

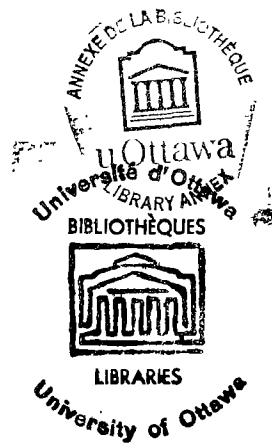
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SARTRE'S NOTION OF FREEDOM

by

LAWRENCE KANE

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"La pluie a cessé, l'air est doux, le ciel roule lentement de belles images noires . . . je vais au hasard, vide et calme, sous ce ciel inutilisé." (La Pensée)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the concept of freedom which is found in Jean-Paul Sartre's L'Être et le néant. I have chosen the topic of freedom, not only because it is one of the most important contemporary problems, but also because I think the question of whether or not man is free is one of the most primordial questions which the consciousness of man asks, because the way in which one answers this question has ramifications in every sphere of life.

I have chosen to do a detailed analysis of L'Être et le néant because it contains a concise conceptual account of Sartre's notion of freedom which, in my estimation, is the foundation for all his subsequent philosophical meditation.¹

Before we begin the first section, however, I think it is necessary to make a few prefatory remarks concerning the ultimate purpose of Sartre's book so that we may have somewhat of a framework in which we can insert his philosophy of freedom. The subtitle of the work is, Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique. Thus his purpose is to

¹ Colette Audry, Sartre et la Réalité Humaine, Paris, Editions Seghers, 1956, p. 43.

present an analysis of being. This analysis, however, is not to be confused with metaphysics. For Sartre, ontology is concerned with the factual data which answers the question what. Metaphysics, on the other hand, attempts to answer the questions why and how by making hypotheses which best unify the data of ontology. Thus it is an epistemological presupposition on which he operates throughout this book that the questions why and how are ex definitiva relegated to the realm of the uncertain; whereas the question what is given independently of the why and the how and can be answered with certitude. It is in this sense that Sartre says that metaphysics is to ontology as history is to sociology.² Also, this analysis of being is further qualified by the fact that it is a phenomenological analysis. It is precisely the question of the meaning of Sartre's phenomenology and its ontological consequences which is the subject of the first main section.

One final remark I would make before beginning the analysis is that this work of Sartre's is a very dialectical one. By this I mean that almost all the parts are intimately dependent on each other for their meaning and that the meaning of a part can be grasped only in the meaning of the whole.

² Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 715.

PHENOMENOLOGY AS THE METHODOLOGICAL
FOUNDATION FOR THE ANALYSIS OF FREEDOM

The first section is an attempt by Sartre to situate himself among various traditional and contemporary trends of thought in respect to the starting point and methodology of philosophy. It is certainly necessary for us to understand this section since it provides the starting point for the analysis of freedom. However, since this section is only indirectly related to the main topic of freedom, I shall only mention the major themes which will enable us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the foundations of his notions of freedom.

Phenomenology has two major precisions for Sartre. For him it consists in both ontological and methodological principles. With regard to the first meaning, Sartre asserts a monism of the phenomenon (i.e. all reality is reduced to the connected totality of its appearances), because it is the simplest explanation of reality and because it obviates many dualisms.³ By this, however, Sartre does not mean that much of reality is not hidden, but merely that phenomena do not hide reality. This monism of the phenomenon, in turn, presupposes two types of being:

³ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 11.

the being of consciousness and the being of which consciousness is conscious. These two realities are respectively designated by Sartre as being - for - itself (or simply the for - itself) and being - in - itself (or simply the in - itself).

Now consciousness may be considered in two ways. First of all, consciousness may be considered as positional insofar as it transcends itself toward an object in such a way that it is a kind of nothingness except insofar as it exhausts itself in that object.⁴ Second, we may speak of a non-positional consciousness since it is a necessary condition for every consciousness of something that it also be conscious of itself. Now what exactly is this consciousness of consciousness and how does it differ from positional consciousness? Sartre rejects the answer that it is knowledge of consciousness. This would constitute a subject - object relation in which the consciousness - reflected - on would be an object for consciousness. But if this were the case, then for the reflecting consciousness in turn to be conscious of itself would require a third term (a consciousness of the consciousness of consciousness). Thus we have the dilemma of either regressing to infinity, or of stopping at one of the terms, in which case there would still be a consciousness which is not conscious of itself. Thus it

⁴. Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 18.

is necessary that consciousness of consciousness be a
 ". . . rapport immédiat et non cogitif de soi à soi."⁵

Thus we may speak of the positional (thetic or reflective) consciousness which considers consciousness as an object; or we may speak of the non-positional, (non-thetic or prereflective) consciousness which is an immediate awareness of consciousness, but not as an object. Or, Sartre says, "En d'autres termes, toute conscience positionnelle d'objet est en même temps conscience non positionnelle d'elle-même."⁶ Thus on the level of prereflective consciousness, "knowing" and being are identical. For this reason, whenever Sartre uses the phrase, "consciousness (of)," as referring to the prereflective consciousness, he will put the "of" in parentheses. Thus the prereflective consciousness is the condition and foundation for the reflective consciousness. We must not think, however, that there are two consciousnesses, but rather that the prereflective consciousness is ". . . le seul mode d'existence qui soit possible pour une conscience de quelque chose."⁷

Being - in - itself is characterized very briefly and succinctly by Sartre. First, it is itself, that is,

⁵ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 19.

⁶ Ibid. p. 19.

⁷ Ibid. p. 20.

it exists independently of consciousness. Second, it is in - itself. Sartre gives many subtle analyses of what he means by this; however, the root idea is that it is the opposite of consciousness. On the one hand, being - in - itself is what it is and has to be and can only be what it is; on the other hand, consciousness can constitute its essence by choosing among its possibilities. Lastly, being - in - itself is. By this Sartre means that it simply is and that it cannot be necessarily deduced or explained in any fashion with respect to its being.⁸

The second and last main meaning which Sartre gives to phenomenology is a methodological and epistemological one. The first important passage is as follows:

Toutefois, la caractéristique de l'être d'un existant, c'est de ne pas se dévoiler lui-même, en personne, à la conscience; on ne peut pas dépouiller un existant de son être, l'être est le fondement toujours présent de l'existant, il est partout en lui et nulle part, il n'y a pas d'être qui ne soit être d'une manière d'être et qu'on ne saisisse à travers la manière d'être qui le manifeste et le voile en même temps.⁹

The passage seems to me to indicate three ways in which being is hidden: a) being is hidden from consciousness in the sense that the cogito is never perfectly united to any being, that is, there is always a barrier of being;

⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris Gallimard, 1943, p. 30-34.

⁹ Ibid. p. 30

b) also, since being never exhausts itself in any one being, there will always be a hiddenness of being even when we are conscious of a being; c) lastly, even though a being manifests itself in a true fashion through phenomena, nevertheless, all phenomena are not immediately given and must be sought out with patience and perseverance.

Sartre then says, "Nous en avons à chaque instant ce que Heidegger appelle une compréhension préontologique, c'est-à-dire qui ne s'accompagne pas de fixation en concepts et d'élucidation."¹⁰ It is this preontological knowledge which we must always rely on. So then, phenomenology as a method of analysis for Sartre seems to consist primarily in the principle that although being is hidden in many ways, it can be apprehended through phenomena which are given to our preontological comprehension. By this, however, Sartre does not seem to mean that we have innate knowledge; but rather, he seems to be tending toward an intuitive notion of truth whereby being is unveiled simply by the beholding of it.

My method of commenting on each section will follow the pattern of treating each major theme within the section: first, in its relation to freedom; second, in re-

¹⁰ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 30.

lation to the advantages and disadvantages in my estimation which this particular analysis has in accounting for the totality of the phenomenon of freedom.

Now then, we have seen that phenomenology is the apparent beginning and foundation for Sartre's philosophy. I say apparent since it seems to me to be rather the material beginning or the material embodiment of a prior formal presupposition which we shall analyze in a later section in order to preserve the formal integrity of Sartre's meditation. Nevertheless, we may proceed with our analysis and simply suspend our judgment on whether phenomenology is the true source for Sartre's philosophy or rather the consequence of a prior presupposition.

The first major theme which we encountered in this section was Sartre's assertion of a monism of phenomena. By this he meant the reduction of all reality to the connected totality of its appearances. By leaving the comprehension of the term appearance very wide and vague, Sartre seemed to be making the laudable endeavor to admit every type of knowledge, experience, data, etc. to his analyses which would be necessary if one is to have a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of freedom for human reality. In fact, however, it seems to me that the real meaning which Sartre has given to the term appearance is a very rationalistic and intellectualistic one. I think we can see the beginning of this restriction

when Sartre concludes from this notion of phenomenology that there are only two types of reality: the for-itself and the in - itself. Sartre uses this terminology because he is referring to human reality and the rest of the world in a very restricted and original way which will be gradually unfolded throughout this paper. At this point, however, I think it is sufficient to see an indication of the rationalistic interpretation of appearance in the fact that Sartre views the "essence" of human reality solely in terms of consciousness and the "essence" of the world solely in terms of being merely in - itself.

This interpretation or presentation of phenomenology has many repercussions on his analysis of freedom. Indeed, it inclines the analysis of freedom to be sought in a purely intellectual manner; and hence, the discussion of freedom will be severely limited since human reality and the world will be discussed merely in terms of being for - itself and in - itself rather than in terms of the material, spiritual, sensory, intuitive, affective, social, and other relationships which, it seems to me, should be analyzed by and for themselves. Thus it seems to me that at the outset, Sartre has sacrificed even the provisional discussion of the rich complexity of being merely for the sake of having an all encompassing and yet coherent and unified view of reality. These conclusions and criticisms have, of course, been made in hind sight and as such can

only be verified by pursuing an analysis of Sartre's text to see if this is in fact the case. I mention this entire analysis here with the hope of sighting the embryonic agglutinations of Sartre's intuitions in all their incipient richness and limitations rather than to clinically dissect the desiccated formulae of a philosophy cut off from its origins.

The second major theme concerned the two fundamental forms of consciousness. I presented Sartre's analysis in some detail since this distinction pervades the entire analysis of freedom. It is intimately involved with his notion of anguish which is Sartre's main argument for the existence of freedom. It is also the concept which enables Sartre to construct his notion of bad faith which we shall see is his primary answer to those who object to his notion of freedom. Lastly, we shall see that freedom is an aspect of non-positional consciousness rather than positional consciousness.

The third main theme consisted in an analysis of the in - itself. The important point here, I think, is the assertion that it is de trop or without meaning or explanation. The main reason why Sartre says this is contained in and flows from his later analysis of the for - itself. This has an obvious relation to freedom insofar as it consists in the rejection of any kind of ultimate ontological finality other than death. In this sense I

would agree with Colette Audry that the tragic element in Sartre is born of the in - itself.¹¹

The last major theme concerns phenomenology more specifically as a method of philosophical analysis. At the outset, we are confronted with two seemingly contradictory statements. Sartre affirms both the hiddenness of being and the translucidity of consciousness. The resolution of this problem lies, I think, in the distinction that the hiddenness is due to the very structure of being whereas the translucidity of consciousness refers to the innate capacity to know. Thus it seems that Sartre views being as hidden in part because of its very structure; and yet, on the other hand, he wants to transcend any skepticism by saying that we have a preontological comprehension of being. By the term preontological, he seems to mean, as we have mentioned, a comprehension without clearly defined concepts. Also, since Sartre says that we must rely on this preontological comprehension, he seems to be adhering to a method of analysis which by its very nature precludes any clearly defined argument for or against an issue.¹² Thus with regard to his notion of

¹¹ Colette Audry, Sartre et la Réalité Humaine. Paris, Editions Seghers, 1966, p. 111.

¹² Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant. Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 30.

freedom, we must realize that he is not so much interested in refuting one view and proving his own, as he is in merely elucidating and delineating his meditations and intuitions, and thereby allowing the reader to behold and accept as his own or reject as alien.

QUESTIONING AND ANGUISH AS THE REVELATION OF FREEDOM

The second main section of Sartre's book is concerned with the problems of nothingness and questioning. We will, for the most part, pass over this section and merely point out some connecting threads of thought. I do this simply because I think the primary function of this section is to provide a continuity of ideas rather than to provide any substantive basis for his notion of freedom, which is what we are primarily concerned with. There is, however, a part within this section concerned with anguish which is very important in respect to his notion of freedom. I say this in spite of the fact that Sartre says in this section that anguish is not a proof of freedom, but rather freedom is the necessary condition for the possibility of man to question. This is, however, said in the context of answering objections which psychological determinism poses to Sartre. It is quite evident, nevertheless, in the context of the whole, that questioning is an aspect of freedom and that the primary revelation of freedom as a structure of man's being is due to anguish. Hence I will only analyze in detail his notion of anguish. Thus I hope that this will provide a good introduction to the section concerning bad faith.

Sartre begins this section by pointing out that in our questioning of being we can recognize questioning as

a mode of human existing. The structure of questioning, in turn, reveals the existence of negations or what Sartre terms négatités. There is, first of all, negation in the sense that a negative answer to the question is possible. There is also negation in the sense of the ignorance on the part of the questioner as to the answer. Lastly, there is negation in the sense that every objective answer is a limit and will exclude other answers. (There are also many other kinds of negation connected with absence, change, otherness, regret, repulsion, etc.) The important point, however, is that all of these négatités have human consciousness as a necessary condition for the possibility of their existence. And, more precisely, it is human consciousness insofar as it is free to project possibilities that is the origin of these négatités. Freedom here is considered primarily in a negative sense; that is, freedom is considered under the double aspect of being able to stand at a distance from or to disengage itself from both objects and itself. For instance, man can project the possibility of making a ladder out of this lumber. Also, man can project the possibility of being a carpenter rather than a teacher. Thus the first main meaning of freedom for Sartre is a mode of consciousness which enables man to withdraw and relate himself to himself and the world.

Thus Sartre's reasoning is as follows: questioning as a mode of existence for man is a fact; questioning reveals the existence of négalités; négalités have as a necessary condition for their existence a mode of consciousness which consists in the freedom to project possibilities. Then, however, Sartre says that someone may object to this by saying that if this freedom is a mode of consciousness, then there must necessarily be a consciousness of this freedom. He answers this objection by saying that anguish is the consciousness of this freedom. Anguish, however, in my estimation has the more important function of being the sole evidence for the existence of Sartrean freedom. This is way, I think, Sartre makes a detailed analysis of anguish. Thus the next section we will analyze will be the section on anguish.

Concerning anguish, Sartre says: ". . . c'est dans l'angoisse que l'homme prend conscience de sa liberté ou, si l'on préfère, l'angoisse est le mode d'être de la liberté comme conscience d'être, c'est dans l'angoisse que la liberté est dans son être en question pour elle-même."¹³ He begins by referring to Kierkegaard's distinction between anguish and fear. To illustrate the difference, we shall use an example of Sartre's: a man

¹³ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris. Gallimard, 1943, p. 66.

is walking on a narrow path up the side of a mountain. There is fear here because an avalanche, a slippery rock, or some weak ground will result in our falling to our death. There is also anguish, however; for we know that we can either exercise extreme caution or be carefree, cling to the side of the mountain or walk the edge; and finally, we can even commit suicide. In the one case, we are afraid of a transcendent object which we cannot have any control over. In the second case, we are anguished because of our self insofar as we must freely choose among many possibilities. Normally the states of fear and anguish are successive: an irreflective fear is usually followed by a reflective anguish. There are, of course states of pure anguish which are neither preceded nor followed by fear.

But now there is a problem: if freedom is a permanent structure of the being of man (as Sartre will assert and explain in the section on the for - itself), and if anguish is the mode of revelation of this freedom, then man should be in a constant state of anguish. If we realize, however, that anguish usually presupposes a reflective awareness of certain possibilities as my possibilities, then there will be a way of explaining why men usually experience anguish rarely. The obvious reason is that we often perform our daily acts in a non-reflective manner,

that is, most of our possibilities are only non-reflectively apprehended by our realizing them in action. This way of acting Sartre terms a pattern of flight when faced with anguish. To say it simply, rather than acknowledge our freedom and the responsibility of choosing, we simply ignore the problem and act unreflectively or else pretend that we are not free and that there is only one true or good way of acting. Both of these ways of acting Sartre terms "bad faith." Nevertheless, we are still left with essentially the same problem; for it doesn't seem possible that man can ignore a fundamental structure of his being. Sartre tells us that we must look for an answer in an analysis of bad faith.

The major theme in this section seems to me to be that of anguish. Its function for Sartre is to reveal and "prove" the existence of freedom. I certainly would not deny that there is a type of anguish which reveals the freedom to act and hence the responsibility for acting. Nor would I disagree that in some sense freedom is a permanent structure of man since I think his distinction between reflective and non-reflective anguish and his notion of bad faith sufficiently explain the rarity of anguish. Two questions, however, remain in my mind:

a) "Is man's freedom absolute or limited?" b) "Does the experience of anguish reveal either absolute freedom

or limited freedom to the exclusion of the other?"

These questions, however, are intimately related to the question of action and values and hence will be taken up again in the section where Sartre treats of this.

BAD FAITH AS THE FUTILE ENDEAVOR
TO AVOID FREEDOM

I. BAD FAITH AND FALSEHOOD

He begins the first subsection concerning bad faith by recalling that man is not only the condition for the existence of négarités, but that he can also negate himself because of his freedom to actualize various possibilities. Bad faith is one way of negating one's self. One can say that bad faith is a lie to oneself if one is careful to distinguish this lie from a lie simply. The fundamental difference is that in a lie simply, someone in possession of the truth deliberately hides it from another; whereas in bad faith, there is a unity of consciousness in which the same person both possesses the truth and conceals it from himself at the same moment. Also, bad faith is not a state which comes to us from outside, but is the result of a free project which implies "...une compréhension de la mauvaise foi comme telle et une saisie préreflexive (de) la conscience comme s'effectuant de mauvaise foi."¹⁴ At this point, Sartre doesn't try to explain the paradox, but concludes the section, by showing that the Freudian unconscious does not explain the paradox, but, in fact, either presupposes

¹⁴ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 87.

bad faith in the censor, or else results in a worse duality of the me and the other within the same person.

II. THE CONDUCTS OF BAD FAITH

The second subsection analyzes the structures of consciousness which are necessary for the possibility of bad faith. There are three ambiguities in human reality which make bad faith possible. First, there is the ambiguity of facticity and transcendence. Facticity represents the condition of the person - in - the - world. Transcendence represents the projecting and negating ability of man which aims at changing the self and the world. The second ambiguity consists in the fact that we can consider ourselves either as we see ourselves or as another sees ourselves. The third involves the temporal ambiguity by which one can think of himself either as he was or as he will be.

Now, what exactly is "bad" in bad faith? It is simply the attempt to consider oneself as a thing, as an in - itself (whether that be one's transcendence, facticity, being - for - self, being - for - another, past, or future), rather than to accept the human situation as it is in all its freedom. Sartre concludes the section by saying: "La condition de possibilité de la mauvaise foi, c'est que la réalité humaine, dans son être le plus immédiat, dans l'intrastructure du cogito préré-

flexif, soit ce qu'elle n'est pas et ne soit pas ce qu'elle est."¹⁵ The last sentence means that if one accepts his freedom, then he must be that which he is not (a future project) and must not be that which he is (his being is always in question because of freedom). Thus there is a fissure within human reality itself which bad faith utilizes.

III. THE "FAITH" OF BAD FAITH

The last subsection deals with the "faith" in bad faith. We may call this faith belief if by that we mean " . . . l'adhésion de l'être à son objet, lorsque l'objet n'est pas donné ou est donné indistinctement . . . "¹⁶ Now the object of bad faith is the ambiguous human reality which is what it is not and is not what it is. Indeed, to consider the human reality as anything else is precisely bad faith. However, since this reality is ambiguous, one can "decide" not to be convinced that human reality is such. Nevertheless, one could object that if one's belief is simply due to a subjective volition and if one "knows" this, then his belief is automatically destroyed, Sartre answers this question thus:

¹⁵ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 108.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 108.

Certes, nous avons forcé ici la description du phénomène en le désignant par le mot de savoir; la conscience non thétique, n'est pas savoir. (Mais elle est, par sa translucidité même, à l'origine de tout savoir.) Ainsi, la conscience non thétique (de) croire est destructrice de la croyance. Mais, en même temps, la loi même du cogito préréflexif implique que l'être du croire doit être la conscience de croire. Ainsi, la croyance est un être qui se met en question dans son propre être, qui ne peut se réaliser que dans sa destruction qui ne peut se manifester à soi qu'en se niant; c'est un être pour qui être, c'est paraître, et paraître, c'est se nier.¹⁷

Now what does he mean? First, we do not have a reflective knowledge that our belief is due to our subjective will. We do, however, have a non-reflective consciousness of this which destroys our belief. But, at the same time, there is consciousness (of) belief since every act of consciousness (in this case, believing) must exist as consciousness since its whole being is simply this consciousness. Thus we have the paradoxical situation that the very condition for the possibility of belief is the simultaneous destruction and negation of it because there is a non-reflective consciousness that it is due to a mere volition. Sartre concludes by saying that we can now begin a study of consciousness.

I would like to conclude this section by saying that it seems that Sartre's notion of bad faith does provide a reasonable explanation of why -- presupposing freedom as a fundamental structure of human reality -- many people,

¹⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 110.

for the most part, are not in anguish. Thus he has to a great extent resolved the objection that freedom is not a permanent structure of man because anguish is only rarely and intermittently experienced. This does not mean-- and Sartre certainly agrees -- that bad faith is a perfectly clear notion. It is, in fact, a paradox; but, nevertheless, it seems to me that there are good reasons within Sartre's context for asserting it. We must remember, however, that it is an assertion which is made to explain the presupposition that anguish reveals freedom as a fundamental structure of man. As such, it is true only to the extent that the presupposition is true.

If in our final analysis, however, we conclude that the pervading intuition for Sartre is the notion of absolute freedom, which is in turn based on his notion of consciousness, which is in turn based on the methodological presuppositions of his meditation, and if we have reasons to object to this notion of absolute freedom, then we must realize that it would be a petitio principii for Sartre to answer by merely saying that we are in bad faith; rather, he would have to argue against our reasons; for we could simply counter that he, in fact, was in bad faith.

AN IDEALISM OF SIGNIFICATION
AS THE METHODOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITION
IN THE ANALYSIS OF FREEDOM

The fourth main section is concerned with what I consider to be Sartre's main philosophical presupposition, which is also a methodological one. It is contained in the first part of Sartre's analysis of the for-itself in which he tries to summarize his ideas on the methodology of philosophical meditation. I think that we shall see that it is not by chance that Sartre places this section as a type of preface to the section on the for-itself.

He begins by telling us that our analysis of negation referred us to freedom, this, in turn, to bad faith, and bad faith to the prereflective cogito as the condition for its possibility. He then continues with a very important sentence, "Mais le cogito ne livre jamais que ce qu'on lui demande de livrer."¹⁸ He further explains this statement thus:

A vrai dire, il faut partir du cogito, mais on peut dire de lui, en parodiant une formule célèbre, qu'il mène à tout à condition d'en sortir. Nos recherches précédentes, qui portaient sur les conditions de possibilité de certaines conduites, n'avaient pour but que de nous mettre en mesure d'interroger le cogito sur son être et de nous fournir l'instrument dialectique qui nous permettrait de trouver

¹⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris Gallimard, 1943, p. 115.

dans le cogito lui-même le moyen de nous évader de l'instantanéité vers la totalité d'être que constitue la réalité humaine.¹⁹

Now I think we are in a position to uncover the primordial methodological presupposition of the entire Sartrean edifice and to situate ourselves in regard to it. When Sartre says that the cogito never surrenders anything except that which is asked of it, it seems that he means that it does not give us anything except sheer consciousness. Indeed, this would seem to me why the existence of the material world was concluded by the "ontological proof" which was based on the nature of consciousness alone, rather than accepted as a given in consciousness. This would also seem to be why he uses only a few pages to describe transcendent being, whereas all the rest of the book is primarily concerned with consciousness. This is, perhaps, also why he does not seem to be able to say much about transcendent being except that it is in - itself. It is true, however, that Sartre says it is necessary to leave the cogito. And it is true that he has not only gotten out of the cogito, but has "proven" the existence of the material world. Nevertheless, it seems to me that one should not only get out of the cogito, but that one should let reality be as it is apart from any imposition of the cogito. In spite of the apparent ten-

¹⁹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 116.

dency in the analysis of appearance to be open to being and to accept it as a given in consciousness, he has, in fact, methodologically presupposed that the way of understanding not only consciousness, but the total human reality and the world is by an analysis of pure consciousness. In fact, in the preceding quotation, he explicitly says that his sole goal in the prior analysis was to interrogate the cogito in order to find in it itself the means to understand the whole human reality. Thus Sartre seems to have fallen prey -- as his master, Descartes -- to a methodological idealism or an idealism of signification, at least with respect to the world and any aspects of the human reality except consciousness.

Does this mean that we should discontinue our analysis of Sartre? On the contrary, his method does not preclude an authentic and true analysis of consciousness. Also, undoubtedly this analysis will illuminate other realities. We must simply be especially attentive to any assertion by Sartre in regard to any reality other than consciousness or even consciousness itself insofar as it is related to other realities, and realize that it has its foundation in an analysis of pure consciousness alone. With respect to what Sartre says concerning consciousness, we will either recognize our own experience or not. And if we do not recognize our own experience there, then there simply is no room for dialogue since we are starting with

different visions. If we differ, however, in regard to some reality other than consciousness, it would seem that dialogue would be possible since we are looking at reality from two points of view (e.g. Sartre from a reflective analysis of consciousness, we from a reflective analysis of reality simpliciter -- albeit through consciousness).

I. FOR - ITSELF IS THE
ONTOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR FREEDOM

The fifth main section is, in my estimation, the ontological foundation for Sartre's notion of absolute freedom. This section is the concrete analysis of freedom as it exists in every individual man in contrast to the following section which will analyze the abstract notion of freedom in all its significations. In this section he analyzes human reality from the point of view of pure consciousness and on the basis of this, is led to conclude to the absolute freedom of man.

I. PRESENCE TO SELF

The primary notion of the first subsection is that the being of consciousness is a being such that in its being, its very being is in question. This has been interpreted as meaning that consciousness is the obverse of the in - itself; that is, there is not a perfect coincidence of it with itself. For instance, in the example of belief, we cannot say simply that consciousness (of) belief is consciousness (of) belief: for precisely insofar as belief is consciousness (of) belief, it is no longer belief; or rather, it is troubled belief.

As a further explication, Sartre says that the self is always present to the self, or rather, is at a distance

from itself. But when we ask what this distance is, we can only reply that it is nothing. In the example, for instance, there is "nothing" which separates consciousness (of) belief from consciousness (of) belief; for it is nothing other than consciousness (of) belief. Yet, as was pointed out above, neither is there a perfect coincidence. Sartre says of this non-being, "Il est été."²⁰ He is here referring to the being of consciousness (for-itself) insofar as it is and is not because its being is constantly in question in virtue of the necessity of an eternal consciousness of being able to freely choose either to be or not to be, or to be this or that.

II. THE FACTICITY OF THE FOR - ITSELF

The second subsection is concerned with the facticity of the for-itself. Facticity is used by Sartre to refer to the for-itself as being - in - the - world and as being contingent. These are not two completely different notions. In fact, we may say that contingency is revealed by and is the result of the for - itself as being - in - the - world. Sartre has his own special meaning for contingency. A being is contingent if it lacks its own fundament or ground, or, as Sartre says, if it is de trop. The notion of de trop, I think is best understood in terms of final-

²⁰ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris Gallimard, 1943, p. 120.

ity, that is, a being is de trop if a) there is no reason why it came into being in the sense that one's birth is given and is not chosen; b) there is no reason why it is this type of being rather than another; c) there is no reason for it to continue in being. That Sartre is doing it seems to me, is denying any ontological finality. We can also see why he does this; for since he is taking the perspective of consciousness, that is, since he is looking at consciousness as consciousness rather than consciousness of -- as a methodological presupposition -- then certainly there will be no ontological finality since consciousness as pure and simple consciousness reveals itself as a sheer freedom to project and realize certain possibilities.

However, besides the utter gratuity and freedom which results from the facticity of the for - itself as contingent, there is also a type of determinism in regard to facticity as a particular situation (e.g. being in Canada, on a rainy day, and of Irish descent). Nevertheless, the situation does not determine the for - itself as being such or such; for it is precisely the for - itself which freely gives a meaning to a situation by making various projects. This question is treated in detail in a later section; the main idea, however, is that although one cannot choose the situation he is in, he can freely choose how he will react to it. Thus we have here again a

dialectical relationship: consciousness as for - itself is the fundament of its being this or that, and yet, it is not the fundament of its being simply.

III. THE FOR - ITSELF AND THE BEING OF VALUE

The next subsection is concerned with the for - itself and the being of value. We have already seen that the for - itself negates itself in its own being. This negation, however, is accomplished only in reference to the in - itself, that is, it determines itself not to be an in - itself. Thus the in - itself is intimately linked with the transcendence of the for - itself. Sartre then attempts to explore this relationship through an analysis of "lack."

He says that the most fundamental internal negation ". . .celle qui constitue dans son être l'[^]être dont elle nie avec l'[^]être qu'elle nie, c'est le manque."²¹ Lack doesn't pertain to the in - itself which is full positivity, but comes into the world only in relation to human reality. There are three aspects of every lack: a) that which is lacking, or the lacking; b) that which lacks the lacking, or the existing; c) a totality which has been broken by the lack and which will be restored by a synthesis of the lacking and the existing, namely,

²¹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'[^]être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 129.

the lacked. In this trinity, it is the - lacked which is primary since it constitutes the lacking as lacking and the existing as lacking. The - lacked (or that which is not) determines that which is (either the lacking or the existing).

The existence of desire is proof that human reality is a lack. It is a lack, however, which must transcend itself -- at least in terms of consciousness -- since otherwise it could never be viewed as lack or desire.

Now then, what exactly are the three terms of lack which arise through human reality? The existing is that which is disclosed as the immediate subject of desire. But what is the - lacked? To answer this we must examine more closely the bond between the lacking and the existing. Now, we have already seen that the lacking must be present (in its very absence) at the heart of the existing in order to be constituted as such. Thus the lacking and the existing are apprehended as about to be annihilated in the unity of the totality which is lacked. Now, since everything which lacks, lacks "for," what is the for in reference to human reality?

We have seen that the for - itself is the fundament of its being insofar as it denies itself a certain being or manner of being since its very nature is to put its being in question. That which it denies is nothing other than the self as in - itself (the self as not being able

to be other than itself). Since, in this respect, human reality is not what it is, it can derive its meaning only from a more primary relationship which Sartre calls the ". . . rapport nul ou identité."²² He says:

C'est le soi qui serait ce qu'il est, qui permet de saisir le pour-soi comme n'étant pas ce qu'il est; la relation niée dans la définition du pour-soi--et qui, comme telle, doit être posée d'abord--c'est une relation donnée comme perpétuellement absente du pour-soi à lui-même sur le mode d'identité."²³

The for - itself - is an eternal failure to ground its being since it is the foundation only of its non - being in the sense that it always puts its being in question. Thus the ever failing act of the for - itself to ground itself can derive its meaning only ". . . en présence de l'être qu'il a échoué à être, c'est-à-dire de l'être qui serait fondement de son être et non plus seulement fondement de son néant, c'est-à-dire qui serait soi fondement en tant que coïncidence avec soi."²⁴ Thus consciousness refers both to the lacking and the existing. Also, the origin of transcendence is human reality in its continual endeavor to surpass itself and to found itself in that which it lacks, namely, coincidence with

²² Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 132.

²³ Ibid. p. 132.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

itself, or the self as in - itself. Thus Sartre makes the - lacked as the ground of the surging up of the for - itself: ". . .Ainsi l'événement pur par quoi la réalité humaine surgit comme présence au monde est saisie d'elle-même par soi comme son propre manque."²⁵ Therefore, the fundamental relation of consciousness to being - in - itself is that of a lack to that which defines its lack.

That toward which human reality strives, however, is not the pure and simple transcendent in - itself; for if it were such, consciousness would be destroyed. The totality which human reality strives for is the impossible synthesis of the for - itself and the in - itself. In other words, it wishes to be the fundament of its being, and not only of its non - being, and yet preserve the necessary translucidity of consciousness. Because of this, Sartre says:

La réalité humaine est souffrante dans son être, parce qu'elle surgit à l'être comme perpétuellement hantée par une totalité qu'elle est sans pouvoir l'être, puisque justement elle ne pourrait atteindre l'en-soi sans se perdre comme pour-soi. Elle est donc par nature conscience malheureuse, sans dépassement possible de l'état de malheur.²⁶

But what exactly is this impossible synthesis of the

²⁵ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 132.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 134.

in - itself - for - itself toward which the unhappy consciousness of man strives? As was said previously, it is impossible to realize it. Yet consciousness can only exist as engaged in this being. It is not relative to consciousness since it is not projected as an object by consciousness. Rather, it is a phantom being which haunts the non-thetic consciousness (of) self. It is not in the sense that it can never be realized; and yet, it is, in the sense that it can never escape from consciousness, for consciousness could not be consciousness (i.e. lack) without it, and since consciousness derives its meaning from it. Neither has priority; but rather, they form a dyad, neither of which can exist without the other. Finally, we must not think of this being only in abstract terms since every consciousness arises in an individual concrete situation. It is the self in its individual achievement which haunts the for - itself.

Now we can determine more exactly the being of the self. It is value. Value, however, is affected with the double character of both being and not being. Value as value certainly is; but the being of value is not to be being. Sartre, at this point does not give any reasons for the latter statement. In this context, however, there seem to be two reasons why he would say this: a) value seems to be intimately linked with consciousness to the extent that it could not exist independently of it;

b) Sartre's propensity to claim absolute freedom for the for-itself independent of reality would also seem to relegate value to the domain of non-being. He seems to indicate this when he says that although nobility can be seen in a noble act, the value thus apprehended is not on the same level of being as the act which confers value on nobility. He then without further argumentation concludes:

Ces considérations suffisent à nous faire admettre que la réalité humaine est ce par quoi la valeur arrive dans le monde. Or, la valeur a pour sens d'être ce vers quoi un être dépasse son être: tout acte valorisé est arrachement à son être vers . . .²⁷

Thus value is seen as the beyond or the "for" of all surpassings or transcendences. Value, therefore, is intimately linked with human reality. In fact, it is presupposed and is the ground of all human transcendences.

In terms of lack, value can be seen as the - lacked, that is, the totality of the lacking and the existing which totality is itself lacking. Thus value is the ground of all lack. Even further, value transcends itself insofar as it bestows being on itself. The reason for this is that precisely insofar as any value is achieved, it is to that very extent itself put in question by value because of the freedom of the for - itself. I do not

²⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris Gallimard, 1943, p. 137.

think he means so much to restrict value arbitrarily to the continual negative denial of one's self; but rather, he seems to mean that value can never be achieved since it is never grounded in itself since it is always in question for the for - itself. This is, perhaps, why he says that value does not exercise any attraction or external constraint over the for - itself. Again, he says:

En un mot le soi [i.e. the self which^{is} sought, or, the self as in - itself - for - itself], le pour-soi et leur rapport se tiennent à la fois dans les limites d'une liberté inconditionnée--en ce sens que rien ne fait exister la valeur, si ce n'est cette liberté qui du même coup me fait exister moi-même. . .²⁸

This unconditioned freedom is, of course, also the foundation for the relativity which exists in the area of morals for Sartre. We will see precisely what this means when we come to the section in which Sartre more specifically analyzes transcendent value.

Now then, value is not posited by consciousness, but is consubstantial with it. Thus for non-thetic consciousness, value is simply given and not known -- except non-reflectively of course. Reflective consciousness, on the other hand, sees human reality as lack, and value as the out - of - reach meaning of what is lacked. Finally, he concludes this section by saying that a detailed analy-

²⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 138.

sis of the objective encounter with values will be made in the last main section.

We have seen that Sartre has analyzed the fundamental "nature" of consciousness and value in terms of lack. This has obvious importance for his notion of freedom since it bears on the motivation of consciousness and the constitution of value as such. It is here that we encounter a paradox and a possible contradiction within Sartre and one which he recognizes and questions until the very last page. On the one hand, he says that the for - itself acts because of the lack of the in - itself - for - itself; and yet, on the other hand, he says that value (or the in - itself - for - itself) does not limit the freedom of the for - itself. I think we can best attempt to resolve this problem in the section where Sartre specifically treats of transcendent values. Now, however, Sartre will continue the analysis of value under the aspect of lack by considering the being - of - possibles

IV. THE FOR - ITSELF AND THE BEING OF POSSIBLES

The fourth subsection is concerned with the for - itself and the being of possibles. We have seen that human reality is a lack of coincidence with itself. As such, the for - itself wishes to transform itself into a particular concrete self. Thus the lacking arises as a complement to the existing in the process of transcend-

ence. The self which it wishes to be is its own self; and yet, it can never be this self perfectly in the mode of identity since it is always for - itself. Thus Sartre says "Ainsi le rapport transcendent originel du pour-soi au soi esquisse perpétuellement comme un projet d'identification du pour-soi à un pour-soi absent qu'il est et dont il manque."²⁹ That which is the lacking and defines the for - itself as lacking is precisely the possible.

The possible is an option on being which can arise only through human reality since the very notion of the possible presupposes a transcendence. As such, the possible can only be a structure of the for - itself, since the in - itself is full positivity. More precisely, the possible is a structure of the for - itself to the extent that it is not what it is and is what it is not.

Finally, the eternal striving of human reality for the possible can be viewed in two ways. On the non-reflective level, drinking a glass of water aims at satisfying thirst. On the reflective level, however, this act is seen to have as its goal the satisfaction of the ontological thirst of the for - itself to be itself.

²⁹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 140.

V. THE SELF AND THE CIRCUIT OF SELFNESS

The only notion in the last subsection which is pertinent to our research is that of the Ego. The Ego doesn't pertain to the domain of the for - itself since it is in - itself. The mode of being of the "I" is that of the "having been." rather than that of the for - itself. Thus it is seen to be a transcendent in - itself. The for - itself, however, rather than simply an impersonal contemplation of the Ego, is the very condition for the appearance of the Ego by means of its self-transcendence.

In this section there seem to me to have been three fundamental ideas: a) the for - itself is present to itself; b) facticity is a fundamental structure of the for - itself; c) value is the totality of the in - itself - for - itself which is lacked.

First of all, it certainly does seem that the for - itself is present to itself in the form of being able to negate itself. In this sense it is the ground of its non - being. Also, it certainly is not the ground of its being in the sense that its being is always in question. Nevertheless, it seems to me that Sartre has certainly overemphasized the negative aspect of presence to self to the detriment of the affirmative and positive aspect. Indeed, the affirmative aspect seems to me more primordial since one must affirm and become one's self in order to negate oneself. Also, it seems that negation

can arise only through affirmation whereas affirmation does not necessarily need negation as a condition sine qua non. This point has important implications for Sartre's notion of freedom. By viewing man almost exclusively in the negative sense of denying or negating himself, Sartre has provided the ontological basis for his view of absolute freedom; but he has also made this freedom into a meaningless absurdity since life would consist in no more than one huge denial. Or, to use a distinction of Erich Fromm's, freedom from can find its meaning only in freedom to. It is true, however, that Sartre's denial of transcendent values precludes the notion of freedom to. Nevertheless, it seems to me that if Sartre viewed freedom also in its positive aspect, it would open the door to assenting to transcendent values.

Second, we have seen that Sartre has asserted facticity as a permanent structure of the for - itself. By this he seems to mean that the for - itself is infected with contingency or a lack of meaning with regard to its origin (because it had no choice in the matter), with regard to its present way of existing (absolute freedom destroys transcendent values and hence relegates all ways of existing to pure arbitrariness), with regard to its final end, death (since death is considered as the ultimate, absurd return to nothingness rather than the re-

solving chord of a melody which brings fulfillment).

There certainly are many plausible reasons for saying that the for - itself is de trop. In fact, because of Sartre's primary methodological presupposition, to view being in terms of pure consciousness, Sartre must necessarily view not only the for - itself, but the entire world as de trop. This is so because rather than look at the for - itself and the world as objects known -- at least to some extent -- Sartre first observes consciousness in its subjective freedom to project any value it wishes. Now, in one sense there certainly is an absolute subjective freedom to project and act in any way we wish in a situation. Also, if we observe the world and human reality solely in terms of this absolute subjective freedom, it certainly will preclude any transcendent value and hence will relegate being to the realm of the de trop. However, if we see consciousness not only as in one sense absolutely subjectively free, but also as limited insofar as it is a consciousness of being and a knowledge of being, then it would seem that one would have to recognize the existence of transcendent values. Sartre, in fact, does recognize the limitation of consciousness by truth and the existence of one supreme transcendent value, the in - itself - for - itself. I do not think this is a contradiction within Sartre; rather, it simply represents two instances in which he did not allow his usual methodological

presupposition to operate. Why then does he bring this methodological presupposition to bear on every other analysis? In other words, even if we grant the absurdity of being in an ultimate sense (because of death), why does Sartre will (by reflecting under the influence of this presupposition) to refuse even relative truth, goodness and beauty as necessary transcendent values?

This is, I think, a crucial question; for, as Aristotle said, we cannot rest secure in the truth if we do not understand the reason for the diversity of opinion. Now, although a psychological explanation of the origin of a meditation is never an argument against it, I think it often is the only possible explanation for a tyrannical interest of a man for one aspect of reality to the exclusion of others. My personal and unsubstantiated opinion, based on his works as a whole along with biographical information, would be that Sartre wanted absolute and full knowledge so much that he lost all faith in philosophical meditation since it obviously could not provide this. Thus rather than consider Sartre an overbearing Cartesian rationalist, I would consider him a philosopher without faith in philosophy who merely chose to analyze in all its ramifications one seemingly imposing aspect of reality, the pure consciousness of man. Thus, on the one hand, in order to make his analysis of an idea,

he had to admit the limitation of consciousness by truth; on the other hand, since being seemed to him to be sheer mystery in an ultimate sense, he disdainfully refused any relative sense.

The facticity of the for - itself is obviously related to the phenomenon of freedom. Indeed, if the for - itself is completely lacking in meaning in the sense that every act is utterly capricious, then certainly one's freedom will be absolute since it will not have any objective or subjective limitations since all meaning is derived from a free projection by the for - itself. One may pause here, however, and wonder whether it is the facticity of the for - itself which causes Sartre to assert total freedom or whether it is Sartre's notion of total freedom which causes him to assert the facticity of the for - itself. It seems to me, as I have said, that logically speaking Sartre proposes the latter case. Psychologically speaking, however, it seemed to me that the conviction concerning facticity could very well have been the motivation for his considering man in terms of pure consciousness, total freedom, and absolute absurdity.

Finally, I think the questions whether or not values exist and what do they consist in of fundamental importance to the problem of freedom for two reasons: first, if one does not admit even the minimal limitation of

freedom insofar as we are a certain kind of being, structured with various needs which necessarily crave fulfillment and in terms of which we act, then it seems to me that it will be impossible to view freedom as limited in any sense; second it is precisely this point which seems to me most open to criticism in Sartre's theory of freedom.

We certainly would agree with Sartre that lack is a fundamental structure of human reality and that value in one sense arises in the world through human reality. It seems to me, however, that we must recognize the existence of at least relative transcendent goods which limit our freedom, simply because our being is a specific kind which is limited by certain needs and can be fulfilled by satisfying at least some limited needs. Thus I would think that man finds true (even if limited) fulfillment in truth, love, food, drink, sex, music, art, etc., and that these are not illusory sublimations of the only true value (the in - itself - for - itself) made in bad faith. A much more extensive analysis of this entire question, however, will be made in a later section in which Sartre treats of this problem more specifically.

FREEDOM AS THE PRIMARY CONDITION FOR ACTION

Now that Sartre has presented the root notions of his philosophy, he gives us a more detailed and abstract analysis of freedom which I have somewhat arbitrarily divided into six subsections.

I. THE NATURE OF ACTION AS PRESUPPOSING FREEDOM

In the first subsection, Sartre discusses the nature of action and points out that freedom is a primary condition for action. In general, by action he means a modification of the world. He further clarifies this by saying that it consists of the disposal of means in view of an end, or the production of an organized instrumental complex such that by a series of relationships an anticipated result is produced. The most important clarification, however, is that action is fundamentally intentional, that is, the end must be consciously intended. Thus man can be said to truly act only in direct proportion to the intentionality.

This notion of action presupposes an objective lack or nécessité. By this he is simply referring to a state of affairs which is not and thus can be intended by an action. His point is not to utter a commonplace, but to point out that the non-being or the pure possibility of

a state of affairs and the conceptualization thereof is a primary condition for action. Also, action presupposes that this possible is not only a pure possible, but also a desired possible. A useful example Sartre uses is that a worker cannot rebel against severe conditions unless he is able to detach himself from the status quo and envision a different and desirable state of affairs.

Two important consequences follow from this:

1) Aucun état de fait, quel qu'il soit (structure politique, économique de la société, "état" psychologique, etc.), n'est susceptible de motiver par lui-même un acte quelconque. Car un acte est une projection du pour-soi vers ce qui n'est pas et ce qui est ne peut aucunement déterminer par lui-même ce qui n'est pas. 2) Aucun état de fait ne peut déterminer la conscience à le saisir comme négativité ou comme manque.³⁰

Thus, action presupposes as a necessary condition a double nihilation (a projection which involves a withdrawal from the status quo and oneself) by consciousness insofar as it posits the status quo as undesirable in terms of a possible which is desirable. Thus we see that the first meaning of freedom, which is also the primary condition for action, is the freedom of the for - itself to nihilate or make projects.

Now then, we have seen that Sartre has concluded

³⁰ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 510-511.

that no state of affairs by itself can motivate an action, or, in fact, even determine consciousness to seize upon it as a nécessité or a lack. The first conclusion is obviously true since Sartre has defined action as the projection of an end which, indeed, requires consciousness. The second conclusion involves what I consider to be the crucial question in regard to the entire analysis, namely, the question of whether or not there are transcendent values. If there are not transcendent values, then Sartre's second conclusion would also seem to be correct. If, however, there are transcendent values, then the question becomes much more complicated, especially as regards the highest or most fundamental transcendent values. This question, however, is treated in the next subsection.

II. FREEDOM VERSUS DETERMINISM

The second subsection is concerned with freedom and determinism. On the one hand, the proponents of a freedom of indifference try to point out examples of choice in which there was no anterior motif or in which there were two different acts having equal motifs and motives. To which the determinists simply reply that there is no act which is lacking in a motif and a motive which confer on it its meaning. Sartre says that the determinists are correct in saying that every act ~~has~~ a motif and a motive since every act is intentional and refers to an

end which refers to a motif. Otherwise, the fundamental meaning of an act would be rendered absurd.

Sartre continues, however, by saying that the essential question is how the motif and motive are constituted as such. Now, although there is no act without a motif, this is not in the same sense that there is no phenomenon without a cause. On the contrary, to be a motif, it must be "experienced" as such. This does not mean that the person must make it conceptually explicit, but, at least, that "...le pour-soi doit lui conférer sa valeur de mobile ou de motif."³¹ Indeed, the constitution of the motif as such cannot possibly refer to an anterior motif; for then, "...la nature même de l'acte, comme engagé intentionnellement dans le non-être, s'évanouirait."³² In regard to the motive, we have already seen that it is understood only through the end which is nonexistent.

Sartre uses as an example a person who accepts a very poor salary because of the fear of dying of hunger. Fear is indeed a motive; but it cannot have any meaning apart from an end which is ideally posed, that is, the preservation of life which is now grasped as in danger.

³¹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943. p. 512.

³² Ibid. p. 512.

Further, this fear cannot be understood except in terms of a value which I implicitly give to life which in turn refers to a hierarchical system of ideal objects which are in fact what values are. Thus the motive is constituted as such by the ensemble of beings which are not, by ideal existences and by the future. Thus Sartre concludes:

C'est seulement parce que j'échappe à l'en-soi en me néantisant vers mes possibilités que cet en-soi peut prendre valeur de motif ou de mobile. Motifs et mobiles n'ont de sens qu'à l'intérieur d'un ensemble projeté qui est justement un ensemble de non-existants. Et cet ensemble, c'est finalement moi-même comme transcendance, c'est moi en tant que j'ai à être moi-même hors de moi. . . C'est l'acte qui décide de ses fins et de ses mobiles, et l'acte est l'expression de la liberté.³³

Now let us summarize what Sartre has said thus far about freedom and action. An act as such must be intentional. Therefore, every act must involve a motif and a motive. Sartre has not thus far distinguished explicitly between these two; however, it is rather clear that by motif he is referring to an objective situation viewed in relation to a certain end, and that by motive he is referring to either the end itself or the subjectivity in its striving for some end. He then says that the essential question is how the end is constituted as such.

³³ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 512-513.

Now the end as such is in the realm of non-being. Thus he says that every action presupposes an objective lack or négité. By this objective lack, however, Sartre refers only to the end which is not and is desired. He specifically does not mean to refer to a subjective lack which would necessitate an end or a project. In fact, Sartre says that no existing state of affairs by itself can motivate an action or even determine consciousness to seize upon a situation as an objective lack. His reasons are: a) if the end were constituted as such, not by consciousness, but by a previous state of affairs, then the very nature of action as intentionally engaged in non-being would vanish; b) every act as intentional requires that consciousness detach itself from itself and the situation to envision and project an end which is not. Thus he concludes that the value which is presupposed in every action, and which, for Sartre, is equivalent to the end projected, is an arbitrary and absolutely freely chosen one since it is the for-itself which confers upon it its meaning and value as an end.

I have said before that the questions whether or not values exist and what they consist in is of crucial importance to Sartre's notion of freedom. It is in this section that we see why, because it is here that Sartre not only asserts absolute freedom for the for - itself, but explains why. His fundamental reason consists of

denying all transcendent values. In other words Sartre denies that we act out of necessity because of various needs which are rooted in our being. His reason for denying transcendent values consists of arguments against the only other possible alternative, namely, that man acts because of a subjective lack or that action presupposes a subjective lack. Thus, depending on how one answers this question will also depend whether man's freedom is limited or absolute.

If one is not only attempting to understand Sartre's fundamental notion of freedom, but also is personally trying to relate himself to this view, it seems to me that it must be at this juncture ~~that~~ he must do so. I disagree with Sartre on two issues. First, it seems to me that the notion of action presupposes a subjective lack which constitutes its meaning. This in turn precipitates the second disagreement, namely, that value is not constituted as such by consciousness alone.

We have seen that Sartre gives two reasons for denying that a subjective lack constitutes the meaning of an act. First, he says that since an end must be "experienced" as such, it is the for-itself which confers upon the end its value. Although it certainly is true that the for-itself confers value on the end in the sense that one must both be aware of an end and choose to seek it, nevertheless,

this does not contradict the possibility that one acts precisely in order to fulfill a subjective lack which confers value on an end even though the for - itself may deny it as a value because of another value. In this sense, man is determined to act for a good or a value if there is any acting, but not determined to act for this or that or even the highest value whatever that may be.

The second reason Sartre gives is that the very nature of action as intentionally engaged in non-being would vanish if a subjective lack, insofar as it is, and is not simply nothing, were constitutive of value as such. This would not seem to me to be a necessary consequence if one realizes, as I certainly do, that even if a subjective lack constitutes value as such, it is still a necessary condition for action that consciousness intend or will do this or that.

Thus far I have merely pointed out reasons why I think Sartre's arguments for absolute freedom are invalid. Since this is my major point of contention, however, it is necessary to point out the positive argument for limited freedom. Since this would constitute a major breach within the text, however, I have reserved these arguments for the conclusion.

III. THE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING FREEDOM

In the third subsection, Sartre points out the dif-

difficulties in analyzing his notion of freedom. Sartre concluded the last subsection by saying that freedom in the sense of the freedom to project an end is the primary condition for action. Now we must attempt to describe freedom more precisely. Now the usual method of description is to make explicit the structures of some essence. Indeed, Sartre says that we must say of it what Heidegger says of Dasein: "En elle l'existence précède et commande l'essence."³⁴ He explains what he means by this statement thus:

La liberté se fait acte et nous l'atteignons ordinairement à travers l'acte qu'elle organise avec les motifs, les mobiles et les fins qu'il implique. Mais précisément parce que cet acte a une essence, il nous apparaît comme constitué; si nous voulons remonter à la puissance constitutive, il faut abandonner tout espoir de lui trouver une essence. Celle-ci, en effet, exigerait une nouvelle puissance constitutive et ainsi de suite à l'infini.³⁵

Another way of putting it would be to speak of freedom in two different aspects. Freedom as an act of defining itself by projecting ends can be grasped and has a very definite meaning in terms of a particular act. A more primordial aspect of freedom, however, is presupposed by an act of freedom, namely, the constitutive "power" to

³⁴ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 513.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 513.

act thus. It is this primordial aspect of freedom which has no essence and concerning which Sartre says it is dangerous to even use the word freedom if we think it refers to a concept as words ordinarily do.

Sartre attempts to overcome this difficulty by describing the act of freedom by aiming at the structures, not of an essence, but of ". . . l'existant lui-même, dans sa singularité."³⁶ Indeed, my freedom and another's freedom are very different since each is particularized by a different situation or what Sartre calls facticity. Thus he says that we must address ourselves to our own individual consciousness in order to discover the freedom which is ours as a pure necessity of fact which we cannot not experience. This is so since freedom is the very mode of our being and not a quality or property of our nature. Hence, we must have a non-thetic comprehension of our freedom through our acts. The endeavor to make this comprehension explicit is the goal of the remainder of Sartre's analysis.

The only point of comment I would like to make on this subsection is that although I quite agree that I am my freedom in the sense that it is not an extrinsic part of me, still, I am much more than freedom. Or, to

³⁶ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 514.

use a way of distinguishing which Aquinas used, I would say that I am my freedom "secundum totum sed non secundum omnia." I am also this mere, material being afflicted with various needs. Sartre emphasizes our freedom to change rather than the fact that everyone has defined their being to a limited extent, even if they are free to change.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF OUR PREVIOUS ANALYSES TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF FREEDOM

In the fourth subsection, Sartre summarizes all that can be said about freedom from his previous analyses. In the beginning, he says that we discovered, since negation comes into the world through human reality, that man is free in the sense that he can realize a rupture with himself and the world. Thus the for - itself is its own nothingness in the sense that for it, to be is to nihilate the in - itself which it is. It is in this sense that it precedes its essence. Thus we are condemned to be free. By this he means that the only limit to our freedom is that we can't cease being free and that our original freedom is de trop. Insofar as we try to hide our nothingness by incorporating the in - itself as our true mode of being, we are living in bad faith by trying to hide our freedom from ourselves.

For the determinists, the motive causes the act as the physical cause causes its effect. This refusal of

freedom is an attempt to conceive of man as being - for - itself. Psychologically this amounts to construing motifs and motives as things which have permanence. Thus we try to hide that their nature and their weight depend on the meaning we give them. This amounts to thinking that the meaning which I gave to a certain event in the past must remain the same today and that I cannot give it a new meaning. This in turn amounts to trying to give an essence to the for - itself. In the same way, many consider that ends are not maintained in their being by man, but that they come from God, my nature, or society. Thus these ends would define the meaning of my act before I even conceive it.

These attempts to stifle freedom, however, collapse before the sudden upsurge of anguish before freedom. Human reality is free because it is not enough, because it is wrenched away from itself and the world, because nothingness separates what it is from what it will be, because man is not himself but presence to himself.

"Ainsi," Sartre says, "la liberté n'est pas un être: elle est l'être de l'homme, c'est-à-dire son néant d'être."³⁷

V. THE RELATION OF THE WILL TO THE PASSIONS

The fifth subsection discusses the relationship

³⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 516.

between the will and the passions. Sartre begins by saying that the previous discussions can lead us to new insights, beginning with the relationship of freedom to the will. It is a common view to equate free acts with voluntary acts and to restrict determinism to the realm of the passions. In short, there is the free Cartesian will, and yet there are also the passions of the soul. The physiological determinism of Descartes, however, has been superceded by a purely psychological determinism as, for example, in the intellectual analyses of Proust. In both of these views, however, man is considered to be free in respect to some acts and determined in respect to others.

Sartre rejects this view because ". . . c'est qu'une pareille dualité tranchée est inconcevable au sein de l'unité psychique."³⁸ We have already seen Sartre's reasons for rejecting complete determinism. In rejecting a compromise solution, however, he has come up with a different attack with hardly any development. We can, however, understand why his objection is so obvious; for, from his point of view, freedom is understood solely in terms of pure consciousness and not in relation to this consciousness experiencing this need in relation to this object. Indeed, we have seen that Sartre's previous

³⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris. Gallimard, 1943, p. 517.

arguments preclude this latter viewpoint. One could, of course, say that Sartre is begging the argument; but we have seen that Sartre could just as easily say the same about the deterministic view. Hence Sartre concludes:

Cette discussion montre que deux solutions et deux seulement sont possibles: ou bien l'homme est entièrement déterminé (ce qui est inadmissible, en particulier parce qu'une conscience déterminée c'est-à-dire motivée en extériorité devient pure extériorité elle-même et cesse d'être conscience) ou bien l'homme est entièrement libre.³⁹

Thus for Sartre to admit a compromise solution, he would first of all have to admit the possibility of viewing human reality from more points of view than merely and solely that of pure consciousness.

Sartre then proceeds to some positive considerations. The will is not the most primordial manifestation of freedom since it presupposes an original freedom in order to constitute itself as will. He considers the will as a ". . . décision réfléchie par rapport à certaines fins."⁴⁰ It does not create these ends, however, but is rather a way of being in relation to them. In other words, it decrees that the ends will be pursued deliberately and reflectively. Passion can, in fact, have an identical

³⁹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 518.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 519.

end. For example, someone who runs when confronted with danger posits life as a value. Another person will not run even though at first glance it would seem more dangerous to stay. In both cases the end posited is the same yet the one action is termed passionate and the other voluntary. Thus Sartre says, "La différence porte ici sur le choix des moyens et sur le degré de réflexion et d'explication, non sur la fin."⁴¹ Thus the difference is in the subjective attitude: the one chooses to act reflectively whereas the other chooses to act passionately or non-thetically.

To point out more explicitly the difference between passionate and volitional acts, we must again discuss the relationships among end, motif, and motive. Sartre defines motif thus: ". . .la saisie objective d'une situation déterminée en tant que cette situation se révèle, à la lumière d'une certaine fin, comme pouvant servir de moyen pour atteindre cette fin."⁴² The very notion of motif clearly presupposes a prior intention or project since its meaning demands a relationship to an end. Thus Sartre says that it is the internal organization by non-positional consciousness which is the foundation or the

⁴¹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 519.

⁴² Ibid. p. 522.

necessary correlate of a motif as such. Now the motive is precisely this non-positional internal organization by consciousness. There is a positional consciousness of the motif which is also a non-thetic consciousness of itself as a project toward an end. It is in this sense that it is a motive in that it experiences itself non-thetically as a project. When motive, however, is used as referring to an end, then Sartre says, of course, that its value as such is due to the initial free project.

Thus the difference between a voluntary act and an involuntary or passionate act is that the latter is a purely unreflective consciousness of motifs in terms of a project. The motive in the non-reflective act is a non-positional self-consciousness. In the voluntary act, however, the motive is grasped as a quasi-object insofar as it is a consciousness-reflected-on. Also, the motif is apprehended in a reflective manner.

It is now clear from the above analysis that both voluntary and involuntary acts presuppose an original freedom or what Sartre terms intention, since they both presuppose the projection of an end since they are merely ways of relating oneself to an end. This original freedom, although contemporary with volitional and passionate acts, is the foundation for them. It is this original freedom which is identical with the very existence of man.

There are two main points in this section which deserve comment. First, we have seen that Sartre rejects any compromise with absolute freedom because he views man solely from the point of view of pure consciousness. However, if one views man as structured with needs on the basis of which he acts, then two compromise positions are possible: a.) the least compromising view would consider man as determined to act on the basis of a need, but free to decide which needs will be acted on; b) the more compromising view is the same as the above except that it would consider man in some situations as no longer having the freedom to decide which needs to act on. The second main point concerns Sartre's statement that the will or voluntary acts are not the primordial manifestation of freedom since the will or a reflective act presupposes the prior intention to act thus. Although I disagree with this point to some extent, I shall treat of it in the next subsection in which Sartre further analyzes it.

VI. THE MEANING OF ACTION IN TERMS OF THE ORIGINAL FREEDOM

In the sixth and last subsection, Sartre more explicitly elucidates the notion of action in terms of the original freedom of the for - itself. He says that every act implies meanings more profound than itself. In fact, it is precisely the purpose of existential psychoanalysis

to disengage the most primordial and root meaning or project which is the foundation for a whole series of related and coherent actions. Thus although the primordial project is capricious and absolutely free, the actions which flow from this project are not capricious. The fundamental freedom of the for - itself is, however, retained since no matter how much one is committed to a project, there is also the possibility of a radical conversion in which the for - itself would project a contrary project.

Thus it is the original act of freedom which gives meaning to a particular action and which is precisely the being of the for - itself as choosing itself in the world. The original choice must not, however, be thought to be a deliberate one; for we have seen that deliberation presupposes this original project. This does not, however, necessarily imply that the original choice is unconscious. Indeed, it is the very consciousness of ourselves which we have seen can only be non-positional. Thus Sartre says, "it comme notre être est précisément notre choix originel, la conscience (de) choix est identique à la conscience que nous avons de nous."⁴³

This self-consciousness, moreover, exists only in

⁴³ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris Callimard, 1943, p. 539.

reference to a particular man engaged in some original project in view of which other subsidiary projects are made. The initial project is an attempt to solve the problem of being insofar as it is the fundamental mode of our being. It is not a solution, however, in the sense that it is first conceived and then realized; but rather, we are the solution. The solution is precisely our engagement in a project. Hence, we can apprehend the solution only by living it. This consciousness, moreover, can only be non-thetic since it is precisely a consciousness in which we are completely present to ourselves. We do, on the other hand, get a glimpse of ourselves which is positional. We get a transcendent image of ourselves by looking at the world which arises only in relation to our projects. Finally, I agree with Colette Audry that Sartre's intention is that it is anguish as a mode of consciousness which reveals our freedom to choose ourselves.⁴⁴ Thus Sartre says, "Angoisse, dé-laissement, responsabilité, soit en sourdine, soit en pleine force, constituent en effect la qualité de notre conscience en tant que celle-ci est pure et simple liberté."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Colette Audry, Sartre et la Réalité Humaine, Paris, Editions Seghers, 1966, p. 34.

⁴⁵ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 541-542.

Anguish is the result of the realization that a radical conversion of our initial project is always possible and that any original project is unjustifiable. Unjustifiability consists not only in the absolute contingency of the for - itself, but also in the interiorization of that contingency, that is, by the perpetual, gratuitous determination of the for - itself by itself.

Finally, Sartre discusses in detail the relation of the original project to all the derived projects which, as we have seen, have a certain type of coherency. The connection between the original project and the derived project is not one of deduction as from a principle to its consequence, but rather the connection of a totality and a partial structure. Now, although the original or total project enables one to understand the derived project, there is a great deal of variability within the derived projects. This is so for two reasons: first, many different derived projects can relate to the original project; second, the relation of a derived project to the original project is not due to the apprehension of a necessity, but rather, it is due to the subjective interpretation of the relationship.

Thus, since the relation of the derived project to the original project is based on the subject's interpretation of the relation, the for-itself can even make voluntary decisions which, in fact, oppose his original

project. This can occur only on the reflective level, however, since the projection of possibilities on the non-reflective level is purely spontaneous. The possibility of error on the reflective level, however, is manifold; not insofar as it seeks to apprehend consciousness as a quasi-object, but insofar as it attempts to apprehend psychic objects or original projects within consciousness which, as we have seen, are only probable and hence can even be false on the reflective level.

In commenting on this last subsection, I would first of all like to say that I think it would be an unfair interpretation of Sartre to say that he has subjected human reality to a determinism of a capricious, non-thetic consciousness since, for Sartre, this is the true self or being of human reality, and also since this is conscious activity. This does not, however, obviate the difficulty that for Sartre man is fundamentally an absurd being because his original projects are absurd; thus Francis Jeanson says:

Ce choix est "absurd" en ce sens qu'on ne peut en rendre raison, puisque c'est par lui que les raisons viennent à l'être, par lui que la notion même d'absurde recôit un sens; opere sans point d'appui, se dictant à lui-même ses motifs, il est en outre obligatoire, car il n'y a pas possibilité de ne pas choisir.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Francis Jeanson, Le Problème moral et la pensée de Sartre, Paris, Editions du Myrthe, 1947, p. 293.

Thus, in this sense, Sartre's philosophy of freedom leads to absurdity and pessimism.

Second, it would seem that we must agree that a volitional act presupposes as its foundation a non-positional project on two conditions, however: first, that we define volitional activity not as the project or choice of ends but only as the deliberation concerning the means to attain some end; second, that the non-positional project is more spontaneous, natural and primordial than a volitional project and hence is the foundation of every other act. If, on the other hand, we accept transcendent values, consider the choice of which ends to pursue within the compass of a volitional act, consider volitional activity in this sense just as spontaneous, natural, and primordial as non-thetic activity, then it would seem to me that our original freedom or project could be grounded in volitional activity just as well as in non-thetic activity. By spontaneous, non-thetic activity, however, I mean a non-thetic awareness of certain transcendent ends and, in view of this, an upsurge toward these ends. Finally it seems to me that if one considers the unity of man, it would seem more probable that our original projects are grounded in a reciprocal relation between spontaneous non-thetic activity and volitional or reflective activity.

At the end of this rather lengthy section, Sartre condenses his argument into eight main ideas.

1) The first main idea is that the being of human reality consists in action and that action consists in the free projection of ends. Thus the notion of any type of deterministic given for human reality in the sense of passion or character structure, for instance, is excluded since it would vitiate the very notion of action.

2) Next, the very determination by human reality to act is itself an act since otherwise there would be a given in virtue of which the acts of a man would be replaced by a series of deterministic movements.

3) Furthermore, the very notion of an act is defined by an intention. Now, although the intention of an act can be interpreted by its end, the end is not a given reality since its very meaning necessitates that it assume a form of non-being or that it exists as a possible rather than an actual.

4) Next, the projection of an end has a function of revealing the world as this or that type of a world. Also, although the end is revealed to thetic consciousness, this is so only on condition that it is also revealed to non-thetic consciousness as its possibility.

5) Since the given cannot explain the intention, there must be a rupture with the given. This must be so since the given cannot be the motif of an action unless there is a rupture or withdrawal in reference to it such

that in the light of a non-existing end, the motif will be constituted as such. Thus, Sartre says, "La réalité humaine étant acte ne peut se conserver que comme rupture avec le donné, dans son être."⁴⁷

6) Although consciousness cannot exist without a given, this does not mean that the given conditions consciousness in relation to an action. Consciousness, rather, is simply the negation of the given in terms of a non-existing end. This negation, in turn, necessitates a withdrawal from oneself since otherwise one would be reduced to the status of a pure given or in - itself which could not effect a withdrawal in reference to any given. It is this double nihilation or withdrawal which constitutes the foundation for the freedom of the for - itself. This freedom, however, is always engaged and hence can be apprehended only as a choice in the making. Finally, this choice is unconditioned.

7) Such an original choice dictating its own motifs is absurd. This is so because ". . . la liberté est choix de son être, mais non pas fondement de son être."⁴⁸ Thus the for - itself can determine its essence, but its being is given. It cannot refuse to act since even

⁴⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 558.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 558.

suicide is a choice and an affirmation. It is because of this being which is a given for the for - itself that the for - itself is caught up in a quagmire of contingency and absurdity. The choice is absurd because one cannot not choose and because it is through this choice that all reasons and all meanings exist. Finally, freedom is not simply the barren gaze of the intellectual on his contingency, but is the interiorization and appropriation of this contingency by means of the absurd, free project.

8) The free project is the essence of my being. This original project is always a relation of the for - itself to his total being - in - the - world. This original freedom is constantly lived in a state of unjustifiability since a radical conversion is always possible because of freedom. Also, even in respect to the secondary projects, there is a certain amount of contingency and absurdity.

Thus, Sartre says that he has described the freedom of the for - itself. Freedom, however, requires a given because it is conceived as a nihilation of a given and because consciousness is always consciousness of something. Also, freedom is absurd since it is not the foundation of choosing although it is the foundation of being - chosen. Thus, we are confronted with the facticity of the for - itself which is the subject of the next main section.

FACTICITY AS A POSSIBLE
LIMIT OF FREEDOM

The next main section is concerned with the relationship of the free for - itself to facticity, or the concrete situation as a possible limitation of freedom.

I. FACTICITY IN GENERAL

Sartre begins the first subsection by pointing out the common sense argument against freedom. One certainly does not seem to make oneself, but rather to be made if one considers that everyone is born in a particular family, nation, class, etc. and that, consequently, everyone is confronted with a coefficient of adversity in the situation.

This argument, however, has not troubled the proponents of freedom. This is so because it is only on condition of the projection of an end that a coefficient of adversity arises in things. For instance, a rock can be an obstacle if one wishes to remove it, or an aid if one wishes to ascend to a greater height. Thus the rock in itself, so to speak is neutral. Thus Sartre says:

Ainsi, bien que les choses brutes (ce que Heidegger appelle les "existants bruts") puissent dès l'origine limiter notre liberté d'action, c'est notre liberté elle-même qui doit préalablement constituer le cadre, la

technique et les fins par rapport auxquels elles se manifesteront comme des limites.⁴⁹

Never theless, in terms of an end already projected, there remains a certain residuum in the in - itself which makes one rock an obstacle and another an aid. Far from being a limit to freedom, however, it is precisely on condition of the coefficient of adversity that freedom can arise as such. This is so because the very notion of freedom includes the act of realizing one's freedom, that is, the choice of one end rather than others and the pursuit of this end. If, as in a fairy tale, there wasn't any difference between conceptualization and actualization, the term freedom could have no meaning.

He further explains this by saying, ". . ."[^]être libre" ne signifie pas "obtenir ce qu'on a voulu," mais "se déterminer [^]à vouloir (au sens large de choisir) par soi-même." [^]"⁵⁰ In other words, it is not success, but the pursuit of an end which is important. Thus the empirical and popular concept of freedom as the ability to achieve the ends chosen is different from Sartre's philosophical concept of freedom as autonomy of choice. Also, as we have seen, Sartre does not distinguish between doing and choosing since both are reciprocally dependent.

⁴⁹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 562.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 563.

Thus it is mainly through our acts that our intentions are unveiled and disengaged for thetic consciousness.

Next, Sartre discusses the facticity of the for - itself itself. The for - itself is free, but is not the foundation of itself since its freedom is a given which it cannot not choose. It is precisely the necessity of choice, which is a result of the facticity of freedom, which forces a relation of the for - itself to the given in terms of nihilation. Finally, it is the contingency of the for - itself, insofar as it is not the foundation of itself, coupled with the contingency of the in - itself, insofar as it is revealed only in terms of a project, that Sartre calls "situations".

Thus the paradox of freedom consists of the fact that although freedom arises only in a situation, there is a situation only because of freedom. Thus although human reality everywhere encounters resistances which it does not create; nevertheless, these obstacles have meaning only in terms of an original project. Sartre concludes this subsection by saying that to understand these remarks more fully, we must analyze specific structures of the situation.

I think this section is important for eradicating false popularizations of Sartre's notion of freedom and in pointing out the limitations and qualifications of Sartre's notion of freedom. We have seen in a previous

section that Sartre has called his freedom absolute because of his rejection of transcendent values. He clearly states in this section, however, that man does meet with resistances or what he terms a coefficient of adversity in things themselves. This is why he says that by freedom he does not mean the freedom to succeed in any wish, but the freedom to project and to attempt to realize certain ends, that is, the freedom of autonomy of choice of oneself in the sense that although man often cannot change reality, he can relate himself to reality in any way he wishes. Thus, on this point, Sartre's notion of freedom is not very radical or new. He is very realistic by admitting that there are resistances in things. Once again, the particularly Sartrean emphasis comes in regard to his rejection of transcendent values on account of which he will push the point that man can relate himself to reality in any way.

II. PLACE

The second subsection discusses "place" as a part of facticity. Place is defined by the spatial order and by the various objects which surround me. It is the country where I live with its particular climate, etc. More specifically, however, it is ". . . la disposition et l'ordre des objets qui ^àprésentement m'apparaissent . . .

et qui m'indiquent comme la raison même de leur ordre."⁵¹
 Thus we see that Sartre is gravitating toward the subjective and psychological aspect of place.

He continues by saying that although my present place may be due to a free choice, nevertheless, I was able to occupy this place only in terms of my previous place. This place, in turn, refers me to a previous place and so on until the place of my birth. The place of my birth is purely contingent in the sense that it does not represent anything which is part of my experience, but merely the place which was given to me at my birth. One cannot explain my birth place in terms of my mother. This would be invalid since the freely chosen places of my parents do not offer an explanation in terms of my experience. I did not choose my birth place for some reason; but rather, it was simply given to me. This, however, would seem to be a restriction of my freedom since the place of my birth is the place in terms of which I occupy all other places.

If we wish to come to an understanding of the problem, Sartre says that we must do so by beginning with the following antinomy: ". . . la réalité humaine reçoit originellement sa place au milieu des choses -- la réalité

⁵¹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 570.

humaine est ce par quoi quelque chose comme une place vient aux choses."⁵² Neither space nor place could exist apart from human reality yet human reality gratuitously receives its place.

Sartre agrees that our original placing is an absurd gratuitous fact. Nevertheless, our place can take on a meaning only in terms of an end. My place can be related to me as an aid or an obstacle only in terms of a projected end. Thus my place, resident of Chicago has meaning only in terms of a project, whether it be the project of residing in Chicago or of residing in New York.

Thus the facticity of my place is revealed only through the projection of an end. Hence freedom is necessary for the discovery of facticity. On the other hand, however, freedom must take facticity as its point of departure since the projection of an end, in the context of change, presupposes an already existing situation. Thus the facticity of our place contributes to the absurdity and contingency of our being, and yet does not restrict our freedom since it has meaning only in terms of a free project. Thus Sartre concludes, ". . .sans la facticité la liberté n'existerait pas -- comme pouvoir de néantisation et de choix -- et que, sans la liberté, la facticité ne serait pas découverte et n'aurait même

⁵² Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 571.

aucun sens."⁵³

This section is the beginning of a series of sections in which Sartre analyzes the possible limitation of the freedom of man when confronted with various aspects of the world. This dialectical relation of man to the world Sartre calls situation. It is dialectical for Sartre in the sense that freedom arises only in a situation and yet a situation cannot exist without freedom in the sense of nihilation. The very framing of the problematic here clearly indicates that Sartre is viewing the problem solely from the point of view of pure consciousness projecting ends and assuming that there are no transcendent values or meanings. It seems to me that it is only in this sense that one can understand Sartre's statement that without freedom a situation has no meaning. Thus Sartre's main argument for freedom will proceed along these general lines: the world is de trop or completely without meaning or value apart from that which a for - itself projects; and therefore, man's freedom remains -- even the resistances in things can assume a meaning only in terms of a project. Thus my major criticism and qualification of this view is that man has autonomy of choice with regard to relating himself to the world but

⁵³ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 576.

only within the sphere of transcendent values. Thus, in regard to place, if one recognizes the transcendent value of eating, it is clear that one's place will have a meaning and a value in itself insofar as it is more or less able to provide a supply of food and hence will be a limitation of one's freedom.

III. THE PAST

The third subsection discusses the "past." We have already seen that the past does not determine our acts as a prior phenomenon determines a consequent phenomenon. Nevertheless, the freedom by which we escape the past and project the future has a very definite past which it cannot ignore. It would seem that we cannot modify the past in any way and that every action must be done in terms of the past. Even the radical rejection of the past is the assumption of a negative attitude in reference to it. Thus we are confronted with the paradox that we cannot lack a past and yet we are the beings through whom the past, both for us and the world, arises.

We must examine this paradox more closely. Since freedom is choice and hence change, it is defined by the non-existent, future end which is projected. Now then, within the context of change, we have already seen that what - is can only be illuminated by what - is - not (i.e. the projected end), and not the reverse, since

what - is, in the context of change, is considered as a lack. Thus in the projection of an end, one is already beyond what - is in the sense that it is a nihilating withdrawal. Hence what is assumes its meaning only in terms of the future and hence is the past. Thus although the past is necessary for a change, or the projection of an end; nevertheless, the very nature of the past as such arises only in terms of the original choice of a future. In fact, it is precisely on condition of the choice of a future that the past is irremediable.

If one exists, one cannot lack a past. Now, we have seen that there are two primary existential characteristics of the for - itself: a) every consciousness is non-thetically conscious of being; b) the being of the for - itself is in question and hence is always chosen. The for - itself is not, however, merely extrinsically connected with the past; but rather, it has and must be its past. It has a past in the sense that the past is enlivened and meaningful only in terms of a present project into the future with respect to the past. It must be its past in the sense that a present project must always be made in terms of past projects.

Thus Sartre says, "Mais si la liberté est choix d'une fin en fonction du passé, réciproquement le passé

n'est ce qu'il est que par rapport à la fin choisie."⁵⁴

We have seen that the past exists only in relation to an end chosen in two senses: a) the past can arise only on the condition of a present project into the future; b) the already existing past can be enlivened only by a present project. Thus there is both an unchangeable element of the past, the brute fact, and a variable element of the past, the meaning of the past in relation to the totality of my being.

Sartre uses Schlumberger's hero as an illustration of his understanding of the past. If one radically changes his fundamental project to one of freeing himself from a continued state of happiness, then all previous projects will lose their urgency:

Ils ne seront plus là que comme ces tours et ces remparts du moyen âge, que l'on ne saurait nier, mais qui n'ont d'autre sens que celui de rappeler, comme une étape antérieurement parcourue, une civilisation et un stade d'existence politique et économique aujourd'hui dépassée et parfaitement morts."⁵⁵

Hence, although the past is restrictive in the sense that it is the material revelation of the end which we are; nevertheless, it is the free project into the future which bestows on the past its meaning and value.

⁵⁴ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943. p. 578.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 580.

Here, once again, transcendent values has an important relation to freedom. Indeed, if one admits any transcendent values, then clearly the past will assume a meaning and a value apart from any projection of the for - itself. This is true not only in the sense that the past will represent a state when I had satisfied certain needs and hence achieved certain values, but it is also true and important in the sense that then the past will have been the effective agent whereby my present possibilities and freedom are either widened or lessened. For instance, if one has not attended to the basic needs of eating, then he will not be able to pursue his intellectual desires; or, if one has not diligently practiced the piano, he will not be free to express himself artistically by playing a Chopin ballad. Thus if one accepts transcendent values, the past will have a limitation of one's present freedom.

IV. ENVIRONMENT

The fourth subsection discusses environment. Environment must be distinguished from place which has already been analyzed. Environment consists of ". . .les choses-ustensiles qui m'entourent, avec leurs coefficients propres d'adversité et d'ustensilité."⁵⁶ Thus although place

⁵⁶ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 585.

is a condition for environment, environment is a further consideration of place in terms of its coefficients of adversity and utility. Also, one's place is primarily changed by oneself whereas one's environment is often changed because of other physical reasons. Finally, in the notion of environment, the coefficients of adversity and utility in things is considered not only in respect to place, but also in regard to the potentialities inherent in the instrument itself.

Thus as soon as I exist, I am confronted with a world of independent existences which both help and hinder me. Sartre uses an example of someone who is traveling by bicycle to a town and is beset with a hot sun, a strong wind, and a flat tire. All of these adverse phenomena are part of the environment. They do, of course, take on meaning only in terms of a project.

Nevertheless, Sartre says that this description is too simple since the environment can contribute to a radical modification of the situation. The flat tire compels me to either walk to the town and, consequently, miss Madeleine who has already boarded a train, etc. Thus it would seem that environment clearly limits freedom; for even though one does not confuse the freedom of choice with the freedom of obtaining, the adversity of the environment is often the occasion for the change in project.

In order to discuss this possibility, however, we

must first make the status of the question much more precise. If the environment can modify certain projects, at least two restrictions must be made. First, it cannot cause the change of my original and root project, since it is precisely in terms of a fundamental project that a motif is constituted as such. Thus if a project is forsaken on the occasion of the appearance of adverse elements in one's environment, this can be so only on condition of a more fundamental project. Thus if I give up my project of going on a picnic on the occasion of rain, this occurs only in view of a more fundamental project such as, for example, remaining in a state of comfort. Second, the adverse object which either appears or disappears in our environment cannot cause even the partial abandonment of an original project since the object must be apprehended as a lack in the original situation; hence, on the occasion of its appearance, the for - itself must relate to it by effecting a withdrawal from it and considering it in terms of a project. This certainly does not mean that I will achieve a certain end, but it does not absolve me from the responsibility and necessity of relating myself to it either by continuing an absurd and impossible endeavor or by renouncing the present project in view of another.

Also, the given is not only not an obstacle to our

freedom, but is a necessary condition for its existence. Indeed, in order to be free, we must be free in respect to something. Hence this "something" must have a real existence independent of consciousness. Thus the free project expects a certain resistance. Hence Sartre says, "être libre, c'est être - libre-pour-faire et c'est être-libre-dans-le-monde."⁵⁷ Hence a certain margin of unpredictability is inherent in every free project because of the independence of the world. This, in turn, points out a new aspect of free choice, namely, that it is an open project. By this Sartre means that every project anticipates a certain amount of modification due to the independence of the world. Nevertheless, we must remember that adversity comes to things through freedom.

Sartre then concludes this subsection with a brief summary. We have seen that the in - itself comes into the world through the upsurge of the for - itself in the sense that meaning comes into the world through the for - itself. We have also seen that we are surrounded by things which are inapprehensible as such except in terms of a project. Thus we are separated from the world by our nihilating freedom. Thus it is freedom which reveals things as either adverse or useful. Also, the unpre-

⁵⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 5⁰⁸.

dictability and adversity of the environment is precisely the expression of the contingency of freedom and the contingency of the in - itself. Thus Sartre says that we are absolutely free, but only in a situation.

Once again, if one admits the limitation of freedom by transcendent values, then certainly environment will present a possible limitation of freedom. For instance, a man in an underdeveloped country who must labor all his life merely to survive cannot possibly develop a cultured mind for which much leisure to read and meditate etc. is necessary. Apart from this however, I found this particular analysis very refreshing because it exhibits the peculiarly Sartrean optimism which asserts that man can make the best of even the worst situation.

V. FELLOWMAN

The fifth subsection is concerned with the existence of the Other (one's fellowman) as a possible limitation on the freedom of the for - itself. One fundamental aspect of the existence of the other is that we find ourselves immersed in a world of instrumental-complexes which have received their meaning from the Other rather than from our own free project. Moreover, this meaning which arises through the Other is also mine in the sense that it is directly related to me such that I cannot ignore it.

Things would be very simple, however, if all meanings were revealed simply in view of one's own ends, or if we were all independent monads perfectly indifferent to each other. Concrete experience clearly refutes this, however, by pointing out a plurality of objective meanings which are part of "my" world and which are not the result of my free project. One need think only of houses, streets, road signs, etc. to realize that there are a multitude of meanings which do not come from us, but which we must, nevertheless, confront. Thus it would seem that rather than having the world organized around my spontaneous projection of meanings, a state of objective meanings is imposed on me since if I do not observe the road signs, I will have an accident, or if I do not leave a show in accordance with the imperative of the "Exit" sign, I shall encounter the resistance of an oncoming crowd. This is the problem which we will now examine.

Sartre is now, as we have seen, posing the problem in terms of the possible limitation by objective techniques of the ends which one seeks. Thus it would seem that the existence of the Other as a part of my facticity is an external limit of my freedom insofar as it consists in the prior independent constitution of techniques which I must consider when I make my projects.

Sartre begins by stating emphatically that he is not asserting that man is the free foundation of his being.

Man is free, but in condition. It is precisely the relation of this condition to freedom which is in question. Now, although it is true that man can choose himself only beyond certain meanings or techniques which are already given, nevertheless man is free and is a man precisely because he must choose himself beyond these given techniques. Sartre here speaks of a transcendence -- transcended. By this he means that although techniques are already given, man's total freedom is assured since precisely insofar as he is a man, he must effect a nihilation in respect to these techniques, or make techniques of the techniques, or transcend the transcendences. Thus it is not a question here of an external limit of freedom, but rather that the fundamental meaning of freedom is to choose oneself in an already existing world. Also, it is not meaningful to assert that a limitation or scarcity of techniques limits freedom since freedom consists of the absolute choice of oneself regardless of the techniques. Thus Sartre says, "Car [^]être libre n'est pas choisir le monde historique où l'on surgit--ce qui n'aurait point de sens--mais se choisir dans le monde, quel qu'il soit."⁵⁸

There is, however, a second, more fundamental aspect of the existence of the other which seems to limit freedom.

⁵⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, L'Être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 604.

Every man, precisely because he is an upsurge and a free transcendence, bestows on his associates an objective being - for - others. By this he means that there are certain determinations of our being which we have not chosen, as, for example, when we are apprehended as Jewish, stupid, ugly, etc. Sartre says that this being - for others is objective because he considers it not as merely an opinion of others, but as a real dimension of our existence insofar as a meaning is conferred on us and our situation. We discover this aspect of our existence in our relations with others even though a complete understanding of this being - for-others is always beyond our grasp since it is the result of an objectification by the Other.

Sartre says that this is a real limit of our freedom. By this, however, Sartre is not referring, for example, to the prohibition of Negroes to enter certain restaurants. This would be an aspect of collective techniques which was considered in the first part of this section. The real limit consists in the fact that the Other apprehends me as an Other - as - object in which apprehension I become merely an objective structure for the Other. Thus because man exists in a world among Others, he, by that fact, exists as a man alienated by the Other. Hence we may say that freedom has two limits: the limitation by freedom itself because of its "nature"

and the limitation by the freedom of the Other. In other words, freedom is both condemned to be free and must exist for other freedoms.

Although our being - for - others is a real limit in the sense that it cannot be thought of as a brute resistance which we could nihilate since it exists precisely insofar as we exist as objectified rather than objectifying, nevertheless, we can in a sense, recover this limit of freedom insofar as it is necessary to transcend the Other in order to recognize that we are transcended. Thus although our being - for - others exists as a real dimension of our being, it is necessary also that we relate ourselves to this being - for - others by either further interiorizing it by making it a specific project, or by projecting the opposite. Thus there is a sense in which freedom remains free even when confronted by the Other.

In this section, I quoted Sartre to the effect that to choose the historical world in which we live would have no meaning but that freedom consists in choosing one's self. This seems in my mind^a synthesis of Sartre's attitude toward the relation of the free for - itself to facticity. Choosing the world in which we live has no sense because there are no transcendent values and hence whether the world is affluent or impoverished, refined or barbarian, friendly or unfriendly makes no difference. In spite of this, however, man is free to relate himself

to the world, to choose himself amidst the world, and thus to be free.

Here again, however, the existence of transcendent values would limit one's freedom. First of all, the objective techniques employed by society as a whole would widen or narrow one's freedom to the extent that they are aware or not aware of these values. Second, although Sartre says that man's freedom is limited by the freedom of another, he says this only and solely from the point of view that rational knowledge consists in an objectification of the other (here again his presupposition to view reality from the point of view of pure consciousness is evident). On the other hand, if one realizes that the solitude of man's birth, life, and death is rooted in his very being, then it would seem that communion with one's fellowman on the affective level, the desire to share the joys and sorrows of the lonely voyage, would be another type of limitation of one's freedom. It would limit one's freedom from doing certain actions, but it would also broaden one's freedom to be human and to enjoy life as far as possible.

VI. DEATH

The sixth and last subsection discusses death as an element of one's facticity. Sartre begins by analyzing the various concepts of death. At one time death was

considered to be fundamentally non-human since it was beyond human life. After this, however, a new notion of death as a fundamental part of life arose. Sartre explains this change by saying that, in any event, death seems to be a boundary. Thus although death may be the final limit of life, it is still a part of the series. Sartre describes this concept of death by speaking of it as the final chord of a melody which, on the one hand, clings to the nothingness of the silence which will follow and which, on the other hand, clings to the plenum of being of the melody which is constituted in its meaning by the final chord and the silence which follows. Sartre says that it is one of Heidegger's merits to have put in philosophical form this humanistic notion of death in which life becomes meaningful precisely by the personal interiorization and anticipation of death. Sartre admits that this notion of death has an element of truth in it; but, nevertheless, he says that we must take up the question again from the beginning.

Even if death in itself is the passage into an absolute non-human existence or non-existence, it cannot be considered as such since all of our knowledge is conditioned by our humanity and hence is subject to the human point of view. Thus death must, first of all, be considered as an aspect of human reality.

The most fundamental aspect of death according to Sartre is its absurdity. He uses the metaphor of a man who is condemned to die and who while bravely preparing himself to be strong on the scaffold, is carried off by a flu epidemic.

Sartre rejects the notion that the free project of one's death makes life meaningful because it is the only way in which one can achieve his individuality and uniqueness as a person. He says that the truism that no one can die for me is true in the same sense that my most commonplace emotions can only be mine in the sense that I am I and am not any other being. If, however, one considers death in terms of its function, efficacy, or result, then it is clear that others can die for me in the sense of inspiring others or saving the country for example. In either case, death has no personalizing virtue; in fact, it is mine only because of my unique subjective existence.

A positive reason, on the other hand, for the absurdity of death for men is its contingency. We know only that we will die and not when we will die. Thus death appears no longer as a final resolving chord nor simply as my possibility of no longer realizing a presence in the world, but rather, ". . .une néantisation toujours possible de mes possibles, qui est hors de mes

possibilités.⁵⁹ Sartre elucidates this statement by considering death in terms of meanings. Human reality is meaningful in the sense that it comes to know itself by making itself. As such it is always engaged in the future. The absurdity consists precisely of this, that we are continually awaiting the future (in the sense of the realization of certain ends) which death may prevent. Not only this, however, but all men are denied the resolution of their ultimate and last project since both the person and the end are surpressed by death. Suicide also is absurd in the sense that it lacks a future which would be necessary to validate or invalidate it as a project. Thus since the for - itself is a being which is constantly engaged in the future, a free project toward death is self-destructive and absurd. Hence death is the ultimate in absurdity since it removes all meaning from life.

Now we can discuss whether or not death is a limitation of freedom. To begin, however, Sartre distinguishes death from finitude. The common conception is that it is death which causes and reveals our finitude. Sartre, however, says that human reality would remain finite even if it were immortal because human reality consists of making individual projects which of necessity preclude

⁵⁹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 621.

other projects and hence are finite. Thus Sartre says, "L'acte même de liberté est donc assumption et création de la finitude."⁶⁰

Death, on the other hand, is a contingent fact which belongs to the facticity of the for-itself; it is not, however, an ontological structure of it as is finitude. In one sense, we cannot have any relation to death since, as we have seen, we cannot have any attitude toward it in the sense of a project because the for - itself precisely insofar as it is projecting into the future needs the future to constitute it as a meaningful action. Sartre does not mean that the for - itself needs the future in the sense that it must achieve its ends; but rather, he means that the very meaning of a project presupposes the future in order to strive for the realization of an end.

Thus although death does present an obvious, external, factual limit of one's subjectivity, the for - itself retains its freedom in three senses: a) death cannot be the object of a project and much less the object of necessary project; b) death is not an ontological structure of the for - itself; c) one must freely determine the meaning for oneself in regard to death as an element of facticity. Thus Sartre says, "Je ne suis pas "libre

⁶⁰ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 631.

pour mourir," mais je suis un libre mortel."⁶¹ On the other hand, however, if one accepts the transcendent value of being, then death will present itself perhaps as the final resolving chord, but certainly also as the ultimate and absolute negation of Dasein unless it is viewed as the threshold by which one enters another mode of being.

⁶¹ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 632.

FREEDOM AS NECESSITATING ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

The eighth and last section of this paper discusses two very brief, but very important aspects of freedom: a) "Freedom and Responsibility"; b) "Ethical Perspectives." They are important not only because of their substance, but also because they prevent many erroneous concepts which can easily be thought to be natural conclusions from his notion of freedom.

I. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Sartre begins the first subsection concerning freedom and responsibility by saying that man is fully responsible for the world and himself as a way of being. By "responsible" he means ". . . conscience (d') être l'auteur incontestable d'un événement ou d'un objet."⁶² We have seen that this is true in three different ways: a) the world arises through the for - itself since it can assume a meaning only across a project; b) the for - itself precedes its existence and makes its essence, not in the sense that it is the foundation of its being, but in the sense that it is the foundation of its way of being; c) regardless of the situation, the for - itself retains its

⁶² Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 639.

freedom since a situation can be adverse or useful only in terms of a project.

There are, therefore, no accidents in life. If I am drafted into a war, it is my war because I have chosen it. The ultimate possibilities of suicide or desertion present another choice. Thus if I enter the war, I myself choose it because I prefer other values (e.g. life, honor) more than the refusal to engage in war. In any event, it is always a matter of a free choice -- even bad faith is a choice. Thus to seize upon facticity as an excuse or to attempt to evade freedom by inaction or passivity is a futile act in bad faith since for man, absolute responsibility is a necessary, logical corollary to man's absolute freedom. Man, therefore, is not the foundation of his being; but he is condemned to be the foundation for the meaning of being. Thus Sartre says, ". . . je dois être sans remords ni regrets comme je suis sans excuse, car, dès l'instant de mon surgissement à l'être, je porte le poids du monde à moi tout seul, sans que rien ni personne ne puisse l'alléger."⁶³

II. ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

The second subsection deals with ethical perspectives. Sartre says that ontology cannot formulate ethical pre-

⁶³ Jean Paul Sartre, L'être et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 641.

cepts since it is concerned solely with what is. We can understand this statement better if we recall that Sartre distinguishes metaphysics from ontology by saying that the latter is concerned with the factual givens whereas the former is the attempt to explain the given in terms of why and how. Also, if we recall that Sartre's ontology denies any transcendent values, we can easily see why ethical imperatives cannot be derived from Sartre's ontology.

Sartre does say, however, that if any ethics is to assume its responsibilities, it must accept the nature of value as given in ontology. We have seen that value is a lack in terms of which the for - itself determines itself. We have seen that the ultimate value and fundamental meaning of all projects is the coincidence of the in - itself and for - itself. Thus an ethics based on the psychology of altruism, utilitarianism, etc. must be surpassed.

The main consequence of ontology in regard to ethics, however, is to repudiate the spirit of seriousness. The spirit of seriousness considers values as transcendent givens and thinks that they are constituted as such because of material relations (e.g. the nourishment of bread) rather than Sartre's metaphysical value of the in - itself - for - itself. Sartre considers the spirit of seriousness as an attitude in bad faith which is the result of the endeavor to escape one's freedom and responsibility. Thus Sartre says that if one activity is to be preferred to

another, it will be because in the one there is a higher degree of consciousness of the ideal goal.

CONCLUSION

Since I think, as I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, that Sartre's philosophy of freedom is very dialectical, in regard to a summary of this paper, I shall do two things: first, I shall merely sketch what I consider to be the main points of Sartre's philosophy of freedom and hope that the paper as a whole has provided a coherent and true analysis; second, I will present my analysis of why I consider the rejection of any transcendent values to be the major limitation of Sartre's notion of freedom.

Sartre began by saying that phenomenology is the starting point for philosophy because the phenomenon is presupposed in every experience. It seemed at first that Sartre intended to leave the notion of phenomenon open to any kind of experience in which something appears or is evident. However, we discovered by the way in which Sartre used phenomenology that he had in fact very much restricted the meaning and value of phenomenology. In fact, he explicitly disclosed later on that his major philosophical presupposition is that all of reality must be known and viewed first of all and primarily from the point of view of pure consciousness. We then saw how this type of phenomenology provided the foundation for two types of reality : the for - itself and the in - itself. Sartre

then presented the phenomena of questioning and anguish as the revelation of the freedom of the for - itself. It is here that he presented his notion of bad faith as an answer to any objection concerning freedom. He then made an analysis of the structures of the for - itself which provided the ontological foundation for his notion of absolute freedom by asserting of the for - itself all the conditions for the possibility of absolute freedom. Sartre then analyzed exactly what he meant by freedom and how it is related to facticity.

We saw, first of all, that freedom was the ability of man to nihilate both the world and himself through consciousness. Second, we saw that freedom more specifically was the ability to project ends. Lastly, we saw that the most primordial meaning of freedom was the ability to choose, make, and create one's self without restriction by capriciously projecting ends and endeavoring to realize them. In conclusion, Sartre pointed out the reciprocity of his notion of freedom with responsibility.

With regard to the second point of this summary, we have seen that in our mind the major contention with Sartre has been his rejection of transcendent values. We have already seen within the text why Sartre's explicit reasons for rejecting transcendent values were invalid. There seems to me, however, to be an implicit but more fundamental reason why Sartre rejects this position.

We have seen that the root, hidden presupposition of Sartre is that truth concerning man can be obtained only by viewing man first of all as consciousness and not as conscious of this or that. We have also seen that for Sartre the essence of consciousness is the utterly capricious projection of ends. It is clear that this view certainly precludes the possibility of viewing man as acting because of a subjective lack. Or, to reverse a saying of Sartre, if one starts out by viewing man as absolutely free he will not later on find some ways in which he is determined. Thus Sartre refuses to accept a compromise solution which would maintain that man is determined to act on the basis of a subjective lack, but is free to act on the basis of this or that lack.

Now, however, we must present some positive reasons for the existence of transcendent values. Indeed, it is certainly difficult to "prove" Sartre's position false since its very extremeness presupposes any argument against it. However, I think that one can see that it is false in the sense that if one does not act out of sheer caprice then he must act because of a subjective lack. Further, I think it is evident that one who acts capriciously can not possibly have any real concern or care or anguish about how he acts. whereas the opposite is true for one who acts because of a subjective lack. Ironically enough, some of Sartre's most moving passages are concerned with the anguish

of the person who is confronted with his freedom to act in many diverse ways. Thus, the bulk of my argument will be to point out an example or two in which it is evident to me that man acts in anguish because he suffers specific subjective lacks.

This subjective lack is difficult to define even in an abstract way. Man lacks, in one sense, not in terms of what he is, but in terms of what he is not; otherwise, he would neither lack nor crave it since he would either have it or be it. On the other hand, however, man must be this lack since otherwise he would not lack or crave it. Thus, perhaps, this subjective lack can best be described as a nothingness at the heart of human reality which exacts being.

Whether there is one root lack, of which all other lacks are the expression, is another question, but that man is lack and desire is difficult to deny. One could consider, for instance, the fleshless child in India. Or, one could consider the incessant wanderings of the solitaire along the midnight sea asking his child-like question, "Why?" One may not fully know what the snows of Kilimanjaro consist of, or exactly why they are sought, but it would seem to me that they are sought.

Sartre himself recognizes this. He says, as we have seen, that every for - itself lacks coincidence with

itself (i.e. the in - itself - for - itself or God) and that it is in virtue of this subjective lack that all projects are made. How then does Sartre reconcile his views? He simply doesn't, and seems to consider them as two more of the many paradoxes in life. This is why, as Colette Audry points out, in the very last paragraph of this work it is still a question in Sartre's mind whether or not freedom, once it discovers itself as the source of all values, can take itself as an end and as a value.⁶⁴ It seems to me, however, that the one view, that man is lack and desire is due to his sincere and perceptive realism, and that the other view, that man acts capriciously with regard at least to his fundamental projects, is due to his erroneous philosophical presupposition that man must be known and understood first and foremost as consciousness, that is, as the absolute freedom of capriciously projecting ends.

Thus it would seem to us that the notion of action presupposes transcendent values. We will have to define much more precisely what we mean by this term, however, since it is used in many diverse significations. We have seen that for Sartre the notion of action presupposes the notion of value considered as an end capriciously projected by a for - itself which corresponds to an objective

⁶⁴ Colette Audry, Sartre et la Réalité Humaine, Paris, Editions Seghers, 1966. p. 34.

lack. We, however, have said that action presupposes transcendent values considered as ends projected out of necessity precisely because of their capacity to fulfill a subjective lack. Thus the first and major precision is that relative values are absolutely freely chosen because they are arbitrary and capricious, whereas, transcendent values are chosen out of necessity.

At once the question of freedom arises in reference to transcendent values. One certainly is not free not to act. The life of a railroad bum or of an indolent drunk is a form of action insofar as it is a way of relating oneself to the world and to oneself. Even suicide considered as a metaphysical act denying the transcendent value of being is a form of action in which there is apparently a greater need for non-being than for limited being.

Freedom, in the realm of transcendent values, seems to me to exist and to consist^{of} defining within one's possibilities one's own being; for we have said that man necessarily acts in terms of transcendent values, but that he is free to choose among the many transcendent values. Now then, freedom is possible not only because of the diverse needs and hence values, but also because some needs and values are more immediate and forceful even if less fulfilling than other needs and values which though less forceful and immediate, and consequently more difficult to obtain, are more fulfilling. As an example,

perhaps we could think of a man who desires very much to express his love for his wife by being faithful, and yet when confronted with some voluptuous tart, finds it difficult to choose the value of faithfulness, even though he realizes it would be much more fulfilling than the value of mere sexual gratification.

The next precision to be made is whether or not at least some transcendent values are objective. The term "objective" here signifies that there are some transcendent values corresponding to subjective lacks which are common to all regardless of situation precisely because of a common human condition. In this formulation of the problem, the phrase, "common to all," does not mean that all men are aware of these values, but merely that they exist. Also, the qualification, "regardless of situation," does not necessarily imply that the objective values in question are the highest, since they could be common and not essential or most primordial.

In order to further clarify the question, however, we should note that all transcendent values, precisely because they are rooted in one's being, are objective in the sense that the situation cannot alter them or their hierarchical order since the situation can not change one's being. At best, the situation can force one to consider certain values rather than others as being here and now at stake. Thus the real question is whether or not some

of these values are common to all men as men.

Since, however, the main reason for asking the question is to determine the common good for the purpose of regulating personal relationships, since one's personal good can be known through merely transcendent goods, it would seem safe to assert that there are objective transcendent values since for most people there certainly seem to be some (e.g. life and the pursuit of happiness).

Now then, we may briefly summarize the discussion by saying that Sartre is a pure relativist because he has asserted the absolute freedom of man by considering him as essentially an absurd being capriciously projecting arbitrary ends. We, however, have maintained the limited freedom of man by asserting the existence of transcendent values and, in a limited sense, objective values.

In conclusion, in order to bring the entire paper into focus, I shall employ the distinction between freedom from and freedom to. Sartre has viewed man, in my estimation, solely as a for - itself and hence as having and being an absolute freedom from any transcendent value. We, however, have viewed man as to some extent being a structured in - itself and hence as having his freedom from limited, and hence as being also a freedom to fulfill oneself by realizing some transcendent values. The opposition here is a clear one which realizes: if one is

absolutely free from, then one's being is absolutely absurd.

Freedom seems a folly when one asks
Why one wants to be free.

Freedom from is like a snowflake
Falling fast.
Freedom to is like a seedling
Breaking through the earth
And embracing the sun,
With its flower.

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