

VI

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

(Born 1905)

EVERYBODY who has heard of existentialism without knowing much about it will couple with it the name of Jean-Paul Sartre, who mainly by his novels and plays and as a centre of cult and controversy in Paris has earned notoriety for the movement, so that to many the names of both one and the other are suspect. Nobody who takes the trouble to read Sartre's main work *L'Être et le Néant* carefully will be able either to take the author for a charlatan or the philosophy for a stunt. Sartre is a typical modern French intellectual. The world takes him as such, and dismisses, adores, or reviles him as such. But the adroit omniscience of this French intellectual is founded upon a philosophical keel. He borrows largely from Husserl and Heidegger and profoundly from Hegel, but he handles his themes with professorial sagacity and with a virtuosity all his own. It is no use (English) academic philosophers dismissing him as a mere *littérateur*. In France, philosophers can feel a national pride in this exhibition of French intelligence out-speculating the Germans. In any case, *L'Être et le Néant* is not a mere *tour de force*; for Sartre is supremely in earnest and the argument of the book is the indispensable clue to his life's work.

I

To be conscious is to be conscious of something; consciousness refers to and separates itself from something not itself. And to be conscious of something is to be aware of being conscious of something. But this secondary awareness is implicit in the primary consciousness of something. Otherwise, I should be aware of being conscious of something and aware of being aware of being conscious of something, to infinity. My consciousness cannot become an object to itself in this way; it is seized only as consciousness of something else. Consciousness is always present to something which it is not, and thus is present to itself, but always in the form of not being something. Consciousness comes into the world as a No, and is aware of itself as an everlasting No, as pure possibility separated from everything existent. It is a form of being which implies a form of being other than its own. Itself, it is a mode of being 'which has yet to be what it is, that is to say, which is what it is not and which is not what it is'. On the other hand, the object of consciousness is what it is; it is wholly there, totally given, without any separation from itself; it is not possibility, it is itself, it is in itself; 'uncreated, without any reason, without any relation with another being, being-in-itself has been eternally *de trop*'.

These two modes of being, consciousness and its object, the *pour-soi* and the *en-soi*, are not merely in contrast. Consciousness absolutely requires the given objective world. It only comes into existence as separation from what is there. Consciousness cannot be deduced from the world, which is independent and self-sufficient. The world can be deduced from consciousness; not because consciousness is prior and independent, but because it comes into the world as nothing, as not the world, and gives the world as there. Consciousness is thus relative to the objective world and dependent upon it. On the other hand, consciousness is not something other than the world, since that would be itself an object to consciousness, an *en-soi*, it perpetually reconstitutes itself other than the world, in relation to every item of experience, perpetually puts itself in question, and is thus an absolute. The *en-soi* and the *pour-soi* are therefore modes of being related by an unbridgeable separation. How, then, is knowledge possible, or action, or any form of transcendence? Is Being an irresolvable duality, a plenitude on the one hand and a barren

negation on the other, *l'être et le néant*? If so, how does this remotely resemble our experience of ourselves in the world?

Indeed, it would not be possible to unite the *en-soi* and the *pour-soi* if they were separate entities; and that is the position of defeat in which philosophy stands, whether based like Idealism on the primacy of the *pour-soi* or like Realism on the primacy of the *en-soi*. In order that there can be knowledge and action, and other modes of the conjugation of subject and object, *the pour-soi* must be recognized for what it is: perpetual pure separation and denial, embodied in historical existence in the world, yet not identified with that existence as a property of it nor as its totality, but perpetually reconstituting itself and having a virtual totality of its own. This pure nothing which limits and defines being and is not a property of it nor something else set over against it is not a mere hypothesis to overcome the riddle of philosophy, it falls into place in the description of the only conditions which make our human presence in the world possible. Ontology, description of the structure of Being, will thus describe how consciousness, human presence in the world, neither substance nor process, is related to the body, to its situation in the world, to past, present, and future, to knowing, desiring, willing, and choosing, to having and doing, to value and ideals, to other consciousness. By its convincing description, ontology, disposing of baffling problems in philosophy which have made the wearisome circuit of idealism-realism, will reveal the truth of the human situation and lay the foundations for ethics, prescriptions for living.

II

Consciousness, then, comes into existence as consciousness of something with awareness of this consciousness. Always the *pour-soi* comes into existence by separation from, that is dependence upon, some matter of fact which merely is. I am conscious of being a waiter because I am not wholly and solely a waiter, but I happen to get my existence by separation from (or trying to be) a waiter, not a journalist nor a diplomat. I am only a *pour-soi* by being an *en-soi* which I am not; but I am not merely not this *en-soi*, nor merely dependent upon it for another form of existence (as a foil), I try to take it up into myself, to assimilate it completely, to make it wholly my consciousness of myself without any separation; and this I am never able to do. This contingency of the *pour-soi*, its dependence upon the *en-soi*, is

its facticity. It can never found itself, it can only found its own nothingness by relation to the *en-soi* which is gratuitously given, just what it is. Man is not a substance that thinks, but a separation from all substance: I am not, therefore I think. But the separation is never complete, for it is separation from a contingent substance which is not merely its occasion but also its mode and instrument: this is its facticity.

In its nature, then, consciousness by being always consciousness of something refers to itself and constitutes itself apart as not something else. This distinction, being consciousness aware of itself and not a distinction made by an onlooker (as between that inkstand and the pen), already constitutes the consciousness as personal, for personality in the first place is being which exists for itself in the sense of being present to itself. But this consciousness is consciousness not merely of difference but also of the nature of the difference, a perception however rudimentary of the object as a plenitude and of itself as a lack. My consciousness of myself thus already implies a projection of myself towards my possibility, what I lack in order to be myself identified with myself; and this is the structure of desire and the movement towards fulfilment. The ideal project which defines our existence and is the meaning of human presence in the world is the *nisus* towards some form of unity of the *pour-soi* with the *en-soi* in a totality which saves both. That is in principle impossible. Man aspires to be god, but god is a self-contradiction. Nevertheless, this absolute value is the lure which governs our lives.

The *pour-soi* since it constitutes itself by separating itself from that to which it is present can only exist historically, that is, in the temporal mode. It is always present, but it has a past and a future, by which it generates a self and a world. I am not the *en-soi* I am present to, and I am not the *en-soi* that I leave behind. Nevertheless, it is my being and not another's that I leave behind: my past is my facticity. I am angry, an official, unhappy: I transcend these conditions in my awareness of them and they are thus separated from me as my past, but in leaving them behind they remain and haunt me. The past is the totality always growing of the *en-soi* which we are. But whilst we live we are never identified with it. It is not what I am but what I was. I am totally responsible for it and cannot change its content, but I can interpret it, give it a sequel which will alter its meaning; until in the end I become my own past finally, fixed and solidified, open without defence to the judgement of others, an *en-*

soi. Meanwhile, I happen to be sad or a waiter, but it is only by separating myself from some condition that I *am*. The past is the inverse of value, of the human ideal, for it is the *pour-soi* congealed in the *en-soi*. That is why the past can be idealized, for it seems to be wholly given and solely what it is and at the same time human. The future is constituted by the lack which *the pour-soi* is; it is open, problematical, essentially a project. Thus there is not first a universal time-stream in which the *pour-soi* suddenly appears without a past. The phenomenal world comes into existence with the birth of the *pour-soi*, which from the moment when it constitutes itself by separating itself from the *en-soi* has a past, the *en-soi* refused. Thus appears a world with a past and a future as the mode of being of the *pour-soi*. But in this mode of temporality it never is nor can be wholly and solely itself, coincidence with itself. In aspiring to this absolute repose in himself, coincidence with himself, man aspires (vainly) to an intemporal mode of being.

III

Consciousness, the *pour-soi*, transcends the world and is not itself a phenomenon, given as an appearance. The objects of consciousness, phenomena, the appearances of things, disclose what is really there as it really is, but never exhaustively. The *en-soi* given to consciousness in phenomena is being in its plenitude, and the source of all being. Consciousness implies and refers to an existence other than its own and to its own existence as a question. It is this relation of the *pour-soi* to the *en-soi* which is the foundation (and only condition) of knowledge and action. Knowledge is necessarily intuition, the presence of consciousness to the object which it is not. This is the original condition of all experience. Before the object is defined and interpreted, consciousness constitutes itself by separating itself from it. Consciousness does not separate the thing from itself as being not itself, which could only be done by a third-party and if consciousness were itself an *en-soi*. Consciousness is only aware that it is itself not-that, and this is the first phase of knowledge and of action. 'The *pour-soi* is a being for whom his being is in question in his being inasmuch as this being is a certain manner of *not-being* a being which he posits at the same stroke as other than he.' Thus knowledge is not in any sense a relation into which two beings enter. It is the very being of the *pour-soi* inasmuch as it is presence to...that is to say,

inasmuch as it has to be its being by making itself not be a certain being to which it is present. Thus the formula is: 'the fundamental relation by which the *pour-soi* has to be as not being *this* particular being to which it is present is the foundation of all knowledge of this being'. There is neither continuity nor discontinuity between knower and known; the relation is unmediated identity, denied. There is an image of it if one imagines two curves which touch at a point with a common tangent. If the curves are covered up so that one sees only the coincidence of the curves at their point of common tangency, it is one and the same line, separated by nothing, neither continuous nor discontinuous, but identical. Uncover the two curves, and they are seized at once as two and distinct, even at the point of tangency. There has been no physical separation, but the two movements with which we draw the curves in order to perceive them involve a negation, a separation, as the act which constitutes each. The internal negation which constitutes consciousness and is the condition of knowledge is a special case of negation since it does not affirm a separation between two pre-existing things having their own character and being *en-soi*. The *pour-soi* is itself characterized only as not *this en-soi*. It reveals the world in being not the world and makes it that there is a world, but adds nothing to it. The *pour-soi* does not only start from *this-here* as given and constitute itself by a negation (I am not that), for the same negation constitutes this-here and that-there, and the whole world besides which is virtually there as the ground and as the totality of all future and all possible negations, corresponding to the unrealized totality of the *pour-soi*. The *pour-soi* as co-present to the particular object and the totality spatializes the world and characterizes itself as not extended: each particular *en-soi* has its place and the *pour-soi* is present to it without place (I may be conscious of the absent).

A thing is what it is, its qualities are neither subjective nor synthesized in it: a green cone is not first a cone, then green. It is entirely what appears to consciousness, since consciousness is nothing in itself and cannot act upon it, but consciousness has always a perspective view and does not attend to all aspects at once. A particular act of self-realization which constitutes the *pour-soi* is always a negation of some quality of the object in the way of seizing it, say the greenness rather than the conicality, which leaves to the future a difference of emphasis. The instantaneous negation of the *en-soi* by the *pour-soi* is bound, as to its complement, to the immediate

negation of the *pour-soi* by itself: its past solidifies into an *en-soi*, its future possibilities draw it on to the realization of the being it aspires to be. The negation is thus an engagement constituting different futures, the different potentialities of the two types of being—future states of the world and future possibilities of self-realization. The negation of this-here by me, which is immediately left behind as my past because I separate myself at once from what I am, involves my own future and the future of the world. Unreflectively, I am not aware of my own lack (as pure negation, nothingness), but only of the incompleteness of the object. I must go on to know it in its essence as other than I. But its essence is identical with its existence, and thus I will and desire the concrete universal of past, present, and future states of the world, with which to be united. This is out of reach. I experience beauty as a lack. This reference of the particular thing to what is beyond itself, other states of itself and other things, comes home to the *pour-soi* in a call to action; for the world is a world of tasks and it is the nature of things to be bound together as means and ends: things are both things and tools, not first one in order to become the other but always under the double aspect. To be in the world is not to escape from the world towards oneself but to escape from the world towards a beyond which is the future of the world. The complex of tool-things does not refer to an end finally in the *pour-soi* (as Heidegger says); the totality of this complex is the exact correlative of my possibilities. And, as I am my possibilities, the order of tool-things in the world is the image projected in the *en-soi* of my possibilities, that is to say, of what I am. But this is an image I can never decipher; I adapt myself to it in and by action: I am inserted without recourse inside the circuit means-ends.

The ideal of knowledge is to know the thing as it is in itself. But this would be possible only if consciousness could identify itself with the thing, and then there could no longer be consciousness and the possibility of knowledge. Thus knowledge is not relative in the Kantian sense of not being able to know the thing as it is in itself (as though this were a possible notion of knowledge), but simply in the sense that it is wholly human, that is, the separation of a consciousness which brings into existence a world, Being as known. Knowledge puts us in the presence of the absolute, what is there, and has its truth: what is truly known is nothing other than the absolute, but the knowledge is strictly human and could not be otherwise.

Since the body and the senses are themselves first objects of knowledge, it would be quite improper to treat them in an ontological description as the ground or meaning of knowledge. We know the bodies of others, and my body is known by another. Thus the body involves the existence of others and our relation to others.

IV

Neither idealism nor realism has been able to give an intelligible account of my relation to another, and thus to refute solipsism. It is not primarily a relation of knowledge, and it is because they have treated it as such that these philosophies have condemned themselves to fail. Heidegger comes nearest to success, but because (although a pupil of Husserl) he does not start from the *cogito* (the deduction of the world from a subject who brings himself into existence by detaching himself from it as given) he cannot account for the concrete individual whom I know and slips back into idealism, taking others as given along with me inserted in the complex of tools. I cannot be an object to myself; and the other as a subject cannot be an object to me either. He escapes my consciousness as knowledge altogether—in principle. I experience him as a subject not when I see him as an object and infer from his appearance that he is a person like myself, but when he sees me as an object. Then I am sucked into his orbit. My world dissolves and flows away from me and is re-constituted by and about him. I become an item in his world, an item and a world for ever inaccessible to me. When I fall under the regard of another a haemorrhage sets in, my world leaks and flows away: I am wholly given in my appearance to the other, like an *en-soi*. The other is, in principle, the one who looks at me not the one at whom I look—a subject not an object. If I am caught unawares immersed in an activity of which I become ashamed on being discovered (spying through a keyhole, let us say), I become conscious not of myself but of myself as existing for another. This is an inaccessible dimension of myself. I am not only the being I was (my own *en-soi*, my facticity) and the being I have to be (my possibility) but also the being I am to another. I discover that my liberty is limited by his, that I have an outside which I can never see that gives me a totality that belongs only to the human being whose life is accomplished and finished, whose possibilities are no more. Under the regard of another, I am lost, a being I cannot know, placed I cannot know where, in a world

that is not mine: yet this is veritably me, as much as the person I was or the person I am yet to be. This is what happens to me when I am the object of another's regard and he organizes me in his world. This relationship is not an objective relation between bodies in the world, it is not a relationship within the world at all: my transcendence is transcended, I experience concrete proof of another's transcendence, a beyond the world. In this experience, solipsism is not merely refuted, but shattered: under the regard of another, I experience my own objectivity and in that I experience the subjectivity of another—in the destruction of my own—as I never can whilst I remain a subject and he an object to me. That I am an object for another subject is as indubitable as that I exist for myself, and certain forms of consciousness (for example, shame) can only come to me in that way.

The other is a consciousness, a *pour-soi*, a personal being, a self, like me. I should be identified with the other were it not that I constitute myself by dissociation from the other *pour-soi* as from the *en-soi* (and from myself). But this dissociation is mutual and is the attempt to constitute oneself a subject by constituting the other an object. We refuse to be each other. This double negation destroys the objectivity of one or the other: both cannot be at the same time objects for each other. The other as a subject not myself escapes me. I do not seize him directly, but by not being the objective me whom he separates himself from to constitute himself a subject: I refuse myself refused. But to do this is to recognize both the other and my objectivity for the other. This acceptance (in refusal) of my objectivity for the other is the price of my not being the other. My alienated refused self which the other separates himself from in making himself a subject conscious of me and which I separate myself from in striving to be a subject and tearing myself from the other, has to be accepted or else both the other and I disappear. I escape from the other in leaving my alienated self (my self for him) in his hands. My detachment from the other which constitutes myself is in its structure an assumption as mine of this me which the other separates himself from as his object: it is *only* that. The me, alienated and refused (from which both dissociate ourselves to constitute ourselves independent persons), is at the same time my bond with the other and the symbol of our absolute separation. The separation of the other and myself is never something given, like the separation of two bodies in the world for a third person. In affirming myself, I accept

myself as object for the other, but I cannot know this alienated self which is constituted by the other's dissociation: it is my outside, really a dimension of my being, and not an image of me in the consciousness of the other. I am to myself unlimited, pure possibility, for ever not-this; but to the other, seen from the outside, I am limited. My being-for-another is neither *en-soi* nor *pour-soi*, but a being torn to pieces between two negations: the other constitutes himself as not this me of whom he has the intuition, and I have no intuition of this me which I am. However, this me produced by the one and assumed by the other gets an absolute reality from being the sole possible separation between two beings fundamentally identical in their mode of being and immediately present one to the other, for consciousness alone can limit consciousness. On the basis of this acceptance of my limit, obscuring it, comes of course my limitation of the other. It is in fear, shame, pride, vanity, and the like that we experience our existence for others, and these affective states indicate how in practice we pass from one condition to the other, sometimes transcended, sometimes transcending.

What is the other as an object for me? A concrete centre about which a total world is organized, but contemplated and placed within my world, a transcendence transcended, an enclave within my sovereign territory. In principle, I can interpret correctly and know exhaustively the other as object; and nothing in his objectivity refers to his subjectivity which is in principle beyond knowledge and out of the world—and is nothing. When the other as subject arises, the other as object is shattered—the one does not refer to the other nor manifest the other. The other as object (because it can be transformed into subject) is a highly dangerous explosive and my efforts are always concentrated on taking care that it does not go off. But I cannot control this and I can never reconcile the two aspects of the other nor reject either. Only the dead are permanently objective.

The body is a concrete centre of reference. The things in the world are oriented towards the body and reveal it. All the things which I habitually use are organized in my world and indicate my bodily presence which gives them their place and their meaning. Similarly, the great public places and services presuppose and refer to the bodies that frequent and use them; the world is organized and routed for prescribed uses. Objects are both things and tools, given to sensation and use. In a world of serviceable-things, sensation and action cannot properly be distinguished. Thus inquiry should not start with the

body as given and ask how we come to act in and know the world, for with the emergence of the *pour-soi* in relation to the world the world itself as a complex of serviceable-things reveals to us our bodies. I objectify my own body and senses by taking them from my observation of the senses and bodies of others, or from my objective knowledge; I then think of myself as looking on at my own body and sense operations. But that would involve my power to look on at myself looking on, etc., to infinity. The fact is I am my senses and my body and cannot make them an object to myself, for in attempting to do so I am identified with them: the eye whilst it is looking does not see itself. My body is not for me a tool inserted in the complex of tools, but is of such a nature that it can both fit into the complex of tools and be a last term, not itself a tool, which makes sense and order of all. My body is both a point of view and a starting point, for it organizes and fixes the world which I transcend towards a new order by action which realizes other possibilities. It is also an obstacle, a resistance to my projects, with its own 'coefficient of adversity'. It is the condition of action, that is of choice, as of the world of perception.

But as a point of view, my body is not a point of view on which I can take another point of view, just as it is not an instrument which I can use by means of another instrument. I live my body: I do not (cannot) use it, as I cannot transcend and know it. In immediate experience I am not explicitly conscious of it; it is itself passed over as a sign is passed over in making use of the signification, for example, a word or phrase in seizing its meaning. I am conscious of it sideways and retrospectively as of something radically contingent which I cannot seize.

To be conscious is always to be conscious of something against the background of the world, and is always a bodily consciousness, visual or other, against the complete sensory consciousness of the world. Thus in simple consciousness of something, consciousness is aware in different fashion of the total world and of the total body. This consciousness of the body is affective not cognitive, coenaesthetic. It may be painful, agreeable, or without feeling tone, a pure apprehension of one's contingent existence. When it is painful it is my effort to get away from it, to project myself beyond it that brings it into consciousness. But when it is not painful, it may be no less unpleasant, for it is then that we are seized by that nausea which may be worse than painful consciousness. This primal nausea is no

metaphor, it is the real thing, the reaction to our sense of pure contingency, which is the root of all other physical vomiting which is, so to speak, a reminiscence of it.

In brief, the body *for me* is both the centre of reference indicated by the serviceable-things organized in the world and the pure contingency lived by the *pour-soi*. The body of another person to which the serviceable-things of the world refer as to me, indicating a common world, differs from mine simply as being a possible tool and as a body on which I can take a point of view. My perception of another is radically different from my perception of things because I see him in the setting of some piece of his own world: it is always more than a body I see, for it is a transcendence in time and space.

Thus the body exists in three modes or dimensions. I live my body; my body is known and used by another; in so far as I am an object for another, he is a subject for me and I exist for myself as known by another as a body.

V

The *pour-soi*, being related to the other in this way either as subject or as object, tries to escape becoming an object to the other, strives to assimilate the other or to make the other the object, engages in love or hate. In love, it is the liberty of the other that I want to assimilate or to possess as liberty; for it is the liberty of the other that separates the other from me and constitutes me an object revealing my outside to the other. In loving, I demand that the one I love shall exist solely to choose me as an object, and thus be the origin of my existence for another: it is this alone that gives me an existence not merely *de facto* (*de trop*) but *de jure*, willed by the entire liberty of another, whose existence I will with my own liberty. If I can possess the will of another to whom I am an object, an essence, without infringing its liberty, I become my own foundation and justification. But in order to be loved in this fashion the lover has to make himself an object capable of seducing the loved one, an object that can stand in place of the whole world and be worth the whole world, and here it is the language that the lover employs that promises best to serve his interests; but he can no more know how his language will be taken and interpreted by the loved one than he can know how his body and himself will be taken; his language too has an outside inaccessible to him. He will never begin to succeed until he makes

the loved one himself wish and demand to be loved absolutely in the same fashion. For the other can never love me as an object, and he can love me as a subject only by making himself an object which will be all the world to me and seduce me. The loved one only becomes lover by becoming consumed with the desire to be loved. Thus each is trying to be an object of fascination to the other and to demand that the other exist solely to found, will, and sustain him as object. To love is in its essence the project to make oneself loved. The aim is balked quite inevitably. To gain his end, the lover would have to reduce the world to the loved one and himself and have the other exist solely to found his objectivity, and thus give him security and *raison d'être* in his subjectivity; and he would be for the other supreme value and all the world. It is in principle that this enterprise is doomed, for I cannot be loved like this as an object, and I cannot be other than an object to another, and the love of the other is essentially the same project to be loved as subject by me. I cannot get to the goal, I can only turn aside to masochism, making myself wholly an object, using my liberty to deprive myself of liberty, or to sadism, compelling the other to become wholly a thing, a body. These aberrations are themselves self-defeating. And they are only isolated and developed moments of normal sexual intercourse, which is the original project for possessing the liberty of the other through his objectivity. For sexual differentiation and sexual acts spring from deeper ontological structures. The desire which attempts to satisfy itself in sexual acts is a desire for a person taken in his life and place and to become with that person nothing other than one's flesh and blood, pure facticity, contingency. I make myself flesh in the presence of the other in order to appropriate the flesh of the other. The ideal end of desire is the complete incarnation of both consciousnesses in the embrace, with the elimination of movement, the world, even of consciousness. It is the choice of a mode of consciousness: why does the consciousness choose to annul itself under the form of desire? In desire I live my body in a special manner and the world about me suffers a modification: my body is no longer felt as the instrument which cannot be used by another instrument, corresponding to my acts and to a world of serviceable-things; it is lived as flesh, and it is in reference to my flesh that I apprehend the world about me: I make myself passive, I am more sensible of the material substance of things than of their form and use: consciousness sinks into a body which sinks into the world. I come very near to being a thing in the middle of the

world, and very like the dead. The meaning of all this is in the attempt to seize the liberty of the other in itself by reducing it to identity with the palpable. This ideal aim is inevitably frustrated by turning into mere power over the body of the other. I wish to be drunk by my body as the ink by a drunkard in order that the other shall do likewise. The consummation of the sexual act disturbs the profounder intention, which anyhow is doomed to frustration since it is self-contradictory. The liberty, subjectivity, of the other cannot be seized physically.

Obviously, the possible attitudes towards the other cannot be all reduced to these variations on the sexual theme; but all the complex behaviour of men one towards another is only elaboration of these two attitudes, love and desire, and of hate. Certainly, particular forms of behaviour (collaboration, struggle, rivalry, emulation, submission, pity, shame, etc.) are infinitely more delicate to describe, for they depend on the actual situations and concrete detail of each relation of the *pour-soi* with the other, but they all enclose within them as their skeleton the sexual relations, simply because these attitudes are the fundamental projects by which the *pour-soi* realizes its being-for-another and tries to transcend this factual situation. These original attitudes are all doomed to move in a circle of frustration, each evoking and developing another form without ever breaking out or achieving the ideal aim. The other is in principle out of reach. We could take a consistent attitude towards another only if we were revealed *at the same time* as subject and as object, which is in principle impossible. Even an ethic of complete respect for the liberty of the other does not succeed, for it is my existence itself which imposes a limit on the liberty of the other, and any of my projects realizes this limit. To surround the other with tolerance is to force him to live in a tolerant world, and deprives him of the opportunity of developing the virtues and qualities which are demanded by an intolerant world. In education, we choose for others principles and values in which they are brought up, and to choose for them freedom is not less to limit theirs. It is our existence itself (whatever we do) that limits the freedom of the other, and not even suicide can modify that original situation: whatever our actions are, it is in a world where there is already the other and where I am *de trop* in relation to the other that we carry them out. It is in this original situation that the notion of sin, original sin, which has haunted mankind is rooted. The fact of my self-affirmation makes of the other an object and an instrument,

and this original theme only is played with all its variations in all our relations.

I cannot possess the liberty of another, then, and when I am the object of another's regard I may turn my own regard upon him as though two liberties could struggle for supremacy; but when I do so he at once becomes an object for me and loses all the efficacy of a subject that makes me an object. I may carry this attitude through, and reduce all men to objects for me; I may make myself indifferent to them and surround myself with a kind of practical solipsism. I then act as if I were alone in the world, dealing with objects, and functions, and tools. But it is a transparent self-deception from which I am likely sooner or later to be rudely awakened; and even if I am not, the price I pay is to lose all sense of my own objectivity, my reality, and in so far as I manage to retain it I have an uneasy sense of the reality which I am ignoring, an uncomfortable feeling of being everywhere looked at and of being helpless, since, having pretended to myself that I am not observed, I cannot take appropriate defensive action. My double project towards the other is not only frustrated but so obscured that it remains an irritant and a disturbance: on the one hand, I am not protecting myself against the danger of being exposed to the liberty of another; on the other, I am not attempting to use this liberty of the other to complete my own being and give me my own *raison d'être*.

In despair of succeeding by these futile means, the *pour-soi* may seek to get rid of the other by bringing about his death. This is hate. This is a policy of despair, since the *pour-soi* abandons half the project and simply aspires to get rid of its own inaccessible outside. It is the attempt to realize more effectively the mode of indifference, to live alone. In hating one other in this sense I hate not some detestable trait or feature but the offending transcendence of the other, his unget-at-able subjectivity which makes me an object for him, and in hating this one I hate and wish to destroy all, the general principle of the existence of others. Hatred is a black sentiment because it demands to be disapproved and is contemptuous of the disapproval, and thus aims at defying and destroying the liberty of each other. But even if hate succeeded, it could not get rid of the consciousness of the other, it could not restore the lost innocence of solipsism. The past would haunt me, not for my crime, but as the still effective subjectivity of the other, judging me, making me an object irremediably, a fate as irremediable as my own death. Hate is the last throw of despair, and

the retreat from its futility has no escape but to withdraw again into the circle of frustration which it has in vain tried to break out of. [At this point, Sartre inserts the following footnote. 'These considerations do not exclude the possibility of an ethic of salvation. But this salvation must be attained after a radical conversion of which we cannot speak here.']

Of course we find ourselves by the side of others as well as over against them. This experience of the *we*, however, is derivative and not primitive. It can only be understood in terms of the original structure of being-for-another of which it is a complication. The *we* may be experienced as object or as subject. When any two are engaged in any of the forms which the relation between one and another may take, the appearance of a third transforms the situation, and may do so in various ways, but most frequently by constituting a *we* or a *they*, and in any case it is always and necessarily a modification of the primitive structure. Work by the side of others under the eye of an overseer or master is the most radical and the most humiliating experience of the *we* as object, and in this case the *I* is closely integrated with the others and the machines in a total mechanical system determined by an end; the machines and the objects manufactured indicate the places and the roles of the operators. But this is merely a case that happens to be favourable to the recognition of the *we* as object. Any situation can do so none the less. And just as we are conscious of our existence for the other as part of our structure, without actually being under the eye of any other, so we know that the existence of humanity involves the possibility of a plurality of consciousnesses existing for others as object or as subject; but it is only a complication of the original structure: hence, class consciousness and the various phenomena of group structure and social psychology. The experiences and tentatives of the crowd correspond closely to the tentatives in love and desire. And merger in the crowd offers a way of escape to the individual consciousness anxious to forget its irreparable isolation and responsibility, its liberty. Since the *we* is realized only in relation to others, the realization of humanity as such can only take place by positing the existence of a third, distinguished in principle from humanity, in whose eyes humanity is constituted an object. This is simply an ideal concept and corresponds to the idea of God as the being who sees and is not seen. We are always trying to experience our

participation in humanity as an object, an historical object working out its destiny, and we never can, since God is the radically absent and there is no experience of a third party for whom humanity as such is an object. Humanity as such has no outside.

Our existence as subjects in common is indicated to us by the world of manufactures and of public signs. The consumer is always in mind to the manufacturer, his liberty, his needs and possibilities. The consumer's ends are generalized and the article on the market indicates the universal we and universal ends. The market reveals to me that I share my transcendence, that I am a one. In using the public services or any common object I am standardized as one of the universal we. The experience is most accented in the rhythm of common action, as in rowing or singing or marching together. But in all cases it is only a psychological experience, never any modification of the fundamental structures of being. In my being-for-another I exist with an outside exposed to the other, in a dimension really and objectively mine. Nothing in the experience of the we alters this or adds anything comparable to it. It may seem that the conflict which derives from the original situation can be deflected or absorbed in the experience of the we as a union of all subjects engaged in making themselves master of the earth. But this is a mere wish, for the subjectivity of the other remains radically separate and inaccessible, and I cannot hope to enter into union with it as it were sideways and inadvertently when in principle it defeats all my efforts and ruses. This experience of the we is partly dependent upon the partial organization of the world as a system of serviceable-things in common, and partly it is a personal and unstable feeling which in certain situations may or may not be the impression which any given person has. The serviceable-things of the world, which indicate my transcendence and occasion experience of the we, are already humanized; they imply the other and would not have for me the meaning they do have unless I had direct experience of the other in my relation to him: they are never primary, nor can they be a substitute for this fundamental relation. The instability of the we experienced as subject is exemplified in the anarchy of the bourgeois class which refuses to recognize its class basis until it becomes an object under judgement and is made to feel fear and shame. There is no way out: the essence of the relations between consciousnesses is not togetherness, it is conflict.

VI

The *pour-soi*, then, comes into existence by separating itself from the *en-soi*, and this is the condition of both knowledge and action; of knowledge because by this separation the objective world is indicated, organized, and explored—in the way that has been shown; of action because by this separation the *pour-soi* finds itself as nothing and seeks to found itself as something, to acquire the unquestionable being of *en-soi*—in a way that has now to be shown. The *pour-soi* not only transcends the world and therefore makes it that there is a world and interprets it, in the way described by Heidegger, it continually changes the world by action upon it, modifying the *en-soi* in its own constitutive material nature (a possibility which raises a metaphysical problem beyond the scope of ontological description). Why does the *pour-soi* act, and what does it mean to act? But knowing and doing are not the most general modes of human living, for knowing is a mode of having. The general modes are having, doing, and being. They are not finally separated modes; for example, a moral agent may act in order to make himself, and make himself in order to be. The present tendency in philosophy follows the tendency in physics to resolve substance into process, into simple movement. The aim of ethics used to be to provide man with a mode of being; for example, this was the aim of the Stoics and of Spinoza. But if the being of man is resolved into the sequence of his acts, morality cannot raise man to a status above his acts, and puts the supreme value of action in the doing, as Kant does. Is the supreme value of human activity in doing or in being, and where does having come in?

We must begin by analysing the notion of action. An act is intentional, or it is not properly speaking an act; it implies a lack that is to be remedied. As such it cannot be motivated from behind, by the past or the state of affairs: it is by an isolation of the state of affairs by a preliminary act of negation (separating the situation as an object), and then by the positing of an end, a difference, by another act of negation, that the past or the present can be interpreted and converted into a motive for action. That is to say, liberty of the agent is the foundation and indispensable condition of all action, liberty as conscious separation from what exists and self-projection towards what is conceived to be possible. The worker does not revolt against the conditions of his life unless and until he can separate himself from them by conceiving and projecting himself towards a better

state of things in a realizable future. The motive to act becomes the intention to act and the act moves towards an end in view. This complex is indissolubly one; the terms mutually interpret one another and do not derive simply the one from the other or from any other simple antecedent. Fear may prompt me to act, but only because what I fear to lose is already established as an ideal end for me; and if I reject that end the fear has no more power to move me to act, it becomes a baseless, irrational, unmeaning fear. The single movement of separation from the present and projection towards the future, which is the formal self-constitution of the *pour-soi* (the coming into existence of consciousness), contains motive, act, and end, as its integral parts. The act in this total sense is liberty, and liberty is not a property of human nature but is human existence, the separation in consciousness of the *pour-soi* from the *en-soi*, which is always a particular act.

'To be, for the *pour-soi*, is to cancel the *en-soi* which he is. On these conditions, liberty can be nothing other than this cancellation. It is by this that the *pour-soi* escapes from his being as from his essence, it is by this that he is always something other than what one can say of him, for at least he is the one who escapes from this very classification, the one who is already beyond the name one gives him, the attribute one recognizes in him. To say that the *pour-soi* has to be what it is, to say that it is what it is not in not being what it is, to say that in its existence precedes and conditions essence or inversely, according to Hegel's formula, that for it *Wesen ist was gewesen ist*, is to say one and the same thing, namely, that man is free. By the mere fact, indeed, that I am conscious of the motives which solicit my action, these motives are already transcendent objects for my consciousness, they are outside; I should seek in vain to cling to them: I escape from them by my very existence. I am condemned to exist always beyond my essence, beyond the affective and rational motives of my act: I am condemned to be free.' (*L'Être et le Néant*, p. 515.)

This freedom can be masked, but not destroyed; I can deceive myself, but not cease to be free. Thus we tend to think of motives, affective and rational (e.g. fear, health), as constants, given in the world and encountered, coming from God, nature, human nature, or society, in virtue of which the *pour-soi* is given an essence and becomes *en-soi*. This is a dead world, the world of the past. Life and

liberty mean separation from whatever is and has been, a projection into the new, and it is this perpetual projection which constitutes motives and ends; they are never given. Human presence in the world is not a form of being, but a form of doing, of choosing and making itself.

'It is entirely abandoned, without any help of any kind, to the insupportable necessity of making itself be down to the least detail. Thus, liberty is not *a* being: it is the being of man, that is to say, his lack of being. If one first conceives of man as a plenum, it would be absurd afterwards to look in him for moments or psychic regions in which he would be free: as well look for space in a vessel which one has previously filled to the brim. Man cannot be sometimes free and sometimes bound: he is entirely and always free or he is not.' (Ibid., p. 516.)

Like motives and ends, will and the passions are not given states of mind, but are constituted like the *pour-soi* itself by separation from what is and projection towards what does not yet exist: they are elements which express and furnish man's freedom, not determinants to which he is subject. The will is not more free than the passions, since it is the *pour-soi* in itself by its self-constitution that projects itself towards an end beyond present existence; the will or deliberation is merely refinement by reflection upon this self-projection, it is self-examination rather than self-determination, for 'when I deliberate, the die is cast'. If I deliberate, that is because it is part of my original project to give myself a rational account of my action before I act. The very satisfaction of the will in its own consummation, 'I have done what I wanted to do', reveals its dependence upon a primary intention at a deeper level, the project to be an '*en-soi-pour-soi*', of which it is one form of attempted realization.

I am a being who is originally pro-ject, that is to say, who defines himself by his end; in being separation from myself (from my facticity) which falls into the past and from the world to which I am present, I am transcendence towards a form of being with which I can be identified, although as transcendence I can never be identified with any form of being. There are a thousand ways of affirming this separation, this transcendence: I can, for example, live my body by identifying myself with it either in its endurances or in its delights, or by ascetic renunciations, or by hypochondriac cultivation; and I can

relate myself to my own past and to the things in the world in a similar variety of ways. My original project, my choice of myself, is worked out in choices which are an explication of the original choice. One could choose otherwise in a particular case (say, one could have chosen to go on with the fatigues of an expedition in-instead of giving it up), but only at the cost of a conversion, a change in the original project or choice of myself (becoming, say, an athlete instead of a hypochondriac). *In theory*, any detail of action may be traced back to the original choice, which is nothing other than the way in which the *pour-soi* separates himself from himself and from the world, his way of being-in-the-world. Beyond this it is not possible to go.

This analysis points to the possibility of an existentialist psychoanalysis by which to explain and understand personality and behaviour. It would differ from Freudian psycho-analysis in rejecting determinism by past events in a psyche reacting to the pressure of circumstances. Simply, such an existentialist psycho-analysis would be founded on the basic principle that every gesture and trait of character is to be interpreted by its integration through secondary and primary structures in the total personality, and not as the effect of an antecedent cause in a past psychic state. The inferiority complex is a primary structure in this sense, a free projection of myself as inferior before another; 'it is the way in which I choose to assume my being-for-another, the free solution which I find for the existence of the other, that insurmountable scandal'. I express my whole self, that is to say, the unrealized choice of myself, in the least action, just as I bring the world into organized existence in my perception of the least object. This fundamental act of liberty which I am, by which I constitute myself endlessly, is the choice of myself in the world and at the same time discovery of the world. The consciousness of my original choice is my consciousness of myself. In being conscious, I am separating myself from what I am and from what I am present to, that is, I am choosing how I shall be related to them: 'choice and consciousness are one and the same thing'. My initial and ultimate project is always the rudiment of a solution of the problem of being, not a solution first conceived and then realized, because we *are* that solution and can only apprehend it in living it. Just because we are always wholly present to ourselves, we cannot hope to have an analytical and detailed consciousness of what we are. And in choosing ourselves we interpret the world as the image of what we are: the

value of things, the parts they play in my life, my relation to them, sketch the image of me, of my choice.

This initial choice of myself which sketches my solution of the problem of being is always capable of being changed, and it is only such a radical change that will make me act otherwise than as I do. The meaning of the dread which I feel when I realize my liberty is the recognition that my choice could be otherwise, that it is, that I am, *de facto* not *de jure*, and that this choice, which is not justified, which does not derive from anything antecedent, is yet the foundation of all value and all reality for me, all my interpretations. In separating itself from the *en-soi*, itself gratuitous, the *pour-soi* makes itself gratuitous. My ultimate choice, being absolute, unconditioned, is precarious, may be replaced. But since the world is apprehended and interpreted by us by means of and in terms of this fundamental choice we have made, a radical change of this sort, whilst always possible, is in the highest degree difficult and unlikely. Other choice is the choice of others, not easily a possibility for us.

VII

‘The decisive argument used by common sense against liberty consists in reminding us of our impotence. Far from being able to modify our situation at will, it seems that we cannot change ourselves. I am not “free” to escape from the lot of my class, my nation, my family, nor even to build up my power or my fortune, nor to conquer the least important of my appetites or my habits. I am born a worker, French, with hereditary syphilis or tuberculosis. The history of a life, whatever it may be, is a story of frustration. The coefficient of adversity of things is such that it takes years of patience to obtain the most trifling result. Moreover it is necessary “to obey nature in order to command her”, that is to say, to insert my action in the mesh of determinism. Much more than appearing “to make himself”, man seems “to be made” by climate and land, race and class, language, the history of the collectivity of which he is part, heredity, the particular circumstances of his childhood, acquired habits, the great and the little events of his life.’ (*L’Être et le Néant*, p. 561.)

It is true that the being called free is one that can realize his projects, but the rejection of what is actual and the projection of what is possible is the very meaning of free action, and the resistances

encountered are the condition of action which makes the difference between liberty and necessity. 'There cannot be a free *pour-soi* save as engaged in a resistant world.' To be free does not mean practicability of purpose; it means determining what one wants, not getting what one wants, but determining what one wants in the large sense of choosing how one shall take one's life and what ends one shall pursue. At the same time, the autonomous choice is not a mere wish or aspiration, it is not real unless it initiates action: in this sense, the prisoner is always free to try to escape or to try to get himself liberated—as distinct from being free to walk out or to dream of being set free. Liberty is not in question until consciousness separates itself from the given, which is the foundation of knowledge and action, already a movement towards a new state of things. 'Thus liberty is lack of being in relation to a given being and not the emergence of a positive being.' It presupposes all being and cannot therefore be its own source. The facticity of liberty is its attachment to the given by separation from which it comes into existence. My place, my body, my past, my fundamental relation to the other person: these are the structural aspects of my total situation illumined by my projects.

My limitation of place is one of the forms of my facticity, but what that place means and whether it is an obstacle, an opportunity, a starting-point, a matter of indifference, depends upon my free projects. The past is determined irremediably, but its evaluation remains in suspense—what it means to me, what I make of it, the part it plays in my life. In a thousand ways, I can choose my past or repudiate it. What the sequel will be that is the key to the past is in the open future. Thus the Greeks would always say: Call no man happy until his death. The past does not determine the future. Rather, one must say: If you want to have such a past, act in such a way. I can choose and continue a tradition, repudiate or fulfil an engagement, learn from my experience or ignore it, overcome a proved weakness or avoid or exploit it; and in such ways I act freely on my past and convert it into motives by my choice of the future.

It is I who give meaning to my surroundings by my projects, and to the events which affect my projects: I create my situation and am responsible for it, and it is in this situation that I am free. When I separate myself in consciousness from what is there, I constitute not the world but its existence and meaning for me: it is by the independence and indifference of things and my capacity to separate myself from them and to act on them in order to change them for the

sake of some project, a future end, that I have the liberty which I am. Purpose would be inconceivable save in an order of independent indifferent things, partly knowable, partly stable, partly alterable; and the practicability of purpose is conditioned in this way. Therefore intelligent purpose is open, empirical, modifiable. It is not that I simply interpret the world by my projects, and thus give things their coefficient of adversity or utility; it is that I form my projects partly on my experience of the use and potentiality of things, and allow for the unforeseeable.

This treatment of the world from the point of view of my interests and projects is complicated by the presence of others in the world. Not mainly because they enjoy a different perspective and form a different interpretation, but because most things are presented to me as already worked over, utilized, standardized for prescribed uses: instead of my giving them meaning by my projects, they tell me what to do, and therefore, since I am my projects, what I am; and since these ready-made meanings and public instructions of an already inhabited and organized world are not addressed to me personally but to everyone concerned, I am reduced to impersonality in adopting or obeying them. This world of defined meanings, available techniques, given ends, and other persons, is a matter of contingent fact, which cannot be deduced from the existence of the *pour-soi* itself in face of the *en-soi* as independent reality. It is by these means that I *live* my participation in the human species, as I live my body and my place. It is not I who decide by my projects whether I shall see the world in the simple clear-cut black and white of the proletarian or in the chiaroscuro of the bourgeois: 'I am not only thrown in front of brute existents, I am thrown into a working-class world, French, lorraine or méridional, which offers me its meanings without my having done anything to uncover them'. But these techniques and standardized meanings and instructions are not self-acting; they are techniques only when they are viewed from outside and analysed as used; in use they are spontaneous projections towards personal ends. Language is the cardinal example, furnished as it is by the elaboration of usage and formulable in grammatical rules, but in spontaneous use the phrase transcends the individual words and the thing denoted in a vivid personal intention; and this is only possible on the basis of established usage regulated by rule. The human world, worked over, standardized, furnished with instructions and techniques, conditions and facilitates liberty and does not replace it.

It is in order to be a man that one belongs to a nation, a class, a family, etc.: these are the conditions of one's projects, which one both maintains and surpasses. It is from *these* conditions that I separate myself in my projects. And it is in this way that by my projects I help to make the human species itself, as language is made not by laws but by use.

Although the ready-made meanings and techniques furnished by others merely condition my liberty and do not limit it, the existence of others does limit my liberty. This is not merely that I cannot change and cannot even properly know the image or opinion which another may entertain of me; that would not matter: what is a fundamental objective fact of my being, which therefore can and does limit my liberty, is that from the moment when a liberty other than mine rises in face of me I begin to exist in a new dimension of being and, this time, there is no question of my conferring a meaning on brute existents, nor of turning to my own account the meaning which others have given to certain objects: it is I who see myself given a meaning, and it is not a meaning which I can get hold of or make use of. Here is a dimension of me which I cannot get rid of and cannot live; it is given and has to be endured. At this point and in this sense, I am something that I have not chosen to be. This limitation of my liberty is not at all the limitation imposed by others by means of prohibitions, but lies simply and solely in the mere fact that I am an object to another, and in that my lived situation (wholly informed by my liberty) becomes an objective structure: my being a Jew or a worker is not for another the lived situation it is for me, but is a determination. I can only recognize the liberty of another by accepting that; my outside which I cannot choose, nor know, nor adopt, is the liberty of others and the check or limit to my own. What I am in its absolute concreteness appears only to another; the words by which he describes it are abstract and I cannot apply them to myself. My characteristics are given, objective, for another who is not identified with them, and I who am identified with them cannot realize them: in this sense, my characteristics are unrealizable. They can be recognized to be unrealizable only when I try to realize them, which I do when I accept the other as free subject and myself as object for him. I do not receive passively the labels fixed on me—ugly, weak, Jew, etc.—I react to them according to my own fundamental projects, am proud, ashamed, indifferent, etc. Thus for others these characteristics simply *are*; for me they can only be as if chosen. I can neither refuse to be what I am

for another nor simply be that: I have to digest it. These unrealizables, then (my characteristics in the eyes of another), are not brought into existence by me and constitute the limit and outside of my situation, yet they demand that I shall take them into account in terms of my fundamental project and in recognizing the free existence of the other. In this they resemble and share the nature of an imperative, which comes from outside and demands to be taken up in liberty and adopted as one's own, and yet can never lose its exteriority. Such is the unrealizable which demands to be realized. I cannot escape being the object of another's free existence, which limits my liberty, and I cannot live the situation and characteristics attributed to me by the other, but I can at least will this entire situation, to be limited by the freedom of the other; and this brings the external limit inside my situation, under my choice. I see that there is a liberty beyond my liberty, a situation beyond my situation, and that this involves my being there in the middle of the world for someone else, and by willing that situation and reacting to it in the circumstances of my particular case I bring it into my situation under my liberty, although it remains unrealizable. I cannot go outside and see myself as Frenchman or worker, but I can take it upon myself to be in order to be Frenchman or worker decisively. This is an alienation of myself: for myself, I *am* nothing.

Nor should the limit imposed by death be misconceived. Contrary to the conception of Heidegger that death is my sovereign possibility, death is not *my* possibility at all, it is 'a cancellation always possible of what I can be, which is outside my possibilities'. Death is accidental in its occurrence and therefore absurd: far from giving a life its meaning, it may leave that meaning in doubt and suspense. 'My project towards a death is comprehensible (as suicide, martyr, hero), but not the project towards *my* death as the indeterminate possibility of no longer realizing presence in the world, for this project would be the destruction of all projects. Thus death cannot be my peculiar possibility; it cannot even be one of *my* possibilities.' On the positive side, my death is the triumph of the point of view of the other over the point of view which I am: my whole life then simply *is*, and is no longer its own suspense, can no longer be changed by the mere consciousness which it has of itself. Life decides its own meaning because it is always in suspense; the life that is dead does not cease also to change, but the die is cast, it is what the living make of the dead and their works that is in question. The fate of the dead is

always in the hands of the living. Death is not annihilation, but the lapse of my subjectivity out of the world; I leave behind meanings and traces which are my meanings and traces and which are modified at the hands of others: I exist solely in my dimension of exteriority. Therefore, to meditate on my life considering it from the standpoint of death would be to meditate on my subjectivity taking the point of view of another upon it, and that is impossible. Thus, contrary to Heidegger, death so far from being my own possibility is a contingent fact which as such escapes me in principle and belongs in its origin to my facticity. Death is a pure fact, like birth. I am not 'free in order to die' (Heidegger), but a free being who dies. I choose to assume my death as the inconceivable limit of my subjectivity, as I choose to be liberty limited by the fact of the liberty of another. In neither case do I encounter this limit as a fetter upon my liberty.

This, then, in sum is Sartre's account of human freedom. The *pour-soi* is nothing other than its situation; being-in-a-situation defines human presence in the world, in taking account at the same time of its being-there and of its being-beyond. Human presence in the world is, indeed, the being that is always beyond its being-there. And the situation is the organized totality of being-there interpreted and lived in and by being-beyond.

'It is this steep and dusty road, this burning thirst which I have, this refusal of people to give me a drink, because I have no money or I am not of their country or of their race; it is my abandonment in the midst of these hostile peoples, with this bodily fatigue which will perhaps prevent my attaining the end which I had fixed for myself. But it is also precisely this *end*, not in so far as I formulate it clearly and explicitly, but inasmuch as it is there, everywhere about me, as that which unifies and explains all these facts, that which organizes them in a whole which can be described instead of making of them a disordered nightmare.' (*L'Être et le Néant*, p. 634.)

The chosen end which illumines the given does so because it is chosen as transcending *this* given—ideals are concrete and empirical. The *pour-soi* does not emerge with an end already given in relation to the situation; but in 'making' the situation, it 'makes itself', and inversely.

This freedom involves responsibility. To be in a situation, which is the being of human presence in the world, is to be responsible for one's manner of being without being the origin of one's own being.

I am inescapably responsible because my ends which are mine alone determine my situation. It is lived, not suffered; I am conscious of being the incontestable author of my life in the sense of what happens to me. I am responsible even for the wars that happen in my time.

‘Thus, totally free, indistinguishable from the epoch of which I have chosen to be the meaning, as profoundly responsible for the war as if I had myself declared it, unable to live anything without integrating it into *my* situation, engaging myself wholly in it and marking it with my seal, I must have no remorse nor regrets as I have no excuse, for, from the moment of my emergence into being, I carry the weight of the world on my own, without anything or anybody being able to lighten the burden....

‘On these conditions, since every event in the world can disclose itself to me only as *opportunity* (opportunity taken advantage of, lost, neglected, etc.), or, better still, since everything that happens to us can be considered as a *chance*, that is to say, can appear to us only as a means of realizing this being which is in question in our being, and since others, as transcendences-transcended, are themselves also only *opportunities* and *chances*, the responsibility of the *pour-soi* extends to the whole world as a peopled-world. It is just for this reason that the *pour-soi* apprehends itself in dread, that is to say, as a being who is not the originator of his own being, nor of the being of the other, nor of the *en-soi* which form the world, but who is forced to decide on the meaning of being, in himself and everywhere outside of himself. He who realizes in dread his condition of being thrown into a responsibility which goes back even to his finding himself in the world, no longer has remorse, nor regret, nor excuse; he is no more than a liberty which is itself perfectly revealed and whose being lies in this very revelation. But...most of the time we take refuge from dread in self-deception.’ Ibid., (pp. 641, 642.)

VIII

Since it is by the ends which he projects that the *pour-soi* is defined, it is essential to study such ends as the clue to human activity. The analysis by psychologists of human propensities is no help because it falsifies the character of human presence in the world to treat it as a substance having these attributes as desires, and desires are concrete forms of consciousness (desire of something), transcendent, projective;

and the whole person is present in each form of behaviour (were it a gesture), which reveals the fundamental project which is the person. What is this project? The *pour-soi* is the refusal to be the *en-soi* it comes into being by separating itself from, and is itself a project to be. What? *The pour-soi* comes into being as not the *en-soi* and this negation defines itself as projection towards the *en-soi*: between the *en-soi* denied and the *en-soi* projected, the *pour-soi* is nothing. The end and the aim of this negation that I am is the *en-soi*. Human presence in the world is the desire to be *en-soi*. But of course not the *en-soi* already encountered and rejected. The rejection is itself tantamount to a revolt of the *en-soi* against its own contingency, its gratuitousness, its absurdity. To say that the *pour-soi* lives its facticity is to say that this rejection is a vain effort of a being to found its own being. The being the *pour-soi* aspires to be is an *en-soi* that would be its own source, that is, which would be to its facticity as the *pour-soi* is to its motivations. It is consciousness identified with what it is conscious of without the least separation that the *pour-soi* desires to be, consciousness which would be founder of its own being in itself by the pure consciousness which it would have of itself. That is the ideal of God. Man is fundamentally desire to be God. This is the ultimate meaning of human desires and ends but does not constitute them what they are in their particularity, which is free invention. The desire to be which is ultimately desire to be founder of my own being is in practice desire expressed in choice of manner of being, what I do with my facticity.

‘Thus we are faced with symbolic structures of great complexity which have *at least* three levels. In the empirical desire, I can discern a symbolization of the fundamental and concrete desire which is *the person* and which represents the way in which he has decided that being shall be in question in his being; and this fundamental desire, in its turn, expresses concretely and in the world, in the particular situation which surrounds the person, an abstract and significant structure which is the desire of being in general and which must be considered as *human reality in the person*, that which makes his community with another, that which makes it possible to affirm that there is a truth concerning man and not merely incomparable individuals. ...the desire of being, in its abstract purity, is the *truth* of the fundamental concrete desire, but does not exist in a real sense...the structure, abstract and ontological, “desire of being” could

hardly represent the fundamental and *human* structure of the person, it could not be a fetter on his liberty. Liberty, indeed, is strictly assimilable to the cancellation of being: the only being which can be called free is the being which cancels (separates itself from) its being. We know, moreover, that the cancellation is *lack of being* and cannot be otherwise. Liberty is precisely being which makes itself lack of being. But since desire, as we have shown, is identical with lack of being, liberty can emerge only as being which makes itself desire of being, that is to say, as the project of the *pour-soi* to be *en-soi-pour-soi*. We have reached here an abstract structure which cannot at all be considered as the nature or essence of liberty, for liberty is existence and its existence precedes its essence; liberty is an emergence that is immediately concrete and is not distinguished from its choice, that is to say, from the *person*. But the structure under consideration may be called the *truth* of liberty, that is to say that it is the human meaning of liberty.' (Ibid., 654, 655.)

The ontological analysis once it has revealed the structure of man and the ultimate meaning of desire gives place to the empirical analysis of man's activities in the pursuit of the objects of his desire. Desire is at bottom the lack of being, a movement towards completion. Human presence in the world is a form of being separated from the *en-soi* which is wholly and solely what it is and by the mere fact of this separation striving for a consciousness which is not a consciousness of separation from but of identity with, a consciousness which founds itself, is its own cause. This desire is manifested in the abundant and diverse activities of men, seeking to do and to make, to have and to be. To trace in these varied activities prompted by human desire the forms of the fundamental human project to be a self-caused-thing-in-itself is the work of an existential psycho-analysis.

In the first place, the activity of doing and making can be reduced to a case of being or, far more usually, of having. In making something or creating a work of art, the artist is seeking to possess something outside himself which he encounters in the world and which bears the mark of himself; in seeking to know, the scientist seeks to appropriate the object known in a way that makes it his own and at the same time leaves it public and objective; in games and sports, the player seeks the appropriation of victory, not merely the prize but the difficulty overcome, mastery of the mountain, the sea, the air; and in the purest forms of play, it is not possession that is sought but

being, realization in the purest form of the liberty of the person, the purest symbolization of the project to be God which is the profound meaning of human presence in the world. Thus these typical activities of human life reveal a striving to appropriate the *en-soi* in its absolute being, beyond the typical objects of appropriation which represent it. Human desire, then, in its practical activities is concentrated upon possession of the *en-soi* in various forms and by various means; in its ideal activity it is aiming at a form of being which unites the nature of *en-soi* and *pour-soi*. What is the relation between this practical appropriation of the *en-soi* and the form of being which is the ultimate aim?

The answer is that the desire to have, to possess, is a desire to be united with the object in a certain relation, that is, a desire for a certain form of being. The object possessed remains what it is, unaffected, external; but the possession of it by the *pour-soi* is the attempt to internalize it, to make it an extension and a part of the being of the *pour-soi*. *Mine* is a form of being intermediary between the absolute inwardness of me and the absolute externality of *not-me*. It aims at an ideal identity. The possessor becomes the *raison d'être* of the object possessed; and virtually I am the creator and user of the objects with which I surround myself and by which I live. It is only the act of creation or of use which realizes the ideal identity or union of person and thing; outside of this, the thing lapses into an indifferent object encountered. But the *pour-soi* because it is nothing in search of its being throws all the accent on the object possessed: I am identified with the thing as the completion of my being; in giving the thing its *raison d'être* and identifying myself with it, I am in some sense what I seek to be, *en-soi-pour-soi*. In possessing, I have outside myself in the world a form of myself which I can enjoy as an object; and in this I anticipate my being-for-another: I am already in possession, enjoying myself as an object from outside, which the other wants to make of me.

But this possession is merely a symbolic realization of the ideal human project and does not give satisfaction. It is for that reason that possession is insatiable and often passes into destruction, whether by using up or wearing out or by deliberate action. To destroy is akin to creation, in that it assimilates the object to the self, even more completely; and when it has gone it remains in the sense that there was this independent object which is now assimilated. To give away is similarly a form of destroying and of possessing.

What fundamentally is this relation of possessing? It is that I as *raison d'être* of the object seek to appropriate its being, and, beyond and through its being, the world itself; and since the object is itself in some sense ideally me in being mine, the *pour-soi* is here its own *raison d'être* existing in the mode of *en-soi*. 'To be in the world is to seek to possess the world, that is to say, to seize the total world as what is lacking to the *pour-soi* in order that it may become *en-soi-pour-soi*'. What is sought here is not an abstract mode of being but a concrete union. The *pour-soi* chooses this world in and by the concrete object, that-there, and transcends it towards a new state of the same world in which being will be *en-soi* founded by the *pour-soi*.

Thus the desire to have is indirectly the desire to be, both springing from the lack of being which I am. This nothing which I make myself to be in coming into existence as consciousness is itself individual and concrete, being the lack of the being which already exists and in the midst of which I arise. Thus I choose being in a thousand ways of being and having. The business of an existential psycho-analysis is to trace why I choose to possess the world by means of this or that particular object. That certainly belongs to liberty, but the objects themselves can be studied and made to reveal being in their qualities. 'For it is not at the level of taste for the sweet or the bitter, etc., that free choice is irreducible, but at the level of choice of the aspect of being which is revealed *through and by means of* the sweet, the bitter, etc.'

Human presence in the world, then, is fundamentally a choice of being, either directly or indirectly, through appropriation of the world by means of concrete things in the world. When the choice is by means of appropriation, each thing is chosen for the way in which it gives off being, the way in which being crops out at its surface. Thus there is wanted a psycho-analysis of things and of their matter which is concerned to establish the way in which each thing is an objective symbol of being and of the relation of human presence in the world to this being.

The quality of a thing is nothing other than its being, and not a mere subjective mode of apprehension; and the whole being is present in any quality: it is the disclosure of being to a consciousness, which separates itself from being so that there is being for something which is not that being. It is this separation, making it that there is being disclosed in its qualities, that the *pour-soi* desires to overcome in order to reach being such as it is

absolutely and in itself. 'In each apprehension of quality, there is, in this sense, a metaphysical effort to escape from our condition, in order to pierce the muff of nothingness of the *there is* (of consciousness) and penetrate to the pure *en-soi*.' But obviously we can only seize the quality as symbol of a being which escapes us totally although it is totally there in front of us. Nevertheless, this attempt to get an intuition of being by means of the qualities disclosed in things can be helped and illumined by a psychoanalysis of the symbolism of things. The yellow, the rough, the polished; water and oil; the fluid and solid; the animal: here are forms of being which have their meanings which throw light on the human choice of being in its particular manifestations. When I separate myself from something (which is my consciousness of it) I do not merely hold off it in awareness of it, I ask implicitly, How can I be it? How can I have it? Its response is in its materiality, the way it gives itself; its nature is its response to this question of appropriation. Thus, the viscous gives itself readily, but when it is taken it adheres: it symbolizes, not the domination of the *pour-soi* over the *en-soi* which it finds and uses, but an ideal form of being in which the psychic and the physical are confused, and the *pour-soi* is sucked into and possessed by the *en-soi*. This ideal of being can no more be realized than the union in which both elements retain their distinctiveness; but it remains a danger, an anti-value, as the other remains an end, the supreme value. Thus there are no tastes however seemingly idle and indifferent which do not throw light on our fundamental project and the way in which we go about to realize it.

'Each human presence in the world is at the same time the direct project of metamorphosing his own *Pour-soi* into *En-soi-Pour-soi* and the project of appropriating the world as the totality of being-in-itself, under the varieties of a fundamental quality. Every human presence in the world is a passion, in that it is a project to lose itself in order to found being and in the same act constitute the *En-soi* which escapes contingency in being its own ground, the *Ens causa sui* which the religions call God. Thus man's passion is the inverse of Christ's, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain; man is a useless passion.' (Ibid., 708.)

IX

The foregoing summary of the argument does no justice at all to the intellectual rigour, ingenuity, and copious description of Sartre's own exposition throughout more than 700 pages of *L'Être et le Néant*. His account of human presence in the world is likely to be rejected by common sense as bizarre, perverse, bewildering, and depressing, throwing no light on human problems and helping nobody to live more intelligently or effectively. Philosophers of course have their own sophisticated way of dealing with it. Sartre is far too intelligent a thinker to be easily vulnerable to common sense, and too well versed in philosophy not to have anticipated objections from the orthodox standpoints. The hail of obvious and superficial criticism is not likely to inflict any vital wound. Of course he is open to serious criticism—on the condition that he is taken seriously.

The point that his philosophy is pessimistic and depressing is easily disposed of. In order to know how to live and to live well, it is first necessary to know on what conditions we have to live; diagnosis comes before prescription. Both Sartre himself and Simone de Beauvoir have made this clear, and have acutely pointed out that the pessimism and cynicism of popular wisdom show that people have no objection to such views of human nature and destiny, as they have none to sentimental and romantic views; what they do object to is the view that is disturbing: they want to think that to live well is easy or is impossible, not to be told that it is both difficult and possible.

But is the diagnosis right? What is gained by refurbishing such metaphysical entities as the *en-soi* and the *pour-soi* instead of relying wholly upon the empirical descriptions and conceptions of the sciences, especially psychology, to give the account of nature and man and human life in the world? Sartre insists that empirical psychology is not based on anything ultimate at all, since it is either concerned first and last with facts or relies for its explanations on the libido, the will to power, a bundle of original propensities, the mechanism of the association of ideas, that is to say, on some empirical finding or uncriticized assumption or metaphysical entity. It does not go back to any evident original principle which can really be the source of explanation. Hegel had complained of modern philosophy that it stultified itself by founding metaphysics on psychological facts which themselves required to be explained, and Husserl, taking the task of philosophy seriously, explored the meaning of meaning by

trying to uncover the ultimate structures of consciousness. Sartre claims that his ontology gives the mental and moral sciences their principles, and he himself has made extensive application of his own doctrine in sustained psychological and social analysis, abstract and concrete, not without striking results. His studies of Baudelaire and of anti-semitism, and his theory of the emotions and of the imagination, are remarkably fruitful, and fruitful because of his doctrinal approach, whether or not he really succeeds in laying bare his ontology in the complex structures of the phenomena he studies.

Before raising the question of its truth, the boldness and the philosophical virtues of Sartre's doctrine are worth a word of appreciation. With beautiful economy, consciousness (simply by making itself other than the world without being something other than the world) constitutes the world and the self and the principle of all knowing, feeling, and striving, without a trace of traditional idealism or materialism. (Marcel describes this as obsolete idealism united with old-fashioned materialism, in an essay on Sartre which is certainly not lacking in truth save in the total omission of all that is positive in the man and in the philosophy.) This enables Sartre to give us both a palpable natural world (with a reconditioned fascinated interest in the simple materiality of things) and human presence in the world as liberty—conditions of the carnal, spiritual, and dramatic satisfactions of human living. Consciousness by its very lack of being is choice of being, and from that original project which consciousness is springs all the diversity of human activity, even the ontology which analyses and conceptualizes the original project, and thus modifies my own sidelong awareness of my consciousness, that is, this original project itself which I live and am. The rational ideal of philosophy is here approached to the point where further progress is fatally balked. The explanatory description reaches its limit with the conditions that give us a world, and the rational end which it discloses as the ideal goal of human striving is seen to be unattainable. Human existence is presented as the historical attempt to realize the union of consciousness and existence (*En-soi-Pour-soi*), as classical philosophy has been the attempt to deduce existence from thought in order to see the world as rationally necessary. This project, unachieved in philosophy because the world is not required by reason, will not be achieved in history because the world cannot be made wholly rational, even if philosophy turns from explaining to changing it. The ideal is and remains self-contradictory; nevertheless, it is and remains the

explanation of human activity, even if recognition of the contradiction modifies human aspiration and effort. What makes Sartre's argument fascinating philosophically is the ingenuity with which he makes the simple presence of consciousness to the given material world suffice in its manner to account for everything in heaven and earth, clarifying not only human life in the world but also past efforts in philosophy, and seeming neatly to avoid the difficulties and save the values of opposed schools. No doubt his triumph is a Pyrrhic victory, not merely because the cost of it is an insurmountable discrepancy between the ideal and the actual, but mainly because the argument raises theoretical difficulties not less stubborn than those which it evades or resolves: my consciousness of something and implicit awareness of this consciousness, which is the foundation of all, is not awareness of me and can never reach me; the *pour-soi* as pure flight and pursuit can never know itself as flight and pursuit, and therefore the principle which ingeniously furnishes the ontological description from within could never produce the reflective consciousness which carries out the description. But, leaving aside technical soundness in this general consideration of Sartre's philosophy, the prior question is whether this type of analysis really is explanatory. Is there necessarily an ultimate irreducible situation in terms of which human life is bound to be lived, so that every human activity can be interpreted through intermediary structures in terms of this absolute situation? Or is this an entirely otiose reductive analysis, even less excusable than reductive materialism?

We have become used in Freudian psychology to the idea of fantastic infantile wishes, incapable of being realized and normally repressed and lost, which play their part in the development of mature desires; but Sartre's primordial structure is the very being of human presence in the world and conditions all empirical desires and therefore cannot play the part of a mere component. Its status is unique, and is not to be confused with that of material structures in mechanical determinism or of psychic structures in psychological determinism. It is not a 'fetter on liberty', it is 'the human meaning of liberty'. No primitive structure continues to limit the meaning and possibilities of later elaborations—to suppose that it does is the reductive fallacy. Sartre, however, gives a dazzling performance on the ice that will bear nobody else; he escapes the fallacy and exploits its power of reductive explanation. He does it with inventive resourcefulness in the one way possible, by keeping consciousness

clear of the complications and elaborations of being, consciousness remains first and last detached non-being and at the same time constitutive of all we know and are: it is the play of light, revealing the world, inseparable from the world, and never mixed or compounded or entering into process with anything in the world. And he can use this principle of explanation not in the manner of traditional determinism, whether causal or final, but as omnipresent and constitutive, which acquits him of relying on exploded forms of rationalism. His daring and simple conception, with the elaborate and impressive manner of its working out in the full knowledge of what he is about, makes, at worst, one more monumental failure of the speculative genius of man. But the intellectual ingenuity addressed to the traditional problems of technical philosophy is rooted in the total responses of the man, and is not a *tour de force*. Sartre's famous nausea, his sense and horror of the gratuitousness of things, cognate with his repugnance to the viscous and the animal and his preference for the metallic and quasi-metallic, indicate a profound rationalism as the crying need of his nature, and the lived impulse of his philosophy; but it is a rationalism that learns to abandon the quest for origins and ends and to rejoice in an absolute 'without cause, without reason, without goal, without any past or future other than its own permanence, gratuitous, fortuitous, magnificent'. (*Le Sursis*, p. 276.) Consciousness as the play of light on the surface of things is man's glory and his agony, since it is his being; and there is no doubt that Sartre lives it as such.

Sartre is a rationalist and a materialist, as Marcel says he is; but there is no sense in dismissing him under these labels as no different from old-fashioned gentlemen of this description whom one may have learned to despise—or perhaps to fear. There have always been rationalists and materialists as long as man has been reflective enough for these terms to have any meaning, and there always will be as long as the same condition holds. The point about Sartre's rationalism and materialism is that it is an original attempt of a highly vital and gifted living person to get a grip on his own experience and come to terms with life. As such it is profoundly interesting and instructive to anybody who is not too antipathetic to profit by it.

If he is a rationalist and materialist, how is it possible to include Sartre in the existentialist camp? Indeed, Marcel would exclude him on the ground that he is a rationalist, or else an eccentric. The answer is that Sartre is not a rationalist or materialist of any previous type.

His filiation from Heidegger and Husserl shows his tendency, and his language and choice and treatment of themes confirm it. His whole philosophy is constructed (whether soundly or not) on the lived project which consciousness is. Man is resolved into his situation, into his relations and projects, not into any essence or nature. Man is in absolute ethical isolation and totally responsible. These exemplify the theses of existentialism, not those of rationalism or of materialism.

Finally, the destructiveness or nihilism of Sartre's philosophy calls for remark. He concludes the argument of *L'Être et le Néant* with the words, 'man is a useless passion'. Simone de Beauvoir, speaking for Sartre, in the first chapter of her *Pour une Morale de l'Ambiguïté* takes up the point. True, there is this frustration in the pursuit of his ideal, but it is the condition of man's existence by which he becomes present to the world: he is for ever prevented from being the world, but it is by this separation that the world *is* for him. His despair and his delight are two sides of one medal. Man comes into existence for himself and brings the world into existence for himself by the ceaseless separation and projection of himself. That is his destiny, and nothing can save man from himself. Instead of hiding from himself or looking for salvation from himself, which he can only gain at the price of his abolition, man must come to himself and take his destiny upon himself. This is the conversion of which Sartre speaks, which leads to salvation of the whole man by the whole man achieved on this earth. The converted man, who is awakened to his human condition and has assumed it, plunges into the world but does not lose himself in the world: he accepts total responsibility and engages himself fully, and always maintains the separation from himself which constitutes his actions personal, so that they have value and give value. 'The business of any morality is to consider human life as a match which can be won or lost, and to teach men how to win.' But it is up to men individually to choose their ends and their values, and thus to constitute for themselves the meaning of success and failure. The risks are real and the frustrations inevitable; but life is lived by taking the risks and fighting ceaselessly against frustration. Consciousness whose being it is not to be the being to which it is present serves in the pages of *L'Être et le Néant* as the principle of explanation of the natural order of human existence in the world. When the person makes himself lack of being, he understands that he is both *pour-soi* and *en-soi* and that he can never satisfactorily suppress either nor unite both: at the same time, he enters upon the distinctively human

life and tackles the problem with a passion that is not useless. The natural order of this human existence is willed and becomes a moral order; he is no longer explained, he is justified: he justifies himself.

The nihilism of the modern age had undermined everything, working on every front in the guise of a humanism that had given up thinking about ultimate questions. Sartre proposes to clear the ruins and reconstruct a dogmatic humanism which understands and assumes the eternal human situation, offering a liberation of mankind which starts with a total knowledge of man by himself.