the more obvious sort of 'ought' question related to my responsibilities toward other people? Let us begin by looking at the content of a common injunction of social ethics - the injunction to treat all people equally. For the moment I am not interested in the validity of the injunction, but in the process whereby it is given content. Obviously it does not mean that all people should be treated identically. Firstly it means that differences in treatment should be based only on natural differences between people. It would not be legitimate to tax a black man more heavily than a white, but it would be legitimate to tax a bachelor more heavily than a widow with eight children since the difference [14] between the number of dependants is relevant to the issue of taxation; the difference between black and white skins is not. A further criterion is related to the question of goals. If we assume that the goal of human existence includes within it some reference to material comfort, then the sphere of material goods falls within the sphere to which the injunction to equality applies. If, however, we assume that the goal of human existence is to find final union with the infinite through the acceptance of suffering, then the domain of material goods becomes almost entirely irrelevant. Each individual would perhaps have an equal right to enough material goods to keep her/ him alive to continue suffering, but the idea that there should be measures taken to assure equal access to affluence would be irrelevant. The actions through which one embodies the injunction to equality depend upon some assumptions about what other people need, or about how human beings find fulfilment. In an important sense, then, the injunctions of social ethics are 'means' terms, not 'ends' terms. Treat people in such a way because of what it does to them.

The 'end' is some ideal of human fulfilment. Each different concept of human fulfilment constitutes a different set of criteria for evaluating societies.

Thus we find that the problem of inter-personal responsibility refers us to the question 'What ought people to want?' The same question also arises at another level in the discussion of morality. So far we have considered only the content of injunctions of social responsibility, not the question of the derivation and validation of such injunctions. The defence of principles for treating other people always depends on some concept of what I should want for myself. The crude "Love your neighbour or else God will burn you in hell" relies for its power on my feeling that I ought not to want to burn in hell. Less utilitarian defences of morality rest, in a more complicated way, on some idea of the meaning of other people for myself. By this I do not mean that they are all based on the principle of manipulating other people to serve one's own interests. 'Honesty is the best policy: clean advertising will help you to get rich.' Defences of this kind are in fact made, but they rest on a particular concept of interest which defines human fulfilment strictly in terms of personal material satisfaction, and hence logically independently of one's relationships with other people. But it is also possible to defend certain ethical principles by arguing that certain kinds of human relationships enter into the concept of human fulfilment - "Tell the truth because unfettered interpersonal communication is one of the most satisfying of human activities." In this case I do not manipulate other people in certain ways to satisfy my personal needs. Rather my personal needs include the need for certain kinds of relationships with other people, and these relationships also complement their similar needs.

The point which I wish to make through this analysis is that arguments about principles of inter-personal morality depend upon arguments about the nature of human needs. Thus [15] we see that in many different ways the definition of political problems such as the 'housing problem', and the policies advocated to solve the problem, depend on an implicit answer to the question 'What kind of thing is a human being'? Furthermore insofar as a human being is defined, in part at least, by its needs, we see that the answer to that question cannot be arrived at by exclusively empirical methods. The question "What kind of thing is a human being"? begins to turn into the question 'What kind of thing ought a human being to be'? This is certainly very odd, if not paradoxical. Most, if not all, philosophy is an attempt to work through this apparent paradox in one or other of its many guises.

The peculiar nature of human reality can be illustrated in a number of ways. On the one hand individual human beings are limited in both space

and time. They always experience things from particular and limited perspectives. Although they can look at the same thing successively from a number of different angles, they can never explore it from all possible perspectives and they can never see it all at once 'as it is'. That is, a human being is always a 'particular'. On the other hand we are all, in using language, assuming that we have shared the experience of some other particularity, at least in learning accurately the meanings of words. Furthermore, each word itself transcends particularity. The word 'chair' does not refer simply to this chair here in front of me now. I used the word in order to subsume this here-now under a whole class of other experiences. 'Chair' is a universal term, as are all words. Even proper names like John or Fatima, apply not only to John or Fatima now as I see them in front of me, but also to all my other previous and possible future experiences of the ... [missing]. Thus with the word I seem to be able to escape from the particularity of my here and now experience. Similarly, when I make a true statement it is true for all people and at all times. A statement like "the three angles in a triangle add up to 180" is, if it is true, true not only for me here now, but for all triangles and for everybody at all times. The statement 'On the 25th September, 1872 the dog bit Jane' is true now even though both Jane and the dog no longer exist. We, changing particulars, can make universally valid statements about other changing particulars. Thus within human reality there is a peculiar relation between particularity and universality.

Another similar paradox appear if we reflect on the activity of scientists. In the natural sciences the observers have, in a sense, a position of complete independence in regard to what they are observing. Of course their instruments are subject perhaps to the same laws they are investigating, and this has to be taken into account. Also laws discovered about, say, physical systems, are applicable also to themselves in so far as they are also physical systems. Nevertheless the relation of observer to observed natural process is a relation of subject to object. The observer is only part the observed system of relationships for the duration of the observation. In the social sciences, however, the observers are usually observing systems of which they are [16] themselves a part or which are in many ways similar to systems of which they are a part. The observer is both subject and object of the observation and this can produce problems on the theoretical level. If the scientist produces explanatory hypotheses about human behaviour, then these hypotheses must apply to the scientist's own production of the hypotheses, in so far as this is also a form of human behaviour. Let us imagine, for example, a psychiatrist who claims that all adult behaviour is the result of the way in which the child reacts to the weaning process. Now, this claim, as

the behaviour of a particular adult, must itself be a product of that individual reaction to being weaned. We would then seem to be entitled to object 'If you are right, then what you are presenting to us is nothing more than a by-product of your weaning process. Why should this be more interesting than the by-product of anybody else's weaning process? What we want is a scientific theory, not a psychological accident. That is, to present a theory as a scientifically valid theory is to make certain claims about how that theory was arrived at. It is to claim that the movement in the argument from evidence to conclusion is motivated solely by rules of rational thought internal to the thought process itself. It is to claim that the sphere of scientific investigation is a sphere of autonomous action, rather than a sphere of heteronomous action in which the movement from one position to the next is influenced by external factors - such as the way in which one was weaned. Only if we are convinced of the autonomy of the process of investigations *do we accept the conclusion as valid.*

Obviously my example is a very crude one. Nevertheless, the problem is a real one which arises particularly when theorists discuss the learning process, the origin of ideas, the relation between ideas and other aspects of society, such as the economic institutions, or any similar problem. Do they have to apply their conclusions to their own ideas? If so, does this relativism bring into question the validity of their own ideas, and if not, why not. This problem relates back to our earlier question about the status of the laws formulated by social scientists. On the one hand, many fruitful generalisations have been made about the relationship between ideas and personal history or social position. On the other hand we seem obliged to postulate, at least as a possibility, some sort of autonomy of the process of idea formation. What then is the status of those generalisations which do in fact work, in the sense that they can in fact be successfully used to predict behaviour? To whom do they apply; why do they apply, and what are their limitations? How do we resolve the apparent paradox that one is both subject and object of one's own theories? This is another way of formulating the problem of particularity and universality, since the theory makes a claim to universality, insofar as it attempts to explain human behaviour in terms of a variety of causes it embeds the theorist in particularity and makes the universal theory the product of a particular concatenation of particular events. [17] We can perhaps illuminate the apparent paradox further from a political point of view. If you and I and several of our closest and most intelligent friends were wrecked on a desert island we believe that we would help one another to get food and shelter. We would share our tasks and protect one another. We would not fight and we would not exploit one another.

That is, the social order which we would create would be the embodiment of rational co-operation and within the limits imposed by a (we shall assume) benevolent environment, we would be building a utopian community. Most people, taken individually, would agree that they themselves could behave rationally in this way. Yet, in the real world most people do not, in fact, act rationally. They do not even act rationally towards the satisfaction of their own perceived interests. They have feuds and prejudices, delusions of grandeur and illusions of glory. They kill a million peasants so as not to be 'the first American President to lose a war.' The irrationality on an individual level goes along with an apparent social irrationality in which millions of individuals become trapped by one another into a patters of behaviour which no one of them would wish, and which is likely to bring disaster to all of them. We all know, for example, that within 50 years we are likely to be buried alive under plastic bottles but the process appears to be an impersonal one quite beyond the control of the individual user of plastic bottles.

What then is the relation between rationality and irrationality in human behaviour? Can one expand the area of rational behaviour and, if so, how and how far? This is related to the problem of autonomy and heteronomy. Kant distinguishes between an autonomous will and a heteronomous will, and he points out that a heteronomous will acts under the impulsion of stimuli which come from outside the rational thought processes of the individual. A dog smelling a bitch on heat acts heteronomously in the sense that its behaviour is immediately determined by this external stimulus. Some human beings act in the same way when offered the possibility of a sexual experience. That is, the physical urge immediately imposes itself on the will. Others, however, control the physical urge and use it rationally in relation to some goal. In this case the urge no longer imposes itself on the will and the action taken is autonomous, rather than heteronomous. Most people assume that they are autonomous but, in fact, are heteronomous. What is the relation between autonomy and heteronomy in human reality?

Finally, we can formulate all these oppositions - particular and universal, object and subject, irrational and rational, heteronomous and autonomous - in terms of the general nature of the relationship between human beings and world. On the one hand human beings are obviously dependent on the world. They are subject to physical laws, they have to work in the world in order to survive as material objects among other material objects. They are conditioned in their behaviour by the needs of their bodies and by their social and historical situations. On the other hand, human beings seem able also to transcend the world. [18] They are able to think in universal terms,

They can ignore the needs of their body by dying for an abstract ideal. They can escape from the perspectives apparently imposed upon them by their class situations or by their cultural background. That is, human reality appears, to be both dependent on and independent of the world.

The question of the relation between the "is" and the "ought" of human reality is just another way of formulating the problem of the relationship between dependence and independence. To what extent are human beings free to decide and to become what they ought to be? To what extent are they determined by what they are? Our first step in the attempt to find an answer to this question must be to attempt to think out clearly the relationship between the various apparently contradictory elements in human reality which I have described. Our task here is not to attempt to explain away one or the other elements in each contradictory pair. We do not need to attempt to show that human reality is 'really' heteronomous or 'really' autonomous. Rather we need to see whether we can make coherent these various facets of human reality.

So far we have considered this problem mainly in regard to the needs of individuals. We went from the 'housing problem' down to this basic problem of the nature of the individual human being.

Let us now look at the process in the opposite direction, and show the way in which ideas about the nature of the individual human being affect social theory and political policy. The main point is that the construction of explanatory theory and the formulation of political policy always depend in an important way on some concept of what is possible.

(1) This is obviously the case in connection with political policy. We choose one from amongst a range of perceived possibilities. If we do not know that a particular policy is in fact possible then it does not enter into the picture at all. A 'socialist' solution to the housing problem may be rejected either because socialism is seen as a possibility which is undesirable or because it is not seen as a possibility at all. That is, it may be thought that, for some reason or other, people could not behave in the sort of way in which they would be required to behave if a democratic socialist society were to work. Thus if we can say what possible modes of behaviour are open to human beings, then we are also in a position to say precisely what the range of alternative political solutions is in any particular case. On the other hand, if we accept unquestioningly that a particular form of human behaviour is natural, then all postulated possibilities have to be compatible with this behaviour, and it may well be that certain factual possibilities will be excluded.

(2) Within theory the same reference to a field of possibilities occurs. An explanation is designed to explain whatever appears to be problematic at the level of analysis in question. If you want to explain why 'A' jumped to his death from [19] the tenth floor you do not spend your time talking about gravity and the acceleration of falling bodies, as this is not relevant to the level of analysis, and is not problematic in this case, Nor do you ask why, having reached the level of the fifth floor, he continued on down to the ground. There appears to be nothing problematic in the process at all, since there were not alternatives open. It is only when some other event, 'Z', could have occurred that it becomes interesting to ask why, in fact, event 'Y' occurred. You do not ask why 'A' didn't fly; but if he jumped with a parachute and didn't try to open it, then you do ask why.

Thus an explanation usually refers implicitly to a hypothesised field of possibilities, and attempts to show why a particular one of those possibilities is actualised. This means that if we fail to begin with an exhaustive investigation of the possibilities, then we may simply not notice interesting and important theoretical questions.

If, in attempting to understand the shape and nature of South African society, we begin with the assumption that black people are biologically inferior to white people, then we are liable to take for granted that their social, economic, political and educational inferiority is in some way caused by biological inferiority and therefore does not need to be explained sociologically. Only if we conceive the possibility of a society in which black and white are equal do we begin to ask the theoretically interesting questions. How, historically, was white dominance imposed? How is it maintained? In what ways does the situation of dominance affect the dominated people and how are the various types of inferiority produced by the social system?

Similarly, if we assume that women are biologically different from men we tend not to look for sociological explanations of the very different roles played by men and women in our society, Or, if we assume that it is natural that society should be divided into property-owners and non-property-owners, then we tend not to look for an historical origin of this and also we tend not to try to analyse the mechanism which, in present day society, preserves that division.

Finally, in order to make meaningful moral judgements, we need to have an idea of the range of alternative individual and social forms of behaviour available. We can only condemn a particular form of society by reference to some postulated alternative form of society. Unless therefore, we work out carefully what alternative forms of society are available, we are not in a position to make valid moral judgements about those which do exist.

So far, in discussing the problem of the nature of human possibilities I have laid most stress on those limitations which might arise from the nature of the individual human being, which one might term the imperatives of human nature. However, it may well be that there are other limitations which arise only at the level of the social. For example, one might conclude that as an individual each perspn is capable of understanding [20] the problems facing a complex modern society, but that it is impossible for two hundred million individuals to decide jointly on an issue in a sufficiently short time, and that therefore some decision-making hierarchy will be required in any large society. There might therefore be certain 'imperatives of organisation' which we also need to take into account. The attempt to establish the existence of such imperatives of organisation is related to the problem of the ontological status of social laws to which [we] have already referred. This problem can be reformulated as a set of questions about the nature of social structure and of social change. In the discussion of social change our paradox of dependence-independence arises in the form of problems about historical predictions. We all do continuously make quite accurate historical predictions on a large scale. For example, I expect my salary to be paid at the end of the month. At first sight this perhaps does not seem to involve any historical predictions. But, in fact, I am predicting that a very large number of actions, on which the payment of my salary depends, will occur. Inter alia, I am predicting that the system of white dominance in South Africa, which is kept in being by a large machinery of repressions as well as by the informal actions of a large proportion of the South African population, will continue to be able to funnel the products of black labour into the pockets of members of the privileged class such as myself. Now this prediction which most people would agree is fairly reliable (at least with reference to this month's salary) is based on some sort of analysis of the past and of the present. It is not the result of an undifferentiated assumption of continuity; one can imagine a set of circumstances in which I would no longer feel able to make that prediction.

There are many other examples of safe predictions one can make the next British Prime Minister will not be a communist; in 1977 the U.S.A. will have a new President and he will be a Republican or a Democrat.

The examples I have given so far all involve predictions of historical continuity of some sort. I have predicted that British voters will continue to support the present major parties within the time span of my predictions and that, similarly, the U.S. constitition will be applied so that President Nixon is not eligible for a third term. But we cannot only predict continuity. We can also predict that certain sorts of problems are likely to arise as a re-

sult of the continued existence of certain social structures. We can, for example, make predictions about the increase of the problem of pollution arising from a continued worship of GNP. We can also make predictions about some technical topics such as the effect of exposure to a market economy on a tribal society. We seem to be able to make predictions based either on the continuity of social structure, or else on the idea of tensions either within or between social structures.

Thus we clearly can make historical predictions of various kinds. On the one hand, then, we need to ask to what extent we can refine our technique of prediction and [21] what limits, if any, there are to our capacity to predict: can we extrapolate from the limited capacities referred to above and develop a long-range theory of social change? If not, why not? On the other hand, we are once more faced with the problem that to the extend that we insist upon the possibility of historical prediction, we at least seem to be implying that individual behaviour is the product of historical social forces and, hence, particular, heteronomous, thing-like and dependent. We seem to be implying that human beings are not responsible for what happens in society. What is the relationship between the possibility of prediction and the possibility of choice?

We have seen that the consideration of the meaning of the 'housing problem' has led us into a set of problems about the nature of human reality and of social structure, which we have formulated in terms of a number of apparently contradictory concepts: universality-particularity, subject-object, rationality-irrationality, autonomy-heteronomy, independence-dependence, historical responsibility-historical determinism. Our estimation of the range of human possibilities depends on the way in which we resolve these apparent contradictions. How do we go about solving this problem?

(1) The empirical approach. Can we not in fact solve these problems simply by empirical research? Could we not, perhaps, even bypass the paradox and attempt to delimit the field of human possibilities through a careful description of all the various ways in which human beings have behaved and do behave, and all the social forms which have existed and do exist? One obvious objection to this approach is that the fact that a particular mode of behaviour or a particular social form has as yet not existed is no proof that it could not exist. If, at any point in the past, one had attempted to determine the limits of possibility by such a description, one would have ruled out possibilities which have since proved themselves to be historically viable. Nevertheless, it might be possible to use one's observational data to construct theoretical alternative models, just as an engineer designs a rocket

engine, something new, on the basis of his observations of other related classes of object.

However, there is a more fundamental objection to the possibility of a purely empirical approach to the problem. This is that the paradoxes to which we have referred place in question the meaning and possibility of human knowledge. Empirical investigators are claiming that the 'knowledge' they arrive at is something more than just their own particular reaction to a particular set of events. They claim some sort of universality for their findings. Until we have given an account of the relation between particularity and universality within human reality, we do not really know what the status of empirical observation itself is.[22]

That is, empirical observation is itself one of the forms of human behaviour, the meaning of which we are trying to comprehend. We seem to be faced here with another paradox. Can we know before we know that we can know? And if not, how can we ever know that we can know?

(2) The speculative or metaphysical approach. Having reached this point of paradox many investigators have tended to throw up their hands in despair. Theologians are tempted to speak of a 'mystery', and to turn to the discussion of the religious significance of this mystery. Is not the existence of this mystery at the heart of human reality a proof of the existence of an omnipotent creator and of the dependent and derived nature of human beings? What distinguishes the speculative approach from the empirical is this: an empirical explanation is an attempt to show the relation between two sets of observed phenomena; a speculative explanation is an attempt to imagine a mechanism which, although unobserved, could, if it existed, account for a particular set of observed phenomena. The speculator then moves one step further and says 'since neither you nor anybody else can explain the phenomenon empirically, therefore the mechanism which I have speculatively discovered must exist.' Speculation can, of course, be a very helpful guide as to what to look for. "What might explain it"? "A, B or C might. Therefore let us look for one of them." All research is, in fact, guided by some sort of speculative hypothesis - if one has no idea of what one might be looking for, one is not likely to find it. Speculation only becomes useless when it becomes a method of confirming hypotheses.

The history of philosophy is cluttered with the wrecks of speculative attempts to explain the apparently paradoxical nature of human reality. These attempts have played an important role in the development of philosophy, in that they are often associated with fruitful new ways of formulating the initial problem. For example, Plato's whole speculative edifice rests upon the first, and still one of the best, clear formulations of the problem of

universals. However, here I do not intend to discuss the progressive aspect of speculation.

Most versions of the speculative solution to the problem have the following form:

The ultimate nature of reality is X.

Therefore human reality must be derived from X.

A, although it has some problems which as yet we haven't quite solved, is a way in which human reality could be derived from X.

Therefore A.

X is usually derived from a reflection on the paradox, followed by the assertion that one of the two aspects of human reality is the essential one, and that the other aspect is in some way either quite unreal or else secondary to and derived from the first aspect. Thus we are faced with two metaphysical concepts, 'mind' and 'matter' and with two great metaphysical systems, metaphysical idealism and metaphysical materialism. [23] (I prefix the term 'metaphysical' to each as, there are philosophies described as 'idealism' which are not metaphysical in the sense that I have defined that term here.)

The two concepts 'mind' and 'matter' are initially used conjointly within the same theory. The 'universal' element is described as 'mind' or 'soul' and the particular element is described as 'matter' or 'body'. The contradiction is then explained by saying that a human being is the union of two dissimilar elements, mind and body. However, it then becomes necessary to describe how these two elements are conjoined. This produces an ontological problem about the 'being' of human reality, and an epistemological problem about the possibility of knowledge. If mind is different from matter, how can it know matter? How do these two spheres of being communicate with one another? The two metaphysical systems arise as 'solutions' to these problems.

Metaphysical idealism tends to accept only the universal, autonomous, independent, aspect of human reality; to assert that the ultimate reality, both of human existence and of the universe, is 'mind' and to embody 'mind' in some theistic form. The 'material' aspect of human existence is then explained either as being an illusion of some sort, as Plato explained it, or as being a real but secondary and created product of Mind.

Metaphysical materialism accepts only the particular, dependent, heteronomous aspect of human reality and asserts that the ultimate reality is something called 'Matter' and that the 'mental' aspects of human reality are in some sense reducible to material processes. In the words of one metaphysical materialist: "The brain secretes thoughts as the liver secretes bile."

It is important to stress that what I have called metaphysical materialism' is quite different from science, as the two are often popularly confused.

Metaphysical materialism is a hypothesis about the ultimate nature of reality. Science is based not on a hypothesis about the nature of reality but on a set of methodological principles for the acquisition of knowledge. Scientists do not, as scientists, make statements about the ultimate nature of reality. They use certain techniques for the collection and analysis of data in order to establish correlations between observed phenomena.

(3) The Philosophical or Phenomenological approach. The empirical approach is inadequate because it cannot account for itself. The speculative approach is inadequate because it offers no publicly available criteria for checking whether the alleged cause is really there. But what else can we do, apart from observe or speculate? I suggested earlier that our job was not to try to explain the apparent paradox of dependence - independence, but rather to try to make coherent these two aspects of human reality. How can this be done? I earlier formulated the problem of the foundation of empirical knowledge in these terms 'How can we [24] know before we can know that we can know'. That is, we need criteria of what constitutes knowledge. But these criteria are themselves part of our knowledge, so how do we decide that we know the criteria before we have criteria in terms of which we can be sure that we know? If we formulate the problem in this way it seems to turn into an insoluble vicious circle. Also it assumes that we can, in fact, attain the position of total scepticism from which such a question could be asked in those terms. If we cannot in any event do this, then it will be necessary to approach the problem from a different angle.

Is such scepticism possible? Descartes tried to lay the foundation of his philosophical theory by the use of the technique of methodological doubt. He decided that he would doubt everything that he could possibly doubt and see what was left. Since it is possible to be deceived by my senses, all sense perception must be doubted. Since it is possible to imagine an evil genie who deceived me and confuses my thought processes, I must doubt the truths of pure reason, such as logic and mathematics. But to doubt, or to be deceived, I must exist; I doubt, therefore I am. Thus Descartes believed that he had pushed scepticism to its limits, and at the heart of the sceptical position had discovered the one single indubitable truth from which to build anew. But was Descartes' doubt really as thorough as he thought it was? Even as he said 'I think, therefore I am' he was using concepts and he was assuming that he understood the significance of those concepts. But each concept gets its meaning at one level, from its relation with other concepts and, at another level, from its relation to the personal experience of the

individual using it. That is, when I use a word I know what it means although, as I use it, I am not thinking about what it means. Sartre uses the terms 'pre-reflective consciousness' and 'reflective consciousness' to distinguish between these two aspects. While I am doing something, such as counting or eating, I am not specifically thinking about the fact that I am counting or eating. I do not continually say over to myself 'Here I am eating my supper'. Nevertheless, I know that I am eating my supper. If somebody asks me what I am doing I transfer from being pre-reflectively conscious of it to being reflectively conscious of it, and reply that I am eating my supper. Similarly, if I am watching a film and the heroine slaps the hero, I don't ususally have to ask why she did it, or begin to go back through the story in order to work it out. I immediately understand it, which means that I immediately see how it is related to its context, the rest of the film. I can go over the story afterwards, perhaps to explain it to somebody who has not understood it, but this reflective attempt to relate the episodes to one another can only occur to the extent that I understood the film 'pre-reflectively' whilst watching it. I see each scene within the context of all the other scenes which I am neither seeing nor reflectively thinking about but which constitute the necessary horizon of meaning in terms of that toward which my attention is actually directed makes sense. Even when I am developing a purely intellectual argument, I do not, as it were, hold it all in my head at once. The word which I am uttering at any given moment gets its meaning [25] both from the words I have already used and from the contexts in which I or my listeners have heard or used the word before and of which we are pre-reflectively conscious throughout the process.

Thus, within the concepts which Descartes uses for his methodological doubt is already contained both his own personal history and the culture of his society. Commenting on this, Merleau-Ponty writes

> For if I am able to talk about 'dreams'. and 'reality', to bother my head about the distinction between imaginary and real and to cast doubt upon the 'real', it is because this distinction is already made by me before any analysis; it is because I have an experience of the real as of the imaginary, and the problem then becomes one not of asking how critical thought can provide for itself secondary equivalents of this distinction but of making explicit our primordial knowledge of the 'real', of describing our prescription of the world as that upon which our idea of truth is for-ever based. We must not, therefore, wonder whether we really perceive a world, we must instead say: 'the world is what we perceive' (*Phenomenology of Perception* xvi).

We cannot therefore, in fact escape from the pre-reflective context in which we begin to ask philosophical questions. Try to imagine an evil

genie who changes your perception of your past from moment to moment and who changes the meanings of words as you use them. Your only solution is total silence. Thus the only way in which we can ever move towards a sound theoretical basis is via the reflective exploration of the position from which we begin. This means that we shall need to thrust through to the most taken for granted elements of human experience, to try to articulate these elements clearly. This is not so easy as it sounds. What is completely taken-for-granted is often not named, so it may be necessary to develop a new vocabulary in which to embody the description. Secondly the taken-for-granted is, by definition, difficult to see, because it is never looked at. Finally the process is complicated by the fact that language makes it possible to withdraw from reality in such a way that one can construct theories which falsify one's perceptions of reality. In this case one may have two contradictory sets of assumptions, one derived from one's pre-reflective experience and the other based on one's reflective theory-building activity. This is precisely the case with Descartes.

There are two philosophical schools engaged in some way in this activity - the linguistic analysts and the phenomenologists. It would take us too far afield to discuss in detail the similarities and differences of these two approaches, but [it] is at least useful to use Ryle's description of his method of 'linguistic analysis' as an introduction to Sartre's account of phenomenology. Ryle writes

> The philosophical arguments which constitute this book are intended not to increase what we know about minds, but to rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess. Both in describing the minds of others and in prescribing for them, (people) are wielding with greater or lesser efficiency concepts of mental powers and operations. [26] It is, however, one thing to know how to apply such concepts, quite another to know how to correlate them with one another and with concepts of other sorts. Many people can talk sense with concepts but cannot talk sense about them; they know by practice how to operate with concepts, anyhow inside familiar fields, but they cannot state the logical relations governing their use. (*Concept of Mind*, 9.)

Instead of walking over a particular area we make a map of it, and on the map state with precision the relationship between the spots which we habitually designate imprecisely but adequately from the perspective of everyday use. Once we have the map, we do not use it for finding our way around since we already know how to do that. We use it for more theoretical purposes, such as estimating areas and defining boundaries. In establishing the logical geography of a particular conceptual field we are making coherent the various concepts inhabiting that field.

Sartre outlines a similar approach in rather different terms. He begins by distinguishing between "phenomenological reflection" and "introspection". Introspection is a (dubious) method within the field of psychology. It is a particular way of gathering data from which generalisations can be made in the normal way. Phenomenological reflection on the other hand, is not aimed at particular occurrences but rather at the structures which constitute particular types of experience.

> (It) tries to grasp essences. That is to say that it begins by placing itself immediately in the sphere of the universal (*L'Imagination* 40).

For example, imagination is a pre-reflective activity which can become a theme of consciousness in reflection, and "Reflective consciousness delivers an immediately certain given". That is, here, under normal conditions I know when I am imagining or perceiving, and thus means that I have certain criteria which I habitually use in distinguishing between imagining and perceiving. Introspection might be used to solve the following type of problem. Do people normally imagine in colour or in black and white? I might try to answer this question by 'introspecting' while making ten successive acts of imagining and then reporting how many of them were in colour. But this introspecting already assumes that I know what I am introspecting, that is, that I am introspecting acts of imagination rather than acts of perception. Phenomenological reflection is aimed at the prior question of explicating what is involved in knowing that I am imagining. [27] Sartre writes, therefore,

> If these consciousnesses (of imagining) are immediately distinguished from all others, it is because they present themselves to reflection with certain marks, certain characteristics, which immediately determine the judgement 'I have an image.' So the act of reflection has an immediately certain content which we shall call the 'essence of the image'. (*L'Imaginaire* 14)

The fact that I am aware that I am, say, imagining rather than perceiving, implies (a) that there are criteria for distinguishing between imagining and perceiving and (b) that I am able, in my daily activities, to utilise these criteria without difficulty. I have to reflectively investigate this normally unreflected use of criteria and to make the criteria explicit. The 'essence' of the image is not its particular content, but that in it which makes it count as an image.

To conclude, the problems with which Sartre is dealing are

(a) What is the nature of human reality? How can we resolve the apparent paradox of human independence-dependence? This is essentially the topic

of *Being and Nothingness*. In a recent interview he defined his objective in *Being and Nothingness* specifically in terms of an opposition to both idealism and 'mechanical materialism'.

> My preoccupation at that time which was to give a philosophical foundation to realism. Something in my opinion which is possible today and which I have tried to do all my life. The question was: how to give a man both his autonomy and his reality amongst real objects, while avoiding idealism and without falling into mechanical materialism. (*Situations IX*. p. 104)

(b) What is the significance of this for our understanding of social structure, history, and political choice? This is the topic of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The method which he uses is the method of phenomenological reflections in order to make explicit the fundamental structures of human reality. As I pointed out earlier, when we try to analyse the most taken-for-granted elements, we are faced with a problem of vocabulary. New words have to be used for what is not usually named. One of the main difficulties in the understanding of Sartre's work arises from this problem of language. Sartre's special vocabulary is a combination of neologisms and traditional philosophical terms used in new ways. It is important, therefore, (a) to watch very carefully how he used the words, rather than to prejudge the meaning; and to remember that the terms which he uses are designed to explicate [28] everyday experience, rather than to refer to entities postulated as underlying and causing everyday experience. This is particularly true in regard to two central terms in *Being and Nothingness* 'being-in-itself' and 'being-for-itself'. These and similar terms have to be recognised as being linguistic tools rather than metaphysical entities. if we bear these two factors in mind, if we try to stop taking for granted the taken for granted, then Sartre's apparently forbidding prose turns out to be quite straightforward. [29/1]

CHAPTER 2

Toward reason: The liberation of humanity

Part 1

Being and Nothingness

We have to begin our enquiry into the nature of human reality by exploring the relationship between human being and world, for it is on this relationship that the crux of the paradox of dependence-independence lies. On one level this can be formulated as a question about experience. How, in an act of perception, am I related to the object that I am perceiving? Clearly I am only perceiving part of the object - I can only see it from one particular perspective at a time. Furthermore, is it not arguable that the actual picture I have of this chair refers only indirectly to the chair, insofar as the picture is a function also of my sense organs and, to that extent, is not purely 'of the object'? This kind of approach has led to the postulation of the 'dualism' referred to here by Sartre:

> Modern thought has realised considerable progress by reducing the existent to the series of appearances which manifest it ... the dualism of being and appearance is no longer entitled to any legal status within philosophy. The appearance refers to the total series of appearances and not to a hidden reality which would drain to itself all the being of the existent. (*BN* xlv)

In terms of traditional dualisms, what I see is not the 'thing' but the way in which the thing appears to me. I can, therefore, never directly know the thing as it really is, but only the thing as appearance. The appearance refers to a reality underlying it, but the way in which it so refers is problematical. The dualism has been described in many ways. Sartre refers to the following sets of opposites: outside-inside, appearance-reality, appearance-essence, phenomenon-noumenon.

Once one has accepted this dualism a number of difficult problems about knowledge and the nature of reality arise. The phenomenological approach is not to attempt to solve these problems; rather it involves questioning the

assumption from which the problems flow. We must not begin to philosophise by asking how appearance is related to reality. Instead, we must start with the 'appearance' or the 'phenomenon' itself, and describe it and its relation to other phenomena. Only if the appearance-reality problem arises out of a careful description of this nature can we treat it as a legitimate problem. [30/2]

If I look at a cup, it appears to me in a certain way, in that I'm seeing it from a certain angle, and see only one facet of it. If I move I see another facet of the cup. What is the relation between these two appearances of the cup? How are the different appearances related to one another, and how is it that I can see the relationship? This seems to introduce a new dualism:

> Let us understand that our theory of the phenomenon has replaced the reality of the thing by the objectivity of the phenomenon and that it has based this on an appeal to infinity. The reality of that cup is that it is there and that it is not me. We shall interpret this by saying that the series of its appearances is bound by a principle which does not depend on my whim. But the appearance reduced to itself, and without reference to the series of which it is a part, could only be an intuitive and subjective plenitude, the manner in which the subject is affected. If the phenomenon is to reveal itself as transcendant, it is necessary that the subject himself transcend the appearance toward the total series of which it is a member. He must seize Red through his impression of red. (*BN* XXlVII)

The dualism here is the relationship between the single appearance and the infinite series of possible appearances of which it is a part; as Sartre formulates it, it is the dualism of 'finite' and 'infinite'.

There is one noticeable difference, which Sartre does not make explicit at this point, between this dualism and the other rejected dualisms. These were all expressed in terms of spatial metaphor; a reality lying behind or under the appearance, an essence inside the thing, and so on. However, this new dualism of finite and infinite is a temporal dualism. The series of possible appearances to which the individual appearance refers is a temporal series. The epistemological problem is not whether there is in fact a reality lying spatially behind the appearance. To discover whether there were such a reality one would, as it were, have to climb out of the top of one's head, and struggle over the barrier of the appearance to see if there were anything on the other side. Instead, the problem of the objectivity of the phenomenon has to be solved in time, by investigating the consistency or otherwise of the series of appearances with which this particular experience is factually related. This of course describes how we, in fact, go about determining whether something is 'real' or not. We try to touch it, or we turn it over to see if it has the right sort of underside, and we only decide whether it is in

fact real on the basis of a [31/3] comparison of all these different perceptions of it. When we perceive an object as real we are perceiving it as being able to appear in other ways. Or, to put it differently, we perceive an object as a transcendable appearance and this transcendence is a temporal transcendence. Seeing the problem of reality in temporal terms rather than in spatial terms, raises its own difficulties, but they are different from those difficulties which arise from the spatial metaphor.

We need now to attempt to delinate the logical geography of the set of concepts to which we have been introduced. In particular, we need to ask what is the relationship between the concepts 'being' and 'appearing'. Is 'to appear' identical with 'to be'? If not, what do we mean when we say that something 'is' rather than 'is not'? Sartre formulates this problem with the aid of the concept of 'being'. In asking the question "What is the 'being' of the object I perceive?" We are no longer talking about the object itself, but about "being". That is, the focus of our attention is directed away from the specific object towards the phenomenon of being. We seem to be faced with a problem of circularity here as the question about the being of the phenomenon appears to dissolve into a question about the phenomenon of being. 'Being' seems to be just another phenomenon which is in some way internal to our experience if we proceed along these lines. However, Sartre argues that we have to distinguish between what is involved in transcending this here-now experience of the chair towards the chair as the total series, and the transcending of the phenomenon towards the being of the phenomenon. The difference is this: the chair as 'the principle of the series of appearances which discloses it' is the meaning of the particular appearance; 'being', however, is neither a specific quality which the chair has (like its colour or shape) nor is it the principle underlying the series of appearances, the meaning or essence of the object.

> The object does not possess being, and its existence is not a participation in being, nor any other kind of relation. It is. That is the only way to define its manner of being; the object does not hide being but neither does it reveal being... Being is simply the condition of all revelation. (*BN* xlix)

That is, being can never be reduced to the knowledge we have of it, since what we discover when we investigate the phenomenon of being is the necessary transphenomenality of being. What is meant by this rather complicated proposition is that, while a 'phenomenon', by definition, only exists in a perceiving-revealing relationship with consciousness, yet that which I am perceiving when I perceive [32/4] the chair transcends my perception of it. The world I perceive cannot be reduced to my perception of it. It is

important to establish this point carefully, because the exact significance of the transphenomenality of being is one of the factors which determines the limits of human knowledge. So far in this analysis we have established guidlines for an answer to that question: (a) We can have knowledge of things in the world, rather than simply of our own subjective states but (b) our knowledge can never appropriate the world, or coincide with it exactly. We now need to explore this important fact.

> All consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness of something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not a *positing* of a transcendent object or, if you prefer, that consciousness has no 'content'. We must renounce those neutral 'givens' which, according to the system of reference chosen, find their place either 'in the world' or 'in the psyche'. A table is not *in* consciousness - not even in the capacity of a representation. A table is *in* space, beside the window, etc. The existence of the table in fact is a centre of opacity for consciousness; it would require an infinite process to inventor[ise] the total contents of a thing. To introduce this opacity into consciousness would be to refer to infinity the inventory which it can make of itself, to make consciousness a thing and to deny the cogito. The first procedure of a philosophy ought to be to expel things from consciousness and to re-establish its true connection with the world, to know that consciousness is a positional consciousness of the world. (*BN* 11)

In this paragraph Sartre indicates the essential nature of the two poles involved in the relationship of human reality to the world: the 'centre of opacity' and the 'contentless' consciousness. We shall explore these two in the opposite order from Sartre. (1) The object of consciousness is 'centre of opacity'. Can we say anything about this at the level of phenomenological description? We can obviously say all sorts of things about individual things in the world and it is the job of the natural sciences to do this, but what can we say about the 'being' of all these things? Sartre suggests that, initially at least, we can make only three statements. 'Being is. Being is in-itself. Being is what it is.' (*BN* lxvi) The object of these Delphic utterances is two-fold; (a) to exclude the possibility of a speculative metaphysics which tries to explain the meaning or origins of being; "Being in-itself is never either possible or impossible. *It is.*" [33/5]

This is what consciousness expresses in anthropomorphic terms by saying that being is superfluous (*de trop*) that is, that consciousness absolutely cannot derive being from anything, either from another being or from a possibility, or from a necessary law. Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, 'being-in-itself is *de trop* for eternity' (b) to indicate the difference between this and the being of human reality, Sartre borrows the Hegelian term 'being-in-itself' to distinguish be-

tween something which contains within itself some self-reference (exists for-itself) and something which does not contain any self-reference (exists only in itself.) For example, Hegel distinguishes between a class in-itself and a class for-itself. In the former the members are linked by a set of objective relations of which they are not aware, and therefore they do not see themselves as constituting a class, whereas in the latter case the individuals are both objectively a class and subjectively conscious of being a class. The relationship of self-reference is an important one for our description, since the concept of 'identity', basic to formal logic and to our thinking, applies differently to things which are 'in-themselves' and things which are also 'for-themselves'. To explicate this further, we need to examine the other pole of the human-world relationship.

(2) Consciousness as 'contentless'. The knowing subject is conscious. What do we mean when we say this? Firstly, 'consciousness' is not a container. I do not 'know' things which are in some way 'inside' my consciousness. If we were to work with such a model, knowledge, as an objective relationship between myself and a thing, would become impossible. For if there are 'opacities' inside consciousness then it becomes impossible for me ever to distinguish between what 'consciousness' and its content is contributing and what the thing itself is contributing to the end result. It would be like trying to measure accurately the temperature of a small amount of water without knowing the initial temperature of the thermometer and so, without being able to calculate the way in which the thermometer itself altered the temperature of the water. If the opacity, the infinite explorability of the object, were inside consciousness I would never be able to get beyond the internal states of my consciousness to some sort of consciousness of the world. Knowledge would thus be, in principle, impossible. It is important to distinguish here between situations in which knowledge is, in fact, impossible, and the idea that any knowledge is in principle impossible. We may well find that the former case is very frequent, but we cannot ever accept the latter position, since it is self-contradictory - it involves saying [34/6] 'I know that it is impossible to know'. Thus the concept of knowledge logically implies a contentless consciousness; it implies that to be conscious is to be related to the world in some way. Consciousness is what phenomenologists describe as 'intentional'. It is directed towards something which is not it.

Sartre draws an important distinction here between 'consciousness' and 'knowledge.' He writes

> Consciousness is the knowing being in his capacity as *being* and not as being known. This means that we must abandon the primacy of knowledge if we wish to establish that knowledge. Of course consciousness can know and know itself. But it is in itself something other than a knowledge turned back upon itself. (*BN* 11)

What would it mean to be conscious of something without knowing it? Sartre distinguishes, for example, between "being conscious of knowing" and "knowing that one knows". He clarifies this by introducing the concept of 'reflection'. To know that one knows is to reflect on the fact of one's knowledge, whereas to be conscious that one knows is pre-reflective. In reflection I make my knowledge the object of my reflection and, insofar as it is an object for me, I can take up an attitude towards it and judge it. But my pre-reflective consciousness of knowing just involves knowing. It involves no judgement on the fact of my knowledge, and no 'distance' between myself and my knowledge. There is a dualism in knowledge; it involves a subject and an object, and this seems to involve a problem. If I know something, it would seem reasonable to say that I know that I know it. On the other hand, if we accept the subject-object distinction, then the 'I' that knows that I know is the subject in this particular relation of knowledge, and the 'I' that knows is the object. We are forced to ask - does this new 'I', the 'I' that knows that I know, know that it knows (that I know). This obviously pushes us into an infinite regress of 'I's', and this infinite regress is logically implied by our insistence that to know is to know that one knows. But this multiplication of 'I's' is ridiculous so we need to reanalyse what is involved in cognition. Sartre takes the example of counting. When I am counting my whole attention is directed towards the things that I am counting. I do not keep on saying to myself 'I am counting'. Nevertheless, even though I am not reflectively thinking about it, I am conscious that I am counting. And if I were not so conscious I would not be able to count since counting involves a sequence of acts, each one of which is only meaningful in terms of those that precede and follow it. If I were not conscious that I was counting I would not be able to move on from 'five' to 'six'. I only actually say 'I am counting' when something forces me to reflect on what I am doing. I then become [35/7] conscious of my own consciousness, or reflectively conscious. Thus consciousness always exists for itself, though it need not necessarily make this explicit. To count is to be conscious of counting.

Another way of explicating this is to point out that there is an ambiguity in our everyday use of the word 'know'. In one sense when I am counting I

know that I am counting, rather than running to catch a bus, and no philosophical problems are raised by my saying that of course I knew that I was counting. The problems only arise when this sense of the term 'know' is confused with the second sense in which I say, for example, that 'I know that Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark' meaning thereby that this fact is the theme of my thought processes, that it has been conceptualised, verbalised and reflected upon. This is what might be described as 'theoretical' of 'intellectual' knowledge and it is this type of knowledge with which consciousness must not be confused.

This is similar to Ryle's distinction between 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' and Ryle makes the distinction for a similar reason to Sartre's; in order to attack what he calls the 'intellectualist legend' which insists on the primacy of intellectual knowledge.

> To do something thinking what one is doing is, according to this legend, always to do two things; namely, to consider certain appropriate propositions, or prescriptions, and to put into practice what these propositions or prescriptions enjoin. It is to do a bit of theory and then to do a bit of practice. (*Concept of Mind* p. 3)

He points out that people can often do things without being able to say how they do them. For example, the sailor boy tying a complicated knot probably cannot describe in words how the knot is tied. He knows how to tie the knot but he does not know it 'intellectually' or 'theoretically'.

Ryle uses the term 'intelligence' rather similarly to the way in which Sartre uses 'consciousness'.

> The well-regulated clock keeps good time and the well-drilled circus seal performs its tricks flawlessly, yet we do not call them 'intelligent'! We reserve this title for the persons responsible for their performances ... A person's performance is described as careful or skilful if, in his operations, he is ready to detect and correct lapses, to repeat and improve upon successes, to profit from the example of others and so forth. (*Concept of Mind* p. 29)

(Of course 'intelligence' here does not refer only to the top end of the (mythical) I.Q. scale, but rather to the whole range.)

We are normally involved in situations in which we know what we are doing (are conscious of what we are doing); are more or less effectually [36/8] adapting our acts to our environment (are acting consciously), but in which we are not theorising (are not reflectively aiming at out activities and thereby turning them into 'knowledge that').

However, does it help us to replace 'I know that I know' with 'I am conscious that I am conscious'? Yes, it does, because the whole point [of]

Sartre's argument is to show that this pre-reflective consciousness does not involve a dualism and hence the problem of infinite regression. Consciousness "is one with the consciousness of which it is consciousness". (*BN* liv)

This self-reference, or self-directedness, of consciousness defines its 'mode of being' and this is why it is described as being 'for itself'. It is what Sartre describes further on as a 'relation of being' not a 'relation of knowledge'. Our problem is to establish the significance of this self-reference of consciousness for the comprehension of human reality.

The third characteristic of consciousness, derived from the first two, is that it is autonomous. When I am counting, what moves me from 3 to 4 is simply that I am conscious that I am counting. lf I am tying a knot I put this end over that end in a certain way because I am conscious that I am tying a knot, rather than just fiddling with a piece of string. It is my consciousness of what I am doing which makes a unity of the sequence. Thus Sartre concludes

> It is impossible to assign to a consciousness a motivation other than itself. Otherwise it would be necessary to conceive that consciousness, to the degree to which it is an effect, is not conscious (of) itself. It would be necessary in some manner that it should be without being conscious (of) being ... consciousness is consciousness through and through. It can be limited only by itself. (*BN* lv)

In one sense, of course, my counting is determined by what I am counting. I cannot count 43 sheep if there are only 11 in the field. But this is not the point that Sartre is making. He is, rather, saying that if I found myself saying 'one, two, three, four, erg, glumph' I should not know how I got to 'glumph' and should no longer say that I was counting, and would feel as though something else was putting words into my mouth and I would not know what was happening to me. The move from 'erg' to 'glumph' would be motivated from 'outside' my consciousness; and for that very reason the end result would be meaningless. It is only insofar as the end result is motivated by my consciousness throughout of counting that I am conscious of it at the end as being the number of the objects that I have counted. [37/9]

Thus consciousness is consciousness of something, is 'for-itself' and is autonomous. We have now discovered what Sartre calls "two types of being, the in-itself and the for-itself" (*BN* lxvii) and our problem is to describe more fully the relationship between the two.

The essential problem is to comprehend consciousness, and this we can do through a series of transcendental questions of the type "What must consciousness be to be 'for-itself'?"

We start from the concrete, that is, not from knowledge, or from the world, but from 'this totality which is man-in-the world ... (we must ask) (1) What is the synthetic relation which we call being-in-the world' (2) What must man and the world be in order for a relation between them to be possible? (*BN* 4) Any pattern of human conduct, analysed, should exhibit the basic abstract structure of this relationship. And they all reveal the fact of 'non-being', of 'nothingness'. Now this concept, central, to Sartre's analysis, is far from being clear. It is a term rarely used in everday speech and, in any event, Sartre uses it in a technical sense. So it is crucial to examine very carefully what he means by it.

A human being is, *inter alia*, a receptor of sensory inputs from the rest of the universe, the centre of an infinite number of tracks of light and sound. One could imagine such a receiver entirely pinned down by this massive and continuous bombardment, obsessed with what is given directly to it by the world. To simplify the image one could imagine an eye which has to stare fixedly at a light and which, because at any given moment it is obsessed with the light as it is at that moment, cannot look at anything else and, more importantly, cannot think of anything else, and cannot even think of the past or of the future of that light and *a fortiori* cannot think of itself. Such a receiver, then, would be entirely involved in what is here and now before it. This is what Sartre would call being involved only with being.

It is easy to see that our own experience is not like this. Sartre takes as his first example the activity of questioning. When I ask a question I am referring (a) to a lack of knowledge on my part and (b) to the possibility of an answer which is negative, and (c) to the alternative possibility of a positive answer which delimits a particular truth, separates it off from other aspects of reality. Thus,

> the question is a bridge set up between two non-beings: the non-being of knowing in man, [38/10] the possibility of non-being of being in transcendent being ... The permanent possibility of non-being, outside us and within, conditions our questions about being. (*BN* 5)

It is clear that the 'eye' mentioned above could not ask questions. It could not ask, for example, why there is a light, because this would involve on its part (a) an awareness of the possibility of there not being a light; (b) an awareness of the possibility of a future goal or past cause for the light; and (c) an awareness of itself as not knowing these things. But in terms of our model it can be aware of nothing but the here and now of the light.

We now have to investigate the status or nature of this non-being. The question is by definition a reflective act, a theoretical act, and we might conclude from this that non-being only arises on the level of reflection and of the intellect, in the form of the negative judgement which we might then see as itself a positive act exactly equivalent to the positive judgement. But there are, in fact, many direct non-reflective experiences of 'non-being' such as the experience of destruction or of fragility:

> In a sense, certainly, man is the only being by whom a destruction can be accomplished. A geological plication, a storm, do not destroy or, at least, they do not destroy *directly*; they merely modify the distribution of masses of beings. There is no less after the storm than before. There is *something else*. Even this expression is improper, for to posit otherness there must be a witness who can retain the past in some manner and compare it to the present in the form of *no longer*. (*BN* 8)

If the white light at which the eye is staring were suddenly to be replaced by a green light this would not make the slightest difference to it. It would remain consciousness-of-this-light-here-now, and would not be able to say that destruction or change had occurred. In our more complicated model a change does not affect the fact that there is a fullness of being, a continuous input of sensation. We can only say that one thing has been destroyed if we have previously distinguished it from other things. This process of specification involves negation. It involves separating one thing from the rest, neglecting the rest, and denying of the thing that is the rest. "This supposes a limiting cutting into being by a being, which ... is already a process of nihilation" (*BN* 8)

When I look at a particular field I do not perceive it undifferentiatedly as one mass of being. Rather I see separate things, and moreover I see some thing or things as focus of attention and the other things as ground. [39/11] This involves what Sartre describes as nihilation. It is this nihilation, this introduction of separation, and hence of nothingness, into the given itself, which is the basis for the perception of destruction, or fragility, or for the asking of a question, or for the direct intuition of absence. Thus we can see that 'non-being', 'nothingness' is constitutive of our experience. What is the relationship between "being", of which consciousness is necessarily conscious, and "nothingness", to which our investigation into the relation between being and consciousness has led us?

For Hegel "Pure being and pure non-being would be two abstractions which could be reunited only on the basis of concrete realities" (*BN* 12) Being as "the indetermination which precedes all determination, the undetermined as to the absolute point of departure" is so empty of content that it is

"pure abstraction and consequently absolute negation" (*BN* 13) (both quotes from Hegel). However, Hegel errs here in identifying complete lack of determination with empty abstraction. As we have seen, being is transphenomenal. That is, it is not one structure of the phenomenon, which could be isolated by abstraction from the other structures, and which would then turn out to be so general as to be indistinguishable from nothing. Rather, being is the condition of the phenomenon manifesting itself. Hegel operates with the assumption that being can be conceptually known (and this assumption is the foundation of his idealism insofar as it implies a priority of knowledge over being) but in fact this is not the case. As we have seen, we can only say that being is, being is in-itself, and being is what it is. If we assume that what we have here is a piece of conceptual knowledge like any other, then it appears to be of utmost abstraction and generality. But in fact it is a statement of the limits of our conceptual knowledge and, as such, it is at the same time an affirmation of the "absolute plenitude and entire positivity" (*BN* 15) of being. Being in itself cannot be conceptually known because its absolute plenitude and entire positivity rules out the possibility of determination and, hence, of knowledge. Thus we end up at a position opposite to Hegel's. The concept being is logically prior to the concept nothingness which refers to an absence of being: "Whatever may be the original undifferentiation of being, non-being is that same undifferentiation denied". (*BN* 14)

Thus we have to account for the presence of nothingness in the world, and we have to do so without falling into the trap of substantialising nothingness, of making of it a special kind of being which coexists in [40/12] itself with being. The phenomenon which we have described as nothingness must therefore be produced by some being in its relation with things.

If we revert back to the "question" we see that in asking a question I "realise a nihilating withdrawal in relation to the given" (*BN* 23) that is, the questioner "dissociate(s) himself from the causal series which constitutes being and which can produce only being" (*BN* 23). Thus, asking a question involves my negating certain aspects of the world. It is I who introduce nothingness into the world. This leads us to the fundamental transcendental question "What must man be in his being in order that through him nothingness may come to being"? (*BN* 24)

To summarise Sartre's argument so far, he has shown that the concept 'nothingness' is central to our experience, in the sense that every aspect of our experience that we have so far investigated involves at least some reference away from what is here and now to what is not, in the sense that it is

future, or past, or elsewhere, or non-existent. Furthermore, this nothingness is not a thing that we encounter as we might encounter a hole.

> In order for the totality of being to order itself around us as instruments, in order for it to parcel itself into differentiated complexes which refer one to another and which can be used, it is necessary that negation rise up not as a thing among other things but as the rubric of a category which presides over the arrangement and the redistribution of great masses of being in things. Thus the rise of man in the midst of the being which 'invests' him causes a world to be discovered. But the essential and primordial moment of this rise is the negation. (*BN* 24)

Once the fact of nothingness has been uncovered through phenomenonological description, the next step is to pose the transcendental question. We do have this experience of nothingness. We cannot ask how this comes about in the sense of looking for some mechanism or causal explanation. But we can ask 'What must man be in his being in order that through him nothingness may come to being'? That is, what is logically implied by this fact for our understanding of other aspects of human reality? To explicate this will, of course, involve a whole series of other transcendental questions.

The first answer to the question is that for nothingness to come to being through man, man must be free. For in putting a particular being in question I am distancing myself from it, placing it away from me, and thereby placing myself away from it. I have "secreted a nothingness" which isolates [41/13] me from the thing, and the capacity to do this is what is meant by freedom. That is, to say human reality is always completely involved in causal sequences is to say that it is always involved in reacting in some way or other to the here and now, to being. Nothingness only arises to the extent that the causal sequences can be questioned, and placed at a distance. But this identification of freedom with the capacity to nihilate does not solve our problem. It only gives us a name to use. We now need to investigate freedom.

The causal sequence is a temporal sequence, and my act of questioning is, as an act, also temporally articulated. The break in the causal chain which I effect in asking the question is a break in the relation of myself to my own past.

> Inasmuch as my present state would be a prolongation of my prior state, every opening by which negation could slip through would be completely blocked. Every psychic process of nihilation implies then a cleavage between the immediate psychic past and the present. (*BN* 27)

My past is contiguous with my present, but is not my present. It is separate from my present, but there is nothing which separates it.

The Eye which we envisaged earlier, obsessed by the light at which it stares, cannot escape from the causal nexus constituted by its relation to the light. For it to do so it would be required at the same time to distance itself from its own past as obsession-with-the-light. But as it is it has no past. It is purely within the here-now. Or, rather, one can say indifferently that it has no past, no future, or that it is identical with its past and its future. And this is not only because in our model the light is not changing; it applies even if the light were changing, for, as we have seen, the Eye would not be able to conceive of change.

Thus consciousness is this special relationship of my present to my past, a relationship in which I am separated from my past, but am not separated from it by anything, and in which the separation comes from me, rather than from outside.

> The condition on which human reality can deny all or part of the world is that human reality carry nothingness within itself as the *nothing* which separates its present from all its past. (*BN* 28)

This relationship to the past must be a conscious relationship, that is, "not as a phenomenon which it experiences, rather as a structure of consciousness which it is" (*BN* 28). That is, to be conscious is to be in a certain [42/14] relationship to one's past. This relationship to the past, on the reflective level, manifests itself in anguish. A description of anguish and of the conditions in which anguish does not arise will explicate further the being of consciousness. Anguish, in the sense in which Sartre uses the term here, is distinct from fear. When I am frightened, I fear what the world may do to me. When I am anguished I am in anguish over what I may do to myself. The classic example of this is vertigo. On a narrow ledge I may be frightened of falling, but this is not the same as vertigo. When I experience vertigo I am attracted by the drop and I am horrified by the feeling that I may give in to my attraction and throw myself over the edge. I am aware that my present strong determination not to throw myself over the edge cannot be binding upon myself in the future. In establishing a certain conduct as a possibility and precisely because it is *my* possibility, I am aware that *nothing* can compel me to adopt that conduct. Yet I am indeed already there in the future; it is for the sake of that being which I will be there at the turning of the path that I now exert all my strength, and in this sense there is already a relation between my future being and my present being. But a nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation. I am not the self which I will be ...

Anguish is precisely my consciousness of being my own future in the mode of not-being. (*BN* 31-2) It will be me that will crash painfully to the rocks below, but that me is out of my control.

One may object here that when Sartre writes, apropos of this, of

> a certain mode of standing opposite his past and his future, as being both this past and this future and as not being them (*BN* 29)

he is unnecessarily confusing the issue, and that one should rather say that in one sense I am my future, but that in another sense I am not it. And to a certain extent this formulation might be less misleading. But it has its own dangers, for it might be taken to imply that these are two quite distinct attributes, like having red hair and liking Beethoven - two attributes which quite accidentally belong to the same person. Sartre's point is, however, that "being what I am not" is one relationship, and that it is the basic structure of my being. What I am, my essence, is always what is past, what I have been. My existence precedes my essence, and in anguish I am thematically aware that what I am (was) cannot bind what I am (am) and that what I am (am) cannot bind what I am (will be). It is this essentially ambivalent structure that makes it possible for negation to occur, and which justifies Sartre's saying that the for-itself is its own nothingness. [43/15] We need now to ask why, if consciousness is necessarily both separate from its past, and conscious of this separation, anguish is not a permanent state of all consciousness. To understand this we need to return to the distinction between *consciousness* and *knowledge*, to the fact that what is normally involved here is not "a phenomenon which I experience" but "a structure of consciousness which I am". It is only when I reflect upon a particular possibility and thereby see it as *my* possibility, as dependent on me, rather than as the world's possibility, that I am anguished in relation to it. Normally, however, I do not reflect upon my possibilities. Normally I am involved in action. "The consciousness of man in action is non-reflective consciousness". Usually it is the things in the world which indicate to me what to do, and I only discover my possibilities in acting them out.

> In the act of tracing the letters which I am writing, the whole sentence, still unachieved, is revealed as a passive exigency to be written. It is the very meaning of the letters which I form and its appeal is not put into question, precisely because I can not write the words without transcending them toward the sentence and because I discover it as the necessary condition for the meaning of the words which I am writing. (*BN* 36)

It is only if I sit back and ask "What the hell am I writing this book for"? that I see continuation as only a possibility and that I realise further that the meaning of the ten years work that I have already put into it depends on a future decision that I cannot determine. Reflection, and hence anguish, is always possible, but it need not ever occur. Once I reflect on a value I recognise it as deriving its exigency only from my acceptance of it. Value "can be revealed only to an active freedom which makes it exist as value by the sole fact of recognising it as such". (*BN* 38)

However, I usually live in the world of 'everyday morality', the world of the 'immediate'. This everyday morality is what Sartre describes as the 'serious mood', the morality of the 'serious man',

> who apprehends values in terms of the world and who resides in the reassuring materialistic substantiation of values. In the serious mood I define myself in terms of the object by pushing aside *a priori* as impossible all enterprises in which I am not engaged at the moment; the meaning which my freedom has given to the world I apprehend as coming from the world, and as constituting my obligations. (*BN* 39-40)

This analysis raises a number of problems. Firstly, of course it confronts us with the problem of ethics: if value derives from my [44/16] freedoms, how can we answer the question 'What ought I to do'? However, Sartre is not here concerned with that question. He has introduced the concept of value purely for the light which it can shed on the ontological investigation into the nature of consciousness. Throughout the work there are implicit suggestions about a theory of ethics, but I shall leave these for consideration later. The second problem now introduced, in an expanded form, is that of the relation between knowledge and consciousness, here formulated as a relationship between anguish and the spirit of seriousness. We can see, *prima facie*, that I can be so involved in what I am doing that I do not notice anything else. I am, of course, conscious that I am sitting in this room whilst writing, and perhaps even that the room is getting colder and colder, but I am so involved in what I am writing that I do not notice these things and, *a fortiori*, do not notice that I am writing in order to achieve some long term goal, and that that goal is questionable. But we still do not know what is the precise structure of the relationship between 'theme' and 'horizon' here. The third problem, deriving from this, is that of what is involved in moving from one attitude to the other, from the pre-reflective to reflection and back again.

Sartre continues the investigation through the consideration of another way in which anguish can be avoided. When anguish is actually experi-

enced in the reflective apprehension of freedom by itself, it is still possible to attempt to flee anguish, to attempt to hide from myself my responsibility for my values. I can do this in any number of ways in particular situations. I can postulate a psychological determinism which makes me be what I am. I can reaffirm the spirit of seriousness and insist on the objectivity of a particular value. Of course, these acts may be done themselves in a spirit of seriousness, insofar as they are conducts which flow out of my everyday engagement as, say, a psychologist or a priest or a politician, and if this is the case then the following analysis does not apply. But when these conducts are adopted in order to flee anguish we are faced with a problem. On the one hand I know that I only believe in a particular value, I do not know it, since no incontrovertible proof can be given. But to say that I only believe it is immediately to place it in doubt. And on the other hand, if I am adopting this conduct *in order* to avoid anguish I must be doing it knowing what I am *trying* to avoid;

> Anguish, the intentional aim of anguish, and a flight from anguish toward reassuring myths must all be given in the unity of the same consciousness. In a word, I flee - [45/17] in order not to know, but I cannot avoid knowing that I am fleeing; and the flight from anguish is only a mode of becoming conscious of anguish. Thus anguish, properly speaking, can be neither hidden nor avoided. (*BN* 43)

When, in this highly ambivalent situation, I let myself be convinced, I am in what Sartre calls 'bad faith'. Bad faith introduces us to a new 'nihilation'. In bad faith I hide myself from myself in the unity of a single consciousness. Bad faith is instantaneous in the sense that throughout my project of bad faith I must both be convincing myself that I am not anguished and, at the same time, be conscious that it is my anguish, that I am fleeing. What is significant about 'bad faith' here, for Sartre, is not its 'badness' in a moral sense, nor its extent in the actual world, but rather the fact that it is possible at all. For it introduces us to a new transcendental question. "What then are we to say that consciousness must be in the instantaneity of the pre-reflective *cogito* - if the human being is to be capable of bad faith". (*BN* 45)

In bad faith I attempt to hide from myself my motives for acting in a particular way. Sartre points out that Freudian psychoanalysis is a theory about the relationship in an individual between manifest 'conscious' motives and latent 'unconscious' motives, which are my 'real' motives in a given situation. It thus operates within a model in some way analogous to bad faith, in which there are also two sets of motives coexisting. Can the

psychoanalytical theory of the psyche therefore account for the duality of bad faith?

Freud's model includes the following elements:

a) The ego, which is me insofar as I am conscious, me in my ordinary everyday operations, a set of 'psychic facts', of interests, goals and motives. However, the *meaning* of these psychic facts is not given at the level of the ego. If I ask myself why I am behaving in a particular kind of way, I can only formulate tentative hypotheses as to the origin of my particular motive or goal.

> I am not those psychic facts, in so far as I receive them passively and am obliged to resort to hypotheses about their origin and true meaning, just as the scholar makes conjectures about the nature and essence of a external phenomenon (*BN* 51)

Thus the origin of these facts is external to the ego.

b) The id is the zone in which the substrata of the psychic facts are located. It consists of original drives and complexes resulting from the particular history of the individual. It is the unconscious. Within it these drives and complexes lead a life of their own which generates the psychic [46/18] facts which occur on the level of the ego. I cannot have direct access to it, and can only verify my explanatory hypotheses in terms of the number of facts which they can explain and in terms of the success or otherwise of the cure which results from it.

c) However, the relation between the id and the ego is not purely accidental, even though the one is in one sense external to the other. The drives of the id are *repressed*, in the sense that those which are, for some reason, incompatible with the ego structure, are held within the unconscious. Thus some drives are permitted to enter the conscious, while others are not. The agent in this process is the Censor.

d) Repression is not, or is not always, successful. The repressed drives succeed in rising into consciousness although not openly, but in disguise, in the form, for example, of dreams or of slips of the tongue, or of pathological behaviour. These are the clues which permit the psychoanalyst to construct a hypothesis as to the nature of the repressed drives in each individual case.

e) When the psychoanalyst begins to get close to an adequate hypothesis about the repressed drives, the phenomenon of resistance is often encountered. The patient begins to attempt to deceive the psychoanalyst, to resent questions, and may even end the analysis.

Sartre rejects this theory but, before looking at his criticisms, it is important to be clear as to precisely on what level he is attacking Freud. He is not questioning the actual observations and observed behavourial correlations of Freud or of other psychoanalysts. Nor is he questioning the therapeutic value of psychoanalysis. From a purely philosophical standpoint he could not of course do either of these things. What he is questioning is the theory that Freud develops to account for his observations. That is, Freud never observes, nor claims to observe, the id or the ego or the censor. He observes a wide range of human behaviour and he then develops a theory which he believes makes sense of that behaviour. Sartre's objection is to the theory, which he argues is incoherent and does not, in fact, account for the observed data.

a) The censor represses unwanted drives. But this means that the censor must know which drives are which (i.e. must know the contents of the unconscious) and must, at the same time, know which drives are unwanted - [47/19] (i.e. must know the contents of consciousness)

> In fact if we abandon all the metaphors representing the repressions as the impact of blind forces, we are compelled to admit that the censor must choose and in order to choose must be aware of so doing. (*BN* 52)

b) Resistance is only possible if there is some awareness of the truth which is about to be uncovered which the patient does not wish to recognise:

> the resistance of the patient implies on the level of the censor an awareness of the thing repressed as such, a comprehension of the end toward which the questions of the psychoanalyst are leading and an act of synthetic connection by which it compares the *truth* of the repressed complex to the psychoanalytic hypothesis which aims at it (*BN* 53)

c) The concept of the repressed drive disguising itself in order to evade the censor seems to imply consciousness on its part also. Thus Freud's theory seems to fragment the process of mental life and, at the same time, restores, unexplained, the original problematic dualism within the censor:

> But what type of self-consciousness can the censor have? It 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? (*BN* 53)

d) Finally, Sartre argues that at least one analyst, Stecke has concluded that "Every time that I have been able to carry my investigations far enough, I have established that the crux of the psychosis was conscious"

(*BN* 54) That is, psychoanalysis gives us a lot more data, but theoretically leaves us exactly where we were, faced with the problem of accounting for the ambivalence of bad faith, to the more detailed description of which we must now turn.

In the study of bad faith one can distinguish analytically between two components; that about which there is belief and the belief itself. In both aspects bad faith is only possible because of a fundamental ambiguity in the structure of human reality.

Bad faith is a belief about myself. It refers to what I am. However, as we have already seen, I am what I am not and I am not what I am. If I am in bad faith I play on this, asserting that which is true of me as being what I am, as true of myself as being what I am not, and vice-versa. [48/20] I am, for example, both facticity and transcendance, that is, a being here and a capacity to transcend that being. I have a particular past, particular characteristics, but I also have a future, and hence the possibility of changing those characteristics. I am a body, a thing, a "being-in-the-midst- of-the world" and I am also he who gives value to the world by transcending it. Further, I am a being-for-itself, but I am also a being-for-others and

> The equal dignity of being, possessed by being-for-others and by my being-for-myself permits a perpetually disintegrating synthesis and a perpetual game of escape from the for-itself to the for-others and from the for-others to the for-itself. (*BN* 58)

In all these cases there are apparently contradictory propositions which are simultaneously true of me and I am able to utilise this fact in my attempt to hide the truth from myself. We can take two examples of this process from Sartre's description of a girl and her would-be seducer. The girl is both charmed by the attention and (in our example) distressed by the crude desire underlying it. Thus

> If he says to her 'I find you so attractive' she disarms the phrase of its sexual background; she attaches to the conversation and to the behaviour of the speaker, the immediate meaning which she imagines as objective qualities. (*BN* 55)

The man's statement is both particular fact and one step in a project with an obvious goal. Here the girl treats it only as the former, and denies its transcendance. Next, at the moment when the man makes the first physical overture by taking her hand, she takes off into the clouds of soul and spirit, leaving her hand behind, a thing which is not really her and which just happens to be lying between a man's hands.

The basis of bad faith can be further illustrated by an examination of the problems of the attempt at a certain kind of sincerity, what happens when I try, in sincerity, to be what I am. The very idea of sincerity as a project immediately implies that I can also in some sense be what I am not or not be what I am. It involves trying to find out and to be what I really am. But what am I really? This is the whole problem, since my existence precedes my essence, and there is no pre-defined me with which could sincerely coincide. Sartre takes the example of the cafe waiter. He is a waiter, but what does that mean? He is not given a 'waiter behaviour' in the way that, say, an oak tree is given an 'oak-tree-behaviour'. Rather, he has to invent his waiter behaviour.

> The waiter in the cafe cannot be immediately a cafe waiter in the sense that this inkwell *is* an inkwell, or the glass is a glass. (*BN* 59)

This is obvious in the case of the waiter, where the very exaggeration with which he twirls his tray is indicative of [49/21] the fact that he is playing a role. But, Sartre insists, this analysis does not apply only to such obvious forms of role play. Even when I am, for example, sad, I do not coincide with my sadness. It remains a project with which I have to attempt to coincide. The world continually tries to impinge, presenting distractions and temptations which I have to fight off as unsuitable to my state. That is, 'being sad' is a mode of intentional behaviour, produced as being appropriate to certain types of situation. Neither the type of situation to which it is appropriate nor the kind of behaviour which manifests it, is predefined. As insofar as it is *socially* predefined then it is a particular role to which our earlier analysis applies: for example, the funeral rites of a particular group which allot special roles involving special behaviour patterns to various individuals in terms of their relationship to the dead.

Thus the attempt to coincide with what I am is, in fact, impossible. In fact, to the extent that an individual seeks sincerity of demands sincerity in another, he or she may well be in bad faith. In being sincere I may be attempting to reveal to myself what I am, precisely in order to distance myself from it.

> Who cannot see that the sincere man constitutes himself as a thing in order to escape the condition of a thing by the same act of sincerity ... He escapes from that *thing*, since it is he who contemplates it, since it depends on him to maintain it under his glance or to let it collapse in an infinity of particular acts (*BN* 65)

Being sincere here, as a reflective act, involves distancing oneself from oneself, rather than coinciding with oneself. In fact, both the sincere person

and the person who is in bad faith play on the meaning of the word being. The difference between the two is that the person who is in bad faith specifically aims at the deception, while the sincere person is not aiming at this, but is, nevertheless uncomfortably aware that this is where it will end. b) Bad faith is faith, or belief. The problem with belief is that, by definition, it falls short of apodictic knowledge:

> To believe is to know that one believes, and to know that one believes is no longer to believe. Thus to believe is not to believe any longer because that is only to believe - this in the unity of one and the same non-thetic self consciousness. (*BN* 69)

That is, when I say that I believe something is the case, I am admitting that I do not have enough evidence to know or to be certain that it really is the case. Thus I have to decide to adopt criteria which are in some way inadequate. What is involved in bad faith is the decision to use this necessary inadequacy of criteria to justify the choice of criteria which are totally inadequate. [50/22]

> Bad faith in its primitive project and in its coming into the world decides on the exact nature of its requirements. it stands forth in the firm resolution not to demand too much, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded, to force itself in decisions to adhere to uncertain truths. This original project of bad faith is a decision in bad faith on the nature of faith. Let us understand clearly that there is no question of a reflective voluntary decision, but of a spontaneous determination of our being, One *puts oneself* in bad faith as one goes to sleep ... it is as difficult to get out of it as to wake oneself up. (*BN* 68)

Thus the possibility of bad faith is given in the necessary instability of belief. In this way the analysis of bad faith reveals to us more clearly what is meant by the fact that "Human reality ... must be what it is not and not be what it is." (*BN* 67) It is important to remember here once more that Sartre does not introduce the concept "bad faith" for its ethical relevance, but rather for what its analysis can reveal about the ontology of human reality. However, the chapter entitled 'Bad Faith' in *Being and Nothingness* has often been interpreted as an ethical theory, and in particular as implying an ethic of despair. So it will be useful to clarify what Sartre is doing here from an ethical perspective, particularly because a number of the key concepts have sometimes been either confused or conflated. These key concepts, 'the spirit of seriousness', 'bad faith', 'good faith', 'sincerity' and 'authenticity' are not here woven into a coherent ethical theory.

The spirit of seriousness is the normal attitude of immediate unreflective involvement in the world. Bad faith only arises with the awareness of

choice. This means that it can occur on many different levels, and not all bad faith is a conduct of flight in the face of absurdity. The girl in the cafe is aware that she has the choice of sleeping with the man or not sleeping with him, so she may handle this aspect of the situation in bad faith. But she is not aware, say, that she could enter into a lesbian relationship with the waitress. Her sexual perspectives are confined to certain choices by her 'spirit of seriousness'. Bad faith, therefore, does not arise in her attitude to the sexuality of other women.

The ambiguous nature of human reality which makes bad faith possible does not make it inevitable. Speaking of the dual facticity-transcendance of human reality, Sartre writes

> These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of a valid co-ordination. But bad faith [51/23] does not wish either to co-ordinate them or to surmount them in a synthesis (*BN* 56)

That is, transcendence-facticity can be lived other than in bad faith. When he writes of the impossibility of sincerity and of the impossibility of good faith, he is not contradicting himself. He makes clear that he is referring only to a certain kind of sincerity.

> To be sure, there is a sincerity which bears on the past, and which does not concern us here; I am sincere if I confess *having had* this pleasure or that intention ... But here our concern is only with the sincerity which aims at itself in present immanence. (*BN* 65)

In rejecting the possibility of good faith, he is not saying that there is no alternative to bad faith. He is pointing out, rather, that one cannot remain permanently on the level of *faith*, of belief. One can escape belief, as does science, by searching for evidence and by the use of critical thought. By using the example of the waiter to indicate the inevitability of role play, Sartre is not thereby announcing the necessity of bad faith. The waiter's behaviour is not introduced as an example of bad faith. The example is introduced in an attempt to answer the question "But what are we then if we have the constant obligation to make ourselves what we are" and it is introduced only to show that this question cannot be answered if the term 'is' in 'John is X' is understood univocally with 'is' in 'the tree is Y'. Once more, this fact is the basis for the possibility of bad faith, but it is not a basis for the necessity of bad faith.

Finally, Sartre himself here goes no further than *naming* the alternative to bad faith; the escape from bad faith

> supposes a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted. This self-recovery we shall call authenticity, the description of which has no place here. (*BN* 709)

To repeat, to interpret Sartre's analysis of bad faith as the basis for an ethic of despair is to assume that in it he is attempting to give a complete analysis of the moral life, rather than simply to use certain aspects of the moral life as objects of analysis in his ontological investigation.

This ontological investigation has so far brought us to the fact that the nature of consciousness is simultaneously to be what it is not and not to be what it is. The most obvious manifestation of this lies in the most basic structure of consciousness: consciousness is intentional, other-directed, and at the same time it is self-directed. Consciousness is always present to itself. The problem here is that in the relation of presence to [52/24] self-consciousness does not coincide with self (in the mode of in-itself), but neither is it separated from itself by anything. It is presence to itself and therefore at a distance from itself and this 'distance' within it is what constitutes its being. This is the original 'nothingness'. We may formulate this in a slightly different way by saying that the for-itself is never identical with itself, and that the term 'nothingness' here is used to indicate the impalpable division in the self which is involved in this lack of identity.

We can return here to the Eye staring at the light. There we have a consciousness coinciding with itself and, because it coincides with itself, not in fact being conscious. For the eye to be able to turn its attention from the here and now of the light it would have to be self-conscious, for it is the 'distance' from the world introduced by self-consciousness which makes possible the awareness of the non-necessity of staring at the light. It is, therefore, because of this lack of identity that the phenomenon of nothingness, as we earlier described it, arises in the world. Precisely because nothingness is not a special kind of thing we cannot intuit it as we would a thing.

> Nothingness is always an *elsewhere*, it is the obligation for the for-itself never to exist except in the form of an elsewhere in relation to itself, to exist as a being which perpetually affects in itself a break in being. (*BN* 78)

Since consciousness is content-less, and since the defining mark of consciousness is its 'nothingness' we are referred always from consciousness to that of which consciousness is conscious. That is, the being of the for-itself (as opposed to its nothingness) is defined by the in-itself to which it is related.

This is of crucial significance. Descartes' 'cogito' was, to a certain extent, self-sufficient, and this was the basis for the later development of an idealist philosophy. But here we have discovered that consciousness exists essentially in relation to things, and that human reality can only be understood through the world. This introduces an important new element into our analysis, for the for-itself, as we saw earlier, is autonomous, self-causing, in the sense that within consciousness, say, of counting, the move from '4' to '5' is motivated simply by the fact that I am conscious that I am counting. The for-itself is in this sense its own 'foundation'. However, we now see that the being of the for-itself is defined by its relation to the in-itself and this relation is purely contingent. It is a contingent fact that I am a South African - related, therefore, to a [53/25] particular, material, social and cultural environment; and not a German related to a different material, social and cultural environment

> While I must *play* at being a cafe waiter in order to be one, still it would be in vain for me to play at being a diplomat or a sailor, for I would not be one. (*BN* 83)

This is what Sartre describes as the facticity of the for-itself.

> Thus the for-itself is sustained by a perpetual contingency for which it assumes the responsibility and which it assimilates without ever being able to suppress it. This perpetually evanescent contingency of the in-itself ... haunts the for-itself and reattaches it to being-in-itself. (*BN* 223)

What we have here is a more detailed formulation of the paradox of dependence-independence.

Consciousness, then, exists necessarily in relation to the in-itself. What is the nature of this relationship? Sartre elucidates it by means of the concepts 'lack' and 'desire'. It is a negative relationship, in the sense that I exist as not being the in-itself. But the negation here is of a special kind. The waiter is not a waiter in a very different sense from that in which he is not a diplomat. Examining the concept 'lack' we can see that when something 'lacks' something, that which it lacks is in some way necessary for its being. We can, of course, say 'pigs lack wings', but this is an abstract use of the term. Sartre's French term 'manque' could perhaps more accurately be translated as 'is missing' here. We can say 'this bird is missing a wing' but we could' say 'this pig is missing wings'. Lack is defined in relation to completion. Desire has a similar structure. in desiring something I define myself in relation to what is desired as a possible future completion. What I desire is not me, but it is necessary in order to complete or to perfect me. Similarly, the for-itself exists in relation to an in-itself which it is not but which is neces-

sary for its being. But both lack and desire are temporal, they refer to a possible future fulfilment (or, in the case of 'lack' perhaps also to an actual past fulfilment). Similarly, if the for-itself is to be defined in negative terms, as not being the in-itself to which it is related, but as not being it in the form of a lack or of a desires [sic], then this must be in relation to a future completion. That is, to say that I exist as not being the in-itself, in a non-trivial sense, is to indicate that the relation is both necessary to me and inadequate as it stands. For if it were adequate, it would no longer be a 'negative' relationship and would simply be a certain relation with the in-itself; 'next to' or 'dependent upon' the in-itself and [54/26] so on. We shall explore the implication of this future-orientedness of the for-itself shortly. For the moment, the problem is - what is the totality which the for-itself lacks and which is therefore constitutive of its being? When I desire a glass of water I desire it in order to be satiated - I do not desire the water for itself but for what it can do to me. Similarly, Sartre argues, to be in a particular position in the world and hence to be in a particular relation of nihilation to the in-itself, is not be conceived as a desire for that particular aspect of the in-itself for what it is itself, but rather as desire for it for the sake of a totality which can be achieved in some way through that aspect of the in-itself. The question is, what is this totality?

The answer lies in the ontological structure of consciousness and of the world. As we have seen, consciousness is autonomous and self-creating. The world is contingent and accidental. But insofar as the world is necessary to consciousness as that of which it is conscious, consciousness itself is rendered contingent. Anguish, as the awareness that the for-itself is creating values but that these values are contingent, is the permanent possibility which results from this. Thus the goal of the for-itself is a consciousness which is both autonomous and which nevertheless possesses the solid being of the in-itself, a consciousness which has become its own foundation and is no longer haunted by contingency. Such a consciousness would be *ens causa sui* - or God. That is, God, or being-in-itself-for-itself, is the totality at which the for-itself is aiming in its relation of negation, in its nihilation of the in-itself. However, such a synthesis is impossible, since consciousness is necessarily a relation to something other than itself, and so necessarily cannot be its own foundation.

From the concrete analysis of the girl in bad faith we have moved into a realm of highly specialised and abstract language and many readers of Sartre seem to be tempted at around this point to suspect that he is playing with words. What does it mean to say "Man is the desire to be God"? What does it mean to say that

> The being of human reality is suffering because it rises in being as perpetually haunted by a totality which it is without being able to be it, precisely because it could not attain the in-itself without losing itself as for-itself. Human reality therefore is by nature an unhappy consciousness with no possibility of surpassing its unhappy state. (*BN* 90)

The language is odd. Furthermore it does not seem to relate to our everyday experience of ourselves. We do not see ourselves as going around trying to become God. Nor, perhaps, and particularly if we belong to that third of the world's population which [55/27] has enough to eat, do we experience ourselves as perpetually suffering.

We should bear in mind firstly Sartre's distinction between consciousness and knowledge. What he says here of 'value' may be said equally of the desire to be God. It

> is not known at this stage since knowledge posits the object in the face of consciousness. (It) is merely given with the non-thetic translucency of the for-itself.

That is, one is usually simply involved in actions and that which Sartre argues is the underlying long-term goal of these actions, the desire to become an in-itself-for-itself is not the object of one's attention. It only becomes so as the result of a reflection in which I attempt to investigate the meaning of my existence and this kind of reflection is not normally indulged in. That is, the desire to become in-itself-for-itself is not a *particular* desire which one might or might not have. It is the structure of desire or, more precisely, it is the structure of consciousness as desire. As such it is normally taken for granted, and the language problem which arises when we try to talk about it comes precisely from this fact. We may try to sum up what Sartre is saying here by the use of the concept identity. I am not what I am (e.g. University lecturer) in that I have no 'university lecturer' behaviour ready-made. I either have to copy somebody else's play a role - or else I have to invent my own. In either case being what I am becomes a project, rather than a state. If I become what I was in the sense of achieving the state of being a lecturer, rather than living the project of being a lecturer, then I would have done away with the gap between myself and what I am trying to be. But that gap is what makes it possible for me to be *conscious* of what I am trying to be. Without the gap there is no more consciousness. So the ideal of the identity with myself, which is what Sartre describes as being-in-itself-for-itself, is an impossible ideal.

From this analysis we can also see the relation between this and the possibility of a sense of insecurity, and hence of suffering. Am I *really* being an

adequate lecturer? This question can never be finally answered in the affirmative, since no piece of teaching, however brilliant, or no piece of common-room role play, however sophisticated, guarantees the adequacy of the next. I wake up each morning having to do it all over again, or uncomfortably resigned to never being able to do it. Each project, of course, fits into a hierarchy of projects. My decision to be a lecturer is a way of trying to give my life a meaning and I may also feel insecure as [56/28] to the adequacy of lecturing as a response to this problem. Or, if I am particularly insensitive, I may feel no doubts as to either the adequacy of lecturing as a choice of meaningful life or even as to the adequacy of my own ability in playing the role. But even here I will experience insecurity at some more trivial level - did I really tell that anecdote as well as I might have done, did I really get across to my Professor the contempt I feel for students silly enough to believe that they can question lecturers? At some level or other every individual must experience directly the necessity to try to be what he or she is, and the sense of insecurity which comes from never being able to be sure that one has succeeded. What is involved here is not simply success at carrying out a task, but success in carrying out the sort of task which defines the identity which one has chosen for oneself. The casual darts player is not rendered insecure by a failure to hit the board, but the darts champion who defines himself as darts[2] champion is rendered insecure by a much more limited failure than that.

In concrete terms, what for for-itself lacks is always some possible future state of the for-itself.

> The For-itself is separated from the Presence to itself which it lacks and which is its own possibility, in one sense separated by Nothing and in another sense by the totality of the existent in the world, inasmuch as the For-itself, lacking or possible, is For-itself as a *presence* to a certain state of the world (*BN* 102)

That is, it is through the world that I project my possible future, and my 'self' has to be understood in terms of the particular way in which I project my future possibilities through a particular state of the world. As we saw earlier, I normally in fact learn what I am through the way in which I involve myself in the world. Pre-reflective involvement in the world is primary. Reflective apprehension of the self is secondary. In fact the self or the 'ego' as a being endowed with certain qualities is not given in consciousness. Rather, it is an object for consciousness. The for-itself is an individuating presence to being, and as such it is personal. But this individuating or personalising aspect of it is not the same as the Ego:

2 ms: arts

> 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. (*BN* 103)

My ego is an object in the world, a particular past and a particular set of possibles, and so on. What makes it *my* ego is the fact that I am present to it, and not present somewhere else. Of course I could not *choose* to be present somewhere else. I have to be as a personalising presence to being and to myself, and this occurs as facticity, not as choice.

> It is [57/29] consciousness in its fundamental selfness which under certain conditions allows the appearance of the Ego as the transcendent phenomenon of that selfness. (*BN* 103)

In this analysis Sartre is not so much distancing consciousness from the Ego as he is bringing the world closer to consciousness. For Descartes the conclusion of the argument that 'I think therefore I am' was that since my very existence was proven by the fact of my thinking therefore I could grasp with the greatest certainty my being as a thinking subject, as a self. He, and later philosophers, therefore tended to see 'the self' as a thinking being, a substantial mind, and to see the world or body or *res extensa* as being a separate substance that could not be known with such great certainty as could the mind. Viewing Sartre's argument here from a Cartesian perspective, one might conclude that he is thrusting the 'self' out into the realm of uncertainty hitherto reserved for the world, and retaining only a shadowy non-personal consciousness in the realm of certainty. But, in fact, he is trying to do the opposite. Descartes explored the realm of consciousness and then thought that he had come up against a problematic limit in making the leap from consciousness to the world. Sartre's point is that this is only problematic if one identifies consciousness with the Ego, for the Ego is a rich multi-structured domain. Once one has explored it and established it as the knower one is faced with the insuperable problem of disentangling the self from the other in one's knowledge of the outside world. However in fact one does not discover the self within the cogito (the 'I think') since one is thrust immediately from the cogito into the world which it logically implies, and the Ego is only discovered in and through the world.

> The examination of negating conduct and of bad faith has enabled us to approach the ontological study of the *cogito*, and the being of the *cogito* has appeared to us as being-for-itself. This being, under our observation, has been transcended to-

> ward value and possibilities; we have not been able to keep it within the substantial limits of the instantaneity of the Cartesian *cogito*. (*BN* 104)

One final point to be noticed here is that the term 'world' does not mean the same thing as 'in-itself'. The world is a meaningful structure of related things - else I could not grasp myself in it. But this structure does not exist in total independence from the for-itself. Sartre defines 'world' as "the totality of being insofar as it is traversed by the circuit of selfness" and by 'circuit of selfness' he means "the relation of the for-itself with the possible which it is". (*BN* 102) That is, the world is [58/30] human and it can only be separated analytically from consciousness, for it is through consciousness that there are patterns and meanings.

However, before considering the significance of this we need to dispose of one further problem which arises from Descartes. Descartes' thinking subject finds itself marooned on the instantaneous island of the present: This methodological doubt leads him to a point at which he asks the question "can I trust my memory"? He is forced to answer 'No' for it is quite possible that the evil genie may be distorting his memories. Thus the 'I think', when it is finally established, is established as having no direct access to the past. The question 'How can I know for sure that I went to the cinema yesterday' becomes a very difficult one. I can only rely either on deductions from 'present' facts (e.g. a used cinema ticket on my desk) or else on other people's equally questionable memories. But since the instantaneous cogito is an impossibility, we need to reconsider the meaning of temporality in order to see whether such problems really arise.

One might argue that the past is always, in fact, reconstructable on the basis of what is present, from present memories, present impressions, present objects. But this misses the point, for it presupposes that we have a *concept* of the past, and that all that we have to do is to establish the details of this past. For in fact no present thing can of itself indicate a past. If the past is not given first we cannot establish details of it by deduction from the present. Thus we have to begin not by implicitly assuming that 'there is a past' and then asking how we are to know the details of it, but rather by asking what I mean when I say that 'I have a past'. If I had no relation with my past, there would be no concept 'past'. We have, therefore, to elucidate an actual relationship rather than to attempt to discover hypothetical mechanisms. "There is a past only for a present which cannot exist without being its past - back there, behind itself" (*BN* 114) Furthermore

> It is not because I 'represent' my past that it exists. But it is because I *am* my past that it enters into the world, and it is in terms of its being-in-the-world that I can by applying a particular psychological process represent it to myself. (*BN* 115-6)

I am immediately present to my past, but it is what I was and can no longer not be. Not only am I present to it. I am it. Somebody talking about what I did yesterday is talking about me. But I am it in-itself, not for-itself, no longer as consciousness, but as being, and in this sense I am also not it. However, the relationship here must not be confused with the relation between this [59/31] chair now and this chair six months ago. There we might say that the chair is the same chair but also that it is not the same chair, because it has been changed by wear and tear. The chair is what it is in the present and its relation to the past chair is a purely external relation established by me. The past chair does not exist for the chair, whereas my past does exist for me. But I can only now be my past me because when I was that past me I was not it in the sense of in-itself. I was even then at a distance from it, for-it. It is this that preserves the internality of my relation to my past.

The past is in-itself and as such it constitutes my facticity: "the invulnerable contingency of the in-itself which I have to be without any possibility of not being it". (*BN* 118) The past is my essence.

We have said that the for-itself is 'present to' the past, and is 'present to' the in-itself. It is this presence which defines the present. The present is not an instant, in the sense of being the smallest unit of time. As we have seen, such a concept makes it impossible to escape from the present and dissolves time into a series of independent entities. In fact, if we rid the present of the past and the future we are left not with a residue but with nothing at all. The present is quite ungraspable. It is nothing but the presence of the for-itself to being, and since the for-itself is present to being as the negation of being, the for-itself is also flight from being. It is this aspect of flight which rules out the possibility of a stable present as a unit in time. The for-itself is a flight from the past towards the future, and the present is this flight.

The future, like the past, cannot be deduced from the present. The indications in the present of what the future may be - the heavy clouds presaging rain - do not in themselves give us the future. in themselves they are what they are, a particular configuration of molecules, water vapour at a particular pressure and temperature. The future is radically distinct from any element in the present (assuming that one could hypostatise the present in this way). Unless there is some kind of direct relation to the future the concept "future" could not arise. Of course, this relation cannot be the same as the

relation to the present; it is not a question of direct intuition of future events as though they were present, as in premonitions and prophecies. The future is not simply a [60/32] present which we have not yet reached. It is a necessary structure of this present, in that this present is a flight towards the future. The for-itself exists towards the future.

> There is in my consciousness no moment which is not similarly defined by an internal relation to a future; when I write, when I smoke, when I drink, when I rest, the meaning of my conscious states is always at a distance, down there, outside. (*BN* 125)

Since the for-itself is defined by the fact that it cannot coincide with what it is, and so is necessarily a project, the for-itself necessarily exists as future oriented. It is the for-itself's lack of identity with the self which reveals possibles (the possibility of being or of not being what I am) and the possible is the future. In a sense, also, the future always remains future. What I aim at in the future is coincidence with myself, but what I achieve is always only another state of distance from myself. The future becomes a former future. If my future is to be a lecturer I cannot stop when I get there. I have to continually make myself be a lecturer. Even if my future is a single event, like winning a gold medal at the Olympic Games, when I do win it I do not suddenly coincide with an identity as "gold medal winner". I find that the meaning of my gold medal is not given as an in-itself, but is dependent on a whole series of conducts which follow it and amongst which I have to choose.

> The future is what l would be if I were not free and what I can *have to be* only because I am free. (*BN* 128-9)

Thus the 'now' is not an instant and time is not a series of instants. Descartes, who saw time in this way, was then faced with the problem of accounting for the unity of time, and he could only do this by having recourse to God. Thus for Descartes time is a series of atemporal instants synthesised by an atemporal God. Temporality itself seems to vanish as a result of this approach. Time must be seen as being originally a unity. But it is a unity which also involves the separation of before and after. Sartre distinguishes these two aspects as the 'static temporal' (before and after) and the dynamic temporal (the flow or course of time). The problem is that

> If we first posit temporal unity, we risk no longer being able to understand anything about irreversible succession as the *meaning* of this unity, and if we consider the disintegrating succession as the original character of time, we risk no longer being able to understand that there is *one* time. (*BN* 136)

To be 'before' is a relation to an after and if that relation is not given immediately in the before, it cannot be created afterwards and from outside. That is, we must say that if the relation A before B is possible, this is because of the possibility of some sort of immediate 'co-presence' of A and B. But this 'co-presence' is neither an actual *present* [61/33] 'co-presence' nor, what would be closest to this, an atemporal logical relation of deduction of the type A implies B, B does not imply A. This would destroy the flow of time. In fact the 'co-presence' of A and B is not a quality of A and B as things-in-themselves. It is the 'presence' of consciousness to both. 'Temporality is not, but the for-itself temporalises itself by existing' (*BN* 136)

Consciousness 'is what it is not and is not what it is'. This peculiar relationship of consciousness to itself has three possible modes, and these three modes are identical with the three dimensions of temporality.

1) Consciousness is not 'what it is'. I am my past, but I am it as no longer being it. I have been born and I have a particular history which I cannot change. My past is there in my present project.

> It is the very meaning of the object which I look at and which I have already seen, of the familiar faces which surround me ... It is the origin and springboard of all my actions; it is that constantly given density of the world which allows me to orient myself and to get my bearings ... This supple insinuating, changing knowledge which makes the woof of all our thoughts and which is composed of a thousand empty indications, a thousand designations which point behind us, without image, without Words, without thesis this is my concrete past inasmuch as I was it as the unalterable background-depth of all my thoughts and all my feelings. (*BN* 141)

But yet, insofar as I am not my past, insofar as I necessarily transcend it, it is my *past*, it is in-itself, my facticity, that for which I am no longer responsible and cannot change. It is this unchangeability which is the defining element of being past; and it is the meaning of the fact that I am in one sense not the foundation of my being - I am not *ens causa sui* and hence I am necessarily at least partly beyond my own control.

2) Consciousness is "what it is not". I am a lack. I am defined by that future being which I wish to be.

3) Finally the two propositions may be formulated together. Consciousness "is what it is not and is not what it is". This is the definition of the instability of the present, that permanent self-reference which constitutes presence to the in-itself as a nihilating distance from the in-itself.

The for-itself is change, or spontaneity; "Temporality ... temporalises itself entirely as the refusal of the instant." (*BN* 149) The unity of time as a process of change is constituted by the fact [62/34] that the for-itself, in fleeing

that to which it is present, makes past its old present, pushes the past into the pluperfect and transforms the future into a former future at the same time as it creates a new future either through inevitably failing to coincide with the future it was aiming at or by ceasing to aim at a longer term future at which it had previously been aiming. Thus the for-itself constitutes both the before and after of time and the unity of time.

"Time" is in any circumstances a difficult concept with which to deal, and the reader may feel that the combination of such an inherently difficult concept with Sartre's peculiar technical vocabulary is quite indigestible. So it is necessary to stress that Sartre's account of temporality is essentially an attack on a particular philosophical theory of time - the theory of the instant, the idea that time is a sequence of discrete units. As we have seen, there are logical objections to this theory, in that it destroys any possibility of a coherent account of the various aspects of temporality. But in addition to this it is worth pointing out that we never, in fact, experience time in the form of Cartesian instants. Even my most simple action is articulated temporally. Playing tennis I raise my racket in relation to my opponent's already past stroke and in relation to the still future position of the ball when I will strike it. The present normally shades into the past and the future with no clear dividing line. It is, therefore, useful to distinguish between 'present' as a precise technical concept and 'present' as an everyday concept. In the latter sense, it does not refer to any precise period of time, but it does usually refer to some period of time. 'At present I am writing' (i.e. this morning). 'I'm not interested in history, I am only interested in the present (i.e. last year, this year, perhaps next year). If one insists and says "I do not want to know what you are doing this year, or this morning, but what you are doing at this very instant" one has, in fact, begun to use 'present' in a different sort of way, and so to ask a different sort of question. One is in fact no longer asking a question about a particular period of time. One is, as it were, asking to be shown not a piece of time but a cross-sectional drawing of time. An engineer can make a cross-sectional drawing of a machine, but he does not conclude from that that the machine is made up of a number of cross-sections stuck together.

I can, in a sense, 'see' into the past and the future. Or, to put it another way, the lived present has a certain density, a certain thickness, [63/35] although it is an indefinite thickness. While I am waiting at the bus stop watching my bus coming towards me, my present is made up of my walk from home to the stop, and of the bus's leisurely journey towards it, which I 'see' in its entirety even before the bus has reached me. What I shall do in the bus is shading into the future. What I did before leaving home is begin-

ning to slip into the past. Even when I simply look at an object, like the hedge outside my window, I see it in its past and in its future; I see it as having a certain permanence. If this were not so I should be continually surprised to find it in front of me, but not at all surprised if it were to suddenly disappear.

In *Nausea* Sartre gives a less technical description of an experience of time in the following passage in which Roquentin is standing bored at his window, watching an old woman walk down the street:

> I can *see* the future. It is there stationed in the street, hardly any paler than the present. Why does it have to be fulfilled? What advantage will that give it? The old woman hobbles away, she stops, she tugs a a lock of grey hair escaping from her shawl. She walks on, she was there, now she is here ... I don't know where I am any more: Am I *seeing* her movements or am I foreseeing them? I can no longer distinguish the present from the future and yet it is lasting, it is gradually fulfilling itself; the old woman advances along the empty street; she moves her heavy mannish shoes. This is time, naked time, it comes slowly into existence, it keeps you waiting and when it comes you are disgusted because you realise that it's been there already for a long time. The old woman nears the corner of the street, she's nothing more now than a little bundle of black clothes. Alright, then, that's new, she was there a moment ago. But that's a tarnished, deflowered newness, which can never take you by surprise. She is going to turn the corner of the street, she turns it - during an eternity of time. (*Nausea* p. 50)

This possibility of seeing into the past and the future must not be confused with remembering and predicting. I am not looking at the old woman and at the same time remembering where she was a moment ago and predicting where she will be in a moment's time. Indeed, even if I wanted to do this I would not be able to do so, because remembering and predicting are themselves acts which take time. On this hypothesis I would, while remembering, have to remember also the beginning of my act of remembering and at the same time have to predict the end of it; I could never get beyond my first memory or prediction. Predicting and remembering are reflective activities which are only possible within the context of the thickness of the pre-reflective present. I can only mathematically remember that the woman was [64/36] there five minutes ago because my consciousness of the fact is involved (non-thematically) in my seeing her now.

The experience of temporality which I have just been describing is a pre-reflective experience in which I am involved in projects and hence involved in the world, and, as it were, I see time as things, as the relative permanence of things. The present as a nothingness can be revealed to me either in a direct experience of the irreversibility of time - a child runs out in

front of the moving bus, and the whole situation is immediately changed - or else through reflection, which reveals to me the nature of my own relation to myself as temporally articulated in the way in which we have described.

Sartre is reinstating our common sense experience of temporal articulation over against what had become the traditional philosophical view of time as a series of instants. The difficulty of the language comes, once more, from the necessity of making explicit what is usually taken for granted.

This analysis of temporality raises a new problem with regard to reflection. If consciousness as it were spreads itself out through three temporal dimensions, what exactly is involved in reflection? What is it that is reflected upon? And what is the status of reflective knowledge? We normally think of reflective knowledge as giving certainty, but by expanding the limits of the for-itself out of the instant, have we not rather stretched the boundaries of certainty further than they can properly go? Reflection is perhaps the purest example of the 'nihilating withdrawal' which is constitutive of consciousness.

> Reflection - if it is to be apodictic evidence - demands that the reflective be that which is reflected-on. But to the extent that reflection is *knowledge*, the reflected-on must necessarily be the object for the reflective; and this implies a separation of being. Thus it is necessary that the reflective simultaneously be and not be the reflected-on. (*BN* 151)

In reflection I know myself as being both observed and observing. This is, as always, a fundamentally ambiguous situation, and it permits of two different types of reflection, which Sartre distinguishes as pure and impure reflection. In pure reflection the unity of the reflecting and the reflected on is maintained. This means that the normal relation of knower to known, which involves a 'being other' than the known, does not obtain, and so the knowledge given by pure reflection cannot be carefully structured and ordered - it is "indistinction [65/37] without a point of view, knowledge overflowing itself and without explanation". (*BN* 155) Nevertheless, it is this which gives it its apodictic nature, and this apodictic nature does not refer simply to the instant because, as we have seen, the for-itself is always beyond the instant. Reflection

> is free from error to the exact that it apprehends the past as that which haunts the present in non-thematic form. When I say "I read, I doubt, I hope" etc. as we have shown I reach beyond my present towards the past. (*BN* 157)

Here I grasp my past and my future in unity with my present.

In pure reflection the reflecting grasps the self reflected on as a for-itself, that is, as an on-going project which includes the reflection. However, it is also possible to effect a complete break between the reflecting and the reflected-on and to posit the reflected-on as an in-itself. This of course necessarily falsifies in some way what is given in consciousness, since in breaking the unity of the reflecting and the reflected-on it also breaks the unity of the reflected-on itself. It replaces the pure temporalising character of the for-itself with what Sartre describes as "psychic duration" which is a succession of different units of experience, different psychic states. What is given in impure reflection he describes as a "shadow cast by the reflected-on onto being" (*BN* 160) but he stresses nevertheless that

> We cannot call it an illusion ... Practically it is on the level of psychic fact that concrete relations between men are established. (*BN* 158)

This is because impure reflection is a kind of experience of myself and, even though it is a falsifying experience, it nevertheless becomes part of my pre-reflective self-comprehension. That is, the unreal psychic state becomes real for me once I have posited it in impure reflection as being me. But the "Ego" made up of these various psychic states, qualities and acts, and known in impure reflection, can no longer be known with apodictic certainty. By becoming in-itself it becomes only probable. I can make mistakes about the existence, meaning and interrelations of my various psychic states. In fact, the psychic, when considered in isolation in this way, is necessarily unintelligible. The ego appears to be in some way passively affected by anger or hatred or love, and the various co-existing characteristics of the ego, or the successive nows of a particular state, are quite inexplicably related to one another in a kind of magical unity once the spontaneous project of the for-itself has been obscured by impure reflection.

> Psychic temporality is an inert *datum* ... which *undergoes* its intimate cohesion without affecting it, which is perpetually temporalised without temporalising *itself*, in which the [66/38] irrational and magic interpenetration of elements that are not united by an ekstatic relation of being can be compared only to sympathetic magic acting from a distance - an interpenetration which hides a multiplicity of already formed nows ... The absolute unity of the psychic is indeed the projection of the ontological, ekstatic unity of the for-itself. But since this projection is made in the in-itself which is what it is in the distance-less proximity of self-identity, the ekstatic unity parcels itself out in an infinity of 'nows' which are what they are and which, precisely for this reason, tend to isolate themselves in their self-identity. (*BN* 167)

It is preoccupation with the psyche as given in impure reflection which produces the popular image of the soul as a bundle of passions competing for mastery but which, at the same time, makes the competition incomprehensible through making these passions inert.

We have now given an account of the internal structure of consciousness, the pre-reflective consciousness, temporality and reflection. But we saw at the beginning of the analysis that consciousness is necessarily a relationship to something other than itself, and it was this relationship that we were initially interested in investigating.

It will be remembered that Sartre distinguishes between the phenomenon and 'being', and that the term 'being' describes that which is transphenomenal. I experience the chair as transcending my experience of it. It is a centre of opacity for consciousness.

The problem is that, by definition, I cannot experience that of the chair which transcends my experience of it. I cannot experience 'being' and can only say "Being is", "Being is what it is" and "Being is in itself". What I can have knowledge of is the phenomenon. But what is the phenomenon? By definition it only arises in relation to a perceiver, and we are therefore tempted to say that the phenomenon is created by consciousness in its interaction with being, and that our knowledge therefore refers only to the contents of our own subjectivity. If we can say that being is transphenomenal, but may say nothing about that transphenomenal being other than it is, it is what it is, and it is in-itself, how are we to found the objectivity of knowledge? To put it another way, if consciousness is a nothingness, and if the being of which it is conscious can be described only in those terms, then to what do all the other varied descriptions of things refer? [67/39] Sartre has insisted, in the name of the objectivity of knowledge, on expelling things from consciousness - consciousness is contentless, intentional, - but this knowledge now seems to be left hanging in the air. At this stage of the analysis it may even seem to have been returned surreptitiously to pure subjectivity. Sartre's definition of "world" as "the totality of being insofar as it is traversed by the circuit of selfness" (*BN* 102) seems in some way to make "the world" dependent on consciousness. Is this dependence of such a nature as to destroy entirely the possibility of objective knowledge? The for-itself has to be as presence to being. What is the significance of this for our knowledge of that to which it is present? This can be reformulated as a question about the relation of the particular thing to the in-itself. Knowledge is 'intuition' that is, the direct presence of consciousness to the thing. But whence in relation to being-in-itself does the thing arise? We have to approach this question once more via an analysis of consciousness. What-

ever else is involved in my present to an object, I am conscious of that object as not being me. And this negation comes from me, not from the object, which is simply what-is. For me the object is an essential aspect of my knowledge, whereas for the object I have no meaning whatsoever. That is, the negation which is constitutive of knowledge is an internal negation, whereas the negation involved in a statement such as "This chair is not that table" is an external negation which leaves the chair and the table untouched. When I know my knowledge is completely defined by what I am not - by X. So Sartre writes

> Thus in this ekstatic relation which is constitutive of the internal negation and of knowledge, it is the in-itself 'in person' which is the concrete pole in its plenitude, and the for-itself is nothing other than the emptiness in which the in-itself is detached ... The knower is not; he is not apprehensible. He is nothing other than that which brings it about that there is a *being-there* on the part of the known, a presence - for by itself the known is neither present nor absent, it simply is. (*BN* 177)

This argument involves two steps -

1) it makes explicit what is meant by the word "know". To count as knowledge of X, rather than as a subjective impression, my knowledge must be of X as it is - or rather, of those aspects of X to which my knowledge refers. We must be able to say that *all* the fact of my knowing X does to X is to make it known - that is, in Sartre's terms, to give it its being-there, or presence.

2) It points out that this kind of relationship is precisely that which we have discovered to be characteristic of consciousness - the relationship of being what it is not. So we have only made explicit what was contained in the initial supposition of the [68/40] possibility of objective knowledge. We now need to ask the further question: How is it that the knower, in doing nothing to the in-itself, other than changing its being into a being there, can produce the possibility of ascribing various characteristics to things. If my statement "This pen is green, long and thin and round", is to count as knowledge, then we must say that all I do to the pen in perceiving it is to change its being into a being-there. However, if this is all I do to its being, why can I say so much more about the pen than I can say about being-in-itself?

My knowledge is never a knowledge simply of 'being'. It is a knowledge of a 'this', or of several thises. What is the relation between "this" and "being"? The for-itself is present to being, but it is present to being as a *lack*, that is, as a "detotalised totality" - a totality which it is not but which, in so far as it aims at being it, defines it. This totality is defined in concrete terms

by the world as a totality - the totality which I am not. That is, being in itself appears as a totality for consciousness:

> This totalisation of being adds *nothing* to being; it is nothing but the manner in which being is revealed as not being the for-itself, the manner in which *there is* being. (*BN* 181)

In addition, the for-itself is only a totality in the future and through the specific negation of the "partial structure which it is". That is to have to be a future totality and to have to not be what I am now are different ways of describing the same essential characteristic of consciousness. I am both the affirmation of a future totality, which I am not, and the negation of a present this which I am.

> The 'this' is the being which I at present *am not*, in so far as it appears on the ground of the totality of being ... There is a this because I am not yet my future negations and because I am no longer my past negations. (*BN* 182)

What determines the this as a this is purely a negation. It is not, from the point of view of the this, an *internal negation*, it leaves the this quite untouched. It is an external negation. This table is not that chair. Determination, the specification of the totality of the in-itself into thises, or rather into one or more thises, plus an indifferent ground, is purely a function of the fact that the for-itself is present-to-being from a particular perspective. If I look at my desk from this perspective, that book is to the right of the pen. If I look at it from the other side, it is to the left of the pen. Neither 'to the right of' nor 'to the left of' characterise the book in any way. They are purely external relations between it and the pen. In this way being in-itself can appear as a sum of externally related *thises*, and we might say that each 'this' is only a possible perspective on the in-itself, a particular point of view from which to bring about the 'being-there' of the in-itself. Being-in-itself present to a nihilating for-itself [69/41] has therefore the characteristic of being simultaneously continuous (an undifferentiated totality) and discontinuous ("a purely additive collection of all the 'thises'"). (*BN* 183) This is 'the world', and space, as the basic characteristic of the world, *res extensa*, is this relationship of the continuous and discontinuous, a unity (there is one space) which is at the same time pure externality.

> Space is not the world, but it is the instability of the world apprehended as totality, inasmuch as the world can always disintegrate into external multiplicity. (*BN* 184)

One can define space as the possibility that external negation can come to being through the for-itself. And its exteriority is the expression of the indifference of being, of the fact that being is what it is:

> the indifference of the in-itself as the indifference which the for-itself has not-be is revealed in the world as determination. (*BN* 186)

If one takes a particular this and considers it separate from the other thises and from the totality, it has certain qualities. The lemon is yellow, hard, sour. But these qualities are not separate parts which go to make up the lemon. The lemon is given as an undifferentiated unity. The qualities of the this are the various points of view which we can take on it. Thus there is an analogous relation between *this* and *in-itself*, and between *quality* and *this*. But it is not an identical relationship. As Sartre puts it "instead of the figures appearing on an Undifferentiated ground, it is wholly penetrated by the ground". (*BN* 188) The this gives itself totally, but "in profile" and the qualities are a series of possible profiles. In a sense each quality is an "abstraction". But it is not therefore subjective. Abstraction involves nihilating, going beyond the given. Each quality is an abstraction in the sense that if offers itself as a particular profile towards which I can transcend the this as it is given to me.

The thises are related to one another by external negation. This is not that. Space is the continuity - discontinuity of this exteriority in the relation of this to totality. This same exteriority in the relation between this and that is *quantity*. Quantity "does not depend on the terms added but is only the affirmation of their independence" (*BN* 191). 'Four' can be four anythings as long as they are separate things. Quantity is not about the things quantified.

> Thus space and quantity are only one and the same type of negation. By the sole fact that *this* and *that* are revealed as having no relation to me who am my own relation, space and quantity come into the world, for each one of them is the relation of things which are unrelated (*BN* 191). [70/42]

I am present to this as having to transcend it towards the future, and so as transcending it towards another this. This means that at the same time the this is given as having *potentiality* - either the potentiality of permanence, or the potentiality of change.

The 'essence' of a thing is 'the principle of the series of its appearances'. For me to see the lemon is to transcend it towards its essence, and this essence may be permanence, that is, the coincidence of the lemon with itself. (This ideal of a thing coinciding fully with itself is what we call Beauty - a lemon that would be completely lemon, the essential lemon.) As we have

seen, my past exists for me in my present project in the form of, *inter alia*, empirical knowledge. It is in the past that the connection between the bud and the flower is discovered, and "it is in the terms of this past that the for-itself makes known to itself what it is in the future" (*BN* 195). It makes itself known to itself in the world, on things, and it thereby makes the connection between the present and the future state of the world, as potentiality. I am my past, but I make myself known to myself in the projection of a future. Insofar as my past is empirical knowledge, my future is the potentialities of things. However, for the things these potentialities are purely external. The bud, the crescent moon, are complete in themselves. We cannot describe them as *in themselves* lacking anything. They are what they are, that is all. But in the perspective of consciousness's temporalising structure being-in-itself appears as having potentialities. The point here is that there is nothing *necessary* in the sequence bud-flower. It is a succession of states, and what makes me see the flower in the bud is my own past as presence to a similar succession of states. In his analysis of causality Hume writes

> Motion in one body is regarded upon impulse as the cause of motion in another. When we consider these objects with the utmost attention, we find only that the one body approaches the other; and that the motion of it precedes that of the other, but without any sensible interval. It is in vain to rack ourselves with *further* thought and reflection upon this subject. We can go no *further* in considering this particular instance. (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. 1, p. 80)

He goes on to point out that in the analysis of a causal sequence we can discover no necessary connection between cause A and effect B. The only relations that we discover between them are those of contiguity and succession. What Hume means by 'necessary connection' could be interpreted in terms of an 'internal relation'. Human reality is internally related to its future, insofar as it is *flight towards* a future which it has to be. The thing, on the other hand, simply is. It is a particular configuration of molecules, which will be [71/43] replaced by some other configuration of molecules, which will be as full and as dense as the first.

My being-in-the-world is a project, but, on the unreflective level, this project is revealed to me as *tasks* to be performed in the world, and the things therefore appear in a relation of instrumentality to myself and to one another. They appear as to be used. Both 'potentiality' and 'instrumentality' refer to the concepts change, causality and motion. In the world things come into existence and cease to be. There are what Sartre calls "abolitions and apparitions" which are not in any sense brought about by me, and therefore must be in some sense characteristics of being. There is also *mo-*

tion, that is thises which do not change their nature (their quiddity) but do change their place. Again this seems to be in some sense a characteristic of being. Both these notions refer also to time - a this which was but is no more, an X which was here and is now there, and this time to which they refer is also a time *of the world*, a universal time which I do not in any sense create.

We have seen that when I see an object and immediately see it in all three temporal dimensions, as being a past and a future. What is the nature of the relationship, for the object, of its past, present and future? The first point to notice is the exteriority of time. Like space, universal time appears both as a unity, a continuum, and also as infinitely divisible into a multiplicity of instants. The relation between the instants can be quantified - that is, it is purely on external relations. Insofar as universal time is by definition quantifiable, the non-temporality of being is the foundation of universal time. That is in being-in-itself there is no project but only pure succession, and it is this fact which is given to us in universal time. That there should be succession involving abolitions and apparitions rather than pure repetition is a "contingent and metaphysical fact" (*BN* 206) just as is the existence here of a this rather than of a that. But that there should be one or the other is a function of the necessity for the indifference of being to appear to me from a temporalising perspective.

Motion is perhaps the purest expression of this exteriority, for in motion the this is exterior to itself, not in the way in which the for-itself is always outside itself, but rather in a relation of pure indifferent exteriority. Passing through the position AB is different from being at rest at the position AB. The difference is that to be at rest at AB is to be in a set of establishable relations of exteriority with other thises. But these relations must be established within a "now". However, in the case of motion: [72/44]

> The very 'now' in which they are established is already exterior to them; that is, simultaneously with their revelation, there are *already* revealed new relations of exteriority, of which the 'this' considered is considered as the foundation and which are externally related to the first. (*BN* 211)

Thus motion involves the exteriority to itself of the in-itself in time.

> But since exteriority-to-self is in no way ekstatic, the relation of the moving body to itself is a pure relation of indifference and can be revealed only to a witness. (*BN* 212)

Motion is, as it were, the intersection of space and time and this appears in the form of the trajectory of the moving body, a temporally defined spatial[3] unit.

The for-itself exists in universal time firstly through its past, which is in-itself, which is what it is, and so is in universal and quantifiable time in exactly the same way as are other things in the world. Secondly, although the for-itself's present is, as it were, the moment of its escape from the in-itself and hence from universal time, it is at the same time an escape from being as *presence* to being. The present to which it is presence cannot be distinguished from the past through *change*, since change is a pure coming into being or ceasing to be, with no relation to the past. However, motion, the continuity of the trajectory can serve as a basis for this distinction, and so it is through motion that the for-itself connects with the present dimension of universal time.

Finally, the for-itself escapes from the in-itself towards the future, but the future towards which it escapes is a future in-itself to which it will be present. Because of this each thing is given to me as having certain of its properties in the future, as probabilities external to it. The universal future is

> the abstract content of that hierarchy of equivalents which are the futures, a container of reciprocal exteriorities which is itself exteriority, a sum of itself which is itself in-itself (*BN* 214).

Thus if the for-itself brings time to the in-itself it does not thereby distort the in-itself. The in-itself has to give itself to a consciousness as a temporal world. That is, the being there of the world, which is all that the for-itself does to the in-itself, is necessarily temporal. Why this must necessarily be the case can perhaps be brought out by contrasting my knowledge of the world with God's knowledge. Hypothetically, God is omniscient. That is, he knows everything, and he knows it all at once. He sees both sides of the table at the same time. But under this hypothesis the table, as a centre of opacity of consciousness, disappears; and when the table disappears, so does knowledge of it. The concept of knowledge implies distinctions, determinations, limitations, and these are absent from the God perspective which dissolves everything into total indifferentiation. Thus there can only be knowledge for [73/45] a consciousness to which being appears from a particular perspective. Being present to something from a particular perspective does not change or in any way affect the thing to which one is present, but it makes it *be there* - that is, it makes it into a possible object of knowledge, which means at the same time that it makes the complete

3 ms: spation

undifferentiation of being-in-itself appear within the context of limitation. Space and time, both being one and yet infinitely divisible, are the appearance of the in-itself in the context of limitation from a perspective.

Thus Sartre concludes his analysis of knowledge by writing:

> We shall grant to idealism that the being of the for-itself is knowledge of being, but we must add that this knowledge has being. The identity of being of the for-itself and of knowledge does not come from the fact that knowledge is the measure of being, but from the fact that the for-itself makes known to itself what it is through the in-itself; that is, from the fact that in its being it is a relation to being. ... To Realism, on the other hand, we shall grant that it is being which is present to consciousness in knowledge and that the for-itself adds *nothing* to the in-itself except the very fact that *there is* in-itself ... *Nothing* of which I see comes from me; there is *nothing* outside what I see or what I could see (*BN* 216-217).

To revert briefly to the structure of the argument here, we can see that what is involved is not metaphysical speculation but the delineation of the logical geography of a set of concepts, basing it on a transcendental argument. Knowledge is possible. What must consciousness be if knowledge is to be possible? Consciousness must be that which makes being 'be there' without in any way affecting what it is. The categories of empirical knowledge space, time, quantity, quality, potentiality, instrumentality, change and motion can then be established as objective through the analysis of this primitive fact. Two further points should be noted. Firstly, Sartre is not interested at all here in the *how* of this process, in, say, the brain as the 'mechanism' underlying the 'process of consciousness'. This is not a philosophical question, but depends for an adequate answer on a preliminary specification of the logical geography of consciousness. Secondly, Sartre is naturally not arguing here that to be conscious is necessarily to have veridical knowledge of the world. He is not denying that people make mistakes. To a certain extent his analysis of impure reflection is an attempt to found error, [74/46] but this is not his essential objective. Error is logically secondary to truth, and the explanation of error must come after an account of the possibility of truth.

These two points bring us back to a problem raised right at the beginning of this chapter. We might formulate it like this. I see with my eyes. This involves light rays reflected from a particular object entering my eye, being translated into electrical impulses to my brain, and there producing the effect which we call 'seeing'. If this is the case, how can we insist that I actually see the object as it is? Is not the final result a complicated mixture of sensations created by the interaction between my sense organs and the external world? Bertrand Russell formulates this problem as follows

> Scientific scripture, in its most canonical form, is embodied in physics (including physiology). Physics assures us that the occurrences which we call 'perceiving objects' are at the end of a long causal chain which starts from the objects, and are not likely to resemble the objects except, at best, in certain very abstract ways. We all start from 'naive realism' i.e., the doctrine that things are what they seem. We think that grass is green, that stones are hard, and that snow is cold. But physics assures us that the greenness of grass, the hardness of stones and the coldness of snow, are not the greenness, hardness and coldness that we know in our own experience, but something very different. The observer, when he seems to himself to be observing a stone, is really, if physics is to be believed, observing the effects of the stone upon himself. Thus science seems to be at war with itself, when it most means to be objective it finds itself plunged into subjectivity against its will. Naive realism leads to physics, and physics if true, shows that naive realism is false. Therefore naive realism, if true, is false; therefore it is false. And therefore the behaviourist, when he thinks he is recording observations about the outer world, is really recording observations about what is happening in him. (*An enquiry into meaning and truth*, p.13)

Can we get out of this apparently vicious circle? There are two points to be made here. Firstly, my body appears first as the known. It is philosophically illegitimate to use facts about my body in the initial attempt to found knowledge, since only once we are shown the condition for knowledge can we accept the validity of those facts. Secondly, my own body is never experienced by me as, inter alia, a set of sense organs, nerve fibres and brain tissues. It is only somebody else's body that I can know in this way. That is, before discussing philosophically the role of 'the body' in the relation of human reality to the [75/47] world, we have to elucidate the relation between my body-for-me and the other's body, or, rather, my body-for-the-other. And in order to do this we must first explore what is involved in the fact that I exist as 'being-for-others'. [76/1]

Chapter 3

Being for Others

When we speak of the Other, we are speaking of another subject, a conscious human being. If I say that I sat in a room with three other people, I mean that there are three other conscious beings in that room, who see me in exactly the same way as I see them. On the other hand, when I see the other, the other is the *object* of my perception. I see the other as a thing. I see a face with a particular expression, hands moving in a particular way, I hear a certain pattern of sounds, and so on. Each of these is a full existent, an in-itself. What is the relationship between the other as object of my perceptions, as a thing out there in the world among other things, and my understanding of the Other as a subject? At the simplest level, we might ask - how can I be certain that this object here in front of me is not a skilfully constructed automaton? How do I know that there is a consciousness in there somewhere? I cannot experience the Other's experiences. What then does it mean to say that I have an experience of the other, rather than of a body?

The problem can be formulated in more technical terms by the use of the concepts 'internal negation' and 'external negation'. I exist as an internal negation of being, in the sense that what I am is defined by my relation to the being which I am not. In asserting that the Other is an Other, not a thing, I am asserting, therefore, that he/she also exists as an internal negation of being. However, things in the world are related to one another only by an external negation - the table is not the chair, but this fact is not constitutive of the being of either. Insofar as my body is a thing in the world, it is related in exteriority to other things and also to other bodies. To the extent that I apprehend the Other through his/her body, what would seem to be involved is a purely external negation. But an external negation is one which is established from outside. It is not a relation of reciprocity between the two. However, the notion of the Other implies reciprocity - it implies that while I am constituting my self as not being the Other, the other is at the same time constituting himself/herself as not being me, and it is this fact that makes him/her an *Other,* and therefore it is this to which I am referring when I recognise the Other. This reciprocity cannot be established, therefore, if we remain within the [77/2] framework of external negation. For there to be knowledge of the Other, the relation between Self and Other must involve

an internal negation which is in some way constitutive of the being of both. The problem is to uncover the nature of this particular internal negation, and to show in exactly what way it is constitutive of the being of human reality. Otherwise we are left with the alternatives of choosing either the pure unanalysed assertion of the existence of the Other, or else solipsism, which simply denies the existence of consciousnesses other than one's own. Husserl, Hegel and Heidegger have all approached the problem along these lines, and Sartre introduces his own solution through a critical review of their conclusions.

According to Sartre, for Husserl:

> Whether I consider this table or this tree or this bare wall in solitude or with companions, the Other is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object's objectivity (*BN* 233).

That is, I learn the world in and through my relations with other people, the world is objectified for and by me in a language which is the Other's language, and so on. Moreover, I learn myself in the same way, in interplay with other people, other selves:

> Thus each object appears in my concrete experience as polyvalent; it is given originally as possessing systems of reference to an indefinite plurality of consciousness; it is *on* the table, *on* the wall, that the Other is revealed to me as that to which the object under consideration is perpetually referred. (*BN* 233)

This, Sartre agrees, is part of the answer but, nevertheless, Husserl fails because he does not give an adequate analysis of the nature of the subject. He distinguishes between the empirical Ego and the transcendental Ego. An adequate account of the meaning of this distinction would take us too far afield but in the simplest terms we can distinguish between them as follows. On the one hand, I can describe myself as having certain characteristics - bad tempered, ambitious, having a certain stock of knowledge and beliefs, superstitious, insecure. This self I can explore. I can ask "Am I really insecure"? And I can answer the question by looking at how I behaved with that group of people yesterday, and so on. That is, my insecurity is very much an object in the world - an objective set of behaviour patterns - and I go about exploring it in very much the same way as I explore somebody else's insecurity. This is the [78/3] empirical ego. But what is the 'I' which does the exploring? As we have seen, Sartre solves this problem by his analysis of pre-reflective consciousness, in which he shows that there are not TWO egos, the I that knows and the I that is known, but one

consciousness which exists for-itself. However, Husserl retains the assumption of a division, and postulates a transcendental ego, which is beyond experience, since by definition it is the I that is doing the experiencing and cannot look at itself, but only at the empirical ego; but which is constitutive of experience, in the sense that it is the synthesising agent which makes a unified experience possible.

But this means that, although he has solved the problem of the relation between the empirical egos, he has quite ignored the problem of the relation between the transcendental egos. For me to assert that the Other is an Other is to assert that she/he is a transcendental subject: "Thus the true problem is that of the connection of the transcendental subjects who are beyond experience" (*BN* 234). The transcendental ego is a knowing subject, and nothing more, and the relation of knowing with the Other can never satisfy us, as it gives the Other as *known,* not as knowing.

For Hegel, the other is necessary for my consciousness to exist as self-consciousness. I discover my self as an individual only in relation to another consciousness which is not me. For me to say 'I think', I must be conscious of my self as an 'I', as an *individual,* otherwise I would only say 'There is thinking going on'. This individuality only arises when I am recognised by the other. But insofar as I am what the other recognises me as being, the development of my self-consciousness depends on the other recognising me as a *subject* and not simply as an object. This involves me in asserting that I am more than my mere life, and this is done by risking my life. Thus I risk my life in a struggle with the other in order to force the other to recognise me as a subject. But insofar as I force him to recognise me as a subject, he is an object for me - I am Master and he is Slave. But if he is only an object he cannot recognise me adequately because I wish to be recognised as subject by a subject. Thus the Master-Slave solution is unstable. But as such it initiates a dialectical process which leads finally to a situation of mutual recognition, and hence of complete self-consciousness.

> At this [79/4] moment there will appear a selfconsciousness in general which is recognised in other self-consciousnesses and which is identical with them and with itself (*BN* 237).

Of course, to speak as though there were an I demanding recognition is contradictory if one insists that only through the Master-Slave dialectic does the I as self-consciousness arise. What Hegel is doing is describing a process which is the prerequisite for the appearance of self-consciousness, and the term 'I' is not used univocally throughout. Full self-consciousness

only comes into existence through the relation with the Other. That is "I am a being-for-itself which is for-itself only through another" (*BN* 237).

There are three main faults in Hegel's account:

1) He confuses knowing and being. The development of self-consciousness is a growth in knowledge - the move from an undifferentiated self-comprehension, which Hegel describes as self-certitude, to a conceptualised articulated knowledge of self, which Hegel describes as the *truth* of certitude. Thus my knowledge of myself depends on the other's knowledge of me - that is, on my status as an object-for-the-other - and vice versa.

2) And this is why his end point, full self-consciousness, is also dissolution of all otherness. There is one self-consciousness, universal reason understanding itself. The specificity of the individual is dissolved in the universality of knowledge, and the end product of the development of self-consciousness is a purely abstract truth 'I am I'.

3) However, as we have seen, consciousness is prior to knowledge, and self-consciousness is not the same as knowledge of the transcendent Ego. If consciousness affirms itself in the face of the other, it is asserting its irreducible being, not seeking for an abstract truth. It is aiming at recognition as an individual;

> The individual claims his achievements as an individual, the recognition of his concrete being, and of the objective specification of a universal structure. Of course, the *rights* which I demand of the other posit the universality of *self;* respect of persons demands the recognition of my person as universal. But it is my concrete and individual being which flows into this universal and fills it; it is for that *being-there* that I demand rights (*BN* 239).

Hegel's concept of the universal self-consciousness assumes that we can move to a position where I know the other and I know myself in exactly the same way and vice versa. At this moment, obviously, particularity [80/5] would dissolve, we would have a common knowledge and a common will. But this assumes that I can be an object for myself in exactly the same way as I can be an object for the other, and it was this assumption also which underlay the argument that I come to know myself through being, as a subject, an object for another. The thought that in risking my life I at the same time shed my objectiveness for the other. But in fact

> the Other is an object for me because he is the Other and not because he appears on the occasion of a body-object (i.e. life) (*BN* 241).

In the relation of knowledge the Other is always merely object, that which I am not, whereas I am always what I am and cannot be radically an object for myself. I apprehend myself in interiority, whereas I cannot apprehend the other in interiority. 'No universal knowledge can be derived from the relation of consciousness. This is what we shall call their ontological separation' (*BN* 243).

In fact, Hegel can only reach the conclusion which he reaches because he has forgotten himself. That is, he is observing not the relationship between his own consciousness and the other's consciousness but the relation of various other consciousnesses to one another. Thus it is quite irrelevant whether X is object for Y or Y is object for X. The relations are interchangeable, and hence universalisable. But the universal is in Hegel. He can only conclude that his work is the final fruition of absolute mind because at the beginning he adopts a God perspective. Thus, Sartre concludes,

> In fact, if, as we have established, the being of my consciousness is strictly irreducible to knowledge, then I cannot transcend my being toward a reciprocal and universal relation in which I could see my being and that of others as equivalent. On the contrary, I must establish myself *in my being* and posit the problem of the Other in terms of my being. In a word, the sole point of departure is the interiority of the *cogito.* We must understand by this that each one must be able by starting out from his own interiority, to rediscover the Other's being as a transcendence which conditions the very being of that interiority. This of necessity implies that the multiplicity of consciousness is on principle unsurpassable for I can undoubtedly transcend myself *toward* a Whole, but I cannot establish myself in this Whole so as to contemplate myself and to contemplate the Other. No logical or epistemological optimism can cover the scandal of the plurality of consciousnesses ... so long as consciousnesses exist [81/6] the separation and conflict of consciousnesses will remain (*BN* 243-244). Heidegger does not make Hegel's mistake of confusing being with knowing, and so of trying to account for my relation to the other in terms of knowledge. He replaces the notion of 'being for' which is implied by knowledge, with the relation of 'being with' -
>
> a sort of ontological solidarity for the exploitation of this world ... not a *frontal* opposition but rather an *oblique* interdependence (*BN* 245-246).

In my projects I constitute the world as a complex of instrumentality and I make myself known to myself as 'anyone' in using instruments which belong to everybody. Heidegger argues that the experience of 'being-with' is the basic experience. I establish my individuality only by transcending the 'being-with' in the acceptance of the fact that I am living towards my private death. Individuality is not given, it has to be earned.

Sartre's criticism here is that Heidegger asserts the being-with without adequately founding it. In particular he never makes clear the relation between this general 'ontological' being-with and the particular 'ontic' experience of a particular other. The difficulty is that while I make being 'be-there' it cannot be said that I make the other 'be-there'. The other is always itself "the free foundation of a world" (*BN* 248). Finally, we have to conclude that we encounter the Other, we do not constitute him.

From these criticisms of Husserl, Hegel and Heidegger, Sartre draws the following conclusion about the preconditions for an adequate account of the Other:

1) One cannot offer an argument showing that the existence of the Other is highly probable. Probability is only meaningful in circumstances where verification is possible, and this is not the case in relation to the Other.

> Therefore if the Other is not immediately present to me, and if his existence is not as sure as my own, all conjecture concerning him is entirely lacking in meaning (*BN* 251).

Thus all we can do is to make explicit the foundation of the certainty which we do have regarding the existence of the Other.

2) This must begin not from knowledge but from consciousness.

> The *cogito* examined once again, must throw me outside it and on to the Other, just as it threw me outside upon the In-itself. (*BN* 251)

3) The Other must be given immediately as [82/7] a subject, not as an object.

4) And the Other must be given in a reciprocal internal negation.

That is, we understand the term 'Other' as meaning 'subject in a reciprocal relation of internal negation with me'. Since, however, there is no possible procedure whereby the actual existence of such a being could be finally confirmed at the level of conceptual knowledge, it follows that when I say "That voice is probably a man, not a talking computer" then the possible certainty from which the notion of probability here derives its meaning, insofar as it is a probability of *confirming* that it is a man, cannot be a certainty on the level of knowledge. We must therefore look in our experience for

> a fundamental connection in which the Other is manifested in some way other than through the knowledge which I have of him (*BN* 253).

My assertion that this Other, as an object for me, is *probable,* can only be made on the basis of some more fundamental relation with the other, just as

my doubt about this memory of the past assumes a direct pre-reflective consciousness of the past.

We have to begin our analysis then from those everyday experiences which I have of other people. If I see a particular man, what do I mean when I say that he is a man (not a robot)? The answer can best be illustrated by comparison with the seeing of an object. If I see an object, I see it as entering into a set of spatial relations with other objects. These relations all come from myself as a centre of reference. For me, the bench is two feet away from the lawn. For the bench, it is what it is and nothing more. The things in the universe are organised *around me,* not around the bench. But when I see the man, then I 'register an organisation *without distance* of the things in my universe around that privileged object ... instead of a grouping toward me of the objects, there is now an orientation *which flees from me*' (*BN* 254).

That is

> The Other is first the permanent flight of things toward a goal which I apprehend as an object at a certain distance from me but which escapes me inasmuch as it unfolds about itself its own distances (*BN* 255).

Thus at this level the Other appears as a strange type of object, an object which reorganises my universe around it, but which, of course, at the same time remains within my universe, for otherwise I would not be able to see it as reorganising my universe. However, the [83/8] fact that the other can see my universe means that he can also see me. That is, I can discover myself as being situated as an object within the Other's universe, as "being-seen-by-another". This relationship is not to the other as an object, nor is it directly to the Other as a subject. It is a relation to myself as an object for the Other. The Other here is defined not by his relationship to

> a solitary, extra-mundane consciousness which I cannot even think" but, rather, "by his relation to the world and by his relation to myself (*BN* 257).

However, that relation is what Sartre describes as "an internal haemorrhage". How exactly do I perceive such a relationship? I am conscious of it in being conscious of the Other's look. What the look does is to give me an outside. Normally I am simply involved in action in the world. I do not know myself. I am simply pre-reflectively conscious of acts to be performed. Moreover, as we have seen, in an important sense I am not. I am a pure flight from the past towards the future. There is no 'self' present. The self only arises in reflection, as an object which I can know. There is usually no self at the level of the pre-reflective *cogito*. However, when I

suddenly experience myself as looked at I remain on the level of the pre-reflective, but at the same time do now experience myself as a self, as an object. Thus the pre-reflective experience of myself as an object arises only in the context of the Other's look. But it arises as "a self which I *am without knowing it*" (*BN* 261). I both am not this self, insofar as it exists for the Other, and at the same time I am it, insofar as I accept it in shame or in pride. I freely accept it as conferred on me by the Other's freedom as a self which I cannot know, and in doing so I affirm my solidarity with the other who does know it.

As an object for the other I am in-itself. My possibles - my possibility, for example, of hiding in that corner - become *surpassed* possibilities, they become the very instruments which the other can use to trap me. That is, they change from possibles into probables, future events in the world to be used by the Other. Similarly I become an existent in universal time, rather than a temporalising agent. Finally I am the object of value judgements.

> Insofar as I am the object of values which come to qualify me without my being able to act on this qualification or even to know it, I am enslaved (*BN* 267).

The best way of conceptualising this is to say that the Other's look [84/9] pushes me into a new dimension of being, into a new dimension of my existence. I discover myself as having an outside which I cannot know.

> Through the Other's look I *live* myself as fixed in the midst of the world, as in danger, as irremediable. But I *know* neither what I am nor what is my place in the world, nor what face this world in which I am turns toward the Other (*BN* 268).

The Other, then, is first given to me in this experience of myself as having an outside. What precisely is involved here? Firstly, the Other is neither an object nor the goal of my attentions. If I turn and focus on the Other, then his/her look disappears and is replaced by certain facial expressions, etc. In effect the Other's look radically removes objectivity from my world, since my whole world becomes a world for the Other. Thus I experience the Other as placing limits upon me, and these limits as deriving from the Other's freedom. This is, as it were, the content of the experience, but what is the nature of the experience? It is not knowledge, for knowledge would involve the metamorphosis of the Other into an object. It does not involve "conceiving" or "representing". Neither is it an interpretative construction placed upon certain more basic experiences. That is, it is not the case that I have certain experiences which I explain to myself by means of the category "other". Rather it is a direct relation to the Other. As such, it is a mode of consciousness or a structure of my consciousness. But it is a different

mode of consciousness from that involved in being an object for myself in impure reflection. In that case I know myself as an object which I can know. But in being for others, I am conscious of being an object which I cannot know.

> Even when language has revealed that the Other considers me evil or jealous, I shall never have a concrete intuition of my evil or of my jealousy. These will never be more than fleeting notions whose very nature will be to escape me (*BN* 275).

The nature of this relationship can be further explicated by analysing what happens when I make a mistake about being looked at. In Sartre's example I am bending over peering through a key-hole when I hear a sound behind me which I *interpret* as being a footstep. I immediately experience myself as being seen, even though I may later find out that I was mistaken in my interpretation of the sound. Thus the experience of the Other can occur when there is in fact no Other actually present. This fact does not, however, once more confer uncertainty on the status of the Other. It is only the existence of the Other as object which can be [85/10] uncertain. My feeling that I am being looked at does not reveal to me the Other as object, but it reveals to the Other-as-subject through my experience of myself as object for another. What is uncertain is not the existence of the Other-as-subject but, rather, the Other's-being-there, or facticity. In fact, even *absence,* as a concrete experience of the not-being-there of somebody who is usually involved in a particular situation, whether it be a social group or a place, is a revelation of the Other-as-subject. Sartre uses the concepts 'distance' and 'being-present-without-distance' to explicate this. Distance is a relationship between objects. Cape Town is a thousand miles from Durban. But if X is in Durban and Y is in Cape Town, although they are in one sense separated by one thousand miles nevertheless X, in thinking of Y, is 'present without distance' to Y. That is, something does not have to be here before consciousness for me to be conscious of it. So in spite of the distance separating us I can experience X as being present-without-distance, to me from his factual position in Cape Town, and in so doing I am experiencing him as a subject. I can be present-without-distance to an object, but an object cannot be present-without-distance to me. This means that I live in a world which is partially defined in relation to all those subjects who are either present or absent to me on the ground of an original present (*BN* 279). That is

> Being-for-others is a constant fact of my human reality, and I grasp it with its factual necessity in every thought, however slight, which I form concerning myself (*BN* 280).

Finally, 'Each look makes us prove concretely - and in the indubitable certainty of the *cogito* - that we exist for all living men; i.e. that there are (some) consciousnesses for whom I exist' (*BN* 281).

But the existence of the Other is contingent. The experience of the Other in the look reveals as a simple fact not just this Other here looking at me, but the fact of "Others". This was referred to earlier as the fact that I *encounter* the Other. But here we also see that the concept "Other" implies a relation of reciprocity, and hence implies an internal negation. An internal negation is one which is in some way constitutive of the being involved. How, then, can the Other both be an *encountered facticity,* and at the same time be joined to the for-itself through a bond of internal negation? Sartre's answer is

> What I refuse to be can be nothing but this refusal to be the Me by means of which the Other is making me an object. Or, if you prefer, I refuse my refused Me; I determine myself as Myself by means of the refusal of the Me refused; I posit this [86/11] refused Me as an alienated Me in the same upsurge in which I wrench myself away from the Other. But I thereby recognise and affirm not only the Other but the existence of my Self-for-others ... I escape the Other by leaving him with my alienated Me in his hands. But as I choose myself as a tearing away from the Other, I assume and recognise as mine this alienated Me ... Thus this Me which has been alienated and refused is simultaneously my bond with the Other and the symbol of our absolute separation (*BN* 285).

That is, the Other transcends (negates) me towards his own possibilities, and I negate myself as transcended (in shame or pride as projects) in the recognition of the fact that any possibles are being transcended. The intersection of these two negatives constitute my being-for-others. The reciprocal negation is not a direct relation of face to face recognition but, as it were, a lateral recognition through my experience of that dimension of my being which is my 'being-for-others'.

What Sartre is trying to do in the above argument is to explicate the way in which I experience the Other, rather than to present a new proof for the existence of the Other. It is an attempt to explicate in that he does not simply affirm that I do recognise the existence of the Other, but tries to work out the exact way in which that recognition occurs, the fundamental structure of my relation to the Other. The significance of this is that an understanding of various specific kinds of relationship with other people must al-

ways be a function of our general analyses of the precise way in which I exist for the Other, and vice versa. The most obvious point to be made here is the inherent instability of the relationship. Immediately given in my Being-for-others is the fact that I assume this being in transcending it, and my own transcendence, as a necessary structure of my Being-for-others, can also be directed specifically at the Other - and can also thereby reduce him to an object. Furthermore, my original experience of Being-for-the-other, in so far as it is lived in shame or in fear, provides a motivation for this second step.

The Other-as-object is a transcendence transcended, an autonomous organisation of the instrumental world round a centre, which suddenly becomes a part of my universe, of my organisation of the instrumental world around myself. It is at this level that I can know the Other;

> Since I *am* my possibilities, the order of instruments in the world is [87/12] the image of my possibilities projected into the in-itself; that is, the image of what I am. But this mundane image I can never decipher; I adapt myself to it in and through action. The Other inasmuch as he is a subject is found similarly *engaged in his image.* On the other hand, insofar as I grasp him as object, it is this mundane image which leaps to my eyes. The Other becomes the instrument which is defined by his relation with all other instruments; he is an order of my instruments which is included in the order which I impose on these instruments ... Thus the world announces the Other to me in his totality and as a totality ... If I could make explicit all the instrumental complexes as they are turned towards the Other ... I should have defined explicitly and totally the being of the Other as object (*BN* 292-293).

That is, I know the Other in the world, and my knowledge of the Other can, theoretically, be as complete as my knowledge of myself. It only refers to an 'inside' beyond my grasp insofar as it is asserted that the instrumental complex *does in fact* constitute a pattern of meanings for the Other. The actual meanings, however, are not 'inside' the other - they are the Other's behaviour in the world, and it is by observing the Other's behaviour, including verbal responses to verbal stimuli (i.e. answers to questions) that I acquire knowledge of the Other. This is a consequence of the fact that consciousness is contentless and intentional. It can be known that there is consciousness, but neither my consciousness nor the Other's consciousness can ever be known, because consciousness is not a thing. It is the nihilating projection of myself towards the future, and this projection creates patterns in the world which can in turn be known.

However, within my knowledge of the Other as an object is contained an awareness that the Other, as transcendence-transcended, is perpetually in the position of suddenly reasserting his pure subjectivity by subjecting me

once more to the look, and thereby dissolving the objectivity of my world, including the objectivity of my knowledge about her or him. Thus much of my rational behaviour towards other people in the world is involved in my attempt to retain the objectivity of my world by retaining the Other as an object for me. But before considering this problem we must return to the body, since I relate to the other as a body, and since the instrumental complex in the world which is the Other is a complex centred on the Other's body. We now need to ask

> What then is my body; What is the body of the Other?" (*BN* 302) [88/13]

As we have already seen, one of the major philosophical problems associated with the body derives from the theory of the relativity of the senses - the idea that we know the world through sensations and that sensation is at least partly a function of our body as an instrument for exploring the world. But before we are in a position to treat the body as a collection of sense organs we have to first ask how I actually come to know my own body. Sartre argues that the traditional approach to the problem has been a) to analyse consciousness; b) to analyse the body as an object, as a being-for-others and, finally c) to attempt to develop some account of how these two beings co-exist. The failure to provide an adequate theory is inevitable since the two are irremediably different. Unless we start from the fact that

> Being-for-itself must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness; it cannot be *united* with a body (*BN* 305),

we are always going to find our theory falling apart.

I am a being-in-the-world and the world exists in a certain relation to me. That is, as we saw earlier, the for-itself makes things 'be-there' and in being there the indetermination of the in-itself appears in the categories of space, time, quantity, quality, potentiality and instrumentality. Without these categories, without the for-itself making the in-itself 'be there', no knowledge would be possible. "The point of view of pure knowledge is contradictory; there is only the point of view of *engaged* knowledge" (*BN* 308). Knowledge presupposes a point of view. However, that there should be knowledge and what the point of view is, whether it is from the mountain top or from my bed, are both contingent. This is what has been described as the *facticity* of the for-itself. As facticity I am defined by the order in which the world appears to me

> This absolutely necessary and totally unjustifiable order of the things of the world. This order which is myself insofar as I am neither the foundation of my be-

> ing nor the foundation of a *particular* being - this order is the body as it is on the level of the for-itself (*BN* 309).

As it is necessarily a point of view, so the for-itself is necessarily body. I do not know my point of view, but only that on which it is a point of view. When standing on the mountain top I look at everything but the top of the mountain. That is, what makes it a point of view is the fact that I go beyond it. Similarly, my body is what I transcend toward the world. The body as point of view is, therefore, "never a given which I can know" (*BN* 309).

A consciousness without a body, that is without any spatial and temporal orientation, is inconceivable. [89/14]

Since we can't know the body as for-itself directly, the only way that we can come to find out about it is by studying its worldly correlate, the orientation of the world. Firstly, although *the* world is necessarily orientated, the actual orientation is contingent in two different ways. One of the contingencies comes from the in-itself - it is contingent that this mountain be here rather than there. The other contingency comes from me. It is contingent that I should look at this mountain rather than at that lake. I can choose to look at the one rather than at the other. That is, my presence to being creates the necessity of there being a *this* and a ground on which the this appears, but what is to be this and what is to be the ground is determined by my free choice. This fact is what is described as my 'sense of sight'. The order of 'thises' which is subject to the laws of perspective, refers to and converges on a centre of reference, which must itself be a visible this, since it is part of the system, but which at the same time is not actually seen because it is the centre of reference. This is the eye. Thus we may say that

> My body is coextensive I with the world, spread across all things, and at the same time it is condensed into this single point which all things indicate and which I am without being able to know it (*BN* 318).

The senses are therefore in no way 'subjective'. What I see when I look in a particular direction, and how I see it, are both determined by the order of objects in the world and by the objective laws of perspective.

The for-itself does not contemplate the world. It is a project towards the future and, as such, the world is a complex of instruments and potentialities. These in turn refer me to my body as actor. Once more we must avoid the danger of trying to learn about my body as actor by examining the body of the other. The Other's body is also an instrument which I can use for my own ends, and we therefore tend to see it as an instrument which the Other uses for his/her ends. This immediately raises the problem of the subject - If this body is an instrument and if it is not my instrument whose instrument is

it? Along these lines we end up with the idea of a soul manipulating a body but we can never explain exactly how it does so. So instead we must start from an account of my-body-for-me in action. If we do so, we see that, on the one hand,

> the world as the correlate of the *possibilities* which I *am* appears from the moment of my upsurge as the enormous skeletal outline of all my possible actions (*BN* 322)

while on the other hand these possibles are all strictly objective, in that [90/15] they involve reference to instruments and to ways of making use of them. However, these instruments refer also to a centre of reference. This centre of reference is what I am, rather than an instrument which I use, although because it is part of the instrumental complex, it could be used by an Other, just as my eye can be seen by an Other, but not by me:

> Thus this centre is at once a tool objectively defined by the instrumental field which refers to it and at the same time the tool which we cannot *utilise* since we should thus be referred to infinity. We do not use this instrument, for we *are it*. It is given to us in no other way than by the instrumental order of the world, by emotional directional [ms: hodological] space, by the univocal or reciprocal relations of machines, but it cannot be *given* to my action. I do not have to adapt myself to it ... but it is my very adaptation to tools, the adaptation which I am. (*BN* 324)

Just as I have to perceive the world from a particular perspective, otherwise it would dissolve into complete indetermination, so I have to be temporally limited, I have to be separated from my goals by time. If I could get what I wanted simply by wishing, there would no longer be any distinction between end and means, possible and real, present and future. The world would be dissolved.

The fact that my body-for-me is the necessary point of view on the world which I have to transcend in action can be expressed in a number of different ways. My body is my facticity. It is the necessity of my finitude. It is my past, in the sense that it is that of me which I always have to go beyond. It is all those contingent characteristics which I must necessarily have as a being-in-the-world, my birth, my race, my class, my nationality, my physiological structure, my character and my past. All these facts of my body are revealed to me in my concrete relations with things and other people in the world. In these relationships I do not "know" my body, in the sense of making it an object for consciousness. Rather, writes Sartre,

> Consciousness exists its body.

What is meant by this? The body is a structure of my consciousness in that I am always pre-reflectively conscious of being a body. But it is what Sartre calls a 'lateral and retrospective' (*BN* 330) consciousness, in that it is a consciousness through which and past which I am conscious of the world. Sartre illustrates this point by an analysis of my pain. [91/16] If I am in pain I can of course actually direct my attention towards my pain. But when I do not do this, when I continue in some form of action in spite of my pain, how exactly do I experience the pain? My pain is that through which I project a world. It is a quality of my relation to the world, a specific colouring which this relationship acquires. My pain is not an object or thing of which I am conscious. If I am reading with sore eyes I am directly conscious of the book and laterally conscious of the pain, and this lateral consciousness manifests itself as a kind of diffuse awareness that it would be much nicer to read with eyes which were not hurting. That is, my project of reading here includes implicitly projecting my body towards a pain-free state, not in the sense of an explicit series of steps designed to reduce the pain but as a regretful awareness of being trapped within the pain, insofar as the consciousness of "being trapped" is only possible for a being which necessarily transcends the given. As such it involves an awareness of my body as me.

If I do come to reflect on the pain, and thereby make it explicitly part of a pattern of pain which I define as an *illness,* I do not necessarily make my body the object of my consciousness. In fact, I tend to dissociate the pain from my body and constitute it as part of this independent entity, the illness. This is another example of an impure reflection which hypostatises the reflected on consciousness. The illness simply refers laterally to the body as that which passively suffers it. My attention is only directed explicitly and directly to my body when I experience myself as an object for an Other. That is, my knowledge of my body, as opposed to the lateral awareness of my body we have been discussing up till now, is inextricably linked up with my being-for-others and with my knowledge of the other's body.

Before going on to consider this, I would like to refer to a point which Sartre makes a little earlier in his argument. When considering his attack on the idea of the "subjectivity" of the senses, and his insistence that the senses give us immediately objective relations in the world, the reader is certainly likely to have asked of what relevance is the physiological account of "sensation" in this argument. Does not the detailed physiological analysis of the mechanisms of the sense organs irretrievably lead us into the position where we have to recognise the subjectivity and relativity of sensation? Sartre meets this argument [92/17] by pointing out that the concept of "sen-

sation" is one example of the confusion which arises from applying what we discover about the body-for-others to our understanding of the body-for-me. Theorists have often written as though the individual's primary experience is of 'sensations', or of 'sense-data', and that these sensations are the product, in part, of our sense-organs. We have already read Russell's account of the theoretical difficulty which this raises. Sartre formulates the same problem as follows:

> My perception of the Other's senses serves me as a foundation for an explanation of sensations ... but reciprocally my sensations thus conceived constitute the only *reality* of my perception of the Other's senses (*BN* 315).

That is, we never experience ourselves as having sensations (except in the trivial sense of 'that gives me a funny sensation up and down my spine'; this use of the term 'sensation' is not what is being referred to here). We do not have sensations; we see things. But in investigating what happens when other people see things we go through the following steps. We put a man in a laboratory. We flash a light at him, and at the same time we watch his eye by means of some instrument, and we notice, say, a certain pattern of dilation of the cornea. We have here an objectively observed stimulus and an objectively observed response. Finally we ask the subject what happened and we discover a relationship between the light, the eye movement, and what we describe as a 'modification in the other's consciousness'- which modification we once more discover by objectively observing the Other's verbal responses to our questions. That is, we have here a set of relations *between objects.* What entitles us to say as a result of this that the person on whom we were experimenting had subjective reactions while we had objective reactions? What we in fact do is to construct the notion of sensation from our observation of the fact that sense-organs react to stimuli. We make this sensation into a *thing,* that is an inert object, related in exteriority to other objects. We then conceive of the "mind" as the environment in which these objects exist. However, we are faced with the contradiction between the discrete exteriority of the sensations and the apparent unity of the things we see, so we are obliged to conceive of this environment as living its sensations, as integrating them with one another in some way. It both 'suffers' sensations, in the sense that it receives them passively from the environment, and at the same time it 'appropriates them to it-self by living them' (*BN* 314). Once we have approached mind in this way, we cannot explain anything [93/18] about consciousness other than by reference to essentially magical notion of inherence and interdependence, which assert the action at a distance of these various objects on one another without in any

way explaining how such action would be possible. Thus the concept of consciousness as a container can be seen to derive from this confusion between the body-for-others and the body-for-me.

The Other as object always appears to me as a transcendence-*transcended.* As a transcendence the Other constitutes a pattern of instruments and meanings in the world. As a transcendence-*transcended* these meanings and instruments point back to the Other as their origin. Just as I learn what I am through the possibles which I project in the world, so I learn what the other is through his or her relation to tools in the world. The desk, the open book, the cup of coffee are objects in my world, but they are objects which also have a lateral reference to a centre of reference other than myself. It is through the study of the nature of this lateral reference that I come to know the Other. The patterns of instruments refer to the Other's body, and, *inter alia,* to the other's sense organs. Here the sense-organ appears as an object in my universe:

> In reality the sensory organs of the Other originally is in no way an instrument of knowledge for him; it is simply the Other's knowledge, his pure act-of-knowing in so far as this knowledge exists in the mode of an object in *my* universe (*BN* 341).

That is, the sense-organs are the objective centre of reference of a pattern of transcendence, as transcended.

The Other's body is meaningful, which means both that I always see the Other's body as part of a total situation, and also that I perceive the body itself as a totality. Furthermore, I see it with temporal dimension, as going from a past through a present towards a future:

> In itself a clenched fist is nothing and means nothing. But also we never perceive a *clenched* fist. We perceive a man who in a certain situation clenches his fist. This meaningful act considered in connection with the past and with possibles and understood in terms of the synthetic totality 'body in situation' *is* the anger. It refers to nothing other than to actions in the world (to strike, insult, etc.); that is, to new meaningful attitudes of the body. We cannot get away from the fact that the 'psychic object" is entirely released to perception and is inconceivable outside corporeal structures (*BN* 346-7).

Thus what is involved in [94/19] understanding or misunderstanding another person is not a process of inferring from bodily actions to hidden 'mental' psychic states which motivate the action. It involves instead reference from the present to the past and the future actions of the same body. We can refer here to the point made earlier, that traditional epistemology tended to operate with spatial metaphors - here the inside and the outside - but that this

misunderstands the temporal articulation of consciousness. To establish what somebody means if she says 'I am angry' I look to the relation of this statement to the situation that she is in, its consistency with her past reactions to past situations, and finally I test it in the future, by asking questions, but also simply by observing later actions. Problems of communication - between two people arise from their temporal separation, not from the 'spatial' separation of their two psyches, as permanently divided by the two bodies. Any two people have different pasts, and different future projects, and these are involved in everything they do and say in their present attempt at communication. The meaning of each word I use is a function of my experience and of the contexts in which I have learnt it and heard it. Thus in my presence to an Other I am separated from her by my past and my future. But, unlike the spatial separation of psyches, this is a separation which I can work towards overcoming, by attempting to share my past and future through communication. Obviously this is a difficult and lengthy process, in that the medium of communication is already infected with the separation, but it is at least a possible project. This, however, is not a point which Sartre makes here. He merely wishes to show that the distinction between the 'psychic' and the 'body' is a false one, which comes from considering the body in the instant, rather than as the centre of reference for a temporally articulated set of meanings. The concept of the 'psyche' is reached by considering the meanings in abstraction from the body to which they refer, and then hypostatising them as independent entities. The Other's body is the Other's facticity, but beyond this facticity there is nothing but the fact of transcendence.

I can never know the other as transcendence, as knowing, as subject but this is not because 'subjectivity' is a kind of object outside my field of perception. Subjectivity is not a thing. It is simply the fact of being future orientated. Once this fact is given to me by the experience of the look, that is, once I am in possession of the concept Other, everything else that I can possibly know or want to know about the Other I learn from the particular ways in which the Other as body, as facticity, is orientated towards the world. [95/20]

So far we have considered what it means for me to 'exist' my body, and what is involved in the Other (or myself as Other) having a body which can be used and known. These aspects Sartre describes as the first and second ontological dimensions of the body. The third ontological dimension is the fact that I exist for myself as a body known by the Other. I exist as an alienated body which can become a tool for the other. However, and this is the essential meaning of any alienation here, I can never grasp concretely what

my body is for the Other. Nevertheless, the Other uses language to describe my body, and I can borrow the words and describe myself with them. This does not help me to grasp either the body as I live it, or my body as the other lives it, but it does constitute a new layer of meaning of my body for me. Like the psyche, this layer of meaning only arises on the level of impure or accessory reflection, when I consider myself as a hypostatised object, rather than as a pure project, but nevertheless my body as object-for-the-Other does exist for me, in that, for example, if I consider myself 'ugly' this determines a whole series of conducts in the world.

Having followed Sartre's account of the basic structure of my being-for-others, we can now look at his analysis of the way in which this basic structure manifests itself in my actual concrete relations with other people. The main problem in interpreting Sartre here is that of establishing the exact status of his descriptions. Is he saying that the various relationships which he describes are *possible,* relationships, or is he saying that his description exhausts all the basic forms of relationship? If he is saying the former, then what is the relation between these and other forms? There has been considerable controversy over these issues, and Sartre himself is not all that precise. I shall adopt the procedure of first describing the specific forms of relationship, and only then of seeing what clues the text offers to the status of these relationships. Meanwhile, the reader should perhaps bear in mind a comment by Simone de Beauvoir: *"Being and Nothingness* is to a large extent a description of the serious man and of his universe" (*Morale de l'Ambiguite* p. 67).

I discover the Other through experiencing myself as a being-for-the-Other as a result of the Other's look. That is, I discover the other not originally in a relation of subject to subject, a relation of equality, but through the experience of myself as a possible instrument in the Other's instrumental field. The affective content of this [96/21] experience is the feeling of such emotions as shame, pride or fear. The experience itself is highly unstable, in that once I in turn look at the Other, I re-establish my subjectivity, but at the cost of turning the Other into a transcendence-transcended. What motivates my specific choices in the face of this instability? It is the fact that I am essentially a project, that which flees from the in-itself towards the future, whereas the Other, by making me into an object, can be construed as threatening the victory of the in-itself over my transcendence. The Other makes me be what I am, whereas I am for myself the attempt to be what I am not. In this sense the Other constitutes a threat to my very being. How can I react to this threat?

The Other's look brings into existence

> a being which I am without my being able either to appropriate that being or even to conceive it (*BN* 363).

In so far as I am it, I cannot avoid taking up some sort of attitude towards it. There seem to be two alternatives open to me. I can attempt to deny that I am this, which involves making an object of the Other, transcending the Other's transcendence, and thereby simply disallowing it. The second alternative is to take advantage of the fact that the Other's freedom founds me as an in-itself, and so attempting a short cut to being in-itself-for-itself by attempting to identify myself entirely with the Other's freedom. That is I can attempt "to incorporate (the Other's) transcendence within me without removing from it its character as transcendence" (*BN* 363). Sartre suggests that there is no ontological priority of one of these attitudes over the other. They are both equally possible. He begins his analysis with the second attribute.

I live in the world with other people. My relations with these people are 'contingent', in the sense that, ultimately, I am separate from them. They can come and go without me ceasing to exist. I cannot *control* them. I cannot guarantee that my wife will continue to love me, that my boss will continue to respect me. That is, whether or not I continue to exist for my wife or my boss in the way in which I do now, as to-be-loved or as to-be-respected, depends not only on me but also on them. Yet I identify myself, at least in part, through the ways in which others see me. I accept that I am responsible for my acts, I am aware that the meaning of my acts is given, at least in part, by the way in which others see them. And at the same time I interpret my acts to myself partly through the way in which others see them. I am threatened and unhappy if my wife sees my acts as unlovable, or if my boss sees them as [97/22] unrespectable. Thus I am in a situation of more or less explicit perpetual insecurity. Whilst I continue to accept the meanings which others give to my acts, that is, while I continue to accept my being-for-others and the Other as subject, there is only one way in which I can avoid this insecurity, and that is by persuading somebody or everybody to accept my acts as *a priori* good. If I can persuade somebody to say "Whatever you do, I will approve of it", then I am no longer threatened by a possible division between the two sources which I use to establish *my* identity, the Other's perceptions and my own perceptions. For me to do this it is necessary for me to act upon the Other's freedom in such a way as to persuade the Other to *choose* me as an unsurpassable limit. This, says Sartre, is the ideal of *love* (We shall investigate shortly why Sartre uses the term 'love' here).

> In Love the Lover wants to be 'the whole world' for the beloved (*BN* 367).

I want to be the object through which the Other reveals the world to himself or herself, and in terms of which the Other evaluates the world, But this must be a free choice. If the beloved Other has been hypnotised, drugged with an aphrodisiac, or bound to love me by duty or oath, then the whole meaning of the love is lost. It can no longer help to establish my identity, since the Other's judgements on me are no longer the judgements of a *free consciousness.* They are the judgements of another object, and as such are worthless. But when I am freely chosen by the Other, then my whole being is given an absolute and permanent value:

> These beloved veins on my hands exist - beneficently. How good I am to have eyes, hair, eyebrows and to lavish them away tirelessly in an overflow of generosity to this tireless desire which the Other freely makes himself be. Whereas before being loved we were uneasy about that unjustified, unjustifiable protuberance which was our existence, whereas we felt ourselves 'de trop', we now feel that our existence is taken up and willed even in its tiniest details by an absolute freedom which at the same time our existence conditions and which we ourselves will with our freedom (*BN* 371).

This attempt to become loved is a project, the project of 'seduction'. I have to take all sorts of steps to fascinate the beloved. I use my being-as-object-for-the-Other to express certain meanings to the Other. In fact, the possibility of communication, and hence of language, is immediately given with the experience of being-for-others, in that this experience is the experience of the fact that my acts have meanings for [98/23] other people, meanings which both originate with me and escape from me. The articulated word is only "a derived and secondary mode whose appearance can be made the object of an historical study" (*BN* 373). However the use of language as the instrument of seduction poses a problem. "The very fact of expression is a stealing of thought, since thought needs the co-operation of an alienating freedom in order to be constituted as an object" (*BN* 374). That is, I cannot finally know what meaning, what interpretation, the Other has attached to my language. Communication *is an always unachieved project.*

Furthermore, fascination *per se* is not adequate. I only recognise that the beloved loves me when he or she begins to want to be loved by me. That is, the Other wants to become for me that object through which the world has meaning. That is, the Other refuses to be the subject which will establish my identity as an object, but instead tries to turn her/himself into a fascinat-

ing seductive object whose identity will be established and justified by my free choice as a subject. My attempt to love is ultimately contradictory since it involves inducing the Other to engage in a project which will defeat my ends. Far from being able to lose my responsibility for myself, I find the Other demanding that I take responsibility for him/her as well.

Finally, the arrival of a third person transforms both lover and beloved into objects, gives each a whole new dimension of unknown meanings, and renders fruitless the initial attempt to absolutize my meanings. Thus love is destructable for three reasons: a) it implies the self-contradictory project; to love is to wish to be loved; b) the Other can always opt out; and c) "love is an absolute which is perpetually made relative by others" (*BN* 377).

One possible reaction to the failure of love is the following:

> instead of projecting the absorbing of the Other while preserving in him his otherness, I shall project causing myself to be absorbed by the Other and losing myself in his subjectivity in order to get rid of my own. This enterprise will be expressed concretely by the *masochistic* attitude. (*BN* 377)

Here I wish to become purely an object and to be treated like an object. I no longer wish to be, as in love, the object which gives meaning to all other objects. Rather, I wish to be *any* object, and, by being treated like any object, to lose my experience of myself as a subject. However, masochism is a project, and as such [99/24] always contains within it the awareness of its goals, of its nature as a project, and hence also of the subjectivity of the person whose project it is. Finally the masochist is using the other as an object which will enable him to experience his own objectivity. Thus both the possible ways of accepting my objectivity before the look of the Other are unstable.

The second way of reacting to the Other's look is simply to look at the Other in turn, to reassert my subjectivity, and to transform the Other, in turn, into an object. However, the problem is that this begins as an attempt to recuperate my being-for-others through direct contact with the Other as freedom, but its effect is to end the Other's freedom by objectifying him/her.

The first way of doing this is through *indifference,* in which one sees other people purely as *functions* (the ticket-collector, the waiter), and in which one's relations with other people are purely manipulative. Sartre argues that, although this state of indifference can be maintained almost indefinitely, it is in bad faith, and experienced as inadequate and as always threatened. In fact, one can never be unaware of the subjectivity of the other, since the ways in which I attempt to manipulate other people all in-

volve using them in their capacity as acting individuals. I use people differently from the way in which I use machines. I can only hide from myself the subjectivity of those whom I use through bad faith. The state of indifference is experienced as uncomfortable and unstable for two reasons. Firstly, it deprives me of the support of other consciousnesses in my attempt to establish my identity as a person:

> Without the Other I apprehend fully and nakedly this terrible necessity of being free which is my lot; that is, the fact that I can not put the responsibility for making-myself-be off onto anyone but myself even though I have not chosen to be (*BN* 381).

Secondly, through my bad faith I am vaguely aware of being seen and being judged, although my project of indifference is such that I cannot permit myself to admit this, and so cannot permit myself to explicitly take action against the Other as judging subject.

This 'indifference' can be seen in perhaps its clearest form in the attitudes of any socially dominant group towards members of the dominated groups, particularly when the relation of dominator to dominated is defined in [100/25] racial terms. In South Africa whites in a very important sense *do not* see blacks. For example, they talk about "South Africans" in a way which makes it clear that they mean "white South Africans". In more limited situations, the maid or the gardener or the employee who is doing his or her job is simply not noticed. A white will often say "There's nobody in the house", meaning "There is nobody except for black servants", and so on. Yet underlying this indifference an enormous insecurity shows through, in that the etiquette of dominance and deference has to be rigidly enforced. The black has to play the allotted role, and should he or she let subjectivity momentarily gleam through, studied indifference turns to harsh action. The penalty for "cheekiness", which is the white name for any non-role defined and hence subjectivity-displaying act on the part of a black, ranges from verbal abuse through loss of employment to not infrequent physical assault amongst the most backward white farming communities. The very heat of the reaction well illustrates the fact that underlying the indifference, which is rationalised in an ideology of racism which specifically ascribes pre-human characteristics to the blacks (in so far as to be human is to be white), there is a continuous awareness of the fully human character of the black other as an acting subject.

This indifference can never be a stable way of relating to the other. I cannot not recognise the Other's subjectivity, and I have to attempt other ways of controlling it. Sartre suggests that a basic way of utilising the others ob-

jectivity-for-me to reach his or her subjectivity is through sexual desire. That is, he argues that sexuality is not purely a function of the possession of a reproductive system and of sexual organs. More fundamentally, a consciousness is necessarily embodied, and the body is "the senses". That is, a consciousness is necessarily also something which reacts in different ways to bodily senses, and this fact is equally necessarily involved in being for others, since the body as object is a necessary focal point in my relation with the other. Consciousness is necessarily sensual, and it is this fundamental sensuality which manifests itself in one form as genital sexuality. It is desire that reveals sexuality, rather than the possession of specific kinds of sexual organs causing desire. If this is the case, we can only understand desire as an attitude towards the other if we study it as arising within the context of the basic problem of being-for-others, the unstable relation between subjectivity and objectivity. [101/26]

Desire is firstly, intentional, in that it is not simply directed towards itself in the form of satisfied desire or of pleasure. It is desire of some specific object. Secondly, it is not desire for any man or woman whatsoever (except in the secondary and derived cases of the rouê or of the teenager culturally embarrassed by his or her virginity). It is desire for a particular person. And it is not simply the desire for the body as a thing in the world. If it is directed at a particular part of the body, it is nevertheless desire for this breast or leg as part of the body as an organic totality in situation. Thus, Sartre concludes

> this organic totality which is immediately present to desire is desirable only in so far as it reveals not only life but also an appropriate consciousness (*BN* 386).

The next question is, what motivates consciousness to choose itself as desire, if desire is not simply a physiological reaction to a sensory stimulus? Firstly, it must be noted that sexual desire differs from other forms of desire, in that it is a specific mode of existing one's body as "troubled". Sartre uses a number of phrases to explain what he means by this. Sexual desire "compromises me", it makes me "the accomplice of my desire", it "takes hold of me", "paralyses", "overwhelms" me, I am "invaded by facticity" (*BN* 388). What he is trying to explain here is the idea that in sexual desire one melts into and becomes totally identified with one's body. "The non-thetic consciousness allows itself to go over to the body, *wishes* to be the body and to be only body" (*BN* 389). The question which now arises is *why* does consciousness choose thus to make itself body. Sartre's answer is that it does so in order to appropriate the other's body as an embodied consciousness. In making love to the Other, in caressing him or her, I am at-

tempting to awake in the other desire, and thereby to make the other also choose to become body, to identify entirely with the pure contingency of the body, to be incarnated.

In my everyday relations with other people their subjectivity is, as we have seen, always escaping me. I can never, as it were, enter into direct communion with the Other as a subject, never dissolve our separateness. If I try, I am left only with the body, as an immediate presence, while the other as consciousness escapes I know not where. However, if I can make the other identify with his or her body, then I can overcome this problem. In orgasm the other as subject [102/27] is wholly his or her body, a consciousness which is not a judging or manipulating or indifferent look. But for me to experience this embodiment, I must not be at the same time transcending the present embodied other towards her/his other possibilities. That is, I must myself be embodied, otherwise, if I am not myself totally absorbed in the presence of our two bodies to one another, I will, in projecting my own future possibilities at the same time refer implicitly to the Other's future possibilities, and so re-establish her/him as completely Other. Thus I choose desire, and the consequences that it has for me, because it is the only way of embodying the Other.

However, desire is an unstable relationship, because, although it does not aim at pleasure and at release from desire, this is what it in fact achieves. Desire as such cannot be permanently sustained. It must end in some final act of possession and of awakening and this in turn leads to reflection. Either I drift off into a reflective apprehension of my own pleasure, forgetting the Other, or I reflect on my act of possession and discover, as always, that I have not got exactly what I was aiming at - although, the desire being temporally past, I am no longer quite sure what I exactly was aiming at. The Other is over there, locked in her/his own pleasure, or already once more disembodied and projecting a private future. Or, if one imagines a hypothetical consciousness embodied in a way different from our own, with a desire not related to genital sexuality as ours is, then in any event the final grasping of the Other's body will, at some point, like a surfeit of chocolate produce a negative reaction. The final identity with that which one is trying to possess can never be achieved, always slips uneasily away.

One possible reaction to this inevitable uneasy feeling of dissatisfaction is sadism. Faced with this Other whose subjectivity despite everything escapes from me I may coldly and purposively attempt a new and non-reciprocal form of incarnation, to make the Other both incarnate and mine through violence and pain. My objective here is to enslave the Other and to force the Other to recognise and accept this enslavement, to demean him-

self, rather than simply to receive the pain. That is, the sadist does not simply wish to hurt the body. The object is to break the Other, to exact a confession, to produce cries for mercy, to make the other abase him/herself:

> The spectacle which is offered to the sadist is that of a freedom which struggles against the expanding [103/28] of the flesh and which finally freely chooses to be submerged in the flesh (*BN* 404).

The cry of pain gives pleasure to the sadist not in so far as it is a physical reaction, but in so far as it is a confession by the Other of his/her weakness and impotence. I use the Other's body as an instrument to reach the consciousness. But in fact sadism fails just as does desire. It fails firstly because possession is never absolute:

> When I have indeed before me a panting body, then I no longer know how to *utilize* this flesh (*BN* 405).

And it fails secondly because it is by its very nature directed towards the Other's subjectivity and so cannot avoid an apprehension of it. The victim can always look at the sadist and in so doing destroy the whole project.

Thus each of the attitudes we have examined turns out to be essentially unstable. Sartre therefore concludes

> just as Love finds its failure within itself and just as Desire arises from the death of Love in order to collapse in turn and give way to Love, so all the patterns of conduct towards the Other-as-object include within themselves an implicit and veiled reference to an Other-as-subject, and this reference is their death. Upon the death of a particular conduct toward the Other-as-object arises a new attitude which aims at getting hold of the Other-as-subject, and this in turn reveals its instability and collapses to give away to the opposite conduct. Thus we are indefinitely referred from the Other-as-object to the Other-as-subject, and vice-versa (*BN* 408).

The existence of the Other results in a necessary alienation of my being. Furthermore, I can never act towards the other without in some way limiting the Other's freedom, whether it be by harming the Other, by positively attempting to help the Other towards greater rationality, or by simply letting him be, and thereby causing him 'to be thrown forcefully into a tolerant world' (*BN* 409). I am both responsible for the Other through these limitations which I place on her/him, and at the same time necessarily unable to do anything about it: hence a feeling of sin and guilt before the Other.

One final attempt to solve all these problems is the project of destroying the Other: the attitude of hatred. I wish to recuperate my Being-for-Others by symbolically destroying Other men through killing a particular other.

However, hate itself necessarily fails. Not only can I not in fact destroy all Others, but even if I do kill the Other [104/29] to whom my hatred is directed, I cannot bring it about that he/she has never existed, and so that my Being-for-Others has existed.

> The destroyed Other has carried the key to this alienation along with him to the grave (*BN* 412).

Thus all the attitudes Sartre analyses lead to failure, and we seem to have no alternative in our relations with other people but to move from one to the other of these attitudes. However, to fully understand what Sartre is saying here we need to ask three further questions:

1) What criteria of verification does Sartre offer us?

2) What is the relation between the attitudes that Sartre describes and other kinds of everyday attitudes?

3) In what sense are these attitudes fundamental and in what sense is the failure of our relationship with other people *necessary?*

1) How are we to test whether the account which Sartre gives us here is true? Particularly in his account of sexuality Sartre seems to contradict widely held beliefs which one thinks are empirically based. His detailed analyses of some of the attitudes seem convincing as one reads them, but is not this perhaps merely a function of the literary skill and precise observation of Sartre the novelist? In general, one might be inclined to believe that Sartre is offering us here a theory which is based on some empirical observations, but without using the usual empirical methods of constructing valid generalisations, testing the representativeness of data and so on. This raises once more the whole question of the relation between philosophy and the sciences. What justifies a philosopher, qua philosopher, talking about love, hate, sexuality, sadism and desire? Sartre's argument proceeds as follows:

a) He establishes the logical geography of the set of concepts 'consciousness', 'body', 'Other'.

b) He then shows that this implies that my concrete relations with other people necessarily occur within a certain structure of abstract possibilities.

c) He next shows what each of these particular possibilities is by deducing it in an abstract way from the basic "map".

d) Finally, he illustrates these abstract possibilities in concrete terms with hypothetical or literary examples. [105/30]

The most important point to notice in analysing this method of argument is that it is in no way merely inadequate empiricism. The concrete cases are not introduced as evidence, but as illustrations. At the most they are

presented as examples of the elucidatory power of the conceptual framework, showing the way in which the coherence of the conceptual framework helps to make sense of certain observed attitudes. In particular the analysis of sexuality, which has the rather odd and unexpected result of showing that sexuality is independent of the existence of specifically differentiated male and female sex organs, does not contradict empirical observation of the important role actually played in human sexuality by the sex organs. Sartre's point here is that human sexuality is sex between humans, and as such cannot simply be reduced to animal sexuality and physiological reactions. It has to be understood within the context of the fact that conscious beings exist for-others in a particular way, and so that sexual desire, as one way of relating to others, must manifest itself in terms of that particular way. Approaching it from this perspective it is then possible to make sense of sexuality as specifically human, as an attitude of conscious beings, rather than as being only a function of the peculiar and accidental form of our particular bodies. (Of course, these bodies are only "accidental" from the point of view of a consciousness experiencing its facticity. From, say, an evolutionary natural scientific point of view they are not accidental at all, but that is not the point. Thus the way to evaluate Sartre's argument is either to analyse its internal coherence, or else to produce phenomena which cannot be located in terms of it - that is, to remember, a town for which there is no room on his map.

2) This brings us to the second question - what is the relation between the attitudes which Sartre specifically describes: love, masochism, desire, sadism, indifference and hatred - and all the other ways in which one relates to other people? Sartre attempts to situate his description as follows:

> We have not thought by these few remarks to exhaust the problem of sex, still less that of possible attitudes towards the Other ... We do not claim that all attitudes toward the Other are reducible to those sexual attitudes which we have just described. If we have dealt with them at considerable length, it is for two reasons: first because they are fundamental, and second because all of men's complex patterns of conduct towards one another are only enrichments of these original [106/31] attitudes ... Of course examples of concrete conduct (collaboration, conflict, rivalry, emulations, engagement, obedience, etc.) are infinitely more delicate to describe, for they depend on the historic situation and the concrete particularities of each relation of the For-itself with the Other; but they all include as their skeleton - so to speak - sexual relations ..., Naturally this does not mean that these different attitudes are simply disguises borrowed by sexuality. But it must be understood that sexuality is integrated in them as their foundation and that they include and surpass it just as the notion of a circle includes and surpasses that of a rotating line segment one of whose extremities is fixed. These fundamen-

> tal-attitudes can remain hidden just as a skeleton is veiled by the flesh which surrounds it; in fact this is what usually happens. The contingency of bodies, the structure of the original project which I am, the history which I historicise can usually determine the sexual attitude to remain implicit, inside more complex conduct. For example, it is only seldom that one explicitly desire an Other of the same sex. But behind the prohibitions of morality and the taboos of society the original structure remains, at least in that particular form of 'trouble' which is called sexual disgust (*BN* 406-7).

Thus Sartre is here distinguishing between an abstract "structure" common to all (or to a particular range of) attitudes towards the Other, and an "enriched" concrete form which integrates the abstract structure within it but cannot be reduced to it. These attitudes can be shown to be "fundamental" in that it can be shown how they are derived from necessary structures of consciousness as embodied in the world in the face of the Other. However, one might argue, does it not remove the theory from the sphere of possible discussion and refutation to insist that, where these attitudes are not visible, this is because they are *implicit,* rather than not there at all. That is, it would seem to make it *a priori* possible to explain any attitude by means of this theory, and a theory which can explain everything is necessarily uninteresting because it cannot account for the specific differentia of any particular phenomenon. However, this objection misses the point. When Sartre says that some sexual attitude is implicit in a particular relationship he is not saying that it is *there* but *undetectable* - in which case he could never prove himself right, but nor could he ever be proved wrong. Rather, he is saying that although it is not immediately visible it can in fact [107/32] be discovered in a very careful analysis of all aspects of the relationship. Thus his account could in fact be refuted either by producing a relationship which, on analysis, was shown not to involve any one of the attitudes which he insists are fundamental, or, of course, as pointed out earlier, by showing that the original derivation of these attitudes from the analysis of consciousness is inadequate.

3) However, it is still not clear in what sense these attitudes are fundamental, for although Sartre concludes his analysis of the last attitude, hatred, with the following statement[4]

> After the failure of this attempt (hatred) nothing remains for the for-itself except to re-enter the circle and allow itself to be indefinitely tossed from one to the other of the two fundamental attitudes

he then appends the following footnote:

4 [Ed. This quote, "After the failure of..." up until the beginning of "Thus on the other hand" is repeated below: click [here].

> These considerations do not exclude the possibility of an ethics of deliverance and salvation. But this can be achieved only after a radical conversion which we cannot discuss here (*BN* 412).

Thus on the one hand in this whole section on "Concrete Relations with Others", he shows a) that all relationships are necessarily unstable and necessarily fail and, b) that "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others", but on the other hand, in the footnote, which comes at the end of his analyses of person-to-person relationships, and which seems to refer to the whole section, he seems to hold out the hope of a radically different, stable and non-conflict-ridden pattern of relationships. Sartre can certainly be accused of lack of clarity, and even of verbal contradiction here, but is there an actual contradiction in his thought? If there is no justification, other than uncharacteristic wishful thinking, for his footnote, then, if we accept the rest of the analysis, Sartre has shown that conflict is an ontological inevitability in human relations and this will obviously have important implications for social and political analysis.

However, it does seem to me that one can render the footnote coherent with the rest of the analysis. We have already come across the distinction between "pure reflection" and "accessory" or "impure" reflection. It is clear that when Sartre speaks here of a "radical conversion" he is referring to the possibility of pure reflection, and that his analyses refer to the level of the pre-reflective and of impure reflection; that is, to people living in the "spirit of seriousness". Sartre in fact says very little about pure reflection, and what he does say I shall discuss more fully later on. For the moment, it seems to me to be possible to clarify what is involved here in the following terms. [108/33]

In the spirit of seriousness values exist for me as absolutes, and I exist for myself as an absolute, in the sense that I take for granted the necessity and meaningfulness of my existence. Impure reflection reinforces this position because it hypostatises that pure flight which is being-for-itself into a series of full existents - my psyche as a bundle of drives, passions, emotions, etc. However, this surface appearance of calm is illusory. In fact values are not absolutes, and I am not an absolute. If I could maintain the fiction there would be no problem. But it is impossible entirely to avoid events in the world which visibly challenge the absoluteness of myself and my values - for example, other people with different value systems, or the other's look as bestowing on me an identity quite different from that absolute identity which I ascribe to myself. Further, there are lots of little ways in which I discover uneasily my lack of coincidence with myself. But while I operate

within the context of the idea of absolute values, and of an absolute me, or what I described earlier as an identity, I struggle to overcome these elements of disruption, rather than to confront and accept them. Thus my relations with others necessarily fail because they involve the impossible project of trying to use the Other to construct a fixed identity for myself. However, the Other, as an independent creator of value, by his/her very existence relativises all values.

Pure reflection, on the other hand, is what reveals to me the structure of consciousness as a flight towards the future and as a free choice. It thus reveals to me explicitly the impossibility of absolute values and the impossibility of a fixed identity. It thereby makes it possible for me to attempt to construct a pattern of relations with the other which takes into account what we are, and is not doomed to failure through being contradictory. That is, impure reflection conceals from me what I am, and thus thrusts me into a series of impossible projects. Pure reflection, by revealing that I am what I am not and am not what I am, at least opens the possibility of acting in a way which is non-contradictory. Pure reflection does not dissolve the structure of my "Being-for-Others", but it can put me into a position where I can begin to learn to live with it, rather than fight it. I shall return to this point later.

Sartre concludes his account of Being-for-Others by looking at what he calls the experience of "We". To what extent do the experiences captured in sentences like "We are doing this together", "She is looking [109/34] at us" reveal a non-conflict-ridden unity between myself and other? The experience of the we-subject or the us-object arises in the following kinds of situation.

1) I and the other are engaged in conflict. A Third comes onto the scene, and I experience myself as being looked at by the third while engaged reciprocally with the Other in the conflict. I experience us as a unity being looked at by the other, a unity for which I am responsible, in so far as it could not be maintained without my project of fighting, but for which I am at the same time not so responsible in so far as it involves also the Other's project and my being for the Other. Thus

> it corresponds to an experience of humiliation and impotence; the one who experiences himself as constituting an Us with other men feels himself trapped among an infinity of strange existences; he is alienated radically and without recourse (*BN* 419).

2) A group of workers carrying out a task dictated to them by a particular material arrangement of objects which impose a certain division of tasks, and thereby produces the experience of Us.

3) The members of an oppressed class who experience themselves as members of that class as an Us through the look of the oppressor who is radically other to all of them.

4) In my use of various products I experience myself as "anyone", as part of an undifferentiated consumer market for whom the product was made, and hence as part of the We-subject of consumers.

In considering these and other examples, Sartre points out:

a) that in none of these cases do I have direct *knowledge* of the other as being part of the We with me. Each involves a lateral consciousness, a pre-reflective awareness of the Other, and nothing more.

b) The experience of the We or Us always presupposes a prior comprehension of the other. In particular, experiencing myself as part of the "we" using manufactured goods, going out through the door marked "Exit", and so on, presupposes my knowledge that the goods have been *manufactured* and that the sign is a created meaning.

c) The We and Us relations are not reciprocal, ontological relations between consciousnesses. They are in fact merely psychological, personal experiences. Thus he concludes that the fact of the We-experience in no way invalidates the earlier analysis of my relations to the Other as necessarily conflict. [110/1]

Chapter 4

Freedom: Choice and Situation

The main concept used by Sartre to analyse the relation of dependence-in-dependence between human reality and world is the concept "nothingness", and at this point in the argument we need to try to bring together some of the different uses of the terms to see exactly what is meant by it.

1) All human attitudes involve reference away from what is immediately given here and now, that is, in Sartre's terms, reference to what is not, or nothingness, as well as to what is, or being. This is the most basic and essential structure of human reality, and it leads us to the transcendental question: "What must human reality be if through it nothingness comes to the in-itself"?

2) Sartre's answer to this question is that for nothingness to come to the in-itself through human reality, human reality must be its own nothingness; we can take all the various analyses of aspects of consciousness as ways of explicating what is meant by this. Consciousness is:

a) contentless

b) questioning

c) autonomous and free

d) for-itself, presence-to-itself and at a distance from itself

e) a reflexive scissiparity

f) nothingness: "The reflective is separated from the reflected - on by a nothingness"(*BN* 153) and "Thus the for-itself must be its own nothingness. The being of consciousness *qua* consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* ... and this empty distance which being carries in its being is Nothingness" (*BN* 78).

g) what it is not, and is not what it is

h) temporally articulated around a present which is, strictly speaking, nothing: 'A rigorous analysis which would attempt to rid the present of all which is not it - i.e. of the past and the immediate future would find that nothing remained but an infinitesimal instant ... a nothingness' (*BN* 120).

i) a project into the future, a pursuit

j) a lack

k) relation: "The for-itself is relation" (*BN* 362)

Thus consciousness is not in any sense a thing. It is the fact that human reality exists in relation to a world as a project towards the future. [111/2]

3) However, if consciousness is not a thing, but a relation, then human reality must be defined in terms of that to which it is a relation. Consciousness is:

l) intentional, directed towards what it is not: "Consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself" (*BN* lxii)

m) a lack, a detotalised[5] totality, the desire to be God

n) that which, in knowledge 'is nothing other than that which brings it about that there is *being-there* on the part of the known' (*BN* 177)

o) that which "makes known to itself what it is through the in-itself"

p) "wholly body" (*BN* 305)

q) *facticity,* contingent, not its own foundation.

That is, although human reality exists as transcending the world, as going beyond what is towards the future, nevertheless it has to be understood in terms of the world which it transcends, including the past, and in terms of the way in which, as embodied it brings about changes in that world. There is nothing *behind* or *"inside"* the acting body, other than the fact that the acting body is future oriented.

All these 17 different descriptions are not different characteristics which are accidently found contained in one class of animal, the human being, like, say being a marsupial, having a duckbill, being web-footed and having short fur are accidental characteristics of a duck-billed platypus which do not *logically* imply one another, but which, as a result of historical evolutionary contingencies happen to be contained in one animal. Rather, these are all different ways of describing the same essential structure, the fact that a being which exists towards the future at the same time exists for-itself, insofar as the pre-reflective awareness of self is the precondition for the continuity of the project towards the future, and the project towards the future is the precondition for that distance from self which makes pre-reflective consciousness possible; the fact that the for-itself is *free*.

Sartre sums this up as follows:

> Freedom is actually one with the being of the For-itself; human reality is free to the exact extent that it has to be its own nothingness. it has to be this nothingness, as we have seen, in multiple dimensions: first, by temporalizing itself - i.e. by being always at a distance from itself, which means that it can never let itself be de-

5 ms: detotatised

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Chapter 4.

FREEDOM: CHOICE AND SITUATION

The main concept used by Sartre to analyse the relation of dependence - independence between human reality and world is the concept "nothingness", and at this point in the argument we need to try to bring together some of the different uses of the terms to see exactly what is meant by it.

1) All human attitudes involve reference away from what is immediately given here and now, that is, in Sartre's terms, reference to what is not, or nothingness, as well as to what is, or being. This is the most basic and essential structure of human reality, and it leads us to the transcendental question: "What must human reality be if through it nothingness comes to the in-itself"?

2) Sartre's answer to this question is that for nothingness to come to the in-itself through human reality, human reality must be its own nothingness; we can take all the various analyses of aspects of consciousness as ways of explicating what is meant by this. Consciousness is :

a) contentless
b) questioning
c) autonomous and free
d) for-itself, presence-to-itself and at a distance from itself
e) a reflexive scissiparity
f) nothingness : "The reflective is separated from the reflected - on by a nothingness" (BN 153) and "Thus the for-itself must be its own nothingness. The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist at a distance from itself... and this empty distance which being carries in its being is Nothingness" (BN 78).
g) what it is not, and is not what it is
h) temporally articulated around a present which is, strictly speaking, nothing : "A rigorous analysis which would attempt to rid the present of all which is not it - i.e. of the past and the immediate future - would find that nothing remained but an infinitesimal instant ... a nothingness" (BN 120).
i) a project into the future, a pursuit
j) a lack
k) relation : "The for-itself is relation" (BN 362)

Thus consciousness is not in any sense a thing. It is the fact that human reality exists in relation to a world as a project towards the future.

> termined by its past to perform this or that particular act; second, by rising up as a consciousness of something and (of) itself - i.e. [112/3] by being presence to itself and not simply self, which implies that nothing exists in consciousness which is not consciousness of existing and that consequently nothing external to consciousness can motivate it; and finally, by being transcendence - i.e. not something which would *first* be in order subsequently to put itself into relation with this or that end, but on the contrary, a being which is originally a project - i.e. which is defined by its end (*BN* 453).

We have considered the variety of transcendental arguments which Sartre has used to establish human freedom. The rest of his argument in *Being and Nothingness* may be interpreted as an attempt to meet the most usual objections to this position; and thereby to show more precisely what is meant by "freedom". The concept of freedom is attacked from two standpoints, which we may crudely define as *internal* and *external.* On the one hand it is argued that there is some sort of psychic determinism, e.g. "man is a slave to his passions". On the other hand it is argued that the outside world imposes constraints on the individual, e.g. "a man's behaviour is determined by his environment". Sartre now proceeds to analyse these two aspects of the problem of freedom by means of the concepts "choice" and "situation". I will consider them in the opposite order to Sartre's. Firstly, what role does the situation in which I find myself play in determining my choices? Secondly, what happens when I choose something, what determines the choice, what leads me to choose one thing rather than another?

Sartre begins by an analysis of the concept "action". An action is "intentional", in the sense that it is aimed towards some goal which is not the case at the time of action. That is action cannot be purely motivated by what is, but only by what is when seen in the light of some alternative:

> It is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our suffering and that we *decide* that these are unbearable (*BN* 435).

That is, the concept of action implies the capacity to withdraw from the given and to project a future - it implies freedom. This does not mean, however, that the act is gratuitous and incomprehensible. We can analyse both the motive of the act and the set of objective circumstances which, seen in the light of the motive, leads to the act taking place. This set of objective circumstances Sartre describes by the French word 'motif', which Hazel Barnes translates as "cause", though stressing that this must not be understood deterministically. The "cause" of the act, the set of objective circumstances, [113/4] cannot of itself determine the act. It only does so when I

view the situation in the light of a particular goal. The complex self (wicked uncle - beautiful niece) does not of itself cause me to shoot the uncle. I only shoot the uncle because I wish to liberate the niece, or, more probably, because l want to oppress her myself. The uncle's oppression of the niece is the *cause* of my shooting him, but only insofar as I also have a *motive.* All acts have causes, because they are projects from my past towards my future, and the past, as a past, and now in-itself, relation of self to world, and hence as cause, is therefore a necessary structure of the act. The necessity of the act's having a cause derives from the facticity of the for-itself, that is, from the fact that it necessarily exists in relation to a given of which it is not the foundation. Thus in investigating the nature of the cause, we are investigating the extent to which facticity can be said to limit freedom. To put it in a more straightforward way, we are asking to what extent the world constrains me to act in a particular way.

In reply to these questions it must be pointed out that there is an ambiguity in the term "freedom". Sartre distinguishes between the "empirical and popular" concept of freedom and the "technical and philosophical" concept. The former refers to "the ability to obtain the ends chosen". The latter refers to "autonomy of choice", or "by oneself to determine oneself to wish".

In the first sense the nature of the material world can, of course, often place limits on freedom. But in the second sense it cannot do so, and this is not because this freedom does not refer to the material world. "Autonomy of choice" is not something purely "internal". "Choice" here refers to choice of action, and the concept action presupposes a distinction between conception and result. It presupposes, therefore, the existence of a world with a "coefficient of adversity". Conversely, the coefficent of adversity of the world is constituted as *adversity,* as a problem, by my project. The mountain is only "difficult to climb" if I wish to climb it.

Thus to be free is necessarily to be involved in a resisting world which only resists in relation to my freedom. This resisting world, insofar as it is distinct from the in-itself, which simply *is*, outside the sphere of human reality, is what Sartre describes as the "situation":

> We shall [114/5] use the term *situation* for the contingency of freedom in the *plenum* of being of the world inasmuch as this *datum,* which is there only *in order not to constrain* freedom, is revealed to this freedom only as *already illuminated* by the end which freedom chooses (*BN* 487).

For this reason it is very difficult, in the analysis of the situation, to distinguish what is brought to it by the in-itself, and what is brought to it by me. A

particular mountain may be “unclimbable” only because my motive in wishing to climb it was to enjoy the view from the top, and a 50 foot cliff-face was not worth scaling in terms of that project, although it might well have been scaleable had I had other objectives. Sartre distinguishes and treats separately the following aspects of the situation: my place, my past, my environment, my fellowman and my death.

A My Place

The place I at present find myself in is the last in a chain of places, the first of which is the place of my birth - which I obviously did not choose. Thus my place is founded on an absolute contingency - the fact that I was born in Cape Town rather than in Murmansk. Yet a “place” is a relationship to other things, and it is only because I can, through my nihilating power, be present to that hedge and this wall and the sea beyond them on one side, and the hills on the other, that I can be in a place - rather than simply be in itself. Moreover, the meaning of my place is constituted in my projecting of goals. To be conscious is to place myself in relation to other objects in the movement by which I project some future goal in terms of which the other objects are given meanings. My place is only a problem if I want to be somewhere else.

B My Past

As a project towards the future, I necessarily have a past. The past is that which I am fleeing toward the future. And my past is necessarily irremediable. I cannot choose to have that past rather than this past. But this past is a) preserved as past through my consciousness of it and b) at the same time therefore evaluated in terms of my future project. This means that although I cannot change my past, I can change its meaning. In the case of my original project of writing a book about Sartre, the rejected drafts, the completed sections, the words written, the books read, the quotations noted are all irremediably there - but they cannot oblige me to [115/6] complete the book. It is by continuing to work on the book that I preserve them as my living past; I can always decide to do something quite different, thereby metamorphosing this formerly living past into a blind alley into which I wandered accidently. Once I have chosen a particular past it imposes itself upon me in a particular way. The work I have already done establishes the guidelines

that I must follow to complete my project. It indicates what books I must still read, what topics I must still write about. Furthermore, as part of the universal past, my past places me in relation with other people that are equally binding on me once I have chosen this particular meaning of my past. But if I decide to stop being an academic, and to become instead a sailor, then all these relations change, and become inconsequential in relation to my new future which gives a new meaning to my past.

C My environment

The world of things in which I live has its own laws. Although usually I change my place in it by choice, the environment, as the sum of these things, changes quite without consulting me. Trees fall across my path, cars break down, it rains when I intend to go swimming and a flu epidemic strikes. These events change the potentialities of things and thereby also are related to changes in my projects. I miss the plane due to a puncture, I will be too late for the meeting I was going to attend, so I abandon my project of going to Johannesburg. There are two answers to this problem. Firstly the field of potentialities is only constituted as a field of potentialities through my consciousness, hence through my freedom; and the annoyance of missing the plane is a function of some more basic project, rather than an absolute. Secondly, in so far as my project is necessarily related to, things possessing their coefficients of adversity, it also necessarily assumes a "margin of unpredictability" on their part:

> To do is precisely to change what has no need of something other than itself in order to exist; it is to act on that which on principle is indifferent to the action, that which can pursue its existence or its becoming without the action. Without this indifference of exteriority on the part of the in-itself, the very notion of *doing* would lose its meaning... and consequently freedom itself would collapse (*BN* 507).

That is, any project is an "open project", available for modification on the grounds of environmental changes. I wished to attend the meeting to put a certain point of view. Having missed the plane I now seek other ways of putting that point of view. If I abandon the project altogether it is only because my initial project was, say "To do enough to satisfy my conscience [116/7] and to create a good impression", rather than "To continue the struggle whatever the circumstances". That is, I can use the missed aeroplane *as an excuse* to change a project, but this is only in terms of a more basic project; the missing of the aeroplane itself does not impose the change.

D My fellowman

There are two different problems constituted by the existence of others for our understanding of freedom. Firstly, I find myself in a world in which things exist which already have meanings which other people have given them. Secondly, through my being-for-others I myself have characteristics which I have not chosen.

a) There are streetsigns and warning signs, tools with predefined uses, social institutions which outline patterns of conduct, and a language which embodies a classificatory and an evaluative system. In particular, the world appears to me through a set of techniques which I use to investigate it and to act in it. These techniques include bodily techniques, but they also include techniques implied by various instruments of investigation and actions as well as linguistic techniques of classification and analysis. A log offers quite different facets of itself to a man equipped with a stone chisel and to a man equipped with an electric saw. Thus other people's techniques, when I adopt them, affect both the ends which I choose, in so far as they change the field of possibles, and also the picture which I have of the world:

> This world, seen through the use which I make of the bicycle, the automobile, the train in order that I may traverse the world, reveals to me a countenance strictly correlative with the means which I employ; therefore it is the *countenance which the world offers to everybody* (*BN* 511-512).

To be more precise, the world offers to me the countenance which it offers to everybody else who makes use of those particular techniques. The techniques which I use, and the world which they reveal to me, define me as belonging to particular social collectivities, including nations, classes, and more restricted kinds of group. Thus my social position presents me with a certain set of techniques which in turn confer certain sorts of meaning on the world.

To understand the significance of this for my freedom, we have to investigate the ontological status of a technique. Sartre chooses *language* as an example. What is the "reality" of a language? The language itself, [117/8] "English", is an abstraction in the sense that it is made up of a number of regional variations or dialects, no one of which can exclusively claim to be English. But the same applies to the dialect, which is spoken in different ways by different people. If we look in the other direction, and define the

language as the sum total of "English" words, then we are faced with the problem that a word by itself has no specific meaning. It acquires its specific meaning from the context in which it is used. Language only exists in use, and in use its meaning derives from the signifying act of the speaker. As we saw earlier, all human behaviour, as transcendence-transcended by another, is meaningful, and this is the basis of language. Language therefore has its origin in my act of transcendence, and its meaning in your capacity to identify with and follow my transcendence towards my ends. I speak and you understand on the basis of the logically prior constitution by each of us of a situation as a meaningful unity of things in the world:

> the reality of the dialect is the *free act* of designation by which I choose myself as designating (*BN* 516).

The grammar of the language, as a set of rules which the words must obey if they are to be meaningful, is itself created through speaking. In addition, for me my speech is transparent. It has no ambiguities. These ambiguities, based on the fact that the laws of language extend beyond the ground covered in my sentence, and make it possible for the sentence to have other meanings, exist only for the listener. The ambiguities of course constitute a problem for the speaker when they result in the listener's misunderstanding, but this, Sartre implicitly suggests, is a secondary phenomenon. The laws themselves are abstracted from concrete speech, and do not exist prior to or independently of speech. The conditions for the construction of a meaningful sentence are not different to and separate from the structure of the project, which constitutes a meaningful pattern of events and objects.

But, Sartre here objects to himself,

> You have dodged the question. For these linguistic organisations or techniques have not been created by the for-itself so that it may find itself; it has got them from others. The rule for the agreement of participles does not exist, I admit, outside of the free *rapprochement* of concrete participles in view of an end with a particular designation. But when I employ this rule I have learnt it from others; it is because others in their personal projects cause it to be that I make use of it myself. My speech is then subordinated to the speech of others and ultimately to the national speech. (*BN* 519).

His reply to this objection is that
a) we must nevertheless remember that the ontological foundation of the national language lies in individual projects and
b) that therefore each [118/9] individual, although bound to operate through this abstract structure, chooses himself "beyond" these structures. The national language is a vehicle beyond which I project myself. Any technique

can be put in question and transcended, and each use of the technique is an invention that goes beyond the actual technique. The fact that in transcending the other as transcendence I transmute her free projects into given meanings and hence into techniques is not extrinsic to this. It is because techniques and objectified meanings come into the world through my consciousness that I can also transcend them. The arrow does not move my feet in that direction for me. The set of techniques characteristic of my culture offers me a world different to that which a different set of techniques offers to somebody of a different culture. But each world can be lived in a vast number of different ways involving, according to Sartre, "infinite possibilities of choice" (*BN* 522).

b) I exist for the other as an object with certain characteristics, and I learn from the other, by means of language, what these characteristics are. I am, say, a coloured, and as such subject, in South Africa, to many restrictions. However, the characteristics which the other ascribes to me are in an important sense *unrealisable.* I can never identify with my being coloured, or being ugly, simply because I am a subject, whereas the label is the label of an object. Nevertheless I have to adopt some sort of attitude towards this characteristic. I can choose to try to be what I am for the other and/or I can try not to be it; but this is only a special way of being it, being a coloured - in revolt:

> Although I have at my disposal an infinity of ways of assuming my being-for-others, *I am not able not to assume it* (*BN* 529).

Thus the other limits my freedom here by placing me in a situation where I am not able not to choose. But this limitation is identical with that imposed upon me by the fact of my own freedom. I am free but I am not free to be free.

E My death

The absolute contingence of death puts it outside the meaning structure of my life. Death is something which at some point intervenes, turns my possibilities into dead possibilities, and fixes the meaning of my life, by making me wholly into what I am for others. Thus death is not one of my possibilities. For me my death is merely an absurdity. Insofar, however, as I recognise my future death as a meaning which I shall have for the other, death is an "unrealisable". [119/10]

F My body and my psyche

Although Sartre does not specifically deal with these two elements of my situation in the chapter we are now considering, it is useful to consider them here in order to get a fuller understanding of the relation between freedom and situation. I am in the world with and through and by means of my body. My body is, *inter alia*, a set of skills and techniques; the basic human techniques such as being able to walk, tall, grasp and perceive, and also more specialised techniques which I acquired, such as the ability to drive a car, to type, to spear buck, or to dive for pearls. The state of my bodily techniques are one element in determining the way in which the world appears to me. The jungle for the hunter is entirely different from the jungle for the city dweller. It is fuller for him, because his senses are sharper, and it is also richer, because there are meanings in it which the city-dweller can neither recognise nor understand. The techniques I learn widen and change the form of my universe. However, they do not impose any type of action on me. As we have already seen, I choose myself *beyond* the techniques which I possess.

The other important aspect of the fact that I am a body is the fact that as such I am myself a material part of the world. I need to renew myself; I can be hurt or killed. However, this does not impose absolutes constraints upon me, since I need not take my body's needs into account: flagellation, fasting, suicide and vows of continence are all examples of this. In flagellation I choose my pain precisely because it is pain. When pain or exhaustion threaten to frustrate or limit my projects, as in the case of somebody being tortured for information, there is never any particular degree of pain or exhaustion at which my body tells me or obliges me to talk. It is up to me to decide the moment at which the pain or exhaustion becomes intolerable. I evaluate my pain and my physical needs in terms of my projects.

If, in impure reflection, t ask myself "What am I"?, in the sense of "What is my nature"?, then I may recognise myself as being bad tempered, mean and ambitious. Now, these are not actually *states* of myself. They are in fact terms which describe ways in which I behave; ambition is nothing beyond the series of ambitious acts which "express" it. But through impure reflection I constitute them as though they were real objective qualities towards which I have to adopt an attitude. I am bad tempered, *therefore* I [120/11] must avoid political arguments. Or, I am politically ambitious, therefore I

must learn to control my temper. Thus these qualities derive their meaning from the way in which I evaluate them in the light of my projects.

Sartre's whole account of the relation between freedom and facticity may be summed up as follows: the moment through which I make there be things [sic] by being present to them is identical with the moment whereby evaluate the things in transcending them towards a goal. That is, consciousness and freedom are identical, and just as consciousness exists as a relation to an object (as intentional) so is freedom a relation to obstacles. To be more precise, my situation is not that to which I am related; it is, rather, the relationship itself.

Thus the "cause" (the *motif*) derives its effect as a cause from my choice of ends, which constitutes this particular concateration of objects and events as a 'cause' for acting in such and such a way. But what is the nature of this choice? In particular, can we not interpret the choice as a "motive", and interpret this motive, in turn as a psychic entity, a given, the first in a chain of "internal" causes? For example: "Why did Clovis conquer Gaul? Because he was ambitious". Here "ambition" is conceived of as an element in Clovis's psyche, the existence of which can be referred to in order to help to explain Clovis's action. Furthermore, some theorists have interpreted the process of choice as a battle between "the will" and "the passions". If the will manages to prevail, then the act is freely motivated by the will, but if the passions dominate, then the act is determined by the passions.

Sartre has two objections to this kind of theory:

1) It can give no account of the *unity* of consciousness. How, in particular, would the "will" act on the "passions", or vice-versa?

2) In fact terms such as "ambitions" or "bad-tempered" are used to *describe* a particular series of acts by an individual; they cannot in turn be used to explain those acts. If one tries to explain a particular act by saying "He did it because he was ambitious", all one is doing is pointing out that this act is consistent with certain other acts of his. But this does not *explain* the act. It only *situates* it.

These problems arise primarily out of a confusion over the nature of "the will". When these theorists distinguish the will or "voluntary" acts from what one might describe as "passionate" acts in which I am no longer acting coolly, calmly and collectedly, they are in fact dealing with choice [121/12] of means, rather than choice of ends. That is, a passion is *intentional,* in the sense of being aimed at a particular goal, just as a voluntary act is aimed at a particular goal. Furthermore, each may be aimed at exactly the same goal; that is, each may posit the same value. What distinguishes the two is the way in which they go about achieving the end. The "volun-

tary" act involves reflective awareness of the relation between means and ends, while the passionate act does not. Freedom lies in the projecting of ends, and therefore freedom is logically prior to and presupposed by the voluntary or passionate nature of the act.

> Volitions ... like passions are certain subjective attitudes by which we attempt to attain the ends posited by original freedom (*BN* 444).

The problem is, then, to understand the relation between will and passion as alternative ways of attempting to achieve one's ends. What characterises the passionate or emotional response is that it adopts magical techniques to achieve its ends. It is like "If I shut my eyes it will go away". The passions adopt means which are, from a rational point of view, not in fact adapted to the posited ends. Or, to put it another way, the passions treat the world as though relations in it were magical -

> We have to do with magical behaviour provoking the symbolic satisfactions of our desires and revealing by the same stroke a magical stratum of the world (*BN* 445).

We are faced with two different ways of looking at the world, the rational and the magical. Why, in any particular case, do we choose one rather than the other? Sartre's answer is that, precisely, we *choose* one or the other. The world cannot determine the choice, because the meaning of the things in the world is itself a function of the choice. That is, a "passion", far from being a psychic tempest interfering with my freedom, is in fact a particular technique freely chosen to achieve freely chosen ends. The question "why did you choose that particular technique" refers only to consciousness as autonomous. This does not mean that it refers directly to an arbitrary decision, but rather that it refers to *other choices*.

The motive only appears to have some sort of independent existence as a psychic entity when it appears in impure reflection. Normally I am involved in my project, conscious of the objects which I am trying to change (the "cause"), and only pre-reflectively conscious of why I want to change them, of my motive. If I look back into the past I see the cause, and also the motive as its correlate. However, the motive is a past motive, a past mode of consciousness, and hence in-itself. As such it appears as a thing, like the cause. But as a thing it can in fact no longer act as [122/13] a motive. It can only act as a motive insofar as I "recover" it, make it once more into a living project; I have to choose the motive once more. It has no force independent of my choice of it. However, this choice must not be confused with volun-

tary deliberation. As we have seen, voluntary deliberation is itself an approach which has to be chosen:

> If I am brought to the point of deliberating, this is simply because it is a part of my original project to realise motives by means of *deliberation* rather than by some other form of discovery (*BN* 451).

Voluntary deliberation, at this level, takes certain motives as given (and hence is involved in impure reflection, although Sartre does not say so here) and merely weighs up the relation between these motives and possible ways of acting. Thus if a particular motive is to be recovered and made a living project, this cannot come from voluntary (impure) reflection, but from some more profound project or intention. What is the nature of this underlying project?

Sartre illustrates the problem by considering the example of a hiker, out walking with a group of friends, who throws himself down exhausted (but still physically able to go further) before the goal is reached:

> Someone will reproach me for my act and will mean thereby that I was free - that is, not only was my act not determined by any thing or person, but also I could have succeeded in resisting my fatigue longer, I could have done as my companions did and reached the resting place before relaxing. I shall defend myself by saying that I was too tired. Who is right? Or rather, is the debate not based on incorrect premises? There is no doubt that I could have done otherwise, but that is not the problem. It ought to be formulated rather like this: could I have done otherwise without perceptibly modifying the organic totality of the projects which I am; or is the fact of resisting my fatigue such that instead of remaining a purely local and accidental modification of my behaviour, it could be effected only by means of a radical transformation of my being-in-the-world - a transformation, moreover, which *is possible?* In other words: I could have done otherwise. Agreed. *But at what price?*? (*BN* 453-454).

That is, if I choose the moment at which the physical state of my body becomes unbearable, this does not mean that I do so purely capriciously. We can understand my choice as a function of some wider project. So to ask me to make a different choice here can be to ask me to change some much more fundamental attitude which this particular choice expresses. The hiker who, equally fatigued, nevertheless does not collapse, behaves differently because he or she has a different attitude towards the world and [123/14] and towards the body as an expression of the coefficient of adversity of the world.

This gives us the idea of a *hierarchy* of choices. I hit the ball because I am playing tennis, I am playing tennis because I want to keep fit. I want to keep

fit because I want to be an efficient young executive. I want to be an efficient young executive because I want to be admired - and so on. At some point in this regressive analysis we come across an initial project which is not explicable in terms of some more fundamental project. Hitting the ball is a function of, and comprehensible in terms of, the fundamental choice, and it is this choice which provides the unity of the for-itself, and prevents it breaking up into a series of discrete choices.

What is the status of this fundamental choice? Clearly, when the ball comes flying across the net towards me I do not ask myself "Now, what are the implications of my fundamental choice for my relation to this object flying towards me"? I simply hit the ball. But the ball does not tell me that I should hit it, rather than leave it to fly past. I hit it because I am prereflectively conscious that to do so is implied by my project of playing tennis. Similarly, although I do not necessarily reflect upon my fundamental choice, I must be pre-reflectively conscious of it in all my acts for it to operate as a choice. In fact, Sartre suggests, the attempt to grasp and make explicit this choice would require a kind of psychoanalysis. This parallel with psychoanalysis helps to clarify the nature of the fundamental choice. For the psychoanalyst, each act is *symbolic.* For Freudian psychoanalysis it is symbolic in the sense that it seems to express a more profound desire. However, the freudian approach is inadequate insofar as it makes the basic desire a given, and in fact ends up with a historical determinism. But the notion of the act as being not simply an isolated event, but an expression of the life of the actor can be taken up in a way which does not imply such determinism, using what Sartre describes as "existential psychoanalysis";

> we should attempt to disengage the meanings of an act by proceeding from the principle that every action, no matter how trivial, is not the simple effect of the prior psychic state and does not result from a linear determinism but rather is integrated as a secondary structure in global structures and finally in the totality which I am (*BN* 459).

He elaborates on this further on:

> every project is comprehensible as a [124/15] project of itself toward a possible. It is comprehensible first in so far as it offers a rational content which is immediately apprehensible - I place my knapsack on the ground *in order* to rest for a moment. This means that we immediately apprehend the possible which it projects and the end at which it aims. In the second place it is comprehensible in that the possible under consideration refers to other possibles, these to still others, and so on to the ultimate possibility which I am. The comprehension is effected in two opposed senses: by a regressive psychoanalysis one ascends back from the considered act to my ultimate possible; and by a synthetic progression one

> redescends from this ultimate possible to the considered act and grasps its integration in the total form (*BN* 460).

There are two major problems here. Firstly, in what sense can this ultimate possible which I am be described as a "choice" if it is necessary to use a form of psychoanalysis to uncover it? Secondly, in what way does the relation of "comprehensibility" between act and "total form" differ from a causal relationship?

Why psychoanalysis?

The world appears to me as a meaningful totality; meaningful not in the sense of having some purpose, but in the sense of being an interrelated complex of objects and instruments. However, these meanings which beings have are not meanings "in-themselves", but rather are brought to the world by consciousness. In a specific project, say of writing, I organise the things around me in a particular way. Of course, I do this physically, by pulling the paper towards me, and opening the curtains to bring in the light. But prior to this I organise the objects evaluatively, in the sense that each object in my room takes on a meaning which is related to my project. The desk which previously, while I was sweeping the carpet, was an obstacle-to-be-removed, now becomes an aid-for-resting-the-paper-on, and it is because I evaluate it thus that I go and sit at it. Where does this process of evaluation stop? Can we say that object X is *within* the complex of meanings which I establish through this project, and that object Y is outside the complex, and hence not in any meaningful relation with X or with any other object? In fact, what happens is that I organise the given into a series of *thises* on the basis of a *ground*. That is, Y is given as an undifferentiated part of the ground, and hence as being in a non-explicated relation with X, rather than in no relation at all. This is what is meant by saying that the world appears as a totality. I see [125/16] the desk as a part of a world which extends beyond it in all directions. But this means that my particular project refers to some general evaluation of the whole world as a complex of instrumentality, since it is only in terms of such an evaluation that the world can appear as a totality. This "general evaluation" is what Sartre refers to as the fundamental choice.

To rephrase the analysis in more obviously ethical terms, we may say that, since the essence of consciousness is its ability to question any object, it can also question any value. A value therefore only becomes a *value* that is, a rule for action, when it is chosen.

> Value derives its being from its exigency, not its exigency from its being ... it can be revealed only to an active freedom which makes it exist as value by the sole fact of recognising it as such. It follows that my freedom is the unique foundation of values ... values, due to the fact that they are essentially revealed to a freedom, cannot disclose themselves without being at the same time 'put into question' (*BW* 38).

This implies therefore that insofar as there is some coherence in my behaviour this derives from a basic attitude towards the world in terms of which I evaluate and act towards objects.

The problem is, then, in analysing the choices of a particular individual, to go up the hierarchy until we find a choice which is x irreducible, in the sense that it is evidently identified with the being of the individual, when we can see that the individual is this particular choice. We can already give an account of the structure of this choice. As we have seen consciousness exists as a lack, as a project towards the future, and the future which it is projecting is a future in which it will be, as consciousness, in-itself; that is, complete, a totality we can describe this as "a project of being", or as "the desire to be" and the being which consciousness wants to be is what we have described as "God". However, this desire to be God is not a particular desire. If it were, then God would be an absolute value and the desire to be God would constitute a human essence, defining a specific set of essential human behaviour patterns, and negating the idea of freedom.

Although all desire is the desire to be, nevertheless there are an infinite number of different ways of being:

> Thus we find ourselves before very [126/17] complex symbolic structures which have *at least* three stories. In empirical desire I can discern a symbolisation of a fundamental concrete desire which is the person himself and which represents the mode in which he has decided that being would be in question in his being. This fundamental desire in turn expresses concretely in the world within the particular situation enveloping the individual, an abstract meaningful structure which is the desire of being in general. (*BN* 567)

One wonders if this is really a useful way of making the point. Perhaps it would best be reformulated as follows. Human reality, as a lack, is essentially *desire.* But desire has usually been interpreted as a set of "little psychic entities dwelling in consciousness" (*BN* 557), that is, as specific desires for specific things. If we interpret desire in this way we destroy freedom. However, that desire which is constitutive of human reality is not such a psychic entity. It is in fact identical with freedom. That is, it has no predefined object, but is merely the expression of the necessity for

consciousness to choose itself in the future. This can be expressed by saying that it is a desire "of being", since the term "being" does not refer to a specific object of desire, but merely indicates that the notion of eventual completion is implied by desire - that is, the achievement of a state in which I am satisfied with what I am, and no longer wish to be something else in the future. However, such a state is impossible, since at the very minimum I have to *choose* to continue being what I am; I can never just be it. This fact is explicated by using the term "God", and saying that "fundamentally man is the desire to be God", that is, inherent in the structure of human desire is the necessary failure of desire in the sense that the completion which is aimed at, and which would constitute human reality as a thing, and so destroy freedom, is in fact unattainable. God, as an in-itself-for-itself, is a contradiction in terms. The desire to be God, therefore, is not an essence - but it is

> a truth concerning man, and not only concerning individuals who cannot be compared (*BN* 567).

So far, we have derived the idea that human reality is the desire to be God from the phenomenological account of consciousness as a "lack". But can we really assert that desire is always a desire "to be ..."? What is the relation between this postulated basic desire to be, and other kinds of actual desire? I may desire to play cricket, to own a new car, to make love, to discover the secret of the universe, as well as to be famous or to be happy. Can we interpret these and a myriad other desires as all being manifestation of the desire to found myself as a being-in-itself-for-itself? [127/18]

Sartre suggests that we can classify these various kinds of desire in terms of the categories *avoir, faire* and *être*: to have, to do (or to make) and to be; but he argues further that "to have" and "to do" are both in important ways reducible to "to be".

Firstly, he argues that the desire to make something can be shown to be a form of the desire to have - I create in order to own. Even when my activity is aimed only at *knowledge* of the thing, this knowledge aims at establishing some sort of symbolic possession of the thing, and through that possession aims at establishing my identity in relation to the world and other people:

> This thought which I form and which derives its existence from me pursues at the same time its own independent existence to the extent that it is thought by *everybody.* It is doubly 'I'; it is the world revealing itself to me, and it is 'I' in relation to others, I forming my thought with the mind of others (*BN* 578).

In knowing the object I have assimilated it, but in a form in which it preserves its own independent existence. This relation of assimilation and independence is the essence of possession. Finally, some activity is completely gratuitous, as in play, where the aim is neither the creation of an object to be possessed, nor the acquisition of knowledge. Sartre suggests that play, as a free human invention of rules is essentially the attempt to

> make manifest and to present to *itself* the absolute freedom which is the very being of the person (*BN* 581).

That is, play manifests the desire to be free, to coincide with one's freedom. In addition, some forms of play, particularly outdoor sports such as swimming, skiing, and mountaineering, can also be seen to be forms of appropriation. I "overcome" the material world.

However, appropriation is not an irreducible relationship. In possessing a thing I establish myself as *possessor* of this thing. That is, establish my identity through this thing which I possess. From this we can also see more clearly the relation between creating and owning. The thing which is owned can only be established as mine to the extent that I establish my power over it by using it. That is, I have to continuously recreate it as property by using it. Conversely, if I create an object and then do not 'possess' it by using it, this is equivalent to undoing my creation of it. That is, creation itself has to be reaffirmed in use. (Of course I could create *as a game*, and then destroy what I had created. In this case my "making" would fall under the rubric "playing".) The necessity of this ongoing project of appropriation is a function of the fact that the thing is [128/19] in-itself, hence necessarily independent of me, whilst I am for-itself, and hence necessarily dependent on the object. I can choose what object I wish to be dependent on, and how I wish to be dependent on it, but underlying any such choice is the fact of my dependence, which can be reformulated by saying that the structure of my choice is a project towards being, or that my choice is a choice of being.

It is when one sees Sartre asserting that one form of behaviour is really the manifestation of another form of behaviour that one is most inclined to say "That is all very convincingly expressed, but in fact to what criteria are you appealing?" If you say "X wants to create that so that she can possess it", and X replies "Not at all. I do not want to possess it", then how do we decide who is correct? In particular, should we give benefit of the doubt to X, who is, after all, doing the creating? One might answer this sort of criticism in one of two ways. One might say "In fact, if X *really* thought about it honestly and carefully, she would admit that she was creating in order to

possess". This sort of retort seems unsatisfactory, *inter alia,* because it leaves open the question of how one tells if X has really thought about it. If you produce an X who continues to deny it, I would reply "All that just proves she hasn't *really really* thought about it".

The second kind of reply would be to say that if there continues to be disagreement this is because there is a misunderstanding involved. Sartre is not saying that two apparently dissimilar things are in fact identical. ("That woman is really a man.") He is saying that two things, or activities, which are dissimilar in one way, are similar in another important and perhaps not often remarked upon way. (That man and that woman are both human - that is, underlying their surface differences there are important structural similarities.) Although *making* a chair and *owning* a chair are different activities, nevertheless they both involve an ongoing relation of creative use to the chair, and this relation manifests the basic fact of consciousness standing in a relation of lack to the world. Moreover, it is significant to say this, since another kind of relation is possible, the relation of exteriority between two things, and this relation of lack is what distinguishes human reality from other types of reality.

What Sartre terms the "fundamental choice", is the fact of human reality's necessary evaluation of the world through the projection of its future. [129/20]

However, this ultimate possible fundamental choice, basic attitude or general evaluation must not be confused with a "deliberate choice", in which I weigh up the pros and cons of various possible courses of behaviour, and then choose one of them. Such a deliberate choice assumes the existence of criteria in terms of which I evaluate the possibilities: "if I follow course X, it will have that beneficial result, but also that unfortunate side effect". The fundamental choice is that which constitutes and establishes these criteria, and so it cannot itself be based upon them. Furthermore, the concept of deliberate choice presupposes a period of "neutrality" prior to choosing. But human reality enjoys no such period of initial neutrality; rather, it exists immediately as engaged and acting in the world. It is not the case that I am and then I choose; rather I am a choice.

> This constantly renewed act is not distinct from my being; it is a choice of myself in the world and by the same token it is a discovery of the world (*BN* 461).

But, Sartre insists, although it is not a deliberate (reflective) choice, it is nevertheless a *conscious* (pre-reflective) choice, and of course that it should be conscious is the very minimum condition for it to be termed a choice. We must recall here Sartre's distinction between consciousness and

knowledge. Consciousness remains an unformulated unthematised awareness. Normally I take basic choice for granted, do not reflect upon it, do not formulate it, and do not even think of it as a choice. To the extent that I become explicitly aware of the nature of this choice it is in the world, rather than in reflection. Since my choice is a way of structuring and relating to the world the structure which the world has for me is 'the transcendent image of what I am' (*BN* 463). That is,

> My clothing (a uniform or a lounge suit, a soft or a starched shirt) whether neglected or cared for, carefully chosen or ordinary, my furniture, the street on which I live, the city in which I reside, the books with which I surround myself, the recreation which I enjoy, everything which is mine (that is, finally, the world of which I am perpetually conscious, at least by way of a meaning implied by the object which I look at or use): all this informs me of my choice - that is, my being (*BN* 463).

This gives me a consciousness of what I am, but does it make me conscious that I have *chosen* what I am?

The implications of describing this fundamental attitude as a choice is that it can be changed, and a different choice made. However, insofar as this choice can, as we have seen, not be deliberated upon, it would seem that a second choice would just happen. Sartre describes this in very dramatic terms:

> in anguish ... we apprehend our choice - i.e., ourselves - as *unjustifiable.* Thus ... we project the future by our very being, but [130/21] our existential freedom perpetually eats it away as we make known to ourselves what we are by means of the future but without getting a grip on this future which remains always possible without ever passing to the rank of the *real*. Thus we are perpetually *threatened* by the nihilation of our actual choice and perpetually threatened with choosing ourselves - and consequently with becoming other than we are ... The absolute change which threatens us from our birth until our death remains perpetually unpredictable and incomprehensible (*BN* 464-5).

Thus it is *anguish* that I become conscious of having chosen what I am. Once again, one has to ask, what does it mean to say that I am threatened by my own possible future choice?

Sartre uses the term "instant" to refer to the replacement of one choice by another. It is an "instant" in that it is a genuine break in the process of temporalisation which I am:

> In so far as I *shall reassume* my choice, the making - past of the process will be effected in perfect ontological continuity with the present. The process which is made-past remains organised with the present nihilation in the form of a *practical*

> *knowing*: that is, meaning which is lived and interiorised without ever being an *object* for the consciousness which projects itself toward its own ends. But precisely because I am free I always have the possibility of positing my immediate past as an object. This means that even though my prior consciousness was a pure non-positional consciousness (of) the past while it constituted itself as an internal negation of the co-present real and made its meaning known to itself by its ends posited as 're-assumed', now at the time of the new choice, consciousness posits its own past as an object; that is, it *evaluates* its past and takes its bearings in relation to it. This act of objectivising the immediate past is the same as the new choice of other ends; it contributes to causing the instant to spring forth as the nihilating rupture of the temporalisation (*BN* 107).

It is clear from the analyses of these quotations that Sartre is using the term "choice" in a slightly unusual way. I think his main purpose in using the term lies in the relation between *choice* and *responsibility.* If I have chosen a particular act, then I am responsible for it. Sartre wishes to point out that there is no aspect of human behaviour for which human beings are not, in an important sense, responsible. If there were a "human nature", in the sense of a set of necessary biologically rooted behaviour patterns, then we would be able to say: [131/22]

a) that certain objects which act as stimuli to trigger those behaviour patterns are absolute values for human beings, as the phototropic characteristics of plants make light into an absolute value for them. That is, an absolute value is something which acts "magnetically" on the "actor"; but there are no such magnets-for-man.

b) that in the conditions which elicit those behaviour patterns human beings are not responsible for their actions. If a dog smells a bitch on heat, the smell acts literally as a magnet, and he has no alternative but to seek out the bitch. Human sexuality, however, does not act in this way. The sexual attractiveness of another person constitutes a problem, but it does not dictate a pattern of behaviour. In *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, the judge Azdak finds the complainant guilty of having raped the stable lad she is accusing of having raped her. He proves his point by making her walk across the court and bend down in front of him to pick something up, and he says "Do you see that? The way it sways? The criminal element has been discovered, the rape has been proved. By eating too much, especially sweet things, by lying too long in warm water, by laziness and too soft a skin, you have raped the poor man. Do you imagine you can go around with a bottom like that and get away with it in Court? This is a case of deliberate assault with a dangerous weapon" (Scene 5).

Unfortunately we have to contradict Azdak. Even under these terrifying circumstances the stable lad had a choice, and was responsible. Sartre's

point is that since there is no "human nature", as has been established through the analysis of consciousness, therefore we must say that there is no "inevitable" and "non-responsible" human behaviour. However, we must still be able to explain the fact that many people imagine that their particular ways of behaving *are* human nature. This is because people are usually involved, in the [ms: a blank] of seriousness, in projects, and see their chosen values as things in the world - which they are, in the context of the project. This is possible because of the difference between knowledge and pre-reflective consciousness, which brings it about that when I am involved in a project the ultimate aim is always there as the guiding principle which constitutes the unity of my project, but I am not *thematically* conscious of it; it is not the focus of my attention, and so is not put into question. Just as we can distinguish in perception between the this and the ground, we can also distinguish as it were within the internal structure of consciousness between the "put in question" (the theme) and the "taken for-granted" (the prereflective). The point of describing both as being *conscious* is to indicate the always possible passage of any element of the taken-for-granted - [132/23] into the put-in-question. I am therefore responsible for my acts not in the sense that I have reflectively decided upon them, but in the sense that I could always put in question the underlying principle, and it is for this reason that Sartre wishes to describe this underlying principle as a choice.

But the process of putting this choice in question does not occur "instantaneously":

> We have remarked sufficiently ... that the Cartesian *cogito* must be extended. In fact, as we have seen, to assume self-consciousness never means to assume a consciousness of the instant; for the instant is only one view of the mind and even if it existed, a consciousness which would apprehend itself in the instant would no longer apprehend *anything* (*BN* 462).

If I learn what I am, and hence the nature of my choice, *from the world,* then this takes time. The process of "evaluating the past", referred to earlier, is itself a project, and it is this project which is described as existential psychoanalysis. It is a process in which I am, in reflection, referred from one level to the next of a complex hierarchy of projects.

Furthermore, as a project of investigation this process requires special techniques. Sartre elaborates on this in the following important passage:

> But if the fundamental project is fully experienced by the subject and hence wholly conscious, that certainly does not mean that it must by the same token be *known* by him; quite the contrary. The reader will perhaps recall the care we took in the Introduction to distinguish between consciousness and knowledge. To be

> sure, as we have seen earlier, reflection can be considered as a quasi-knowledge. But what it grasps at each moment is not the pure project of the for-itself as it is symbolically expressed - often in several ways at once - by the concrete behaviour which it apprehends. It grasps the concrete behaviour itself; that is, the specific dated desire in all its characteristic network. It grasps at once symbol and symbolisation. This apprehension, to be sure, is entirely constituted by a pre-ontological comprehension of the fundamental project; better yet, insofar as reflection is also a non-thetic consciousness of itself as reflection, it *is* this same project, as well as the non-reflective consciousness. But it does not follow that it commands the instruments and techniques necessary to isolate the choice symbolised, to fix it by concepts, and to bring it forth into the full light of day. It is penetrated by a great light without being able to express what this light is illuminating ... [133/24] This 'mystery in broad daylight' is due to the fact that this possession is deprived of the means which would ordinarily permit *analysis* and *conceptualisation* (*BN* 570-1).

Sartre goes on to distinguish between "knowledge" and "reflection", and by knowledge here he means the use of concepts and techniques to articulate what is discovered in reflection into a coherent account of the nature of the individual's fundamental project. The significance of this distinction is that knowledge treats that of which it is knowledge as an *object,* whereas in reflection itself I grasp myself as a subject. Thus my "knowledge" finally is not of what I am as project, but of what I am "for others"; that is as object. However, Sartre asserts:

> the subject's knowledge of it (project as it is for others) can in addition contribute to *clarify* reflection, and that reflection can then become a possession which will be a quasi-knowing (*BN* 571).

From the above analysis we can extract three cardinal points:

a) Consciousness is temporally articulated and cannot be limited to the instant. Thus the reflective investigation of the hierarchy of choices which constitutes the pre-reflective consciousness must itself take time.

b) This investigation involves selection, differentiation and an ordering of experience. It thus involves the use of techniques of analysis and of a particular technical vocabulary.

c) By the use of these techniques either the analyst or the subject can give an account of the nature of the fundamental choice constitutive of the being of the subject. Although this account remains at the level of knowledge, and so cannot grasp this choice "from the inside", as subject, nevertheless it can be used by the subject to help him grasp this choice. The implication of this is that the ultimate criterion of success in the analysis of fundamental

choice is the extent to which the subject can use the knowledge so attained in choosing himself anew.

In the light of these remarks we can now consider Sartre's comparison of existential psychoanalysis with empirical psychoanalysis. He mentions five major points of resemblance, and five points of dissimilarity. The resemblances are:

1) "Both kinds of psychoanalysis consider all objectively discernible manifestations of 'psychic life' as symbols maintaining symbolic relations to the fundamental, total structures which constitute the individual person" (*BN* 569),

2) Both deny the idea of a fixed essence of human behaviour, and see human reality instead as a "perpetual, searching historization". [134/25]

3) Both therefore analyse human reality "in situation".

4) Both seek a basic attitude which is constitutive of the individual's reaction to everything that she experiences. This is the "couple" or the "choice".

5) Both deny that the subject has privileged access to this basic attitude, recognising rather that it is exhibited in all the subject's behaviour, but requires techniques of analysis to make it explicit.

The major differences are:

1) The various schools of empirical psychoanalysis approach the subject equipped with prior assumptions about the basic attitude as being founded in a libidinal drive, or a "will to power", or some other such irreducable fact, whereas for existential psychoanalysis it is necessary to show how such factors arise out of some prior choice. They may not be interpreted as "given".

2) For existential psychoanalysis the environment does not act mechanically or deterministically on the individual. Rather

> the environment can act on the subject only to the exact extent that he comprehends it; that is, transforms it into a situation (*BN* 572).

3) The implication of the first two points is that there can be no preexisting set of symbols which can be used to interpret any and every individual's dreams and fantasies.

4) Existential psychoanalysis recognises that the fundamental choice, because it is not a given, but has to be continuously reaffirmed, remains permanently "in question", and may therefore be changed.

5) The phenomenon of resistance is interpreted by existential psychoanalysis as a manifestation of the conscious nature of the choice. It is for this reason that, although the subject has no privileged access in the process

of analysis, nevertheless "the final intuition of the subject" (*BN* 574), is what serves to verify the hypothesis of the psychoanalysis. [sic]

II What is "comprehensibility"?

The question of criteria for verification leads us on to our second problem. If a particular empirical choice is "comprehensible" in terms of the fundamental choice, does this not imply some sort of *causal, deterministic* relationship, and thereby deny in an important way the freedom of the subject. That is, when we explain a particular event, we normally do so with reference [135/26] to prior conditions and to some general (causal) law which enables us to deduce the event from the conditions. Thus we make the event into a necessary result. Can we "explain", "understand" and "comprehend" in a way which does not involve this kind of reference to general laws? To answer this question we must examine the relation of "comprehensibility" between particular action and fundamental choice.

There are three factors complicating the relationship. Firstly, my original choice will not predefine entirely all my further actions. If I wish to get to Johannesburg this evening, I must catch an aeroplane, but whether I catch the morning or the afternoon plane is left quite undetermined. At each level there exists a range of alternatives left open by the choice on the previous level, which Sartre describes as "indifferents". Secondly, in interpreting the relationship between various choices, we cannot make use of some *a priori* system of meanings:

> the for-itself in its freedom invents not only primary and secondary ends; by the same stroke it invents the whole system of interpretation which allows their interconnection (*BN* 471).

The meanings of the various possibilities available at any particular level are themselves a function of the original project. So one cannot simply assume that a particular action has the same meaning for me as it does for you. This naturally complicates the process of interpreting what a particular act does mean. Thirdly, there is the possibility of a contradiction between some reflectively undertaken act and the fundamental choice. As we have seen, in impure reflection the individual's "psychic life" appears as a set of hypostatised objects, states, motives, and so on, and in the examination of these psychic objects consciousness can very well make mistakes. Furthermore, there are certain kinds of project which actually require such a contradiction. For example, in what is described as the 'inferiority

complex' the individual chooses to live her being an object-for-others as being inferior. To be "inferior" is a) to attempt to be great b) to fail, and c) to suffer from the failure. The person who chooses the "inferiority complex" therefore, is aiming at suffering from a sense of failure, but this means that she must try desperately to succeed, and at the same time must ensure that she fails, otherwise there will be no suffering. So the apparent projects aimed at greatness hide here a fundamental project of inferiority. It may even be it that some of the projects are crowned with success. For example, if one of the ways in which the sense of inferiority is to be manifested is through *stuttering*, then, in order for this stuttering to be real for the individual, she must attempt to cure it, and it may well be that this will [136/27] lead to success. This does not mean that the inferiority complex has been cured, but only that it must now manifest itself in different behaviour patterns.

These three factors mean a) that the attempt to discover the original choice of oneself or of another person requires painstaking analysis of one's own or the other's behaviour in an attempt to enter into and to make explicit the value system which is being used, and b) that the relations between a particular act and a fundamental choice cannot be a deductive relation:

> the connection between the derived possible (to resist fatigue or to give in to it) and the fundamental possible is not a connection of deductibility. It is the connection between a totality and a partial structure (*RN* 469).

Thus to comprehend here is to follow the trajectory of the Other's freedom. At each moment I cannot predict the Other's next act, but once the act has been performed I can see its relation to the other's other acts and to the project from which they all derive. This involves "the interpretation of a factual connection and not the apprehension of a necessity" (*BN* 470).

Sartre sums up the methods of investigation and the criteria of success as follows:

> It will utilise the comprehension of being which characterises the investigator in as much as he is himself a human reality; and as it seeks to detach being from its symbolic expressions, it will have to rediscover each time on the basis of a comparative study of acts and attitudes, a symbol destined to decipher them. Its criterion of success would be the number of facts which its hypothesis permits it to explain and to unify as well as the self-evident intuition of the irreducibility of the end attained. To this criterion will be added in all cases where it is possible, the decisive testimony of the subject (*BN* 574).

I can perhaps clarify this analysis of the "fundamental choice" by the use of the concepts "picture" and "frame of reference". We may say, speaking loosely and metaphorically, that I have a picture of what the world is like. This picture is value-impregnated, in the sense that in it things are painted good or bad, desirable or undesirable. In any given situation this picture of what the world is like and of how it works functions as a frame of reference in terms of which I evaluate what is before me, and fact towards it in terms of this frame of reference. The first important point to notice in this analogy is that I don't see a thing in the world "as it is". I interpret it in terms of my picture, which is, in turn, a function of my previous experience. An Eskimo meeting a cobra would not see it as "dangerous", and therefore would, at least initially, behave differently towards it from someone who knew something about snakes. [137/28]

That is, the fact that I see the world through a particular frame of reference means that I can see it wrongly. However, my picture is not static. Each new experience, although it is interpreted in terms of my picture, also serves to change the picture. The Eskimo, if he survives, is likely to see new cobras differently.

My picture of the world includes an idea of myself, both directly and also indirectly through the fact that the picture is value-laden, and that these values refer to me as an actor. This means that I act towards the world *inter alia* in terms of what I see myself as being. My picture of myself also changes, but once more my new experience is interpreted in terms of my previous experience, which means that there is likely to be considerable continuity in change. The basic elements of the picture are not likely to change at all. These elements constitute what one existential psychoanalyst, R.D. Laing, describes as a "pivotal self-definition".

This pivotal self-definition and the picture of the world painted around it may be based on some highly peculiar "traumatic" experience, and this means, on the one hand, that the individual will behave in a peculiar way towards the world, and, on the other hand, that the wide gap between what the world is like and the individual's picture of pose a constant threat to the individual's stability. For example, Laing writes:

> Let us suppose that something happens which is incompatible with the nuclear pivotal definition, perhaps a hidden one, that nevertheless is determining the individual's whole system of meanings. It is as though a linchpin has been removed that had been holding the person's whole world together. Something has happened that challenges the whole meaning that the individual has been giving to "reality". (*Self and Others* 82).

Thus we can interpret the behaviour of "insane" people as deriving from a queer picture of the world, and their suffering as being a function of their attempt to preserve that picture despite its radical incompatibility with reality. To understand the person we have to try to reconstitute his picture of the world. In particular, writing about schizophrenics, Laing points out that we must not dismiss their language as being meaningless, as it appears to be, but rather must recognise that it is constructed by means of an idiosyncratic grammar and logic, which, once discovered, enables us to interpret what is being said.

The process of discovering the frame of reference and the pivotal self-definition is a difficult one because of the fact that its development is [138/29] a function *both* of the objects of experience and of the preexisting picture. How difficult it is can perhaps be best illustrated by some of the mistakes which Sartre himself makes in analysing the role of objects in this process.

He suggests that we cannot tell *a priori* whether one person is going to use animal imagery or another person is going to use geological imagery, but that it is possible to give an account of the objective significance of the animal or of the geological, and therefore to deduce from the choice of, say, animal imagery, certain facts about the nature of the person who makes the choice. That is, if the fundamental choice is a choice of being, than all particular objects symbolise being in some way, and the sort of objects a person likes or dislikes can help us to understand that person's fundamental attitude towards being. Things have, in relation to human reality, various qualities. Rocks are hard. The quality is objective in the sense that all my experiencing of the hardness of the rock does to it is to cause it to be there. The hardness is an expression of the nature of the rock, and through this is one manifestation of being-in-itself. Now insofar as human reality is also necessarily oriented towards being-in-itself, this particular quality will also symbolically express certain aspects of human reality. The quality "hard" can function as a category of analysis which I can use in saying "This man is hard". Sartre insists that this is not merely a metaphor, for the "hardness" of the man refers to "psychic" qualities which are radically different from rocks. We can only make the connection between the hardness of the man and the hardness of the rock because there is already some similarity between them, and this similarity must lie somewhere in the way in which, on the one hand, the hard rock symbolises some aspect of being, and, on the other hand, the hardness of man symbolises the way in which he is choosing "being". Sartre suggests that it is by exploring these kinds of symbols

that we can establish the objective meaning of various qualities, and so interpret people's likes and dislikes.

> It is not a matter of indifference whether we like oysters or clams, snails or shrimp, if only we know how to unravel the existential significance of these foods (*BN* 615).

He himself chooses the example of the concept "visqueux", as used, for example in "un homme visqueux", which is translated into English as a "slimy man". He analyses in great detail and with great ingenuity the way in which the quality "visqueux" in things symbolises that relation to being which is displayed in the characteristic of the "slimy" man. He finally [139/30] concludes that the slimy symbolises a "poisonous possession" in which the in-itself absorbs the for-itself, in which I am trapped gradually by the appearance of liquidity into "a liquid seen in a nightmare, where all properties are animated by a sort of life and turn back against me. Slime is the revenge of the in-itself" (*BN* 609).

Unfortunately, the examples which he uses to analyse "le visqueux", and to show its *moral* qualities, are honey and pitch. Now although both of these are visqueux in French, and hence associated with l'homme visqueux, they are not "slimy" in English, and therefore one cannot refer to their qualities to explain what is meant by "sliminess" as a moral quality. To be more precise, Sartre's convincing-looking analysis seems to be nonsense. Sartre might try to defend himself by saying that what this problem of translation implies is not that his analysis is invalid, but rather that the fact that the English do not see "honey", which is, after all, visqueux, as being unpleasant to touch and feel, tells us something about fundamental English cultural traits. Why do the English actually like some aspects of the visqueux; he might ask? However, such a response seems inadequate. But this does not mean that we need reject Sartre's main point here, which is that people's attitudes to the qualities of different kinds of object are one of the elements which, we need to examine in existential psychoanalysis. The inadequacy of the example does not of itself establish the inadequacy of the argument.

Let me now return to the concept of the "frame of reference" and the "pivotal self-defintion". In what sense can we use the word "choice" here? The "pivotal self-definition" is described as a choice because a) it is mine, my unique reaction to the world, based on my unique history, and with no roots in any pre-established human essence and human nature; and because b) as such it can be changed. There is always the possibility of a second choice. Thus what Sartre means when he says that that I choose myself is

that I always act in terms of my understanding of the world, and that I am responsible for the assumptions about values involved in this understanding, in that these values are not absolute, but could be reflected upon and changed in a genuine act of choice.

This raises two major problems. Firstly, it is a matter of empirical fact that most people seem to take a certain set of values as absolutes, and to go through their lives without ever questioning those values, and so without ever reaching the point of making a genuine choice. In the light of this, to what extent are we still justified in describing these people as free, and what meaning is left for Sartre's defence of the idea [140/31] that human beings are absolutely free? We need therefore to re-examine some elements of his argument to discover exactly what he means by "absolute freedom".

Secondly, the question of a "second choice" brings us into the field of ethics. What, if anything, can I say about how I *ought* to choose myself? Associated with both these questions is a problem about the political meaning of freedom. If human beings are absolutely free in any circumstances, then what meaning is left to political freedom, and to what extent can one *defend* freedom as a value? [141/1]

PART 2 - The Critique of Dialectical Reason

Chapter 5: The Concept of Dialectical Reason

In the Preface to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre defines a type of Reason as "an ordering of our thoughts" which "reproduces or constitutes the order of being" (*CDR* 10), and he goes on to say

> the goal of my research will therefore be to establish whether the positivist Reason of the natural sciences is the fact the reason [sic] which we find in the development of anthropology, or whether the knowledge and the comprehension of man by man implies not only specific methods but a new Reason, that is to say, a new relation between thought and its object (*CDR* 10).

He uses the term "analytic reason" to refer to the "positivist reason of the natural sciences", and his question is whether the categories of analytic reason are adequate to deal with human reality.

Before exploring further the notion of a critique of dialectical reason I shall attempt to outline schematically the distinction between these two "kinds of reason".

There are two interrelated elements in the specification of a particular type of reason.

1) It is a particular way of ordering our thoughts, or a set of rules or categories in terms of which legitimate ways of ordering thoughts may be distinguished from illegitimate ways.

2) This way of ordering thoughts derives its status as *reason* from the fact that it is related in a specific way to the "order of being". Sartre expresses this in the rather lapidary phrase "Reason is a certain relation of knowledge and being" (*CDR* 10).

For there to be more than one kind of reason, there must be more than one way in which knowledge can be related to its object. Sartre accepts the legitimacy of analytic reason in the natural sciences, so we shall begin exploring what is meant by the "relation of knowledge and being" by considering what this relation is in the case of analytic reason. As we saw in *Being and Nothingness*, consciousness is always consciousness of something, or, in other terms, the for-itself is always present to being. In this sense the

for-itself is an internal negation of being, in that it necessarily exists as not being being, and so this negative relation to being is constitutive of it. However, it is present to being from a [142/2] *particular perspective,* and the particular perspective from which it is present to being is not constitutive of it: there are many other perspectives from which it could just as well be present to being.[6] Hence, we see the ambiguous character of the world, which is revealed simultaneously as a synthetic totality and as "purely additive collection of all the thises" (*BN* 183). Although I am related by an internal negation to being, I am related *externally* to the this. Furthermore, the thises are related externally to one another. This is because of what Sartre terms the *indifference of being,* or its contingence: the fact that being is, being is in itself, and being is what it is. When revealed from a particular perspective this indifference of being shows itself as the spatial arrangement of determinate objects. Space is neutral, and within space objects are related to one another externally. The patterns of objects are not meaningful. Each object could be elsewhere. This exteriority of objects in relationship to one another is quantity. Finally, change appears as the replacement of one state of affairs by another, and time is seen, therefore, as a succession of instants. Unlike the ekstatic temporalisation of the for-itself; it is *universal time.*

The natural sciences study the "purely additive collection of all the thises". That is they treat things as independent entities, quantifiable and moving in neutral space and time, and attempt to make satisfactory descriptive generalisations about how in fact these things are related to one another. To return to Sartre's definition of a type of reason, analytic reason may be defined in terms of the externality of knowing to being, and of the use of categories of externality in ordering ideas. The question is, then, whether these categories of externality can be applied in anthropology.

Here the object is human reality, both as individual, and in society. This means that the observer is part of what is being observed. As a sociologist studying my society, I am also studying myself insofar as I am conditioned by my relations to that society. Even if I am studying a society of which I am not a member, I am communicating with the members of that society through some kind of shared experience, and so, insofar as what I study is finally experience which I share, and insofar as I am a being which is able to share the experience of those I am studying, I am also studying myself. In the social sciences the order of thoughts of the observer is *part of* the order of the objects being observed. There is [143/3] thus a dimension of self-reference here which is absent from the natural sciences. The next question is, what implication this different relation of "knowing" to "be-

6 ms: bring

ing" has for the relation of objects to one another, and hence for the categories through which ideas are related to another.

Sartre's answer to this question is that in fact there does exist a set of categories which differ from those of analytic reason, and which have been used fruitfully in the social sciences: the categories of dialectical reason. Our problem, therefore, is not to discover these categories, but to determine precisely their logical geography and the limits within which they may be used. That is, it is necessary not to discover these categories but to found them by a critique of dialectical reason.

The title thus draws a parallel with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* Kant was faced with a paradox. On the one hand Newton and his successors had developed obviously fruitful scientific theories. Yet on the other hand Hume seemed to have shown that the categories which they used, such as the category of causality, were invalid. Thus Kant realised that it was no longer legitimate to take these categories for granted, but that they had to be justified, and their precise range of applicability had to be shown.

The necessity for a critique of dialectical reason does not arise as a result of devastating blow from a Hume-like figure, but rather from a breakdown internal to the social movement to which it is related. Marxist theory has broken down, for the historical reason that the first attempt to put Marxism into practice, in an underdeveloped country and in a hostile world, influenced the way in which most Marxists used the Marxist tools of political and historical analysis. In the USSR the essential needs were security and rapid economic development. This resulted in the growth of a highly centralised party and planning system. The corollary of this was the insistence on the necessity of absolute respect for the leadership's interpretation of the theory, in the name of party unity, and the bureaucratic defining away of the specific *differential* of different situations. Marxist theory, Stalinised, developed into a sort of Platonic idealism, in which the object of political or historical analysis was to explain away the "veil of illusion" of the facts in order to get at the underlying essence [144/4] of "worker" or "imperialist", "revolutionary" or "counter-revolutionary", "proletariat" or "bourgeoisie", "Marxist-Leninist" or "revisionist".

The world became a dance of these ideal forms, and "experience, when it didn't verify the predictions, could only be wrong". (*CDR* 25) instead of it being shown how the individual is created by his class, his culture, the history of his society, the relations of production, and through them the whole geographic milieu, but is only created by them in so far as he integrates them into his life by transcending them in his projects, the individual just gets forgotten in an abstract consideration of these more general structures.

Class and relations of production are incomprehensible without the individuals who make up the class or do the producing. And the individual is not *just* a member of a class; he is situated in his class through a variety of intermediate relationships - in particular, family relationships - which tend to get forgotten in this "Marxist idealism".

Thus Sartre suggests that the concept of dialectical reason is not only lacking a foundation, but at present it is very often not even being used fruitfully. A consideration of his main criticism of the practice of dialectical reason will lead us into the problem of theoretical foundation.

When we describe social events, are we doing anything other than describing the sum of a collection of atomic behaviours? Sartre follows Marx in arguing that we are describing a "totality", a set of interrelated behaviours each of which is in some way dependent for its nature on the other behaviours. For Marx the central factor in this totality is class conflict, and it is around the notion of "class conflict" that the account of the social totality has to be organised.

The class is the widest category of which the individual is a member, since an individual's class membership defines *both* the relation with other members of the same class and the relation with members of classes with which this class is in conflict. That is, to specify an individual's class is to situate him/her within a network of internal relations with all the other individuals in the society.

This raises what Sartre calls the problem of "mediations". Traditionally Marxist writings have conceptualised the relation between class and other [145/5] aspects of social life in terms of "base" and "superstructure". Class is defined in terms of relations to the means of production. The relations of production which individuals enter into with one another are defined as the "base" of the social structure, and other elements of society, such as politics, religion, culture and family are described as the "superstructure". That is, they are dependent on, but different from, the relations of production. A perennial topic of debate has been the exact nature of this relationship between "base" and "superstructure". Engels describes the relationship as follows:

> There is interaction on the basis of economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself", and elsewhere: "All moral theories have been hitherto the product, in the last analysis, of the economic conditions of society obtaining at the time (*Anti-Dühring* 132).

Sartre quotes Marx as writing:

> The mode of production of material life in general dominates the development of social, political and intellectual life (*CDR* 31).

The problem is that phrases like "in general dominates", "ultimately asserts itself" and "product in the last analysis" are very vague. It is clear that some sort of priority of base over superstructure is being asserted, and also that there is some kind of interdependence ("interaction") between the two elements. But it is not clear at all precisely how the priority asserts itself within the interdependence. Partly this problem is a function of the rather non-dialectical image used. A superstructure sits on top of its base in a somewhat mechanical way, and if one removes the superstructure the base remains there inert and unaffected. The image embodies a one way causal relationship.

If one is to use building metaphors a better one would be to contrast the walls with the stress beams that balance the walls, hold them apart and help them to support the roof. This image indicates that the "superstructure" is in fact internal to the "base", or that for the relations of production to persist, it is necessary that there should exist a certain kind of legal system, a family socialising individuals in a certain kind of way, a religion transmitting a certain concept of the "meaning of life", and so on.

Sartre's concept of "mediation" is designed to conceptualise this more adequately. He approaches the problem via the question as to what it [146/6] means for an individual to be situated within a class, arguing that traditionally Marxists ("lazy Marxism") have remained on an abstract level:

> Valéry is a petit bourgeois intellectual, no doubt about it. But not every petit-bourgeois intellectual is Valéry. The heuristic inadequacy of contemporary Marxism is contained in these two sentences. Marxism lacks any hierarchy of mediations which would permit it to grasp the process which produces the person and his product inside a class and within a given society at a given historical moment (*PM* 56).

Further on he writes:

> To be sure, the capitalist owns the instruments of labour, and the worker does not own them: there we have a pure contradiction. But to be precise, this contradiction never succeeds in accounting for each event. It is the framework for the event; it creates a permanent tension in the social environment, a split within the capitalist society; but his fundamental structure of every contemporary event (in our bourgeois societies) does not by any means explain the event in its concrete reality (*PM* 127).

On the one hand class division exists as "permanent tension in the social environment" and as such is the fundamental structure of every event. But on the other hand it is not the *only* structure of every event.

Individuals exist within their class through other institutions. Each one comes into a class first through the family, and experiences the class situation first through the way in which the mother and father cope with their situation, their income, mode of life, and social milieu. A white South African farmer's boy learns his position first through the availability of black servants and black children who are dependent on his whims. The relation of authority and subservience arises far from the actual situation of control over land on which it is based. The family, then, is a mediating institution, and one has to understand both the way in which the class tension manifests itself within the family, and also the peculiarities of the family itself.

Individuals are members of other types of "collectives", such as sports clubs, residential communities, and informal peer groupings, as well as more obviously class-related collectives such as trade unions, employers' associations and specific types of work-place: e.g. rural [147/7] labourer on small-holding, clerk in bureaucracy, worker in medium sized factory. They exist also within a particular historically created cultural milieu. All these elements constitute an "instrumental field" within which individuals act and through which they have to understand themselves. One of the implications of the fact that the individual is in a class *through* mediating collectives is that it becomes possible not to perceive the fact that one *is* in a class. One has to discover the class through an analysis of the mediations.

The study of mediations involves two steps.

a) We need to analyse the structure of various types of collective. For example, bureaucracies, whether they are state departments, business, trade unions, churches or schools, all have a specific structure, which can be analysed in itself. To be a member of a bureaucracy is to be related in a specific way to other people, and we need to investigate this relationship.

b) Having established the abstract structure of the various collectivities we then need to describe the actual collectivities involved in whatever we are considering, by showing how a particular history has been crystallised in a specifically unique form of that type of collectivity.

However, this still does not give us either the individual or the act. So far we have only engaged in the regressive moment of what Sartre calls the progressive regressive method. This regressive moment describes the instrumental field within which the individual acts. But this field does not *cause* the act, and the description of the field can be used neither to predict nor to give a causal explanation of the individual's act. For the individual's

act is, as we have seen, a *project;* that is a negation of the given in terms of a future. The field itself only exists as a set of structures and meanings in so far as the individual gives it meaning in the project. In particular, the social structures have no status independent of the individuals who act out the behaviour patterns which constitute the structures. Thus the regressive moment falls apart without the individual's totalising project, the progressive moment.

Factually the nature and continued existence of the instrumental field is dependent upon the totalising activity of individuals. Theoretically we can only understand events by grasping the way in which individuals totalise the instrumental field. We are thus faced with two problems:

1) What is the nature of "totalisation"? What categories do we need in order to describe a process of totalisation? [148/8]

2) An event normally involves not one but many individuals, and therefore not one but many totalisations. In particular, as we have seen Sartre insists that the instrumental field is made up in part of social structures: the basic class division and the secondary institutions through which class is mediated. These involve millions of totalising individuals. Thus in our quest to understand a particular event we seem to be referred to the impossible task of attempting to comprehend the totalising projects of millions of different individuals. If we are to make sense of this we will have to show that the history of a society is one of totalisation, ontologically dependent on the totalising individuals, but nevertheless constituting one intelligible development. This is, we shall have to show that the categories used to describe a totalisation can be applied to society, as well as to the individual. For Marxists, the concept of dialectic is used to solve both these problems, and Sartre accepts this. However, as we have seen, he believes that dialectical reason lacks adequate foundation. In particular, the relationship between individual totalisation and historical totalisation is not made explicit. In fact, the role of the individual is often completely ignored. Engels

> shows us men being produced by the system without making us see the system being produced by men, and ... reduces interhuman conflict to being no more than a symbolic expression of the contradictions of the economy. (*Situations* VII 15.)

The development of this tendency within Stalinist Marxism is partly related to the political and social factors already referred to:

> Marxist formalism is a process of elimination. The method is a process of elimination. The method is identical with Terror in its inflexible refusal to differentiate; its goal is total assimilation at the least possible effort. The aim is not to integrate what is different as such, but rather to suppress it. Thus the perpetual

> movement *toward identification* reflects the bureaucrats' practice of unifying everything. Specific determinations awake in the theory the same suspicions as persons do in reality (*PM* 48).

However, it has its theoretical justification in the work of Engels himself, in the idea of a "dialectics of nature". Engels argues that the whole of nature, both human and non-human, works dialectically, in that it is a unified development process in which at each stage an enriching resolution of conflict goes hand in hand with the creation of new contradictions, new conflict and hence potential for further enrichment. Since nature is a dialectical process, therefore society is also one dialectical process. [149/9]

But this argument is quite illegitimate. To start with Hegel developed the concept of dialectics through the study of the mind. It was only in terms of his Idealist ontology, in terms of which nature is produced by the Mind as its self-alienation, that it would be legitimate to assume that Nature also works dialectically. Engels, in moving from an idealist to a materialist position, reverses the argument, and thereby deprives the concept of dialectic of any basis at all.

There is also a serious logical objection to any theory, which makes individual human consciousness into an element in an overriding historical process.

In a materialist philosophy it would be impossible to justify one's claim to any kind of knowledge on the basis of such a theory. For since my thoughts are a part of the world, my claim to knowledge, just like any other idea, must itself be a product of the natural process. Unless I can show some way in which my statement could be independently verified, by pointing to some sort of autonomy from external historical determinism, I cannot claim that it is true.

Hence the importance of the "methodological principle which makes certainty begin with reflection" (*CDR* 30). I have to start off from the reflectively discovered fact that it is I who am doing the thinking, and trying to discover the truth, and that any theory which in principle denies me this autonomy contradicts its own base.

The difficulty with this methodological principle is that it sometimes gets confused with an ontological principle to the effect that mind or idea is "more real" than matter, and so results in an idealist philosophy in which only reflective knowledge finds a place, and the breakthrough into the "outside world" is never made. Sartre therefore stresses that such a methodological principle "in no way contradicts the *anthropological* principle which defines the concrete person by his materiality" (*CDR* 30). [150/10]

Considering the dialectic of nature on a practical level leads to an analogous recognition of some sort of individual autonomy. For a materialist dialectic the future is real and personal and urgent. The individual is involved in it through his choices, and so, even if it could be shown that inorganic nature works dialectically, it would still be necessary to show independently the way in which the projects of individuals interlock to create the historical dialectic.

It is this that Sartre is trying to do in *The Critique*. Briefly, he does it by showing that a free activity is by nature dialectical, and that in the world of scarcity this dialectic loses itself in the phenomena of "alienation" and of "serial praxis", and so becomes subject to a necessity of which it is itself the origin. It is thus possible to speak of patterns of historical development without postulating that these patterns are the expression of laws external to and independent of human behaviour, or that they derive from some human essence.

Historically speaking, Marx and Engels's materialism began as a theory about the relations between the individual, the world in which he produces his means of subsistence, his fellows, with whom he enters into specific relationships in his productive activities, and the social, political and ideological forms which arise on the basis of these relationships. This theory was then used as an interpretative tool for the study of social forms and historical changes, and used very fruitfully. However, at some point it seems to have occurred to them that they had only *stated* this theory, and had not *proved* it by showing, from an account of the nature of the individual, why he is related to the world in this particular way. So they - or, rather, essentially Engels, in the *Anti-Dühring* and in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of classical german philosophy* - tacked on the theory of the "dialectic of nature" to fill in the gap.

Sartre argues a) that the implications of this theory are such that it contradicts rather than complements the first theory; b) that Marx and Engels do not use it in their social analysis; and c) that his own account of "being human" in fact does provide an adequate foundation for their historical theory.

The "Introduction" to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, is divided into Part A "Dogmatic Dialectic and Critical Dialectic" and Part B "Critique of the Critical Experience". In these two sections Sartre attacks the inadequate theoretical foundations of the dogmatic dialectic and sketches out the form which the attempt to provide more adequate foundations must take. His two major criticisms are:

1) that a philosophical theory must at the very least justify its own existence, and this historical materialism has failed to do - "this totalising thought has founded everything except its own existence" (*CDR* 112);
2) that the necessity of the laws of the dialectic is either taken for granted or else "proved" empirically, both of which are inadequate approaches; and that no attempt is made to explain why the laws of the dialectic are as they are.

1) Knowledge is universal. It always involves an escape from the particular, from the immediate given. This raises a problem: "Thought is both being and knowledge of being." (*CDR* 122) A true statement is both a thing in the world, a particular fact, and also a truth about the world. We have to account for this dual status, and in particular we have to make sure that any theory we are putting forward does not deny one or the other of these aspects of thought. [151/4]

Hegel reduces being to thought. Marx establishes against Hegel that "being remains irreducible to knowing". (*CDR* 121) But he appears to fail to establish that autonomy of knowing which is necessary to justify his own claim to knowledge:

> Doubtless dialectical materialism has, in regard to contemporary ideologies, the practical superiority of being the ideology of the rising class. But if it was only the simple inert expression of this ascension, or even of revolutionary praxis, if it did not turn round on it to illuminate it, how could one speak of a progress in becoming conscious. How could the dialectic be presented as the real movement of History revealing itself. (*CDR* 123)

The crude materialism of contemporary Marxists seem to accept this. But at the same time they claim their theory to be universally true. This is dogmatic idealism: "an idealist materialism which is basically nothing more than a discourse on the idea of matter." (*CDR* 126) This type of theory ends up "giving man a constituted reason, that is, making of thought a form of behaviour rigorously conditioned by the world (which it is), while omitting to tell us that it is also knowledge of the world". (*CDR* 127)

2) Sartre quotes Engels' account of the "most general laws of natural and social history":

> They can be reduced essentially to three: The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice-versa. The law of the interpenetration of opposites. The law of the negation of the negation. All three are developed by Hegel in his idealist manner as simple laws of thought. The mistake consists in imposing these laws on Nature and History as laws of thought, rather than deducing the laws from Nature and History. (*CDR* 127)

He points out that these laws, if they are to be necessary, cannot be "deduced" or "induced" from Nature by observation -

> We know since Kant that experience gives the fact but not necessity. (*CDR* 130)

Further, if they are to be understood, rather than simply stated, it is necessary that the relation between them should be explained, which Engels does not even try to do.

Before giving an account of Sartre's own solution to these problems I shall give a brief schematic outline of what I understand by the concept "dialectic".

In our ordinary common-sense thinking we think of objects as separate, independent entities. As Hegel put it, the central logical category of this form of thought is the category of *identity.* The thing is what it is. It is distinct from other things. However, further analysis reveals that the thing is in fact in relation with the rest of the universe. The desk that I am writing on is only where it is and what it is because the rest of the universe has a certain configuration. If, say, the sun were suddenly to disappear the desk would cease to exist, as a desk, for one of the factors which keeps it in its present position and in its present shape is the fact that it coexists with the sun in a particular field of force. If the sun were to be annihilated the nature of the field of force would change. In a very important sense the desk *is* its relations with the rest of the universe. In Hegel's language, it is the determinate negation of the rest of the universe. It is a specific, determinate, way of not being the rest of the universe. The language may be rather odd, but the thought is not. For what is being implied is that to understand any particular thing we have to unravel the ways in which it is related to other things. We have to treat it as an [152/5] interdependent part of a totality, rather than as a self-sufficient Identity.

Dialectical logic is the logic of totalities, and dialectical reason is the attempt to make sense of totalities.

> Each of these socalled laws of dialectics becomes perfectly intelligible if looked at from the point of view of totalisation. (*CDR* 137)

Let me now attempt to state this with a little more rigour. To speak of dialectical *logic,* is to imply that the "laws" of the dialectic are formal, rather than substantive laws. They are what Kant terms *categories.* The statement "All events must have a cause" is a formal law, in that it makes no attempt to specify the cause of any particular event. "Germs cause disease" is a substantive law, in that it specifies the cause for a particular class of events. If dialectical laws are laws of logic, they are of the first type. And only if they

are formal laws can it be claimed that they are also *necessary.* For empirically discovered laws can never be necessary. They must always be held open for possible falsification.

The laws of the dialectic are, then, an attempted formulation of those categories which necessarily have to be used in describing any totality or whole. Justifying the application of these laws therefore always involves two steps a) showing that these categories are logically implied by the concept "totality" and b) showing that the phenomenon to which they are being applied is in fact a totality.

For something to be experienced by me it must enter into some relationship with me, and thereby also directly or indirectly into some relationship with all other things which I may or do experience. If there was something in this room which had no effect on me or on any other thing in the room, then it would not be meaningful to say that it was *in* the room. It would be in a different universe. To say that something is in the room is to say that it is in interaction with every other thing in the room. That is, for something to be experience by me, it must be part of a totality of which I am myself a part. And the first law of this totality is the law of interconnectedness, or what Engels here calls 'The law of interpenetration of opposites', There are no polar opposites within a totality, no entities which can be understood other than in terms of their relations with other entities.

But this interdependence is not undifferentiated. If every thing in the universe affected me in the same way an every other thing affected me then experience would collapse into total uniformity. The concept of interconnectedness of things implies that different things are connected in different ways - that is that what is involved is an interconnectedness of *different things*, rather than a Simple Oneness. The totality is *structured.* To say it is structured is to say that it is made up of substructures. This fact is formulated in terms of a law of change. A substructure has a relative independence, in that certain changes can occur within it without affecting its relationship to other substructures. However, if changes within it go beyond a certain point, then changes in its relations with other parts can ensue. If changes have occurred within these relations then the nature of the totality has changed. It has become a qualitatively different entity. This is formulated in the "law of the transformation of quantity into quality." Quantitative changes are changes *within* a substructure, changes which can occur independently, but if they go beyond a certain limit change the qualitative nature of the structure as a whole [153/6] So far we have seen that I am necessarily a part of a totality of interconnected substructures. Our experience is temporal, and therefore the totality of which we are a part is itself temporal

as well as spatial, diachronic as well as synchronic. Here we encounter a problem. The structure of a totality is a structure of *inter*-dependence. Casual relationships within a totality are always two-way, rather than unidirectional. In what sense, then, can the past and the future be part of a totality? For we usually see the temporal sequence as a unidirectional causal process. What happened in the past is the cause of what is happening now. What is happening now is the cause of what will happen in the future. Only if we can show that the future affects the present can we meaningfully speak of a temporal totality.

As we saw in the account of *Being and Nothingness*, human reality is temporally three-dimensional. Consciousness is a project. The specific way in which a human reality interacts with the whole of which it is part is by projecting a future and acting in terms of that future. That is, as we saw, consciousness makes temporality into a totality. My present is a particular way in which my past is organised in relation to my future. The for-itself is its past in the mode of not being it. In Hegelian terms, the for-itself is the determinate negation of its past.

The temporal law of totality is the "law of the negation of the negation". In dialectical terms the negation of a negation is an affirmation, and the law of the negation of the negation asserts a) that change occurs through a process of successive "negations" and b) that the end result is an "affirmation", or a positive development in relation to the initial state. This only makes sense if the initial state is a consciousness-world totality. In such a totality change occurs through actions, which is the negation of the given in terms of a projected future. Each action is incomplete and its result is inadequate in terms of the goal. It therefore has to be negated once more by a further action which gets a little closer to the goal. Each negation is an affirmation in that it integrates what is being negated into a new totality. Thus the concept of the "negation of the negation" is an attempt at a formal description of the ambiguous relationship which human reality has to its past and to the natural world. As Marx wrote in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. (*Tucker*, 437).

That is they are both conditioned by their history and free to make something new of their condition. They are both in a situation and free to give that situation their own meaning. In the *Critique* Sartre describes this as

> the perpetually resolved and perpetually renewed contradiction of man the producer and man the product. (*CDR* 158)

Thus the totality of which the experiencing (and hence acting) consciousness is a part is a structure of interdependent subsystems in which development takes place as a result of the "negating" character of the experiencing consciousness itself. I began the analysis of the concept dialectic by pointing out that in the application of dialectical logic we had to know whether the class of events to which it was being applied was in fact a totality. Our explication of the concept has itself revealed one element which must be present in any process for it to be dialectical - the element of negation. Negation is part of the structure of the experiencing consciousness. "Nature", considered completely independent of human reality, is not a diachronic [154/7] totality. We cannot say that there is development in Nature, for nature is always simply what it is. States succeed one another. Only a consciousness can relate them to one another and *evaluate* them.

It is therefore possible and legitimate to treat certain elements of the totality human reality Nature non-dialectically. The changes of state inside a distant star cannot of themselves be subjected to dialectical analysis. It is only insofar as they are experienced and integrated into an individual's consciousness that they become a part of a process of *development* by changing both the ideas and eventually the actions of a person in the world.

It is important to notice here that the "categories" of the dialectic do not have exactly the same status as Kantian categories. For Kant, the categories are applied, to phenomena from outside by a "noumenal" consciousness which does not seem to be itself in any way part of the process. Here the knowing consciousness is itself an integral part of the dialectical process. Consciousness is essentially creative action, rather than simply observation. We are

> referred from *doing* to *knowing* and from *knowing* to *doing* in the unity of a process which is itself dialectical. (*CDR* 135)

The intelligibility of the dialectic comes from the fact that

> the so-called 'laws' of dialectical Reason are each *all* the dialectic: it could not be otherwise, or else dialectical Reason would cease to be itself a dialectical process, and thought, as the praxis of the theoretician, would necessarily be discontinuous. Thus the fundamental intelligibility of dialectical Reason - if it is to exist - is that of a totalisation. Or, to return to the distinction between being and knowing, there is a dialectic if there exists, at least in one ontological sector, a totalisation in progress which is immediately accessible to a thought which totalises itself ceaselessly in its very comprehension of the totalisation from which it emanates and which makes itself its object. (*CDR* 137)

Thus fully dialectical relations occur only in the human world. But we still need to ask in precisely what regions of the human world they occur. And this is Sartre's essential problem in the *Critique*. The praxis of the individual is necessarily dialectical, and each individual's personal history is a dialectical whole. But can we go beyond this? Can we, as Marx does, treat society and the history of society as dialectical wholes?

Each individual consciousness is a totalising process. But history is made up of millions of individuals totalising separately. If Marx's application of the dialectic to society is to be shown to be valid, we must be able to show that history is in some sense one single totalising process. Sartre formulates the problem as follows:

> It is not a question of rewriting the human adventure, but rather of carrying out the critical experience of connections of interiority, or, in other terms, to grasp in respect of whatever real enterprises, structures or events the answer to this question of principle: what are, in the human adventure, the respective roles of interiority and of exteriority? If in this total experience, which is, in sum, that of my whole life insofar as it is dissolved in all history, and of all history insofar as it is gathered up within a life, we show that the relation of exteriority (analytical and positivist reason) is itself interiorised by practical multiplicities, and that it only acts on them (as an historical force) to the extent that it becomes internal negation of interiority, we shall find ourselves situated by this [155/8] research at the very heart of a totalisation in progress. (*CDR* 146-7)

That is

> we have seen that the universe vanishes in a dream if man submits to the dialectic from outside as his unconditional law; but if we imagine that each individual follows his own whims and that these molecular collisions produce a collective result, we shall find *average* or statistical results, but not a *historical development.* (*CDR* 131)

If we are to understand history as a *dialectical* process, rather than as a mere succession of states, we must, starting from individual praxis

> follow with care the thread of Ariadne which, from this praxis, will lead us to the various forms of human ensembles; we must seek, in each case, the structure of these ensembles, their real modes of formation from their elements, and then their totalising action on the elements which have formed them. (*CDR* 153)

When we describe social events are we doing anything other than describing the sum of a collection of atomic behaviours? When Marx apeaks of "classes" and "class-struggles" what does he mean? What does it mean to say of an individual that he or she belongs to a class, to speak of classes

"struggling", and to speak of history as the result of the class struggle? One could treat the term "class", or any similar term, in one of three ways:

1) It is a mere name - a word which can be used to classify people in a particular way, without saying anything about the relations between the people. This is the nominalist or "sardine-tin" use - sardines in a tin have no relationship to one another other than the fact of being in the same tin. They are related *externally,* rather than *internally.*

2) It is a real entity, and the individuals who make up the class are simple bye-products of the class - secondary and derived beings.

3) The class is not a real entity, but neither is it a mere name. It is a set of internal relations between people. Marx, following Hegel, distinguished between a class-in-itself and a class-for-itself. The latter is a class in which the members are reflectively conscious of themselves as belonging to a class. In this case the relations between them are necessarily internal. But if Marx's use of the term is to be justified we must also be able to show that the relations between members of a class in-itself are internal. We must be able to show that even in this case the praxis of each member involves the totalisation of his or herself as member of the class.

Similarly, if we are to speak of History, we must be able to show that the totalising activity of each individual praxis includes within itself a totalisation of all other praxes. Can we steer between the ideas of History as a super-human process, on the one hand, and history as a meaningless and accidental succession of events on the other hand? In both these cases people are mere products of the historical process, whether it be super-human or subhuman. If we can steer between them, we can show how history might become a completely self-conscious human process, in which humans can take control. As we have seen, freedom is a cultural product, and unless this can happen we shall have to conclude that freedom only emerges by accident. [156/9]

We can clarify this problem by looking at Sartre's concepts of *intelligibility* and *necessity.*

> If dialectical Reason exists, it must define itself as the absolute intelligibility of an irreducible novelty *insofar* as this is irreducibly new. It is the opposite of the positivist attempt to illuminate new facts by reducing them to old facts. (*CDR* 147)

For "analytic reason" explanation consists in showing that some new observed event is an example of some previously observed class of events. When Newton explained the fall of the apple he merely pointed out that its fall was one particular example of the way in which bodies move in relation

to one another. That is, in the positive sciences to explain an event is to show that it is an exemplification of a particular descriptive generalisation. What do we do if we find something new? The tendency of the positive sciences is to reformulate the descriptive generalisation to show that it is not new in itself, that it is not qualitatively different from what was previously observed. As a result of the Michelson-Morlay experiment Einstein reformulated Newton's generalisation to include the behaviour of bodies approaching the speed of light, and showed thereby that the result of the experiment was not something radically new, but a phenomenon of a class of which the phenomena which act in accordance with Newton's generalisation are also members.

However, Sartre, and all dialectical theorists, are arguing that historical "novelties" are not of this kind. As we saw in the study of *Being and Nothingness*, consciousness is free, and this means that it can give new meanings to situations in its projection of itself towards the future. Human praxis is a continuous invention of new meanings, but these meanings are nevertheless intelligible to the actor.

> This dialectical intelligibility rests on the intelligibility of each new determination of a practical totality, insofar as this determination is nothing other than the maintenance and the totalising transcendance of all the anterior determinations, insofar as this transcendence and maintenance are illuminated by a totality to be realised. (*CDR* 150)

As I write these words I am creating something irreducibly new which is nevertheless only intelligible in terms of what I have already written. My present writing *both* maintains *and* transcends what I have already written. My present act embodies the intelligibility (to me) of my past.

Sartre formulates this as follows:

> If the dialectic exists, we must submit to it as the insurmountable rigour of the totalisation which totalises *us*, and grasp it in its free practical sponteneity as the totalising praxis which we are; at each degree of our experiment, we must find, in the intelligible unity of the synthetic movement, the contradiction and the indissoluble link of necessity and freedom ... *necessity* as the apodictic structure of the dialectical experience lies neither in the the free development of interiority nor in the inert dispersion of exteriority. It imposes itself, as an inevitable and irreduceable moment, in the interiorisation of the exterior and the exteriorisation of the interior. (*CDR* 157)

What this means I shall try to show in the following chapters. But first I would like to elaborate a little on the relation between *Being and Nothingness* and *The Critique*.

I would like to stress once more that although there is a considerable difference in terminology between *The Critique* and *Being and Nothingness*, there is nevertheless a continuity both in method and in thought. The phenomenological method which Sartre uses [157/10] in *Being and Nothingness* consists in starting the study of philosophy by an analysis of prereflective consciousness, in order to explicitate the prereflective awareness of the main elements involved in being conscious. It is based on the fact that my behaviour is conscious and intelligent, in the sense that it involves an understanding of a goal, and so a global awareness of the relation of this goal to the rest of the world (but not, of course, intelligent in the sense of always proceeding from verbalised intellectual judgements, or of always being wise). In so far as my everyday behaviour involves reference to other people, to the culture of my society, and to the material world, I have a pre-reflective understanding of what it means to be related to other people, to a culture, and to a material world. This does not mean that to discover the actual empirical details of, say, the material world, I should start reflecting, instead of just looking at the world itself. We saw that I could distinguish between a perception and an image because I was pre-reflectively aware of what constituted the defining elements of each. Similarly, if I know that a particular experience is an experience of a person, rather than of a thing, it is because I am pre-reflectively aware of what constitutes the defining elements, the abstract structure, of a relation to another person. It is this abstract structure, rather than the concrete details revealed by introspection or empirical research, that phenomenological reflection aims at uncovering. So, says Sartre,

> the epistemological point of departure must always be *consciousness* as apodictic certainty (of) itself and as consciousness *of* such and such an object. But it is not a question, here, of interrogating consciousness about itself: the object which it must give is precisely *life*, that is to say, the objective being of the investigator, in the world of others, in so far as this being totalises itself from birth and will totalise itself until death. (*CDR* 142)

The Critique is a phenomenological study of the social dimension of man's behaviour and consciousness.

In my discussion of *Being and Nothingness* I argued that the specialised words that Sartre uses in it - expressions like "being- in-itself", and "being-for-itself" - must not be interpreted as names for metaphysical substances, or for the activities of metaphysical substances, lying "behind" the world that we experience. Rather, they are linguistic tools used to clarify and explicitate certain essential elements in our everyday experience. This

interpretation of their status is justified by the fact that in *The Critique* Sartre, while still calling himself an existentialist and using the phenomenological method, uses a different set of specialised words.

The expression "being-in-itself" is replaced by "matter". Being-in-itself is "neither concrete nor abstract, neither present nor future" (*BN* 189), "neither activity nor passivity" (*BN* lxiv), and "the indifference of being is nothing; we cannot think it or even perceive it". (*BN* 191) Of matter, he writes:

> Where is matter, that is to say, being totally pure of meaning, found? The answer is easy. It presents itself nowhere in human experience. (*CDR* 247)

The two concepts express the irreduceability of the world to my knowledge of it, or *realism.*

> The monism of materiality ... is the only monism which is a realism. (*CDR* 248)

The "human world" in terms of which I act, that is, the world as I understand it, with its objects that I know how to use, and its laws that I can take into account, is always only a partial "embodiment" of the whole world, elements of which always escape both my understanding and my control. This does not mean that there is something more real "underneath" the experienced world, and, in particular, it is not a metaphysical statement to the effect that the basic units of the universe are small particles of matter (as in Democritus's materialism). It just means that however far we dig [158/11] into the world we never in fact reach the bottom. The world remains a world of obstacles: it retains its coefficient of adversity.

Sartre expresses this concept of materialism very clearly in a passage in the 'Reply to Claude Lefort' (*Situations VII*)

> When Marx reproaches Hegel for having stood the dialectic on its head, he is not just opposing a materialism to an idealism: he wants to show that each moment of the dialectic is a conquest by effort and work (if necessary by combat) over chance and exteriority; he wants to reintroduce into the most rigourously planned enterprise the hindrances, the gaps, the constant distortions of our operations ... the Marxist dialectic is not the spontaneous movement of Spirit, it is the hard struggle of man to insert himself into a world which refuses him. (57-8)

The correlative terms "for-itself", "nihilation" and "freedom", are replaced by "praxis" and "totalisation". Praxis is the free (intelligent) activity of the human being. Nihilation and totalisation both express the fact that it is man who makes a situation appear, who creates a structured world - "the

necessity for the given to appear only within the compass of a nihilation which reveals it". (*BN* 478) They both describe the temporal structure of human consciousness. "Thus freedom, choice, nihilation, temporalisation are all one and the same thing" (*BN* 465);

> In this sense it goes without saying that totalising oneself means temporalising oneself. In fact, as I have shown elsewhere, the only conceivable temporality is that of a totalisation as a singular adventure. (*CDR* 143)

What I have called the "social world" (p. 46), that is to say, the world of the objectified praxis and values of other people, is called "worked matter", or, in conditions of alienation, the "pratico-inert". Since *The Critique* is an attempt to analyse the social dimension of man, the concept of the pratico-inert plays a much more important role than does the concept of the social world in *Being and Nothingness*. [159/1]

Chapter 6: Praxis and Scarcity

> Anthropology will only merit its name when it substitutes for the study of human objects the study of the different processes of becoming an object. (*CDR-QM* 107)

In *The Critique* we are studying man this side of the possible liberating total reflection. He remains an object, that it to says he has a nature, to the extent that there are values that have become absolutes for him. In this case, his freedom is *alienated.* (The term "alienation" is fairly widely used today, and there is no great clarity in its use. I am here simply defining one of the ways in which Sartre uses it.) To study the processes of becoming an object is to study the way in which a man's freedom becomes alienated through his relationship to certain objects or ideas. Since a man always acts according to his understanding of the world, it is to study the way in which his frame of reference can develop in such a way that he understands the world in terms of the absolute character of certain of its elements.

> Everything is discovered in need: it is the totalising relationship of this material being, a man, to the material ensemble of which he is a part. (*CDR* 166)

Need is an intentional relationship; this is what the concept of "totalisation" expresses. To totalise is to unify, to give a definite structure to what was previously only a haphazard collection of objects in the world. In other words, it is to make a situation appear by projecting oneself towards a goal; it is to evaluate the world. At the most abstract level of human existence, organic existence stripped bare of the complex of motives which derives from, or is only possible in terms of, living in a society, I evaluate the situation in terms of a goal which is already given that of feeding myself. My totalisation of the world is the strict correlative of my bodily needs. Need as a relationship between myself and the world is original, in the senses of being first in time, and also in the sense of being always there, underlying all my other activities.

The world is independent of me; it has a coefficient of adversity. So I never attain my goal instantaneously. My first totalisation, which necessarily applies to the whole field, is nevertheless not adequate. Aspects of the field escape my attention and control, and become "partial organisations" which frustrate my original project. I have to try to reintegrate them in a new and more complex totalisation. Thus my activity is dialectical: a never completed series of richer and richer syntheses, each synthesis constituting

a partial organisation as its own antithesis, a "counter-finality" which escapes from it.

Just as my frame of reference, or picture of the world, is constituted dialectically, so is my relationship to the world itself dialectical. This is just another expression of the fact that my thoughts are acts and that my acts are "thoughtful". To say that my acts are dialectical is another way of saying that human behaviour is intelligent. To express the unity of this dual characteristic of intelligence and of relatedness to the world which defines human behaviour, Sartre uses the word "praxis". He defines praxis as

> a project organising the material conditions, inscribing itself by work in inorganic matter as a reshaping of the practical field and as [160/2] a reunification of means in order to attain the end. (*CDR* 687)

The word "praxis" is used to stress the fact that "freedom" is not a sort of power or faculty, but a kind of behaviour.

Since the world is independent of me, in order to act in it I have to obey its laws. I have to become a "mechanical system" -

> The man of need is an organic totality who is perpetually making himself into his own tool in the milieu of exteriority. (*CDR* 167)

I "approach" the world, or I "am in" the world, through techniques. But, as we saw in Part 1, the word "I" is ambiguous. In one sense I am never my techniques, my past, my body, etc. In so far as consciousness is a continual project away from them towards the future. In the other sense, however, I am nothing but these different elements in my situation. And when the goal is simply the repetitive continuation of organic life, then, for all practical purposes, the ambiguity disappears in the identification of me with my situation. I am my body, my techniques and my past (which I experience at this moment as a certain relationship to the world spread out before me). I am the way in which I make myself into a tool in pursuit of survival, and the way in which I do this is a function of the surrounding world, of what I can produce, and of how I can produce it. I am what I make myself to be, but what I make myself to be is determined by what I produce. I am the product of my own product. The kinds of things I do, and so my reactions and attitudes, are conditioned by my economic situation. For example, the peasant is an entirely different type of man from the hunter. He looks for and reacts to different things in the world. He probably has a different diet, a different eating pattern, and different physical development. Above all, because the way in which he "makes himself into a tool" includes the way in which he cooperates with other people, the structure of his society is different. His

religion, both in so far as it expresses his (economic) experience of the world, and in so far as it has itself a utilitarian function, will be different too. All this means that the two will have different understandings (not necessarily thematised understandings) of the world.

One of the most controversial and heavily-criticised elements in Marxist theory has been Marx's statement that

> The mode of production of material life in general dominates the development of social, political and intellectual life (quoted *RD-QM* 31),

and Engels's statement that

> all moral theories have been hitherto the product, in the last analysis, of the economic conditions of society obtaining at the time. (*Anti-Dühring* 132)

In particular, critics have complained about the vagueness of "in general" and "in the last analysis". One useful way of approaching the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is to see it as an attempt to show what this "in the last analysis" means, and what its implications are, through an analysis of the individual's existential relation to the material world and to his fellow men, dominated as are both these relationships by the basic structure of need.

Cooperating with other people is one of the ways in which I make myself into a tool in order to produce. What is the abstract structure of my relation to other people? I meet the other as the subject of a praxis, that is to say as someone who is reorganising the world, often in a different way from that in which I am trying to reorganise it. He is a "centre of outflow of reality". (*CDR* 183) (See also *BN* 155-7, where Sartre's famous analysis of the "Look" is just a dramatic way of expressing this reorganisation of the world by the other). [161/3]

The other *signifies* in so far as he gives values to the world which I can recognise as his values. My relation to him is reciprocal, because I am obliged to take his intentions into account. since we both unify the same material world we integrate one another as independent creators of value in our respective value systems.

> Reciprocity implies 1) that the other is a means to the precise extent that I am myself a means, that is to say that he is the means to a transcendant goal, and not *my* means; 2) that I recognise the other as a praxis, that is to say as a totalisation in progress, at the same time as I integrate him as an object in my own totalising project; 3) that I recognise his movement towards his own goals in the very movement by which I project myself towards mine; 1) that I discover myself as object and instrument of his goals by the very act which constitutes him as an objective instrument for my goals. (*CDR* 192)

As we saw in the Introduction, my relation to the other is the result of a practical recognition, rather than of a purely intellectual recognition. Since my practival activity is intelligent, the other is a part of my understanding of the world. I always act in terms of the other. The other is a part of my 'horizon' when I do something.

There are two important points here. Firstly, since I meet the other as a project, he is for me "gardener", or "road-mender" or "wanderer" or what have you, rather than "man". In conditions where the predominant activities are economic, my original relationship with the other is a relationship in terms of his and my productive relationships to the world.

Secondly, although the totalisations are reciprocal, there is no single totalisation which unites both. The objective meaning of our struggle or of our cooperation escapes us and we remain separate from one another.

> Thus each lives in the absolute interiority of a relationship without unity. His concrete certainty is the mutual adaptation in separation, the existence of a relationship with a double focus which he can never grasp in its totality. This disunion in solidarity comes from an excess rather than from a lack, it is in fact produced by the existence of two rigourously equivalent synthetic unifications. (*CDR* 191)

In this case, does the relationship have any independent objective meaning? Does the structure of human relationships collapse in an incoherent multiplicity?

When I engage in some relationship with another person, this binary relationship is itself situated in the context of other people, or, as Sartre puts it, of the Third. There is always myself, the other, and the third - the other and the third being either individuals or groups. My struggle or cooperation with the other occurs in the world in terms of material things: tools, stones, rabbits, words. It leaves more or less permanent traces in the world. It is this objectification of our acts which gives them their unity and so permits the possibility of their being totalised by a third. The relationships between men are mediated by the material world. Matter, however, does not "express" or "think" these relationships; they are written on the world, and thus they must be read before becoming active and meaningful.

> By his mediation the third reanimates the objective meanings which are already inscribed in things and which constitute the group as a totality. (*CDR* 197)

The third could be a member of the group reflecting on the relationship at a later date. There is, of course, no necessary totalisation, since an act might have insignificant consequences, or its results might be well-hidden. [162/4]

It is this mediation by matter which makes history as a process of change and development possible. I think that it will be useful here, even though we are still on the level of the individual, to try to illustrate the concepts of praxis, totalisation, dialectic, and matter by considering the fact that, according to Sartre,

> worked matter, by the contradictions which it carries within it becomes, for and by men, the fundamental motor of history. (*CDR* 250)

The idea of history here implies some sort of change in structure. There are, or there were until recently, societies which had not undergone any radical changes for a considerable time. Why, then, have some societies changed and developed while others have remained stationary? In the world man finds himself faced with problems which flow from his needs. These problems have to be solved with the available means; that is to say, apart from the human factor, the physical environment: rich or poor soil, water, climate, plants and animals, waterways. If the means are very limited, as, say, in the case of the Eskimos, an equilibrium is probably quickly reached. On the one hand there are a limited number of materials available - ice, and the skin and bones of seals - and on the other hand there are limited sources of food - seals and fish. The solution to the problem of survival requires considerable ingenuity (in this case it is probably a question of adapting; the ways of living developed in an earlier, more favourable, environment), but the possibilities are very soon exhausted, and the totalisation of the environment becomes a simple daily repetition.

The things and the means available are themselves limited by society's tools. Oil a thousand metres underground is not available to the pre-technological society living on the surface. They do invent the drill because an invention is a response to a problem (economic or intellectual) and the oil doesn't constitute a problem for them. For example, the Bushmen of Southern Africa, although they used to inhabit coastal regions, never developed boats. The reason for this is that the coast lacks natural harbours, there are hardly any coastal islands, and the rivers are not navigable. Thus the water did not constitute the sort of problem that could even have been recognised as a problem with the means then socially available. A little canoe would have been dangerous and scarcely useful, and unfortunately you have to invent little canoes before going on to develop the kind of boat which would be useful in such circumstances. The idea of going out to look for problems, or of inventing things which aren't suggested by day to day problems of production, is itself a specialised technique which was developed in the

course of, and made possible by the development of certain economic institutions.

To simplify and schematise very broadly, if a group of people settle in a fairly fertile region, they can initially get by with the simplest of tools. When the population grows they have to produce more, and, if they can't spread out, they develop, say, an irrigation system. This will change both the social division of labour and also the general agricultural techniques. These changes may produce new problems or new possibilities, from which further techniques are developed, and so on. You begin with a need and a given. There is a first totalisation which produces rudimentary techniques. In the second totalisation these techniques then form part of the given. The conditions may result in the dialectic stopping at this stage, but it is possible for the new given to make [163/5] possible a new and richer totalisation. The techniques themselves can cause new problems to appear, either in the form of new and exploitable possibilities, or else in the form of new counter-finalities.

Techniques are preserved because they are inscribed in matter, and this is how they can appear in the new given. Thus we have the dialectic of praxis: totalisation, counter-finality (problem), new totalisation, but at the level of society, rather than at the individual level. Each man makes his totalisations with a given which includes the totalisations of his ancestors, which are objectified in the mass of buildings, tools, books, roads, and other traces left in matter, which he has to reanimate by his own totalisations. It is this objectification in matter, taken up anew by each generation, which makes history irreversible, short of total catastrophe.

This dialectic stops where the new problem is insoluble in the given situation with the given techniques, which include the all-important techniques of thought. The stages of the dialectic are necessary. You can only escape from it on the individual level. For example, Hero invented the steam engine, but his invention remained fruitless because it occurred in a vacuum; the state of the other techniques at the time, including slavery as a technique of production, militated against its use. As this example suggests, the development of strictly mechanical techniques and the development of social organisation can only be separated by abstraction.

The fact that my relationships with other people are mediated by the material world has consequences for the nature of these relationships. If there are certain inevitable or at least very widespread consistencies in the relation between human beings and their world, then there will be similar inevitablities or consistencies in their relations with one another. Sartre suggests that our basic problem in relation to this world is the problem of

need. In this context the main characteristic of our world is scarcity (see *CDR* 201). Scarcity does not, of course, constitute part of the "essence" of [the] world. It is a contingent characteristic of our world, a characteristic which we discover empirically. This does mean that everybody is always hungry. But it is an empirical fact that throughout history most societies have been threatened by a lack of the means of subsistence. Even those who have eaten their fill have done so against a background of threatening famine against which they have had to take precautions. For example, in "Fanshen", William Hinton describes the conditions in which the gentry of a small Chinese village lived before the revolution, and he continues,

> This world of security, relative comfort, influence, position and leisure was maintained amidst a sea of the most dismal and frightening poverty and hunger - a poverty and hunger which at all times threatened to engulf any family which relaxed its vigilance, took pity on its poor neighbours, failed to extract the last copper of rent and interest, or ceased for an instant the incessant accumulation of grain and money. Those who did not go up went down, and those who went down often went to their deaths or at least to the dissolution and dispersal of their families. (p. 38)

Even as far as the most advanced capitalist countries go, not only is it true that the threat of serious poverty exists for considerable sections of the population, but there is also an awareness that the affluence of these societies coexists with hunger in many parts of the world, and a fear that one [164/6] day it will be necessary to fight to preserve this affluence.

Scarcity, as the correlative of need, is the background to all our activities. It is a climate, a milieu. (*CDR* 204) And it is in this climate that all our relations with other people occur. It makes itself felt negatively by activities such as birth-control, abortion, and the exposure of infants, which are attempts to limit the number of mouths to be fed. It also means that the other is, objectively, a threat to me. This is translated on the interindividual level by violence. If there are ten people on an island, and only nine bananas, one person is going to die of starvation. In a class-stratified society this person is at least partially preselected, but in this abstract example any one of the ten might be chosen to die, and thus each one is threatened by all the others and is a threat to them in his turn. The only possible solution for me is to reestablish the equilibrium by killing one, any one, of my companions. For me this violence is merely a response to the objective threat posed by the existence of the other.

> Violence always appears as a *counter-violence,* that is to say, as a riposte to the violence of the other. This *violence of the other* is only an objective reality to the ex-

> tent that it exists for everybody as a universal motivation to counter-violence. (*CDR* 209)

Thus I experience the other as a threat, as evil. This experience is thematised in a Manichean ethic according to which the other is absolute evil, inhuman. If there are nine people for the nine bananas and a stranger comes along, he comes not as a man but as a wolf, and he cannot expect to be treated as human. Thus at this level I understand the other in manicheistic terms as the other species, and my violence is the expression of this understanding.

Raw violence as just described is an abstract moment of human behaviour, which occurs, if it occurs at all, only in certain limit cases. Normally counter-violence is modified and refracted by social institutions, but, while the world remains a world of scarcity, violence is always there, and the institutions themselves are violent in so far as they constitute a social structure which condemns certain strata of society to poverty.

> Violence is not necessarily an act ... it is the constant inhumanity of human conducts in so far as they are interiorised scarcity. (*CDR* 221)

It must be stressed that this inhumanity of human behaviour, as Sartre sees it, isn't part of "human nature", as a philosopher like Hobbes thought. It is the interiorisation of a contingent factor of our world. It is the world understood in terms of scarcity. In such a context my totalisation of the world and of other people is of a special kind. It is a totalisation of struggle. The other with whom I struggle is determined by the material world and by the mode of production - are there enough bananas, to whom do they belong, who harvests them, could more be produced, and so on. That is, Sartre is trying to show that, within the context of the project of staying alive, certain objective material circumstances create violence as a necessary tendency of human behaviour.

To summarise, as a material being my basic relationship to the material world is one of need. I am also related to other people "through" the material world in which we live and in which all our work is objectified. Because our particular world is a world of [165/7] scarcity of the means of subsistence, this means that I am in a state of latent conflict with other people. I experience the other as a threat to me, and this leads to counter-violence on my part. The level of individual dialectical praxis, need, scarcity and counter-violence is the most abstract level of the human situation. It is the general structure uncovered by the regressive moment of the progressive-re-

gressive method, and as such underlies all human experience, in an environment of scarcity.

Whether we are actually in conflict or not, the fact that I and the other are both working and producing in the same world means that we do in fact produce a collective result, at which neither of us was aiming, but which can be traced back to our acts. We must now analyse how this comes about; how the fact of acting in a world where there are other people changes the meaning of my acts. This will give us the next level of abstraction. [166/8]

Chapter 7: Alienation and the Series

Any act of mine can become *alienated,* in the sense that its meaning is changed, through the fact of being objectified in a world where there are other men with other projects. Sartre gives the example of Chinese peasant clearing new ground. To get land, each peasant had to pull out trees. This apparently innocent activity, when it was multiplied by hundreds of thousands of other peasants doing the same thing over the centuries, resulted in erosion, the silting up of the rivers, and finally catastrophic floods. Because of the very precision of the peasants' work, these floods seemed more like the result of a hostile praxis than of an accidental physical process. In this case, the praxis objectified in the world, and so passive, takes on an active character. I have to take precautions against it as though it were the praxis of another. The normal process is reversed, and instead of my controlling the world the world is controlling me. This "passive activity" of things in the world, whereby, as a result of the way in which they feature in my projects, they can dominate me, is what Sartre calls the "pratico-inert". He explains it thus:

> Praxis as the unification of the inorganic plurality becomes the *practical* unity of matter. Material forces assembled in the passive synthesis of the tool or of the machine *perform acts*: they *unify* other inorganic dispersions and thereby impose a certain material unification on the plurality of men. (*CDR* 250)

In one way this account of the pratico-inert would seem not to go beyond the point made in *Being and Nothingness* that the things that happen in the world only have meaning in relation to my projects, but that once I have embarked on a particular project my behaviour is in fact determined by the material world. In this sense even an ordinary accidental flood would be as much a part of the pratico-inert as is a flood resulting from man-made erosion. Within the context of my farming activities it also functions as a hostile praxis. However, what Sartre is trying to express through the use of this new expression is, firstly, the extent to which the material world in which I live, and, in particular those sections of it with which I usually deal, have been shaped by my and other people's work. The patterns in it are not natural patterns. They are the result of human choices. The second, and more important point is that not only do other people's objectified praxis act on me, but that *my own* praxis looses the meaning that I had intended for it when it is objectified in the world of the pratico-inert. This necessity is not

comparable with the position of the mountaineer who, outside society, in his play time, is obliged to take such and such a route, to take these particular risks, to use so much energy, because he wants to get to the top of this particular mountain. Although he has to do these things because of the structure of the environment, this structure itself remains passive and unchanging. The necessity in the field of the pratico-inert is comparable not to the rock I have to go round, but rather to the ambush which my enemy lures me into by using and changing the meanings which I give to the physical environment in terms of my project. The gorge which for me means "path" becomes, precisely in virtue of the fact that it does mean this for me, a trap.

Of course, in the field of the pratico-inert there is no specific enemy. There are just an indefinite number of other people giving different meanings to the same world, both purposively, in [167/9] their projects, and unintentionally, in the way in which the objectified results of their projects combine. By so doing they are continually changing the meaning of my project in different ways. The way in which discrete projects produce a collective and unintended result Sartre calls a "series", and in the field of the pratico-inert men are related serially. Before going on to see what this means in detail I would like to discuss one very important way in which a project's value changes when it is objectified.

Just as each individual is one too many when there are only nine bananas, so my product makes me one too many in relation to it. It becomes a threat to me in so far as it is a scarce product which other people might want to take from me. So I have to protect it. Because of this new relation to it I may forget its status as a means to satisfy my need, and think of it instead as an absolute end. My freedom becomes alienated to it. I build up my frame of reference around it in such a way that I understand the world in terms of it, rather than in terms of my own needs. (In terms of *Being and Nothingness* my belief that staying alive is an absolute value, rather than my own unjustifiable choice, is itself an alienation. So the phenomenon which we are discussing here is really an alienation within an alienation. But for the moment Sartre is accepting the context of premoral existence, before a real choice of oneself has been made, and analysing the irrationalities which can occur in this context.)

> This man has remained a man of need, of praxis and of scarcity, but, in so far as he is dominated by matter, his activity no longer derives directly from need, although this is its fundamental basis: it is induced in him, from outside, by worked matter, as the practical exigence of the inanimate object. (*CDR* 252)

For example, the peasant's plot is initially his means of supporting himself. But it becomes more. It gets interiorised in an ethic which confuses the status of "man" with the status of "landowner". It becomes the defining mark of his humanity. A change in the technique of agriculture, such as the introduction of tractors, may mean that this plot is no longer the best means for the peasant to satisfy his needs, and that he could live better if he joined a cooperative. But the plot of ground has now become a value-in-itself for him, and he struggles irrationally to keep it, and so to retain his humanity.

His plot has become what Sartre calls his *interest.*

> From the moment that, in a specific society, an objective whole posits itself as defining an individual in his *personal* particularity, and that *as such* it requires that this individual, in acting on the whole of the social and practical field, *conserve it* (as the organism conserves itself) and *develop it at the expense of the rest* (as the organism feeds itself from the external environment), this individual *has an interest.* (*CDR* 263)

Instead of my using an object as a means to my own ends, I have become a kind of cog which transmits the activity of this object to the world, and the activity of the world back to the object. I am related to other people in terms of this object, and they are related to me in terms of their own "interests".

> The relation of interests includes, then - on the level of individual interest the massification of individuals as such, and their practical communication through the antagonisms or compatibilities of the matter which represents them. (*CDR* 263) [168/10]

Another example of interest is the relationship between the capitalist and his business. Here, scarcity hardly exists as an actual physical threat. If he succeeds he earns far more money than he could possibly spend on conspicuous consumption, even if he wanted to do so, and even if he does not succeed he is not threatened by hunger - he will perhaps have to sell out, but, always assuming that he does so in time, he should still have enough to live on. But instead of retiring to a cottage in the country or to a villa on the Mediterranean as soon as he has earned enough money to live on comfortably, he continually reinvests his earnings in his business, and works an ulcer-producing fourteen hour day in order to continually expand it. The business has become his "being-entirely-outside-himself-in-a-thing". (*CDR* 261) Scarcity may not threaten him, but it threatens his business: "competition ... puts him in danger in so far as he has constituted himself [as a?] factory". (*CDR* 264) Thus his manicheistic ethic, his inhumanity, disappears at the level of his private life, only to reappear at the level of his business life. Doubtless he would gladly sacrifice himself to his business,

but he also sacrifices his workers, and does his best to sacrifice his competitors, to it. If possible, his workers' wages should be lowered, or, even better, they should be replaced by machines - and in any event they should be treated as means, not as ends. If they try to strike direct violence may be used, and militants may be sacked in order to intimidate the others. In general, property becomes more important than people, and violence is used to protect property rights. Violence first appeared as counter-violence in the face of the other who wished to kill me, but now it is employed against the striker because he threatens the owner's interest. (Of course, the capitalist's ability to behave in this way is limited - but only limited - if there are effective laws enforced. Where there are no such laws, or no independent agency for enforcing them, capitalists have used, and still do use, direct and indirect violence and deceit against any threat to their interest, whether the threat be legitimate or not. And that the relatively tight legal systems brought into being by Trade Union pressure in some of the more advanced capitalist countries has not changed the "essence" of the capitalists is evidenced by the way in which many companies behave when they find themselves operating in the much "freer" environments of underdeveloped countries.)

The theorists of nineteenth century laissez-faire liberalism - not to mention any number of contemporary conservative editorialists and political pundits - believed that it is an immutable law of human psychology that "Everybody seeks his own interest", and that capitalism as a socio-political system is an equally immutable result of this facet of human nature. Men are naturally separate, and any attempt to socialise them must lead to the break-down of society.

> It is necessary to choose, in fact: either 'each one follows his interest', which means that the division of men is natural - or else it is the division of men, as a result of the mode of production, which mades interest appear ... as a real moment of the relations between men. (*CDR* 227)

The answer, as we have seen, is that interest - and, therefore, the division of men - is not natural. Interest is an alienation, not a nature. It is strictly irrational from the point of view of the genuine material needs of the individual. The reason this irrationality can appear is that these material needs do not themselves constitute a nature, either. They can only act in so far as they have been interiorised, and in the course of interiorisation they may be deformed or even rejected. Interiorisation is [169/11] the basis for alienation It is important not to confuse this rejection of "interest" with the denial of an instinct for self-preservation. We saw earlier that there are no immutable

instincts - the fact of suicide is sufficient to show this. But if one decides not to commit suicide one at the very least acts *as though* one had an instinct of self-preservation. In some societies this remains at the level of preserving one's life, rather than improving one's standard of living. But Sartre is not even trying to deny the rationality, in this context, of the desire to improve one's standard of living; the aim of socialism is a society of abundance, and as such the building of socialism involves the harnessing of each individual's desire to live better, and so, to that extent, of his selfishness. The criticism of "interest" is not aimed at this kind of selfishness. It is aimed at theories of human nature which make an absolute out of the desire for private, exclusive property in land, and private appropriation of profits - that is, desires which destroy the possibility of cooperation. The point is that these desires, as evidenced in the examples of the capitalist and of the peasant, involve a confusion of the means (land, accumulation of capital) with the end, and it is this that is irrational, and necessarily involves conflict with others.

The machine is the capitalist's interest, and so dominates him. It also dominates the worker, but in a quite different way. Instead of the worker objectifying himself in the machine, the machine in a way objectifies itself in him. The rhythm and timing of his work is decided by the machine. New developments in technology can change his whole life pattern, by making him migrate from the country to the town at an early stage of industrialisation, or by making a particular regional industry redundant at a later stage. But, unlike the proprietor, he tries neither to conserve nor to develop the machine. It

> defines and produces the reality of its servant. That is to say, it makes him into a pratico-inert Being which is machine to the extent that the machine is human, and human to the extent that the machine remains, in spite of it all a tool to be directed. (*CDR* 269)

Sartre calls the machine the worker's *destiny,* rather than his interest. Its exigencies are understood as constituting part of the nature of things.

However, this destiny does not really come from the nature of *things.* For example, in France before 1830 there was a period during which the introduction of new machines into the cotton industry continually depressed wages. The destiny of the workers

> was just the impossibility of any stabilisation. This not because of the physical and technical materiality of the machine, but because of its social materiality (of its pratico-inert being); that is to say, because of the impossibility of controlling this materiality and of directing it towards a real diminution of human labour for

> all, and not towards the negation of the workers, or at least of their humanity. (*CDR* 272)

Their destiny came from the nature of the society, from the way that men used things in that society, not from the things themselves.

Why, then, did men use things in such a way that an improvement in the method of production meant, at least initially, a drop in the standard of living for the producers? And how, in general, can people, through their business activities, cause suffering which would probably horrify them if they caused it in their private lives? These questions bring us back to the "series". [170/12]

We have seen that all my acts in the world and towards other people occur in the context of the Third. This is obviously so in the case of the footballer trying to pass his opponent, where the Third is the rest of the team, or in the case of the soldier on manoeuvres, where the Third is the rest of the army. Here the individual is cooperating with the Third, and is united with him in a common project. But the same applies in relationships where there is no direct coordination. Separation and isolation are relationships which are just as concrete as is cooperation. Isolated individuals are related to one another through their relations with a common world, in the same way as the members of a group cooperate through their acts in the world. This relation of separation has specific characteristics which can be seen in the way the individuals concerned behave. In this sense, separation is an internal relationship between individuals.

The people waiting at the bus stop (see *CDR* 308) are related from outside by the bus, but they are separated by their different projects; they are taking the bus for different reasons and to go to different places. They are in no sense cooperating to catch the bus. In fact, in so far as the bus has a limited number of places, they are in conflict with one another and with other possible and actual users of the bus. This relationship has a specific structure, which is reflected in the fact that each one takes a number when he comes to the stop - whether it be an actual numbered ticket, as in France, or a virtual number given by a place in the queue.

> It is true that each relation is linked with every other one, and with them all, but it is not related just anyhow: each element is linked with all the other elements, but *from its place in the series* and *through its lateral (fuyante) relation to all* the intermediate elements, just as a number is linked to all numbers in precise relationships which suppose, precisely, that each of them is related to the other *through* the series of numbers which separate them. (*CDR* 328)

Not all such relations of separation are literally numerical relations, as in the bus queue, but they all have a structure analogous to that of the number series, and so Sartre calls them "series".

Somebody listening to a propaganda broadcast (see *CDR* 320) is separated spatially from the other listeners, but connected through the common object, the voice. If he believes that the broadcast is dangerous he nevertheless cannot communicate with the other listeners to protect them against the lies. He is powerless to act. And in so far as he does try to act, by painting an anti-government slogan on a wall, his act can only have any significance if other people are also painting up slogans. Since, at this level, there is no possibility of coordinating their activity, the force of his act relies on purely coincidental acts on the part of other individuals.

> I sense my impotence in the other, because it is the other as other who will decide whether my act remains a foolish individual initiative, or pushes me into an abstract solitude, or becomes the common act of a group. Thus each one waits for the act of the other, and each makes himself the impotence of the other in so far as the other is his impotence. (*CDR* 325)

Impotence and 'otherness' are the main characteristics of the individual's praxis in a serial situation. In a police state the discontent with the government remains serial because each individual is afraid of talking about it to his neighbour, who may be a spy. In the case of a strike call where [171/13] there is no strong coordinating body, each individual goes back to work for fear of being the only one to strike. Each individual, in this case, acts as he thinks the others are going to act. A simple example of this: four boys go down to the river to swim. The water is cold, so nobody can nerve himself to take the plunge. One suggests that they close their eyes, count up to three, and all dive together. They agree, they close their eyes, count up to three - and each does what he thinks the others are going to do. One doesn't want the others to laugh at him because he is the only one in the icy water. But neither does he want to be the coward left standing on the bank. So he has to decide whether his friends are honest, whether they have a tendency to play practical jokes, and also whether they are likely to trust him. If he thinks that most of them are going to dive, he dives; if not, he stays on the bank. Each boy's act is conditioned by the sum of the other acts, and he is only conditioned by himself in so far as he is an "other" for the others and to that extent is taken into account in their decisions. It is not even a question of three of the boys imitating a fourth. Each one is imitating the presumed acts of the other three, so all four are alienated. In some cases, though not in this one, this could lead to the result of the act appearing to come from

outside them all. The sense of one's powerlessness, and the attempt to make oneself "other", constitute the abstract structure of a large number of behaviour patterns, which Sartre calls "serial praxis".

If we now return to the case of the capitalist who discovers that he can lower salaries and cut costs by mechanising his factory, we see that he is not doing it in a vacuum. He is acting in the context of the other factory owners. He wants to lower costs to get a larger share of the market by selling cheaper than his competitors. Or they are already mechanising, and if he doesn't follow suit he will be forced out of the market. In both cases the necessity of lowering wages comes from the other.

> Competition as a recurrent antagonism determines the employer himself as other than himself to the extent that he determines his actions in terms of the other and of the actions of the others on the other. (*CDR* 254)

The "market" is nothing but the sum of all the acts of everybody who has something to buy or sell: capital, goods or labour. The capitalist reacts to market conditions, and in so doing he is trying to regulate his acts in terms of the others' acts, while they are trying to regulate their acts in terms of his. The market is a series, in which, as in all series, each individual is precisely conditioned by the collectivity. So it is never the factory owner who lowers wages or puts people out of work. It is always the other, who forces him to do so.

The worker's destiny in these circumstances comes to him not only from his employer's competitors, but also from the serialised praxis of other workers, for it is the competition between them which permits the lowering of wages. The "iron law of wages" is only the result of the serialisation of the praxis of the workers.

The project of "making oneself other" can take other forms beside that of submission to the market. In particular, it can become an ethic of conformism which rules the entire life of the individual, and serves as the basis for what Sartre calls "extero-conditioning". Conformism is a very well documented phenomenon. At all levels there is the attempt to do what other people do, to [172/14] wear what other people wear, to do the done thing. Sartre gives the example of an experiment with record sales, which showed that the fact of being on the hit-parade one week automatically boosted the record's sales the following week. The buyers bought because others were buying. (see *CDR* 615) Advertising stresses this: "Buy X, everybody is buying it", and so on. Serial conformism results in manipulation and extero-conditioning, the chief characteristics of which are

> the mediating action of the group which conditions each other by all the Others, the practical fascination of each by the illusion of the totalised seriality. (*CDR* 615)

We have seen that the individual acquires behaviour patterns from his family and society, and that, until he has made a "second choice", he conforms to these patterns. Everybody is, in a sense, naturally conservative. But what happens when the conditions that call forth these behaviour patterns change - as they do incessantly in a developing advanced capitalist society? The individual may invent new responses himself, or he may stick to his conservatism. But if he chooses the latter course, he can no longer repeat the particular old patterns. He can only accept the *form* of these patterns; that is, doing what other people do. But, in a serialised society he has no way of knowing what other people are doing. So to the extent that he tries to act, to think, to be like the others, to buy what the others are buying, he is inevitably conditioned by pressure groups, for it is only through propaganda and publicity groups that he can know, or think he knows, what the others are doing.

The best way for the bourgeoisie to protect its interest is to keep the workers in a state of seriality. This can be done directly by forbidding trade unions, by sacking militants and by intimidation. It can also be done by encouraging an ideology of extero-conditioning and seriality. In this way advertising has a political as well as a commercial effect. Each advertisement puts forward not only a particular product, but also a particular life-pattern, - based on the ideal of extero-conditioning, of keeping up with the Joneses. The ideology of individualism which is the basis of capitalism is in fact an ideology of absolute submission to the collectivity (through the series), and the ideology of individualistic consumption that goes with it functions as an ideology of conformism.

In general, any serial ideology - that is, any ideology which involves an ethic of extero-conditioning, or which claims that from the point of view of the social sciences men must be treated as discrete molecules - can usefully be called a 'bourgeois ideology'. As we shall see, this is not meant to imply that such a theory is a conscious attempt at mystification. It is just a thematisation of the praxis of the ruling class.

In this chapter we have seen that the necessity which we experience in society is only the impotence of serial praxis.

> Necessity as a limit in the heart of freedom ... becomes ... the very structure of all the processes of seriality. (*CDR* 376)

The first level of experience, that of the individual's dialectical relation to the world, Sartre calls the level of the "constituting dialectic". Of the second level - the pratico-inert and the series - he writes,

> The pratico-inert field is not a new moment of a universal dialectic, but the pure and simple negation of the dialectics by exteriority and plurality. Simply, this negation operates not by destruction and dissolution, but by deviation and overturning. Thus this second [173/15] moment ... appears in itself as the anti-dialectic .. (*CDR* 376)

Unless the individual can escape from the series and the "anti-dialectic" his freedom will remain alienated. So the next step is to see how he might escape from it and, by cooperating with his fellows, overcome the impotence of serial praxis. [174/16]

Chapter 8: The Group

The other is part of my frame of reference; I act in terms of the other. In the series I assume that the other is not with me. In the group I assume that he is with me, and so I act in an entirely different way. For example, a platoon of soldiers prepares to charge the enemy. The individual soldier wouldn't charge alone, but when the order is given he charges without hesitation because he knows that the others are also going to charge. The unity of the charge comes from the fact that each individual unifies the group by acting as though it were a unity. There is neither a ready made unity, nor a special act of unification. The group is unified by a specific quality of each act undertaken by each of its members: "In fact the group is not my object; it is the *communal structure* of my act." (*CDR* 403, my italics). In a group there is a new kind of praxis, which Sartre calls "communal praxis".

In the series, the Third, although he totalises (unifies) the reciprocal relations of the others, nevertheless does it from his own place in the series, that is, as Other. His act of unification, if it reflects back on the unified relationships, does so as foreign; as threat or as indifference. In the language of *Being and Nothingness*, the Third unifies myself and the others as 'us-object'. The experience of the Third as unifier

> corresponds to an experience of humiliation and impotence: the one who experiences himself as constituting an *Us* with other men feels himself trapped among an infinity of strange existences; he is alienated radically and without recourse. (*BN* 419)

The change from series to group involves a change in the structure of my relation to the Third, which does away with this experience of alienation.

What permits this change in the way in which we relate to one another to occur? There are two prerequisites. First, there must be an already given "passive unity" - a unity of place, or of any other factor which actually brings people into contact in some way. Secondly, there must be an objective which is common to all the individuals involved, and which each one can see is only attainable through cooperation. This objective is often self-defence in the face of a threat from another group, but it may be a need arising from scarcity, or from any element in the pratico-inert. (*CDR* 396) Sartre gives the example of the first days of the French Revolution of 1789. At first the population of Paris is only passively unified, by the city itself. This unity becomes positive through the fact that Paris is surrounded by

troops preparing to "restore order". The citizens become conscious of themselves as "about to be massacred". This threat makes each individual experience his "us-objectness" for the soldiers as a genuine integration with his neighbours. That is, he no longer feels that he is being falsely included with a whole lot of strangers in a unity of which he is really independent. He now understands himself as an integral part of his neighbourhood, and no longer as an objective observer. He has a real characteristic in common with them - vulnerability to the same threat. It is the appreciation of this fact, as yet shared only serially by the other inhabitants, which is the basis for the formation of the group.

This situation could be catalysed in a number of ways. In Sartre's example the first step is that the people, disturbed by the situation, come down into the streets. They find themselves already [175/17] in a nascent grouping as they follow the currents and eddies that agitate the crowd. At this level, each individual is *following* the crowd, rather than moving *with* it. The assembly remains serial, and can easily fall back into the pure seriality of complete dispersion. The group comes into being on the basis of this crowd, when some suggestion for action, coming from any individual, serves as a "signpost" (*CDR* 421) in terms of which everybody acts. This signpost gets its status from the fact that it is freely accepted and adhered to by each individual. It is not an order from one person to the group. It seems to be an immediate emanation of the group itself:

> I discover in my praxis the *mots d'ordres* [slogans - ed.] which come from the other Thirds. (*CDR* 421)

I discover them *in my praxis* that is, when I am already carrying them out, which is when they are already mine. Each Third (and I myself am a Third for the other Thirds) is sovereign. (*CDR* 401) Each individual has the status of organiser of the group. This common sovereignty is the first characteristic of the fusing group. The second is that my relation to each Third is mediated by the group; it is a function of the fact that we are both members of the same group, and has specific characteristics derived from this.

The crucial element is that of sovereignty, Sartre defines 'sovereignty' as follows:

> the absolute practical power of the dialectical organism, that is to say, its pure and simple praxis as a synthesis in progress of all the given multiplicity in its practical field, whether inanimate objects, living things, or men. (*CDR* 563)

In short "Man *is sovereign*." (*CDR* 588) In the series, there is no sovereign. Nobody originates actions; all actions come from elsewhere. In the fusing

group everybody is sovereign. There is no leader, yet the group functions as a unit, and in so doing it expresses the projects of all the individuals involved in it. Serial alienation, whereby the individual's acts are distorted by their relation to other people's acts, has been overcome, at least within the confines of the group. Instead of distorting my act, the other's act is complementary to it, and as such indispensable to it having the meaning I intended. The other is my "alterego". The individuals are equal. If the immediate catalyst of the group's formation is one individual leaping up on to a box and ordering "Do this. Do that", he does not thereby establish his unique sovereignty over the group. Either the crowd obeys *serially,* as they might a traffic officer, in which case there is no group formed. Or else the actual formation of the group reabsorbs him, in that the group does what he suggests because they see its desirability, not because he has any power of coercion over them.

Sartre calls the individual who shouts the order that the group takes up "the Regulating Third". In the case of the fusing revolutionary group, running, fleeing together, regrouping, looking for a vulnerable enemy, the action is often not sufficiently diversified for it to be possible to find a specific regulator for any particular act. In a more highly structured group, such as a football team, different individuals serve as regulators at different times, and one can say, in a more limited sense of the word, that the sovereignty *circulates.* The player who has the ball serves as a regulator for the others. They adjust their positions according to his, and he totalises the field for the group. But his acts while he is sovereign point to his coming loss of sovereignty. He is only dribbling the ball in order to pass it on to someone else. This kind of sovereignty is not exercised from the exterior. It is nothing other than the way [176/18] in which the individual concerned integrates himself into the group. He is

> quasi-sovereign and quasi-object; and the group itself, in so far as it is totalised by the activity of some common individual, is an objective quasi-totality, and, in so far as it is a negated multiplicity of quasi-sovereignties, it is in perpetual *detotalisation*. (*CDR* 564)

Sartre calls this ambivalent relation between the individual and the group a relation of "transcendance-immanence". (*CDR* 430)

This relation of transcendance-immanence is both the strength and the weakness of the group. The group does not, and can not, abolish the separateness which is the basis for the series. Instead, it uses it. It takes it up within it, both conserving it and transcending it. Just as the individual praxis makes itself "a mechanical system" in order to act on the world, so

the group makes use of the relations of exteriority involved in the fact that the individuals are separate, can move around independently, can split up and come together again, and so on. On the other hand, this means that although the praxis of the group, taken as a whole is in some respects like an individual praxis (in particular, because it finds expression in and through the individual action of the regulating third), it can never reach the level of integration of the individual organism. It can never become a "hyperorganism", an entity in its own right. The relation of transcendance-immanence prevents this. The individual praxis is a constituting dialectic, but the praxis of the group is a constituted dialectic.(*CDR* 432)

In the sense that the group takes up and conserves the series within it, the series is *logically* prior to the group. But although Sartre discusses first series and then group, and begins his discussion of the group by showing a group arising out of a series, he is not suggesting any *historical* priority of the series over the group. He is not trying to give an account of the way in which things actually happened. A group, containing within it its implicit serial structure, might well have existed before any actual series.

The cohesion of the group presents two problems, which result from the relation of transcendance-immanence and from the existence of the serial structure subsumed in the group.

1) An element of passivity remains in each individual, even if it is nothing more than the fact that each has a different frame of reference, and therefore his own peculiar limitations in knowledge. The members are different.

> In fact, each comes to the group with a *passive* (that is, with a complex conditioning that singularises him in his materiality); and this passive, in which must be included biological determinations as well as social determinations, contributes to the creation, outside seriality, of a hysteresis which may bring forth a new series. (*CDR* 427)

There is always the possibility of misunderstandings, and conflicts arising from them. And since these differences include differences of capacity, they constitute the basis for a possible permanent stratification of functions.

2) Since the group can never become a hyperorganism, the individual can always leave it. The unity of the group lies only in the unifying nature of each praxis.

In order to avoid disintegration, the structure of the fusing group is changed in certain ways. These changes can in turn introduce new problems - in particular, a danger of "ossification". [177/19]

By dint of trying to retain its unity, the group may make itself into a structure that is so rigid that it can scarcely act at all. In describing the way in which the attempt to avoid disintegration can lead to complete paralysis, Sartre is not attempting to give the actual history of real groups. Nor is he arguing that all groups must necessarily evolve in this way to a final relapse into seriality. He is a) showing what structure each kind of group has as a result of the relation of transcendance-immanence between the individual and the group, and b) showing the logical relation between the different types.

> It does not happen, nor could it happen, that these implicit contradictions which refer *to structures common to all groups,* provoke of themselves, and in their structural formalism, the resurrection of seriality in the heart of unity or betrayal or repression by Terror, or the liquidation of the group. In fact, (these contradictions) *must* be lived and produced, whatever happens, because they define the intimate texture of the organised group, and no action and no member can be produced in its concrete reality other than through the internal curvatures peculiar to the group which produces them. But is it the historical process in its entirety, and, in the totalising framework, it is the particular circumstances, the goals of the group, its past history, its relations with other groups, and so on... (*CDR* 571)

which determine whether and when any change will occur.

Just as the series is logically prior to the group, so, in the account that follows, there is a logical hierarchy of groups, in the sense that any type contains within it the structure of the preceding type. For example, although the type of group that Sartre calls an "institution" may come into being directly in that form it is nevertheless structured as though it had originally been a fusing group. Since the defining mark of the group is that in it each individual is sovereign, the study in the changes in the structure of the group is essentially the study of what happens to the individual's sovereignty in the different kinds of group. Each contains within it, in however distorted a form, reference to the individual's sovereignty.

Let us now return to our original "fusing group". Once the external threat which initiated it has been temporarily withdrawn - the enemy has retreated - a new threat immediately arises. There is no longer any immediate guarantee that the group will remain together. There are various tasks to be performed - keeping watch, getting supplies, sharpening knives and each third now requires some guarantee on the part of the others that they will do their jobs while he is doing his. In the absence of the enemy the third fears that nobody, not even himself, will be scared enough. (see *CDR* 447) In order to guarantee the permanence of the group, to constitute the unity of the group as an untranscendable factor in the praxis of each individual, it is necessary

to replace the fear of the enemy by another, more immediate, fear. This function is performed by the *oath* (as a historical fact or as an implicit structure). All the members of the group swear that they will remain together, and each one agrees that sanctions should be taken against him if he leaves unilaterally.

> I demand to be killed if I secede. (*CDR* 449)

I give up my right to leave the group in order to create a force which will terrify the others into not leaving. Terror, as a threat of violence against the deserter, becomes a corollary of Fraternity. Since the function of this "Terror" is to stand in for [178/20] the pressure which lead up to the formation of the group, it depends for its intensity on the nature of this pressure. (see *CDR* 155) In some cases it could involve death, but in other cases it might be as slight as the risk of being cold-shouldered for a few days. (Sartre has an unfortunate habit, which can be alarming, of describing a whole range of emotions or other phenomena with the word usually reserved for the strongest of them all).

The oath can never serve as a final guarantee of permanence. It can only raise the threshold of secession. But as such it serves as the basis of any later differentiation of the group, as a guarantee (of sorts) that each individual will do his job while I am doing mine.

The first differentiation which takes place leads to what Sartre calls the *organisation.*

> The organisation is ... *both* the discovery of practical requirements in the object, and the division of tasks among the individuals on the basis of this dialectical discovery. (*CDR* 260)

Each individual has special qualities (this passive) [sic], so each one tends to take on a particular function, the nature of which is dictated by the practical field in the light of the objectives of the group. This reintroduces otherness, but otherness as "culture" and not as "nature":

> As member of a series I don't understand why my neighbour is different: serial otherness reinforces accidental otherness (birth, organism) and renders it unintelligible; as member of a living organisation I understand that the Other is a practical and signifying invention of *'we-the-same'*. (*CDR* 475)

At this level each still has equal authority as quasi-sovereign. There is no distinction between my rights and my duties. It is both my right and my duty to expect from the group what I need to accomplish my functions. I am still the Regulating Third. But because of the greater diversity present at

this level, the unity of the group becomes even more difficult to maintain. Once the group's praxis is spread out in time and in space - thereby making full use of the underlying serial relation of exteriority - it becomes more and more difficult for the sovereignty to circulate. The continued unity of the group requires the institutionalisation of the function of sovereignty in one individual or sub-group. This occurs, like all differentiations, on the basis of the conditions of the group and of its members - some individual who performs a key role in the organisation, or somebody who is stronger or more intelligent, gets the job.

The institutionalising of the sovereignty guarantees continued unity and effectiveness, but it does so at the price of a drastic change in the nature of the group. The Regulating Third is essential to the fusing group. But in this new group the individual becomes a non-essential mediation between the sovereign and the practical field. He has become a tool. A particular function is no longer the praxis of a particular, unique, individual. It has become an institution, a post which has its own existence and which anybody might fill: "(the function), by posing itself for itself, and producing the individuals who are to perpetuate it, becomes an *institution"*. (*CDR* 581)

Sartre calls sovereignty as an institution "authority". The creation of this authority, as terror concentrated in the hands of one individual - "an individual reincarnation of the fusing group and of Freedom-Terror" (*CDR* 588) - does not involve the creation of [179/21] new force. It is a redistribution of the power of the quasi-sovereigns. The power of the authority rests solely in the praxis of the subjects, and it is the subjects who are responsible for it, although of course they do not necessarily realise this.

The structure of an organised or institutionalised group is described as an "active passivity". Through the oath the individual makes himself, in a sense, passive; that is, he places limitations on his future behaviour, and to that extent gives up his freedom. The significance of this is that to the extent that the group now has a specific structure, a skeleton which can be considered and described in itself, this skeleton is created by the specific limitations which each individual places on his behaviour, by his behaving as though the group were an absolute. The function of the word "oath" is to describe this self-limitation (explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious) which serves as the basis for all structures - which in fact creates all structures. This can be clarified by relating it to what Sartre calls "choice" in *Being and Nothingness*. The individual's fundamental attitude to the world is called a "choice", not because it has been reflectively chosen, but to indicate that the individual is responsible for it, and could change it, whether he is aware of this or not. His behaviour patterns are not his nature. They could

be changed. The self-limitation described by the word "oath" has the same status as this choice. The individual is responsible for it, although he may well not be aware of it. He may never question his relation to the group, particularly if he was born into it, and so may behave as if it, and the behaviour pattern implied by it, were absolutes. Nevertheless, neither is really an absolute, and this is why the "volition" word oath is used to describe the attitude to them.

Once the individual is no longer quasi-sovereign, the group is approaching the return to complete seriality. The individual, being no longer occupied directly with the praxis of the group as such, may become occupied only with his own place in the hierarchy. If this happens the sovereign can only use manipulation - extero-conditioning - and Terror in order to keep the group going. These methods of ruling both spread down from level to level in the hierarchy, and change the nature of the relationships at each level. Terror applied from outside serialises by introducing the necessity of self-preservation, and the mistrust of all originality which goes with it.

> It is this triple relationship - extero-conditioning of the lower multiplicity; mistrust and serialising (and serialised) terror on the level of equals; annihilation of the organisms in the obedience to the superior organism - that constitutes what is called bureaucracy. (*CDR* 626)

Any kind of an organisation - a government, a business, a church, a political party, an army, a trade union, a school - can degenerate into a "bureaucracy". Finally the sovereign's attempt to reserve unity becomes self-defeating, for the ability of the group to *act* is lost. The group can only preserve itself. Its internal serialisation makes it incapable of bringing about changes in the external series which constitute its practical field. The sovereign acts on the world through the institutionalised group. By paralysing this group in order to preserve its unity he paralyses himself. A typical example of this process is the development of a bureaucratic state structure in the Soviet Union, with its attendant problems of efficiency as well as of justice. The "Cultural Revolution" in China is an attempt to break out of the process of ossification, [180/22] back to the purity of the fusing group. (See 'Conclusion', page 156)

The unity of the bureaucracy is different from the purely external imposed unity of the people in the bus queue. It is still a group to the extent that the different members of it are, in theory at least, complementary to one another, and so prevent the serial alienation of each other's acts in the external field. Due to the institutionalisation of the actual sovereignty, the complementarity has become so theoretical as to be virtually nonexistent.

Nevertheless, the bureaucracy can only function to the extent that it does function in so far as each individual places a limit on himself (the implicit oath structure) in terms of the group.

The point of Sartre's description of the different kinds of group is to show a) that groups and structures depend on individuals, and not vice-versa, and b) the implications for the nature of groups of the fact that individuals can cooperate but cannot coalesce - that is, the implications of transcendance-immanence. What is the status of his analysis, and what is the justification for a philosopher talking about groups, instead of leaving it to sociologists. You cannot describe a house adequately by describing the bricks it is made of. But,if you know what sort of things bricks are you can say what sort of things can be made from them, and what sort cannot. Similarly, if you know something about what is involved in being human, you can show what sort of relationships can and cannot be entered into by humans, and you can show what is implied for the possible kinds of groups by the fact that they are made up of this particular kind of unit. This gives a very abstract account which the sociologist should bear in mind, but which certainly doesn't take away his job.

To conclude, I think it is possible to clarify the difference between the pure series and the pure group be relating it to what Sartre has to say about my relations with other people in *Being and Nothingness*. In the series I act *in bad faith* towards other people, while in the group I act *in good faith* towards them. In *Being and Nothingness* he considered my relations with other people in terms of my ambiguous status of subject (for-itself) and object (for-itself-for-others). The other's "Look" metamorphosises me into an object - I experience myself as being an object in the other's world. I can either accept and live this object-status, which is masochism, or reject it and try to re-establish my subjectivity by making the other an object-for-me, which is either sadism or indifference. All these conducts are in bad faith because they are a refusal to recognise that both I and the other are both object and subject.

In the series the usual relation towards the other is indifference: the bus queue, the market, the other as statistic. But the individual who accepts an inferior position, who puts up with being pushed around by a bureaucracy, or with being manipulated by some pressure group, or the individual who gives himself up entirely to a fascist-type Leader who "knows best", is accepting his impotence and choosing himself as an object, which is masochism. The Leader himself, or the capitalist seeking domination, poses himself as an absolute subject faced with a series of objects which he can manipulate, which is sadism. [181/23]

In the series I refuse to admit that the other and I are both subjects. There are serial ideologies which expressly deny the human being is a subject. Instead, he is an object which responds to stimuli in a peculiar way.

Another aspect of bad faith is that it is an attempt to flee responsibility: instead of accepting responsibility for his actions, the individual blames them on history, God, his genes, or whatever else he can think of. In the series bad faith manifest itself in the too-frequent cry "I know that it's bad (torture, starvation, racialism, war) but what can I do about it *all by myself*." In the series no one is responsible for what happens. The capitalist is not responsible for unemployment; he blames it on the market. Each individual accepts tyranny not, he assures you, because he approves of it, but because everybody else does, and so there is nothing he can do about it; it is their fault that he is passive, not his own. Once more, this is elaborated into a whole ideology of inaction and noninterference in the status quo.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre shows that all inter-human relationships are doomed if they remain on the level of bad faith. After showing that hate fails, just as does love, he concludes[7]

> After the failure of this attempt nothing remains for the for-itself except to reenter the circle and to allow itself to be tossed from one to the other of the two fundamental attitudes. (*BN* 412)

But in a footnote he adds

> These considerations do not exclude the possibility of an ethics of deliverance and salvation. But this can be achieved only after a radical conversion which we cannot discuss here. (*BN* 412)

On the level of interpersonal relationships this conversion can be seen as the change of attitude which leads to the formation of the group. The group is essentially, through the structures of the Regulating Thirds, the reciprocal recognition of each as free, as responsible, as subject and as object (as quasi-sovereign and quasi-object). The true lovers, as opposed to the lovers locked in the struggle to subjugate one another whom we are shown in *Being and Nothingness*, constitute the ideal limit case of the group, the full recognition of each as subject and as object. This is the interpersonal ethic of good faith.

The group, says Sartre, lays the basis for humanity and for freedom:

> Every organisation with reciprocity of oaths is a first beginning (of humanity) because it is always a conquest of man, as common freedom, over seriality ... (*CDR* 453) [182/24]

7 [Ed. repetition from above. click [here]

Chapter 9: Class

If the various groups and series which we might isolate within any particular society are related to one another externally, then there is no totalisation of the society as a whole, and history is not a process of totalisation. The last problem in the regressive analysis is to discover whether society as a whole is structured. It is easy to draw up schema for exhaustively classifying all the individuals in a particular society (male and female, incomes up to (pound) x and incomes over (pound) x, height up to 5' 6" and height over 5' 6") but one also wants to know which of such schema, if any, actually correspond to some real structural categorisation. Is there some way of classifying which does not merely describe external relations of coexistence, but indicates internal relationships between individuals?

The concept 'class' can be used in a purely classificatory way, to refer to, say, different income levels, or different styles and levels of consumption. However, the Marxist concept of class, which Sartre adopts, is not simply classificatory. It is designed to describe certain social structures. That is, to say of some individual that he belongs to a certain class is not simply to describe a characteristic of the individual, it is to say that he has certain specific relationships with certain other individuals. Society is seen as being divided into classes which are in a state of conflict, and this conflict is the central fact in that society and in its development. Sartre is not interested, here, in the actual history of the class struggle. He is trying to uncover its *intelligibility:* that is to say, he is trying to show a) why there should be a class struggle at all, what factor in the structure of interhuman relations would permit and condition the emergence of conflicting classes, and b) what it means for the individual to be in a class society, how an individual totalises himself in the context of class relationships.

"Class" is defined in terms of relations to the means of production. A particular class includes all the individuals who have the same relationship to the means of production. In the widest sense, therefore, there are only two classes: the people who own the means of production, and the people who do not. But within each of these categories there is room for useful subdivisions. On the one hand there are different kinds of means of production - land, machinery, liquid capital - and different ways of owning - the peasant who owns and farms his plot, and the landlord who owns a vast domain, are related to their property in different ways. On the other hand, among the non-owners, there are those who are directly involved in the productive

process - blue collar - and those involved in administration -- white collar - and non-owners can also be classified in terms of the kind of property they work on - urban proletariat and rural proletariat. The structure is much more complicated than the initial owner-non-owner classification suggests. There is room within each of these broad classes for a variety of conflicting groups with conflicting interests. Another complicating factor to be borne in mind when making a class analysis of a given society is the fact that, since "ownership" is usually an institutionalised, legal relationship, what it means to "own" can vary from society to society. However, in the following discussion I shall, for the sake of brevity, often write in terms of two classes: owners and non-owners, bourgeoisie and proletariat. [183/25]

In *The Critique* Sartre does not actually give any evidence for believing either that classes, in his sense of the word, really exist, or that any material disadvantage is involved in being a non-owner. As it is sometimes argued that, in fact, in advanced capitalist societies such as the United States and the United Kingdom, class divisions are being attenuated, it is necessary to look at the facts in order to decide whether there is any point in continuing the analysis. The idea that class divisions are disappearing is based on two postulates:

1) that ownership of the means of production is being broadened, and
2) that income divisions between classes are narrowing.

1) The evidence indicates that the process of concentration of capital is in fact continuing. In the United States and the United Kingdom the proportion of the economy controlled by the largest firms is increasing. According to Senator Kefauver

> Between 1947 and 1962 the share of total industrial output produced by the (U.S.'s) 200 largest corporations increased one third. In 1947 these companies accounted for 30% of the value added by manufacture. By 1962 their proportion had risen to 40%. (*In a Few Hands* 206-7)

Extension of monopoly control within particular industries is supplemented by firms spreading out into different fields, and thereby increasing total concentration. This concentration in the power of corporations is not offset by any significant spread in share ownership. For example, according to Victor Allen, in the United Kingdom in 1954, 1% of the adult population owned 81% of company shares, and 5% accounted for 96% (see *The Incompatibles* 244). (Share ownership is spread wider than this in the U.S.A.).

2) As far as income is concerned, it has been shown that, in the United Kingdom, the ratio of wages to profits has only fluctuated within fairly

narrow limits throughout this century, and the ratio between the incomes of the rich and the poor has also remained more or less constant. Summing up the relation between property and income, T.B. Bottomore writes

> But numerous investigations have established that the inequality of incomes depends very largely upon the unequal distribution of property through inheritance, and not primarily upon the differences in earned income which might be supposed to have some connection with natural or innate ability. (*Classes in Modern Society* 17).

So there seems to be good grounds for believing that classes are not withering away, and that inequality is not decreasing. And this is irrespective of the by now widely admitted fact that there exist "pockets" of serious poverty in certain regions and among minority groups and the aged in all the advanced capitalist societies. (Detailed discussion of the facts of class can be found in some of the essays in *Towards Socialism*, and *The Incompatibles*, and in T.B. Bottomore's *Classes in Modern Society*).

We have a situation in which one class controls the means of producing goods, and uses this control to its own advantage - that is, to exploit the other clase by acquiring, in virtue of its control, a disproportionate share of the common product. This is the basis for the class struggle, since it means that the two classes have conflicting interests. The question arises: why should society be divided into antagonistic classes? The orthodox answer is that the division into classes originated when early societies first began to produce a surplus, thus making it possible for some unproductive individuals to be supported by those who worked. There is an element of truth in this. [184/26] It was only possible to have specialist craftsmen and a proper division of labour when each agricultural worker produced more food than he needed for himself and his dependents. But the division of labour and labour specialisation - even in the widest sense of having specialised priests and specialised warriors - should not be confused with the existence of *antagonistic* classes and of exploitation. It is quite possible that an antagonism might develop on the basis of this original differentiation. But why should what is essentially a cooperative effort, in which the different groups complement rather than exploit one another, develop into a conflict? One answer to the question is that it is due to some sort of inherent nastiness in 'human nature' - a power drive, for example. This kind of answer can be rejected as simplistic, for as we have seen, there is no such thing as human nature. Each individual builds up his own "nature" in his relations with the world. So we could phrase the question as follows: Is there any element in the world that might lead to people understanding the world

in terms of the necessity to exploit other people, and so to enter into antagonistic relations with them?

We have already seen the answer: the element in question is the fact of scarcity of the means of subsistence. In conditions of scarcity, the other is an objective threat to me. I may be justified in killing him, but it is much better if I can get him to work for me. That is, antagonistic classes come into being when not enough is being produced to go round. In order to ensure their own permanent survival certain individuals take control of the means of production, and thereby designate the others as permanently threatened. There are two levels of violence involved here: the act of seizing and keeping control, and what one might call the structural or institutionalised violence to which the non-owning group submitted by the reality of scarcity. The owning group has no natural right to its property, and, *a fortiori*, no natural sanction to back up its claim. It is, therefore, objectively threatened, actually or potentially, by the counter-violence of the dispossessed. The class struggle occurs on two levels: the level of *exploitation,* whereby the owners appropriate some of the product of the non-owners; and the level of *oppression,* whereby they keep the system in place.

Two points need to be borne in mind here. Sartre is only arguing that scarcity as an actual threat to physical survival is *at the origin* of the division into classes. It is possible, once the class-structure and the behaviour patterns which keep it in being have been established, for the struggle to continue in terms of other forms of scarcity. Apart from the strict physical necessities, need is socially conditioned, and so, therefore, is scarcity. Also, it is possible for an individual to see scarcity, and counter-violence, in terms of his "interest", rather than in terms of his own personal needs. The analysis is not meant to imply either that the workers in the advanced capitalist countries are starving, or that the capitalists continue exploiting in order to fend off starvation on their part. On the other hand, it should be remembered that even in the most advanced capitalist societies the workers do have higher morbidity rates, higher infant mortality rates, and a shorter life expectancy than do the bourgeoisie. And in more backward capitalist countries, such as South Africa or Brazil, these differentials increase appallingly. Death and suffering become real and immediate threats in societies where, economically speaking, they are not necessary. [185/27]

Similarly, the words "exploitation" and "oppression", which admittedly have strong emotional impact (although they could, theoretically, be used simply descriptively) are not meant to imply that the capitalists keep the workers in a state of grinding poverty, or that all dissenters end up inevitably in jail. Nevertheless they do have, and are intended to have, an

evaluative function. A relation of exploitation is one in which one person is able to appropriate some of the product of another person's labour. Whether the other person is left at the end of the process with only just enough to feed himself, or whether he is still able to afford a car and a television set, is, in formal terms, irrelevant. As Ken Coates puts it:

> The original Marxist conception of exploitation never concerned simple money robbery; it always involved itself with the alienation of the product of labour from the control of the labourer, in which workers produce, over and above their own livelihoods *at whatever level of 'affluence'*, a volume of capital which, under alien direction, concentrates ever greater economic force against them in ever fewer hands. Conceived in these terms 'exploitation' has been continually intensified and aggravated throughout the whole history of capitalism. (*Incompatibles* p. 65)

A relation of oppression is one in which, in general terms, a social structure which recognises the interests of one group (exploitation) as legitimate, and the interests of another group (the abolition of exploitation) as illegitimate, is kept in being - whether by overt or covert force or any other means. The expressions are evaluative in the sense that they point to a source of conflict, and take sides in the conflict. But the fact that they do involve taking sides does not detract from their usefulness. And a "neutral" attitude tends to function as a support for the status quo. To describe exploitation in the apparently neutral terms of "the labour market" and "the free contract between worker and employer", is to abstract from the social and political context involved, and so to misdescribe.

Scarcity does not *cause* conflicting classes to appear. It provides the basis for their appearance, but it could theoretically be lived in other ways. The way in which a class division might be installed as a solution to the problem of scarcity would depend on the conditions at the time. The prior division of labour might place one "class" - in particular, warriors or priests - in a favourable position to entrench themselves as exploiters. Another way might be through conquest, where scarcity of the means of production - mainly land, whether hunting grounds or farm lands - results in one tribe occupying the territory of another, and so also subjecting the other tribe as slaves or as payers of tribute.

What is the status of Sartre's theory that scarcity is at the origin of the division of society into conflicting classes? It is not based on empirical investigation into any actual origins - neither, of course, is the opposing thesis, that class originates from overproduction. One criticism of either theory would be that there is perhaps no reason to believe that there is one universal reason for class division. Perhaps it occurred for different reasons in dif-

ferent societies. On the other hand, since class division is essentially a way of distributing what is produced, it seems reasonable to think that the original division comes from a difference over how what has been produced in common should be distributed. The idea that this was originally a conflict about the distribution of surplus over need does not take into account the fact that in the most "primitive" societies, such as those of the Aborigines and the Bushmen, people [186/28] just stop producing when they have satisfied their needs. They simply do not produce a surplus. An American anthropologist, Marshall Sahlins (in *Les Temps Modernes* No. 268) reports that observations of some of these groups show that the adults work from about 3+ to 5 hours a day, and produce all they want in that time - yet there is no class division, and all are producers. Why is there no division into classes here? One reason, presumably, is that an individual would have nothing to gain, apart from the avoidance of not very arduous work, from putting others to work for him. He would therefore have no motive for doing so. A second reason is that, even if he wanted to, he could not, since he could not control the means of production, that is, the hunting grounds. There is no shortage of the means of production, and so, at a low technical level, no possibility of anyone monopolising them. This indicates that class division can only occur when there is a relative scarcity of the means of production [which?] is precisely the same thing as scarcity of consumer goods. It means that there are too many people for their needs to be satisfied by the use of the available means of production. One solution would be to improve the method of utilisation of the means of production. The other solution is either to reduce the population by war, or to artificially reduce the needs of part of the population by enslaving them.

Thus it seems to be at least a reasonable hypothesis that conflicts arising from scarcity were at the origin of the division of society into conflicting classes. It is important to note, here, that in "primitive" societies needs seem to be fixed at a relatively low level. In fact it is perhaps only useful to speak of scarcity if this is the case. If needs are unlimited scarcity is inevitable. That is, it is necessary to define scarcity as the point where the available goods drop below a socially defined and accepted norm and it seems to be possible to do this in the case of pre-class societies. At a later stage of development the matter is complicated by "interest", and by the socially conditioned creation of new "needs". As we have seen, no needs are "natural"; but it is fair to say that some needs are more "natural" than others. That is, a conflict is almost unavoidable when there is a shortage of food, but highly avoidable when there is a shortage of grand pianos.

In his first detailed account of class division Sartre deals with a case resulting from conquest: Algeria under French rule. (see *CDR* 671-687) It is scarcely necessary to point out that the original conquest was violent - although in some other parts of Africa force was displayed rather than used. In Algeria this violence had two consequences. The old social order was destroyed in the course of the conquest; the Algerians were "atomised". Secondly, the continued presence of the army was required, in order to preserve this atomisation, to prevent the regrouping of the Algerians round new centres of authority and the revolt that this would have entailed. The process of exploitation was based on the atomisation. But, just as the atomisation, with all its consequences - poverty, destruction of culture and lowering of morale - was not produced by the simple contact of two civilisations, but by the brutal and concerted praxis of the members of one on the members of the other, so the process of exploitation did not in some way flow automatically from the new situation. It had to be installed by the activity of individuals. In fact, the French did not at first quite know what to do with their new colony. The solution which was finally adopted was imposed through [187/29] propaganda and debate in France by groups who saw it as being in their economic interest, over the opposition of other groups who felt that it was damaging to them. It represented the interest of the capitalist class, but not in an abstract way. This interest only found expression through conflict within that class.

The solution was to make Algeria into a market and a source of cheap foodstuffs and raw materials by installing a class of colonists who would be able both to constitute a significant market and at the same time to produce below world prices through the "superexploitation" of the Algerians. The initial atomisation and the later activity of depriving Algerians of a land in various ways in order to accommodate the French settlers, created a disorganised and landless proletariat whose only outlet was work on the colonists' farms at the very low wages the latter were able to pay on account of the plethora of unorganised labour.

Here there are three levels of violence: the actual killing of a number of people; the deprivation of land, either by force or by laws sanctioned by force; and superexploitation (that is, exploitation at a higher rate than in the metropole). Sartre sums up the situation as follows:

> The evolution of violence is manifest here: initially a structure of violence in the pratico-inert (i.e. the class structure in France) it is actualised as a praxis in colonisation; its (provisional) victory appears as the objectification of the practical ensemble (army, capitalists, merchants, colonists) in a pratico-inert system in which it (violence) constitutes the fundamental structure of reciprocity between

> colonist and colonised. But *even in alienation* this new serial exia [sic] (the pratico-inert) only exists if each realises and assumes it *in so far as he is other* in his daily praxis. This means, in the first place, that it becomes its own idea in the form of *racialism.* (*CDR* 676)

Once the structure has been set up, exploitation occurs through the "laws of the market" and the necessity of selling one's Labour. The series functions here. Within the context of the system the landowner "has to" exploit. He doesn't set wage levels; they come to him from the other. But the system, the process of exploitation, in fact only functions through the praxis of oppression - that is, through the land-owners and the army keeping the system in being by their daily activities, whether these involve paying the market price for labour (which, although it is a necessity in terms of the system, is not an absolute necessity), or whether they involve preventing, by force and by the threat of force, the overthrow of the system. These activities maintain in being the "economic world" whose workings produce super-exploitation.

The individual colonist is involved in the praxis of oppression just as much as the army is. Not only does he keep his own employees in a state of disorganised submission by a thousand tiny acts of intimidation, he also uses the labour market itself as an instrument of oppression. He is continually looking for means of forcing down wage costs and so reinforcing the grip of the market, and so of the colonists as a whole, on the colonised. The necessity for the colonist to behave in this way is interiorised as racialism.

The colonist finds himself among men whom he knows to be dangerous, because they have had to be conquered, and who are objectively inferior to him, in so far as a man's status is defined by his job, [188/30] his clothes, his hygiene, his language. That is, he finds himself in a racialistic society; the structure of the society is racialistic. But this structure is nothing more than the (alienated) praxis of the colonist and the colonised, the way in which they reanimate and live the past and the social institutions. The colonist has to interiorise and live the racialistic system in his daily round. Racialism is his way of understanding the world, and racialism as an explicit theory is the thematisation of this lived racialism. It is certainly not a rationalisation on the part of the colonists in order to justify and camouflage their privileges. There is no "natural understanding" for them to try to conceal through rationalisations. Racialism is a "practical truth". The fact that racialism is not a rationalisation means that it is possible for the racialist attitude, as a thematisation of experience, to continue in new circumstances where it is no longer adapted in any way to the realities of the situation. Some change in the balance of power might make it in the colonists' eco-

nomic interest to reach some agreement with nationalist forces, but their racialism prevents them from doing so, and so leads ultimately to their expulsion. Ideology is not simply a reflection of economic interest. In Marxist terms, the "superstructure" takes on an independent existence, and can, in turn, condition the "infrastructure".

The relation between ideology and social structure is circular. The structure is kept in being by the serialised activity of the colonists, that is, without any pre-arranged plot or conspiracy, because they all understand the world in the same way. The colonists can form defensive associations or governments. But these are secondary to and derived from the serial process. Fundamentally, the colonist denies any responsibility for the situation. He is not responsible for the poverty of his employees, because he gives them the wages that everybody else gives them, and this wage is what they are worth, because they are inferior workers. He believes the "native" to be inferior because in this particular society he is badly paid and so suffers from all the ills engendered by poverty. So he believes him to be inferior and pays him a low salary, because the other colonists give him a low salary, and vice-versa. The colonist's ideology is his own interiorisation of the structure. The structure is the sum of the others' praxis; that is, it is the sum of the ideologies of the others, since they act in terms of their ideologies. The colonist's ideology is the other's ideology, the ideology of each other is his interiorisation of the structure, which is itself partially produced by the colonist's ideology...; once more we find nothing but imitations of imitations, without any real praxis.

If racialism as praxis-structure and racialism as ideology are identical, then the problem of how change can ever occur arises. There are two possibilities. Firstly, the ideology is only identical to the structure on the level of the pre-reflexive. It always remains possible to escape from it through reflection. Secondly, since the praxis is serial its results are alienated; they are not the results that were aimed at. The structure of the society can thus change "by itself", through the blind praxis of its members, and this can in turn bring about changes in the ideology. As an example of this, we can take Eric Williams' account of the way in which the idea of the inferiority of the negro originated from the institution of slavery. (in *Capitalism and Slavery* 9-19) [189/31]

The slave trade originated in the demand of the American colonies for labour. A non-free labour force was needed because there was so much virgin land that it was impossible to keep free men as employees. In the beginning the necessary labour was supplied by white convicts, white indentured labour, and even by people kidnapped in the main towns of England, as

well as by black slaves. These whites were shipped in exactly the same appalling conditions and treated in the same brutal way by the white foremen and landowners as were the blacks. There was no racial discrimination or racialism. However, the need for labour grew both in the colonies and in England as a result of the increasing importance of the sugar trade in the English economy. This absorbed the excess labour available in England, and Africa was left as the only source to satisfy the needs of the colonies. When the blacks had fully replaced the whites, and the class divisions had become identical with colour divisions, the contempt of the rich for the poor became the comtempt of the white for the black. The serialised praxis of the merchants and owners, working within the logic of a particular system, brought about changes in the system which in turn produced changes in the ideology.

The main point that Sartre is making in his account of Algeria is that the system was founded on violence, was kept in being by direct and indirect violence, was experienced as violent by the colonised, was thematised by the colonist in an ideology of violence which denied the humanity of the colonised, and, finally that

> the violence of the insurgent is the violence of the colonist; there has never been any other. (*CDR* 687)

However, as he himself points out, the situation in Algeria was much more clear cut than is the situation in any advanced capitalist country. The violent division into two classes was very recent, and the conflicts of interest among the colonists or among the colonised paled into insignificance in the light of the conflict between them. In the advanced capitalist societies the two main classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, have evolved out of other classes - the aristocracy and the peasantry. Within each and on the margin of each there is a great diversity of conflicting subclasses. A further complicating element, which Sartre does not mention, is the fact that political and economic imperialism has produced an integrated structure which transcends national boundaries in such a way that to consider a class-structure within particular national boundaries is a simplifying abstraction.

Although these and other similar points have to be borne in mind in any account of a specific situation, they don't affect the essential structural relationship between bourgeoisie and proletariat. The relation of exploitation is still there: the worker produces a greater amount of value than is returned to him in wages. If he did not, the capitalist would not employ him. But still, is there a class *struggle*? Class struggle involves oppression as well as exploitation; that is, it involves the system or process of exploitation being kept in

existence by the praxis of the individuals who benefit from it. How, if at all, is oppression manifested in advanced capitalist society?

Sartre's answer is that the kind of oppression which occurs in such societies exactly parallels the kind of oppression already described. It occurs at two levels the level of the relation between the individual employer and his employees, and the level of the State. [190/32]

In the factory, all the employer's activities are dominated by his understanding of the necessity of exploiting the workers. He doesn't thematise it as "exploitation", since he does not experience himself as responsible for the situation. He is a cog between his "interest" and the world, and so merely obeys the exigencies of the world. But he is nevertheless aware that he has to pay the least possible to each employee, and the lowest possible total wage bill. These "possibles" vary according to the overall social situation, the balance of forces between trade unions and employers, and the availability of techniques of human engineering, so this statement does not exclude the possibility of an employer deciding that he will be able to exploit more efficiently by paying higher wages and providing better working conditions. The point is that the worker is considered merely as a factor of production, and as such his needs are taken into account precisely to the extent that the needs of any other factor of production are taken into account. Every act of the employer vis-à-vis his workers is an attempt to keep them in line in this process, whether by force and intimidation or by manipulation. In this his main weapon is the machine. Not only is it his possession of the machine which enables him to dominate the worker in the first place, but the introduction of new machines is the main way of cutting labour costs and decreasing the worker's power. Sartre writes of the capitalist in the nineteenth century as follows:

> To lower costs is to decrease the number of his workers. In other words, *it is directly against* the future unemployed that he buys his machines: not, as it is said 'without worrying about what happens to them', but, on the contrary, specifically thinking about it, to the extent that each employer, at that period, tries to create a reserve proletariat by increasing the number of unemployed. (*CDR* 697)

This remains true today, to the extent that new machinery is introduced not in order to increase the well-being of those people who work in the industry, but in order to cut costs by pushing some of them out of it.

The following quotations illustrate more clearly what Sartre means by oppression, and the way in which he links it with exploitation and violence:

> These are the twin practical characteristics of the individual action of the capitalist: the production of free men in the form of men-merchandise in close and recip-

> rocal conditioning with the systematic preference accorded to the machine over human work wherever the latter can be replaced by the former. Now this dual characteristic of the operation *as a living praxis* is precisely what defines *oppression:* the (double) power of constraint given to worked matter over free individuals in so far as one has recognised them (free contract) in their freedom remains profoundly identical, whether this worked matter is a machine (or the money which makes it possible to buy one) or whether it is a gun. And this oppression can only be realised in the form of permanent violence, that is, in so far as it is exercised against an anti-human species (the workers) whose freedom is, in essence, freedom to do evil. It is this free and direct oppression which, in the milieu of class seriality and as a transitive relation of the Other to the Other, gives itself its pratico-inert being as *exploitation.* (*CDR* 698)

In a more recent statement, made in connection with the reaction of the employers after the ending of the strikes in France in May-June 1968, Sartre specifically links "violence" and "exploitation":

> Repression is an activity continually exercised by the exploiting class against the exploited class. It can, as at the Simca works, take the form of organised violence, using armed thugs; it may be reduced to the permanent threat of dismissal, to bullying, to the systematic isolation of the trade [191/33] union militant in the factory: it is always there, present, inevitable, because only violence - whether it is unleashed or whether it is only shown - can sustain and prolong that fundamental violence which is exploitation. (*Nouvel Observateur* 208, p. 21)

Sartre does seem to be using "violence" in a rather extended sense when he says that exploitation is violence. But what he is getting at is the fact that exploitation is based on scarcity, and as such is experienced by the exploited in the form of real lacks which can mean real suffering and real death. Class division institutionalises the experience of scarcity in one class, and is continually recreated by the serialised praxis of the other class. "Each society chooses its dead." (*CDR* 727) This is the minimum meaning of violence, and it is on this basis that other manifestations of the class struggle occur.

Yet if it is true that class relations involve exploitation, and that the owner has no natural right to his ownership of the means of production, which is based on force, how is it that the class struggle manifests itself so relatively rarely in direct violence? Firstly, although the owner has no natural right to his property, he has a *legal* right to it; his individual praxis of oppression is backed up by the legal apparatus of the State. Secondly, although the worker is exploited, and his problems are created by the activities of the ruling class, he still has to *understand* his situation as one of exploitation and oppression rather than as part of the order of nature, before he will re-

volt against it. It is quite possible for him to accept the ideology of the ruling class and so to remain passive.

In orthodox liberal political theory the State is seen as a neutral arbiter between competing interests. Irrespective of the question of the honesty or otherwise of the personnel, this involves two assumptions:

1) that the legal structure which the power of the state guarantees is itself neutral, and

2) that the locus of power in fact lies within the State.

The defining mark of the State is "sovereignty". Sovereignty, as the power of one individual over other individuals, is the power of each Third *in a group*, centralised in the form of authority in the hands of one individual or subgroup, on the basis of the oath. (see Ch. 9) Sovereignty only exists within a group. Since a class society is not a group there can be no sovereign in the society. On the other hand, just as the individual is "sovereign" over his environment, so the group can exercise sovereignty over the series in its practical field. If it is an institutionalised group with its own differentiated sovereign, then this sovereign is also sovereign over the series. (see *CDR* 606) But as such it does not have the legitimacy which it has within the group, where it is founded on the oath.

> In a given society, the state is neither legitimate nor illegitimate. (*CDR* 609)

The power of the State is the serial impotence of the individuals in the face of a certain group.

The state cannot be immediatly identified with the owning class, since the owning class is no more a group than is the society as a whole. To that extent the state is autonomous. But it guarantees a legal system which entrenches property rights - that is, which entrenches the right to exploit, and so is not neutral as between owners and non-owners. In fact, it is impossible to be neutral between the two, since their interests are incompatible. Obliging the exploited to accept the absolute priority of the interest of the exploiters, and then supervising [192/34] negotiations as to the precise degree of exploitation which will be permitted, should not be confused with neutrality. The only way in which the state could take the side of the non-owner would be by abolishing the right to exploit, and so abolishing classes all together. (But to try to do this would bring it up against the economic power of the owning class). However, though the state cannot be neutral between classes, it can be neutral between different groups in the dominant class, and can mediate between them. It may be taken over by one or other of the interest groups, but it can also under certain circumstances enjoy considerable autonomy within the context of the class sys-

tem. The state personnel may be more or less farsighted than any of the other groups. They may inadvertently bring the class struggle to a head, or they may impose reforms which, though they harm certain interests, strengthen the position of the dominant class as a whole. The description of the state as a class instrument is not meant to exclude the possibility of State action bringing about certain improvements, such as factory and working hours legislation, since such reforms do no harm to the system of exploitation as a whole.

However, what the State can do is limited by the nature of the practical field within which it operates. This practical field is the serial structure of capitalist society. Anything it does on the economic level produces reactions in that series, and these reactions may nullify the original measures. The government therefore has to respect the logic of capitalist society. In more concrete terms, Sartre is saying that in a capitalist society, even governments elected by universal suffrage represent not the people who voted for them, but the capitalist class. What they can do is conditioned by the needs of a capitalist society, and the needs of a capitalist society are the needs of the capitalists. The most obvious element in this is the extent to which new investment depends on the "confidence" of the investors. A government is faced with the alternatives of making the investors confident, or of taking over the role of investor itself. It must either do what the capitalists want or it must abolish capitalism.

Sartre's theory of the State and of Sovereignty therefore involves a denial of the validity of the two assumptions of the liberal theory. The State is not neutral, for the legal structure is not neutral. The locus of power does not lie exclusively in the machinery of the State. The directions in which the State is free to act are prescribed by the dominant class.

The state apparatus defends the economic system, which means that violence in the defence of the interests of the bourgeoisie - the maintenance of property rights - is legal, while violence on the part of the workers to protect *their* interest - the abolition of property rights - is illegal. It is also "immoral", since the prevailing morality sanctions the institutionalised violence of the system but condemns violence against the system. Since the capitalist is already in a position of dominance he can usually afford to limit himself to defence. The worker has to attack, whether by striking, in England, or by becoming a guerilla, in Latin America. So he always seems to be the one who is initiating violence, disturbing the peace of society, and destroying "order". In reality, it is the prevailing "order" which is a disorder.

The question of morality brings us to ideology, to the fact that it is possible for a member of the subject class to accept the ideology of the dominant

class, and so to remain passive. The way [193/35] an individual behaves expresses his understanding of the situation. In the sphere of political or social life it expresses his ideology. The word "ideology" is sometimes used to refer only to explicit theories about politics and society. One could use it only in this way, but, on the other hand, it is useful to have a word which refers both to explicit theories and to implicit "frames of reference", in order to bring out the fact that they have the same status for the individual concerned. Whether or not he has thought out his ideology, he still acts in terms of it, and it still involves the same sort of elements: value judgements, facts, and explanatory hypotheses. That is, any individual handles a particular political situation in terms of assumptions about the factual nature of the wider context within which the particular situation occurs, in terms of assumptions about why the facts are as they are, and in terms of assumptions about values, about the way facts ought to be. If he did not make assumptions (which, of course, may or may not be correct) in all three of these fields, he would not be able to act at all.

The failure to indicate this parallel between "implicit" and "explicit" ideologies usually rests on a "human nature" assumption - the assumption that certain ways of behaving and evaluating are natural, and that others are not. Since an implicit ideology is usually a reflection (interiorisation) of the status quo, this amounts to saying that the status quo is natural, and that (explicit) ideologies are not. But there are no natural ways of behaving, no natural ideologies. For example, the idea that one ought to try to accumulate property is not a basic human instinct; it is an element in certain ideologies, and, in particular in the ideology of capitalism.

Each individual builds up his own ideology through his own experience of society and of social relations. He has two main sources of experience:
1) his own direct personal experience, the things he sees around him, the kind of work his father does and the sort of relations his father enters into as a result of this, the attitude of his family to the outside world, and, later, his own work and other relations; and
2) "culture" - indirect experience through what he is taught in school, through novels and films, through the press, radio and television.

The most important and stable social relationships with which an individual is involved are the work relationships of himself and his family - hence the importance of economic factors in determining the way in which the individual looks at the world. In his work relationship capitalism is a "practical truth"; capitalism is *there*, has been there for a long time, and is the accustomed way of doing things. So even at the level of work, where he is being exploited, it is possible for the worker to live the bourgeois ideology, to

accept capitalism as natural. There is a tendency to absolutise what is there, simply because the tools with which to question it, and the time to question it in are not available. Capitalism can become part of the workers frame of reference, which means that he can only conceive of change within the limits prescribed by the capitalist system.

This does not mean that the worker sees the system in precisely the same way as does the capitalist. He sees it in terms of the naturalness of being exploited, whereas the capitalist sees it in terms of the necessity of exploiting. The main constituents of any bourgeois ideology are:
1) The series as the natural structure of [194/36] human relationships, which implies the impossibility of the "socialisation" of men, the necessity for the individual to realise himself through self-centred activities, and the absence of factual individual responsibility for the social system as such;
2) As a corollary to this, the right to private property in the means of production as the foundation of order, stability and freedom;
3) the right to use violence in order to protect those property rights. These ideas are not necessarily either explicit or argued. They constitute what Sartre calls "the general schema of a situated understanding" (*CDR* 715), or "directions of understanding" (*CDR* 715), or "the objective spirit of the class ... a milieu for the circulation of meanings" (*CDR* 721) - that is, the framework in terms of which society is understood.

In different societies these abstract schema get filled out in different ways, in the light of the way in which the class struggle has developed in each country. In "The Communists and Peace" (*Situations VI*), as well as in *The Critique* (715 ff) Sartre outlines the development of the "objective spirit" of the French bourgeoisie. He shows the way in which it was formed by the particularly murderous nature of the class struggle in France, involving as it did massacres of workers in 1848 and again in 1871. This lead to a particular attitude to the proletariat, which found its ultimate expression in the phenomenon of economic Malthusianism in the inter-war period. In this period large industrialists in France increased productivity without cutting costs or increasing production. This meant that the work force tended to contract, and one of the effects of this was a sharp drop in the birth rate. The power and revolutionary potential of the urban proletariat was limited by the decline in numbers. Now, why did the industrialists act in this way? Sartre interprets it as an attempt specifically to keep the proletariat in check, and, by keeping prices up, to permit the continued existence of a large number of small and inefficient producers who were political allies against the proletariat. If this is so, a further problem arises. This Malthusianism was only possible if all the industrialists in a particular sector were

Malthusian.. If any one had broken out into the more normal patterns of competitive capitalism it would have meant that the others would have had to follow suit. What prevented this happening? Some critics took Sartre to be suggesting that there was an actual plot involved, that the leading industrialists had secretly got together and decided that such action was the only way of conserving their power. But his point is that the capitalists react in the same way to a particular situation because they understand it in the same way, not because they agreed beforehand to do so. The overall effect is produced by the serial relation of the individual actions; Malthusianism is the product of a series, not of a group. The ruling class is not some sort of hyperorganic unity. It acts as a ruling class because its members see the world in the same way, and because their actions combine serially to produce a particular result. The Establishment, or the Power Elite or the Military-Industrial Complex, seen as groups, *are only secondary phenomena* in the functioning of the system of dominance.

An ideology is neither the simple reflection of the given nor a rationalisation to conceal more sinister ends. The first idea leaves out the process of interiorisation, and thereby implies the impossibility of ever escaping from the given and attempting to control it rationally. The second implies that the capitalist or the racialist has some sort of 'natural understanding' of the world in terms of which [195/37] he would be able to recognise the sinisterness of his aims, and realise that they need disguising. But in fact the capitalist is just as alienated as is the worker. He is just as much mystified by bourgeois ideology as is the worker. He may of course tell lies in certain circumstances, and realise that they are lies, but they receive their justification in terms of his ideology. He sees it as right to tell lies in those particular circumstances.

On the level of culture, bourgeois ideology manifests itself in specific theories - such as atomistic theories of society - in specific interpretations of history, sociology, economics, and other social sciences, in the interpretations which journalists give of events, and, more often than not only implicitly, in novels and films. In any of these instances positive deceit may be practised - the nineteenth century idea of a religion for the masses (see *CDR* 723), the journalist intentionally minimising the effectiveness of a strike - but this is not the important thing. *The central distortion occurs at the level of the assumptions unquestioningly accepted* - in terms of which the individual concerned thinks and writes. The hostile journalist reporting a strike will not only use value loaded language, he will write from the point of view of the employer, and misinterpret or fail to see the point of view of the strikers. The novelist, or the writer of children's books, frames

his story in terms of the naturalness of certain relationships and behaviour patterns, and, thereby serves to reinforce them in his readers. At school the whole content of education is impregnated with the ideology of the dominant class - not because the members of the dominant class are particularly wicked or particularly cunning, but simply because, in virtue of their dominance, they just happen to be in the key positions, and they express the world as they see it.

The worker not only lives in a world in which the ideology of the dominant class expresses the practical reality of the situation. He is also faced with a cultural world purveying this ideology, and he gets his tools of analysis from this cultural world. There is a process of "serial brainwashing" or "serial indoctrination" continually in action.

This does not exclude the possibility of the creation and propagation of a counter-ideology. From the account of consciousness in *Being and Nothingness* we know that the possibility of 'standing back' is always at least theoretically given. An intellectual - that is, somebody who has acquired at least some of the techniques of rational thought - can, although he comes, in most cases, from the dominant class, stop thinking *in terms of* the ideology and start thinking *about* it. For a non-intellectual member of the dominated class a change in consciousness can only occur through his every-day activities.

In a capitalist society the abolition of exploitation requires: that the worker experience exploitation as man-made rather than natural - that is, that he escapes from bourgeois ideology; and, that he cooperates in a group in order to overcome the state apparatus, to escape from the condition of seriality, and to create a non-serial social system. Both of these requisites involve replacing a "serial" ideology by a "group" ideology, since to see exploitation as non-natural is to see the possibility of non-exploitative, co-operative relations between people. [196/38]

The problem is, then, given that not everybody has the intellectual tools necessary for thinking about ideology in a vacuum, to show whether and how such a change in ideology, in frame of reference, is possible. It is pointless even talking about socialism unless it can be shown that there is some basis in the daily situation of the non-intellectuals in terms of which they can understand the concept of socialism and see its desirability. if there is such a basis, then the group ideology may be developed within the context of these day to day activities, first implicitly and then explicitly. An ideology developed "in abstract" by intellectuals might "take" in a popular setting. Much of Marxist theory is taken up with this problem, and this is why Engels calls it "scientific socialism", as opposed to "utopian social-

ism" which draws up blue-prints for the future without attempting to link them up with a strategy rooted in the problems and the power-structure of the present.

Changes in ideology are related to changes in the pratico-inert. A "fusing group" forms on the basis of a prior passive unity and in the face of a common threat or problem. Our problem is to see whether the advent and growth of capitalism involves the sort of change in the structure of the pratico-inert which could produce a passive unity of the workers and a common threat or problem which might provide the basis for an active union.

One of the main characteristics of capitalism has been the development of factory production, which involves making a large number of men work together, and thereby provides a passive unity. Through its structure as a rationally designed whole with a common product it embodies the idea of co-operation. But what is the basis for a change from cooperation *for* the employer to cooperation *against* the employer and in the building of a new society? It is the conflict within the factory over wages and work conditions. A conflict of this nature involves not only considering your opponent and yourself, it also involves taking into account the way in which you exist for your opponent - that is, your "being-object". In general terms this fact provides the basis for the intelligibility of the class struggle (see *CDR* 753), and in the particular case of the conflict over wages it means that the worker has to try to work out what he represents for the employer, and so may come to understand that his employer's control over him comes from the anarchy of the labour market - which shows him that he must cooperate with other workers - and, ultimately, from his control of the means of production - which shows him that exploitation will continue as long as private ownership of the means of production continues. It is in terms of this that the worker joins in cooperative trade union activity, and, both independently, and through the fact that trade union strength in each factory depends on solidarity with other factories, can come to see that the immediate conflict is merely a function of the conflicting interests of those who own the means of production and those who don't.

This new group ideology need not be thematised and elaborated beforehand. To a certain extent it grows in action. But ultimately it needs to be clearly articulated if the praxis of the revolutionary group is to become effective. The group does not become a hyperorganism with an automatic unity. Nor does it represent the class merely by coming into existence.

> The class manifests itself simultaneously (in the sphere of the struggle for its demands) as an institutionalised apparatus, as a (serial or organised) collection of direct action groups, as a collective which receives its status from the field of the pratico-inert, [197/39] (through and by its relations of production with the other classes), and its universal schema of practical unification from the groups which form ceaselessly on its surface. (*CDR* 649)

The class is not a given unity. It has to be unified. There are always cross-currents, conflicts between trade unions and masses, between bureaucratised trade unions and activist wild-cat groups, and the ideology is the tool which must resolve these conflicts, which must be used by militants to

> ...endow the working class with a reflexivity of class on the basis of the determinations to which it submits in impotence. (*CDR* 737)

It can do so because

> Truth in its original meaning, in so far as it is sociality, and in an integrated group, is the liquidation of all otherness. (*CDR* 530)

That is, in a true account of the situation the "passive" of each individual is taken up and related to that of every other individual in a way which unites them all by giving them the same understanding of the situation in spite of the different perspectives and problems through which they are related to it. The refusal to theorise inevitably inhibits communication and so also co-operation, because it means permanently abandoning different units to their different pictures of the world.

According to Sartre "analytical reason" is the ideology of the bourgeoisie, while the ideology of the proletariat is "dialectical reason". By this he means that only dialectical reason, in so far as it tries to interpret social phenomena in terms of totalisation, and to interpret the individual in terms of the reciprocal conditioning between him and the social collectivities in which, in view of his own totalising projects, he is involved, can understand the essential differences between individual praxis, serial praxis, and communal praxis. It is only in the light of this understanding that it is possible to see that man is responsible for his society, and so that he could cooperate with his fellows to take control over it.

The ideology of the proletariat is thus a dialectical ideology of group praxis. According to Sartre it is also a *universal ideology*, its goal is a society which is not founded on exploitation. He does not explain how this universal ideology is possible, but the explanation is implied in his theory, and

making it explicit will clarify certain of his concepts. Since the division into classes is based on the contingent fact of scarcity, it follows that a classless society is only possible where scarcity has disappeared, or, at least, where the possibility exists of establishing a society where it would be possible to guarantee the means of subsistence to everybody, whatever the risks of flood, drought or other natural disaster, pending the establishment of a society of abundance. Speaking of the beginnings of the industrial revolution Sartre says:

> Doubtless this new mode of production did not permit the conquest of scarcity; in consequence *it was not even conceivable* to socialise the means of production. (*CDR* 227, my stress)

Without this possibility a revolutionary group can only replace one form of domination by another. One part of the proletariat might wish to seize control of the state in order to cooperate with the bourgeoisie in the exploitation of the other workers and the peasants as in many newly independent states the new local ruling classes associate themselves with the ex-colonial companies in the exploitation of the peasants -, or the urban proletariat might take power in order to directly exploit the peasants. In general, without the possibility of escaping from the threat of scarcity any revolutionary group would, whatever its ideals, eventually degenerate into a new elite in order to protect itself from possible annihilation by scarcity. [198/40]

The new historical factor which makes a universal ideology possible is the combination of an economy of accumulation with a powerful technology, which means that, for the first time in history, it is possible to envisage regular progress towards a society of abundance. It is also possible, with the means of production available in the world today, to guarantee a comfortable level of subsistence to every human being - given the necessary organisation. So there is a close relation between the development of a universal ideology, of the economy of accumulation, and of technology. Capitalism is itself both a social system and a *technique of production.* Capitalism and modern technology were both invented in the face of the same problems and possibilities. The accumulation of capital enables the capitalist to employ more workers and to buy more machines, which in their turn permit greater accumulation. Work in common in factories requires new techniques and new machines, and accumulation permits the manufacture of goods not designed for immediate consumption, that is, of more machines. All this made possible both a group ideology and a universal ideology.

In the light of this, Sartre's explanation of the origins of classes in terms of scarcity is of central importance. For unless this division results from a contingent, and so removable, factor in the world, one is reduced to explaining it in terms of "human nature" selfishness, love of power - and it becomes difficult to see how it might be even *possible* to abolish classes.

Capitalism has created the possibility of a human society - a society not permeated by violence and the Manichean ethic. But because the praxis of the bourgeois is alienated, in so far as he acts to protect his "interest", he maintains a state of violence and requires society to be organised in terms of business and profit, rather than in terms of man. In addition, serial alienation means that man is controlled by the system - the pratico-inert - instead of controlling it. The notion of "individualism" in bourgeois ideology is a mystification. Capitalist society does not give the individual independence from the collectivity. Every individual in the society is dominated by the market mechanism - that is, by the serialised activity of every other individual. Not even the capitalist is a free agent. The worker certainly is not.

Yet the conflict is a structured conflict, a process in which the totalisationing acts of each individual are interrelated. Conflict is a mode of mutual totalisation, and the class struggle, as such a process of totalisation is the expression of a unified historical totalising. History is therefore intelligible. But, in conditions of seriality and class struggle, it remains praxis without an author. In Hegelian terms, it is intelligible in itself, but not intelligible for-itself. [199/41]

Chapter 10: Political and ethical implications

We began by asking what it is that stops other people behaving rationally, sensibly and kindly, as you and I do, and how, if at all, this obstacle could be removed. In order to find out, we had to describe what "being human" means. After having avoided the Cartesian myth of the ghost in the machine, we undertook a phenomenological description of the individual which enabled us to rid ourselves of three other illusions : the illusion of the instant; the illusion of "human nature"; and one of the specific versions of this illusion, the Platonic myth of a ready-made mind, of a natural knowledge and a natural understanding of the world. Man has no 'nature', because the structure of consciousness, a continual project into the future, is such that it can never be bound to anything, and can always doubt any value. It is this structure of consciousness to which we are referring when we say that man is free. He transcends the given towards a goal, a value, which he constitutes himself, implicitly or explicitly. This transcending is what characterises being human. Man constitutes values in terms of his frame of reference, of his understanding of the world. He constructs this frame of reference through a process of synthesising all his experience. This process is unconscious, unthematised, but it can be thematised and so become a conscious attempt to construct an objective understanding of the world by means of the various techniques of thought. In so far as he can also change his values in this way, he is responsible for them, but to the extent that he believes his frame of reference to be an absolute he is not aware of this responsibility. He can, through the techniques of reflection, grasp the contingence of his frame of reference and so make a genuine choice of himself. But since these techniques of reflection and of thought come to him from his society, he is to a great extent conditioned by this society, even though the society and the other aspects of his situation - body, psyche, world, past - only exist for him to the extent that he interiorises and lives them.

So to fully understand being human it is necessary to study society, in order to find out why certain people, and not others, possess the required tools of thought. This study of the way in which individuals combine in society also brings out in greater detail the social dimension of the situation, the fact that there are certain structured relationships in society which are relatively fixed and which have to be taken into account in one's projects.

Society is made possible by matter, the world of things, which mediates between myself and other people, and also between myself and the past, through the meanings traced on the world which I reanimate. Society thereby has both a synchronic dimension and a diachronic dimension - history. Neither is a dead weight which conditions me ineluctably. The social system is only the praxis of the individual members of the society. So it is not natural or immutable. The social system seems to have a life of its own independent of the individuals in it because there are two kinds of interhuman relationship: the series and the group. In the series the praxis of each member is alienated, and its result is a counter-finality at which nobody was aiming - "praxis without an author". (*CDR* 235) History is made blindly.

"History" does not refer to some sort of process distinct from politics, economic, sociology, etc. It refers to the sum total of social change, which includes change on all these levels. To study history is to study patterns of economic change, patterns of [200/42] sociological change, patterns of political change, patterns cf cultural change and to try to show how they are interrelated. Under conditions of alienation men have become "objects" which enter into "thing-like" relations with one another. These relations are governed by laws which depend for their content on the nature of the alienation, that is, on the nature of the "thing" which the individual has become. (This is what is usually referred to as reification.) Under these circumstances laws of economic and social development seem to take on a life of their own, to which the individual whose mode of activity is creating these "laws" seems to be submitted. There are laws of historical change, but they have a derived and secondary status: a constituted dialectic, rather than a constituting dialectic.

The fact which conditions this process, and it is a contingent fact, is scarcity. The scarcity of the means of subsistence means that men are a threat to each other, and that the fundamental relation with the other is violence, or, rather, counter-violence in the face of the threat from the other. In developed societies scarcity manifests itself in the designation of certain individuals, defined by their relation to the means of production, as permanently underprivileged, and violence appears as the class struggle. This struggle may appear as a direct confrontation between two groups, but in any event it exists permanently as a daily conflict between workers and owners, and as a state apparatus equipped with the means of repression to guarantee the social structure in the last resort. Scarcity prevents the "purifying reflection", which requires time, and so creates the possibility of alienation, through which certain objects become absolutes, magnets-for-man. In the

form of "interest" this alienation means that counter-violence comes to be used to protect a thing, such as a business, which has become the very being of the individual. A society which is dominated by serial praxis and interest is alienated, inhuman and irrational.

The means of escaping from this irrationality and from the impotence of serial praxis is the group, in which each individual is free, as a quasi-sovereign who unifies the group and cooperates with the other members in terms of a common understanding of the situation. Changes in society are also changes in the way in which individuals understand the world. The historical development of society is both an enriching of praxis and an enriching of understanding. This development is the result of the praxis of individuals who try to solve their problems in the milieu of scarcity and the class struggle. Their understanding is linked with their praxis, and as long as society can only develop blindly the political ideologies remain the simple interiorisation of the given (serial) system. But capitalism, by the institution of cooperative production, and by the present possibility of abolishing scarcity through the application of technology, has created the possibility of an ideology which is both universal and group directed, that is to say, which promises the abolition of counter-violence and of serial alienation.

An individual's freedom is his ability to escape from the irrational absolutes which distort his behaviour. Man is always potentially free, in so far as he has the abstract possibility of making a "second choice", of changing his fundamental project, his fundamental attitude. In order to actualise this possibility he needs certain intellectual techniques. Because it takes time to aquire these techniques, and time to use them, this freedom remains an illusion in the world of scarcity in which man has to work continually to keep himself alive. In addition, in a serial society, [201/43] whose principle is extero-conditioning, and where praxis is immediately alienated, even a philosopher who frees himself through reflection is only formally free. In order to translate this freedom into a real and effective praxis, the individual must cooperate in a group which is animated by his philosophy.

I can only be free from serial alienation in a society in which I live, in its full intensity, the relationship of transcendance-immanence to a group. l cooperate fully with the group: in the creation of the society, but at the same time I know that the society as a structure is only a means, and that it exists for the individuals who make it up.

Freedom as an escape from absolutes raises the problem of ethics. Is it possible to put forward ethical imperatives? Is it possible, once I have freed myself by reflection, to say how I must act, what goals I must choose, how I must behave towards other people? The answer, unfortunately, must be

"No". As soon as I have become aware, through the purifying reflection, that it is I who am responsible for my values, I am entirely isolated; it is impossible to deduce moral oughts. An existentialist ethic is illusory.

Sartre himself makes two ethical claims. He says that one should act in good faith, and that willing one's own freedom means willing everybody's freedom. The injuction to act in good faith tells you how you should be related to your value system, but not what your value system should be. To act in good faith is to act in full realisation of the contingency of your values. Bad faith is the attempt to mask your responsibility for your value system by blaming it on some external force and insisting that it is an absolute. It is to refuse to admit that values can be questioned. Good faith involves bearing the contingent nature of your values continually in mind, but nevertheless reaffirming them anew at each moment. This means that one can be, say, a Christian or a Communist or a Fascist in good faith or in bad faith. The Christian may say that he is acting out the immutable law of God, or he may say that he is freely committing himself to the affirmation of Christ's life as a measure of value. The Communist may claim that he has to be a Communist because the success of Communism is an historical inevitability. Or he may say that he is a communist because he has chosen to commit himself to loving his neighbour. The Fascist may claim to be expressing the Spirit of the Nation, or he may admit that he has chosen power as his basic value. In each case it is possible to justify the same actions by an appeal to absolutes, or by reference to personal commitment.

Judging bad faith Sartre writes

> Bad faith is obviously a lie, since it conceals the total freedom of the commitment. (*EH* 81)

But there is in fact no reason why one should not choose to lie in this way. Similarly, there is no reason why one should will everybody's freedom just because one wills one's own - except in the sense that one will probably suffer from serial alienation if one does not. But this is not itself an ethical principle; it is a question of efficiency, based on quite a different ethical principle.

All that one can do is to undertake a phenomenological study of moral life; that is, to try to show the internal logic of different ways of behaving. *Being and Nothingness* analyses many of the internal contradictions of the attempt to live in bad faith. Sartre shows, for example, that certain kinds of relationship towards other [202/44] people are doomed to failure. This is very useful if one of one's projects is to form stable relationships with other people. But it cannot tell you whether or not you ought to want to form stable

relationships with other people. 'Oughts' are only obligatory if there is a human nature. In that case it would be possible to say "By your very nature you want this; so you ought to behave thus and thus." But there is no human nature. One can show what is involved in certain types of behaviour, or what is implied by a particular ethical principle, but that is all.

> Nobody is supposed to be ignorant of the law, because there is a code and the law is written down: you are free to break it, but you know the risks that you are running. Similarly, the writer's function is to make it impossible for any one to be ignorant of the world and to claim to be innocent. (*Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* 31)

It is possible to bring home to each individual his factual responsibility for the situation. If you believe that you should love your neighbour, I can show you that this requires a political committment aiming to abolish a system which kills children in India and provides mink coats for dogs in England and the United States. But if, on realising that loving your neighbour is not just a warm feeling, but a life's work, you decide that perhaps after all you do not want to love your neighbour, there is nothing else that I can do to convince you. This, of course, constitutes a serious difficulty, for it means that if your ethic and my ethic come into conflict force will be the final arbiter.

I have now outlined Sartre's account of "being human", and shown under what conditions human freedom becomes alienated. In the light of this, and assuming that you want to be free, authentic, and in good faith, and that you consider freedom to be a human value and not just a personal one, it is possible to make some suggestions about the kind of society it would be nice to have, and about ways of bringing it into being. These suggestions are not necessarily explicitly present in Sartre's work. They include the sorts of goals and strategies which seem to me to be implied by it (but as such they are my responsibility, not Sartre's).

"Freedom", in the sense of self-creation and absence of alienation, is different from political freedom. There can be no *political* guarantee that an individual will decide to act in good faith. By "free society" in the following section I shall mean a society in which the *possibilities* of escaping from the various forms of alienation are the greatest.

The first principle is that freedom is essentially *difficult.* There are no simple solutions, precisely because there is no human nature, and so man has to invent himself. Freedom is not something which can simply be guaranteed by a declaration of human rights.

The possibility of freedom is limited by two factors: scarcity, and serial alienation. These might seem to pose two distinct problems, but for the ma-

jority of men they come to the same thing. If I live my entire life threatened by famine, always worrying about my next meal, I am not free. There is a hierarchy of freedoms, not in the sense that some are more important than others, but in the sense that certain freedoms cannot exist unless others are guaranteed. The most basic freedom, of course, is the freedom to live; a society must guarantee to all its members the means of subsistence. A society which fails to do this is not free, even if it has free universities and a free press. [203/45]

An intellectual reduced to poverty may retain his freedom to analyse and criticise. But an Indian peasant is not a very very poor intellectual. Each person builds his own world picture, and there is little for anything apart from the problems of being hungry in a world picture built on the basis of hunger as the omnipresent reality.

The second freedom is freedom to think. This must be understood in the most concrete sense. I am not free to play tennis if I have neither a racket nor a ball nor a tennis court. I am not free to think if I have not got the necessary tools, for thought, as rational analysis, is not a "natural" activity or an innate capacity. It is inseparable from certain vocabularies and certain techniques, which have to be acquired. Up to a certain level all education is indoctrination. All education, formal or informal, involves the conscious or unconscious selection of certain characteristics and certain ideas, for there are no natural characteristics or natural ideas. In a class society culture, and so education, is unconsciously impregnated with the ideology of the dominant class. This "serial brainwashing" must be replaced by a conscious indoctrination of those principles and methods of thought which will eventually permit an escape from indoctrination and from the pre-reflective, unconscious, building up of a picture of the world. If this is not done most people will have understandings of the world which are closely conditioned by what is. Those few individuals capable of escaping from indoctrination by themselves will be the only ones to benefit from a society which guarantees freedom of thought without providing the tools for thinking with.

Political freedom follows the other freedoms in possibility. Political freedom means very little in an alienated society which does not guarantee the other freedoms. For example, the very limited political freedom permitted to the individual in China is much more real than the far wider degree of formal political freedom permitted in India, for it is based on a comparatively adequate diet, and on an effort to give the entire population an education and the tools of political analysis.

The second limitation on freedom is serial alienation. This can only be avoided by group praxis. Capitalist society is essentially serial. In addition, the motives which keep it functioning are irrational in terms of human needs. An individual's needs are relatively quickly satisfied, but the needs of a business are limitless; so when a business becomes a man's "being-completely-outside-himself-in-a-thing" - his interest - his needs become unlimited and he remains inhuman and ready to use counter-violence even when he is no longer personally threatened. Capitalist society is organised in terms of the need to accumulate capital in the hands of a few individuals, not in terms of the satisfaction of the real material and spiritual needs of all individuals. It cannot solve the problem of hunger on a world scale. Only a group society, in which individuals cooperate in the planning of the development of society in accordance with their needs and wants, can do this.

The great danger in a planned society is the tendency for a group to ossify into a bureaucracy. A socialist society might degenerate into a bureaucracy manipulating a relatively passive population. Because a society can never become a hyperorganism there are always problems of unity which leaders may be tempted to solve by the use of authority rather than of reason. This leads eventually to the Marxist idealism which Sartre criticizes in "Questions of Method": [204/46]

> planning imposed by a bureaucracy which was not willing to admit its mistakes, became thereby violence done to reality, and since the future production of a nation was determined in offices, often outside its territory, this violence had as a counterpart an absolute idealism: men and things were submitted a priori to ideas; experience, when it did not verify the predictions, could only be wrong. (*CDR-QM* 25)

As Sartre points out, a group is even more likely to degenerate into a bureaucracy in a socialist society than it is in a capitalist society:

> when the State is an apparatus of constraint in a society rent by class conflict, bureaucracy - the constant threat to the sovereign - can be more easily avoided than in a socialist society in the course of construction. (*CDR* 627)

In the conflict situation, and in the presence of numerous pressure groups, the lower ranks of the apparatus are never faced with a pure series which they can manipulate automatically. They continually have to deal with new problems, to use their initiative, and to this extent serve as a genuine mediator between the sovereign and the rest of society. This inhibits the development of bureaucracy and of the highest stage of bureaucratisation, the

police state. (Sartre analyses the phenomenon of socialist bureaucratisation in his essay on the 1956 Hungarian uprising, "Stalin's Ghost", in *Situations VII*.)

The growth of a bureaucratic elite is not only undesirable in itself, in terms of an ideal of social justice, it is also disastrous in terms of efficiency. On the one hand, the planning and policy of the bureaucrats becomes less and less related to the objective needs, capacities and understanding of the people, since there is no way of communicating effectively with a bureaucracy. On the other hand the people become depoliticised, lose their initial moral enthusiasm, and so are lead to concentrate on personal benefits, opting out of that collective attempt to build a better society which is the only ultimate guarantee of every individual's personal well-being. The consequence of this is that in order to get results the population has to be manipulated into activity, by laying greater stress on personal material stimuli. This in turn increases social stratification and aggravates the problem even more.

Several socialist societies have made attempts to stop this process, Mao Tse-Tung calls the process "taking the capitalist road", because of the way in which it breaks down socialist consciousness. The Cultural Revolution which he initiated was aimed at breaking down the nascent bureaucracy of the Chinese Communist Party and substituting moral for material incentives, by trying to get everybody involved in the political life of the country, since such involvement in politics both produces personal moral fervour and gives the individual the sort of understanding of social and political problems which is required if he is to do something towards solving them.

In Czechoslovakia the process of bureaucratisation had lead to economic stagnation. In order to plan satisfactorily in a developed economy it was necessary to know what people wanted. In order to get the machinery of production operating efficiently it was necessary to get everybody involved in worrying about the whole process, rather than exclusively about their own individual incomes. Decentralisation and workers control in a climate of political freedom was the solution about to be put into practice when the Soviet Union intervened. Effective worker's control at factory level gets everybody involved in running the economy, and provides a countervailing power to combat any tendency towards bureaucratisation at the centre. [205/47]

The most important function of political institutions is to ensure communication between the people and the government, since, unfortunately, there has to be a government, given the size of contemporary societies. In order for the people to participate in running the country they have to know

what is being done and why. In order for the individuals who finally draw up the actual plan to be able to do so effectively they have to be able to relate it to the conditions and level of consciousness of the people.

This kind of democracy has nothing to do with political parties. Campaigning with slogans and promises to attract the votes of serialised electors. According to Sartre,

> an electoral system ... constitutes the ensemble of electors as passsive material for extero-conditioning, and the list of the elected does not represent the will of the country... the only possible manifestation of a 'will' in the masses is their revolutionary regrouping against the inertia of the institutions and against that sovereignty which is built on their impotence. (*CDR* 624)

That is, a five-yearly election creates the illusion of unity and of a considered judgement leading to a delegation of authority. In fact, it results in the individuals being institutionally divorced from the decision making process in the intervening period. They are not in a position to understand the issues when the election comes round, and even at election time they remain separate and serial, and so are manipulated by the political parties.

Even if a party with a genuine socialist programme won an election in this way, it would not be able to carry out its programme, since the possibility of putting socialism into practice assumes a change in the mode of the individual's praxis - from serial praxis to group praxis and this conversion cannot be brought about simply by an electoral victory. So the first task of a socialist party is not to win elections (which is usually attempted by working out a lowest common denominator programme); it is to teach. To be able to do this it must possess a clear ideology (and, of course, a true one), since a man always acts in terms of his understanding of the situation. It is not adequate just to state that the system is wrong and that socialism would be nicer. The demonstration of the abstract mechanism of exploitation and oppression has to be supplemented by a demonstration of how these mechanisms work in each individual situation. Since capitalism is evolving all the time a political party can easily find itself left behind in this if it fails to subject the society to a continuous analysis. This does not mean that it must change its goals, but it must certainly change its strategy and tactics. The problems a worker faced 20 or 30 years ago are not the same as those he faces now, so if the party is still thinking in terms of the earlier position it will lose its grip on the situation.

For example, the strikes in France in May 1968 were sparked off by a big student protest movement, and involved radical calls for workers control from many strikers. Both these elements were rooted in changes in the

structure of French society. Modern capitalism requires an educated labour force, which means that there is an expansion of education at all levels. University students are no longer either an elite or about to join an elite. They are mostly destined to play relatively subordinate and unglamorous roles in capitalist society. There is thus a contradiction between their general education and the narrow roles for which they are destined, and this can lead them to question the whole system of production for profit. (See Rossanda "Les etudiants comme sujet politique" *Temps Modernes* 266-7) The workers' call for worker's control results - [206/48] partly from the growing importance of conflicts over labour intensity and work organisation which accompany rapid technological change, and partly from the fact that there are a growing number of technicians engaged in the productive process. These, like the students, are no longer an elite, and their general cultural formation is in contradiction with the authoritarian structure of the work situation. The French Communist Party, basing its actions on out of date analyses of the problems of capitalist society, mistrusted the students as "unreliable intellectuals", and could think only in terms of wage increase for the workers. So, instead of canalising and organising the revolutionary upsurge in a radical direction, it did its best to limit it to the most humdrum reformism - and in so doing it illustrated Sartre's remark that

> the group in the process of petrification can, by its very inertia, be an obstacle to the dissolution of seriality in the collective. (*CDR* 640)

In addition to teaching it is of course necessary to win the elections, for in this context the elections will have become the index of the party's success in bringing about a conversion from serial to group praxis. Only when this has occurred will it be possible to undertake the necessary revolution in the social structure.

The above analysis does not apply to most of the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, both because the conditions for free political activity are not given, and because the bulk of the population are peasants rather than workers. There is therefore no initial "passive unity" as the basis for the formation of a group. But in many of these countries there is both exploitation - by latifundists, landlords, and money-lenders -, and oppression. There is class conflict, but, at first sight, no objective basis for the transformation from serial praxis to group praxis, and no possibility of propagating a group ideology. This is why the idea of guerilla warfare has assumed such importance. The function of the guerilla band is not simply to defeat the government troops. It provides both theoretical education, through its propaganda work, and practical education, by involving as

many people as possible in support work, and ultimately in combat. The guerilla movement, if it is to succeed, must function as the catalyst which triggers the change from serial to group praxis. In so doing it assures military victory, and, what is more important, it also lays the basis for the new society.

In both cases - political party and guerilla movement - acquisition of control over the state apparatus is ineffective if it is not accompanied by that change in the mode of the individual's praxis which is necessary for the restructuring of society. The first prerequisite for this is that the movement itself should be a "fused group", not a "bureaucracy".

Sartre has said that existentialism is the attempt to draw out all the implications of the denial of the existence of God. I think that it is more accurate and more illuminating to say that it is the attempt to draw out all the implications of the fact that there is no human nature. This implies that men can create and control their own society, since it is men who hold present society in being through their alienated praxis. But it also implies that when I explain to the other that he is responsible for what happens in his society, he can agree and still refuses to do anything about it. [207/49]

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8 Where the French editions are cited, the translations in the text are mine. For *Being and Nothingness* I have altered Hazel Barnes's translation slightly in one or two places.