

SARTRE
Jean-Paul

NOTEBOOKS
FOR AN ETHICS

Translated by David Pellauer



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JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

As Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre notes in her foreword to this edition of Sartre's two notebooks for an ethics written in 1947 and 1948, Sartre had announced at the very end of *Being and Nothingness*, his six-hundred-page essay on phenomenological ontology, that he would devote a subsequent work to ethics: "What are we to understand by this being [the self-reflective consciousness that is the for-itself and the moral agent] which wills to hold itself in awe, to be a distance from itself? Is it a question of bad faith or of another fundamental attitude? And can one live this new aspect of being? In particular will freedom by taking itself for an end escape all situations? Or on the contrary, will it remain situated? Or will it situate itself so much the more precisely and the more individually as it projects itself further in anguish as a conditioned freedom and accepts more fully its responsibility as an existent by whom the world comes into being. All these questions, which refer us to a pure and not an accessory reflection, can find their reply only on the ethical plane. We shall devote to them a future work."¹ This unkept promise, unkept in the sense that Sartre never did publish his ethics during his lifetime, has caused much speculation and controversy. Some have held that such a project was inherently impossible given the description of intersubjectivity developed in *Being and Nothingness*, others have maintained that the general outlines of a Sartrean ethic are discernible and can even be filled in

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 628; French original 1943.

in considerable detail, and still others have taken something like a revisionist position, holding that a Sartrean ethics is possible if one moves beyond the limits of *Being and Nothingness*, something it is sometimes suggested Sartre himself did over time, especially in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and the accompanying introductory essay entitled "Search for a Method."² A fourth position, one nearest to the view I take after having translated these notebooks, is that while Sartre does offer a number of interesting discussions of topics relevant to an ethics developed on the basis of his ontology—discussions that may be read for themselves as a stimulus to further thought—any overall synthesis is lacking and in the last analysis is unattainable. I do not mean to denigrate Sartre's efforts in saying this, and I fully expect some Sartre scholars to take issue with my judgment; yet it seems best to be clear what my own position is in offering these few reflections on this text and its preparation in order to stimulate closer study of it now that it is available in an English version.

In fact, the possibility of demonstrating any one of these positions to be correct has been rendered more complex today because we know that Sartre did write many more pages on ethics beyond these notebooks. Bob Stone and Elizabeth Bowman, for example, report the existence of the following still unpublished materials: 165 handwritten pages plus another 139 typed pages, prepared in 1964–65 as the basis for a lecture given at the Gramsci Institute in Rome; a typewritten manuscript of 499 pages dating from 1964; and a manuscript in six sections totaling 293 typewritten pages, probably written as the basis for a series of lectures Sartre was scheduled to give at Cornell University in 1965 but which he canceled in protest against American involvement in the Vietnam war.³ So anyone venturing to present "Sartre's ethics" must accept the possibility of being proved mistaken, at least until we have all of this material and whatever other writings may yet appear.

2. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1: *Theory of Practical Ensembles*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London: Verso, 1982); *Search for A Method*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Knopf, 1967). An edition of Sartre's incomplete projected second volume of the *Critique* has been published posthumously: *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 2: *The Intelligibility of History*, ed. Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Verso, 1991). For a still useful discussion of early responses to the possibility of a Sartrean ethics, see Thomas C. Anderson, "The Present State of Sartrean Ethics," in his *The Foundation and Structure of Sartrean Ethics* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), pp. 3–14. Among more recent discussions, see the following book-length works and their bibliographies: Linda A. Bell, *Sartre's Ethics of Authenticity* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989); Thomas W. Busch, *The Power of Consciousness and the Force of Circumstances in Sartre's Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); David Detmer, *Freedom as a Value: A Critique of the Ethical Theory of Jean-Paul Sartre* (Peru, Ill.: Open Court, 1988); Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism: The Test Case of Collective Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

3. Bob Stone and Elisabeth Bowman, "Ethique Dialectique: Un premier regard aux notes de la conférence de Rome, 1964," in *Sur les écrits posthumes de Sartre* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1987), pp. 9–33.

Two other general considerations are also relevant in considering these notebooks and the question of a Sartrean ethics. The first comes from the text itself; the second reflects Sartre's own situation as he undertook this project. From the text itself, it is worth noting that nowhere does Sartre really discuss what he means by an ethics, at least not in terms familiar to English-speaking philosophers. There is no mention of deontology versus consequentialism, no acknowledgment of metaethical reflection as distinct from normative ethics.⁴ Even on his own terms, there is no direct discussion of the relation between ontology and ethics, although it seems clear that ontology has the priority and provides a touchstone by which to evaluate any proposed ethics; existence precedes ethics, if you will. The answer, the very Sartrean answer, to what he meant by ethics, it might be said, was to be in the outcome, the book that would result from the inquiries begun in these notebooks. But we do not have that book and therefore we do not have that answer, so any interpreter of Sartre must supply some working reply to the question of what Sartre had in mind when he talked about *une morale*, an ethics (or perhaps—although I rejected this translation—a moral philosophy). And for us, as his readers, there is furthermore the question, How does this ethics stand in relation to what we know as our philosophical tradition of ethical systems? This latter question is significant if only because it has never been clear what Sartre conceived his relation to be with regard to such parts of this tradition as Stoicism, Spinoza, or Kant, all of which had some influence on his thinking. To these parts the notebooks add the looming figure of Hegel, but the Hegel of the *Phenomenology*, not that of the *Philosophy of Right*. That I do not see a clear answer to these questions in these notebooks, apart from the assertion that any contemporary ethics must be revolutionary socialist in nature and concrete, not abstract, is the primary reason why I myself read this text as a series of fragments rather than as indicative of a final, systematic statement.

The second factor I think we need to consider in examining Sartre's attempts to develop an ethics on the basis of *Being and Nothingness* has to do with a change in his own situation. When he wrote and published this latter work he was still a member of the French academic world, one who had not yet attained a university position but who was clearly targeted for such an appointment if he were to complete his doctorate. By 1947, Sartre had left this world, encouraged by the success of his plays, novels, and other more occasional writings to try to live the life of the kind of person that at that time he thought he wanted to be: a famous writer. By leaving the academic track, Sartre was no longer under the pressure to publish the type of works and supporting documentation a university position would require. He was under the pressure of publishing enough to earn a living, whatever his day-to-day indifference to money. If nothing else, his writing would therefore be aimed at a broader audience than the typical univer-

4. On the other hand, see pp. 46–47 for what we might take as Sartre's own negative comments on the limits of an analytic approach to ethics.

sity professor would envisage. Thus, I find it helpful to read these notebooks as the attempt to lay down the outlines of a book on ethics, with the emphasis on “book” as much as on ethics, a book by a committed writer but also a book by a great writer—the model Sartre came subsequently to reject in his autobiographical testament, *Words*.⁵ It is in this sense that the two plans to be found in these notebooks for a book on ethics are significant, particularly when they are complemented by a third, new plan, now available to us, written in 1948, perhaps just after he had set the notebooks aside.⁶

I shall return to these plans in a moment. First, however, let me note three other sources, beyond *Being and Nothingness* and approximately contemporaneous with these notebooks, that I found helpful in deciding how to translate this material, and which seem particularly relevant to understanding this text in terms of its historical context.⁷

The first is Sartre’s well-known lecture on existentialism as a form of humanism, delivered in October 1945, shortly after the liberation of France.⁸ Sartre is known to have regretted the popularity of this often reprinted lecture, which he considered unrepresentative of his more considered point of view, but it is relevant to attempts to understand his ethics and has to be considered indicative of his thinking in the period between *Being and Nothingness*, which was published in 1943, and these notebooks, if only because so many of the same themes appear in both works. First, there is the issue of freedom as a primary characteristic of human existence; second, there is the claim that since there is no God, there are no a priori values that can serve as the basis for ethical decisions (and even if there were a God, it would make no difference in this regard, since values too are ultimately dependent on free choice); and, third, there is the claim that my freedom necessarily is linked to others’ freedom—indeed, I am not free unless others are as well. There is also the often overlooked suggestion that moral acts are more analogous to anesthetic ones than to any kind of deduction from

5. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, 1964). With a number of other commentators on Sartre, I think it best to drop the definite article in this title in English so as better to convey the implicit sense “only words.”

6. The French text of this plan appears as an appendix to Jean-Paul Sartre, *Vérité et Existence*, texte établi et annoté par Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), pp. 137–39. A full translation of this volume is forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press.

7. A more complete exposition would also have to consider Sartre’s war diaries, particularly for what they reveal about his initial ideas about what was to become *Being and Nothingness*. See *The War Diaries of Jean-Paul Sartre: November 1939/March 1940*, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). Sartre’s and de Beauvoir’s correspondence supports the general impression of his work in this period conveyed by these and his other writings. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Lettres au Castor et à quelques autres*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1983); Simone de Beauvoir, *Lettres à Sartre*, 2 vols., ed. Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir (Paris: Gallimard, 1990); and idem, *Journal de guerre: septembre 1939–janvier 1941*, ed. Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

8. Jean Paul Sartre, “The Humanism of Existentialism,” in idem, *Essays in Existentialism*, ed. Wade Baskin, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: The Citadel Press), 1965, pp. 31–62.

pregiven premises in that they always involve creation and invention, a claim that needs to be looked at again in light of the many pages in these notebooks where Sartre returns to the question of God and his own arguments against any possibility of a creation *ex nihilo* or an *ens causa sui*. At least what is partially at stake here, it now seems to me, is an attempt to deepen the understanding of creation implied in the claim that there is an aesthetic aspect to existential ethics.

Many commentators have discussed “The Humanism of Existentialism” in terms of the question whether a Sartrean ethic can have any norms, given his understanding of freedom, other perhaps than freedom itself as the one value that accounts for any other values one may happen to have. Their worry seems to be that a Sartrean ethic really cannot maintain that some actions are immoral, hence there can be no way to judge one’s own or others’ actions as right or wrong. In some ways, I think Sartre would agree, although he does maintain in his lecture that we can pass judgment, not moral judgment in the sense of right or wrong as his critics would like, but rational judgment in terms of truth or falsity, where dishonesty is a kind of falsity—a different way if you will of reducing ethics to epistemology.⁹ As to the question whether any act is immoral, any action will not be so from the point of view of the for-itself. As Sartre says, “we can never choose evil. We always choose the good” (p. 37). So if there are bad acts, in the sense of morally bad acts, the problem of others must play a role. My act is always good until someone else says otherwise. Being for-itself, apart from being-for-others, does not necessarily include ethics; it is merely one of its conditions of possibility. At the very least, then, the meaning of good and bad has to be rethought in a Sartrean ethics, and there is some indication of an attempt to do this in these notebooks. The question is whether that effort escapes another favorite charge of Sartre’s critics, that something like an a priori norm keeps slipping back into what Sartre says. For example, in these notebooks he will say at one point, I should feed a hungry person not because that is the right thing to do but because he is hungry. The obvious retort is, what is morally wrong about being hungry? Are you not assuming “it is wrong for anyone to go hungry”? and the argument is joined once again about the possibility of an ethics on Sartre’s terms, if an ethics has to determine rules or principles for right action.

Sartre would, of course, reply that there may be a normative premise operative, but it is a result of my choosing it, it does not preexist that choice. Even if others have previously decided the same thing, it is not my norm unless I make it so by acting upon it. What critics have especially worried about, though, beyond this assertion that a norm is not a norm for me unless I decide it shall be one, is the additional claim Sartre makes in the passage just cited that my choice is somehow a choice about how things should be for everyone: “We

9. “One cannot help considering the truth of the matter. Dishonesty is obviously a falsehood because it belies the complete freedom of involvement” (ibid., p. 57.)

always choose the good, and nothing can be good for us without being good for all.” As he also puts it in his lecture, “In fact, in creating the man that we want to be, there is not a single one of our acts which does not at the same time create an image of man as we think he ought to be” (ibid.). Somehow, “man” here slides from the particular existing individual I am to humanity in general. Critics have seen this as a kind of unacknowledged Kantian element in Sartre’s remarks on ethics that it is difficult to account for, especially on the basis of *Being and Nothingness*. Is there not an assumption at work here that ethics has to be universal? Where does this element of universalization come from?¹⁰

This question points us in the direction of the second text I believe we cannot overlook in attempting to make sense of these notebooks—Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Ethics of Ambiguity*.¹¹ There are so many similarities between the references and examples she uses and those Sartre uses in the notebooks, we must assume she was well aware of what he was working on, and vice versa. I list just a few, if only to provoke a closer comparison on these two works on the reader’s part: Jouhandeau, Bataille, Cromwell, Valéry, Claudel, the communist as the hero of our time, Pierrefeue, Oradour. Indeed, de Beauvoir too says that “an ethics of ambiguity will be one which will refuse to deny *a priori* that separate existents can, at the same time, be bound to each other, that their individual freedoms can forge laws valid for all” (p.18). And, “to will oneself free is also to will others free” (p. 73). Of course, there are differences between de Beauvoir and Sartre. My point is merely that since de Beauvoir saw herself as working from a basically Sartrean perspective, and because we know that he always discussed his work with her, her own reflections on an existential ethics can be taken as indicating what both she and Sartre saw to be its central themes—and its central problematic. I shall return to this issue below when discussing the major organizing themes in these notebooks.

For the moment, however, I want to indicate one last issue in Sartre’s lecture that is made more evident by his reflections in these notebooks and that also appear in de Beauvoir’s book, one that has to do with his claim that ethics correctly understood has to be concrete. In his lecture, this issue is framed in terms of the claim that no Kantian universal *a priori* principle can tell us what to do in a particular situation, if only because the universal is never the particular, for only the particular “exists,” and a situation is never universal except, perhaps, insofar as it is a situation. Having worked on these notebooks over the past few years, I now believe that Sartre is here concerned not just with a matter of Kantian ethics—how the universal *a priori* moral rule is related to a particular, a concrete situation. He is concerned also and at the same time with a version

10. For one recent discussion of this issue, see Sander H. Lee, “The Central Role of Universalization in Sartrean Ethics,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46 (1985): 59–71.

11. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Seacucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1980; French original 1947).

of the Heideggerian problem: How is the ontic related to the ontological? More precisely, in Heideggerian terms, how do we return from fundamental ontology (such as that presented in *Being and Nothingness*) to the ontic world of everyday existence, and, more especially, how do we do so if the aim of ethics is to consider whether that everyday existence can be “authentic”? It is this Heideggerian more than Kantian theme, I suggest, that underlies Sartre’s attempt in these notebooks to lay the basis for an ethics, for a book on ethics, on the basis of the ontology of *Being and Nothingness*.

If my supposition is correct, there are two basic questions involved in Sartre’s reflections on ethics, questions he does not clearly distinguish, the one Kantian, the other Heideggerian. Distinguishing these two questions can help us account for many of the difficulties his commentators have raised about the adequacy of his position. First, there is the ontological question of the very possibility of an ethics. More specifically, for Sartre the task is initially to show that ethics is possible on the basis of the ontology presented in *Being and Nothingness*. Second, assuming that this possibility has been demonstrated, there remains the question of the content of this ethics, its normative principles and their concrete application, if you will. I think this latter content is what Sartre’s readers are most often looking for, though the former question is what occupied Sartre the most, at least in the years when he was writing these notebooks, and this is another reason why at the end of them we find him returning to the kind of ontological arguments he had made in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre was more than willing in any situation to say what he considered right and wrong—his subsequent political and social commentary more than demonstrates this—what he had to struggle with was why he could invoke the authority of ethics as a justification for what he said.

Despite any attempt to make him a precursor of deconstruction, Sartre—at least the Sartre of this period—was what we have come to call a foundationalist. In fact, he sees his Cartesian perspective as in no way belied by his use of Husserl or Heidegger: “Outside the Cartesian *cogito*, all views are only probable, and a doctrine of probability which is not bound to a truth dissolves into thin air. In order to describe the probable, you must have a firm hold on the true. Therefore, before there can be any truth whatsoever, there must be an absolute truth: and this one is simple and easily arrived at; it’s on everyone’s doorstep; it’s a matter of grasping it directly.”¹² As in Descartes (or, at least, a certain reading of the Cartesian *cogito* characteristic of Sartre’s generation), at some point the epistemological coincides with the ontological, and ethics has to be traced back to this point. It has also to be traced in the other direction, however, and this task, I

12. “The Humanism of Existentialism,” p. 51. “There is only intuitive knowledge. Deduction and discursive argument, incorrectly called examples of knowing, are only instruments which lead to intuition” (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 172).

suggest, comes as close as anything to suggesting the overall framework of what Sartre was trying to do in these notebooks.

The third related source I found useful in making sense of this material was Sartre's long essay "Materialism and Revolution," originally published in 1946.¹³ This essay, often correctly cited as indicative of Sartre's distance from the French Communist Party in the immediate postwar period, is relevant because it too includes many of the same topics and references, major and minor, as do the notebooks. (To cite just a few of the minor ones: Pierre Naville, Einstein's world, Archimedes and Carnot, the situation of American blacks, Nature, the human species, Samson pulling the temple down on his and his enemies' heads.) The essay comports well with the lack of any direct focus in the notebooks themselves on the writings of Karl Marx. Indeed, like the notebooks, it devotes much more attention to Hegel than to Marx, although, again as in the notebooks, Engels is subjected to telling criticism. I am prepared to argue, however, that there is an even closer tie between this essay and what Sartre is concerned about in his notebooks, and this tie points to something missing from the notebooks that may partially account for Sartre's dissatisfaction with what he had accomplished. I mean the notion of oppression and its impact on any contemporary formulation of a concrete ethics.

Very briefly, in "Materialism and Revolution" Sartre says he is discussing materialism, the materialism of Stalinist communism, because the youth of the day do not know how to act, that is, they do not know what they ought to do with their lives. They are sincere and hope for the coming of a socialist regime. They are prepared to serve the Revolution with all their might, but "they remain at the threshold of communism without daring either to enter or to go away" (p. 199). The problem, Sartre argues, is that materialism as presented by his communist critics is a myth, and this myth of materialism, however useful it may be practically in giving some the courage to support the Communist Party, is ultimately unsatisfactory as an accurate philosophy of the human condition. Therefore it cannot be as effective as a more truthful account of what is at issue. In quite Hegelian terms he then goes on to say, "It is the philosopher's business to make the truths contained in materialism hang together and to build, little by little, a philosophy which suits the needs of the revolution as exactly as the myth does" (p. 223).¹⁴ In short, another philosophy than materialism or idealism is required, one that can better account for who is the true revolutionary.

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Materialism and Revolution," in *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, trans. Annette Michelson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 198–256.

14. It is worth noting in passing that Sartre's working definition of revolution in no way implies violent revolution: "revolution takes place when a change in institutions is accompanied by a profound modification in the property system" (ibid., p. 224). Perhaps there is a connection here with his discussion in the notebooks of the difference between force and violence, with the implication that force may be legitimate whereas violence is not.

What is significant is Sartre's claim that not everyone can be a revolutionary: "he is to be found only among the oppressed" (p. 224). Sartre goes on to discuss how the oppressed seek to transcend their situation of oppression: first of all by contesting the right of the oppressor; second, by trying to maintain the sense of solidarity to be found among themselves; third, by seeking to replace the society of laws by the community of ends. All of this discussion anticipates the paragraphs on oppression and alienation in the notebooks, down to the analyses of both Hegel and Engels as illustrative of what is at issue, and even down to the invocation of the very Kantian notion of a kingdom of ends. Strikingly, that something is missing from the notebooks also becomes apparent from this discussion: a concept of liberation as the proper response to oppression, and with it a discussion of what form liberation might concretely assume in 1947–48. Since the notebooks offer no direct information on why Sartre set them aside, the very absence of that idea of liberation may be the reason he felt the project was not yet ready for publication. That is, he had not yet formulated the theory of what the ethical reply to oppression might be, nor had he been able to formulate a convincing description that would illustrate what this reply would look like in practice.

This suggestion is speculative, I admit, but it does cohere with the well-known statement to be found in a footnote in his book on Jean Genet, a text that he began to work on during the period of his notebooks, or shortly thereafter, and that he did go on to publish: "Either morality is stuff-and-nonsense or it is a concrete totality which achieves a synthesis of Good and Evil. . . . The reader will understand, I hope, that what is involved here is not a Nietzschean 'beyond' Good and Evil, but rather a Hegelian *Aufhebung*.' The abstract separation of these two concepts expresses simply the alienation of man. The fact remains that, in the historical situation, this synthesis cannot be achieved. Thus any Ethic which does not explicitly profess that it is *impossible today* contributes to the bamboozling and alienation of men. The ethical 'problem' arises from the fact that Ethics is *for us* inevitable and at the same time impossible."¹⁵ On one reading, Sartre is saying that he cannot formulate his promised ethics; on another, he is saying that that formulation has to show how ethical action is possible even if the ideal of an ethical system that would attain its end—the disappearance of evil, of oppression—is not. That Sartre found himself vacillating between these alternatives suggests not only why he set the project aside in 1948, but also why he could return to it again in subsequent years, and why he may have shifted his efforts toward a less theoretically oriented statement. As one report from 1954 has it: "His thought is at present moving in the direction of a philosophical ethics. He had originally thought of this ethics as a general whole constructed parallel to his ontological work, but now he wants to set out from concrete social

15. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, 1963), p. 186; French original 1952.

problems and avoid abstract exposition. In this way the problem of freedom is set within the framework of society, and social and political commitment is given priority. The past is built in freedom, but for the present it is an established given which determines individual life; and the job of a philosopher oriented toward action is to show how this 'given' can be assumed in collective freedom."¹⁶ And in 1976, Sartre will tell another interviewer, "The first ethics was abstract, it depended ultimately on the pre-reflective and the reflective cogito. And it only took account of the external circumstances in the rather vague and badly described manner of *Being and Nothingness*. From the moment that I transformed the point of view of *Being and Nothingness* and the cogito and made something empirical of the cogito, my ethics became something different."¹⁷

However, it is not my job to explain why Sartre stopped working on these notebooks, nor can an introduction to their translation undertake to trace his subsequent development, which, as I have already indicated, may yet hold surprises we are unaware of. Instead, I shall touch on the content of these notebooks as one possible guide to their implicit structure but certainly not the only one. Three broad topics inform what Sartre writes, three topics consistent with his attempt to formulate an ethics as I have presented it in these remarks. Of course, there are many other focal points one could fix on. I have already referred to the differences between force and violence and the relationship between the two. Childhood would be another focal point, as would the master-slave relation in Hegel, or the differences between ignorance and stupidity, or the themes of generosity and conversion. A broader perspective is required, however, if we are to understand what Sartre was aiming at in these notes. Hence my suggestion that three topics structure most if not all of what he says.

The first theme or topic is the problem of history. At least two things are initially at stake here: first, his attempt to make sense of Hegel, whom he had begun to read in depth, at the instigation of Simone de Beauvoir, during the phony war of 1939; second, and related to this reading, the question whether on the basis of Hegel's philosophy we must say that History (Sartre uses the capital) is somehow ultimately determinative of human action. If so, then the philosophy of freedom articulated in *Being and Nothingness* is threatened in that in Sartre's eyes human responsibility would then be lost, since anything that determines freedom denies responsibility. Beyond these two concerns, a third can be discerned in these notebooks, albeit one that is most clearly revealed in the third plan referred to earlier. There we can see that Sartre basically accepted that ethics had to take history—and the historicity of the human condition—seriously, but

16. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, vol. 1: *A Bibliographical Life*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 295, citing C. A. Van Peursen, "In gesprek met Jean-Paul Sartre," *Wending* 9 (March 1954): 15–24.

17. Leo Fretz, "An Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre," trans. George Berger, in *Jean-Paul Sartre: Contemporary Approaches to His Philosophy*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman and Frederick A. Elliston (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1980), p. 233—trans. slightly altered.

without allowing something like what Hegel calls Spirit to determine it. Thus, whereas the second plan to be found in these notebooks is still entitled "Plan for an Ontological Ethics" (see p. 468), this third, subsequent plan is placed under the rubric "Ethics and History." It is almost as though what Sartre envisaged writing was a phenomenology not of spirit but of ethics, one that would show how the understanding of historicity has shifted over time from what he calls the abstract past to the abstract present to the concrete present, in passing through the ethics of the instant somewhere about the time of the French Revolution. That the present has become concrete, it would follow, is a reason why any contemporary ethics also must be so.

The second overarching theme is the distinction between oppression and alienation, with its conclusion that alienation, while a necessary condition for oppression, is not sufficient. Oppression, to put it another way, is a contingent, not a necessary, fact of history. It does exist, and one of the tasks of a Sartrean ethics must be to show how it can be attacked if not completely removed, but if oppression does exist it is somehow our own fault. Its existence cannot be explained by either Hegelian Spirit or Marxist materialism. It is under this heading that I would place Sartre's fascinating analyses of generosity, gift-giving, and the Potlatch ceremony. Here we can see a slight shift in his thinking. At the time of *Being and Nothingness* there is some sense that generosity is one of the goals of authentic existence. In these notebooks, perhaps under the influence of his anthropologist colleagues at *Les Temps Modernes*,¹⁸ Sartre begins to acknowledge that generosity too may be oppressive, hence it is not and cannot be an unambiguous solution to the problem of bad faith, and hence it is not the simple route to a Sartrean ethics some early passages seem to suggest. It is also under this heading that I would place Sartre's devastating criticism of Engels, but this too implies difficulties for the project of an ethics, this time with respect to Marxism as a possible resource for attaining the revolutionary socialist ethics Sartre is seeking.

The problem is that in distinguishing oppression and alienation, Sartre is led on the basis of the ontology of *Being and Nothingness* to the conclusion that while oppression can be overcome, alienation cannot. Consciousness as for-itself, where the for-itself is ontologically independent of being-for-others, is an ontological fact at the most fundamental level of human existence. There are others, other for-itselfs, but they are not necessary for the existence of my consciousness as for-itself, which brings us to my third heading, which I will place under the title of the dialectic of freedoms. The question is whether two or more for-itselfs can be free at the same time. Or, in the language of *Being and Nothingness*, does the other always steal my freedom from me? In the long run, I see this problem as again being dependent upon Sartre's Cartesianism. Must any subject always

18. See Howard Davies, *Sartre and "Les Temps Modernes"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

objectify what it is conscious of, thereby turning it into an object, not a subject? Are subject and object, subject or object, the only two possibilities? We see in these notebooks Sartre's attempts to describe how one freedom can freely recognize, accept, and support another freedom's project without thereby taking that other freedom's freedom from it. For given the ontology of intersubjectivity laid down in *Being and Nothingness*, this is what a Sartrean ethics requires. I myself am not convinced he succeeds in resolving this problem in the notebooks, although, admittedly, he never says this is what he is trying to do, nor does he concede that he has not been able to work it out. But his failure to resolve the problem would be my answer to why he set this project aside, and why he could say, in the note from *Saint Genet* cited above, that today ethics is both necessary and impossible. And again, once he began to move away from the conceptual structure of *Being and Nothingness*, he still had to return to the problem of how individual freedoms can mutually acknowledge one another, although he never apparently resolved this problem to his own satisfaction to a degree where he would publish his results during his lifetime, apart from his descriptions of the fused group in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

Other readers of these notebooks may disagree with this perspective. In a good Sartrean mode, I have sought to be provocative in the hope that others will read more deeply than I have. As I have hinted in passing, there is an incredible wealth of material in these pages. I commend them to your investigation.

This translation of Sartre's notebooks is based on the French text as first published in 1983. A few minor corrections to that edition have been introduced, arising from my correspondence with its editor regarding several, to me, obscure passages or obvious mistranscriptions of the names of authors of English works. She in turn pointed out some changes that needed to be made in the published French text. One significant difference from that French text is that I have broken up most of the very long paragraphs that appear in that edition, many of them running to ten pages and more. It may have been Sartre's practice not to worry about paragraphing while he was writing a first version of his thoughts, or he may have simply continued writing over one working session what ended up in print as a single paragraph, but he certainly at times could go on at length. In introducing these breaks I have almost always chosen to do so at a point marked by a transitional phrase such as "next," "on the other hand," "second," etc. The wider spacing between units of text does reproduce the French text, so a reader who wishes to check where Sartre did introduce a new paragraph within one of these passages can easily do so by comparing the French and English versions.

These are notebooks. To that end, I have sought to preserve Sartre's capital-

ization and use of emphasis as fully as possible. I have also sought to preserve his jargon; “possibles” rather than “possibilities,” for example. Notebooks, of course, give the translator a convenient excuse: if the translated text is unclear it is because the original is. I do not think Sartre’s text is unclear. Verbose, unpolished, yes, but not unclear. As I have tried to say above, if anything is unclear it is the organizing framework that holds all these reflections together. So despite the good offices of the many people I have asked about points that were troubling me in this text over the past few years, the responsibility for the result is mine and I accept it. I hope Sartre would approve.

As he writes, sometimes Sartre indicates a particular text he is discussing, even to the degree of including page numbers, but more often than not he does not do so. Besides citing existing English editions of the clearly marked passages whenever possible, I have sought to identify some of those references Sartre did not specify, thereby adding to the identifications already contributed by Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre when she prepared the French text for publication. (Elkaïm-Sartre’s notes are followed by “—Ed.”; all other notes are mine.) I have also tried to identify and describe briefly most of the individuals and a number of the incidents mentioned in the text, since a good number of them will not be familiar to English-speaking readers. In a few cases they might not be well known even to many contemporary French readers, so these additions may be considered an initial contribution to better situating this material in its historical context. I have also noted a few places where an incident or reference allows us to make a tie to a date known from other sources. These few references do not allow us to reconstruct a strict chronology of the writing of this material, but they should allow the reader some sense of the period when they were written, beginning it seems in the spring of 1947 and ending sometime toward the autumn of 1948.

Sartre also sometimes refers to catch phrases or examples that can be traced back to a source. One such example he uses a number of times, to cite just one instance, is a reference to the seventeenth-century English Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell, who had a gallstone that cut short his political career. What Sartre has in mind here is, of all things, a passage from Pascal’s *Pensées*. In one respect, this example is a commonplace, not quite on the level of allusions to George Washington supposedly chopping down a cherry tree, but one French colleagues assure me educated French people of a certain age would immediately recognize from their schooling. I cite this example not for its curiosity value, but because it is worth noting that in these notebooks Sartre also cites a number of other passages from Pascal, so there is a question for those who will study these texts in depth what role Pascal plays in Sartre’s thought. A similar comment can be made for other of his allusions, and I hope my notes will encourage others to add to this information. Where no reference is given, the reader should assume I did not recognize the allusion or was unable to locate its source. Perhaps a

subsequent edition of these notebooks will include further references, which I am certain Sartre scholars will turn up as they work with this material, with Sartre's other writings, and with his remaining unpublished manuscripts.

Finally, my own claim to expertise in understanding Sartre is not great. I have read widely in the existing English translations, and followed them in many but not all respects in choosing an English voice for Sartre. I have also read much of the Sartre available in French, but not all of it. In a word, I am a Sartre translator, not a Sartre scholar.¹⁹ Yet on the basis of my reading, I have further taken the liberty of noting certain references from these notebooks to themes, terms, and allusions to be found in some of his other better-known works, particularly from some of those from the period closest to the years when these notebooks were written—that is, roughly from the publication of *Being and Nothingness* to that of *Saint Genet*—and also from just a few of his better-known later works. To follow all the indications that might be listed would be to overwhelm this text with footnotes. Still, it seemed worthwhile to cite a few of the more obvious instances in order to show a continuity in Sartre's writing that I, at least, had not previously been sufficiently aware of. The same work, if not the same passage from an author may be cited in a work written contemporaneously with these notebooks and then appear again more than a decade later in a work on a completely different subject. The most striking examples of such later recurrence are to be found in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (where a one-phrase reference in these notebooks to the “best selling record of the week” is expanded into a multipage illustration) and especially in *The Family Idiot*. In this latter monstrosity (almost three thousand pages allegedly aimed at understanding Flaubert's life, which make almost no sense as a biography if one does not already know Flaubert's biography), this final great project of Sartre's writing, it could be shown that there he uses many of the categories he develops in these notebooks in an operative rather than a thematic fashion. After reading the notebooks, one need only examine how he uses the vassal/lord relation in the first volume of *The Family Idiot*, or the themes of the otherness of the other in me and of conversion in the second volume to see what I mean. And, once again, the many repeated names and phrases—*mana*, the gift, *nur-verweilen-bei*, the massacre at Oradour, Pascal—suggest either that Sartre developed and depended upon a repertory of favorite allusions, or that he reread and reworked his journals as he took up new projects. There is clearly no way at this time to decide between these options, or even to know if they are the only ones. I hope, however, that the few indications I have added may serve as a spur to others to pursue the interesting questions these notebooks, and any other materials that

19. A summer faculty research and development grant in 1988 from the DePaul University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was immeasurably helpful in allowing me to begin to pursue the material surrounding these notebooks as an aid to their translation and in allowing me to begin to think through what has become this introduction to that translation.

may yet be published, raise about how Sartre worked, to what extent and how often he revised his initial writing, and when he decided something was ready for publication.²⁰ In short, beyond their intrinsic importance for Sartre's ethics, these notebooks have a place within Sartre's *oeuvre* and will send the reader back to those texts with many new questions and insights.

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20. One instance of the first draft of an essay Sartre did subsequently revise and publish is now available: Jean-Paul Sartre, "Merleau-Ponty [I]," trans. William S. Hamrick, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 15 (May 1984): 128–54; the initial version of Sartre's "Merleau-Ponty Vivant," trans. Benita Eisler, in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations* (New York: George Braziller, 1965), pp. 225–326; French original, 1961.

FOREWORD

Sartre did not want the uncompleted philosophical texts of his mature years to be published until after his death. “They will represent what I wanted to do at a certain point and what I decided not to finish, and in that respect they will be definitive. Whereas, while I’m alive . . . there is still a possibility that I might take them up again, or that I might say in a few words what I wanted to do with them. Published after my death, these texts will remain unfinished and obscure, since they formulate ideas which are not completely developed. It will be up to the reader to decide where they might have led me.”¹

These *Notebooks for an Ethics* were written in 1947 and 1948. In the conclusion to *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre announced that he would devote his next work to the problem of ethics. “Ontology itself,” he wrote, “cannot formulate ethical precepts. It is concerned solely with what is, and we cannot possibly derive imperatives from ontology’s indicatives. It does, however, allow us to catch a glimpse of what sort of ethics will assume its responsibilities when confronted with a *human reality in situation*.”² The project of an ethics, however, dates back

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Life/Situations: Essays Written and Spoken*, trans. Paul Auster and Lydia Davis (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), pp. 74–75.

2. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), pp. 625–26.

to before *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre was already very much caught up in research for it in 1939—cf. his *War Diaries*.³

The text we are publishing here seemed to me to form a whole. Sartre himself entitled it “Notes for an Ethics, Volume I and Volume II.” The second notebook (“Volume II”) was only half used up, which leads me to think that there must have been a break in continuity even if the project was not actually abandoned.

There are also two appendixes. The first is a text from 1945, written on long pages folded in half, unfinished or abandoned, and entitled “Good and Subjectivity.” It looks like the beginning of a journal, with two dates. The second is a study of the oppression of blacks in the United States, which Sartre no doubt intended to incorporate into his Ethics.

These “notes,” although they were jotted down and not revised, are something more than notes. They have a guiding theme and are often more than half set in order. But they have no overall structure. The index, which does not claim to be exhaustive, attempts to compensate in part for this lack by suggesting possible contours of such a structure.

Arlette Elkaim-Sartre

3. *The War Diaries of Jean-Paul Sartre: November 1939/March 1940*, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

NOTEBOOKS FOR AN ETHICS

NOTEBOOK I

So long as one believes in God one has the right *to do* the Good in order *to be* moral. Morality becomes a certain mode of ontological being, even something metaphysical in that we have to attain it. And since it is a question of being moral in God's eyes, in order to praise him, to aid him in his creation, the subordination of doing to being is legitimate. For in *practicing* charity we serve only human beings, whereas in *being* charitable we serve God. The higher "being" to which we attain is still a being-for-others. From this comes what I will call the ontological individualism of the Christian. He thrives and embellishes himself, he becomes a beautiful, spacious, and well-furnished house, the house of God. It is legitimate to be the most beautiful of all, the best possible. The egoism of the saint is sanctioned. But when God dies and the saint is no more than an egoist, then what difference does it make that he has a beautiful soul, that he is beautiful, if only to himself? At this moment, the maxim "act ethically in order *to be* moral" becomes poisoned. The same thing applies to "act ethically in order to act ethically." Morality has to transcend itself toward an end that is not itself. Give someone who is thirsty something to drink not in order to give him something or in order to be good but in order to overcome his thirst. Morality suppresses itself in positing itself, it posits itself in suppressing itself. It must be a choice of a world, not of a self.

Problem: I distrust an immediate morality, it involves too much bad faith, all the tepidness of ignorance. But at least it does have this essential characteristic

of morality: spontaneity, subordination to the object. Morality is not essential because it is subjectivity; the object is what is essential. Reflection suppresses bad faith and ignorance, but the object passes to the rank of being inessential, appearance (as in the point of view of knowledge: *cogito*). Solution: to be both inside and outside at the same time. Is this possible?

If you seek authenticity for authenticity's sake, you are no longer authentic.

Morality: permanent conversion. In Trotsky's sense: permanent revolution.¹
Good habits: they are never good, because they are habits.

A type of substantialist moral philosophy:

Jouhandeau, *Algèbre des valeurs morales*:

"To be in a certain state is what is important. What one does is only important to other people."²

Jouhandeau, *ibid.*, p. 63:

"Some people observe from a distance the phenomena of life in them as if these phenomena were personally foreign to them. These people are an audience to their own desires as if these desires were an event of a universal order. From this comes their partiality, their intransigence against the individual sin. They pardon everything else through virtue."

and *ibid.*:

"Sinners have their honor, their requirements as a sinner, and, outside the

1. Leon Trotsky (1877–1940), Communist theorist and leader who was exiled by Stalin in 1929 and finally assassinated in Mexico in 1940 by a Soviet agent.

2. Marcel Jouhandeau (1888–1979), *Algèbre des valeurs morales* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969; originally published 1935), p. 63. All page references have been changed to conform to this more recent edition. There is an earlier reference to Jouhandeau in one of Sartre's letters to Simone de Beauvoir: "In fact, I do not know what Jouhandeau is and I do not want to know if one can will Evil—there are other questions (re this latter point, I am in agreement with you, it is all very complicated), but you are correct that in his book he begins by defining Good and Evil as the values and antivalues of current ethics, then he substitutes for them his own ethics without adorning his values with the name 'good' or his antivalues with the name 'evil,' with the result that, in a way, by refusing the ethics that are taken for granted (in the name of *his* Good) and obeying what are social antivalues, he can say that he is pursuing Evil and refusing Good, etc." Jean-Paul Sartre, *Lettres au Castor et à quelques autres*, ed. Simone de Beauvoir (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), letter of 9 May 1940, vol. 2, pp. 214–15. See also Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Braziller, 1963), p. 19. Portions of the French original of this latter text were first published in *Les Temps Modernes* in 1950, the complete text appearing in book form 1952. According to Contat and Rybalka, Sartre began work on this material, which was written as a preface to an edition of the collected works of Genet, in late 1949, having abandoned all work on his "Ethics." Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Oeuvres romanesques*, ed. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka with the collaboration of Geneviève Idt and George H. Bauer (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p. lxvii.

law, there is a law of sinning, a spontaneous, fleeting, relative law, but for all that, closer to life.”³

The idea of an adequation to oneself, of a solidarity with oneself: the universal lacks the meaning of sin and life. One must be ethical from within one’s desire, not from outside. Yet on the other hand would there be any morality without the universal? We rediscover the dilemma of inside and outside again.

“There is no Virtue, there are virtues.”⁴ Against the illusion of the spirit of seriousness, show with Jouhandeau the dialectic of virtues and vices, each one calling for the other and passing over into the other.⁵

Inside and outside: if only reflection could place spontaneity between parentheses, in suspense, without depriving it of its affirmative force, as in the phenomenological *ἐποχή* where nonaccessory reflection does not for one second prevent our affirming the reality of the world in the natural attitude.

The one and only basis of the moral life must be spontaneity, that is, the immediate, the unreflective.

The origin of reflection is an effort by the For-itself to recuperate itself, in order to arrive at a For-itself that would be Itself. It makes sense therefore that reflection should have as its direct and essential goal the unreflective For-itself. Nothing is *important* for it except the For-itself. In the ethical reflection that accompanies this reflection, what is *important* is the moral being of what is reflected upon. It is a question of willing the Good (in the unreflected upon) in order to be ethical. Does the modification that leads to *pure* reflection modify this point of view?

I have shown how an accessory reflection is possible beginning from the prereflective.⁶ Now I have to show how pure reflection is possible beginning from impure reflection. It is not a matter of showing how pure reflection *emerges from* impure reflection but how it *can* do so. Otherwise, we would be dealing with a dialectic, not with ethics. In the same way, moreover, the passage from the prereflective to reflection is a free drama of the person.

The fact that choice in immediacy happens *most of the time*⁷

They tell me: You have to explain *nature* because for you there is a nature

3. Sartre paraphrases the opening sentence in Jouhandeau, which reads: “Sinners have their honor, their requirements as sinners. . . .”

4. This is not a quotation from *Algèbre des valeurs morales*.

5. The first part of Jouhandeau’s book is entitled “Virtues and Vices: Their Equivalence.”

6. Cf. Appendix 1.—Ed.

7. A page may be missing or Sartre may have failed to erase the sentence begun here.—Ed.

that is inauthenticity. The very fact that *Being and Nothingness* is an ontology before conversion takes for granted that a conversion is necessary and that, as a consequence, there is a natural attitude. How then do I explain nature, since man is free? I do not deny that there is a nature; that is, that one begins with flight and inauthenticity. But the question is whether this nature is universal or historical. There is, there has been, and there will be a finite number of human beings and the drama has occurred and will occur among these same human beings. The system is perfectly closed and is History. Thus when I consider that the objections made in the fourth century B.C. to Plato and those which are made today to existentialism have not changed, and do not even touch on the particular philosophy but only the legitimacy of conversion, I can certainly interpret this as the universal nature of man. But also, like Pascal, as man's original fall, that is, as a historical event that is the establishment of society.⁸ Nature would be the historical fact that human beings have a nature, that humanity in choosing oppression to begin its history chose to begin with nature. In this sense the perpetual dream of an *antiphysis* would be the historical and perpetually utopian possibility of another choice. Nature is one's choice of oneself in the face of other people's oppressive freedom.

There are no "characters" in the Apocalypse.⁹ There one is always surprised. I did not think him capable of that. Character is a stable set of relations with the other person, with tools, and with the world, under the pressure of freedoms external to oneself. If it is stable it is because the pressure is constant and the institutions are stable. Character is the product of an institutional and traditional society. Character, that is, *nature*.

Existential ontology is itself historical. There is an initial event, that is, the appearance of the For-itself through a negation of being. Ethics must be historical: that is, it must find the universal in History and must grasp it in History.

So many men, so many chairs, so many houses—a finite number. We think of mankind as an infinite series. That is, someone will say, we consider the concrete, finite series of real men as a particular case of the infinite series of *possible* men.

8. "Man does not know the place he should occupy. He has obviously gone astray; he has fallen from his true place and cannot find it again. He searches everywhere, anxiously but in vain, in the midst of impenetrable darkness." Blaise Pascal (1623–62), *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 146.

9. In his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1: *Theory of Practical Ensembles*, trans. Alan Sheridan Smith (London: NLB, 1976/Verso, 1982; French original 1960), p. 357, Sartre associates the Apocalypse, the moment when the series turns into a fused group, with André Malraux's novel about the Spanish Civil War, *Man's Hope*, trans. Stuart Gilbert and Alastair Macdonald (New York: Grove Press, 1966), in which the second section of Part I is entitled "Prelude to Apocalypse."

But the possible man comes from the concrete one. We are such that the possible becomes possible starting from us. Thus, even though the possible, and therefore the universal, is a necessary structure of action, we must return to the individual drama of the finite series "Man" when the deepest ends of existence are at issue. To the finite and historical source of possibilities. To this society. Ethics is an individual, subjective, and historical enterprise.

To whom is the ethical demand addressed? To the abstract universal? But then it loses all its meaning and becomes abstract and formal itself, since the concrete—that is, social—situation may change. If one says, "Act in such a way, other things being equal," this demand loses all its meaning since it refers to the eternal return. The problem of collaboration or resistance: there is a concrete moral choice. Kantianism teaches nothing on this subject. It requires: a certain development of the idea of one's country—a certain connection between political-social ideology and national ideology, etc. I expect it of a Frenchman that he should refuse to collaborate in 1940. I am much less sure in the case of a nobleman in the thirteenth century. The idea of one's country is not clear, and the noble, after all, is faithful to rule by divine right, which men to whom he does not grant the right of producing a government (since this is exactly what is in question) have just overthrown. And if we assume a war between Russia and the United States, and France once again invaded, the solution that I would have chosen in 1940 is no longer valid since it presupposes a minority of collaborators, whereas in this conflict half the population would choose one side or the other. In truth, we have to choose the concrete universal. That is, those men who find themselves in the same historical situation. And we require of the historian who places himself in our situation by a synthetic form of thought (that is, in the last analysis, by taking up the *idea* again) and in embracing the movement of History, that he approve of our principles.

Develop the notion of a concrete universal: ethics will be all the broader and all the more profound if it has to do with a larger group. In the twelfth century: the *honnête homme*. A small group of privileged men. Can one leave one's class? In truth, one has to create the concrete universal.

Toward a *concrete* ethics (synthesis of the universal and the historical).

Dissociate the universal (understanding) from its infinite extension.

Ex. of *character* resulting from the social whole: ignorance calls for anger (in the sense of resolving conflicts whose rational meaning escapes us by magic. But what if the solution adopted is beyond the capacity of the situation?). Conjugal anger: inferiority of the woman. The man cannot find the woman's underlying need and becomes upset, etc. Or the anger/intimidation of the leader.

Childhood as the creation of unsolvable situations.

“We do not want to understand the world, we want to change it.”¹⁰ And the idea of philosophy as *realizing* itself. Philosophy is not distinguished from mankind in the process of changing the world. The totality of mankind in action is philosophy.

*Tough*¹¹ thinkers (Heidegger)¹² and *tender* thinkers (Jaspers).¹³ Don't wait for an ethics filled with hope. Men are ignoble. We have to love them for what they might be, not for what they are. Sketch out a *tough* ethics.

Plan:

(1) Absurdity and necessity of an ethics.

(2) Immorality of ethics: values conceived of as objectivity. Abstraction and formalism: the universal. An ethics of imperfection and the imperfection of ethics. Oscillation between an ethics of inwardness (at the end: gratuitousness, values transformed into tastes) and an ethics of the transcendent (at the end: man *knows* the Good. To know it is to do it). Oscillation between subjective ethics (the intention cut off from the act) and objective ethics (the results cut off from the intention).

(3) Regarding the original fault: objectivity as a sign of oppression and as oppression. Objectivity = the world seen by another who holds the key to it. Values in the spirit of seriousness: *ibid.* Values are not Platonic things In-themselves for the spirit of seriousness. They are posited by a consciousness that is not mine, and that oppresses me. Nature in me is myself as a transcended objectivity for another. It is self-evident that I can never live my nature. Hence the other transforms me into an objectivity by oppressing me and my initial

10. “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is, to *change* it.” Karl Marx (1818–83), eleventh thesis on Feuerbach (1845), in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), p. 400.

11. In English in the French text.

12. Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), German philosopher whose *Being and Time* (1927) greatly influenced Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. See note 43 below.

13. Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), German philosopher of *Existenz*. While a student, Sartre had collaborated with his friend and fellow student Paul Nizan on the proofreading of Jaspers' *Allgemeine Psychopathologie: Psychopathologie générale*, trans. A. Kastler and J. Mendousse (Paris: Alcan, 1928). In English: *General Psychopathology*, trans. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963). Cf. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, vol. 1: *A Bibliographical Life*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 40.

situation is to have a destiny/nature and exist in the face of objectified values. It is self-evident that a conversion is *possible* in theory, but it will imply not just an internal change in me but a real change in the other. In the absence of this historical change, there is no absolute moral conversion. Just as the rejection of war does not suppress war, whatever else it may accomplish.

(4) The privileged position of the ethicist. He is a historical figure. The one whose historical position distances him the most from the oppressed and the oppressors. However he is still an oppressor and sufficiently oppressed to conceive of the necessity of an ethics without oppression, hence to conceive of conversion.

One cannot be converted alone. In other words, ethics is not possible unless everyone is ethical.

Method: Values reveal freedom at the same time that they surrender it. Any ordering of values has to lead to freedom. Classify values in a hierarchy such that freedom increasingly appears in it. At the top: generosity.

Communication does not exist—it must be brought about. Just as in an anti-Semite you cannot imagine a partial loyalty.¹⁴ Just as in a universe of violence you cannot conceive of a pure love.

Unless that love contains the will to end the universe of violence. Communication between two people passes through the whole universe.

Communication: *Love*, to have the other in oneself. To feel one's own freedom with respect to every gesture of the other person as a beginning and as an absolute starting from the other's gesture. But do not forget that the relationship with another person is always in the presence of a third observer and under the sign of oppression. Poisoned.¹⁵

Another form of communication:

The *Appeal*.

14. "It has become evident that no external factor can induce anti-Semitism in the anti-Semite. Anti-Semitism is a free and total choice of oneself, a comprehensive attitude that one adopts not only toward Jews but toward men in general, toward history and society; it is at one and the same time a passion and a conception of the world. No doubt in the case of a given anti-Semite certain characteristics will be more marked than in another. But they are always all present at the same time, and they influence each other." Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 17; originally published as *Réflexions sur la question juive* (Paris: Paul Muriel, 1946). An excerpt had appeared a year earlier: "Portrait de l'antisémite," *Les Temps Modernes* no. 3 (1 December 1945): 442–70.

15. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 366–77 (re love), 415–23 (the us-object).

The other: detotalized totality. Two mistakes: to seek unity (a substantialism of the spirit, Fascism)—to seek plurality (individualism). In fact: we must will the detotalized totality. To have the other in myself as an other and yet as a free source of my acts.

Conversion: recognition of myself as ec-static For-itself leads to recognition of the spirit as detotalized totality.

Regarding objectivity: my ideas and acts pass over into the objective and I am responsible for this. In the kingdom of ends, no problem. For if freedoms willing to be free recognize my act as issuing from my freedom and take it up in freedom, I will my act both with my freedom and theirs too. Objectivity disappears. My act has a disquieting objectivity only because it is taken up by consciousnesses that make it an object and that make themselves objects in relation to it. I am responsible for it because I cannot ignore that it will be endowed in this way with a *pseudocausality*. For example, the scandal of a book by Miller.¹⁶ It will influence children, etc. The ambiguity of this responsibility: in one sense it ought not to exist (because people are free), in another sense, it is normal that it should exist in our society.

(5) Analysis of an example. The leader and his values. Following the dialectic of the master and the slave,¹⁷ the dialectic of the leader and his subordinates. The subordinate conceived of as inessential freedom. Oscillation between the task and the caprice of the leader. The task (home and country) as justification of the caprice. Result: freedoms that consider themselves as inessential—accomplices of the leader. And yet in today's society, leaders are necessary. Therefore . . .—the leader as the realism of transcendence. Beyond the inessential freedoms, he decides. And a mysterious grace makes his decision what is essential.

16. "In March of 1946, the *Président du Cartel d'Action sociale et morale*, Daniel Parker, had registered complaints against Les Editions du Chêne (for *Tropic of Capricorn*) and Editions Denöel (for *Tropic of Cancer*) under the provisions of an anti-pornography law of 1939. An official committee was formed to decide the case. To everyone's astonishment, it found against Miller, determined that he *was* a pornographer, and proposed to bring sanctions against the distribution of his work. At his point, however, Claude-Edmonde Magny and Maurice Nadeau, then literary editor of *Combat*, appealed to the writers of France to protest this restriction of freedom of expression and to defend Henry Miller. Thus, a *Comité de défense d'Henri Miller* was created, which included André Breton, Albert Camus, Paul Eluard, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Even André Gide, who read Miller's *Black Spring* for the first time, joined." Jay Martin, *Always Merry and Bright: The Life of Henry Miller* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Capra Press, 1978), p. 430. Contat and Rybalka date Sartre's joining this committee to February 1947 (*Writings of Sartre*, p. 14).

17. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage," in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 111–19. Cf. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 158, n. 37.

(6) *Evil*. Or subjective objectivity. Try to explain Evil. Evil always an object. Always marginal in relation to the will.

Evil: subjective objectivity

or

objectification of subjectivity

The fault is not capricious. The historical act by which being negates itself into the For-itself is a fall and a memory of Paradise Lost. Myth of the fault in every religion and in folklore. It is not necessary to see here either a dialectical necessity as with Hegel, where the first individual relationship is *necessarily* that of the master and the slave,¹⁸ or a totally incomprehensible caprice. Rather an original fault that one can *clarify* through consideration of the original event. The appearance of the For-itself is properly speaking the irruption of History in the world. The spontaneous movement of the For-itself as a lack (on the plane of the unreflective) is to seek the In-itself-For-itself. Reflection originally springs up as an accessory to this since it is the creation of a new diaspora in the attempt at recuperation. But even then, as we know, it misses itself. Here, therefore, the possibility of pure reflection arises as an admission of this missing the mark and as taking a stand in the face of it. Therefore, if pure reflection, necessarily posterior to impure reflection, is made possible by the advent of impure reflection, why does it not occur at least half the time? Because another element interferes here, which is the Other. I am leaving undecided the question of whether it is a matter of a new effort at separation. We may in any case make use of this as myth: the new effort of recuperation presents consciousness no longer as a quasi object but as object. From this comes complete scission. At this moment, everything happens as though the Other were a second negation acting on my subjectivity by a subjectivity whose underlying meaning is to exist as the objectifying negation of my subjectivity. This is the original fault. For, at the moment when pure reflection intervenes, it is *already too late*: it may well dissipate the characteristic of quasi object that I possess for my *impure* reflection, but not that of the *object* that I am for the other. Hence it will never be totally efficacious. And in pure reflection there is already a summons to transform the other into a pure, free subjectivity, so that the *scission* may be suppressed. Only, what is required is that the other also do this, which is never *given* and can only be the result of *chance*. For his bad will is fate for me and his good will chance, since he is free.

Note that the other in relation to my prereflective subjectivity is in the same position as I am as reflection. And he never has a direct light on my reflection—no more than my reflection does, which is itself nonthetic consciousness of self.

18. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 115–17.

Motivations: (1) Reflection is first of all impure, not in its results, but in its intention, which participates in the impurity of the nonreflective, since it emerges from nonreflection. (2) Impure reflection is motivation for pure reflection. It is originally *bad faith* because it does not want to see its own failure. But *only* bad faith can be at the origin of good faith. Pure reflection is good faith and as such an *appeal* to the good faith of the other person.

The atmosphere of ethics:

1. Failure.

2. Mystery. We need not take this religiously. But it is a fact that *nothing is elucidated*. The world is given not only as needing to be changed but as needing to be discovered. To be discovered when it is changed. And the deepest mystery is that it is perhaps we who create it. In a word: it is a matter of being ethical *in ignorance*. This is why intellectualist moral philosophy is right and wrong: certainly knowledge aids ethics (it is desirable that knowledge should no longer be ignorance for anyone in this century), but it only lessens the mystery: since absolute knowledge is impossible, we have to conceive of ethics as occurring in principle in ignorance.

Optimism: to consider that ethics is the natural *εξίς* of man. And that an ethical attitude is always possible. Pessimism: to consider ethics as perfectly impossible. In truth, ethics originally began in an atmosphere of failure. It has to fail because it is always too late or too early for it. But it is in and through this failure that each of us must take up his ethical responsibilities.

The passage to pure reflection must provoke a transformation:

of my relation to my body. Acceptance of and claiming of contingency. Contingency conceived of as a chance.

of my relation to the world. Clarification of being in itself. Our task: to make being exist. True sense of the In-itself-for-itself.

of my relation to myself. Subjectivity conceived of as the absence of the *Ego*. Since the *Ego* is *εξίς* (psyche).¹⁹

of my relation to other people.

We may set aside both the ethics of the Transcendent and that of inwardness. The former makes values *objects* and submits us to objectivity. Inwardness transforms us into objects ourselves and rejects the value-objects of transcendence. But it makes each particular value a taste and this taste is a subjective disposition of the object, for which it is not responsible. Tastes are something one does not debate. But there they are written in Nature just as the value-objects were in

19. "By psyche we understand the *Ego*, its states, its qualities, and its acts" (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 162).

heaven. There is no real difference. What matters is that rejecting the transcendence/object aspect of values must not prevent us from seeing them as demands that we *have to be* and for which we are responsible.

The world resists ethics just as Nature resists science. One should speak of a hidden immorality of the world just as one speaks of a hidden irrationality of nature. Situations are originally unsolvable. They are so owing to the Other. In each case, invention of an ethical solution as of a scientific hypothesis that puts off the outbreak of conflict until later.

Example of the objectified subjective: the idea. Subjective in that it is permeable by our mind and in that we can take it up by the root and in its movement. Objective in that it is already seen from the outside. To place it within ourselves, to take it up again, is to place the objective within ourselves, to objectify ourselves within the heart of our creative subjectivity.

Ethics *today* must be revolutionary socialist ethics.

Historical movement: two aspects: every idea is taken up by free consciousnesses—every idea becomes a thing. Peculiar action of the objectified-subjective. An idea taken up by the following generation is deformed but remains subjective. It is motivation. But all at once, transcended by its adversaries, it becomes an object and acts through causality. Thus an idea has a dual efficacy. From whence the bad faith that gets set up between the two of them. As causality, the idea runs toward the most simple, the lowest, through the weight of determinism, at the extreme—to the very end of History, at the same time that it becomes more refined and more spiritualized insofar as it is subjectivity.

The temptation of objectivity: Spinoza²⁰ and the Stalinists: objectify everything in order to suppress the consciousness of the other and finally one's own.

Economics may be reduced to the necessity of eating—what is it to eat from the point of view of the subjective body?

We have a head full of (half) stonelike thoughts. They are not what will help us to free ourselves.

To be like everyone—not to be like anyone: set these side by side. The error lies in the verb “to be.”

The idea or the ruse of bad faith. One does not *adopt* an idea, one slips into

20. Benedict Spinoza (1632–77), Dutch-Jewish philosopher and leading exponent of seventeenth-century Rationalism.

it. It being understood that an idea is not a ball that one puts in a sack but an immense complex of thoughts, acts, and feelings, a hypothesis about my future, and a clarification of my past. The idea first appears in the distance as an object: socialism, idealism, etc. But this appearance disappears as soon as one approaches the idea. The objective glaze that protects it breaks open as soon as we make the effort to place ourselves at its heart and to retrace the essential steps. At this moment, the idea becomes once again a subjective project; my free project. I become the idea. Only at the same time, the idea closes in on me. It is objectified for others, it as an aspect of the in-itself: consistency, permanency, corporality. All at once, I am *characterized* by the idea. I become *a* communist, *a* socialist. The idea has two layers of objectivity: objectivity in immanence, that is, that it is not just thought and lived by me, but thought and lived by others. The error is to believe that the idea *unifies*. Of course it does. But there are two movements: to think one and the same idea unifies several human beings. Yet, reciprocally, that a plurality thinks the same idea pluralizes it at the same time; that is, it offers external sides to the one who is inside, inasmuch as another also thinks it. The shimmering of the idea that is both my subjectivity and objectivity. The shimmering of the idea between the In-itself and the For-itself. When it is entirely for-itself, it is *me*, when it is entirely *in-itself* it is me as an object for myself or, on the contrary, the absolute not-me, depending on whether it drags me along in its externalization. However the idea also has a second layer of exteriority: that it exists for others who do not share it, adversaries, neophytes, the indifferent. At this level, the idea is completely a thing. because it is opaque. One observes it from outside, one refuses to make the effort to enter into it. One explains it by psychological determinism. Or, on the contrary (or at the same time), it is respectable. From failure to grasp the deep-lying interconnection of its elements which is the project, it tends more and more toward *nature* which is pure exteriority, there is a juxtaposition of elements. In this way I give myself to myself in sliding into the idea of a shell of exteriority. I become *a* communist, *a* socialist, that is, I become congealed into exteriority while I have an internal justification to *seek to live* socialism. In-itself-for-itself. From this moment on, all the *recognized* features of socialism that I ought to have lived out in a groping way and in reinventing them, I possess through εἶς. “The communist is the permanent hero of our time.” This is my *character*, my nature.

See if there can be a communication of subjectivities in the idea.

Also applies to:

having a profession and honors (they too have an inwardness; one plays at both of them)

collective representations (how they become *values*)

the idea of *man* (ambiguity: in one sense I can be nothing but a man. In another “it is difficult to be a man”).

False objectivity, the underlying subjectivity of the *humanity* of each one of us.

(a) *No withdrawal* such that we could judge man with the eyes of a horse or of God.

(b) Rather detotalized totality: withdrawal of each one of us in relation to the other. He congeals into an object and humanity with him. Therefore he objectifies his humanity. But it is an unobservable objectivity, a phantom objectivity.

(c) The ethical idea that one makes of oneself what man has to be (communism, Christianity, etc.) impregnates objectivity so viewed. Naturally man becomes εἶς. In-itself-for-itself.

In reality we cannot grasp humanity as an object. It is a deep-lying basis of absolute subjectivity *upon which* our knowledge is determined. Ignorance as an *a priori* limit to our infrahuman knowledge.

I look at the people passing by: I say, "human beings." All at once I am a human being. But if I have objectified my subjectivity, at the same time I have projected all my subjectivity upon them.

Replace the pseudo-objectivity "human beings" by a veritable collective subjectivity. Assume the detotalized totality. We make up one yet we are not unifiable.

Rights. Explanation. To live without a right. To lose all hope of justifying oneself. To live unjustifiably.

The child is first of all an object. "We begin by being children before being men," means: we begin by being *objects*. We begin by being without our own possibilities. Caught up, carried along, we have the future of others. We are flower pots that one empties and refills.

I was wrong just now to say "unjustifiably." We are not unjustifiable, because that would require a system of justification wherein we would not have our place. Neither justifiable nor unjustifiable. Two extremes at the same time: as contingency man *is there* without any cause or reason. As project, he creates the justification for any partial system, but owing to this fact can never justify himself. Whence the ruse of the good conscience: one creates a partial system into which one enters as a *means* and one justifies oneself as the means of the system. This is to forget that one is at the same time the creator of the system, therefore that one is outside of any justification to the extent that one is its basis. Man is the fundamentally unjustifiable basis of all justification.

Man only matters to man. Whether there are any human beings or not, Being

in itself does not contain any more evil. It is necessary therefore to want man. Not to discover him but to invent him.

Normal process: 1st, childhood: objectivity and justification. From these, the child, mystified, chooses quality-objects for himself. 2d, adolescence: through undermining the parents comes the appearance of unjustifiability and of the subjective. But often it is too late: stratifications—one slips into another objectivity. 3d, the adult with his layers of objectivity, his shells.

Man wants to be God or Nature: vacillations. In general, both at once.

Ethics of the leader (following the master-slave): feudal relation of man to man. The subordinate person discovers himself to be inessential in relation to the leader who is essential. But he is justified by his task. Insofar as he accomplishes his task he is universal (interchangeability), but insofar as the leader's gaze falls upon him and insofar as he is recognized as accomplishing his task in a *unique* manner, he recovers his particularity. The leader on his side is recognized and recognizes himself as the source of morality. He is therefore above all morality. And in this he would be subjective and existential if he did not judge all others as inessential. What is more, he invents a relative morality and preserves as something distant the justification of *the goal* (the greatness of France, etc.). The transcendence of the subordinate appears as a transcendence/object. A naturally limited transcendence.

The slave is *justified* (old black slaves).²¹

Passage from the *justification* of the slave to the unjustifiability of the proletariat.²²

Religion: hypostasis of the Other who transforms us into an absolute object for a freedom that is never an object. But at the same time, a presentiment of absolute freedom and of interiority *in the Other*. However, to avoid falling again into total unjustifiability, one assumes that the Other is justified. Without giving the reason.

The Christian religion: assume a humanity-object, justified overall. To see *oneself* with the eyes of God.

21. Cf. p. 74 below, and also Simone de Beauvoir (1908–86), *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Seacaucus, N.J.: Citadel, 1980), p. 85. The French original of this latter text was published in November 1947, i.e., during the same period Sartre was writing these notebooks.

22. See Appendix 2.

“The heart of man is cruel and foul.”²³ In whose eyes? This can only be in man’s eyes and from the point of view of an ethics. Man is the source of all good and all evil and judges himself in the name of the good and evil he creates. Therefore *a priori* neither good nor evil.

There is no abstract ethics. There is only an ethics in a situation and therefore it is concrete. An abstract ethics is that of the good conscience. It assumes that one can be ethical in a fundamentally unethical situation. Ethics is the surpassing of this situation. But in surpassing this situation it preserves it. Ethics is the idea that one can be good without changing the situation; in short, “everything else being equal.” It is the idea that one can “have one’s conscience for oneself.” Ethics is therefore disinterested when it is abstract. It is a way of withdrawing one’s poker from the fire. It is also the assumption that salvation is possible in the absolute.

Ethics is the theory of action. But action is abstract if it is not work and struggle. For example: to save an infant who has drowned. Absurd. Concrete problems: Should Luther have abandoned the peasants during the peasant war?²⁴

“Each people venerates *itself* in the gods it worships, it becomes aware of itself in believing it recognizes the divine” (Kojève, *Intr. à Hegel*).²⁵

In fact, a dialectic with a nonexistent term. 1st, Projection of the situation, hypostasis of the Other in the form of the Divine gaze. 2d, turning back of the hypostasized self on the lived self in order to fix it as an object. Therefore a double representation of the community.

23. Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 72, no. 139.

24. Martin Luther (1483–1546), the German Protestant reformer, denounced the peasant uprising of 1525 in his treatise “Against the Murdering and Thieving Hordes of Peasants.” Cf. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 685.

25. Alexandre Kojève (1902–68), *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur “La Phénoménologie de l’Esprit,”* ed. Raymond Queneau (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), partially translated into English as *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. Allan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1969). This volume is based on notes and summaries of lectures Kojève delivered at the Ecole des Hautes-Etudes from 1933 to 1939. For their influence on the revival of interest in Hegel in France, see Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Michael S. Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); and George L. Kline, “The Existentialist Rediscovery of Hegel and Marx,” in *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. Edward N. Lee and Maurice Mandelbaum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), pp. 113–38. In this latter volume, the editors say that “Kojève reports that neither Sartre nor Hyppolite attended any of his lectures” (p. vii). Jean Hyppolite (1907–68) translated Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* into French in two volumes (1939–41) and subsequently published a commentary on it, which Sartre refers to below.

2d stupidity: power and act. An ethics must result in action. Distinguish power and possibility.

Analysis of the religious man { relation to the self
to the (Christian) collectivity
to the world

Religious categories { faith as bad faith
the world as a cipher
confusion of the spiritual and the impossible
utilization of transcendence by bad faith (a man is much more than a man)
contestation of the word by itself. A being-above-being, etc.
End: succeed in the 4th dimension. Jaspers and failure.²⁶
Religious transcendence: hypostasis of the act of transcending.

False equality of Christians and false freedom: everyone equal as the slaves of one and the same master. How can there be freedom in a religion whose principle is the master (Lord)? Belonging totally to God who created us.

The soul: hypostasis in me of my transcendence. Both my objectivity and my beyond in me.

As the situation has evolved one turns this into a trick, one says that God is not my master, that he has an "infinite respect" for me. But this is only to diminish the reality.

"My conscience belongs to me." To disinterest oneself in *action* in order to take refuge in the subjective. What is important is the realization of the act.

Man must be proud because he makes being existent. Pride is the consciousness of being autonomous and a creator. But this is a pride that is addressed to subjectivity as such, not to *qualities* or εἶδος. For since qualities are conferred upon us by society, by the other, and withdrawn by them, this makes us dependent when we claim them. What is more, it inserts us in a virtually indefinite intensive series, hence somewhere where we are certain to have something *more* than ourselves. If I am proud of my beauty or my strength, I am certain at the same time that, in all probability, there is someone more beautiful or stronger. In any case, there has been someone. Whence arise championships, instituted to tranquilize consciences. The first one, *certification*.

26. See Karl Jaspers, "Limits of World Orientation," in *Philosophy*, vol. 1, trans. E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 120–73. See Michel Dufrenne and Paul Ricoeur, *Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence* (Paris: Seuil, 1947), pp. 94–96.

Ethics of *mediocrity*. *To be* mediocre. The average man. First, the average man as one speaks of the self-propelled man. He is on the level of means. He loses himself in the infinity of means so as not to look the end in the face. The end is understood. Moreover, he is a victim of the solidification of means that themselves becomes ends. The result is that the tragedy of the pursuit of being is transformed into a comedy.

The average man is the man of comedy. The spreading out of the average. By habit or by the satisfaction of being thrown into an infinite process where one never has to face up to the essential. Also by *pedantry*: the average man is a pedant because he accords a primordial importance to what are mere *preparations*. If he paints, what is essential is the choice of the brush. Either he covers up the end or it becomes a dream or a regulative idea. In the second place, the average man wants to be *average* (mediocre). That is, he wants to be “like everyone else” in order to realize through himself the unity of the Spirit.

This also applies to the anonymity of crowds. If he is average, he is lost in the crowd of average people. Hence nothing can touch him that was fated *for him*. Misfortunes are effects of chance. Statistically improbable. The denseness of the crowd is always before him. The average man is *statistical* man. He rejects *fate*. At the same time, he sees the world as *average*. *Weltanschauung* [worldview] of the mediocre: objects of average quality, average views of nature (average aesthetic qualities: softness, discretion, etc).

In the third place, he is both justified and inessential. Justified because he is a *means* for attaining apodictic ends (because they are never called into question) and inessential because he is interchangeable with any other *means*, hence without any crushing responsibility. He always does what any one else would do in his place. If he does it *well*, he is content, this signifying that he is particular solely in that he realizes the role of being an instrument better than other people.

Do not confuse “average” with being “subordinate.” The subordinate obeys the leader with a crazy zeal, he sacrifices himself, he locates $\upsilon\beta\rho\upsilon\varsigma$, particularity, anxiety in the leader. A *feudal* and *concrete* relation of man to man. The average man is abstract and submits to abstract laws. He is always *subordinate* but he is so in a mediocre way and he has his mediocrities. He always wants to be between the extremes. He wants superiors above him who will take the risks and guilty parties below him whom he may judge. To be average, a mean, he needs extremes. But he thinks that the extremes are the means for him to be average. Hence in the end everything falls into the inessential.

4th, the average man is a *middle* (a mean). His reality is statistical. He knows he is the largest number, since he wants to be the largest number. Therefore it is he who creates the dominant qualities of a society. *The Englishman, the Frenchman* are “averages.” If they talk among themselves, they consider themselves and *recognize themselves* to be average.

At the same time, he is a mediator. For him, the extremes touch: the leader and the criminal, the genius and the fool. Circularity of the average world:

Carpentier beaten by an automobile mechanic.²⁷ A pair of sevens beats an ace in poker. The average is a synthesis (or believes itself to be a synthesis) of extremes. Lauvrière and Edgar Poe.²⁸ 5th, the average man—average classes. 6th, virtues and ethics: nothing in excess, one always needs someone smaller than oneself. 7th, the average man's thoughts: the commonplace.

Sadism and masochism are the revelation of the Other.²⁹ They only make sense—as, by the way, does the struggle of consciousnesses—before conversion. If we have assumed the fact of being free and an object for other people (e.g., the authentic Jew)³⁰ there is no ontological reason to stay on the level of struggle. *I accept* my being-an-object and I surpass it. However there may still be historical reasons (it is not sufficient that the Jew accepts his being-an-object).

The Ambivalence of History and the Ambiguity of the Historical Fact

(1) Historical action. That no party can present itself as the interpreter of History. The historical collectivity is a detotalized totality. Every historical agent (whether person or group) is a part of this collectivity. If this agent thinks about History, his or its representation of History (ideology) becomes a historical factor. Suddenly History is no longer what they thought it was—it is *that* plus the action of the representation they have of it. But this action is itself of a particular type. It takes place in terms of propositions. Even if consciousnesses play at inertia, they are not inert, one does not act on them by causality. They have *to take up* the proposed theme and at once it serves other ends. Hence the action

27. Georges Carpentier (1894–1975), French light-heavyweight boxer defeated by Jack Dempsey in a match for the heavyweight championship in 1921; the first million-dollar gate. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 2: *The Intelligibility of History*, ed. Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Verso, 1991), p. 6, for another reference to Carpentier and Dempsey.

28. Emile Lauvrière, *Edgar Poë: sa vie et son oeuvre. Etude de psychologie pathologique* (Paris, 1904). Cf. *War Diaries of Sartre*, p. 74.

29. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, chap. 3, “Concrete Relations with Others,” esp. pp. 377–79 and 399–406.

30. “Jewish authenticity consists in choosing oneself *as Jew*—that is, in realizing one's Jewish condition. The authentic Jew abandons the myth of the universal man; he knows himself and wills himself into history as a historic and damned creature; he ceases to run away from himself and to be ashamed of his own kind. He understands that society is bad; for the naive monism of the inauthentic Jew he substitutes a social pluralism. He knows that he is one who stands apart, untouchable, scorned, proscribed—and it is *as such* that he asserts his being. At once he gives up his rationalistic optimism; he sees that the world is fragmented by irrational divisions, and in accepting this fragmentation—at least in what concerns him—in proclaiming himself a Jew, he makes some of these values and these divisions his. He chooses his brothers and his peers; they are the other Jews. He stakes everything on human grandeur, for he accepts the obligation to live in a situation that is defined precisely by the fact that it is unlivable; he derives his pride from his humiliation” (*Anti-Semite and Jew*, pp. 136–37).

of the theory of History being considered can only take place in and through the deformation of that theory. In a word, every theory of History is historical. This would not be the case if the Spirit were a totalized totality because then it would be what it thought itself to be (as in each person's consciousness). This is the Hegelian myth. And thus it suffices that Hegel brought about Hegelianism for us to be *post-Hegelians*. It suffices that Marx created his materialist dialectic so that consciousnesses that play out this dialectic are at the same time beyond it. In other words, History has one meaning if the Spirit is one. To the extent that the Spirit is a totality, this meaning exists and therefore there is a *direction and hence progress*. To the extent that the Spirit is alienated from itself by the nothingness that runs through it (detotalization) there is neither direction nor progress—marking time. The situation is therefore a History that is not History, a progress that marks time, a *total* explanation by necessity and by contingency.

(2) Because of this, two attitudes toward History: those who deny its reality (Pascal, Alain)³¹ and they are right (as, for example, in the case of anachronistic jokes, such as the centurion who is called Sarge to show that nothing changes)—and those who affirm its existence (Hegel, Comte,³² Marx) and they are also right. Philosophers, in general, seek *either* to set these two aspects in a hierarchy—for ex., contingency in the details, necessity as regards the whole—*or* to consider one of them as an appearance, the other as the reality. In fact, both ways are correct and we should not subordinate one to the other. Rather describe and demonstrate their ambivalence.

(3) Ideality of historical time—reality of intersubjective temporality.

(4) To be always beyond his historical action. Like History itself. The one who remains within is locked up inside it as in a coffin, History is already somewhere else. Permanent revolution.

(5) The more the historical agent chooses violence, lies, and Machiavellianism as his means, the more efficacious he is. But the more he contributes to division, the more he puts the accent on detotalization; the more he is himself an object in History and the more he defeats History (whose ideal existence would be in terms of totalization). The true historical agent is less efficacious but treats human beings as himself, he tries to make the Spirit exist as a unity, therefore

31. Alain, pseudonym of Emile-Auguste Chartier (1868–1951), a philosophy teacher at the Lycée Henri IV in Paris and a regular contributor to *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. He taught many members of Sartre's generation who went on to the Ecole Normale Supérieure, France's elite academy for training teachers, where Sartre did his university-level work in philosophy.

32. Auguste Comte (1798–1857), French philosopher, known as the founder of sociology and for his philosophical method known as Positivism.

History. It is through him that a History is possible (through the writer, the philosopher, the saint, the prophet, the scholar).

(6) Politics is the negation of History because it calculates in terms of divisions. It is therefore another beginning.

(7) The perpetual aspect of repetition and of novelty in each fact. Repetition if one isolates it, novelty if one feigns the existence of the Spirit.

The yogi and the commissar deny reality.³³ The one sees unity (*tat tvam asi*),³⁴ the other diversity. The yogi appeals to *the same*, the commissar to *the other*. The synthesis is dehistoricized History, the detotalized totality, hence the commissar-yogi.

(8) Let us start from the absolute spirit containing within itself a diversity of facts under the heading “representation.” At this moment there is nothing but what there is consciousness of. The law of being is to be conscious. Is the imagination even possible? Furthermore, since there is unity (in the Kantian sense of the term), every thought is necessarily linked to prior thought: it is *traditional*. Whether it turns back toward earlier thoughts and seizes them through *knowledge* or contains them within itself through immanence. Perhaps both of these at the same time. In this case there is *history*. History, in effect, has to do with the *individual* (the unity of the Spirit makes him a person), it excludes repetition. The fact of coming *within the unity after* some term M necessarily implies that the term M₁ must be different even if it is quite close.

33. A reference to Arthur Koestler’s essay “The Yogi and the Commissar” (first published in *Horizon* [London], June 1942, then reprinted in *The Yogi and the Commissar and Other Essays* [New York: Macmillan, 1945], pp. 15–25). Koestler (1905–83) was a Hungarian-born British novelist, journalist, and critic who was a member of the German Communist Party from 1931 to 1938 but then became a fiercely anticommunist writer. Sartre first met him in 1946. The yogi and the commissar, according to Koestler, are opposite types, the one believing in change from within, the other in change from without. No synthesis of the saint and the revolutionary has ever been achieved, and history oscillates between the two forms, although this does not rule out a basic dialectical movement of history. “One of the fatal lacunae in the Marxist interpretation of history is that it was concerned only with the course of the river, not with the waves” (*ibid.*, p. 25), but the pendulum swing between yogi and commissar by itself is no guide to history. See also the book by Sartre’s collaborator and fellow editor at *Les Temps Modernes*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1909–61), *Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem*, trans. John O’Neill (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969; French original 1947), which also focuses on Koestler and his writings in the immediate postwar period.

34. “That thou art.” In the Upaniṣads, this saying conveys the precept that the individual self is identical with the infinite Brahman and that all things are immanent in man: See Chāndogya Upaniṣad, vi.x.3, in *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, ed. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 70.

The existence of the past makes a *tradition* of it (the past taken up and acting). This type of action of the past on the present is *interiority*.

Finally, since it is a matter of a *deciding* spirit, History, whatever may be said about the zigzags of its freedom, has an *orientation*. It decides wholly and as a whole. Its decision does not affect it, therefore, after the fact: it is wholly within itself, wholly itself; there is not a part of itself that could be influenced mechanically by its decision. It is entirely *itself*. Hence the future is part of the perspective of the past and gives a sense to the past. *At the end of History* one can give an outline, a curve to existence that is precisely History as a whole. One can evaluate a particular *Erlebnis* [lived experience] from the point of view of what it was as intended, as experienced, as taken up and judged, and finally as it appears to the eyes that judge the inward judgments of which it was the object. A dialectic is possible, beginning with the emergence of this Spirit, hence a form of *progress*.

But let us immediately note: 1st, that the judgment on the closed totality is made from an external point of view and therefore presupposes another History from whose point of view one judges this Spirit, hence that contains it and that contests the lived history of this Spirit by transforming it into a history-object; 2d, that the judgment on the open totality takes place inwardly and therefore is a part of this totality as one active element in it. It therefore metamorphosizes the course of History and it may itself be judged by some subsequent moment, which, moreover, will be modified by it. Whether inside or outside, in lived History judgment is historical. In history judged from outside, the judgment is ahistorical *relative to this history* (but necessarily historical relative to another system of reference), but History is dead.

Also note that History presupposes an element of opacity as regards predictions. The science of History would kill History by suppressing time. The time of the (historical) Spirit presupposes *progress*, hence some necessary movement or, at least, an orientated one. For an event to be historical it must always have an infinite future owing to the infinity of possible interpretations. It has its depth in freedom, that is, in an unmade future. If, on the contrary, we assume individuals or groups placed in analogous circumstances yet perfectly isolated from each other (as for example might be the case for the different primitive tribes of the coral isles, of central Australia, or of equatorial Africa), each of these tribes may have a history without there being any common history between them. And if the identity of circumstances leads to almost the same reactions, it will be possible to envisage a law, hence to pass over to the universal. Or if we assume civilizations that appear and disappear without any contact, a transcendent spirit, external to these civilizations, may bring to light the *repetitions*. Ten times a start will be made, it evolves up to a certain point, then a cataclysm, a flood, or whatever, and, with other people moving on, one starts again. In this way, dispersion gives rise to repetition and to the universal (in the most favorable case). This is the meaning of the myth of Atlantis. Concentration, on the contrary, implies historicity.

But neither represents reality. It is, 1st, the fact that man is faced with the universe and, consequently, that some of his ideas or decisions may be snuffed out by the universe. In other words, imagination is possible. And what can be wiped out, what is purely *imaginary* is not historical (at least if the imagination is not realized as some form of art). Therefore, there exist human moments that escape History. However History does take them up insofar as it is a totality. First ambiguity of the separation of the real and consciousness.

2d, each human being along with every other one makes up a detotalized totality. Hence the action of Paul in Zambia does not necessarily affect Pierre in Japan. There is a tendency for actions to be isolated from each other, there is a *historical threshold*. But this threshold is a highly variable one. This is the level where *chance* intervenes. There is chance in history only because there may be an encounter, hence the absence of unity. For a spirit, chance is impossible. Two casual series cannot encounter each other because there is nothing but *unity*.

3d, *historical* action is necessarily *partial*. Since minds take it up, it is always outrun on two sides. Outrun and taken up. Necessarily perverted. Therefore other than itself. In a mechanical system one can conceive of movement being communicated to a part. I communicate with the totality without undergoing other alterations than those that are *predictable*. So to obtain some determined effect on the whole one acts on the part in a rigorously fixed way. This is what we call direct action. But this presupposes inertia. Now in one sense inertia does exist in consciousness but as feigned (flight, inauthenticity). Hence in a certain way historical action is mechanical. But in another way it is feigned, always revocable, and also partial. One of Hitler's proclamations mechanically affects the Germans because they want to be inert, but it is only a proposal to his opponents and to the leaders of other governments. At this moment *it becomes historical*. *Ahistorical* insofar as it directly makes History, it becomes historical insofar as it is a passive occasion for History to make itself. Thus it is perpetually inside and outside. Making History, hence emerging from non-History (the absolute of freedom, the inertia of mechanism, these two limits—at the limit, the world of the engineer, man faced with things) and made by History (a mere, disarmed proposal for which others provide its value).

4th, historical action is efficacious only if the idea becomes a thing. For an idea to be presented as a proposal it has to be made into an object. I have shown above that this object was a pseudo-object, given the condition of intending to entering into it. Communism is a pseudo-object and an idea for Marxists, it is a real object for non-Marxists. Object, that is, an external reality, imperfectly comprehensible, opaque, explained externally to itself (it is spite, an inferiority complex that makes them communists), combated by external means (dispersal, arrest, massacre of communists). It therefore perpetually acts in two ways: always as an idea assimilated by consciousnesses (the element of unification), and as an object in terms of inertia (the factor of division: the communists *scare* the bourgeois, etc.).

5th, this comes down to saying that every human being insofar as he is separated (subjectivity) can take up a separatist view of history and talk about universal History. Hence reflect upon and live this history. However this is a false vision for it would be necessary to be transcendent over mankind or to be a single Spirit in order to judge History. Yet one acts historically with a view to History. Hence History is pseudoreflective, a perpetual interplay of reflecting/reflected with nihilation, which makes History advance. A plain mystery: History is entirely before me and I cannot judge it because I am inside of it.

6th, inasmuch as there is always *separation* of one historical moment from another, of one nation from another contemporary nation, there is repetition and the universal. I am to X what a Roman from the time of Caesar was to Y. Homologous organs. I am to Z what an English citizen is to W. Insofar as there is a totality, however, through reciprocal relationships, there is *never* repetition. Everything happens as if nothingness had *interlarded* the Consciousness/Spirit, which is the historical myth properly speaking. To the extent that the totality determines itself, there is evolution and progress. Hence progress marking time. There are always the oppressed—therefore the proletarian is to the boss what the slave is to the master. And perhaps more unfortunate people. No domestic intimacy with the master.³⁵ A renewed outbreak of suicides, etc. Yet on the other hand progress: the slave is a thing, modern man is only *alienated* (freedom recognized but mystified). It is impossible to evaluate progress and yet necessary to presuppose it.

7th, to the extent that one considers the Spirit pure subjectivity, idealism. No reality. This also applies in history: in one sense no material element acts historically unless it is taken up by minds. The plague kills, it is not historical. Its consequences are: historical reestablishment of a new hierarchy, a greater price accorded to the proletarians because they are less numerous in England in the [17th] century. Necessary to create a class consciousness of the proletariat. Yet in another sense, insofar as human beings are body and object, direct and physical action (economic statistics, etc.).

(9) If there is a History, it is Hegel's. There is no place for any other. But if there is only a pseudo-History, then caricature. Because of the undiscoverable unity. One of the factors of History (repetition) is the always renewed dream of unity (the Holy Empire, etc.). But the dream of unity is itself in pseudo-History as a factor of division as well as of union. Since others *are opposed* to unity.

(10) Existentialism against History through the affirmation of the irreducible individuality of the person.

(11) Action of manners, customs, religion, ideology, etc.—in short, the objec-

35. Cf. Appendix 2.

tive Spirit. Do not forget that every consciousness however inert and drifting is *outside of them*.

(12) The historical myth of philosophers (to compare humanity to a plant: progress is the development of order) and the historical myth of historians (physical causality of the instant t on the instant t_1 , repetitions, contingency, the physical universe). Neither is correct.

(13) If humanity were a totality, each moment of its development would be relative to the others as a middle term, mediation, etc. Thus suffering as a moment of the total development would be justified and founded in the whole. But the separation of consciousnesses necessarily implies that the suffering of the sacrificed is not recoverable. Hence the nothingness that separates one consciousness from another makes each determination of these consciousnesses an absolute. It would be easy to show, reciprocally, that joy in some moment or the will are indestructible. Precisely because they can exist only as *taken up* from the outside. Thus, at the heart of History, each historical being is at the same time an ahistorical absolute. Yet inversely the existence-in-relationship of each person makes this absolute relative from a certain point of view. First of all because he has an outside and he can, through this outside, become a statistic. Next, because the surpassing of the moment is in spite of everything—owing to the totalizing relationship—a means of progressing. Hence everything happens as though there were a surpassing of a moment of the universal consciousness by itself, with this difference, that precisely the detotalization involved implies the autonomy of the moment in relation to what surpasses it. In one sense there is a surpassing of one moment toward another state of affairs that conserves it; in fact, the surpassing, the initial moment, and the end moment are autonomous and the conservation of the surpassed moment is a pseudoconservation. E.g.: a proletarian revolution may well preserve the bourgeois moment in surpassing it. However, in fact it just preserves the bourgeois acquisitions for, or perhaps even though, the bourgeois have fled or been massacred. On the other hand, the proletarian consciousnesses are autonomous and fresh emergences that are not penetrated by what the bourgeois have accomplished but who take it up. Thus there is a surpassing that surpasses nothing, preservation that is not preservation, absolute/relative. And from this single fact, a life always begins without a spring board. It emerges within an absolutely new situation, without making use of what has been acquired, since in reality what has been acquired *is part of the situation*. The rifle is certainly an acquisition in relation to the struggle against the wild beast and it intensifies the struggle of human beings among themselves. In that it exists it is not a solution but a danger. It is a solution only insofar as it is perfected, insofar as it becomes a new invention. What is given is always problematic. One does not capitalize in general, precisely because there is not *one* being to capitalize upon (which good sense recognizes under the form: we never

profit from the experience of others). Here we have marching in place. However the problems themselves are different. There is in a way not progress toward the solution but progress in the problem. Perhaps History is an unsolvable problem but one that is posed in ever better ways.

(14) The problem is never in the facts. It is man who makes himself a historical problem beginning from the facts.

(15) History: an ideal continuity perpetually broken up by a real discontinuity.

(16) Impossible synthesis of the continuous and discontinuous. Put together and torn apart like Penelope's weaving.³⁶ Constant progress from M to M₁ insofar as the generation M begins from M and progresses to M₁. Movement broken off by nothingness: death and birth. Set apart from a death and a birth, what was progress becomes a proposed situation, that is, closed-in on itself and problematic. However it is also true that a return is impossible.

(17) Every historical event has a physical aspect that alters it and draws it toward the side of the general. (Even a voice, in speaking: vibration of the air, which does or does not carry.) Consequently *chance* is within each historical event. As soon as I *send* a message I make use of the physical world. Hence a nonsynthetic encounter within this world of two series, the one noncausal and free, the other causal. If there had not been a storm, the messenger would have arrived in time to prevent the execution. Therefore insignificance at the heart of significance, or rather the perpetual significance that there is insignificance, that every significant event is corroded by some insignificance. If Stalin were to die, nothing would be changed. However precisely if—at least this, that the Soviet myth incarnated in Stalin would not be incarnated in anyone else in the same way. Hence the historical myth is concrete and is *in danger of dying* in the world of the general. History is in danger of dying in the world of nonhistory.

(18) Nonhistory in History: the *fact* of the scission of consciousness, the general, repetition, chance as an encounter, pluralism, and, in one sense, freedom.

(19) It is freedom that makes History but it is also freedom that makes nonhistory.

(20) If there is History, there is a reality of time. If not, time being only an illusion, essences remain. Time, a Platonic myth to explain the relationship

36. The wife of Odysseus. In the *Odyssey* she puts off her suitors while awaiting Odysseus's return by weaving a shroud for her father-in-law, Laertes, which she unravels every night so the work is never finished.

between essences. But if time is only an appearance, at least it has the reality of its appearance, hence being. It posits itself and it exists absolutely. But on what conditions can time exist—only on the condition that not everything is fixed in advance: at least partial contingency, partial freedom. But we do not make allowance for freedom. Therefore everything is contingent.

(21) Freedom constitutes History by creating the concrete and absolute endurance of nonrepetition. But it kills History by being able to deny it at any instant by decree. In this it is taken up again by History through assimilation and related to the past in its caprice, even freedom's own caprice, but above all that of other freedoms. This is true even given the mythical hypothesis of a single, unified Spirit. It does not suffice that it is *one*. It has to be free in its unfreedom and unfree in its freedom. We must both not be able to foresee it in the future yet be able to rediscover its necessity in the past. Whence the myth developed by Bergson and so many others, which however is *absurd*: the necessity of past action and the freedom of present and future action.³⁷

(22) Ambiguity therefore of the necessary (relatedness) and the contingent (absoluteness of temporality).

(23) Ambiguity also of the historical object. E.g., “Many of the clubs in New Orleans closed due to the hatred of Blacks for Whites.” Ambiguity: hate, in a sense, pushed to the limit becomes the essential and people who live it the inessential. One speaks of the discontent of 1789. Each historical individual emerges against the background of discontent, is charged to express his discontent. A mode in relation to substance. Would be true if the individual were really a product of emanation from some Spinoza-like substance or the Hegelian consciousness. But, on the other hand, lived discontent becomes the inessential. For example, the thinking of the Blacks' enemy: the Blacks would be all right if *some* particular liar did not stir up their discontent.

(24) Similarly: ambiguity of the historical object. Fabrizio and the Battle of Waterloo.³⁸ Everyone acknowledges that there was a Battle of Waterloo. But what was it?

1st, a material event. Cannon balls—the spending of caloric energy—death as a biological phenomena.

2d, concrete totalities: a regiment. But here a description of the object “regi-

37. See Henri Bergson (1859–1941), *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (New York: Macmillan, 1910).

38. Fabrizio Del Dongo is the hero of Stendhal's novel *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839). Cf. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, p. 395.

ment” is required. (a) It is an institutional form. The regiment exists before its members do, in that it is thought up by the ministers, a head of government, the enemy. It is then thought of *radically* as a tool/object. One moves it about like a hammer or a saw, hence one considers it as a pure passivity. Note that it is thought of as a regiment by the minister of war, for example, insofar as he is this minister, that is, insofar as he incarnates an institution and insofar as there is an institutional world. [(b)] But for it to be displaced as a regiment, it has to think of itself as a regiment. The connection can not be brought about by a natural passivity, it has to be *willed*. Natural passivity scatters the regiment—more or less the physical strength of each soldier, etc. Therefore each soldier must contribute to creating the regiment by denying the real plurality in order to create the ideal object.

This implies: 1st, that the soldier considers his comrades as *objects*; 2d, that he makes a synthesis of these objects into one single *object*; 3d, that he considers himself as an *object* (in which he is aided by his comrades who correctly consider him as *the other*) and as being part of the whole. Yet at the same time the connection is insufficient since it would be just pure addition, the regiment has to possess a subjective unity: relations of camaraderie, each man is another me. Yet the camaraderie is here the inessential in that this other me is conceived of *in general*. Each particular friendship contributes to isolating an autonomous element and therefore [is] injurious. Hence the comrade is me, but replaceable. I love my neighbor by means of the regiment. Camaraderie is mortar. Here, naturally, ambiguity—it is true in part. Indifference to death, to one’s own death. If one considers himself to be inessential in relation to the essence, as the part structured by the whole, what you lose is what you gain: justification. But on the other hand, a perpetual tendency to isolation due to natural friendships or subjectivity. Thus *the object* regiment can only be an object through the subjectivities that make themselves into objects and who use their freedom to imitate inertia. *L’esprit de corps*.

4th, the leader and the symbol. Indispensable. At this moment, moreover, one endows the regiment with *morale*. Yet morale is not essential. It is obvious, of course, that poor morale makes the regiment a poor tool. But a traditional science allows us to deal with this morale in a convenient way. While waiting, the object is treated *as a thing*. This is the first moment. Once one makes use of it, it is an ambiguous object. Always a thing—one moves it here or there. But, on the other hand, an organic unity: animal/tool. One “*puts it to work*.” Furthermore, variable. Perhaps pure passivity (modern war) or semi-objectivity. At any rate, it makes the movement decided upon by the general, but it does so more or less well. A pawn on the chess board, but some pawns have more vitality than others. Therefore ambiguity: an object that is material, organic, and spiritual at the same time. But in reverse order. First a *material* limit (pawn), then an *organic* one (life values), then a *spiritual* one (morale, esprit de corps). The spiritual

subordinated to the material—role of the spiritual: to give a cohesion to the material, to prevent it from becoming scattered.

On the other hand, a curious *irrational* object: a collective and a singular object, made up of general parts and no matter what ones. The truth: insofar as I am an organic totality of cells, I am made up of individual cells. Yet they are ready to consider me as being an assemblage of cells in general. For if one takes a sample of these cells, one examines them as general, not as particular. The same thing applies to the regiment. Men die, they are replaced, they take up the morale of the regiment. Therefore analogous to a physical law: the atom does not have any individuality. In a word the regiment is an individual object whose secondary structures are general ones. But only up to a certain point. Poorly fed, or beaten, it breaks apart into individuals. The perpetual fear in the case of a revolution or a coup d'état: shall we have the army with us? Similarly "public opinion": an individual synthesis of general structures (the worker or the leftist intellectual). Therefore both short of and beyond the object. On the short side: to form a regiment (discipline, habits, etc.); on the far side (the breaking point: discontent, mutinies).

5th, value. The regiment is a *value* (a flag, a special uniform) but a vital value. Consecration of its *mana* which is "dashing," "ardent," etc. All of this is of course *mimed*. The consciousnesses involved have to make themselves inert and general. Everyone must act in complicity. If one group refuses, the regiment is brought down. Naturally this signifies that for the regiment *to be*, it has to be lived. But what is involved in doing so? (a) To think of the Other as an object. (b) To want to be justified. (c) To think the general with one's body (perception = action = general). However the regiment is always *outside*. An object haunting the consciousnesses. One is *never sufficiently* regimental. The regiment *for the Other* in terms of action: *to capture* this fort. Naturally: the army as a linkage of regiments. A weaker form because the regiments are individuals. However a unity. But already a more abstract one (the army does not have any vital value by itself. No aspect. Return to the general with an individual temporal unity.) Therefore: a general object with a temporal unity, a passive instrument, half abstract, whose initial structures are the individual units (regiments) and whose secondary structures are general elements. What is more: *organic* unity of the army (hierarchy of regiments)—mechanical unity of a regiment (made of atoms, of particles).

Above this *the event* as the shifting unity of two armies. The unity is *in one consciousness* (Napoleon)—in this sense, a work of art. Imposition of a form on some matter. But *very ambiguous*. (A) The totality implies the reaction of the opposing general. Therefore a subjective and synthetic unity taken as *an object to be surpassed*, hence *alienated* and destroyed (to foil the enemy is to destroy his effort). Therefore already an ambiguous aspect of the object: an evanescent form. An object consisting internally of a double disaggregation—the destruction of

the Napoleonic unity by Wellington.³⁹ Destruction of the Wellingtonian unity by Napoleon. However at this level there is a *victory*, so one of the adversaries imposes his historical unity on the other. But the final unity contains the destructive internal unity of the defeated. The battle never occurred just as the winner wanted. The unity of the victory is a false unity that resolves itself into a thousand individual defeats (at the level, for example, of the regiments). It is as if the matter, here, considers itself the form as matter. What is more, at this level is the physical action, hence the general, the division into infinity, the unintelligible. The aspect of chance in every historical event. Therefore a destructive unity: Grouchy's error is *irrelevant* to Napoleon's and Wellington's plans.⁴⁰ Chance moreover that is immediately taken up by some invention—one makes use of it to . . . (genius is to make good use of a chance). But ambiguity of the made use of chance: it is human and remains chance. At this level therefore, force, matter. But who decides that a battle is lost (Pierrefeu),⁴¹ that one lost battle decides a war? It is the head of government, or to some extent public opinion according to the current myth of war. Therefore action by chance (and the contingency of genius—another accident) taken up by the permanent structures of a society and an epoch.

We rediscover significance. Therefore the significance attributed to a battle depends *on it* in part, and in part on the interpretation of its results. But this significance is present from the beginning as a future structure of the battle—depending on the rules of the military craft, under which conditions it was won or lost.

(25) There are two forecasts: that of the general and that of freedom. One can forecast freedom: “X will know how to find some generous and discrete way to make them accept this gift.” This is another name for confidence. Politics forecasts the general.

(26) Chance lies in the very plurality of consciousnesses, just as exteriority does, but the unity of consciousnesses as a collectivity is against chance.

(27) The action of History is by *proposals*. And by force. Connected.

39. Arthur Wellesley, first duke of Wellington (1769–1852), commander of the British forces that defeated Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) at the Battle of Waterloo (1815).

40. Emmanuel, Marquis de Grouchy (1766–1847), French marshal who made the mistake of pursuing the Prussian contingent on its way to Waterloo. While he was held up by the Prussian rear guard, the main force escaped and joined Wellington at Waterloo where it turned the tide of battle.

41. Jean de Pierrefeu (b. 1883), French writer and journalist, author of *Plutarch Lied*, trans. Jeffery E. Jeffrey (New York: Knopf, 1924), and other memoirs of World War I in which he criticized historical accounts of that war.

(28) But for everyone there is the sphere of generality (Rorschach).⁴² There are some assured general interpretations.

(29) To the extent that a fact of opinion unites objects to one another by force in a unity of consciousnesses, the unity is open-ended and chance is introduced into the significance. The nonsignificance of significance.

(30) I am an object of History and exposed to violence to the extent that I am an object, transcended transcendence [for] the Other. But subject of History to the extent that I either take up its proposals or not. And in the last analysis, those whose do violence to me have consented to the established order, so violence itself is made significant.

(31) Evolution of History: first in History itself, *nonhistorical elements*: slaves, serfs, workers. History takes place beyond them. They are not historical material. The history of mankind is not then the history of *every* human being. Furthermore separations among countries: *histories* (of France, of Spain, etc.), therefore a possible universalization. Hence: 1st, elements of eternity in History; 2d, elements of abstract universality. Two negations of individual endurance.

(32) In History, too, existence precedes essence. For the representation of History enters into play as an active factor in the determination of History. History is what one makes. But in a consciousness there is adequation between being and consciousness of being. *Separation* in History means that it is never totally what one thinks it is.

(33) The discovery of History is itself a historical factor: passage from *eternity* (antiquity, Middle Ages, History is the accidental) to the *past* (17th century: History is involution), from the past to the *present* (*Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*—18th century), from the present to the *necessary* future (the present as inessential in relation to the future), finally to the three ec-stases.⁴³

(34) Temporality conceived of as fallen, as decadent. Inessential and broken image of the eternal, which is outside time. Man's life as purely phenomenal. Appearance, *test*. No doubt there exists a future, but it is the natural future, the property of each of us. History is a *myth*. Or instead it serves to demonstrate the

42. Herman Rorschach (1884–1922), Swiss psychiatrist and neurologist who devised the projective test based on inkblots that bears his name.

43. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 377, for a definition of time in terms of the ecstases of past, present, and future.

perenniality of certain institutions throughout their ups and downs. Time is essentially the time of *repetition*. 17th century: conquest of the *past*. Historicity for Pascal: appearance of one essential event: the fall.⁴⁴ And of another: redemption. The third one: the “judgment” is atemporal. The future remains natural. The future of repetition. Involution up to the present. The present is the immediate. Immediate consciousness of the present and the future. The lesser reality of the present, its lesser value. The past is completely autonomous: the image of eternity. 18th century: the present. Accompanies the negation of the extrawordly eternal. Yet the present receives the eternal into itself. Eternity of the instant. Time is what divides. Future and past conceived of as inessential. Reversal of the idea of the past: becomes what leads to the present (Voltaire).⁴⁵ Instant—pleasure—analysis—individualism—associationalism. 19th century: the future. The instant disappears. Idea of an interconnected enduring. The present and the past are what is bad. Progression as the meaning of historicity. History and progress. Comte-Marx. But projection of the absolute into the *future to come*. Discovery of the unity of History (thought of a concrete universal at the end. End of History or end of prehistory). The future to come as a summons to and justification of the present. Negation of individualism. Idea of the human species. Then crisis of science and crisis of History (20th century). History as conscious of itself overcomes its three dimensions. Past, present, future. The person in society. But coexistence: the eternal with man as inessential (Christianity)—the future Absolute with the present as inessential (Marxism)—the instantaneous present with the other two as inessential (mediocrity—literary hedonism)—concrete historical temporality: man making History. But History did not stop happening while we had false representations of it. It was an immediate history that was not determined by the consciousness it had of itself. It was closer to repetition and the eternal, to separation and the universal. Lived time did not have the same content. There is a progressive change in the essence of History. Hence the relation of History to the historical myth is itself History. For ethics, history is not at first distinguished from the (religious) relation to the eternal. Then from tradition and customs. Next it became autonomous and this was the means of organizing the present. Then it gave way to preparation for the future. (Lenin: what is moral is what can aid the revolution.) Today history has regained its autonomy: it is the whole set of acts by which mankind decides about the essence of man for itself and for others in and through History. It confers a meaning on tradition by taking it up into the meaning of the future. But it does not sacrifice the present (happiness) to the future, which by nature is hypothetical because it is *to be made*. There would be no ethics if man was not a question in his being, if existence did not precede essence.

44. See above, p. 6.

45. Voltaire [François-Marie Arouet] (1694–1778), French writer and Enlightenment *Philosophe*.

(35) Since History cannot save the sufferings of the children of Oradour,⁴⁶ even if it has a direction, it does not have a meaning. Always the illusion of *one* humanity. But not just that the Anabaptists at their stake are not saved by the dictatorship of the proletariat; brought back to life, they would condemn it as impious. Thus History is lost without recuperation. It is not necessary to seek an ethical collectivity to save History but to realize ethics.

(36) The spirit that determines this moment of time necessarily withers away—and, entirely overextended, it wills this withering away. Myth and the possibility of myth dispatch each other. Only an immense void subsists, loved and miserable. The absence of myth is perhaps this ground, immobile underneath my feet, but perhaps forthwith this ground revealing itself.

The absence of God is not some closing off—it is the opening of the infinite. *The absence of God* is greater than, is more divine than God (I am therefore no longer Me, but rather [an] *absence of Me*: I was expecting this legerdemain and now, beyond measure, I am cheerful). . . .

The decisive absence of faith is the unshakable faith. The fact that a universe is without myth is the ruin of a universe—reduced to the nothingness of things—which deprives us, and this makes this deprivation equal to the revelation of the universe. . . . It is the unrobing that perfects the transparency. . . . “‘The night is also a sun’ and the absence of myth is also a myth” (Georges Bataille, *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, p. 65).⁴⁷

(37) What is oriented subjectivity viewed from within the group, is chance for the other group. Scientists of the U.S.S.R. have not yet found the atomic bomb for precise and understandable reasons. For Stalinist politics, it is *chance*.

(38) Aspects of the event: 1st, unity to the extent that it is mental, it includes within itself a divisibility to infinity insofar as it is nature. Natural tendency to spread, to lose control, just like the skier whose skies, suddenly, spread apart at high speed. Therefore an initial exteriority of the event even as it is lived subjec-

46. A village near Limoges. On 10 June 1944, the German SS Reich Division massacred the entire population. Over six hundred people were shot or burned alive in the village church. See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 586.

47. The whole of the paragraph numbered 36 is in fact a transcription of portions of Georges Bataille (1897–1962), “L’Absence du Mythe,” in *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, Catalogue de l’Exposition internationale du surréalisme (Paris: Ed. Maeght, 1947), p. 65. Cf. Janet Flanner (Genet), *Paris Journal: 1944–1965*, ed. William Shawn (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), pp. 79–80 (from the *New Yorker* of 20 August 1947). The exposition opened 27 June 1947. Sartre also refers to this exhibition and its catalog in a long footnote about surrealism in “The Situation of the Writer in 1947,” in his *What is Literature? and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 338, n. 25. Originally published in six installments in *Les Temps Modernes* 17–22 (1947).

tively. It tends to fade and to get lost. 2d, pluridimensionality. The event takes place in a thousand consciousnesses at once. Each one of them is more or less distant from generality. Thus it is refracted in a thousand different ways. But it is not a question of reflections. The way in which the event is lived is part of the event itself. Public indignation on the occasion of some decree is part of the event of the decree. As is the way in which it is applied (that is, the conduct of people toward it). Which is to say that the significance of the decree is part of it, is pluridimensional, and even theoretically infinite. In fact, the fibrous structure of the universe confers a finitude upon it.⁴⁸ But precisely because this active significance is pluridimensional, the event is not in equilibrium, it is a decentered proliferation.

By the way, each consciousness, even if it plays at being inert, from the single fact that it grasps the event according to its own principles, gives it a synthetic unity as part of the synthetic development of the Spirit. However the nothingness that separates one consciousness from another introduces passivity. Active insofar as they synthesize the event, consciousnesses are passive insofar as they are separated by *nothing*. Separation endured yields passivity. In this sense, the event is separated from itself a thousand times and plays at exteriority, since the lived interpretations are a constitutive part of it and each one is external to the others. But since this exteriority is in turn interpreted (I judge the attitude of my neighbor in the Dreyfus affair⁴⁹ and *further* I react to this attitude) and becomes, owing to this fact, an integrating part of the unity: in each consciousness, the bare exteriority, the innumerable fissures of the event shift about and it is impossible to attach them to a specific place.

Simply put, there is an outside in the inside, an outside that is perpetually regrasped. It is this relationship of outside and inside that makes the event escape each and every one of us. Its inertia, its weight do not stem from some physical inertia but from a perpetual regrasping. I cannot stop it because there are other consciousnesses. At the same time, the lived evaluation of each one of us becomes an object for the other, hence the event has an internal objectivity. At the same time, to the extent that it is produced according to certain zones of institutional cleavage (the railroad strike of 1947 as experienced especially in one particular sector of social existence)⁵⁰ and because of the fibrous structure of the historical universe, it can be wholly an object for a certain category of consciousnesses. Whence its statistical unity. “The railway workers have gone on strike.” Note

48. Sartre attributes the phrase the “fibrous structure of the universe” to the French philosopher Emile Meyerson (1859–1933) in his essay “Un Nouveau Mystique,” in *Situations I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), p. 153.

49. Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935) was a Jewish French army officer falsely tried for treason whose case marked the political and social history of the French Third Republic.

50. 2 June–11 June 1947. See *L'Année Politique 1947* (Paris: Ed. du Grand Siècle, 1948), pp. 121–22.

that who the “railway workers” are is a function of that particular moment. The components of the event are abstract and statistical.

3d, contingency: even if it is planned, necessary, intelligible, and comprehensible, the event always is presented as having an underlying contingency because it includes chance. (α) To the extent that there is a separation of consciousnesses, some coincidence must be established. In general, consciousnesses are united by *a spectacle* (a nervous soldier fires on the crowd—or someone believes it, etc.). But more precisely the spectacle, comprehensible to a particular consciousness that produces it (it was not at all chance if the soldier was nervous that day), becomes chance for the crowd, as a consequence of *otherness*. It is always in terms of something that might not have been that the event that had to be is born. (β) Man’s being-in-the-world as contingency: the terrain, the point of view, the physical accidents (sun in the eyes, etc.). (γ) The total disequilibrium between consciousnesses living in inertia and free consciousnesses. Free consciousnesses *invent* and inert consciousnesses *are affected*. Therefore everything happens *as if* the event had to surprise them. In this way there is always an unexpected part. Unexpected/expected, exteriority/interiority, contingent/necessary, invented/undergone, material/spiritual, perpetually unified/crumbling apart owing to just this unification, object/subject, lost and found, the event is a short-lived contingent concentration analogous to the appearance of a thought in a mind, then this unstable form as it develops fades into a thousand movements that break it into pieces, each consciousness integrating itself over time into other unstable systems. There is a syncretism, a law of inertia of the event—it develops according to its own weight, it reaches its depths owing to its own weight—and, at the same time, a law of action. The event is passive/active. It is an activity enchanted by passivity, that makes itself passive and that affects itself to the extent that it is activity. It is a played-at and significant passivity. Everything takes place as though the event (as intermediary between the physical fact and the free *Erlebnis*) were a thought of the one Spirit, emerging freely through self-invention yet affecting itself with passivity in the free upheaval of itself, at the same time breaking up into infinity and seeking to recapture itself in the living unity of a spirit, yet by this very movement that it makes to recapture itself it alienates itself and breaks apart further, finally lost, broken up, no longer able to recognize itself and yet like some phantom of unity haunting a thousand small particular recognitions. In a word, the hypothesis of the *Parmenides*: if the one is not-one.⁵¹

51. Parmenides (b. c. 515 B.C.), founder of the Eleatic school of Greek philosophy, which held that “all is one.” See Plato, *Parmenides* 137a–b: “Where shall we begin then? What supposition shall we start with? . . . Shall I take the one itself and consider the consequences of assuming there is, or is not, a one?” *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairnes (New York: Pantheon, 1961), p. 931.

(39) History: the last attempt at recuperation, after reflection and the emergence of the other. Attempt to constitute a unique and collective historical consciousness as the mediation between individual consciousnesses. Each consciousness treats itself as inessential in relation to the essential consciousness in the process of becoming that is the totality. This is the dissociated, disseminated dream of the phantom totality that runs through the dispersion. Pseudohistory because pseudo-unity.

(40) “The universal is, in a way, a flight” (Bataille).⁵²

The reverse of every project toward. . . . It’s the flight from . . . (Van Lennep).⁵³

(41) The pursuit of Being is hell. Failure may lead to conversion. It may also be negated by bad faith. If it is loved and acknowledged at the same time without conversion or apart from conversion, it is Poetry. The authentic man cannot suppress the pursuit of Being through conversion for there would be nothing else. But he may love losing himself, then he is a poet. The curse stemming from poetry, which is to say, the love of failure. Love of the impossible. The authentic man cannot fail to be in some way poetic. Description of the poetic world.⁵⁴

(42) The *lived* historical fact.

Historical dialectic: in a sense, too idealistic. It is not simply by chance or stupidity that the Marxists so often revert to causal explanation when they are considering some concrete phenomenon. Rather it is that the dialectic, as stemming from Hegel, suppresses inertia and multiplicity. In fact, a dialectic without unity is inconceivable. What is more, once represented (reflection), every dialectic acts through the representation of the dialectic, therefore nondialectically. No doubt in the one Spirit one can conceive that consciousness, the reflection of the dialectic, turns back dialectically upon the dialectic event and reinforces the dialectic. But here again there is a unity and penetration of the dialectic by consciousness. However, through the separating nihilation the dialectic appears as the object of the consciousness that considers it and from this fact it is probable,

52. Cf. “Un Nouveau Mystique,” pp. 155–56.

53. In December 1946, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir had visited the clinic of the Dutch psychiatrist Van Lennep, where they took some projective personality tests. See Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Penguin, 1968), p. 127; idem, *Lettres à Sartre: 1940–1963*, ed. Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p. 300; and Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, 1964), pp. 231–32.

54. See Sartre’s discussion of the difference between poetry and prose in *What is Literature*, pp. 35–40. See also below, p. 41.

and so consciousness acts through imitation of the dialectic, therefore by making itself passive. At this moment it becomes an antidialectical *cause*.

Moreover, the historical event is *average* by definition. By what preestablished harmony do statistical events engender one another in a dialectical form? To the extent that it is average the historical event is only the result and it only acts as a *proposal*. It has to be *taken up*. If we consider the description of the historical fact, we see that it is in one way wholly an activity—each consciousness is an agent of History, it *historicizes itself*. But on the other hand it is wholly *passivity*—each consciousness sees the consequences of its act stolen from it by other consciousnesses and acts *in ignorance*, each act is a *proposal*, therefore displayed, passive, open. Each historical fact therefore includes within itself the inertia of the exteriority of nature at the same time that it is perpetually an active historicization. To the extent that it is inertia it includes determinism, the causal (but surpassed) relation. For the causal connection is perpetually exteriority, therefore the event is separated from itself by a substantialized nothingness (not nihilated nothingness but the *given* nothingness of separation), and furthermore the causal process is one of the equilibrium and degradation of energy, of dispersion, therefore of a return to equivalence and to destruction.

Thus *one* of the meanings of the historical process is death. It is over as soon as it begins. Not the heroic and intimate death of *Sein-zum-Tode* [being-towards-death] but the death from exhaustion, from the weight of it all.⁵⁵ This is the natural weight of the historical fact, perpetually externalized, dispersed, and fallen away. Yet, on the other hand, and owing to the exteriority of consciousnesses, the historical fact is also a perpetual enriching and surpassing because the *Erlebnis* of each consciousness is a situation for the other to surpass. Hence following one of the directions in which the historical fact is torn, it always justifies the pessimistic saying that “everything always turns out wrong.” The reason does not lie in the foolishness of human beings but in that aspect we may call the physical-chemical aspect of History.

Yet, from another side, the historical fact is always hopeful, a renewing of hope, its guarantee, inasmuch as it is an invention beginning from. . . . From this point of view it presents the appearance of the dialectic. If the dialectic is, in fact, a creative logic, the Other’s consciousness, in taking up the situation experienced by a first consciousness as a logical necessity and surpassing it, [is] on the tracks of this logical necessity. Since every such taking up is a surpassing, even before any conscious and willed invention, we may say that the appearance of the dialectic stems from a pluralistic situation in which each consciousness is located [*axée*] in its original novelty by all other consciousnesses. Or, if you will, there is an appearance of the dialectic in the very fact that what is experienced by one is a situation to be surpassed for the other. The dialectic thus becomes

55. “Being-towards-death” is another concept from Heidegger’s *Being and Time*: Division Two, Part I: “Dasein’s Possibility of Being-a-Whole, and Being-Towards-Death,” pp. 279–311.

something incomprehensible for a third person who comes on the scene who may choose to begin from one or the other consciousness or from the point of view of progress. In other words, the dialectic proliferates in a thousand different directions, and it is the statistical (therefore contingency and abstraction, the introduction of chance) that decides the dialectical orientation History takes by decreeing that consciousnesses that fall outside the average are behind the times, misled, or monstrous. This judgment itself can be appealed since it can be revised (El Greco—Sade—Robespierre—Hölderlin) by posterity.⁵⁶

However, for each third consciousness the relationship between consciousness A and consciousness B is experienced with malevolence through exteriority. One no longer sees the free *taking up* but only the succession: B comes after A. This pure unity in succession is exactly the Kantian relationship of causality.⁵⁷ Hence the ambiguity of any dialectic is that it is subtended by causality. The history of an ideological movement can always be tempted toward a psychology of separation as well as toward a unitary elucidation of its own logic.

For another thing, the historical fact is a singularity. Yet it includes the general in two ways: first, in the way we have spoken of (the regiment at Waterloo), next because the historical fact is necessarily *also* work. Whether it be a question of Hitler's or Napoleon's course of action, or of the invention of the steam engine, some human work is indispensable. And this human work is the relation of the generalizing generality that is the body to the generality without memory of matter. At this level, the true historical agent has to incarnate the general because one acts in general on the general only by making oneself general. The historical work is provided with a general consciousness. This consciousness is the mediator between the singularity of the idea and the universality of matter. What therefore is a general consciousness? It is a consciousness that is caught up in the body as body, that absorbs the simplest relations of being-in-the-world into generality: hunger, fatigue, justice, injustice, etc. It is the consciousness of the soldier, the petit-bourgeois, the worn-out proletariat (work in brutalizing him generalizes him, as does respect or hunger). These are the ones who put forth an unexpected human energy to accomplish historical work; that is, to insert History into matter, through the form of general schemes. It is just that, in order to imprint exteriority and generality on matter, they have *already* had to take up History in its generality. In other words, the historical idea can only act if it is capable of generalizations and increasing simplifications.

The historical fact is a pyramid. In a way, it has a body and a soul. A base

56. El Greco [Domenikos Theotokopoulos] (1541–1614), Spanish painter; Marquis de Sade (1740–1814), French novelist and libertine writer; Maximilien-François-Marie-Isadore de Robespierre (1758–1784), radical leader of the Jacobins during the French Revolution; Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843), German lyric poet.

57. See Immanuel Kant [1724–1804], “The Second Analogy of Experience: Principle of Succession in Time, in accordance with the Law of Causality” (A:189–211/B:232–56), in *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), pp. 218–33.

of generality, therefore an internal takeoff—the pyramid of Marxism: on top, the historical dialectic and materialism, on the bottom, the suppression of injustices and of misery: proletariat of the world, unite. Inertia of the general in relation to the singular: mobility of the historical fact from above (dialectic), stability from below; diversity of the idea at any given level. When the gap between them is too great, a crack occurs. However, reciprocally, work, Hegel has shown, provides consciousness with an image of itself by reflecting its action upon objects.⁵⁸ In this way there is perpetually a mute surpassing on the bottom of any situation. There is a wisdom, an interpretation, a making precise that comes from the degeneralization of consciousnesses. A slower movement that mounts toward the top. The unfreezing of the general once again alters the historical event by giving it a supplementary dimension.

(43) Oppose the lived historical fact to the historical fact interpreted by the following generations.

(44) The historical fact become a situation.

(45) Let us imagine a historical theme; for example, men's aspiration for freedom caught up in and transformed by the contradictory whirling of History. (A) Its dialectic: passage from the idea of political freedom to the idea of social freedom. (B) Exteriority: anarchy conceived as an *object* by the adversary, conceived as an aberrant object for any consciousness in favor of freedom as judging others. (C) Generalization and simplification: freedom as a right replacing freedom as a duty . . . Myth. (D) Split between social and political freedom (Russia—masses). (E) Object for itself. Passivity and exteriority. (F) *Work* of freedom, etc. Work out the analysis of this example.

(46) Reflection on the meaning of the historical fact, along with being wrong about its meaning and its immediate deviations, is part of the historical fact. One cannot get away from this, one brings it along with one, however far one goes, it envelops you. Historicity of indifference. And at the same time, the perpetual false withdrawal of each consciousness, giving a pseudo-objectivity to the fact. But this very objectivity is taken up as *action* into the fact. It is an *internal* characteristic of the historical fact to be a pseudo-object.

(47) The historical fact: neither *objective* nor *subjective*. It ends up by falling into objectivity as soon as it no longer does anything. But as lived, it is both finite and unlimited, like Einstein's universe.⁵⁹ Limited by the number of con-

58. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 118.

59. "Life is limited by life; it becomes like the world of Einstein, 'finite but unlimited' " (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 532).

consciousnesses that are implicated in it, but unlimited because no consciousness can escape it. In this sense: pure imitation of subjectivity. For the historical fact is an event of human subjectivity. The judgment is a part of the thing judged, the experimenter of the experiment. And, on the contrary, has its (pseudo-)objectivity in itself as a perpetual flickering that haunts subjectivity. Me in relation to a historical fact: an *object* before my consciousness, and, at the same time, I enter into a subjectivity that is not thought by anyone, an ignorant/ignored subjectivity, something beyond knowledge that *is* still—and above all—History. A subjectivity that is no longer subjectivity because it cannot grasp itself through reflection. It is precisely this nonknowledge, this alienated subjectivity that will get locked up within itself to become an object for the subsequent generation (or also for *an other* who seizes me at this moment).

(48) The historical event always leaves a residue. One can never go back again.

(49) A concrete transcendence, yes. Well, if it is concrete, it starts from a concrete situation, it surpasses and retains within itself concrete prejudices (ideologies, manners, customs, institutions). Why does anyone want it to intend the eternal? It can will to act only a part of the time. The time when it will be efficacious, everything else being equal by the way. A change in ideology disarms it. Richelieu come back to earth would have no grasp whatsoever that would allow him to judge things.⁶⁰ He was preparing for the triumph of the French monarchy in a Europe exercising its hegemony over the world. No more house of Austria, no more monarchy. What could he say?

(50) Do the ethics of suspects.

(51) Poetry saves the failure as such, persuades man that there is an absolute. This absolute is man. But it does not clearly say so. Poetry is the salvation of the search for Being seen from the point of view of an unconverted reflection.

(52) The contingency of History = the necessity of our contingency. Existence of the body.

(53) The notion of progress has been a historical factor only since the end of the 18th century. History is a type of reality such that nothing external to History can act on History. The only mode of action for an *idea* or a law is to spring up within History. In this case, its action will necessarily be a partial action, one surpassed, warped, turned aside, and overwhelmed by History itself. The ancient world was one of stability, the world of the Middle Ages one of eternity. In both

60. Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal and Duc de Richelieu (1585–1642), chief minister to Louis XIII from 1624 to 1642.

cases, consciousnesses are inessential in relation to stable forms in time or in the atemporal. They did not have a *historical* consciousness of temporality as essential. They were aware only of what immediately and naturally endured. Endurance is a means for maintaining the atemporal. As a consequence, if there was progress in the results—passage from the piecemeal Greek cities to the unification of the Roman state, the concomitant passage from polytheism to monotheism, from the immediate man to reflective subjectivity—this progress falls outside of them. They neither sought it nor felt it. Christianity was not a form of progress for the last pagans, it was a form of decadence. It was not a form of progress for the Christians either; it was the catastrophic advent of an eternal truth. If there is progress, therefore, it must be *objective*, that is, through cunning, an essential mystification that would steal their lived temporality from them.

Of course, we are always tempted to steal its meaning from made History, for the simple reason that its historical agents, having come *before*, did not know all the elements of their history and therefore took risks. History necessarily occurs in ignorance. A synthesis of partial ignorance is in no way a surpassing of it toward the unity of knowledge, but simply constitutes an ambiguous unity—the obscure unity of flashes of lightning. But if history is made by men, this taking of risks, this way of living ambiguity as such, historical obscurity in its denseness, cannot be considered an illusion. On the contrary, the retrospective illusion consists in giving the lived history of preceding generations an unconsciously lived meaning that one can fix nowhere and that is only our own way of living out past history.

If, moreover, we admit the existence of a *law of progress*, this law of progress, for lack of being lived by men, becomes an order/thing; it is extrahistorical and is defined in the eternal. Therefore it kills History. In a word, for progress to be one of the meanings of History, it has to descend into History as lived, sought for, and suffered progress. For the natural man, History is tradition. A pure dimension of the past with a slight decadence from the past to the present—in every case the ancestors are the prime example: the obligation to make oneself worthy of them. But things are not so simple. There coexists with all this a *natural* progress lived in the immediate moment as the effort of men to improve their condition. But this progress is local, and implies no reference to a future humanity. It is current conditions that one wants to improve. Therefore there is a conflict between: 1st, a certain sense of decadence, such that any partial progress appears as a *return to the right state of things*; 2d, a real effort toward improvement following certain principles; 3d, a conception of (religious, philosophical, and traditional) permanence to which decadence opposes itself and from which improvement takes its bearings. Hence improvement is ambiguous. It is natural progress reflectively experienced as a return to order.

One rediscovers the same ambiguity in that great historical project that was the Holy Roman Empire. It was a question of seeking a new establishment that was at the same time conceived in terms of the myth of reestablishment: the

Roman empire, Charlemagne's empire. Also there are historical periods of varying rapidity and stability. A thousand years of Byzantium, or four hundred years for the Middle Ages represent relatively long periods for so little change, in comparison with the last one hundred and sixty years. But this was due, exactly, to the fact that the traditional idea slows down change and, to say it all, makes it be experienced by men as inessential, men who consider themselves as inessential. Chinese history, Indian history, etc. For a whole set of events to be interpreted as progress, it has to be judged and experienced as such by some present society. This can mean two things: either that these events appear as means that through their interconnections appear to allow us to reach a supposedly absolute end-state (for example, one where all men will be good, or happy, etc.)—which is clearly not the case for us—or as a state in which Progress would be experienced in terms of some relation to the future and would become a conscious factor in the historical project. It suffices, to put it another way, that the idea of Progress arises in a history and that it not be a form of contemplation but an actual factor of History for a set of prior facts to be apprehended as a *progression* because they have brought us to this point.

In other words, nonprogressive History is *really* recovered as progress by the progressive project. Indeed, it is not just that this project looks there for a tradition (because Progress also contains within itself the idea of starting from zero), but also that it utilizes the past as an instrument, seeking in it the necessary elements for future progress (for example, the spirituality of Christianity). In this way, the past becomes progressive through the hypothesis/project of current Progress, which is the decision to direct History and which openly considers prior history as the path that has allowed this decision to appear. For it is part of the essence of Progress to see itself as progressively having been prepared for. It is quite clear that, in fact, we cannot consider ourselves to be *happier* than the Romans (for the unhappy population is more numerous in absolute terms), nor that our state is *more just* but only that we are in a better position (even if we are more unhappy) to realize a happy and a just society.

What, furthermore, complicates things is that there exists a partial Progress, but one that is absolute within its own domain: that of science and technology. We say that it is absolute because it has always been experienced as real; in other words, that *Homo sapiens* has always wanted to know more and to adapt his techniques for knowing to reality. It serves therefore as a model for the modern hypothesis of Progress. To such a degree that, as such, the whole of the collectivity shares it. It goes without saying, for example, that science prepares the way for the democratic ideal because it contains within itself the principle of equality in the face of knowledge. However, since in both cases it is a question of partial progress, these forms of progress appear as *proposals* to human subjectivity, which surpasses them toward its own goals (scientism, oppression, war). Science does *contain within itself* a call to democracy, but it can be used as a means of oppression. This is the science, for example, that, in creating such expensive weapons

that only the state can possess them, exaggerates the disproportion between the people and the government and makes insurrection more and more difficult.

Yet, in any case, from the moment that Progress is a factor of History, from the moment that the great majority of men act from the perspective and following the myth of some form of progress, one can say that we have entered into a *progressive* period of History.

However here again we must be careful. From the moment that Progress enters History, it is a proposal for History, therefore a factor transformed by History itself. The one, unified Consciousness that is the ideal subject of History can progress in relation to an ideal posited by itself, by affecting itself with modifications that bring it closer to this ideal; that is, by itself living out the law. But as soon as Progress is deposited in the trough of History, it becomes in part an inert thing, at the same time it is in part experienced as an oriented activity. At first, it may be denied and taken as an illusion. The very idea of progress brings about the conservative and reactionary attitude. Next, and opposed to this, it may be conceived of as omnipresent (the fatalism of progress). Every change represents or leads to progress. Whence arises the attitude of the man who wants to be a contemporary of History, the divinization of History. Third, since by nature progress is a means, one may envisage it as leading to different ends. Since all these attitudes are held at the same time by the different historical agents (let us add that one is not necessarily in agreement about the step we have arrived at in the progression toward the Good. Judgment of the United States about themselves: there is still more to do, but we are closer. Judgment of the U.S.S.R. about the United States: pure, oppressive capitalism, the conditions for progress are not realized. Judgment of the U.S.S.R. about itself: a form of absolute progress over other states. Point of view of favorable noncommunists: there is progress over the Russia of the czars, but behind the modern capitalist states from every point of view), who are also in accord about the end (the socialist parties) and about the myth that one may fool oneself about partial means; yet, on the other hand, man makes himself what he is, and as he seeks himself and thinks in terms of progress, as he seeks himself in other terms and realizes himself in each case as a new invention, oriented in relation to the old, I will say that the historical event or syncretic organization of the whole is a real but undetermined form of progress. Since, moreover, History as a whole returns to itself to carry itself along, since it is not a law of History but rather a secondary structure of History that seeks to be a total structure, I will say that there is a deprogressivized progress.

(54) The residue is a sign, a cipher. Up to me to interpret it.

(55) The error of historical materialism: simplification. It puts what has to do with the economy outside of History—a nonhistorical agent of History. No doubt it admits the historicity of the economy (the history of tools) but since

there is really no *feedback* [*retour*] of the superstructures on the economy, economic history is not inside total History. If we accept the *essential principle of historicity* (analogous to the principle of consciousness)—nothing can act on History without being within History and in question in History—then we understand that the action of what is economic is total and action on what is economic is likewise total. Religion and ethics are affected by what is economic but, reciprocally, the economic “floats” within religion and ethics.

(56) Ambiguity of History: relatively simple if it were the play of interests, relatively simple if it were a concord of devotion and sacrifices. But it is sacrifice and devotion of some to the interest of others (which confers a *value* on interest, even in the eyes of those who are interested) and utilization of interests (for example, of general consciousnesses) for disinterested ends. Relatively simple, too, if it were objective *work*, an objective evaluation of the situation, but it is also a passion. Hence the objective becomes a subjective passion; interest turns into value; value becomes an interest in order to be acted upon. Whence the permanent degradation of value that acts in terms of some interest, and a perpetual surpassing of the interest that devotion gives value to.

(57) Perpetual shifting through nihilation. The collectivity constitutes itself as a state in order to recover itself as a subject. But immediately the state gets posited alongside the collectivity. Alienation. For example, even in a democracy the citizen/elector has the right to choose only between *given wholes* (just as the Christian does between vice and virtue) whereas the government controls the *freedom of invention*. Through this shift the state, by subsisting, pursues its own interest. The devotion of the individual to the state has as its obverse side the egoism of the state: the morality of the citizen presupposes the immorality of the nation. Devotion of morality to immorality. The contesting of all morality.

(58) History: subjectivity without a subject; consciousness without translucidity; objectivity at the heart of the subjective; subjectivity acting through objectivity; interest turned into value; value degraded into some interest; the economic determining the ideology; the ideology determining the meaning of the economic; repetition that never repeats itself; the universal in the singular; the singular in the universal.

(59) Every man at every moment escapes History: absolute transcendence toward the future, toward eternal truths and values. Yet it is at the moment that he escapes it that he is the most inside History.

(60) Partial order in History: some elements become what they are (progressive development of order) but development is slowed down by passivity (literature: the novel becoming what it was). Like a record that is playing along but that

one can always stop from outside it. What complicates things, therefore, is that *there are essences*.

(61) History is the history of *inventions*. An invention goes in the direction of the *best* and reduces what came before it to the status of preparation. From this point of view, the perpetual illusion of progress. (Because the best develops by degrees, it creates a new situation that is not better.)

(62) Man is a being to whom something has happened.

(63) History is the *Other*. Whatever one does, wherever one does it, the undertaking becomes *other*. It acts through its otherness and its results are other than what one had hoped for. It has the unity of the Other that contains within itself infinite otherness and it is always *other* than what one says it is, however one says it. This is logical because History is the history of men insofar as they are all for each one and each one for all *the others*.

(64) “The drunkenness of all these destroyers is that they construct a world that is not aware of them and that they will not recognize when they have built it. The joy of taking a risk, the joy of not *knowing* what one is doing, the bitter joy of being able to say that one will lead mankind to the threshold of the promised land but remain alone at this threshold watching them move on.”

Also true for the builders: the only attitude possible regarding History.

(65) History is always *other* than itself. Even the *truth* that one speaks about it is false through its incompleteness because, as soon as one says it, it is *other*.

(66) In periods when the economy, the means of communication, History itself finally come to isolate man from the concrete community, ethics is abstract and universal because it is just the universal human community that man has in view and carries within himself, that is, the pure repetition to infinity of himself. And, in a parallel fashion, when the concrete future is covered over by the eternal and becomes a pure, abstract, infinite dilation, ethics considers human activity as a succession of acts in the present. It is analytical. The problem is: what to do in such and such circumstance? Even Kantian ethics offers criteria for isolated actions: ought one to lie? (with the implication: in what circumstances)—should one give back the thing with which one has been entrusted? Finally, ethics considers the act in terms of its subjectivity: the intention, and not within its concrete context and its objective dimension. The result of all this is that the envisaged, subjective, isolated, universal, abstract act is never more than a *case*. Hence for the ethicist (as for the psychologist of the same period) human conduct is not a project connected to an original choice but a sum of reactions to *some* events that perhaps present themselves as following

some objective necessity but that in relation to the ethical agent are *chance*. Today the test case will be: a friend ruined; tomorrow: a drowning child; etc. In a word, ethics is a means of getting to the end of a succession of *test cases* without a rule.

But if concrete human life is an undertaking within History, it is at the level of this undertaking and as regards the totality of the undertaking that ethics has to intervene. Of course psychology reveals moods and a “puerile and honest” ethics teaches us to conquer them, but this is not interesting. If you are continually irritated in your relationship with your girl friend, it would be vain to conquer your anger day by day. In fact, it bears witness to the fact that the basic relationship is lacking something, that the whole undertaking is too costly. It is at this level—the enterprise of being a couple in 1947—that one has to question oneself and to change if there is room for doing so. Analytical wisdom is passivity, resignation: don’t try anything too big and try, from day to day, to do the least evil possible. But this mutilates man by forbidding him to be a project. This is how men make use of analytic ethical theories to evaluate large-scale synthetic projections toward what is possible to them. And when it is said of existentialism, “so man is then free to choose by caprice,” this is silly for many reasons but especially because one is presupposing that choices are instantaneous and constantly renewed. The word “caprice” says it all: a man who is chance for himself. Whereas we are all destiny for ourselves. Not only can we not forge an ethics at the level of caprice—by replacing it with the instantaneous virtuous act—but even caprice itself, if it exists, is the sign of a whole condition and a whole project surpassing this condition.

(67) The Other in History: woman, the preceding or succeeding generation, the other nation, the other class.

(68) History is the Other, therefore other than itself. This is why it can appear as dialectical, the One always leads to the Other and does so in *becoming* the Other. But this is a quasi dialectic, one without a synthesis, therefore one without a *meaning*. For clearly the meaning of History can only be the synthesis of unity and duality, as Hegel said, or, if you will, the synthesis of the Same and the pair Same/Other. But it will always be *other* than even this synthesis. So History escapes itself. One cannot even give it a materialist interpretation. In the first place, the Other springs up through thinking about economic conditions. Next, the materialist interpretation in acting establishes the action of ideology. History being other than itself, the objective spirit is simply the otherness of our acts and our thoughts, their imitation in exteriority (to return to Hegel’s distinction between Nature and Spirit. But History is never nature, only quasi nature). To act in History is to accept that this act will become *other* than what it was conceived to be. Here is the true synthesis of unity and duality: to regasp the act *become other* and penetrate it again with subjectivity (the synthesis of the

same and the other), to reappropriate it. To see the synthesis of the One and the Other once again become other and to recommence the process until that death that is the transformation of the whole person into otherness. History being alienation, it is both natural and logical that every historical *idea* should appear *within History* as alienated at first. That is, a historical idea never appears except insofar as it is other than itself, as provided with some exteriority and inertia, hence weighed down like a materialized, naturalized object. *Idea-natures*. This is what acts in History. Whence the alienation of the spirit in Christianity and in Marxism. The spirit is always alienated. History is *also* the history of the Spirit perpetually seeking to escape otherness but never succeeding.

Accept that the idea becomes *other*: the virtue of the historical agent is generosity. But here true friendship intervenes: the friend, the one for whom the other is the same. Combatants who together create a setting of intersubjectivity in their own way. In this instance, rather than the same being in the other, the other is in the same. Nuance of quasi objectivity in this common subjectivity.

The *drunken* alienation of all the great theorists of History (Nietzsche and the eternal return.⁶¹ To be other than oneself). The bad way of doing things in History: to act out of the vertigo of being other for everyone else, to refer to oneself as infinitely other. In time, the purely political man becomes other for himself (importance). Aegisthus is nothing more than the living reflection of the fear others have of him.⁶²

The highest form of generosity: acceptance of death. Death creates the Rubicon: action can never again be taken up into some subjective depth by the agent. A break between action continually internalized in its very exteriority and action taken up as total exteriority and only acting further by way of this exteriority. This is to say that all historical action (I mean any undertaking) has a encompassing horizon of absolute objectivity. It is necessarily fated to become a pure object. At that moment, 1st, it acts as a pure proposal; violence, cunning, suggestion all disappear. It is impossible to *correct* its work or the impression it makes. A pure, naked proposal. Hence it is *handed over to others*. 2d, it is alienated. The idea is caught up in the marble of exteriority. Therefore this action acts further only as a historical residue. The historical agent has to accept that his action will be prolonged only as a proposal and that the spirit that animated him will

61. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), pp. 544–50.

62. In Greek mythology, Aegisthus murdered Agamemnon and married his widow, Clytemnestra. They, in turn, were slain by Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's son, Orestes. Sartre's comment here reflects the image of Aegisthus presented in his retelling of this myth in his play *The Flies*. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 49–127. *The Flies* was first performed in Paris in 1943.

continue to act only in the manner of a residue. But at the same time, *take every precaution* to delay as much as possible the moment of alienation: camaraderie, disciples, appeals from beyond the tomb by testaments, memoirs.

History will *always* be alienated. There may be happy periods, but if the opposition of interests is not so strong, otherness remains. Our actions are stolen from us in any case. If however we imagine a utopia where each person treats the other as an end—that is, takes the other person's undertaking as an end—we can imagine a History where otherness is replaced by unity, even though, ontically, otherness always remains. However, no *State* as a mediator between individuals can realize this situation since the state cannot deal with individuals as free. An ethical determination by each person to deal with all the other persons as ends is required. Hence the passage from pseudo-History to true History is subjected to this ahistorical determination by everyone to realize what is ethical. Historical revolution depends on moral conversion. Utopia is when the conversion of everyone at once, which is always possible, is the least probable occurrence (because of the diversity of situations). One must therefore seek to equalize these situations to make this combination less improbable and to give History a chance of getting beyond pseudo-History. At this moment, we are historical agents, within pseudo-History, because we act on these situations in the hope of preparing the way for a moral conversion. This is why it is absurd to declare that people today are too evil for anyone to devote himself to them. For, in fact, one devotes himself to what they might be, how they might be better if the situation were changed.

The situation is therefore exactly that described by Kafka: Man's effort is to get beyond prehistory and to leap into the unity of History.⁶³ But each of the movements he makes belongs by definition to this prehistory, and contributes to prolonging it since it is immediately altered, alienated—therefore the pretext of alienation and of change. Yet perhaps his goal is attained (liberation of the slaves—political freedom—internal unification of nations by royalty—labor reforms, etc.). But because of the fact that he is bathed in pseudo-History, he is at the same time alienated, and what we have is not the *goal* but what has become a state of affairs experienced plurally and in terms of injustice (absolute monarchy as the reverse side of the realization of unity—social oppression as the reverse side of political liberalism—oppressive Russian bureaucracy as the reverse side of the progress of the proletariat). Since one can never go back again, one can say that there is progress (*material* progress toward unity). But because just beyond we rediscover the same diversity, the same otherness, at the same time there is no progress. To turn back would be *certain regression*, while the goal seems as distant as ever.

63. Franz Kafka (1883–1924), Czech-born Jewish German writer.

The historical and historicizing goal is always *the unity* of consciousnesses, but each time that some unity is grasped, it falls outside these consciousnesses and becomes an objective unity, the unity of an object. Culture is the external projection of the unity consciousnesses lack. This is why it is false to say that science realizes the unity of minds. It does realize an unstable, successive agreement of consciousnesses, but oppositions and otherness leap ahead of this agreement. Moreover, this unity depends on science already done, while the disaccord comes from science yet to be done, where this science yet to be done is always an infinite task, while accomplished science is finite. In a word, agreement over truth is always agreement about *truths*.

There is no reason to prepare a kingdom of morality or of happiness for strangers or unknown people at the price of injustice and unhappiness today. We have rather *today* to reach some improvement that will prepare the way for tomorrow's improvement.

A philosophy of History and a History, a historical ethics must first ask itself the question of the nature of *action*. And it has to be taken up at the level of ontology since History studies the action of men on the world, their action on one another, and the reaction of men and the world to this initial action. Action is therefore an essential category of History as well as of ethics and one that has never been studied.

Therefore: phenomenology of action—phenomenology of History—description of the historical situation—mankind's goals across this History, across this moment of History.

Two clear moments of History: 1st, alienated History: man lacks the myth of History. His categories are the eternal and the present. In the present, he seeks to do the present task: to bring down the Austrian Hapsburgs, to realize the Holy Germanic Empire, etc. In general: to augment the strength of one country, considered as a homeland, or to realize a goal already sketched out in the past. To take one's place in a tradition and to contribute in some way to a specific work. At the same time, to maintain, to conserve. It is a question of furnishing an already existing building. Reforms. History and a heritage: one *inherits* a good (the collectivity) that one tries to improve and to preserve at the same time. History is alienated because the result always turns back into an object and because there is an unperceived historical evolution, or one that is denied by the agent of History. 2d, History attempts to get hold of itself again. That is, action trying to become aware of its future objectivity, or, if you will, an agent trying to grasp the significance of his act. *Quasi-reflective* History or the idea of History becomes a historical motive. Transformation of the idea of History (a subjective invention) into the *myth* of History. Presence in History of

the myth of History. Substantialization of the future. A doubly contradictory attitude: absolute meaning of history through substantialization of the future— historicity of the myth of History. History-myth and History-science as two factors in History.

The dialectic of action in the world: being and nothingness, unity and multiplicity, interiority and exteriority, finite and infinite, knowledge and ignorance, subjectivity and objectivity, particular and universal.

Action: internalization of exteriority and externalization of interiority. To act through passivity on the passive, which at once becomes active (the coefficient of adversity). Objectivation of the subjective. To realize quasisyntheses within the context of inertia. To introduce unity into what is by definition multiplicity, synthesis into what is juxtaposed, but also at the same time to make these syntheses passive and to affect them with exteriority. To introduce the notion of the *fragile* into the world. That which rebels against the synthesis is fragile, that which is bent by force to make up a whole and which perpetually tends to return to the multiplicity of juxtaposition. To mark out the discontinuous in the continuous, and at the same time to introduce the finite into the indefinite; that is, 1st, to submit some creature to the action of the world; 2d, to prolong its action in the world beyond any possible prediction—theoretically and at the limit up to the ends of the world. But an action becomes a form of inertia (it changes). To introduce finality into causality. Yet at the same time to create a pseudofinality capable of running backward. To create something new and not to create it. The distinction “man creates the form not the matter,” is false because the *new* (object) is neither form nor matter, it is an existing something.

There is a point of view of the In-itself on the For-itself: passivity. The For-itself which is pure activity for itself, and an active object for Others, is passivity *for* the In-itself. It knows itself and experiences itself as passivity in its relations with the In-itself, just as it knows itself and experiences itself as an *object* in its relations with the For-itself of Others.

The obverse of transcendence: what escapes. I transcend everything and everything I do escapes me.

In every perception of a thing I understand myself as a thing. I apprehend my own passivity along with the weight of this stone (I am what it weighs upon) but this passivity is at the same time a form of activity (I raise my hand, I move the stone from this place to that). A perpetual double relation. I could not act if I were not passive. Yet I can only be passive because I act (otherwise, I would just *be*, that is all); I am that being who through passivity and activity comes into the world for the In-itself and for myself. Passivity is *my connection* to

the In-itself, both an ontological and a practical connection at the same time. Reciprocally, the In-itself becomes active since it is *threatening*. Furthermore this activity of the In-itself is uniquely *destructive*—directly, because it can reduce me to total passivity (external relations), indirectly, because, in and against manufactured objects, it can always reclaim its independence as external (pure external relations).

The For-itself, the nihilated In-itself, remains in-itself in relation to the In-itself. It is the internal relation of the In-itself with itself (action) at that same time that it is the existing being who makes the In-itself become a world.

Internalization of exteriority: the object henceforth has a *meaning*, that is, a fixed transcendence. It points to something other than itself. It is a relay station for our transcendence. However, one that is posited by this transcendence. It also has a place and surroundings. Finally, it has a natural connection with certain other objects. It has a natural *use*, which means that it imposes certain rituals, that it is the obverse side of certain gestures that are always the same gestures. By this very fact it is universal. Reciprocally, externalization of our interiority: this is what we rediscover on the object, it reflects it back to us but on the plane of exteriority, of passivity, of ritual and the universal. The object addresses itself to the “one” who is precisely the exteriority of interiority, man as replaceable as the object is, a pure, universal instrument who makes use of instruments that are passive and external to him. The civilization of machines will necessarily be the civilization of the “one” (the U.S.A.).⁶⁴ The tool is the inert image of action.

The causal series is infinite; pure Being, never non-Being. Oriented toward equilibrium (the degradation of energy). If there is to be an *end*, an existing being must escape causality and Being by conceiving such an end. This being must also escape Being by constituting means and the causal series has to be partly contingent so that one can create these means, tearing them away from what remains, isolating them. However in depending on causality in order to realize his end, man ties it down and isolates it, he turns it into a practically isolated *system* within which the interconnections are strict ones. In this way he creates determinism in the service of finality. But at the same time he confers an end on this small, determined system, and therefore a future for this perpetual present. Yet this future is fixed, always the same. The other is a small deterministic system, locked in on itself, where each state is strictly occasioned by the preceding state and where everything aims at equilibrium (a halt to all move-

64. See “Individualism and Conformism in the United States,” in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, trans. Annette Michelson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 104–13; one of a series of articles originally published in French in *Le Figaro*, 29–31 March 1945.

ment), yet which is at the same time oriented in the other sense (not toward degradation but toward the production of an end), strict causality and a stiff caricature of finality. A perpetual present with a fixed horizon of the future. We are brought back to the image of two human creations: determinism and “results.”

The proof that mechanisms, for man, are little men is the perpetual tendency to create automata. An automaton is ambiguous to the spectator in that it is both a pure causal series marked by inflexible movements and a being defined by a future, since one must interpret each movement in terms of some external goal. This double series in opposite senses (finality-causality) is at the same time readable in its ambiguity. Every mechanism presents both aspects at once, but in a less visible way. Thus, the more a mechanism becomes human, the more man becomes mechanical. He applies to himself the determinism he has created as an *excuse*. His ends are alienated from him, they are now indicated by objects. When placed on the terrain of the *general* (body, needs, tools), he himself becomes general. Materialism is the representation man makes of himself by means of techniques.

Hence every human work, by humanizing Nature, runs the risk of dehumanizing man, who *himself becomes* placed outside of himself in exteriority, and who makes what he is not refer to the image of what he is. Into the relation of the For-itself to Others (action) is intercalated the moment of the faithless servant (the machine).

In that the tool is semi-isolated from the rest of the universe, but in fact submitted to all its influences, and because man acts on man through tools, in every historical human action the whole world intervenes through its influence on the tools used. Hence all historical action includes an original contingency (the powder is damp, the sun in the eyes of the enemy army) along with a certain generality (a noncontingent universal: the general use of cannon, etc.).

Threefold historical contingency: the tool, the body, the other (in that others are there in this way, just at this moment). The contingency of the world (through the tool): repetition, the universal. Therefore nonhistorical bases of History; yet still internal to History. History has no external side. It contains non-History within itself. Contingency *taken up* through ignorance as historical determination: If Cromwell had not had a gallstone . . . yes, but if one had only known how to cure him.⁶⁵ Contingency is internal to History, measured and

65. “Cromwell was about to ravage the whole of Christendom; the royal family was lost and his own set for ever in power, but for a little grain of sand getting into his bladder. Even Rome was about to tremble beneath him. But, with this bit of gravel once there, he died, his family fell

defined by the whole ensemble of historical significations. For it is just within a world wherein medicine (and therefore other sciences and techniques) was at a certain level that Cromwell was able to act. Death has his image.

Needs: clearly important to history. But never pure. Always surpassed. Need and the sacred (primitives). The meal as a religious ceremony. Today, penetrated by claims for justice. Need is always much more than just a need. In the class struggle, the proletariat struggles for much more than needs: justice. The bourgeoisie for much more than the satisfaction of its needs: to be in charge, for luxury, for culture, for its hierarchical representation of mankind. There is no need, in current society, to be a large-scale capitalist to satisfy most of one's needs. The order of needs, where it is more or less unified, creates a relatively sufficient human order whose goal is the satisfaction of these needs. Once permanently satisfied, the need is for all practical purposes annihilated. Then man has to invent his desires as man and a humanism beyond needs.

The internal otherness of the historical phenomenon: the action of the man in power is taken up and surpassed by the ensemble "masses/institutions" which overlaps it and carries it away. But, reciprocally, the ensemble masses/institutions, with its own evolution, is refracted by the consciousness of the man in power and, owing to this fact, becomes other than itself. Everything bore the whole of Germany in 1914 toward war. But the whole of Germany was in turn taken up and alienated in the consciousness of its leader who interpreted it and where it became other. William II could have avoided war.⁶⁶ In this way, the whole force and necessity of the slide toward war by the German masses was at the same time taken up and placed between parentheses by one consciousness.

It goes without saying that it is not always like this—the institutional character of the leader is required. But even if the great man is *in* the mass, his representation of the whole tends to alienate the mass from itself by penetrating it with a synthetic point of view that may act or may slow it down. The mass is then put in parentheses at its very heart. Therefore a double setting out of play: of the individual by the mass, of the mass by the individual. Far from wiping each other out, these two settings-out-of-play work together to produce the historical phenomenon. The mass has its meaning and its efficacy outside of itself in the mind of a few individuals; but these individuals only get their importance when the masses think of them as such as institutional or as revolutionary leaders.

into disgrace, peace reigned and the king was restored" (Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 257). The reference is to Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), Puritan leader and Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Ireland, and Scotland from 1653 to 1658.

66. William II (1859–1941), German emperor from 1888 to 1918, whose actions unleashed World War I.

In a word, the general is alienated and particularized by the particular and the particular is *thought about in general terms* by the general and its action is generalized. As a result, the historical fact perpetually refers from the particular to its generalization and from the general to its particularization: it is all one.

The internal Dialectic of the Real for Hegel: suppose that the dynamic force of History is contradiction. This clearly implies that each term of the contradiction is identical with itself. If not it would not be able to contradict another term. If the philosophy of Parmenides—"Being is" or "Being and Thinking are one"⁶⁷—can be strictly contradicted, it is through a thought such as "Being is not" or "Nonbeing is" or "Being and Thinking are strictly distinct," therefore by a thought that is itself contained within the limits of contradiction and that does not escape itself. In a word, negativity is strict negativity only for what is denied and the synthesis is not multifaceted but one. But if precisely every thought, as soon as it appears, becomes *other*, if it changes by itself, takes on diverse forms, if Zeno⁶⁸ is already *no longer* Parmenides, etc., the antithesis of a part—from its origin—is *freighted* with the otherness of the thesis, it is ambiguous as the thesis itself already is.

What is more, as freighted as it already is, it becomes *other* all the more so when it is objective thought. Hence the dialectic gets into trouble owing to its own richness. There is infinitely *more* in History than a dialectical movement because the dialectic is dialogical and there are infinitely more than two historical agents. All of this, by the way, happens even while admitting that the initial dynamic force of History tends to be the dialectic. It is precisely the denseness of the multiple faces of History that makes this quasi dialectic just *one* of the historical dynamisms. There are historical processes that do not give rise to contradictory struggles—for example, the great voyages of exploration of the 15th and 16th centuries. There are other examples where historical alteration renders any dialectical opposition unthinkable. For example, the struggle between the Guelfs and the Gibellines, where Guelf and Gibelline are in the final analysis historical concepts, capable of a historical description but not of being reduced to contradictions.⁶⁹ There also exist great currents of the spirit that do not progress *dialectically* but simply by synthesis of what is diverse (not of contradictions); science, for example. There are inventions that are absolute beginnings (the steam engine) even if they do stand at the origin of a quasi

67. "Thinking and the thought that *it is* are one and the same." *The Way of Truth*, frag. 8, line 34, in *Plato and Parmenides*, trans. Francis MacDonald Cornford (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), p. 43. Cf. Hegel, "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 33.

68. Zeno of Elea (c. 495–c. 430 B.C.), Greek philosopher and mathematician, best known for his paradoxes meant to support Parmenides' thesis that "all is one."

69. Guelfs and Gibellines: the two opposing factions in Italian politics during the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries; the former sympathetic to the papacy, the latter supporting the German (Holy Roman) emperors.

dialectic. Far from the dialectic explaining History, it is History that closes in on all dialectic and digests it.

In other words, the true motor principle of History, which is otherness, is broader than the dialectic and encompasses it. The dialectic is one *species* of otherness. If the discovery of America does anything, it is only insofar as it is taken up by consciousnesses and insofar as it becomes an object, an *other/object*, not because it gives rise to its contrary.

It is fitting that History should be in crisis just like physics and that it should be disengaged from the Hegelian and Marxist absolute.

If no subsequent history may recover past sufferings, neither may it transform the truths lived by one epoch in ignorance into errors. This is an absolute. Each epoch has its ignorance, whose limits it pushes back, each epoch has its truth conditioned by this ignorance and as absolute. This is all one. The following epoch reduces this whole to something *relative* inasmuch as it is no longer lived, inasmuch as it is dead. Then it becomes error.

What is complex, as noted by Kojève (p. 187), is that the error maintains itself. That is, dead truth, become error, survives. “[T]hrough his discourse, through his written discourse in particular, man succeeds in *preserving* error in the very heart of reality. . . . And man could be defined as an error that is preserved in existence, that *endures* within reality. Now, since *error* means *disagreement* with the real; since what is *other* than what is, is *false*, one can also say that the man who errs is a Nothingness that nihilates in Being, or an ‘ideal’ that is present in the real.”

To make the Guelfs simply the party of the Empire and the Gibellines the party of independence is to lose the *historical* reality of both of them because they were much more than this and the former turned into the latter and vice versa. The historical reality is the irrational yet describable totality Guelf or Gibelline. There is no stripped down skeleton of a contradiction that is itself modified as a partial structure of the totality.

Existential situation and Hegelian negativity: “If Identity is incarnated in the ‘A’ which is identical to itself ($A = A$), negativity is made concrete in and by (or as) the *non* of the ‘non-A.’ Taken in itself, this *non* is pure and simple Nothingness: it is something only because of the A which it negates. The isolated *non* is absolutely *undetermined*: it represents, in absolute *freedom*, independence with regard to *every* given determination, to *every* ‘nature’ fixed once for all, to *every* localization in an ordered Cosmos. The presence of the *non* in the ‘non-A’. . . . limits the absolute liberty of the ‘non’ and makes it concrete—that

is, determines or specifies it. . . . Moreover, as soon as ‘non-A’ exists, the purely negating ‘non’ is just as much an *abstraction* as the purely identical A. What really exists is the unity of the two . . . the ‘non-A’ which is a ‘B’. . . . B is the (positive) result of the *negation* of A. Thus, B is an A that has not only been *overcome* and at the same time *preserved*, but also *sublimated* by this preserving negation. For if A is *immediate*, B is *mediated* by negation; if A is pure *Identity*, B is *Totality* implying *Negativity*; if A is purely and simply *given*,⁷⁰ B is the result of a negating action—that is, *created*; if A exists only *in itself* . . . B exists also *for itself*, for in it A takes a position with respect to itself” (ibid., pp. 203–4).

Existential situation: freedom does not limit itself to *negating* A (conceived of as a situation), it makes it exist. Negation is also specifying with regard to A. Before there is any negation, A exists *in itself*, that is, A simply *is* (in itself in the existential sense). If A next exists *for itself*, that is, if we can say that “there is A,” it is through the spark of freedom. But in fact it is not A that exists for itself in negating itself. The negativity that springs up at the heart of A makes A exist for a for-itself (which is not B but a consciousness). It is in no way A that becomes for-itself *in B* but a for-itself that springs up for whom A exists (and which is not B because B is of the same species as A—homogeneous to A). Furthermore, surpassing is not negativity. A *moment* of surpassing is negativity. But there is a positive moment that is the invention of the *end*. Negativity is not itself creative, it is the indispensable condition for creation. However the projected end encloses A within it. In this sense, indeed, there is a B including A within itself. But this is in no way A which surpasses itself in B, rather A is surpassed in the direction of B. A and B are transcendent to, experienced, known, transformed by a transcendence. And it is not B that is in and for itself, for if it were why therefore would it be *in-itself* for a new negativity? The For-itself has to be an absolute term. A new negation cannot be born from it that would make it *in itself* become for itself (since it is already that). Or rather a similar negation would be reflection (the relation of what is for-itself to the For-itself), that is, a new type of being. In fact, surpassing through negativity is done by the existing being and if the existing being can become *in itself* for another existing being, this is never so for itself but for another existing being separated from it by a nothingness. It is this separation as an absolute fact that allows the whole made up by the For-itself and the In-itself-surpassed-by-a-negation become in turn In-itself for a new For-itself.

What complicates the *situation* is that it is historical, that is, exactly the fact that it is already experienced and thought about by other For-itselfs for whom I exist before being born and who make claims on my freedom. In other words, I am an already pledged freedom. In surpassing *their* situation, these For-itselfs

70. Sartre’s text lacks the “purely and simply.”—Ed.

have assigned me a future: they have already defined me as French, bourgeois, Jewish, etc.; they have already determined my earnings, my obligations, my chances; they have already made the world meaningful, either by taking up the meanings already there or by creating modes of employment that I will encounter both as things and as having a human meaning, or, if one prefers, as “thinglike” images of human transcendence which are traps for my freedom. In a word, they have defined me *as nature*. I am born with my nature because other human beings came before me. And this nature is quite insidious because, being an *idea*, it penetrates me and flows into my transcendence. For example, if I am Jewish, I am internally penetrated with a Jewish nature. The surpassing of others is therefore a surpassing of myself insofar as I am first of all nature for the other person and, consequently, nature for myself. In this way the situation strikes at the heart of me. And, in societies, surpassing the situation implies surpassing myself, that is, myself insofar as I am an object for others and an internalized object (through education) for myself. This surpassing is, moreover, inevitable. Whether I resign myself to my nature, deny it, or assume it, I surpass it in all three cases. It is *my past* however it comes about. In a word, I am always part of the situation I have to surpass.

Kojève shows quite nicely that History implies *freedom*: creative evolution, that is, the materialization of a future that is not the mere prolonging of the past and the present. The past is my situation, taken up and surpassed by free action. Every attempt, however indirect, to reduce freedom to some form of necessity is a destruction of the historicity of History. 1st, because one suppresses temporality. A temporality that is not founded on freedom is nothing more than an illusion. Time is broken up into unconnected instants (what will tie them together if it is not divine freedom: Descartes’ continual creation); that is, pure atemporal presents.⁷¹ On the other hand, time *adds nothing*, it is the empty framework for a predictable development. 2d, it means replacing historical singularity with what is necessary, that is, with the universal. If History has its *own consistency*, if, by itself, it refuses to evaporate into sociology, it is precisely because of its uniqueness. The first historical event is that *there be a history*. And if there is a history, it contains the universal within itself as one of its abstract structures rather than being able to be universal. Pascal saw this clearly: the original fault that makes all universalization impossible. Free, a sinner, historical, man is a being to whom something has happened.

Hence there is an opacity proper to History, a historical density that evaporates if in taking up the topic of History one refuses to acknowledge: 1st, that History

71. See René Descartes (1596–1650), *Meditations on First Philosophy and Objections and Replies*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 33, 117, 254–55. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 85.

is originally contingency, in other words, that it is not reducible to nature, that it is *de trop* [too much] in relation to the World and that it is, on the contrary, what makes there be a world that changes. And if History is not *nature*, it is because it is in no way *necessitated*. Everything necessary is, in fact, given in some way. 2d, that History is freedom. Since, precisely, History is creation (if only of tools) and since, consequently, there is an unpredictability to every future in relation to every present: History is submitted to *invention* (invention of tools, of scientific hypotheses, of ideologies, of political solutions), which gives a depth to time. This is why there is ambiguity in the Hegelian dialectic (at least as it is presented by Kojève). For, in the last analysis, that the Reason of the Sage should be purely contemplative and allow the dialectical movement that leads up to it turn into this Reason, is acceptable (given the sizable reservation that reason can be contemplative only *in the case of an already accomplished History*).

But is this contemplation the contemplation of a *factual* historical development, that is, one based on contingency and freedom, or of a necessary dialectical evolution? To know we would have to consider History as already finished, therefore to assume that it can end, that is, that it can have an unsurpassable terminus, therefore one that is already contained in seed in the initial term. Progress would be the development of order. But then History disappears. Guelfs and Gibellines are nothing more than *symbols* of a dialectical necessity (particular forms that resist unification).

But, on the other hand, History is not the history of *one* freedom but rather of an *indefinite* plurality of freedoms (and it matters little if one can count the inhabitants of the globe since *in doing so* there is an indefinite redoubling, each person being able both to be part of the situation for all of them and to grasp all the others as one aspect of the situation) and, *at the same time*, of a fibrous structure (albeit a mobile one: the cleavages in a situation depend on the event in question). All freedom is transcended by all the other freedoms, it becomes *chance* for these others and its action becomes an object. Owing to this fact, there is a *statistical* character to History, a quasi generality, a weight to each fact (because most freedoms imitate determinism and are, moreover, pledged), finally there are the encounters of series [where] each of them appears to the other as quasi-causal.

What is more, since freedom is invention but may in fact invent the imitation—that is, may resign itself—the historical temporal form always heads toward equilibrium, that is, toward the homogeneous through destruction to the extent that it is not put back on track, and it is a contingency that it should be put back on track here rather than there. In other words, for a given series—the evolution of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1947—one has to account for this double aspect: at the same time this evolution appears to be necessary (from the fact that there was no rectification), the absence of any rectifying freedom haunts this necessity of freedom even though after the fact there is no place to insert such rectifying freedom (since the event is *dead* and one had to make things up

on the fly, in the middle of actual developments). What is more, since freedom is always conditioned and marked by ignorance, it appears to the following century *which knows* as a lesser form of freedom, hence as closer to determinism or a dialectical necessity. Whence the ambiguity of History that is alienated freedom, necessity within contingency yet taken up again by contingency, the perpetual tendency toward the homogeneous and the equilibrium of nature and death, perpetually crisscrossed by freedoms tending toward the heterogeneous and life, perpetual repetition and perpetual novelty.

In a historical process *that unmakes itself* (and, consequently, limits natural determinism), the visible absence of freedom must be considered to be the obverse side of a constant presence of freedom. (This is why there is revolution among the defeated: they know that it was the *fault* of those in charge). The fault is the absence of invention, that routine that ends up with one nation treating another nation as a pure, manipulable thing (Bismarck having his war when he wanted it),⁷² yet this fault comes precisely from the fact that man has to will an absence of invention and, in a way, invents it. His adherence to the past is itself justifiable for an existential psychoanalysis.

History is *both* antinature and the imitation of nature.

The *Other*, in history: the Orient (China, India, Japan). How can one dare to do a dialectic of History that does not take into account these 400 million human beings who, like us, have fifty centuries of history? The dialectic (whether Hegelian or Marxist) only considers *part* of humanity.

The bourgeois sacrifices himself to capital just as does the worker. Abnegation. Rule of the abstract (Hegel and Marx). In the final analysis man never alienates himself from himself. Yet by means of the oppressor there flourishes a myth to which both the oppressor and the oppressed submit. Here we rediscover the spirit of seriousness. The spirit of seriousness is voluntary alienation, that is, submission to an abstraction that justifies one: the thought that man is the inessential and the abstract the essential. That is, in the terms of the dialectic of master and slave, that man is a slave who has his master in the world, outside of himself. But this myth is a form of justification and, in particular, it justifies what is *originally unjustifiable*, the oppression of man by man. It does so in such a way that the oppressor oppresses the oppressed in the name of the myth. He is justified since he himself is a form of abnegation. He asks for nothing *more* than he asks of himself.

72. Otto von Bismarck (1815–1896), prime minister of Prussia and founder and first Chancellor (1871–1890) of the German Empire. Sartre is referring to the so-called Ems telegram from the Prussian king, released in an abridged version by Bismarck, which led to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

Still he is the beneficiary of certain advantages: the first one is that he sees clearly *what* he is sacrificing himself to. Second is a better material life (needs satisfied, luxuries, etc.). However these latter advantages themselves become inessential. 1st, because a chronically satisfied need becomes inessential and even negates itself. To be exact, the rich man is delivered from his needs. He belongs to a human order without needs. He is never again *hungry* (he has an appetite). 2d, the need, being suppressed, becomes simply a *means*, the end being the myth: either (a) considered as the means of making one do his duty (therefore as itself a duty: I have the duty to feed myself so I can do my job); or (b) as a pretext for a class gathering (family dinners = banquets = invitations). 3d, above all because they are the subjective movements of a being that is by itself inessential: one satisfies them without thinking about them, they do not matter. One eats and drinks *inwardly*, eyes fixed on some value. Duty is the justification of the oppressor. The spirit of seriousness makes him see his myth as an 'obligation.

And since he is freedom, in spite of himself, this constraint takes on the aspect of *duty*. Wherever *duty* is, oppression is not far away. And the oppressor, who considers himself to be inessential in relation to the end, becomes essential in relation to the oppressed person. He is, in effect, the mediator between the end (hidden from the oppressed person by clouds of ignorance) and the oppressed person. It is thus taken for granted that the end can only appear as a duty to the oppressed person at the end of a long education. The oppressor must therefore devote himself *to educating* the oppressed, using force if necessary. For the oppressed person does not see his duty clearly, the essential is *that he do it*. It is necessary therefore for the oppressor, who has responsibility over the oppressed, to force him to do his duty. Here force and violence appear as substitute for duty. They are the dark face of duty.

There is a good chance, today when myths are tumbling, to outline the features of a *society without myth*. Myths: capital, labor, nation, State, dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. The revolutionary is won over by the spirit of seriousness because he considers himself to be inessential in relationship to the cause. The cause appears to him in the form of duty, and justifies violence. Progress: the Cause is a *unique* concrete, historical duty. The myth of the serious bourgeois is universal and abstract. But in the period of *organization* that follows the revolution, the State incarnates the Cause, and we fall again into the abstract.

Dialectic: considering things without taking sides, Hegel represents a high point in philosophy. After him, *regression*: Marx adds what Hegel did not completely work out (development in terms of labor). But he lacks many of the great Hegelian ideas. Inferior. Next comes Marxist degeneracy. Post-Hegelian German degeneracy. Heidegger and Husserl small-time philosophers.⁷³ French philosophy zero. Coarse neorealist philosophy. Why should the antithesis (Marx: materi-

73. Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), the founder of modern transcendental phenomenology.

alist antithesis—neorealism: antithesis, external rather than internal relations) be superior to the thesis? Why does it encompass it? Neorealism does come after Hegel, it is true. But the theory of external relations does not encompass that of internal relations. It is just opposed to it. It is an *external*, not an internal negation. For another thing, several kinds of antitheses because one can negate a thesis in a thousand different ways. Conceive a *regressive* dialectic (that is, a pseudodialectic, for it is true that any true dialectic must be progressive, due to its perpetual appeal to the whole).

Hyppolite: “If we assume a term *A*, can its negation, not-*A*, engender a truly new term *B*? It seems not. In our opinion, if we are to understand Hegel’s argument here we must assume that the whole is always immanent in the development of consciousness.”⁷⁴ Here is the whole question. There is a dialectic only if progress is the development of order, if the whole is given at the beginning, at least as a motive force. If there is no whole (pure sum) there is no dialectic. And if reality is a detotalized totality, then there is a pseudo-dialectic or an aberrant one.

To the extent that man invents, History is always an uprooting from Nature. And the invention remains. There is a perpetual enriching, a perpetual antinature. And, at the same time, to the extent that History tends toward the homogeneous, toward equivalence, one can indeed say that “everything always turns out badly.”

Kojève. He explains quite clearly how if man is dialectical, Nature is not. “What is dialectical, according to Hegel, is the concrete Real—that is, Totality or the total Synthesis, or, better, Spirit. In other words, it is not *given* Being (*Sein*) itself that has a dialectical structure, but *revealed* Being (*Begriff*). Now, revealed Being implies, on the ontological level, two constituent elements: Being as *revealed* (Identity, Thesis) and Being as *revealing* (Negativity, Antithesis). . . . Now Hegel expressly says that negativity is the specifically dialectical constituent element. Identity is not at all dialectical, and if Totality is dialectical, it is only because it implies Negativity. Moving from this ontological level to the metaphysical level, one would then have to say that the Real is dialectical only because the natural World implies a human World, Nature being not at all dialectical in itself. And concerning the ‘Phenomena,’ one would have to say that there is a phenomenal Dialectic because the Real ‘appears’ to *Man*: only Man’s ‘phenomenal’ existence is dialectical in itself, and the natural ‘phenomena’ are dialectical only to the extent that they are implied in the human ‘phenomenology’ ” (*Intro-*

74. Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s “Phenomenology of Spirit,”* trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 15. The first French edition was published in 1946.

duction to the Reading of Hegel, p. 216). And he gives this objection in a footnote: “If, then, nature, as well as Man is creative or historical, truth and science properly so-called are possible only ‘at the end of time.’ Until then there is no genuine *knowledge* (*Wissen*)” (p. 214, n. 15).⁷⁵

This is a good insight. But if Hegel did give a “dialectic of Nature,” perhaps it was to pose the following question. What becomes of a *dialectic* if it encloses within itself a series of strictly antidialectical elements? If the Thesis (In-itself) is identity only in order to be broken, opened up, and surpassed by negativity, perfect. And if the resulting synthesis *B* is itself *first of all* In-itself and Identity in relation to the new negativity that breaks it, this is still admissible (given the objection mentioned above) with some reservations. In any case, it is coherent. In this case, Identity and the In-itself are *only one* constitutive *moment* of any structure at all of Spirit. It is only a question of a negated form of incompleteness until Totality is reached. Except that there is no longer any *Nature*. There is only, at each moment, an infinite Truth posited by Consciousness that surpasses Knowledge, that evolves along with Knowledge: “The inwardness of things is a construction of the spirit. If we try to lift the veil that covers the real we only find ourselves there, that universalizing activity of the Spirit that we call the Understanding.” In this case we have Kantian subjectivism historicized. As Hyppolite puts it: “The dialectic that Hegel presents in the first part of his book on consciousness is not very different from Fichte’s or Schelling’s. One must begin with naive consciousness, which knows its object immediately or, rather, thinks that it knows it, and show that in the knowledge of its object it is in fact self-consciousness, knowledge of itself” (Hyppolite, p. 77).

But what happens if we assume *an order of identity*, that is, if in confronting human History we assume a reality, a nature that is precisely characterized by its being nondialectical? Which is to say, if we push Hegel toward Marxism? In truth, the situation is a difficult one. Marx and Engels, materialists, did try to preserve a dialectic of nature. I have shown in “Materialism and Revolution” that this position was untenable (at least for an absolute idealism).⁷⁶ Hegel, in effect, reduces science to an abstract view of Nature. Therefore he gets rid of it. But how are we both to conserve scientific knowledge (which presupposes the order of identity, of passivity, of exteriority, of the In-itself) and to affirm that the nonhuman Real is dialectical?

Kojève’s position stems from this: Nature is the order of identity, the dialectic only applies to the human world. In this way, he attempts to preserve both

75. The long note from which this passage in Kojève’s *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* is taken begins on p. 212 and continues to p. 215.

76. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Materialism and Revolution,” in *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, pp. 198–256. This essay originally appeared in *Les Temps Modernes* no. 9 (June 1946): 1537–63, and no. 10 (July 1946): 1–32.

Science and the Dialectic. I willingly accept the existence of the order of the In-itself. But what results must then be applied to the dialectic? In other words, when man in knowing and *above all in action* (Work) perpetually finds himself face to face with this nondialectical order, can he still preserve a dialectical history? In order to answer this question we must take up Work.

Kojève says: to work is to deny the tree in order to make it into a table, while preserving it (the wood) in the table. I would like to agree. But in this way one conserves the tree as In-itself and as unsurpassed exteriority, inertia, passivity, identity. There is therefore a resistance to the dialectic at the very heart of the dialectic. Description of the manufactured object. If we are to have a *true* dialectic, the *thing* transformed into a utensil by *work* has to lose its thingness in the instrument it becomes. In reality, something else is produced. We have seen this already, the negativity in work is not mere negativity. It presupposes that man acts on some object and he can only do so through its inertia and passivity. But, even more so, he has to *make himself* a kind of passivity. His arm must become a lever, etc. Furthermore, he has to think of the identical as identical and he has to think of the interconnections of his thoughts as imitating the interconnections of inertia (mathematics, physics). Without a doubt, he stands outside of his thoughts as the freedom that sustains them, but he is also inside them and they link themselves together mechanically (algebra).

In other words, in order to act on the identity/exteriority, man has to imitate this order of identity/exteriority in his thinking and in his body. What is called the dictatorship of machines (or, subjectively, the dictatorship of technicians) depends on establishing an order of exteriority within the human order. There are machines because man makes himself into a machine. Hence work has an ambiguous character (completely outside of the oppression of man by man). On the one hand, in fact, as Hegel himself says regarding the slave: he gives man the image of his freedom.⁷⁷ But, on the other hand, this image is a trap for man who gets caught in it and sees in it the (illusory yet fascinating) reflection of his passivity. Thus there is a man/machine and a thinking/machine: materialism of the proletariat, taught by machines and from machines; the analytical mind of the polytechnic student, of the mathematician. *The worker and the engineer*. The oppression that goes with this transforms man into a thing.

And this layer of humanity: the thinking/machine or nondialectical thinking in terms of exteriority is an important substructure of History. It acts as both *ideology* and direct historical activity at the same time. It is the negation of the dialectic within History. That is, the appearance of *practical* categories or categories of *action*: of *inertia* (passivity, interchangeability of elements felt by the elements themselves to be their leading aspect—internal negation of individuality, thinking in terms of statistics or the masses), of *universality* (application of universalizing abstractions to the understanding of human, hence historical,

77. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 116.

situations—action in History in terms of a universalizing conception of man, therefore the affixing within History itself of a seal of universality to certain events), of the *analysis* of exteriority (materialism), representation of man as *natural* (therefore, *needs*), utilitarianism, etc.

Hence one ought not say: man only commands Nature by obeying it, but instead that man only commands Nature by *making himself Nature*, by slipping into Nature. This means: if there is an order of the identical and of exteriority, conceived in work as the permanent thesis (man being the mediation and the manufactured product the synthesis), there is a reaction of the thesis on the antithesis, the natural order becomes less natural (*artifice*), but the human order becomes less human. Man, in internalizing exteriority, externalizes his interiority and apprehends himself in terms of the world as externalized interiority. There is not a dialectical triad but rather the bringing together of two contraries.

America or the human realm become complete externalized interiority.

A modern society is made up in large part of:

- 1) the man/machine (or *man in general*),
- 2) the average man (or *statistical man*),
- 3) a leader alienated by the spirit of seriousness or *serious man*.

On the margins: the beautiful spirits and intellectual animals. Of course, no *general man* is really man in general. He is so in the mode of not being so. The same thing applies to the statistical man and the serious man. And he *makes himself* be so. He acts on himself in order to be so. He is always *other* and always *making himself* at the same time. However in a historical society so constituted, historical individuality remains a matter of *chance*. If we conceive of the reign of the concrete (utopian, in the limiting case) where man only exists *for* man, historical individuality becoming the definition of man ceases to be a matter of chance. No man is really *general* but the *masses* do exist. No one really exists as completely average, but the *middle classes* do exist.

Man/machine seeing the future with his machinelike prejudices (universality: man is replaceable by a machine and the products of a machine are all equivalent: universal) claims a liberation for himself, that is, for himself as *he is* without taking into account the fact that this liberation will imply his transformation (in other words, that he cannot be liberated *as* man/machine), but by this fact he creates a future of the same type, which is the mediated and projected liberation of the replaceable, hence he bends History to resemble him. In the same way, it is as a slave that the slave wants to be freed, therefore he creates the historical category of the free slave, that is, of the slave master of the master.

In particular, man/machine makes himself Nature in order to dominate Nature and sees himself therefore as a fragment of nature. He is a *species* (species = interchangeable fragment of nature, having an essence like manufactured products) and it is as a species that he wants to be liberated. His liberation as *nature* signifies that he has to liberate the natural within him and the natural is clearly his needs. By his need, in effect, man is natural. He has specific and unchanging needs (Aristotle got thirsty just as Hegel did). Specific permanence of a need; nonindividuality of man in relation to his needs; community of man's and the animal's needs.

Hence the demand of the general man turns itself into the demand for the satisfaction of one's needs, even though it surpasses, as a demand, every particular need and is the demand for freedom, that is, a demand that is destructive of the very generality of the general man and a demand for justice. It is a total demand of humanity that *believes itself to be* (and hence makes itself) a material demand.

However, conversely, in his struggle against the oppressed, the serious man does not defend the satisfaction of his needs (which are for him inessential), instead he defends his abnegation to Capital, that is, in the last analysis, to his myth justifying oppression—which, on the contrary, is completely inessential to the revolutionary (a superstructure that will fall if one changes the essential structures of society). Hence the one attacks what the other only defends in a summary fashion and vice versa. It would be a complete error, therefore, to see the class struggle as two dogs intent on fighting over the same bone. It is rather a game of hide and seek where one is always fighting against an invisible and presumed adversary, who is never where one looks for him. The oppressed man thinks of a cynical and pleasure-loving oppressor, where in fact there is a serious man who justifies himself through abnegation; the oppressor, on the other hand, complains sometimes of the “sordid materialism” of the masses without understanding that this materialism is an inverted idealism, and sometimes, imagining to the contrary that its needs are inessential for the masses as they are for him (because they have been satiated), he thinks that they are satisfied enough (because he believes in good faith that he himself would be content in the case when the minimum goods for life were lacking, needs being inessential) and that it is liars who put false ideologies into the head of the general man, ideologies whose principal vice is to place in danger the object of his perpetual abnegation.

Pseudo-universality of every definition of man: the person who does the defining must be part of what is defined; in other words, the definition is part of what is defined. Since such a definition is a circle in principle, we have *either* to propose incomplete definitions (materialism, behaviorism) where the defined is left out of the definition, *or* definitions of just the definer (reflective ones); *or* some false synthesis claiming to extend both to the definer and everyone else defined (a false synthesis of subjectivity and objectivity), as when one says that man is mortal even though *my* death does not appear to me to be like that of

others. In other words, subjectivity is brought into objective definitions. Impossibility of a *totalizing* definition. But, at the same time, every qualification that one is going to give to this false notion is itself false. “Man is good,” “man is evil,” etc. Of course he is evil if we mean by this that wickedness comes into the world through him. But he is also beyond wickedness, since he names it and defines it as bad. Things are actually more complicated than this, for wickedness seizes me: as soon as I say man is evil, I contemplate others and I confer upon them an objective quality, while at the same time I set myself outside of wickedness. Hence my definition was false. Yet see how it becomes true because Pierre is looking at me, making me again part of the herd, and says “man is evil.” And here is the evil man. Not because, suddenly, subjectivity has taken refuge in Pierre. Everyone is evil, but there is always one provisory just man who escapes this charge and he saves humanity as a whole. The *liar’s* argument is perfectly correct.⁷⁸ But there is a heterogeneity in the defined fact because the definer as defining it is made part of it. A break between subjectivity and objectivity in the definition. *Man* is a false universal concealing a basically undetermined character.

Achaemenides says that men are evil.⁷⁹ But he is a man, therefore evil by essence. He cannot therefore judge his wickedness, speak of it, discourse on it, or pass moral judgment on it, for then he would be placing himself at the point of view of the Good, or, if you will, he would be surpassing it while conserving it, either as agreed-to wickedness or as denied wickedness. Therefore he is not evil, so man is not evil. Another example. Achaemenides says that men are not very smart. But intelligence applies only to men. And he is a man. And the model of being smart to which he compares empirical intelligences is itself conceived as a limit-idea of human intelligence (moreover, as a formal and regulative concept—it only signifies that intelligence is progress without giving its end). Or instead he relates the intelligence of men to that of *an other* conceived as exemplary and this other can only be himself. Therefore either he is God and contemplates men or he is a man and wise, but he then falsifies intelligence by the very fact of judging others from on high, well beyond the limits he assigns to them. There are truths that one can state about man—they concern his condition. Man is free, he is mortal (neglecting the internal leap), he is intelligent (in the sense that he has a faculty of understanding), he is historical, etc. Because they can be conjointly established from the outside and the inside. In the last

78. “Epimenides says that Cretans are liars. But he is a Cretan. Therefore he lies. Therefore Cretans are not liars. Therefore, he speaks the truth. Therefore, Cretans are liars. Therefore, he lies, etc.” Jean-Paul Sartre, “Introduction” to Jean Genet, *The Maids and Deathwatch*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p. 7.

79. According to Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book IV, and Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, Book XIV, Achaemenides was left behind when Ulysses and his men escaped from the cyclops.

analysis, these are *reflective* truths. They stem from a consciousness observing man's condition. But there is an aspect of indetermination touching all the others. One cannot say, "All men are liars" (the liar's argument).

Man and the Human

Given these conditions, should we accept Hegel's definition that: "it is in and by the *universal* recognition of human *particularity* that *Individuality* realizes and manifests itself" (Kojève, p. 235)?

"The purely natural entity *is* not, strictly speaking, an Individual: it is Individual neither in itself, nor through itself, nor for itself. Man, on the contrary, is individual (and hence dialectical) in himself and through himself, as well as for himself. He is individual *for* himself because he knows himself not only as 'this particular man here,' but also as a 'representative' of the human race (and he can *act* as such). He is individual also *through* himself, for it is he himself who negates himself in his given animal particularity so as to conceive and manifest himself (through speech and action) in his human universality. And Man is finally individual *in* himself—that is, *really* or in his very empirical existence—since the universality of his particular being is not only *thought* by him and by others, but *recognized* as a real value, and recognized *really* or actively by a Universal which is real—i.e., embodied in a State (a Universal which he creates), which universalizes him *really* since it makes him a Citizen acting (and therefore *existing*) in terms of the 'general interest' " (ibid., pp. 239–40).

Let's take a look at the different points being made here.

(1) Man "is individual *for* himself because he knows himself not only as 'this particular man here,' but also as a 'representative' of the human race." This can only happen from an outside perspective. I recognize this duck as particular (nature) and as representing its species. Maybe God would recognize me as particular and as representing the human species. But first of all I have to know what the species is. There is an underlying vicious circle here since in every definition of the species the definer (situated in principle outside the definition) becomes part of what is defined. In fact, the human species is totally undetermined. Man creates universal concepts in surpassing the ontic toward ontology—or, to accept Hegel's definition: "In surpassing or transcending given-Being (*Sein*) man creates the concept (*Begriff*) that is Being without the being of Being. Negation therefore *preserves* the 'content' of Being (as the concept 'Being') and sublates it by making it subsist in its 'ideal' rather than its 'real' form." But man cannot surpass man because he is man in doing so, since man *is* precisely the surpassing of everything given. Therefore he finds himself outside of any definition in terms of his species. The concept is indeed Being without the being of Being, that is, man without the being of man. But man is the being of the concept man. And if one creates a concept of this concept of man, man will be the being of the concept of this concept and so on.

In a word, just as for Kant categories have a limited use and cannot, for example, turn back upon the subject, so too man's ontological activity allows him to surpass the given form of the world but not human subjectivity. Man cannot apply the universal to man. And if there is not a human *species*, then there can be no individual representative of this species. On the other hand, universalization can only be applied to what *is*, not to what exists. The universal is a category of being-part-of-the-world, not of being-in-the-world. The qualities that constitute the universal essence are *given*, they are static, part of an eternity concerning which one may just as well say that it is a past eternal (*Wesen ist was gewesen ist*).⁸⁰ Man, who through his negativity breaks every form that encloses him, continually pushes outward the limits of what man is. He is perpetually conquering new realms of existence for his species. Therefore he is always outside his species moving toward some new progress (taken here in the most literal sense of the term), while his species falls outside him and behind him as what *he has been*. Far from the species having a *representative* in the individual, it itself *represents* what is surpassed, the past of the Individual. And it is precisely because he *is no longer* the species but has always *been* it that one is tempted to carry out an *a posteriori* universalization of what man *has been*.

(2) "He is individual also *through* himself, for it is he himself who negates himself in his given animal particularity so as to conceive and manifest himself (through speech and action) in his human universality."⁸¹

(a) Language is, indeed, the realm of the universal. It is the instrument for the ontological surpassing of every given. But it is not myself that I surpass through language. I *am* the individual surpassing of the world through language and from language toward the world. I have "my" language. If I turn it back on myself, I see that discourse is not possible without a radical modification of an "artistic" type: language has to be individualized if it is to depict the individual. Otherwise I use it as a universalizing-universal, only to fall back into the vicious circle mentioned above. It may be that I want to flee myself, turning myself into just language. But then my individuality lies in the fact that I make myself universal as the solution to my problems.

(b) Action can have (but need not have: art) a universal result, but this is because its material is universalizing (exteriority, repetition, inertia), yet if it does give rise to the universal, it is itself individual. It is not *me* that I surpass toward the universal. I am the surpassing of the given toward my goal. And the universalizing image that my work gives me is just the changing externalization of my interiority.

80. "The Now, as it is pointed out to us, is Now that *has been*, and this is its truth; it has not the truth of *being*. Yet this much is true, that it has been. But what essentially *has been* [*gewesen ist*] is, in fact, not an essence that *is* [*kein Wesen*]; *it is not*, and it was with *being* that we were concerned" (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 63).

81. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 240.

(c) I can pour my particularity into social forms (which are universal because they are partially undetermined). Hunchbacked (my nature, my given particularity), I become an examining magistrate (a pure function whose job it is to render justice). In this moment I confer a universal value on my particularity. One respects my hunchback because it is that of a magistrate. But at the same time, I am a hunchbacked magistrate, nothing more. I have given legitimacy to what was a contingent deformation (my hunchback is “preserved” in my official status). Here we rediscover the theory of French sociology that a man is to be explained in terms of the physiological and the social. Here I am: a son of a bitch. If I want just my individuality I have, on the contrary, to surpass these social characteristics through some invention in the proper sense of the word. To be an individual in inventing justice, in inventing an individual understanding of my *cases*; in inventing myself by always surpassing and continually contesting the office of magistrate and even the idea of justice. In a word, individuality is certainly not the negation of my animal particularity toward the universal but the surpassing of the universal toward personal invention. Individuality is the perpetual beyond of the universal, it is a unique use of universal tools for an individual and unique end.

(3) “The universality of his particular being is recognized *really* or actively by a universal which is real—i.e., embodied in a State (a Universal he himself creates).”⁸²

A new circle.

(a) Recognition by *others* (as individuals). What gives them the quality of being able to recognize me? My recognition of them. Reciprocal recognition. But since they only have the right that I lend to them and I have no more right than they lend me, the whole is not recognized and falls into an unjustifiable subjectivity. G., in order to gain recognition through me, turns me into the absolute. Hence my judgments about her (which she knows to be favorable) are oracles. But it is precisely she that turns them into oracles. For it is she who denies any value to P.’s judgments about her. This reciprocal recognition is a game of mirrors, which finally ends up as a lie. This is what a *historical* succession of recognitions by the absolute third person who is God is. Recognition must be without reciprocity; an absolute witness, himself the definition of good and evil, must *justify* me in recognizing me. When this witness is no more, we try to replace him with the interplay of give and take of mutual recognition. But it is just the quickness of this “reflection-reflecting” interplay that prevents our seeing its illusory character. It is also the fact that concrete humanity (or its fibrous structure owing to its great number) is grasped as an unlimited series of men. The unlimited series of men (if someone recognizes me *today* I take this recognition as the symbol of a recognition by the whole human past since the present is the heir of the past; and for the sign of recognition to come for every present

82. Ibid., pp. 236–37.

act is given as making some mortgage on the future) is equivalent in my comprehension to *man* (a universal, absolute, etc. concept). I am recognized therefore by *man*. But this man is me. Circle.

(b) *Objective* recognition is required therefore. This is the *Universal which is real or embodied in a State*, which, by the way, recognizes me *as acting, juridically*. Clearly God follows. But first of all he is internal to humanity and History. In him and through him humanity recognizes itself. *Perhaps* this changes something practically (happiness); it changes nothing as regards the theoretical circle. Kojève recognizes this when he says that man *creates* the universal that is the State. But *above all else* it is true that man does want to be recognized in his particularity by everyone (which is, by the way, difficult to make compatible with the other assertion that man *negates* himself in his particularity in order to conceive himself and manifest himself in terms of the human universality), and it goes without saying that the universal State cannot satisfy him. For a universal organism can only have universal thoughts and acts regarding universal objects. The particular can conceive the universal, but the universal cannot conceive the particular. The State, therefore, can recognize only the universality of a function. I will be recognized (basic rights) as a citizen (consumer, passive subject of rights) and as a worker or a functionary (producer, active subject). That is, through my needs and my function. There is an absolute equivalence of men considered from this double point of view: everyone gets hungry. As for the magistrate's job, it can be carried out by a general subject.

This is demonstrated, incidentally, by the way in which Kojève, with Hegel, conceives of such a society. "If in truly homogeneous humanity, realized as the State at the end of History, *human* existences become really interchangeable, in the sense that the action [(and 'the true *being* of Man is his *action*,' according to Hegel)] of each man is also the action of all, and inversely [(*Tun Aller und Jeder*)], death will necessarily oppose each one to all the others and particularize him in his empirical existence, so that *universal* action will also always be *particular* action (or action liable to failure where another succeeds) and therefore *Individual*."⁸³

An absurdly confused text. *Death* and *finitude* are confused with each other. But death is one aspect of finitude. Next, if it is truly the possibility of failure that gives particularity, it is therefore through Nothingness that one is particularized. Exactly as in the Christian religion. But then I demand that this Nothingness be recognized. In other words, since my particularity is the possibility of dying too early, therefore of failing, I demand that someone give a value to this failure. But it is clear that the universal State only values success. Therefore I am left unsatisfied or rather, since religion is a way of giving value to failure (I am worth more than I am, therefore than what I have done) and the Hegelian State agrees with Hegel, on the contrary, that "the true Being of man is his action,"⁸⁴

83. Ibid., p. 252.

84. Quoted by Kojève, *ibid.*

the universal State fails as a replacement for a religion (Christianity) that values me in my particularity and even in my failure.

Yet, on the other hand, if I decide on my own to assume my death as my own, I surpass universality by an individual singularity that makes me be myself in authenticity. We find a surpassing of the State that leads us to an unjustifiable state of solitude and emergence. In other words, if it is death that particularizes, as death *undergone* and *natural* it falls short of all justification (except a religious justification), or as assumed death, it is beyond any justification. Furthermore, at the limit, even the particularity of death is negated by Hegel's and Kojève's State since Kojève writes: "Every man who has died could have prolonged his activity or negated it; he did not, therefore, completely exhaust his human existential possibilities. And that is why his human possibilities can be realized humanly—i.e., in and by another man, who will take up his work and prolong his action (which was his very being)."⁸⁵

If my (universal) action is me and if another man carries it on, I survive in him. And as in the universal State, my action will necessarily be prolonged, since "the action . . . of each man is also the action of all,"⁸⁶ death has disappeared and with it all particularity. From this moment on, the individual has totally disappeared. It is the collectivity that recognizes itself, but, at the same time, it has lost all right to do so. Things had to end up here, as regards the individual and what happens to individuals, as well as regards the community. Humanity is neither justifying nor justifiable.

The problem was badly posed. Not by Hegel but by immediate consciousness. A reflective conversion will preserve recognition—justification as a practical means not as an end. In a word, justification will always be *in the past* and man will always be *beyond* his own justification. He will be the one who *was* justified and who thrusts himself into the unjustifiable. Solitude does not lie on this side of collective life but rather beyond it. Justification as a closed-off absolute loses all its rights. It becomes an open-ended justification that anticipates the future; that is, it becomes a form of *confidence*. Critical confidence, that is, an affirmation of the orientation of the other's freedom toward a work that one will be able to justify once it is done; that is, already surpassed toward unjustifiable solitude. On the other hand, this confidence has no real foundation other than my decision to accept it, that is, in the generous gift of the work. One only justifies works and works justify nothing.

Spengler, Marx, Guelfs and Gibellines, Trotsky, Benda (History of the French Nation), Lot, Bloch.⁸⁷

85. Ibid., p. 257.

86. Ibid., p. 252.

87. Oswald Spengler (1880–1936), German historian who rejected the idea of progress in favor of a cyclical view of history; best known for his *The Decline of the West* (1916–1920). Julien Benda (1867–1956), French novelist and essayist, who held that the life of the mind should isolate itself

Confidence is the prediction of freedom.

Layers of the historical event:

Chance		1st, layer of original contingency (through tools the whole world is inserted into History),
		2d, layer of generality (<i>general</i> use of cannon, quasi necessity of airplanes),
Quasi necessity		3d, layer of passivity (general man—needs),
		4th, layer of statistics (average man),
		5th, layer of tradition (institutions, interpretation of facts),
		6th, layer of invention (freedom of the historical agent).

In fact, these are not layers since the historical event is given as a whole across each one of them. Rather *Abschattungen*.⁸⁸

The Hegelian theory of the master and the slave is seductive as a phenomenology of human relations, but cannot stand up historically. 1st, the slave did not invent anything of technological significance in antiquity. Besides, he was essentially a domestic or agricultural worker. Working in a group, he had less occasion to grasp the efficacy of his work on the object, like the modern worker on the assembly line. 2d, Stoicism no more than Skepticism was invented by slaves but by free men. In Rome, Stoicism became a theory for the master (for an Epictetus,⁸⁹ or a great courtier such as Seneca,⁹⁰ or an emperor such as Marcus Aurelius).⁹¹ Instead of a theory stemming from a slave who takes the master's point of view, I see in it a theory of a master who forewarns himself of the danger of becoming a slave and who hides his pride as a master in the only

from everyday affairs and political movements; best known for his *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, trans. Richard Aldington (New York: William Morrow, 1928). Ferdinand Lot (1866–1952), French historian and specialist in medieval history. Marc Bloch (1886–1944), French medieval historian and co-founder of the *Annales* school, who was executed by the Germans for his resistance activities.

88. The term *Abschattungen* comes from Edmund Husserl's phenomenology of perception, where it refers to the way any perceived object appears in "profiles," never all at once, even though the whole object is present in some sense in every profile. In his recent translation of Husserl's *Ideas*, Fred Kersten translates *Abschattungen* as "adumbrations." "Of Essential necessity there belongs to any 'all-sided,' continuously, unitarily, and self-confirming experiential consciousness [*Erfahrungsbewußtsein*] of the same physical thing a multifarious system of continuous multiplicities of appearances and adumbrations [*Abschattungen*] in which all objective moments falling within perception with the characteristic of being themselves given 'in person' are adumbrated [*sich abschatten*] by determined continuities." Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 87 (last two German terms added).

89. Epictetus (c. 55–c. 135), who began life as a slave.

90. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 4–65), who committed suicide when commanded to do so by the emperor Nero.

91. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121–180), Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher.

good that is not threatened: thought. For one *has to have goods* and to detach himself from them in order to be a Stoic—it has nothing to do with consoling oneself for not having them. 3d, the theory of the slave who does not risk his life and who apprehends his freedom in fear and work is true for a first generation of slaves, not for the second or third one: the slave, born in the big house, treated as part of the family, no longer has much fear—perhaps he has no fear at all—he feels justified (as inessential in relation to an essential master) and therefore he is an accomplice of the master (old slaves in Georgia stayed near their old masters) and he finds himself in a *natural* situation. 4th, it is not true that the master *has no history*. For there are other masters with whom he does business (family, State, war). And he is the one who conquered the Roman Empire (the soldiers were free men). It was through him that Christianity came to Rome. 5th, technical inventions and scientific discoveries are not the affair of slaves and serfs. It is clerics or free men of the middle class who carry them out most of the time. Nothing remains of Hegel's theory except an ideal relationship and an ideally true one.

The complexity of History also stems from the fact that during short periods one does find episodes of *real* evolution, orientated in terms of certain realities toward their essences, which they at last rejoin only to die soon after: Greek tragedy, French tragedy, Roman, etc. Here there is the development of an original order that we can call progress. However it does not have to do with man but with the perfecting of an object and a tool. Thus there are local histories within History and even the ends of local histories. It is a matter of secondary phenomena, however.

It would be nice if History were the history of slaves but the fact is that slaves were ahistorical in antiquity: the general and repetition.

Each new historical fact brings its past along with it, that is, it is part of its nature to look back to interpret the past. This is, first of all, because man, therefore History, has to be his past. And then, next, owing to the retrospective illusion that the past led *here*, that is, that the past has as its meaning leading here. Hence each new fact brings with it its interpretation of History. Contingent as it is, in its very contingency it provides even the men whose situation includes it with schemata that allow them to interpret it as necessary (therefore as a form of progress).

The connections among the structures of the historical fact are much *looser* than Marx would have liked them to be. This is necessary since man is not reflection but transcendence and invention. It is not false therefore that each of his works reflects his situation and expresses it. But this work expresses this situation *in surpassing it*. And surpassing it is not to negate it (antithesis) but to

invent something on its basis. Thus the political, aesthetic, religious, or ethical “series” expresses in each of its moments the economic situation, for example, but the series as a whole does not stand in a parallel relation to the economic series. Nor is it divergent from it. But often, *without any determinable relationship*. Against Hegel: the history of the Middle Ages is full of peasant revolts—therefore they did not fear risking their life against that of the master (revolts that were thoroughly crushed)—yet one can point to no technical improvement due to them.

The historical fact experienced as a pluridimensional reality by a free consciousness is apprehended by the government as a statistical reality. Consequently it becomes inert and passive, it is a *thing* and one takes it into account as a thing: 27 per cent of the voters abstained from voting.⁹²

The newspaper: mirror of the general man and the average man. It returns their image to them. American propaganda to the average man about the average man reinforces his mediocrity: the most popular song of the week.⁹³ You are informed of the average opinion, therefore of your opinion. The newspaper is a mediation between the average man and himself.

Repetition: thousands and thousands of similar evenings in a restaurant next to the water. Each time, invented, reinvented, and parallel to all the rest. The general can be reinvented. As when in a family, every time the opportunity arises someone reinvents the word that expresses the family spirit. Never mechanical: the circumstances are never the same, one uses it in a slightly different manner, the humor is that one uses it here where no one in the family has ever used it before.

Feudalism: the common oven and the mill. A single mill, a single oven for a number of people. Whence the master and the collectivity subjected to him. Is this sufficient? Other essential structures of feudalism: relation of man to man and personal service, religion, struggle of the king against the great lords, conceptual thought, crusades.

1st, the economic structure represents *repetition* (daily work, daily production and consumption). In this regard it is capable of generalization. And, in fact, we find *different* feudalisms: pre-Homeric Greece, modern Ethiopia. Inasmuch as the economic structure explains feudalism in general, it does not explain *this* particular form of feudalism. If History is about the singular, it may not use

92. In the elections to the National Assembly of 10 November 1946, abstentions and spoiled ballots came to 23.4 per cent. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *The Fourth Republic 1944–1958*, trans. Godfrey Rogers, *The Cambridge History of Modern France*, vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1987), p. 110.

93. Sartre develops this example in detail in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, pp. 644–51.

explanations in terms of what is general except to demonstrate the presence of the general within the singular and as a singular form of the general; historicity of the general. In a word, repetition is an intrahistorical structure. It is, therefore, in fact, quasi repetition. What is more, the whole set of *tools* only constitutes a set when connected by the synthetic set of human relationships. And since the economic structure of feudalism runs in the direction of isolation in terms of small plots (the mechanical juxtaposition of properties), without an extra-economical relation between men, there is not *one* economy but *many* juxtaposed economies. In a word, where the economy is in pieces, the historical synthesis is necessarily extra-economic (or there is no synthesis at all: primitive hordes). It is impossible to *derive* the human connection that turns the many common ovens into a *nation* (however lax the national connection may be at the time). Yet, it is, on the contrary, in and through the human connection that *an economy* of the Middle Ages can exist. However, as soon as it is constituted as an *economy*, it acts as the weight of these human relationships, their exteriority, their quasi-natural side, it externalizes interiority. In a word, one will not explain the relation of man to man by the economy, one will instead explain the perpetual externalization, the unravelable complexity of these relations, their *thinglike* aspect.

2d, Besides economics being repetition, it forms the framework within which the new takes place, it prescribes the limits beyond which it is not possible to invent anything, but it cannot produce the new as new. To put it another way, the economical is the extrahistorical structure of the historical situation. It is what is taken to be *nature* by the child of the serf or of the lord born in the feudal world, consequently, what is perpetually surpassed and converted into becoming something else. But not toward some improvement of the economical properly speaking: toward anything whatsoever (crusades, wars, courtly love, etc). A man is always beyond the economical, which, moreover, he conserves as a surpassed foundation. The economical is habit, the general, repetition, the unproductive (in the historical sense of the term).

3d, the economical is the *present* (man's technical action turning itself into inertia on the basis of the current inertia of the world. Repetition, by the way, implies a perpetual present). It cannot therefore explain the relation to the past, which is properly historical. (No more—we have seen—than it explains the future.) No doubt it defines the *mode of what is inherited*, but there again it is only a framework. It also produces the result that there is a class *without a past* (and without a future) that is pure repetition (the serfs and the peasants). But this class does not make History. Contrary to what Hegel thinks, it does not improve the conditions of work because its work is a pure recommencement, it calls for its freedom during brief movements of insurrection. *Instead* (again against Hegel) it is the men who are oppressors and who are free from repetition (lords and vassals) who are precisely historical in that they can freely link their past to their present through the outline of a future. Hence the economical

creates History by the liberation of a class that, being extra-economic, makes History. This signifies that the economical, in the Middle Ages, has an action on history that delivers it from itself and makes it pure History (that is, without repetitions). The economic is the devil's share which allows conceiving and undertaking a *Crusade* (an essential fact, yet one that is completely inexplicable through economics since it is a question of a gratuitous and eccentric operation of *spending resources*). History is made by the consumer. It is the history of spending. No doubt the class of the masters and that of the slaves are theoretically *struggling*. But practically this history does not make up the history of the Middle Ages. It is a state of affairs in the present that gets translated from one time to another by an insurrection *in the present* (without memory: the precedent teaches nothing—without a future: no plan, no tactics).

4th, the existence of the Christian religion does not *translate* the situation, it complicates it. For it has its own weight coming from the fact that it has a traditional past and institutions that maintain themselves. No doubt it is taken up and transformed: this is what makes History. The error is to believe that what is preserved in the negating surpassing is uniquely those structures that are in harmony with the new situation. The past only acts if it is taken up, and it is the present that confers its meaning on the past, but there is a weight proper to the past once it is taken up (which stems from what it is *in itself*), that is, from those unadapted elements that survive. For example: earliest Christianity was *communitarian*, it bore the mark of the anxieties of the ordinary people of a decadent Empire. In becoming the ideology of an oppressive class it did not completely lose this characteristic: to the extent that it is taken up as an integral whole and experienced as a living ideology, this split between the reality that it expresses and the survivals in its expression acts as a historical factor.

Similarly the spiritual power of the pope at Rome is, at the time of the height of the Roman Empire, a perfect expression of centralization. The overthrowing of the Empire creates an “eccentric centralization,” that is, ferment. Universal and international ideology in a History where the mode of production is regional and particular to a locale. The action of this ideology is plain to see: (along with the memory of the Roman and the Carolingian Empires) it is the origin of the enterprise of the “Holy Roman and Germanic Empire,” that is, of an enterprise that is: 1st, *disinterested* (in contradiction with *needs*, the economy); 2d, *destined to fail* (since precisely—here, a negative action of the economy—the structure of small domains of feudalism does not allow the constitution of a unified empire); 3d, yet *efficacious*: (a) negatively, in that it prevents the emperors from devoting themselves to the unity of Germany since they seek the unification of the Western world; (b) positively, by setting up international contacts. Furthermore, it is this ideology that keeps the holy places *outside* the centers of interest and economic activities, in short, by geographically localizing the ideal in the *eccentric*, it establishes an extra-economical (mythic, ritual) connection between the West and the East. In a sense, the place closest to every Christian, the one

he finds in the nearest church, or on its parvis (mystery) is Jerusalem. And this place above all others is precisely a *spiritual* one, that is, one entirely situated outside the cycle of needs. It goes without saying that the economic phenomenon is to be *found* in the crusades (one carries it everywhere one goes), that interests are involved, (etc.). But, precisely, it *floats* on the concrete historical enterprise, it represents repetition in it, the fall into exteriority.

In this way, we see, to the contrary, that the historical *situation*, far from being harmoniously explained by the economy and its secondary structures, is, on the contrary, originally a form of *disequilibrium*. It is, effectively, antinomical. However the antinomy is not internal to the economic but rather between the different structures: 1st, a particularistic mode of production against a religious and political ideology of universalism and internationalism. 2d, an economy of repetition (there are economies where the repetition is concealed by invention: our own, which is in a state of perpetual creation, for example) against the invention of personal solutions. 3d, the class that produces does not make History—the class that does make History consumes without producing anything. Therefore a history of consummation, that is, of gratuity, of expenditure. It is this inequality that makes each man spring up in an *unstable situation*. 4th, an ideology that makes man inessential and that makes all men the slaves of one master (Hegel) *over against* an oppressive economic situation and a hierarchical relation of one person to another. 5th, the existence of a specialized and professional spirituality, which makes use of an *Esperanto* (Latin), whose changes (councils, heresies) do not reflect the changes in the economy since it is free from them.

It remains true that the action of this ideology (which is conservative: time is inessential, eternity essential) does interact with the economy (repetition) to mark out the limits of historical action. Without *other tools* the Middle Ages cannot cross a certain historical threshold. *Action* is conceived in terms of a local time just as the economy is regional. It too is *repetition* (wars of repetition—repetition of the crusades—repetition of imperial expeditions into Italy). The absence of progress in the economic sphere leads to the conception of *stability* as essential. But here the action of the economic sphere is negative: it acts through its passivity. Not that it *determines* the historical phases, rather it prevents any going further. Let there be some event that changes the economic structures and activities (inventions of ideologies, of political solutions, the achievement of unification by the king) are liberated. Just as in mathematics. Always negative: the use of letters leads to this absurdity: $6 - 12$. One has to go beyond them. Except that the development of mathematics is harmonious because it is *by starting from* this impasse that the mathematician invents what will go beyond it. In general History, invention must be contingent in relation to the established situation (the discovery of gun powder). The monk who discovered gun powder did not discover it *in order* to get out of the feudal impasse. Feudalism did not represent itself to itself as an absurdity which one needed to go beyond. These historical

examples show that a historical structure has an indeterminate stability. It both carries within itself its own destruction and the possibility of enduring indefinitely because each individual tries to bring about his own salvation within the situation. Thus the economic as a *brake on* and a limit to historical efficacy is part of the *nonknowledge* that perpetually limits historical action and that, at the same time, is the essential condition of historical action.

It goes without saying that the economic can be found everywhere. Thus the local and regional aspect of the economy implies a local and regional aspect to the military (the crusaders, for example). But this regional and local aspect appears only against the synthetic background of the enterprise that is a crusade. It represents something like an internal passivity that laminates and interlards the effort at unity. In sum, the economic—repetition—upheld and borne along by a type of synthetic unity (the feudal human relation) acts from within this human synthesis by *externalizing it* (the resistance of inertia) and by an antinomic contrast to its ideology (negative action). In another sense, it turns back against the historical situation as a whole and communicates to it the aspect of repetition (all else being equal, by the way, one will never go beyond it) by coloring as vanity every effort to get beyond things as they are. But this only appears to the eyes of the following generation. For the generation that is “caught up in it” does not see its limits or rather, as Hegel puts it, it sees the inequality between what it knows and the truth, but it does not see that its *Truth* is precisely what must change and that ignorance is the true figure of *Truth*. This leads to the following double consequence. 1st, it is just within those limits where there is ignorance that man can historialize himself. This ignorance conditions all risk, all choices/election of possibilities, therefore History. 2d, but the curtain is drawn back *by chance* (even if the series that led to the invention of gun powder was rigorously determined, it was chance in relation to the preoccupations of the great vassals). The result is that an external contingency is going to make the historical work of the predecessors fall to the rank of vain, absurd efforts in the eyes of the succeeding generation. Through scientific or technological progress, the previous situation appears as a situation for which one *lacks the key* and every particular effort appears as doomed to failure, therefore as run through by a destiny, whereas it was a free surpassing and invention *with the means at hand*. The lived situation which was finite but unlimited and wherein this finitude was experienced from within as the very substance of freedom becomes finite and limited *from the outside* for the following generation. The cannon present inside the following generation becomes in its eyes a material absence of the preceding generation. Its absence is the fixed presence of a negation, an inert flaw, exteriority running through all its interiority.

The synthesis of the universalist and egalitarian ideology of Christianity and the particularist and oppressive structure of the feudal economy is precisely brought about in each particular case by some personal invention. The feudal

epoch is rightly speaking *not the contradictory situation* but *perpetual surpassing of this situation* (heresies, God's peace, the effort of royalty to bring about unity, etc.). Surpassings both free and absolute at the same time and retrospectively colored with vanity by a newly arrived epoch, which has another knowledge and another truth.

The appearance of the cannon is the end of the Middle Ages. But it is also the non-Middle Ages in the Middle Ages (as an absolute novelty, a meteor, that must be interpreted). The same for Christian and Roman ideology. Thus the Middle Ages are as much constituted by the presence in them of nonassimilated and nonassimilatable elements. (Survivals or irreducible new facts.) The Middle Ages *are not*, they are other than themselves. From within their very stability there is a challenge to the Middle Ages. In particular, the formation of a bourgeoisie in the cities through commerce and artisanal work. The bourgeoisie as the death of the Middle Ages is present in the Middle Ages. Yet the lived reality of the Middle Ages is that it does not experience this as its death, that it does not distinguish what is its true future and past, and that it surpasses toward its own future (the lived future of its possibilities) both the past and the seeds of the true future. With the result that the true future is both partly determined by this lived future and partly its negation.

History is discontinuity (generations—revolutions—economies—social revolutions) in continuity (the survivors of generation 1 present in the second generation, survivals), it is not the synthesis of the continuous and discontinuous. Every epoch, after a change such as the great discoveries, can consider the preceding one as having fallen outside it and as totally external, and yet it is impossible to fix this in any other way than completely arbitrarily (the taking of Constantinople: the end of the Middle Ages) the end of one epoch and the beginning of another.

The Marxist will probably say that the wars of the Middle Ages were like the scurrying of ants, marked from their origin by vanity, a manner of running in circles without any possible solution—even given the observations I made above—and that only new technological inventions lead to a change in orientation. To which it must be replied, first, that the invention of gun powder only speeded up an evolution already under way (cannon belonged to the one who was already the strongest and reinforced his strength. A situation exactly similar to that of the atomic bomb). But above all this is to choose *a* History as a function of social and metaphysical prejudices. It is to let fall outside of History the history lived by men from day to day, those efforts, those inquiries, those limited yet free inventions that precisely make up human life.

If the future is conceived starting from the lived situation with its limits and if its future is denied by the true future, itself defined by technological revolu-

tions, then the future outlined by Marx with revolution as its end is precisely denied by the "atomic" revolution. In the first place, revolution has become impossible and replaced by war. Next, there is a bureaucratic and technical dictatorship gradually replacing capitalist oppression. Finally, general man become a historical factor as general demands *generality*; that is, the equal dictatorship for everyone of an abstract State, and freedom and equality in terms of total interchangeability. These three threatening dangers are new forms of oppression. Man may be alienated by abstraction and universality as well as by a concrete category of oppressors. The latter carrying through the mediation between the abstraction and the oppressed. At present, oppression by the abstract without mediation.

Even in the name of Marxism, the most important event in the last fifty years is not the Russian Revolution, but the atomic bomb. Marxism is true only if we assume that industrial discoveries are secondary and all occur *in the same direction* as preceding ones. A discovery as important as the steam engine suppresses the very conditions in which Marxism had a chance of being true. It suppresses its own future and replaces it by a *true* future.

Let us envisage things from this point of view: in a given scientific-technical structure, each person projects himself according to his own possibilities, establishes a knowledge and a truth bounded by ignorance, a subjective morality and an ideal morality equivalent on the practical plane to the pair knowledge/truth (the subjective morality being the relation of individual subjective effort to the ideal objective projected beyond social relationships and retaining within itself these social relationships). These individual efforts transcend one another and nihilate one another and finally end up at an impasse. For example, the Middle Ages. But also our epoch: the whole of History has inexorably and definitively vitiated the Russian Revolution. However owing to the fact that the future is not *made*, that what is lacking calls for *invention*, each one of these individual or collective attempts experiences itself in terms of freedom, *in fact* is free.

It is a double failure: first, because of the plurality of consciousness, next because the historical situation has a form that indicates the limits of every human undertaking. A scientific and technical revolution occurs: cannon, the steam machine, the atomic bomb. The form of the historical situation is broken, a new form is set up which destroys the knowledge and truth, the subjective morality and the ideal morality of the previous epoch. Technical or scientific invention is certainly *human*, it is the invention of a man or of a group of men, historically dated, etc. Therefore it is a part of History and, for another thing, it is evident that it could not take place at another moment of technical or scientific history because it requires that certain conditions be realized. Therefore it has an intimate relation to the whole of history from which it emanates. Yet, in another sense, it is chance in relation to the political-ethical-social ensemble

because the technical (or scientific) series is relatively autonomous and because it does not stem from the same preoccupations of the epoch. In a word, it is not by chance that the steam engine was discovered in the 18th century, but in relation to the problems experienced by the 18th century, it was by chance because it is not united by any relation of comprehension (or by a minimum of similar relations) with these problems—which it all at once suppresses or poses in another way.

In a word, for Hegel, the negation comes from within the thesis and it is united to that thesis that it negates by an internal relation, to such an extent that one can say that the negation happens within the unity of the thing negated, which negates itself and even, by going further, that it is the thing negated that negates itself in negating its finitude. But after what we have said, the negation is united to what it negates by an external relation of concomitance. If we assume a materialistic monism, in the fashion of Marxism, where there is unity because the superstructures are inessential in relation to the economic substructure, we can once again save unity but on the condition of limiting ourselves to saying that the economic produces the economic. For if one considers the ensemble of other phenomena as secondary and inessential, they fall outside History, they are simply the reflection of economic modifications, and History becomes purely economic.

If we conserve *both* human freedom and the primordial importance of the economic, we quite clearly fall into the following ineluctable consequence: lived History has no outside, but every essential invention retrospectively communicates an outside and an external passivity to it. It *receives* a finitude. We know that our thoughts and our ideals will fall out of play and will be revealed to be inefficacious; even if we could hope, all things being equal, for a solution, this solution is neutralized by that appearance of the *chance* that is discovery. We are therefore in the untenable situation that nothing comes *from the outside* to cut off our efforts so long as they are lived in freedom, and yet these efforts have their destiny outside of themselves. Not, someone may say, if one can predict the sense of technological development and the modifications it will bring to the historical structure, for, in this case, we ought to undertake to hasten the advent of this new state of affairs. But this is to place oneself outside History, once again. It is to assume that prediction can get outside its historical framework. Marxist prediction is correct within the framework of the steam engine, the gas engine, and electricity. It conceives a future that is not the surpassing to infinity of this technological stage, in short, an extrapolation. But nothing proves, for example, that the utilization of atomic energy will not produce a state socialism with a dictatorship of technicians and bureaucrats, simply because atomic energy cannot belong to individuals. In any case, we shall find a form of internalized oppression (for oppression tends to get internalized) far distant from the social forms envisaged by Marx.

The historical illusion is a double one: on the one hand, retrospective, on the other, prefigurative. I see the oppressed (the colonized, proletarians, Jews). I want to deliver them from oppression. *These* are the oppressed who touch me and it is their oppression in which I feel myself to be an accomplice; in the end, it is their freedom that will recognize my own. This extends to other *living* oppressed people whom I do not see and to all their living children (or even those about to be born whom I can guess at by means of their living children). Revolt against oppression is the desire to abolish in an instant *this* oppression (by pressing a button). Not being able to do so, I can undertake the *enterprise* of delivering them. But precisely due to the resistances that lead to me some form of *politics*, it happens that I am led to renounce delivering just these oppressed people and even to making use of them as sacrifices to suppress the oppression of oppressed people yet to come. It goes without saying that I hypostasize by way of the future these same present oppressed people into future ones. But therein lies the illusion: I sacrifice men with whom I am in relation so as to deliver from an oppression I cannot conceive of other men with whom I have no relation: 1st, because these new men are free and because my effort will appear to them as a residue to take up (or not to take up); 2d, because the situation will have changed *in some other way* and the oppression to fight against will be *another form of* oppression. As a result, I sacrifice the concrete (oppressed people) to the abstract (suppression of oppression in general, determined relations to undetermined ones). This happens because one has not sufficiently reflected on the *real* relations of living men with those yet to be born: they are just the opposite of what one believes them to be. For the man yet to be born, I shall be the In-itself when he is born, because I shall be dead. Therefore it is from him to me that relations will take place. Going the other way there is an illusion: I represent the man yet to be born to myself as passive because he *does not act*. Therefore I think I am acting on him. But this is not what happens: he is not at all. Therefore I have no determinable relation to him and I act for him as in a void, as blind. Thus we must not sacrifice the bird in the hand for the two in the bush. Our action will amount to nothing if we want to leap from one historical structure to another, absolutely efficacious if we remain within its infrastructure.

History: structures external to one another (in continuity)—internal quasi externality of the infrastructures.

The retrospective illusion is also truth. For if it is false that we were always passive, at least we are really dead in the eyes of the following generation. But the prefigurative illusion is total.

The child, intermediary between the undetermined future of the unborn, who

is a pure abstraction, and the concrete, responsible man, who has committed his freedom in a life, is abstract/concrete. It is through him that the passage to infinity toward the purely abstract gets under way.

The great historical change: the death of God, replacement of the Eternal by the temporally infinite. During the time of God, man was inessential in relation to the Eternal unmarked by time. Today God has fallen into time. Time, discovered as an infinite series and seen in terms of its totalization which includes every moment of time, is the equivalent of Eternity. Modern historical myths tend to consider man as inessential in relation to this total endurance of time. Equivalent negations of finitude. The idea of infinite progress included in that of socialism or of communism. The value of action gets dilated to the infinity of Time. At the same time, substantializing of the future which becomes the essential while the present falls into the inessential (a way of congealing transcendence). Thus today a contradiction is breaking out between the myth of History and historical reality, which precisely, being included in History, is what gives the current aspect of our history. It has to do with the fact that all historical action in its essence can only be *finite* (for the reasons presented above) and that it presents itself with a goal situated *at infinity*. This was not the case in the time of the Eternal because, all action being inessential other than that which procured individual salvation and infinite Time being conceived of as a broken image of Eternity, action was inserted within the heart of repetition and had as its goal nothing more than nearby improvements, short term ones, realizable by one or two generations. Even when it was a question of a king preparing the future, it essentially was a matter of leaving the kingdom to his son in a better state than he himself had found it, in leaving to freedom to come the concern to continue the work undertaken. There was therefore no antinomy, it was just that an attempted action was conservative in one sense or, in any case, set within a conservative framework. The monarch accepted the condition of his subjects, the mode of production, his divine right, etc., and, all things being equal, introduced some local improvement within the whole. This was a reformist History, one which was not conscious of itself, since the finitude of action did not stem from the fact that it is an undertaking within an ongoing history but rather, on the contrary, from the substantial ground of eternity and permanence. If one confined himself to reforming certain aspects of political affairs, it was not because the kingdom, in any way, would be swept away by time, but on the contrary because it was eternal.

History gets alienated from itself in becoming conscious of itself. One possible solution to this antinomy: finite action on finite objects (in the infrastructure) with an opening to the infinite. To put forth one's action to others, as action/testimony, to accept being put *at risk* by others yet to come, as solicitation. But it is as a *maxim of action* that this claim on infinity has to inhabit action. Which in no way excludes recourse to revolution, if it is possible, and it is not a kind

of reformism. Simply, the revolution must be short term. In this sense, Trotsky was correct (even though he understood this in another sense and Trotskyists do just the opposite): the end is born from the event itself. There is a perpetual renewing of near term ends. The distant end is contained in the close one: if one takes a position against the war in Indochina, it is implicitly in the name of the absolute equality of men. If one takes a stand concretely on the side of the proletariat in its struggle to take power, it is in the name of socialism.

Since men have lost their absolute witness, they try to view themselves from the outside. They want to grasp the historicity of an epoch (their own) by trying to see it with the eyes of the following epoch. The mistake is obvious. It is by living his epoch, by comprehending it from within, and by accepting that his comprehension will become an agency of the epoch itself that one is historical, not by contemplating it in terms of the inactivity of the generation that has nothing more to do than to explain things. God is once again present in History. To be an atheist is to accept that one changes oneself by regarding oneself. But thus one particular characteristic of the myth of History, that History can become conscious of itself.

History and its myth. The characteristic of modern History is that it has its own myth as an internal factor. It envelops its own myth and true History gets made through the myth of History. This is indeed the *final* situation envisaged by Hegel, when *Science* rejoins the *Real*. Except that this is supposed to be possible in the case of a Spirit acting on itself, in the unity of its endurance and its consciousness. Thus the changes that take place in ignorance take place through knowledge of their cause and knowledge itself will be the cause of these changes. But this Spirit is lacking, therefore History does not come to coincide with itself, it is inhabited by its myth—split between the mythical representation of a History as realizing Spirit and the detotalized Totality that *represents* this myth to itself. The essential idea to this myth: that surpassing conserves and saves, whereas it saves nothing whatsoever.

History: not the history of the evolution of plurality toward Unity. The History of unfruitful attempts of the detotalized Totality to become a totality or to be nothing more than a sum of independent units. Hölderlin: “*Es ist nur ein Streit in der Welt: was nämlich mehr sei: das Ganze oder das Einzelne*” [There is just one struggle in the world: whether the Whole or the Individual shall prevail] (Letter to Karl, 1801).⁹⁴ But if the Whole existed, there would be no more struggle, for the details would necessarily be included within it. And if there were just a sum of units, details would be units in turn and the question would not arise. There can be a struggle only if the Whole is never the synthetic total

94. Friedrich Hölderlins *Gesammelte Briefe* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, n.d.), p. 383.

unity (it is never completely the Whole) and if the details are never completely isolated (there are never just details). So the Totality is always projected to the outside, in the world, it is a noema, an abstraction that alienates the details without uniting them (the Nation). Yet reciprocally solitude and independence (anarchy, individualism) is just a dream. Hence again a noema. While I play at a fine individualism (Montherlant) I contribute to oppressing the oppressed class and I am myself mystified.⁹⁵

History is inhabited by the myth of unification, therefore it makes itself into another. But precisely *other than unification*; that is, it is the projection on the not-one of the one in the process of becoming, everything gets organized toward unity (dictatorships, authoritarian parties, One World)⁹⁶ and everything fails—dictatorship is oppressive, it is in the period of “one World” that nationalism is the most exasperated.

The American way: technical civilization, hence generality. However it must be noted that generality implies the interchangeability of individuals, therefore it suppresses their organic unity. Insofar as every individual is a *unit* of the concept “worker,” “American,” etc. they are in a state of juxtaposition (mechanical solidarity). They do not contribute in common to make up the essence, but each one of them fully expresses it. Therefore it is a question of binding together these different juxtaposed units into an organic unity. This is what the mass media, best seller, book of the month, best record, Gallup, Oscar, etc. tend to do.⁹⁷ It is a matter of presenting to the isolated exemplar the image of the totality. Naturally all that one gets is the majority. But the majority is given as the expression of the totality (Rousseau. Each American is a potential Rousseau). And since the isolated exemplar is a partial structure of the totality, he learns his taste from the image of the taste of the totality (the minority falls outside, as the inessential sum of aberrant cases). The representation of the majority to the whole of the country is augmented by the very fact of the majority. (The fact that “Symphony” should be the most purchased record this week implies that it will be so the next week.)⁹⁸ Thus the American lives in a state of fascination owing to what I will call his objective opinion; that is, the one that is written in the statistics before he raises the question and which gives him an image of himself. And if he does question himself about his opinion, it is inasmuch as it

95. Henry Millon de Montherlant (1896–1972), French writer and playwright.

96. “One World” is in English in the French text.

97. “Mass media, best seller, book of the month, best record, Gallup, Oscar” are all in English in the French text.

98. American title of a French song that was very popular starting in 1945, both in France and in the United States, where Marlene Dietrich was the singer.—Ed. Cf. Simone de Beauvoir, *Lettres à Sartre*, p. 348, letter dated 16 April 1947.

is the expression of the Totality. Yet it goes without saying that his own consciousness, by itself and apart from this language, remains out of reach. Opinion stays on the *outside*, it is the ideal and transcendent point of the intersection of every consciousness, but precisely because it is something transcendent, it isolates each consciousness in the face of itself, without leaving it words or concepts to express itself. Because he is most alienated by the mythical representation of the Totality (public opinion) as the only result of the interchangeability of Work, the American caught between the transcendent Totality (beyond) and immanent generality (on this side) is in fact the most alone. Unique without knowing it, subjective in immediacy, and with no possible reflection, therefore outside the state of mediating his subjectivity.

Dictatorial way: the Party and finally the leader symbolically expresses the Totality. In him, Totality comes to consciousness of itself. He is the only *subjectivity*, as the enlightened apprehension of the objective. But in this case every individual subjectivity is guilty by essence. Each individual is suspect. For he ought to think and feel over there as the leader does, but he thinks and feels *here and over against the leader*. For another thing, the leader being consciousness is separated from the Party and the Party separated from the masses it is supposed to express. The false image of the Party rooted in the masses and feeling its sap flowing in itself. In fact the masses are an object for the Party and the Party is an instrument/object for the leader (and the leader is an object for certain members of the Party). So America democracy is the abstract and impossible dream of a subjectivity unifying itself in transcendent objectivity. It results only in alienation: an existing subjectivity, but one alien to itself. Nazism takes a step toward the concrete in wanting to incarnate objectivity in one exceptional subjectivity so as to save both objectivity and subjectivity. But with this the exceptional subjectivity falls outside the subjectivity of the masses, become transcended transcendence and transcending, it even divides into abstract objectivity (the historical necessities insofar as it predicts and serves them) and concrete and magical objectivity external to the community (the object of worship).

In a word, Nazism is some progress toward the concrete-subjective in relation to abstract democracy, but at the same time it becomes a regression. In both cases it is a matter of suppressing subjectivity, since subjectivity is precisely the detotalization of Totality. Except, in the case of America, one forgets that every Totality is a totality *for subjectivities* and that, as a result, one makes man into an object for himself. The American ideal being *pure objectivity*, each man is for himself and for others a partially objective structure. Subjectivity is alienated and liberated at the same time (it becomes a kind of sad uneasiness when it falls short of this objective union). In fascism, which is more cunning, subjectivity is not denied and Germany or Italy as a whole are even represented as subjectivities. Except that a kind of abscess to fixate upon is created for these scattered subjectivities: the leader. The leader's thoughts are my thoughts in him, I must *recog-*

nize them as being there. But with this they become objective for me—I do not recognize them, I *learn* them.

Happiness (U.S.), end of History (Hegel), end of prehistory (Marx), unity of the world under German domination: the characteristic of History once it is *discovered*, is to intend its end. Our history is defined by the project of ending History or, if you will, since it is a failure, through this failure of our project to end History. This history is not completely conscious of itself. In reaction to the analytic 18th century (and the beginning of the 19th), which denies the Totality to the profit of individual Units and which, by this very fact, is also a dream about the end of History but an implicit one (since the historical project as enduring gets disseminated into an infinity of present individual efforts), our epoch by hypostasizing the historical Project that it uncovers and extends to the infinity of the Future, uncovers the meaning of History in its *end* (in both senses of this term); that is, in the realization of Totality. This illusion is understandable: a dialectic is possible only if the Whole is potentially present in all the isolated units (cf. Hegel). Every negation is then a negation of a negation or a negation of finitude. The Whole is, in effect, present in each concrete unit. Whence the idea that Progress is the development of order. But the Whole is not present *potentially*, that is, as something that can become actual. It is present *in the act of becoming actual* as everything it might be; that is, as a detotalized Totality. And it will be present in the same way in every historical combination whatsoever. The result is that every negation of unity (sacrifices, massacres) is not a negation to the profit of the whole (or a dialectical negation) but a negation to the profit of another combination of detotalized Totality which is no closer than was the preceding one to the concrete Totality, even if it *plays at* being this Totality. For the only Totality, as Hegel saw, would be the Absolute/Subject. But this means exactly *one subject* or, if you will, the *real* and ontological fusion of every consciousness into one. All current attempts aim at realizing a Totality that will symbolically *play* at this Absolute/subject (beginning with Hegel and his final incertitude). That is, either by considering every consciousness as inessential in relation to a single consciousness (Nazism), or by creating the myth of a collective consciousness (French sociology), or by taking the majority as the fascinating expression of Totality (American democracy). In this way, the reality of History gets covered over. For its essential basis is in fact the inequality between the Totality and the individual. But this principle is in principle *insurmountable*.

The end of History is supposed to be the advent of Ethics. But this advent cannot be provoked from within History. It is a chance combination since it requires that *everyone* be moral at the same time, which presupposes an infinite chance relative to each individual consciousness. What is more, morality is not the fusion of consciousnesses into a single subject but the acceptance of the

detotalized Totality and the decision from within this acknowledged inequality to take each consciousness in its concrete singularity as a concrete end (and not in its Kantian universality).

The same thing applies to the end of History as to disarmament: everyone waits for the other to make the first move.

Just two solutions for a nontemporal and nonrelative truth (which would not be called into question by some other truth, and this one by another, and so on to infinity): that there be an end to History and that, as a result, Truth embrace History in its totality. Or that within History one should be able to transcend History toward the atemporal (eternal Truths) or escape History by way of the *lived* absolute. Nonhistoricity within History.

Wisdom presupposes the end of History. And then everywhere it is entirely contemplative. It is curious that Hegel's system, so active, so full of work and suffering, ends up with contemplation. If contemplation is the fulfillment, it is because it is also the origin. The whole system comes to grief in pure contemplative inactivity, as is demonstrated by the fact that every existential attitude is described by Hegel with the most profound *indifference*. They are merely moments in the system. Total knowledge, moreover, excludes action. Action only occurs when one *takes a chance*. It presupposes risk, therefore ignorance. The ideal is not to contemplate what has *happened* but to *live*. Any ethics that mutilates life is suspect. Just as the phenomenological $\epsilon\pi\omicron\chi\eta$ according to Husserl does not remove any nuance of the world, the ethical $\epsilon\pi\omicron\chi\eta$ must not remove any nuance of human life. Yet, on the other hand, the contemplation of eternal truths, which does leave a place for action, posits man as inessential in relation to divine truth, which is essential. It reduces History to darkness and time to an illusion, it neglects the fact that the truths said to be "eternal" appear in and by way of History.

It is not a matter of being wise but of being *a man* and this man has to be essential because there is nothing more important for men than to be men. Every man as a man is for himself and for others an ahistorical absolute within History. It is precisely because he is this absolute that he cannot be completely captured [*récupéré*]. Were he capturable, he would become *relative* to the whole. It is because he is this absolute that History is not ideal but *tragic* and it does not suffice to comprehend it. But man is absolute insofar as he decides and acts. Not insofar as he might be a substance indifferent to his acts: he is a nonsubstantial absolute. And if he is absolute insofar as he acts—in the world and among others, in *his* moment—he is precisely absolute insofar as he historicizes himself in History.

From this point of view, there is something to be said about this absolute, something that can be expressed through discourse and that is, in turn, a form

of absolute knowledge. But in relation to others, who are equally free—above all, in relation to other generations that will arise when he is dead—this absolute is relative, precisely because they are themselves absolutes. Thus: 1st, the only discourse that may occur concerning this absolute, which does not transform it into something relative or into eternal truth, must be undertaken by this absolute himself. The only absolute knowledge is the knowledge the absolute has of itself. 2d, History appears to this absolute through the very fact this absolute *happens*, as something that becomes relative. The absolute in making itself absolute relativizes the actions of others (death—separation) and it is the pretext for a new upsurge of relativizing. Hence the denseness of History, its tragic quality and its reality, even its unpredictability imply that its very course must be absolute (if not, everything turns into relations with nothing to support them). History is a relativizing and perpetual upsurge of first beginnings. Hegel failed to see this aspect of it, although he did describe “existential” attitudes (Kojève and Hyppolite agree on this) because he wanted to *capture* these attitudes. 3d, the Truth of discourse by the absolute about itself is ontological and ethical in its basic structures, it is *alive* and *personal* in its immediate structures.

Historical time therefore has a threefold dimension: 1st, it is the time that temporalizes itself for each absolute For-itself. 2d, it is the time of intersubjectivities. My direct encounter with (my looking at) the Other makes us live within some temporal unity. But this temporality has two faces: object-time as well as subject-time. This time I live is that of the Other who is my object; therefore it has a face of objectivity, and reciprocally insofar as I experience myself as an object for his gaze, I experience my temporality as objectivity. If he waits for my answer, while looking at his watch, he steals *my* time-which-temporalizes-itself from me, he makes it the time of the universe. 3d, since my freedom marks the end of a series of absolutes that collapse into the In-itself and the relative, my subject-time appears at the end of a series of object-times, and since my past—what I have had to have been—is *in itself*, it is founded upon the past *in itself* of humanity which itself, at its limit, is founded upon the physical time that we retrospectively project on the world before man. Hence my time is always dated in the past in terms of universal time, while the present and the future are unjustifiable and undated time, absolute time. In historical time there is therefore a double rending apart: that of the Other (which is reciprocal) and that of the Past (which is without reciprocity). In the past there is just one time, the historical time that unites the dead: they are all *in the same time*. The essential ec-stasis is *the past* (since past, present, and future are alike in that they all *pass*) and this equivalence allows the retrospective illusion of explanation.

Situations are equivalent as soon as they are surpassed by freedom. *Before* this, they are not equivalent. In one sense, it would be absurd to classify situations

as more or less *easy* for freedom. However if we think of freedom as indifferent to its situation, we fall into mystification.

Precisely because man is absolutely conscious of his situation, the dialectic is wrong. In no historical epoch do we find simply a universal *moment* of History. *Everything* is in each epoch. In antiquity, there are no doubt Stoics and Skeptics, but there is also an Epicurus⁹⁹ who is the first to have a rationalist and materialist conception equivalent to what Hegel much later projects into History under the name of observing reason (for which Reason is an *os*),¹⁰⁰ there is a Socrates who is practical consciousness or consciousness willing to make itself, there is the Platonic or Neoplatonic philosopher who outlined a theology close to that which Hegel attributes to the *Religious*; Aristotle certainly maintains that there is a Master species and a Slave one, but Socrates, himself Master, affirms the unity of the Spirit for the Master and for the Slave (*Callicles*)¹⁰¹ etc., etc. What happened instead was that some of these thoughts or these attitudes did not have the necessary *instruments* to realize themselves effectively. Epicurus's atomism proceeds quite logically from an attitude of mind that we have not surpassed (in this sense many of the materialists who claim to be dialectical [Neville, for example]¹⁰² have not surpassed the conception of analytic materialism). Quite simply, he did not possess the mathematical instruments that give his thought an effective realization. But it was *already* there and it will be the origin of the materialist *tradition*; one will rediscover it as such in the 18th century. Socrates did not have the *means* to initiate a struggle of the Slave against the Master, because the available techniques did not allow for any other economy than a parasitic one. But he is already a surpassing of this situation.

Bad faith also conceals certain aspects of his condition from man. But if it conceals them from him, it is because he is conscious of them. Therefore an

99. Epicurus (341–270 B.C.), Greek philosopher who emphasized a life of simple pleasure, friendship, and withdrawal from the public world.

100. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 209–10; and Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 236.

101. See Plato, *Gorgias*, 481b–end.

102. Pierre Naville (b. 1904), onetime surrealist, who in 1927 joined the Communist Party. He was expelled in February 1928 for supporting Trotsky. See Pierre Naville, *La Révolution et les intellectuels* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 51. In 1946, he published *Psychologie, Marxisme, Matérialisme* (Paris: Marcel Rivière). Cf. Claude Lefort, “La Déformation de la psychologie, du marxisme et du matérialisme ou les essais de M. Naville,” *Les Temps Modernes* no. 13 (1946): 141–51. Sartre also had cited Naville in passing in “Materialism and Revolution” (pp. 200, 205, 211). In 1956 Naville and Sartre wrote another series of articles attacking one another. See Jean-Paul Sartre, “Réponse à Pierre Naville,” in *Situations*, vol. 7 (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), pp. 119–43 (originally published in *Les Temps Modernes* no. 123 [1956]), and Naville, “Les Mésaventures de Nékrassov,” “Les nouvelles mésaventures de Jean-Paul Sartre,” and “L’Intellectuel communiste,” reprinted in *La Révolution et les intellectuels*, with a brief introduction, pp. 125–214. Sartre refers to Naville again in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 2, p. 320.

epoch is always infinitely complex because *everything* is given in it and because an epoch is more like the *accent* put upon certain aspects of the human condition, along with the repressive success of those who represent it in relation to what the others represent, along with the necessary alienation that goes with any idea in its initial form. Communism is as old as the world, Christianity must have existed in polytheism as a personal relation of some men to some gods. And reciprocally, Christianity is polytheism for many people (the saints and the Virgin). If man is always, as Hegel so well put it, other than what he is, it is not just or above all in the sense that he dialectically surpasses his state toward another finitude, it is rather that he is the *presentiment* of a sort of nebulous set of contradictory possibilities beyond the original choice he has made of himself and that his age has made of itself.

In a sense all true philosophy has to stop History since it discovers what is, what is possible, what is impossible. The *sadness* of each philosophy is that each one gives itself out to be in its own way the end of History. After Descartes, there is nothing left to do but mechanically to deduce Science following the Method of metaphysical axioms; after Kant, morality is set forever, as is the tenor of reason and the orientation of science. In his depths, each man *feels repugnance* for the end of History. He wants to make himself and the world in creative ignorance. He wants an open world. (Even though another tendency pushes him to stabilize everything in terms of being.) However, existentialism does not give itself out to be the end of History or even as a form of progress. It simply wants to give an account through discourse of the absolute that each man is for himself within the relative.

Hyppolite: "Spirit . . . is already given as the basis of all experience. Specific consciousness has only to discover that spirit is the truth of its subjective reason. The individual, who claims to realize himself in the world as being-for-itself, must gain (or regain) his substance, spirit. According to Hegel, singular individuals exist in the midst of the spirit of a people as vanishing magnitudes: they emerge for-itself but they are right-away submerged in the spirit that constitutes them and that at the same time is their deed. Universal spirit is the milieu in which specific individuals subsist, and it is the product of their activity. There is a reciprocal action here, between the whole and the parts, between universal and specific, which makes for the very life of the spirit" (Hyppolite, p. 278).

Hegel overlooks the image of intentionality and of transcendence. It is true that the objective Spirit is the work of individuals, it is also true that it surpasses them, not perhaps as the Universal surpasses the particular, but as the largest and most complex thing surpasses the tiniest one. Yet precisely because it is their work, it is an *object*. Objective-spirit means object-spirit. Not just an object of knowledge but also an object within which one moves (as in space, as in the air

one breathes). But precisely because it is these *surroundings*, it cannot *enter into* Consciousness any more than a tree can, and Consciousness can neither emanate from it nor get away from it. Consciousness is in the Spirit as Heideggerian *Dasein* is-in-the-world. As an isolated Consciousness it is already in the world. As a consciousness engaged in multiple relationships with other consciousnesses, it is in-the-Spirit. That is, it surpasses the Spirit toward its own ends. Instead of the Hegelian image—it uproots itself from itself in order to return to itself—we have to assume the image of transcendence: consciousness perpetually surpasses the Spirit toward its own ends. Spirit is the objective and universal structure of an individual enterprise that takes place beyond it. And it cannot become conscious of itself in and through individual consciousnesses. It is in-itself (that is, for consciousnesses) but can never be for-itself. The spirit is the image/object of self-consciousness insofar as self-consciousness surpasses this image toward its own end. Spirit is the always transcendent and noematic unity of the multiplicity of For-itself. However it lacks their ontological irreducibility. Only Heidegger could say of the world that it was neither objective nor subjective because it was revealed by *Dasein* inasmuch as *Dasein* indicates itself through the world. Whereas the Spirit is both objective and subjective. Objective, *first of all*, and in essence, since it is for me the product of the activity of *all the others*; subjective, only to the extent that I surpass *myself too* toward my ends, therefore where I illumine it in *my* way and according to *my* choice. The whole continuation of the Hegelian dialectic will immediately be falsified by this conception of the substance/Spirit of which consciousnesses are both the authors and the modes. I would say, myself, that if consciousnesses are its producers they cannot be its modes.

The initial contingency in History is the number of men. It is a historical factor of the first order, but in itself it is neither an objective nor a subjective factor for one cannot deduce this number from the concept “man,” nor assign *natural* and statistical reasons for their number as in the case of certain species whose practically infinite power of reproduction is limited by external forces. This factor incontestably plays a role (e.g., infant mortality). But it is already taken up into the human and the causes of a fall in the birth rate or, on the contrary, of a rise in births are human (action at the level of life, of myths). Accidents and wars are also human factors. Hence there is a semi-internalization of the demographic factor which, however, *remains* a form of exteriority in relation to the historical event.

Negative Causes

A brute-fact cause in History: the Swedish kingdom of the south (the Vikings), depopulated through emigration, cannot resist the Svea kingdom of the

north.¹⁰³ Unification. This cause is a brute fact and inhuman because it is an *absence*. Because of its nothingness, one can do nothing against it and it acts mechanically, thereby provoking a mechanical result: defeat. For the Sveas, on the contrary, it is an *occasion*, and therefore something taken up and thought through, leading to *victory*, a positive element. In this way the same contingent state of affairs has a human and an inhuman face. The conquered declare themselves to be innocent: no fault was committed, they were courageous and acted as expected. Nothing *human* led to their defeat other than this difference in numbers. However the conquerors congratulate themselves for having known how to profit from this weakness of their enemies. Those factors that seem *inhuman* to one group of men make History, at the same time that they are profoundly human for other groups, having in this way the two faces of necessity and freedom, calling themselves *destiny*. Starting with this we can see that for nations and classes there is perpetually an element of destiny in their history. The progress of industry will be destiny for France, which it will relegate to the second rank. There are periods when History is destiny for a whole nation or class. The individual preserves his freedom within the destiny of his nation. However it is not the same to be in a situation where progress is being made and to be in a situation of destiny.

The individual is self-confirming *evidence* for himself, the necessity of fact; for the other he is a *species*. Therefore he is reached as a species and constituted as such. He is a natural example. But at the same time the Other escapes the species. He is constitutive freedom. Reciprocally, when the individual turns against the species and constitutes others as one, he in turn escapes the species, as constitutive freedom. Hence the concepts that form humanity for humanity can never completely close in on themselves. I am, therefore, outside the species insofar as I think of myself as a species. Yet the other stands over against me in a quasi-reflective position, since he grasps me as an object. Hence *on the same plane* I am a specific object and a free subject, but never both at once, and always the one haunted by the Other.

As a species, I am a thing that is part of the world with a fixed organism and life conditions (birth and death). The individual is not distinguished from the universal. For it is a universal necessity that the species exist by way of the individual examples that reproduce specific characteristics, and if I say that I am an individual, every individual of the species must be able to say the same thing. But I do not say so except in bringing to bear on myself the judgment of an other. And the notion of a species is a purely formal universality since I am completely unaware of what content to give it. The species is the universalization of my facticity and the affirmation that I have a being-there in the world as well

103. Sartre travelled in Denmark and Sweden with Simone de Beauvoir during August and September of 1947 (*Oeuvres romanesques*, p. lxxv).

as existing as an object within the world. The species is, as well, the explanation of my acts and my operations in terms of this being-within-the-world. And just as it is the universality of individuation, it is also the necessity of contingency, since beginning from the species I can establish the necessity for any one of its representatives to appear in a here and now that are both *over there rather than somewhere else* and at the same time a universal here and now.

Finally, it is the repetition of the unique, since I have to have a unique death and this is universally so. I am not *in a situation* in the species, at least not directly, since I cannot then become conscious of my *specificity* (it comes to me through the other): I am, first, in a situation in the species of others, that is, I am perpetually affected by others who are similar to me and who have a species; second, insofar as the other reflects me, he gives my operations an objectivity that I cannot grasp but which is always present. The species thus reaches me by the back way, in the sense that each of my acts, which are unique and free *for me*, is grasped by the other who is behind me as explicable through the species. Hence the species is perpetually assimilatable to an outside of my consciousness and, as I necessarily internalize this outside in thinking of it as *mine*, it is like an unconscious, which is the underlying meaning of my *consciousness*.

In this way, consciousness subtly becomes inessential in my own eyes without my ever being able to grasp the essential. Yet in reality the other has done to me the opposite of what I have done by my own springing into existence: he has rediscovered the species even though the species only exists as having been surpassed. And it is true that I do not know it, but this is due to the fact that I cannot live it except in terms of already being beyond it. My body, my sexual desires, my hunger, my sleep, and my death are first of all *me*, and they are also *values*. Finally, they are moments in the much vaster enterprise of my *action*. In truth, they represent precisely my facticity and exactly the way in which I am and am not my facticity.¹⁰⁴ I am, for example, both my hunger and in a situation in relation to my hunger, I am a surpassed hunger.

In fact, the species is a lack (desires = lack, death = negation) and facticity, passivity. Desires as pure and simple lacks cannot be fulfilled in action. When Hegel thinks that death is a natural phenomenon before the family humanizes it, he falsely assumes that death existed *before* its humanization. He makes it a purely external phenomenon. But from the mere fact that *someone* dies, death is already human (although not realizable). The species is therefore rejected and overlooked by me as regards myself, conferred on others by me and on me by others, and consented to by me through the mediation of others in order to confer it on others. This is typical of concepts having to do with man: apparent

104. Cf. "The Facticity of the For-Itself," *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 79–84. "Facticity is not . . . a substance of which the for-itself would be the attribute and which would produce thought without exhausting itself in that very production. It simply resides in the for-itself as a memory of being, as its unjustifiable *presence to the world*" (ibid., p. 84).

unity concealing a mirrorlike reciprocity; these concepts call for an absolute third party situated outside of space, that is, for God.

The conflict of the finite consciousness calling for the universality of recognition is not the truth. This notion of *recognition* needs to be explored further. In fact, to recognize is not purely and simply to admit the existence of *Dasein*, nor is it to have a simple desire for desire (even though this gets us somewhere). We want to be recognized as a *necessary* consciousness. It is not true that we want to be the Whole, as Bataille believes,¹⁰⁵ or at least that this is what we originally want. We accept our finitude if someone takes away our contingency. Necessity is, furthermore, only demandable in the human world: what is required is that first, if someone takes away our contingency, this world falls to pieces (pulling the kingpin); second, this world itself has to be justified by *a priori* ends. Hence we appear to our own eyes as *solicited* by these *a priori* ends. We are the necessary means for realizing these ends; and these ends elected us as their means. In this way, the spirit of seriousness is the consequence of the desire to substitute a *de jure* existence for a *de facto* one. And when we demand the recognition of our *ends*, it is to obtain recognition of our right to be (religious wars). It is a question of being man by divine right.

The oppressed is the *species, nature*. The oppressor is man by divine right. History is the history of inauthenticity, that is, of the struggle to be man by divine right.

Historical classifications: the city of God, law, nation, class.

Willing finitude. Only a conversion is required since everyone wills it. To want to be everything, if that should somehow happen, is to want everything to be *me*.

To want to be necessary: let us be clear about this. Mathematical necessity has satisfied few people. The idea that my person is the necessary consequence of some interplay of essences (mathematical necessity) or of a material system (physical necessity) works as an *excuse* but rarely as an overwhelming justification because it comes down to reducing my person to exteriority and to the universe, also the logical and mathematical idea of necessity is incomprehensible by itself if it is not a question of a reduction to identity. If it is not defined *objectively* (and how could it be?), it necessarily leads back to subjectivity at some point: this is what one *cannot* doubt. And immediately the problem arises: what does “cannot” signify? Whatever objectivity one gives to a necessary system, as necessary it belongs to some subjectivity. In itself, it is *true*, logical (that is, its moments

105. “M. Bataille wants to exist as a whole and all at once” (“Un Nouveau Mystique,” p. 136; see also pp. 155–56, 157, 163).

are interconnected in conformity with certain rules), and intelligible. But the very notion of necessity only applies to it if it is connected to a subjectivity.

No doubt one can define what is necessary *ontologically*: the connection of A to B is said to be necessary if, A being given, B follows. But clearly, here again, we have to think of a subjectivity that prevents B from following and that is finally conquered, otherwise the succession A B appears as a *factual one*, as Hume showed in his analysis of causality.¹⁰⁶ Necessity exists only for a subjectivity and once again it must be added that to the extent that subjectivity itself brings about the necessary connections, it invents its operations in the free happiness of creation, and necessity is only emptily intended, as the other face of intelligibility (the negative and subjective face, intelligibility being a form of positivity and objectivity).

In fact, necessity appears in a *dialogue* when I want to demonstrate one thesis and my interlocutor forces me to demonstrate another one than it. In any case, the subjective impression is rather one of bewilderment and the necessity is more felt than evident. The genuine experience of necessity comes about only when a subjectivity attempts to undo the knot and does not succeed. However it cannot stem, therefore, from some abstract attempt to bring some form of logical reasoning into order. Indeed, if the intelligibility of the reasoning is manifest, the attempt is merely a game; and if the intelligibility is not manifest, the attempt either leads to a new form of intelligibility and one stops there, or one does not encounter anything intelligible and then stops purely *by chance* (fatigue, etc.), not [through] some objective constraint (the postulates).

In fact, one *experiences* necessity in action. It is never the resistance of the thing that appears as necessary. That is just a form of *opacity*, a *coefficient of adversity*. Necessity is revealed on the level of the means once there is an illumination of the situation in terms of the goal, and there is, at the same time, a revealing of the *means* as required both by the goal and the nature of the resistances. To cross this gully, a plank is necessary. Necessity appears through the fact that this plank *is not there* and because we try to make the crossing in vain. In other words, necessity does not appear, once the logical system has been constituted, as the result of a pure form of doubting what *is*. It appears in and through the *real* absence of the necessary link whose necessity is indicated by the impossibility of carrying out the operation, which is objective and subjectively felt at the same time. This, being a project, clarifies what is in terms of what is not (the end). The necessary means is therefore itself an end. A second-order end or, if you prefer, moment. It is, on the one hand, required by nonbeing (the end) and, on the other hand, sketched out by being (the two sides of the precipice) in the illumination of nonbeing. It is nonbeing that reveals the *lack* of the

106. See David Hume (1711–1776), *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 79–84; idem, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), pp. 17–19.

indispensable means. Yet it is being that announces to us the required qualities for the means to be utilizable: the size of the precipice determines the minimum length required for the plank; the weight of my body, its minimum resistance; my physical strength, the maximum weight it can have.

In this way, the figure of the means stems from both being and nonbeing, it is a mediation between being and nonbeing. It is a perfectly determined being (on the side of being), perfectly concrete and knowable (on the side of being), but *is not* (on the side of nonbeing). However, since it is discovered beginning from the unity of an end, it is not in the first place revealed in exteriority (as in mathematical reasoning). On the contrary, it is created in a single stroke as the organic unity of conditions. The means are the revealed internalization of exteriority. Their essence precedes their existence. They are not the contingent result of some interplay of forces, but rather they are engendered both as an idea (a functional unity) and as being (absent). Following this, if the plank is discovered, it is pure fulfillment (in its contingent being) of the essence. But, furthermore, because its necessity is revealed in an undertaking, that is, for some end, it is itself an end, that is, something that ought to be and a value.

Hence necessity in its initial form is a synthesis of an intelligible articulation and an ought-to-be [*devoir-être*]. The means come into the world because they are *called for* or, if you will, they themselves are what ask to come into the world within the framework of the projected end. Imperative. In their essence, they ought to exist—an ontological proof. The agent launched upon his undertaking appears as the inessential mediator in relationship to the essential relation of means and end. And once a means is realized—and while one makes use of it—it presents the double characteristic of having an effective reality, of *being-there*, and of having been engendered from its own necessity and in conformity with the unity of its essence. And its essence is nothing other than its being called for. In it, essence and value are one. Its necessity may be defined as: a value that comes into being because it is a value. However there still remains a touch of exteriority: the means are necessary for the end, but the end falls outside of the means. The end is not a means for the means.

However let us consider the case where the means are a human being. He too is required by the undertaking. If what is required is a magistrate, an expert, a captain, his qualities are discovered in the object in the glimmer of the sought-for end. Yet at the moment he begins to act, he makes the end that he serves *his own* (unless he is a slave). Hence he assumes the end for his own use, it becomes his end. All at once, he grasps himself as being necessary to the end and just as he assumes the end for his own use, he assumes his existence as a *value* in the same way. He has come into the world because the end called for him, but because the end is his end, it is he that is called for through this end. Suddenly, even the exteriority of the end in relation to the means is replaced by a relationship of reciprocal interiority: the end is a means for the means. It is even a *necessary means* since without it the means would not exist.

Thus the oldest son of the patriarchal family is engendered as the necessary means of prolonging this family. But in springing up within the world, he adopts just this end that engendered him. Hence he engenders himself or, if you will, he experiences himself as necessary. And, unlike an object, he does not pursue his existence as a passive permanence but rather has himself to prolong his existence (in practical terms: hygiene, needs, prudence, food—in terms of *Erlebnis*, as consciousness that motivates itself): he is perpetually an ought-to-be for himself. He maintains his essence and his necessity in his freedom.

All this, naturally, hangs on the end. If the end is conditional, the necessity of the means is conditional. If the end were to be posited as subjective, all the necessity would fall back into pure subjectivity and the existence of the means would rejoin its original facticity. What is more, the end being strictly delimited, the means are only justified through their relations to the end. The plank is justified insofar as it is 1 meter long, 25 centimeters thick, and capable of bearing 100 kilos. But not insofar as it is, for example, painted green. Similarly, the magistrate is justified only in terms of his function and not in terms of his physical individuality or person.

Yet the average man knows how to avoid these two difficulties. In the first place, the end is always *objective* in relation to him, since it existed before he did. In a word, the end is objective because it is first of all an *end for other people*. Obviously, this means that it will be an end for him only if it is assumed by his subjectivity. And it is in so assuming it up for his own use that he internalizes it and can grasp himself as his own son. Only he plays on the fact that he is himself a means for others, hence *born* a means. In this way he escapes the subjectivizing of the end by insisting on its objectivity for other people. Yet because he has to assume it for himself, he objectifies his own subjectivity by setting himself up in his own eyes as a means born for this end—therefore someone who does not have to choose. Therefore, if one demonstrates to him the subjectivity of the end, he insists on the objectivity of the means (and therefore of himself), and, reciprocally, if one wants to demonstrate his contingency and facticity, he presents himself as being called for by some objective end. Hence the end is unconditional. It is a subjectivized objectivity, the absolute justification of his life, the absolute suppression of his facticity. For the end, here and now, requires a means, here and now. The here and now of his facticity pass over into the end where they disappear. And the end, being a human work, conceived by human beings, requires an average man (with eyes, arms, a brain, speech), so the contingency of the species is swallowed up by the end.

As for the fact that there is *too much* in him in relation to the end, therefore too much of the unjustifiable, he can parry this in two ways: either by *forgetting* this too much (he is unaware of the color of his hair, he does not cultivate his character, he does not pay any attention to himself except as a function) and in this case since he *exists* as his undertaking of being a means, he will only be conscious of himself as the means to this end and, finally, he is this same end

internalized (but not subjectivized). The magistrate becomes *justice*. Or, on the contrary, he will consider his set of physical and ethical attributes as the necessary means for being this means. For example, his desires become rights because he cannot be the perfect means unless he satisfies them. He has the right and the duty to *rest* and to *amuse himself*, etc. Or again, these are, simply, absolutes because they emanate from an absolute (he is *the* absolute means). In this way, the absolute means becomes identified with the absolute end, and he demands to be treated as an absolute end by everyone else in the name of that absolute end that they all serve and for which he is the absolute means. As for the absolute end, it is first of all *the city*, then when it makes a place for the abstract imperialism for which all men are equivalent, *God* and his substitute the monarch, who himself is so by divine right, then the *Nation*, then *ethics*.

And no doubt one can indicate a progress in internalization, as does Hegel whose dialectic I am following. Yet in every case, History remains incommensurable with authenticity. To identify oneself through the mediation of the absolute means with ethics as the absolute end and to posit oneself as being created as oneself to realize this ethics, or to identify oneself with the monarch, are one and the same inauthenticity. What must be noted in *all these cases* is the underlying cowardice, for in spite of everything an objective necessity is conserved, albeit one that is internalized in that subjectivity that creates itself. It creates itself, no doubt, but it is *called for*. Its essential relationship to the absolute end preexists the decisive act by which it gives birth to itself. There is a concealed *given* at the very base of the absolute end. It *is* this end, at the same time as it is an appeal. And in identifying himself with it, man who creates himself gives himself out to be a given-being. He created himself because he was called upon to do so. He determined himself to exist in response to an absolute appeal. Or, reciprocally, he was created by God but *because God had need of him*.

In either case, it is a question of that connection between the For-itself and the In-itself that every man seeks. If he is In-itself as a creature of God, it is because he was called to be so as a For-itself from the depths of Nothingness. If he was created For-itself by way of contingent parents, the Cause that called for him was In-itself. The impossible idea, the synthesis, is a For-itself that is In-itself in creating itself For-itself or an In-itself that creates itself For-itself in its Being-in-itself.¹⁰⁷

Man is a For-itself (movement, nothingness) aspiring to be an In-itself (being and repose), but he wants to be Repose in movement or movement in Repose. Inquietude in the midst of calmness. This is why the two ideals proposed to him each fall outside the syncretic exigency he *is*. Insofar as he is merely misguided and forced movement (slaves, proletariat), he aspires to the pure cessation of movement. In other words, movement being surpassing and the surpassed being the obstacle, Evil, he aspires to a state of the world where the coefficient

107. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 90.

of adversity of the thing (and of other men) will be reduced to a minimum (the Hegelian or Marxist End of History, American Happiness). But it should be noted that the oppressed collectivity aspires to this state of pure, undifferentiated equilibrium just as the individual forced into a rending and too brusque movement aspires after Death as pure, undifferentiated *being* and total equilibrium. Hence these ideals are never satisfactory. The representation of the goal makes one sad: "it is nothing more than *this*."

Hegel is careful to preserve wars and the inquietude of the Spirit but does so clumsily.¹⁰⁸ Marx does not predict the end of history but of Prehistory. In any case, what is visible everywhere in communist interpretations is the state of *repose* that the communist society will represent. Similarly for the individual satisfied or partly satisfied with his movement, that is, the one who decides for himself the nature and coefficient of adversity of his obstacles: he judges this ideal to be a purely mortal one. He proposes *life*, that is, the act of perpetually surpassing. This implies that he perpetually maintains the obstacle. He *loves* this Evil as the adversary that allows him to affirm himself (the myth of Prometheus: I do not love man, I love what devours him¹⁰⁹—Nietzsche and the negated eternal return, the perpetual will to surpass oneself). Except that one immediately sees (although he refuses to see it) that he loves *for itself* a moderate evil (a few illnesses or infirmities, a fitting resistance to things for the project that he feels himself to be the author of), above all the Evil *of others*. Therefore it is easy and legitimate to reproach him for having an ethics that only holds within the narrow limits of a happy class (hence one based on oppression).

Also to demonstrate that, since Evil becomes the essential means of realizing the Good, Evil becomes essential and the Good becomes inessential. It is a matter of preserving a bad state of affairs so as to be the pure negation of this state of affairs. Concretely, the individual is led to *set up* the bad order that he negates. He participates in the oppressive class, he is *effective* through Evil (he is bourgeois, as such he contributes to upholding the oppressive order by his very existence as a concrete, particular, and active essence) and *ineffective* through the Good, because he is a pure negation.

Nietzsche's *truth* is the professor of philosophy in a bourgeois, military State. Flaubert's truth is the bourgeois of Rouen.¹¹⁰ They tell man that Evil will endure forever and the dialectic can lead them to making Evil Good. This is what

108. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 227, 288–89.

109. "I do not love Man; I love what devours him.—Now, what devours Man?—His eagle. Therefore, Gentlemen, everyone should have an eagle." André Gide (1869–1951), *Marshlands and Prometheus Misbound*, trans. George D. Painter (New York: New Directions, 1953), p. 136; French original, 1899. Gide was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in November 1947.

110. Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880), French novelist and object of Sartre's last and most extensive biography. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert, 1821–1857*, trans. Carol Cosman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981–). Four volumes have appeared; the fifth and final volume is in preparation.

happened to Flaubert in rejecting the Commune because it dreamed of suppressing the bourgeois, to the collaborator Montherlant. They want a *tough* ethics, that is one that involves wars, death, and oppression. They reach the point (Claudel and *The Satin Slipper*) of deciding that Evil must be done to man in order to provide him with the occasion of surpassing it to create the Good.¹¹¹ They may slip (anti-Semitism) into pure Manicheism, that is, to the division of the world into two contradictory forces neither of which can carry the day over the other, as well as to a perpetual meditation on Evil (considered as the first term).

Is some synthesis possible? Without conversion, certainly not, since it would be a synthesis of the For-itself and the In-itself. But if we bring about this conversion things look different: 1st, the ontological understanding of man allows us to say that he will always be movement, hence surpassing. Therefore there will always be evil and therefore an obstacle. 2d, but as regards this Evil, we also understand that it is man (as intersubjectivity) that decides what it is. With the result that we can neither know nor will for man the preservation of some obstacle that is *our* obstacle (be it oppression, wars, colonies, etc.). We act (in relation to man) *in ignorance* of his goals, his Evil, his Good. What we can decide is that we cannot stop ourselves from deciding, it is *our Evil* that is concrete and contemporary with us. And as regards this evil, we do not have to maintain it in order to offer it to man as an occasion for Good, since it will perhaps be *our* Good which is evil to him. We must only try to suppress this evil absolutely. Certainly we do define ourselves by the struggle against Evil. But we will define ourselves as an effective essence only if we struggle against it in good faith, not if it is a fraternal enemy whose disappearance we do not fundamentally wish for. Rather it must be as though Evil were a viper that we really want to stamp out. This is why it is not a question of our lining up on the side of those who toy with Evil, but rather with those who suffer it.

However this implies two antinomic requirements, both of which must be preserved. The first is to define *with the oppressed* a positive Good, in the light of which Evil appears as evil and that is necessarily hypostasized as a goal in the Future. This is the *directive maxim of Action*, the *regulative idea*. This idea is Socialism (which moreover has to be defined—cf. below—starting from work and freedom—therefore starting from movement—not starting from happiness—that is, from repose and death).¹¹² The second requirement is *not to*

111. Paul Claudel (1868–1955), *The Satin Slipper; or, The Worst is not the Surest*, trans. Fr. John O'Connor (New York: Sheed & Ward, n.d.).

112. Socialism “is none other than the affirmation of human freedom in and through history” (“Materialism and Revolution,” p. 253). It “intends to give liberty and justice to all men; it is not this fundamental intention which can wrench it out of history since, quite to the contrary, it is in and through history that it intends to be realized. But no more is needed to distinguish it radically from all policies which aim to establish or to preserve the domination of a class over the whole of society. . . . Socialist construction is *privileged in this*: that one must, to understand it, espouse its

take seriously this infinite Idea, because it necessarily remains in suspense owing to the freedom of men yet to come, also because it cannot be for them an absolute End that we will have inscribed in things through our action, but only a *proposal*. We have to *impose* our Good on our contemporaries but only to *propose* it to our descendants. Thus it is something absolute/relative, just like us. And we, being *inside*, are at the same time *outside* because of its concrete finitude.

A revolutionary, as Lenin said, has no *ethics* because his goal is concrete and his obligations are made known by the end he proposes for himself. And Hegel showed quite clearly that in the small ancient city the concrete bond of the citizen to the town took the place of ethics.¹¹³

Ethics is by definition an abstract fact. It is the goal one gives oneself when there is no goal. It is a certain way of treating others when one has no other relation to others except the purely ontological relationship. It appears, therefore, when my relation to the other is defined by the purely formal recognition of his universal personhood. But his universal personhood is itself defined by his freedom, it is abstract recognition of his freedom as potential, not as actual. In other words, it obliges respect for freedom in general as a pure potentiality and it leaves undetermined the relation we ought to have with the content of this freedom. No ethics, for example, tells us how we should behave in the face of the revolutionary's maxim. Of course, someone will reply: We have to examine whether he violates the universal ethical rules in his maxim. All right. But if it does not violate them, by chance, we may decide to do nothing more than to *tolerate* his action, that is, to be passive with respect to it. Next, *it cannot be* that the revolutionary does not violate the rules of ethics, since precisely he wants to establish a concrete bond with persons and because this concrete bond in becoming a maxim for him implies concrete obligations that oppose him to the formal obligations of ethics.

In this sense, ethics, not having any real content, can only be conceived of in terms of some status quo. What relations should one have with the family, *assuming* that the family exists and that one wants to preserve it (or not change it, which comes down to the same thing)? What relations ought one to have with this or that person, *assuming* that there can be relations beyond our clans,

movement and adopt its objectives; in a word, one judges what it does in the name of what it intends, its means in the name of its end, whereas one evaluates all other undertakings by what they ignore, what they neglect or what they reject. . . . Only those who participate, in the East and in the West, in the movement of socialism can and should judge." Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Ghost of Stalin*, trans. Martha H. Fletcher (New York: George Braziller, 1968), pp. 119–20. The French original first appeared in *Les Temps Modernes* in a series of articles published between November 1956 and December 1957.

113. See the discussion of Hegel's interpretation of the ancient city in Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, pp. 337–41.

castes, and classes, that is, in ideally, and not effectively, negating classes and clans, that is, by preserving them intact for not having wanted to see them? Hence the historical agent moves beyond ethics, he ignores it. It is just a purely formal game between juridical persons. It appears where political action, religious life, history have stopped. That is, in periods where abstract law defines the ethical person and when real History falls outside this definition. Hence it seems useless. Yet, in turn, the concrete goal that the historical agent proposes for himself presupposes a certain conception of man and of values. It is impossible to be a pure agent of History without some ideal goal (realism is pure passivity or valuing History per se). So it is suddenly no longer true that one may use any means whatsoever to realize the goal: they run the risk of destroying it. In this way we catch sight of, beyond the antinomy of ethics and History, a concrete ethics that is like *the logic of effective action*.

An example favorable to the dialectic. Its limits. Margaret, queen of Denmark, called upon to help the Swedish nobles against their own king, brings about the unity of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, but just because she was called upon by the Swedish nobles, this union remains amorphous.¹¹⁴ Its very possibility indicates the absence of a national feeling. And for it to be efficacious, quite clearly the members of the new union had to have the sense of being a new nation: the nordic State, hence they had *already* to have had the sense of being a Nation. (We cannot assume that this union would have given birth to this sense by itself, since this bond is necessarily looser and less concrete. It could only have subsisted, in a somewhat weakened form.) Therefore the union so conceived is only possible for reasons that make it precarious, even though the geographical situation and language worked in its favor. As soon as it appears it is going to develop in Sweden—and in reaction, in Denmark—its contrary: nationalistic feeling.

Since, in fact, this feeling does not exist among the nobles, neither does it exist for the sovereign. And the union takes place, unconsciously or not, to the benefit of Denmark. This semi-oppression is expressed in the *more abstract* ties between the Swedish subjects and their Danish leaders, between the ruled and the rulers, although the poverty is concrete. A situation that develops *negativity*; that is, the concrete (poverty) produces the Swedish nationalistic feeling as the particular negation of this state of affairs. Whence the struggle for independence and, in reaction, a Danish nationalistic feeling as the negation of this negation. Denmark becomes aware of itself as the negation of Sweden, which it wants to absorb. But these nations that want to become unified in opposition to one another can only do so by means of concrete organisms bringing together scattered forces that count as the individual and concrete unity of the country. Unity

114. Margaret I (1353–1412), regent of Denmark (1375–1412), Norway (1380–1412), and Sweden (1389–1412), who brought about the Kalmar Union in 1397 uniting the three countries.

comes about, therefore, in and through the absolute monarchy, precisely through an alliance of the king (the incarnation of the nation) and the people (whence comes a part of the revolt because it is the people who have suffered) against the nobility who, desiring to maintain themselves as a class, are affected by a kind of internationalism or rather anationalism.

Everything is ready therefore for the synthesis. This will be the fusion through war of these States under one of the centralizing monarchies and the fusion of the particularistic nationalistic feelings into a more general feeling, but one that is equally concrete: the pride of *work* and of collective strength. And it is precisely the country that had the most need for national unity (Sweden), which was most steeped in negativity, that finds itself in the 17th century, *precisely* because of this, most prepared to exercise its hegemony.

Yet just *here* the dialectic stops. No synthesis. Because History is not a closed system and because in being posed, the problem was enlarged:

1st, to constitute itself as a nation Sweden wanted to suppress one of the factors in it of internationalism: the Church. At once it was *reformed*. This draws it into the orbit of the German countries and quite abruptly brings into play a new factor: the synthetic union of the national factor and the religious one. As a consequence, one of the problems that will absorb Sweden is the defense of the Reformation, which leads it to battles in Germany and a new conception of hegemony. It is noteworthy that Gustavus Adolphus and Oxenstierna dream of establishing *a Swedish empire* without assimilating Denmark.¹¹⁵

2d, furthermore, Swedish politics was not one based on conquests. The negativity was too strong. This country wants to assimilate everything that will allow it a greater internal coherence (the acquisition of natural frontiers), but it does not want to risk losing this cohesion by assimilating bites too big. Charles XII, for example, was not a conqueror.¹¹⁶

3d, the strength of Sweden transforms its very world: it has new neighbors because it is stronger. It *becomes* Germany's, France's, and England's neighbor. At this level and since, at the same time, these countries were themselves becoming aggressive and unified, with a foreign policy, its problems are different.

4th, Denmark itself, whence came the idea of unification, loses its strength and preponderance. It is not capable of assuming the direction of these three countries.

5th, Norway remains passive, it is not a *factor* in this dialectic, which is therefore burdened with the presence in it of an absolute (but not negative) passivity. In this way, there was a passage from the immediate to mediation but, what Hegel did not see, at this level the sense of the dialectic gets lost, a new universe appears with new horizons. Indeed, the current notion of a United

115. Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632), king of Sweden; Count Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654), chancellor of Sweden from 1612 to 1654.

116. Charles XII (1682–1718), king of Sweden (1697–1718).

States of Europe stems from another point of view, presupposes a totally different cultural and industrial development, other dangers and other perspectives, and is in no way the synthetic realization that had been sought.

In fact, the synthesis *gets lost*. But this is how, in fact, History proceeds. Thesis and antithesis frequently appear in it because the relation between consciousnesses is one of struggle and opposition, but from this very fact—or from the fact that *during this time* the world gets completely turned around—the struggle loses its meaning and is integrated into a new universe that is the negation of the possible synthesis and the forgetting of the meaning of the struggle. We can find an analogous situation in the example of the medieval Anglo-French empire that leads to the Hundred Years War, to the birth, on both sides, of the national spirit, and the total disappearance of the envisaged problem.

From this results a perpetual *failure* for some collectivities of their synthesis: Germany, for example. 1st, failure of the Holy Germanic Empire (realized too early and too late). From which comes the breaking up of Germany into principalities. 2d, the attempt at German unity by the Reformation. However the problem becomes international. Failure of the Reformation's attempted unification. 3d, the attempt by the Prussian royal house, 1715–1914. But *too late*: unification implies a relation to other countries. Failure. 4th, the failure of unification under Hitler. Yet, in turn, the existence in Europe of a large country that *has failed* influences the whole of Europe. Germany is a *destiny*. Yet it is precisely an essential factor for the neighboring countries to be linked in a tight relationship to a country of destiny. A destiny for itself, Germany is destiny for the others to the extent that they undergo the blows of its destiny. It contributes to taking their history away from them because it is not in possession of its own history. And to end the dialectic, Europe-Germany makes an abrupt pause, then collapses: the problem no longer has a meaning. The collapse of Germany makes a new world appear. The falling away of Europe, the appearance of American power and Russian power.

At the very least, one will say, there is a march toward the unification of the world. It is true. But what I would like to show is that this march is not dialectical. One could say that it is realized by the reciprocal action of two factors: the one is a continual progress in the appropriation of the world and in the negation of distances, scientific and industrial progress; the other is a pseudo dialectic, always on the point of closing in on itself and always suppressed: human relations.

It is certain that the human enterprise ends in other results than those which it had proposed. In particular, at the *present* result (today, 1947) whatever it may be. Whence the temptation to speak of the cunning of reason. But to do this would require that there is *one* reason, that is, a principle of unity situated behind individual consciousness and particular collectivities (such as the species. One also speaks of the cunning of the species) or simply a real presence of the whole

yet to come in the parts. In this case, perhaps it would be necessary to turn toward this Spirit that is in the process of realization through our losses and to worship it in our very losses. But if Reason does not exist, if one cannot speak of its dialectical cunning, then the loss is barren. Our action is stolen from us. As soon as it happens, it is externalized. It is seized by other freedoms and constituted as an object according to their freedom and their categories. Yet it is mine and I must assume responsibility for it, that is, accept being defined by it. However, in the moment that I assume responsibility for it, I do not recognize it. Still, I must assume responsibility for it precisely because I must recognize that I wanted to act on others, that is, to propose to them a motive for action.

It has become a passive starting point and alienated from new beginnings, it no longer participates in the infinitude of the subjective will, it appears in its finitude and turns back against me to qualify me as finite even though I would like to surpass it. It is precisely the occasion for others to draw consequences opposed to those I would have wanted them to draw and yet it is grasped by others as having these consequences, for which I must also assume responsibility. In this way, through action, my alienated, already-made personality imposes itself upon my creative freedom, bringing about not just its present but also its past and its future, which cover over and confuse my freedom, which temporalizes itself in terms of its own future. In this way, my action, as soon as I make it objective, becomes alienated and becomes my *destiny*.

Yet it is in no way Reason that alienates my action in this manner, it is the anonymity of a thousand people, it is the other as a perpetual mirror game, as detotalized-totality. Hence it is impossible for me to reconcile myself to my destiny and to worship it, as Hegel wanted, for I can have no confidence in this Night. It is not the deep Night of Reason but rather the mere night of Anonymity. Action will lead to other ends than my own, but I have no reason for assuming that these ends are higher than my own. In truth, these are not ends, they are results. Hence, since I am nothing other than my work, I am a destiny for myself. And since man in general or humanity has History as its work, and since it perpetually alienates itself in History—because it is a detotalized totality—History is both the work of humanity and its *Destiny*.

Broadly speaking, it is clear that one generation is the destiny of the preceding one and that it finds its destiny in the next one. But from this very fact we see that there is not *one* Destiny like some organic development of humanity, but rather a jagged line of destinies that have and do not have unity at the same time. From the fact of the detotalized totality it follows that part of the human condition is being-in-its-work and being-in-History as part of a *Destiny*. *Destiny* being the transcendent signification our work takes on, therefore our lives and our person, owing to the fact that we are originally in and through others. It is not a question, therefore, of loving our *Destiny* but of assuming it as one category of existence with other people. Humanity envelops History and History envelops humanity. Or, if you will, humanity perpetually envelops itself and changes itself

into an endless multiplicity of objects through the very play of this enveloping, without every attaining the unity of an object and a work.

The threat of the sun cooling down reduces all history to vanity. If humanity must die and die some time or another, its History once again has an outside, it no longer has its end in itself, it is only a vain form of agitation. It is sufficient that the sun *may* cool down for humanity to be ranked with other species and for its history to be a snare. However, it is humanity that *makes there be* a sun. It remains true that *even within this hypothesis*, a finite form of historical action preserves its absolute value. It is only History as absolute reality that disappears, because its end is external to it.

Man is in a situation in his work as he is in a destiny.

Geographical necessity, it will be said. Undoubtedly, but it too is rethought and already historical. Sweden in the 18th century has to swallow the pill: it is a small country and has to preserve its neutrality. It must do so because its neighbors are too strong. However this geographical necessity does not appear until the large countries have attained their unity or before the industrial revolution. This necessity is essentially dependent upon *others*. Furthermore, in refusing the unity of the nordic confederation, Sweden made a future for itself as a small country. Therefore geographical necessity appears within History. History is precisely that by which *there is* a geographical necessity.

The problem of Truth: it is not contact with the Eternal; it is Temporal. But if it is plunged into time and varies, it loses its nature of being Truth. What is more, to say that the Concept is Time (which comes down to saying that Progress is the development of order) as Hegel does, is optimistically to assume that the particular is haunted by totality. It makes no difference, for Hegel, from the point of view of the atemporal (which is the term for becoming), that each moment is considered in its partial truth. Fundamentally, time is still an illusion since there is circularity. Time is the finitude of Truth. But since this finitude is negated, surpassed, and taken up again, time vanishes at the end of History. Of, if you prefer, Hegelian time, being characterized by the hegemony of a definite future, disappears when this future is realized. Truth is the Totality of historical Time turning in on itself, since time is not closed (detotalized totality). Historical time is both thing and spirit (owing to its radical breaks), while the time of the individual is completely consciousness.

In any case, if we return to the most simple case, we see first of all that objectivity is the creation of the eternal. If I say, using a sophisticated example chosen by every philosopher, "the book is on the table," it is true at this moment, but not tomorrow. But if I say, "the 18th Brumaire, Bonaparte carried out a

coup d'état," I create the eternal. It is true forever that Napoleon carried out a coup d'état on that day. However, if we consider things more closely, *every* element is temporal. Napoleon carried out a coup d'état on a certain date in History, and I say so on another date. From the point of view of knowledge, as from the point of view of existence, it is a question of temporal facts. However on the level of signification, the fact is eternal. Why? First, because the truth under consideration is *neither me nor Napoleon*. It is *not in me, nor is it in Napoleon*. It is something transcendent. But not at all in the sense that God is transcendent. In the sense that $2 + 2 = 4$, no matter what the historicity of the one counting, is a thing transcendent to consciousness. From the moment I say it, I stake out forever a starting point in time.

This means that the past as past is *being* that I have to be. Hence each past event is a being to be taken up by humanity as a whole. Hence it has an origin but not an end. Truths *appear* in History, but when they are there, they stay there forever. A truth is what, having been born, is taken up forever by humanity. From this point of view, curiously, it is the most temporal truths, what once was not true, that pass over to the eternal. It is not true that light is an emission of particles, but it is true that Newton thought it was.¹¹⁷ But this is because it is a matter of a subjective consideration. Truths that refer to an external object (scientific truths) intend the ahistorical world of repetition. That is, an eternity this side of time: space and the species. Therefore their content is extratemporal. At the same time, they contain within themselves an appeal to the infinite subjectivity of humanity. They ask to be taken up. And, through the fact, they are taken up in one form or another: surpassed but conserved. They represent, therefore, something eternal themselves. No doubt one might attribute a recurring origin to them, namely that they were truths before being discovered. But this is only an interpretation of the simple fact that their object is this side of time. The fact that they may subsequently be surpassed in no way implies that they do not raise a claim to eternal truth. Nor does the fact that they may be preserved imply a presence *of the whole* (total Truth) but only that every human being's stepping stone is the action of another. Hence it is characteristic of humanity to create the eternal as a structure of its history. And it is also true that truth is becoming. It is brought about in time. It is by means of time that the concept exists. But the concept is not time, it is eternity in time.

By taking up exteriority (through knowledge and action—science and industry), History has placed exteriority within itself, as one factor. Repetition, instantaneousness, necessity are internal factors of History.

117. Isaac Newton (1642–1727), English mathematician and physicist who formulated the laws of motion which today bear his name. He published his theories about white light and colored light in 1669 and 1675 respectively.

Study: Bergson—Two Sources—, Brunschvicg—consciousness.¹¹⁸ The history of the Reformation. Compare Bainville and Benda.¹¹⁹

The economist with his *homo oeconomicus*, just as with his effort to deal with economic facts mathematically, remains on the level of analysis (18th century) and the abstract person, the subject of rights. As a consequence, he always fails to account for the phenomena that surpass the individual—values and prices. Indeed, the fact is that value and prices are fixed independently of individual action, they remain invariable while the individual changes and vary without the individual entering into it at all. The attempts by the neomarginalists to *deduce* prices resemble Rousseau's attempt to deduce the social contract.¹²⁰ It is a matter of establishing a kind of ideal derivation of prices beginning from an ideal person whose act is *already* a value, in the sense that it is a choice of the better without any error. A price is established through the interplay of these economic "good wills." When the sociologist replies by pointing to the existence of concrete *collective realities*, he is inspired by reality and the spirit of synthesis. The price of iron, the Bank of France, a union are something other than the results of individual interactions. However the sociologists try to account for them in terms of some superindividual reality and subjectivity, Society with its collective representations, which is a myth and an impossibility.

Hence it seems that we are faced with the choice between the abstract and analytic myth of the individual and the concrete myth of Society. In both cases, the whole deduction or explanation hangs on this myth as its postulate. We have to start over with this problem. The first thing to note is that the individual intends *objects* that largely surpass his historical personality (eternal truths, collective realities). The individual may be *conscious of* society. However, precisely because he is conscious of society, society falls outside of him. In the second place, the concrete form in which he represents the totality of other people is precisely that collective unity we call Society. The collective unity is never abstract: it is the unity of other people's having done something.

For example, the collective unit I call the Post and Telegraph Office is united for me through its common function for everyone. It acts for an end and ac-

118. The first reference is to Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton, with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1935), the second to Léon Brunschvicg, *Le Progrès de la conscience dans la philosophie occidentale* (Paris: Alcan, 1927), 2 vols. Brunschvicg (1869–1944) founded the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* and the Société Française de Philosophie. A critical idealist, he taught at the Sorbonne from 1909 to 1940, except for the years of World War I.

119. Jacques Bainville (1879–1936), French political writer and historian, and a leading exponent of conservative ideals between World War I and II. Pro-monarchist and anti-German, he was elected to the Académie Française in 1935.

120. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), *On the Social Contract*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).

according to rules. It is an object of a special type in that I can *make use of it*. It is an instrument between me and my goal (to send an order to some manufacturer). But it is an instrument of a peculiar type. I am not unaware that its structures are based upon human spontaneity. Error is possible. The letter may not reach its destination; a strike may interfere. In other words, I *must have confidence in* a totality that imitates determinism, instead of basing myself securely on a determined object (a lever, for example). This concrete unit includes structures and forms of behavior. Its forms of behavior are understandable and to a certain extent predictable. And, although they are revealed to me by way of the behavior of a particular employee, they remain collective. If I say, "the post office will not pay out a money order unless I bring some identification," it is the Post Office as a whole that refuses to do so through the body and voice of this employee. However he may also be rude. At that moment I see that there *is more* to him than just the mere manifestation of the collectivity. He has moods. However, on the whole, what surpasses is Evil. The perfect employee is reducible to carrying out the rites and representations of the collectivity under consideration.

In this case, I am external to the collectivity under consideration. It will also appear to me as a collectivity if I am an employee of the post office, except that *I will be inside it*. In this case, I find myself united with a number of other individuals by: 1st, a form of work; 2d, a condition of life; 3d, interests; 4th, a hierarchy; 5th, rituals; 6th, frequently a myth. But all of this still only constitutes relationships among individuals. Society exists when I become conscious of it. And I first become conscious of it *in the gaze of the other*. For the waiting women, I am a post office worker. Since their gaze transforms me into an object, they ground me in the collective totality and the effect of their gaze is therefore to transform me into part of a synthetic whole, that is, to present me to myself as inhabited by this whole and as lending my body and voice to it. Through the gaze of other people, society as a whole (institution, organism, class) haunts me. *But* I never fully reach myself *in the other*. I can know what the other makes of me, I *cannot experience it*. More exactly, I *am* not it. I have to be it without being able to be it. Hence the other's gaze, external to the society of which I am a part, dissolves me into an objective totality of which I am an organic fragment, creating in me either a giddiness in the head or a task, a perpetual being *caught up in* a totality that I have to be but that precisely I am not.

My individual history is therefore an affirmative—or negative—effort to take up a position in relation to this society, either by grounding myself in it (proletariat) or in rejecting it (Jew). These efforts are vain and bad faith. My distance from society remains constant for it is my distance from the other. And if I am *being looked at*, I have shown that this gaze is the undifferentiated gaze of *Others*. Without quantity. Hence *a society* looks at me as *society*. In the second place, this society constituted *from outside* and *in which* I am (in the sense of *in der Welt sein* [being-in-the-world]) is cemented together by *internal gazes*.

Up to this point we have seen that *I am in* some external objectivity. If I could lose myself in it, I would be outside of myself for myself. I would alienate myself to the point of being this post office work^{er} who is outside himself for the other. At the limit: the masochism of the inauthentic Jew.¹²¹

Next, internal objectivity. If this initial objectivity or external objectivity is assimilable to society's *body*, internal objectivity presents the image of subjectivity or consciousness, but in terms of objectivity. I am *looked at* by other people who are, as members of the society in which I am, the emanation of the Totality of which I am a part and *which I am*. I find myself in the other. But not as an individual. Rather as an expression of the Totality. It is the totality that considers me as a totality. In other words, there is a recognition of the totality by itself. And this recognition comes about insofar as the totality is a form of immanence and activity. It is the Cartesian *cogito* but alienated since: 1st, the other is other than me. Therefore consciousness is separated from itself by a form of nothingness. 2d, The other is a gaze. Therefore once again I do not experience myself as I am for the other: I have to be this internal form of belonging, I have to rejoin this whole that is me and that I am. Hence, from the single fact that *for the other* I am an inessential structure of the Totality, I emerge from this totality as having to be it. From this fact, it appears to me as even more alien to me, more compact. However, I am *inside*, I have to link up with myself in it. Hence it appears to me as this Whole wherein I am and that I have to rejoin. In other words, *I am in* the society under consideration just as *Dasein is in the world*. And, it goes without saying, because the internal gaze is interchangeable and not determined, it is perpetually the entire society—that is, me in it—that invites me to coincide with it. I am like a thought that is isolated from a consciousness while remaining in consciousness or, more precisely, I am like Spinoza's mode that never rejoins the substance from which it emanates.¹²²

3d, in turn, I emerge as consciousness and I set myself up as an individual over against this society I want to enter into. But here we rediscover the process described concerning reflection. From the single fact that I become conscious of myself and of society, society falls outside of me and I am outside of it as consciousness. It is *totality without me*. Yet I am already alienated inside myself—but only through my acts and having made a value of my work. A captive as a work. It is still an object/Totality, where I am in danger through my work, even though I surpass it toward other ends. At this moment I can be *against* society (a bourgeois against his class), but this way of being against something is never like the struggle of *one* person against *another*. To be against the society that at the same time alienates me is always to be against myself

121. See *Anti-Semite and Jew*, pp. 95 and 107.

122. "By *mode*, I mean the modifications of substance, or that which exists in, and is conceived through, something other than itself." *The Ethics*, in *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1955), vol. 2, p. 45.

insofar as I make myself a part of it like an object. I am both inside and outside at the same time. Hence Society is a real, noematic being but one that is neither the sum of individuals nor their synthesis. It is always the synthetic totality of persons insofar as this totality is brought about by *others*. Hence it is everywhere and at all times present without *ever being*. It is the Me that I am not, it is what I am for the Other, what the Other is for me. It has a structure that is torn apart, for it is impossible to join together its three structures: the objectivity of exteriority (for the Other who is outside), the objectivity of interiority (for the Other who is inside), and the intimacy of alienation (for *Me* who is inside and outside). However, it is *real* because if I want to negate it *from* a structural point of view, it is reinforced by *other* points of view (if I negate it inasmuch as I am an *individual*, it still exists from the points of view of interiority and exteriority with me inside).

However, this Society exists, it does things, it has *representations* that can be attributed only to it and that no individual can produce either in their forms or in their extension. Therefore a double problem: the nature of these representations—their origin.

A collective idea is one of the unifying structures of a given collectivity. If an idea is conceived of by each isolated element with the certainty of rational intuition, it is not *social* for it is isolating. It does not make the individual feel his dependence on the group, on the contrary it makes him sense the possibility he has of thinking for himself. It is common *additively* to different people who are convinced of it and, even though it may be the origin of some form of association, it does not bring about any unity among these people other than a *mechanical* unity in the Durkheimian sense since each member has no need of the others to conceive of it.¹²³ An idea is social when others are its guarantee. This means that for each “other” it is the idea of Others.

Let’s consider an example: in a party newspaper a journalist states that the measure M taken by the government is harmful to the interest of the Country. If we consider the truth *realistically*, this journalist is an individual controlled by individuals and each reader of the newspaper is an individual juxtaposed to other individuals who act in general in the solitude of the act of reading. But if we consider things in this way, the sentence put forth by the journalist is nothing more than an *opinion*. And, as a reader, I can have a contrary opinion or not have any opinion at all, or can accept his opinion as a pure and simple opinion. In reality things do not happen like this. It may be that the journalist is a cynic.

123. “A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint, or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.” Emile Durkheim (1858–1912), *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller, ed. George E. G. Catlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 13. Cf. “Un Nouveau Mystique,” pp. 172–73.

But most of the time, if he is sincere, he considers himself to be an interpreter for his readers. He does not create a thought for them—that would run the risk of disuniting them—rather he *uncovers* what they are thinking. But not the thought of each and everyone of them—rather the thought of all in each one. He is exactly in the position of no. 3. That is, he grasps himself both as *in the party* and as distinct from the party. He knows he is regarded by the collectivity as its interpreter. Therefore he writes in the setting of internal objectivity. He does not want to form any thought that would isolate him from the community any more than he wants to deny his isolating subjectivity by using it to form some thought for the group. It is a matter of vanishing into the substance of which he is one mode, and not being able to do so directly, he works through the mediation of an idea. This idea will realize in the future the unity of the isolated subjectivity and the collective totality of which it is a mode. This, properly speaking, is its value.

In other words, the idea will be *true* if it really brings about the unitary fusion of consciousnesses. In this way it will have proved that originally it was indeed the potential unity of the group, having become what it was. In fact, what will be proven is that the journalist's assumption, that the idea brings about unity, was correct. That is all there is to it. But the truth is put right into the idea. Hence for this very idea, the editorial writer who conceives it judges himself to have no responsibility. His idea is not supposed to distinguish the group but rather to fuse it. However, from the very fact that he belongs to the group, he sets himself outside of it and cannot sink into it; it ceases to belong to him. Therefore he misses his goal. Yet each reader apprehends the idea as it is presented to him, that is, as his group's idea. For him, it does not have the subjectivity of an idea but the objectivity of a thing.

In truth, every idea is like this. The other's idea is first of all a *thing*. To comprehend it, I have to slip into it having first broken its thinglike shell and take it up as a subjectivity. But here what I want to rediscover in it is not just myself, it is me as a part of the whole, me as containing the whole. The idea, therefore, is not entirely comprehensible since its value to my eyes is that it is the expression of the wholeless one. It is the idea of others to which I myself belong as an other. But to the extent that I do slip into it, I find only a feeble form of my subjectivity, one lacking certainty. What is needed therefore, for me to feel the collective value of the idea, is that I should be looked at by *another* who has this idea (internal objectivity) and who looks at me as the expression of the whole and at the idea in me as a *thing*. In effect, this other objectifies me. Except this objectivity is precisely what I cannot realize internally. It haunts me as the whole of my being for Others. In this way the consciousness comes about that the collective idea cannot be apprehended in its totality as such. It is given in profile and as subjective—as mere opinion—by way of my subjectivity, but it remains totally outside, unthinkable, in its *reality*.

The social idea is infinite and unrealizable. However, the instant after, I see

a member of the group who is penetrated by the idea and who presents it to me. Once again the idea is an object, and if I look at the person speaking to me I transform him into an object as well. Therefore it seems possible for me to get hold of the idea/object even though for the moment I am outside it. But hardly have I slipped into it when it becomes subjectivity again. Either I am outside the idea as pure subjectivity confronted with an object. Or I do enter into it, but it overflows me in all directions with its phantom objectivity.

Finally, the third element, our society is wholly regarded by other societies as having this idea. At this moment the idea becomes a *property* of the society in question, like the color of somebody's hair. Thus the collective idea is an *object* and therefore unassimilable. An object *in which* I am as subjectivity, yet with the mission of making it exist—or an object that contains me as an alienated objectivity which I encounter facing me. In either case, something unrealizable. It is a mode of the Other's existence. And as such, the idea is alien to itself. It is constantly stolen from me and it is constantly stolen from itself since its center is always outside of it.

Hence each person's goal, his passion, which may continue to death, is to realize the *idea/object* as his pure subjectivity. But as a consequence, the collective idea is never thought by anyone. It is anonymous because it is always the other who thinks it. Therefore it does not *exist*, like *Erlebnisse*, it *is*. However, as an *idea*, it is “comprehensive-consciousness” to me. An idea/object is sacred because it is in-itself, for-itself.

What has just been said also applies to values. Need picks out the object but does not constitute it as a value. It is a value if, through my desire, I realize that it is an object of desire for the collectivity as such of which I am a member; in other words, if my desire constitutes it as a social good because my desire is the concrete expression of the totality's desire. This never happens, but the value of the object, as a hypothesis about the object based on my desire, does get constituted: 1st, when I have seen other members of the collectivity desire it; 2d, when I have been seen desiring it by other members of the same collectivity; 3d, when *we* have been seen desiring it by the members of another collectivity. Consequently, my subjective need is haunted by an objectivity in interiority. It is not the collectivity that inspires my desire, rather in realizing it, I realize the collective desire, I give body to it.

Consequently, in desiring bread or milk, I do not exhaust the desirability of this milk or this bread; before me and after me they will have a desirability that my desire only actualizes, and that the consumption of a *portion* of these goods leaves intact. However, this desirability is a quality of the external object just as the idea/object was an objective property of the community. What is more, as soon as I desire, the value becomes unrealizable, all that remains is *my* subjective relation of destruction/negation to the desired object. One does not eat the value. Hence the value is fixed while my desire is variable. The value of the object is its desirability for others. Labor does not create the value, rather it manifests it.

The object worked on by X members of the collectivity is manifested as being potentially desirable by the other members of society. The worked aspect of the object is the obverse side of its desirability. Yet since one never labors except to satisfy a desire, labor does not create the value, it brings the object to the level of desirability.

Social desire is the determination of a void that labor must fill. In this way, labor does confer value. But this does not mean that it has the value it confers. In a given society, it has the value that society confers upon it in consideration of the goods that it procures and the ideology of that society. For example, the labor of slaves has less value in a society based upon slavery than does the labor of the proletariat in a modern society. And within the limits of the general value of labor, the value of any particular piece of labor is determined by the good that it procures. It is impossible that labor should have a value independent of the society under consideration, for a value necessarily implies an evaluation of which it is the correlative term. Who then evaluates labor in order to give it an absolute value? Only God. In this way, society outlines its destiny according to the value that it attributes to labor. Labor is in History as an internal factor.

History in relation to freedom is just the Other. The essential factor of History is freedom as its initial motive force and its goal. But it is immediately turned into destiny by the Other and it is what, as alienated freedom, oppresses original freedom, for only freedom can oppress freedom. Hence History is alienated freedom.

The motive force of History is freedom as negativity. For goals, we have to distinguish: 1st, submission in the name of one's own freedom. The master and the slave, but replacing consciousness by freedom. Therefore to cover over the freedom of the Other while remaining free oneself. 2d, covering over freedom as regards oneself and others (conservative oppression). 3d, preserving freedom (as a concrete mode of doing things: usages and customs of the city under attack that, even if previously one criticized them, now appear to be spontaneous, autonomous, and *indigenous* in relation to the folkways that the assailant means to introduce) or creating freedom (insurrection of the slave against the master, but also migrations; for example, to gratify one's needs in order to be free of them. However there is always something beyond this need yet to be satisfied).

The beginning of wisdom in desire. Hegel writes that the underlying intention of desire is the "supersession of individual existence"¹²⁴ (which we shall call facticity), which is an appearance devoid of essence. "In effect, self-consciousness attributes to other-being the value of being in itself the same essence as the essence of its Self." From this naturally follows the death of Desire that is the

124. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 108.

passage from singularity to the universal. Yet it is precisely Hegel's ontological optimism that is the source of this whole dialectic.¹²⁵ He presupposes that the only aim of consciousness is that type of knowledge that is recognition and that this recognition is possible. He thereby affirms concerning desire that it is the desire for consummation, therefore for destruction, which is only partially true. This all postulates, in effect, that man is a plenitude that destroys (putting the accent on assimilation). This will be no truer if we were to consider man as a lesser being who gets close to the In-itself in order to borrow his being from it (the desire of property). In fact, desire is indeed the desire for singularity but not for the destructive recognition of being-there. Instead, more correctly, as every language reveals, it is desire for possession.¹²⁶ In fact, the element of *Lust* or of Enjoyment properly speaking is lost. That is, precisely any enjoyment. In fact, desire is not the desire to gain recognition from the other and to recognize him by suppression of his being-there or facticity; on the contrary, desire desires the other *in his being-there*. How can we say, if I desire the body of a woman, that what I want is to get rid of this body? In fact, I want to possess the consciousness in this body. But precisely in trying to appropriate for myself this singular consciousness by way of her taste, her odor, and everything carnal that she is, I stand at the beginning of wisdom because it is just desire (and its dialectical moments of tenderness and love) that wants *all* of a being, that is, its consciousness as *this* facticity. Hence there is an ethics proper to desire that is the claim for the human in its totality. It is true that it is still on the level of passivity. In tenderness there will be a synthesis of activity and passivity: one feels tender about an act to the extent that it is flesh.

The analysis of society I gave above seems to show that society is a phenomenon immediately deducible from ontological considerations about the detotalized totality. As soon as there is a plurality of Others, there is a society. Society is the first concretion that leads from ontology to anthropology. It is just as absurd to assume that there are *men* without society as to assume men without language. Human reality springs up among others. This is translated into anthropological terms by the statement that man exists in society. And his original relationship to society is that he can neither completely ground himself on it nor can he completely surpass it.

Exchange value: entity, Platonism. There is only use value and the price without this mediation that mediates nothing since *for one thing* Marx recognized in one small instance that the exchange value is nothing without the use value.¹²⁷

125. See *Being and Nothingness*, p. 243.

126. See " 'Doing' and 'Having': Possession" in *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 575–600.

127. See Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1: *A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: International Publishers, 1967), pp. 159–60.

Labor cannot confer an exchange value if it is exercised on an object with no use-value. For another thing, he adds to the fixing of prices considerations foreign to exchange value (History, myths, etc.) so that the exchange value comes out as mixed up, as unrecognizable in the price, like the Platonic εἶδος in the sensible thing: crushed between the use value and the price, the exchange value breaks apart. Except that we cannot, like the theorist of marginal value, consider the use value as a connection between the individual and the thing. To do so would be to add a subjective coloration to the object. What attracts me, as regards my current hunger, will be this cup of milk, which loses all value if I am not hungry.

Indeed, there is a bit of hocus pocus to be found in every economist: just as they assume the individual as *universal* (*homo oeconomicus*), they also assume his needs as universal. Hunger is a universal need of *homo oeconomicus*, and they thereby relate the object of need to a universal use value. But this is possible only from a reflective, mediated point of view. In fact, an individual becoming aware of himself through consciousness discovers his singularity. Hence, if he were the only one, he would discover value as a singularity. And this is, moreover, what he does do in some cases: e.g., the child and the broken toy, the adult and the memory-object. However in the majority of cases and above all on the economic level the object appears as possessing an inexhaustible value. I *respect* it even when I have no need of it. And this does not necessarily imply that I relate it indirectly to others' desire. *In itself*, milk or bread is respectable. My desire for bread, that is, my concrete and revelatory relation to *bread/value*, appears exactly in the type of perception that uncovers the object as a totality by way of an *Abschattung*. The value appears through my particular desire which uncovers it without exhausting it. And next comes refusal, it will be the object of my empty intentions. There is not therefore a homogeneous relation in equilibrium of the homogeneous to the homogeneous but the disequilibrium of the heterogeneous to the heterogeneous, an appearance of the universal through the individual, which is characteristic of human reality.

In this sense, Marx made progress over all the economists and he is even beyond the marginalists, for he shows that universality is integrated into the object by an *operation* that overflows individual desire. The labor of *others* integrates the value into the object because it brings it from the inhuman limit state of the human world to the state of being an integrating part of the human. The object becomes work. But the labor itself has to be *human*, that is, not a biological spending of energy but an operation directed toward some end (which Marx himself recognizes when he says that there is no exchange value without some use value). And the end is the satisfaction of *others'* desire (through the division of labor). Hence even in labor, others' desire is present as the labor is present in the desirable object. Hence the object has become an object endowed with a collective value by the twofold addition of *others'* labor and *others'* desire. At the

same time, the object designates me for myself as *an other*, to the extent that I keep myself within the established limits for its use. I am some consumer.

But as such I am also a mere representative of the collectivity intended by the labor. The labor *is addressed to me*, it calls upon me as a depository of society. It remains to ask *who* is speaking to me: a slave, an oppressed laborer, a free man? Is the appeal inscribed in the object a servile form of homage, am I going to appropriate for myself the man himself, his fatigue, his death in consuming it or will this consumption be the *recognition* of a freedom? And in the reciprocal implication of an operation/end, is it the end that subordinates the operation to itself or vice versa? In the first of these cases, it is the object that becomes essential—that is, consumption and, through this consumption, consumer society, in the final analysis, a class. In the other case, there is recognition of the human as such, and the end represents the necessarily singularized direction of its action. As we can see, even within a society of oppression, in the case of bourgeois art: where the painting is appreciated as an operation of free human labor. This depends, in sum, on the value society attributes to labor itself. But where does this value come from? Clearly from the situation of the society (technology, social structure, economy, and thus its myth of man).

Here we have exactly the relation of situation and project that we find everywhere. It is not true that the state of technology and the infrastructures by themselves give the value of a product. By themselves they are incapable of doing so. But they do confer this value insofar as they are taken up into a project. And the project itself finds its limits in the state of technology and the infrastructures. As for saying what the *a priori* value of labor is (as though there were some ruse that at every instant concealed its ideal value), this would be as though we decided that there was an *a priori* human value. In fact, the value of labor is what each society makes of it (all its classes being taken into account). It would be absurd to imagine that the value of servile labor in a society where the slave is held to be an animal or where he is himself an accomplice in this representation is the same as in a society—even one of oppression—where the laborer is conscious of his human value. What we can and must do is to fight for a society that will give labor a determined value (e.g., for a classless society) and attempt to realize this society. If we should bring it about, then labor *will have* this value. But it is not hidden in things waiting to be discovered, it has to be created.

We are nothing other than the result of our operating in the world. Qualities and states result precisely from this operating as secondary structures. The authoritarian *character* of a leader of industry expresses the original choice of constructing an industry with human matter that has to be ordered about, and if we also find this authority in the man outside the factory it is because it is referred to by the secondary enterprises subordinate to the first one; for example, in contemporary society, paternalistic industry offers *factory towns* where laborers are supposed to marry and live and have children who will succeed them in the

factory and where the boss is supposed to set a good example by providing the image of a hierarchical family, wherein we discover marital and paternal authority as the symbol of the hierarchy of free wills. And if authority precedes effective realization as a form of power, it is because the choice precedes the operation.

For example, for the oldest son of the boss who will inherit the factory and knows it, authoritarianism is a sign of predestination that he *plays at*. And he does so emptily and without hope (the anger, scenes, and imperious attitudes of a child) as a formal, preparatory exercise of what later will be a concrete function. This authority itself as a secondary consequence of the commander's choice clearly cannot be suppressed by the circumstances (except insofar as they can be the occasion for a radical alteration in choice), but the matter or content of the operation as it gets modified is the occasion for a change in the operative form intended to reestablish unity, therefore for negating change in order to maintain the integrity of the original individual choice.

For example, this authoritarian industrialist, if he fails in his operations, may, as Lagache as shown,¹²⁸ become jealous; that is, basically, he may introduce the resistance of the world (taken as a *fault*) as an excuse, whereas at first he only considered its malleability—and he may, at the same time, transfer his desire for authority from the primary structure, which escapes him, to a secondary structure (wife, family) considered as easier to grasp *and* as a symbol of the world that escapes him *and*, because it is free, as a consciousness that can be saddled with the world's *fault*. Hence the comprehensible unit “authority/jealousy” is not to be understood as the grasping of some passive relation between given elements but as a certain relationship between secondary forms of behavior or average types of behavior within some principal undertaking.

To conclude, this type of personality is not experienced from within as such. From within we only find the consciousness of some directed activity, or rather—for even this formula is passive—a directed activity that is conscious of itself. It is not grasped in its work nor by the subject who sees in the work only the result of his operation or, as we shall see, himself as justified. This type of personality is the abstract moment of an operation separated from the result inasmuch as it is seized on the fly by the other. Indeed, if I see the industrialist in a cafe speak to a waiter, or to one of his friends in a salon, I conclude from his tone, his manner of closing himself off to the other's reasons, that he *is* authoritarian in character. And, in fact, I am correct to discern a certain passivity in his behavior, which I translate by *qualifying* it, because indeed since I see it in an abstract form, cut off from his undertaking, it no longer has its reason within it.

128. See Daniel Lagache, *La Jalousie amoureuse* (Paris: PUF, 1943). Lagache (1903–1972) was a classmate of Sartre's at the Ecole Normale Supérieure who became a psychiatrist. It was Lagache who gave Sartre a shot of mescaline in 1936 that led to a period of depression and hallucinations. See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, p. 209.

In the final analysis, the authority in the conversation is a subproduct of the concrete authority in the undertaking, a sort of survival, both habit and a constant kind of mimicry, the effect of his conception of the world rather than something constituting his conception of the world. To grasp it in all its power, we must see the connection between the original project and his work. One consequence is that we have to see in such a personality a differentiation of the original choice through the character of the *whole*, with various implications that present the world as a synthetic reality to be manipulated.

Yet, on the other hand, if work is such a commitment in the world, what in fact is its structure? Originally it is a form of appropriation. My work belongs to me. Responsibility is the original form of property. (And reciprocally all property implies, in the eyes of the State for example, responsibility.) But it is also a synthesis of identification. The original tie to property is one of identification. What I own represents me. What I make is me outside of myself. Thus, in one sense, a man is an undertaking that gets inscribed in things. What I am is me inscribed in a matter that necessarily alters me. First of all because it is *in itself*, concrete, most of the time because it is exteriority. Hence the fate of man is to be an interiority that comes to know itself in exteriority. Hence from the very beginning he has an alienated image of himself.

But, beyond this, his work has to be recognized and given a value by the Other. In reality, it takes place through and for the other. The other's agreement is necessary, if only to confer its exteriority on it. But the other is an unpredictable freedom. He *creates* everything he touches. So if I solicit his recognition, I incline him toward creation. If I fully *succeed*, that is, if I do incline the other freedoms to take up my project and make it objective, I have totally failed because I no longer recognize my project. It is entirely alienated from me and comes back to me as the figure the others have conferred upon it. And since my work is me, it is just me that I alienate in succeeding. In one sense, there is a success in failure for the me refuses, it remains open, it has not been "caught," it does not allow itself to become frozen. In another sense, there is failure in success for the image I wanted to make of myself I have incited others to make and I do not recognize myself in it. However it is me. I am responsible for what I have not made and not responsible for what I have made. My act is stolen from me and I must claim it such as it is. And since my character is nothing other than the actual relation of my choice to my work, the other's theft is the theft of my character.

Hence my undertaking is above all else the total risk of myself. I act in order to be swallowed up in the other and in order to rediscover myself in the other. Naturally, I can next decide what meaning this other that I am, this enemy to myself, has for me. But this signifies that *I have become a situation for myself*. In this way, *I am in* my character and my work. Beginning from a situation that is not-me in relation to me, I have transformed it into me. But with the same stroke I have alienated myself from myself. Hence my me has become not-me

to the extent that the not-me becomes me. My work is subjective/objective, wholly mine and wholly escaping me. To say that I am a situation for myself is to say that my work becomes me in the form of an objective necessity; that is, that I belong to myself in the form of destiny. By throwing me into the dimension of the for-others, my choice becomes a destiny for itself, it brings me back to myself as my destiny. Indeed, my work, bearing the double finality of me and the other, limits my freedom by its made finality—that is, its inverted finality. A finality that acts in imitation of causality is precisely what we call fatality or destiny. Hence what I must want in acting is, 1st, to be perpetually destiny for myself and, 2d, perpetually to cut short this destiny in order to rediscover it anew as destiny continuously there where I thought to have escaped it by discontinuous zigzags.

All action is creation. Creation of the world, of myself, and of man. In this sense it is true that a change in technology produces a change in man. But this change in man was itself in the choice of the technology. The mere rearrangement of elements into a new form as means toward an end alters these elements down to their matter. One says that one has only changed the *form*. But here one is drawing on the old concept of form. In fact, the modern form (*Gestalt*) is a unification of the whole in its particular nature, therefore in its substance. Let us add that this change is brought about in a world that is already human. The question of any modification of the in-itself remains to be discussed. Action is a creative humanization of inhuman elements, hence the appropriation of a sector of the world by man. But, by this very fact, it is for man one way of apprehending for himself what he is for some region of being whose mark he bears. Hence all technological action is a decision about man himself. Man's action is the creation of the world, but the creation of the world is the creation of man. Man creates himself through the intermediary of his action on the world. Here is something we can concede to the Marxists. Still, at the same time, humanity being a detotalized totality, there is an internal theft of any work, therefore the image that man has of himself is perpetually alienated. It is quite right that if the Absolute were a subject, it would be God since the World would return to him the image of a harmonious labor. However there are *subjects*. Consequently God is a captive—his creation alienates him from himself, it is perpetually for him in the element of the Other.

For Hegel it seems as if there is nothing in the individual as an actual reality for consciousness (the work) except the individual as some unactualized determination (talent). For me, on the contrary, there is infinitely more. There is the whole density of the world and of others. Hence the individual only exists with all his riches in the element of exteriority.

Hegel on creation (pp. 239–40 [*Phenomenology of Spirit*]): “True, this original content is only explicit *for* consciousness when the latter has made it into a

reality; but the distinction between a content, which is explicit *for* consciousness only *within consciousness itself*, and an intrinsic reality outside it, no longer exists.”

This is true in part. But it does not take into account the important modifications that the upheaval at the center of the world imposes on creation. In fact, consciousness in no way wants to find itself amidst things as it was as an immediate, unactualized essence, rather it wants: 1st, to impose its form on what is not it; 2d, to transform itself into the element of other-being, that is, to transform itself into marble, gold, etc., to enrich itself *for itself* with the depth that these elements make manifest once they are realized in a project; 3d, to make itself sacred as that reality endowed with an infinite depth by all other consciousnesses. Let's start at the beginning again.

1) Hegel distinguishes an *originally determined nature* of individuality or immediate essence, which has not yet been posited as what acts and which is called some special capacity or talent—the operation that is universal negativity or negating movement or becoming and passage—finally the work or actual reality leads to actualization. What completely disappears in this description is the very notion of creation. First of all, originally determined nature is a *given*. Hegel speaks of it as *found* effective reality. In other words, he sees in it a quality or talent, he accepts the psychological idea of a passive, purely contingent “gift,” analogous to a “beautiful voice.” And he opposes to it work as this same gift but as having passed over to actualization. Hence consciousness sees itself in the work as in a mirror and there is *nothing more* in the work than in consciousness. Action “simply translates an initially implicit being into a being that is made explicit.”¹²⁹ Consciousness seeks only to see itself and to reach the certitude that what springs up before it in this light is nothing other than what slept in this night. Hence the setting is indifferent.

What is more, by a sophism, Hegel takes as the setting upon which consciousness makes its mark, “the qualityless void of being.”¹³⁰ This is why he is certain that this space will not show to consciousness anything more than itself, for it is a pure dimension of exteriority. However, if space without any determinability is the setting organized by the work, not only can it not deform the work by adding something of its own to it, but it cannot even be *informed* by the operation for it is just pure juxtaposition and dissemination without any quality. It is true that the bronze or canvas are *part of space*. But they are determinations of space, qualities. Hence they cannot send back *something* except if they always send back more than one puts into them. The formula, “one only finds in things what one has put into them,” is absurd. Even to put something into something, it is

129. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 239.

130. *Ibid.*, pp. 242–43.

necessary that one subsequently find there infinitely more than one wanted to. It is the idea of *the devil's share*.

I am well aware that Hegel rediscovers it when he brings into play other consciousnesses: “*their* interest in the work, which stems from *their* original nature, is something different from this work’s *own* particular interest, which is thereby converted into something different.”¹³¹ It is just that, first of all, this alteration appears too late. On the level of the other, whereas one ought to have found it right from the upsurge of the work. Next, Hegel sees in it, as following from the postulated premises (the nondeforming work/mirror), an element of dissolution of the work, whereas it is a constitutive element. Here, it seems likely that the terminology and no doubt a certain way of thinking bring about the error (for contemporary philosophers no less than for Hegel), for we have just two contradictions available to us: either the individual finds himself in the work—because *it is his*—and then one can write as we saw earlier that “the distinction between a content which is explicit *for* consciousness only *within* consciousness itself, and an intrinsic reality outside it no longer exists”—or the work appears as an alien, discovered reality.

But, in fact, neither of these two possibilities reaches the truth. If, indeed, consciousness rediscovers itself on the work as if internal to itself, then objectivity disappears, only subjectivity remains; that is, a certain way of being for oneself as presence to oneself. This is what happens when I try to read while I am writing—there is only a quasi reading.¹³² Instead of indicating a thought to be “intuited” beyond themselves, the words refer me back to myself; that is, they do not make up a body with their meaning, I barely touch them only to find myself sent back to myself; that is, to the more or less syncretic indistinctiveness of my thought. They never make it undergo that fruitful forfeiture of “incorporation,” it doesn’t take, it rebounds upon itself. And me, I do not get beyond myself.

Hegel made a mistake here because he spoke of consciousness in terms of knowledge, that is, he believed that it sufficed to project a conscious modality on the world as a screen in order to immediately see it there. He did not see the important reversal and radical alteration that the modification of objectivity implies because he had already situated objectivity in the subjective. But neither is it true that my work is a wholly alien reality for the other, for it is never for him some given to be discovered, some found reality. Instead it is an operation that has to be made actual, an end in the form of an absolute exigency.

In reality, for the work to reflect myself to me, I must no longer be in the process of doing it, that is, I must in part (but only in part) have become an other in relation to it. This is when I half enter into it. This signifies that I can,

131. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

132. The “writer cannot read what he writes. . . . The operation of writing involves an implicit quasi reading which makes real reading impossible” (*What is Literature?*, p. 50).

to a certain extent, apprehend it through the observation of its sensible elements (hence as an actual reality existing outside of consciousness). However, for it to be me, I must not apprehend it, but on the contrary, I must be filled with the meaning of the sentences or by the painting's intention before seeing its sensible elements and beyond them. Hence, I have simultaneously to carry out two contradictory operations, grasping what I am right now, having already found what I am looking for. At this level, my work is a *phantom me* for me. It is never wholly alien. However to the extent that it is so, it offers me *precisely* not just my found original reality as actualized reality, but above all else, myself as *an other*. Myself as existing in the dimension of the in-itself, therefore as being able to be transcended, as finite, as presenting a coefficient of adversity to me. And, at the same time, myself as created by me, therefore as only depending upon me.

In short, it unites the passivity of the found thing with the creation *ex nihilo* of the *causa sui*, but *causa* represents me as subjectivity and *sui* me as external object. Me, finally, as existing in the world, that is, as an element of a finite system that confers its form upon this system. Finally, me with the depths of an inexhaustible matter. Myself as prior to being infinitely appraised, with the style of being of a stone or of bronze or of colors. Reciprocally—something Hegel completely overlooks—the world in its total opacity, as if it were kept in being by a free choice that would be me myself. Hence Hegel's formula that "the difference is abolished, etc." is wrong. But rather than the stone becoming consciousness and consciousness stone, exteriority is internalized even while remaining exteriority.

It follows that if my work is me, I am for myself unfathomable since beyond these foreseen and desired relations, others are established as existing by themselves. The underlying ground is neither freedom (translucid to itself) nor inertia (pure juxtaposition without essence), it is freedom existing in the form of inertia or, to put it another way, inertia traversed and upheld by freedom. Neither the translucency of a thought nor its total obscurity (its lack of meaning) are this ground, but rather a translucency that occurs within obscurity; an open-ended impenetrability playing upon the mixture, which lacks the equilibrium of human comprehension (which is instantaneous, whatever effort one might previously have made to bring it about) and the infinite divisibility of the inert (which necessitates an indefinite progress). Hence I am therefore for myself, by way of the aspect of an underlying depth, wholly given yet necessitating an infinite process if I am to rejoin myself.

Starting from this, the qualities of the object (determinability) naturally intervene, which, by penetrating my interiority with exteriority, transform me into that image that is my work. For example, exteriority is the absence of relations. Hence for one point of view, in every work as an object in space, there is an absence of relationships among the elements that are most surely related. The work in essence is in danger of falling apart and, more precisely, it is precisely

me that is threatened with ruin. So I am fragile as a threatened synthesis of elements that can always return to their independence again, etc.

These comments are sufficient to make clear that *from the beginning*: 1st, the relation I have to my work is not the peaceful knowledge of my reflection or of my potentiality as actual reality. It is an underhanded and contradictory relation of possession and magic spells, of appropriation and alienation; 2d, since it is clear that I am entirely different as a found external object from what I am as pure interiority for myself, the relation is in no way that of a “simple transference” of myself (p. 242), but one of *creation*. In truth, I *create myself* in the dimension of the world. I do not project myself into it, I do not reflect myself upon it, I do not translate myself there, I do not make myself pass from virtuality to actual reality there: I *create* myself there for there was nothing “in me” before that could be translated into the language of external reality.

Furthermore, Hegel had to overlook creation since he identifies any passage or means with pure negativity. But how could this pure negativity bring about the projective passage in the first place? I think he means that it can leap beyond the determination of a moment, that is, that it can negate the negation. But this process, strictly speaking, allows the transformation from A to B, B being not-A, that is, the negation of (not-A), but not the *projective* process that is not the negation of the determination of A but the projection of this determination into another element.

2) Therefore my work is a creation. And creation is not negativity. And I create nothing other than myself and the world at the same time. And since this work is one layer in my appropriation of the world, I have no other me in the dimension of being-in-itself or the world than the world as taken up and recreated by me. And if I recognize myself there as me, it is not by means of some comparison, for there is nothing there to compare, but only appropriation. At present, where is my creation, where does it begin? We clearly see that creation means both first beginning and intentional production. Without these two elements, there is no creation, only a miraculous apparition or reparation. But creation cannot be recognized as such unless it is related to a being that itself cannot be derived from another being. Otherwise there would be no first beginning.¹³³ Hence creation implies a creator who would not himself be derived, or if one wishes, who would be both first creation and intention. Furthermore, this creator cannot be his own creation under the pain of becoming object and subject at the same time, hence of introducing an infinite distance between himself and himself. In truth, the bond between the creator and the created thing is one of reciprocal dependence. It is in creating the thing that the creator *exists* (not just as creator, which would only be an application of the principle of identity, but as uncreated creator). It is in terms of the created thing that he creates himself,

133. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 54.

not in the indistinction of a subjectivity. The creator has to be a pure surpassing of his facticity toward the creation of himself in the world of facticity. He has no existence in repose in his pure essence. In himself, he would not even be a pure abstract concept of creation, but rather pure nothingness, the pure impossibility of even conceiving of the means of bringing forth a created object from himself.

Hence human reality is a creation of itself outside of itself in the dimension of the world where it already is as being-in-the-world. This is what we call choice. The original choice is not therefore a *talent* or reality discovered in "certain circumstances," instead it is an operation. What is more, *the goal* is not the originary reality conceived of as a pure, terminal projection. On the contrary, it retains within itself the totality of the world as that which consciousness has to surpass toward its own creation. Man is a being who can only act upon himself indirectly, that is, by way of the infinite intermediary of the world. There is no place, therefore, for talk about "spiritual animals"¹³⁴ because each *individual* is not locked up within his operation and because there is no originary nature where he could find the content and the goal of what he must realize. In reality, choice is the choice to create a state that does not yet exist, beyond the world, that is not a projection, and that is, at the same time, *me*. But there is no other me than this goal to be realized. I and the world are one and the same thing, except I discover myself on the created world or on the world to be created (in fact, it is always partially created, partially to be created) in a nonthematic way when I am on the unreflective level. Reflection makes the *Me* appear thematically as the unity of my operation (which is defined and made precise through its contact with the world).

Hence creation cannot be *one* direction of human activity. There can be creation only if man is himself in essence a creative act and can only create himself. (It is inconceivable that one creates something other than oneself.) Yet, reciprocally, he can only create outside of himself by creating the world. The result is that it can in no way be true that the first and substantial unity is the *Me*. It is not even true that reflection first of all makes the *Me* spring up. The original *Me* is my work. Reflection makes the reflective *Me* appear afterwards as the transcendent and passive unity of the whole set of operative activities, just as it makes appear qualities and states (or characters) as transcendent unities of partial operations.

3) But creation is also a process of *giving*. Since we never arrive by ourselves at conferring the entire objectivity of the created object, we have to make recourse to the other. The other is precisely the *Me* for whom we are an Other. And it is true that for the point of view of abstract knowledge this otherness is an appearance without an essence, but it is experienced in the first place in its

134. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 237.

insurmountable singularity. Hence all our creation for him is a kind of found reality. In any case, if it is merely encountered with indifference, it still remains essentially tied to me, and the other does not alter it. The uncomprehending look of an Iroquois leaves Picasso's painting unchanged, and it remains a painting-for-Picasso. He merely constitutes it as an object in general, leaving the charge to uphold its existence to the painter. In order to constitute it as an object for me, the Other has to take in hand my work and, to some degree, appropriate it for himself, allowing his subjectivity to flow into it. In a word, he has to create it in some way. It is only because it belongs to the Other that it stops belonging to me and becomes Other for me, that is, me myself in the dimension of the Other.

The ensemble of colors and words that I join together is never for me an objective creation so long as I cannot observe it. For I can only observe it when it is Other, that is, alienated. Therefore, only beginning from that moment when the Other takes it from me in order to make it serve his own ends. My book exists for me in its objectivity once the other allows his subjectivity to flow into it, that is, once he recreates it. By realizing it in the perspective of the Other's evaluation of it, I discover a depth that I was incapable of putting there myself for myself. This depth is not comparable to its signification, at least as I discover it, for example, in a painting I have not made which I discover. For in this case, the signification is reality-in-itself *turned toward me*. The depth of my work for me, when I reread it in connection with the Other's evaluation of it, is its signification insofar as it is turned toward the Other, and it escapes me in principle to exist in the eyes of the Other. Hence I have to lose myself in order to find myself.

Reread a passage you wrote while excited that has made someone else laugh. Your emotion will be rediscovered in reading it, but not as an object, rather as mere subjective interiority. More precisely, the scene itself that you are rereading opposes some resistance to you—it made someone else laugh. This centrifugal objectivity is something you can grasp only as it flees you. And it is partially in its flight that you will grasp the moving passage that was so moving. However your subjective emotion does find a guarantee here that is itself, but in that it is ascertained outside as some transcendence.

Hence one creates by means of the world and in the setting of the other. Creation necessarily implies objectification and objectification can only be brought about by the other. Otherwise its meaning would be, *for you the creator*, the superficial tint of an irremediably alien world. One creates oneself by giving oneself to the other. This is why all creation is necessarily a passion. In a word: for the *causa sui* to have a noncontradictory meaning, I have to be something other than myself; that is, I have already to be some *ec-static* and creative relation where the objective and the subjective spring up together. It is also necessary if my projected subjectivity is to become an objectivity that it be incorporated into the subjectivity of another, therefore that it should be stolen from me.

Hence the intervention is exactly the opposite of what Hegel says about it. He writes (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 243–44), “The work *is*, i.e., it exists for other individualities, and is for them an alien reality, which they must replace by their own in order to obtain through *their* action the consciousness of *their* unity with reality; in other words, *their* interest in the work which stems from *their* original nature, is something different from this work’s *own* peculiar interest, which is thereby converted into something different. Thus the work is, in general, something perishable, which is obliterated by the counter-action of other forces and interests, and really exhibits the reality of the individuality as vanishing rather than as achieved.” It is true that the work, by being taken up by alien consciousnesses, is “converted into something different.” But it does not follow that it presents the reality of individuality as disappearing, for a part of its selfhood is to exist as something other than itself. It is itself for me as other, it does not belong to me, as *my* created thing, until it is stolen from me, and I construct it with premeditation so that it should be stolen from me.

And no doubt, as Hegel even says, the human drama is not to recognize oneself in the result of one’s operation. But I have no right to complain about this, for *before* the operation there was no me as a found reality that would have betrayed me but only a schematic and abstract choice that could only be the project of enriching myself through the creation of a state of the world to be stolen from me.

Naturally, the ideal of my operation is that it undergo only a *formal* alienation; that is, that the other consciousness, in taking up my work for his own use, should only confer upon it an exteriority in principle, all the while preserving its matter, that is, its *meaning*. But it is just as sure that, through a preontological comprehension of the essence of the Other, I expect that the very interior of the work and its meaning will be alienated and transformed. Hence, to conclude, every creation is a form of giving and cannot exist without this giving. “Given to be seen,” true. I give this world to be seen, I make it exist to be seen, and in this act I lose myself as a passion. Hence ethics here can only make exist *for us* what is already *in itself*, that is, lead us, with the help of nonaccessory reflection, to posit its implicit meaning as the explicit theme of our behavior: absolute generosity, without limits, as a passion properly speaking and as the only means of being. There is no other reason for being than this giving. And it not just my work that is a gift. Character is a gift. The Me is the unifying rubric of our generosity. Even egoism is an aberrant gift.

4) But can we say that the individual always creates *just* himself in his work? It is clear that if we consider the artist or the “man of destiny,” they try to create a person who would be just their own person in the world. The same thing does not apply, however, to a subordinate who is launched on some collective undertaking or to a worker in a factory. In the first case, the created object already includes human structures that precisely imply the structure that the

person wants to give them. And he may need help to realize his own creation, for example from assistants who carry out secondary transformations and who, by this fact, *also* put their own image on the completed work. Finally, the structure under consideration will only play the role of a link in the chain. Thus the object when completed (the civil code, the conquest of Algeria, the triumph of an anti-alcohol league) no longer reflects a particular Me but the whole set of persons who played a part in bringing about the unity of its being. Hence I can hardly distinguish myself since the details of my operation get lost in the synthetic totality.

In fact, my operation was effective and individual, there is proof of my *initiative* (the very word implies that I was an absolute beginning for some secondary structure of the object), but the correlative brought about by my operation got lost in the whole, and since I am for myself only this Me that is my work, I only exist for me as Me in the reassuring indistinction of some communal creation. In a word, the object refers me to a concrete *We* wherein my I gets fixed and gets lost.¹³⁵ I refer both my justification and my nonexistence as a singular person to it. In this way, what is impossible at the level of the For-itself and the Project (the ontological organization of a *We*) becomes real on the anthropological level of some common work.

However, by way of my operation that was the realization of some secondary structure, I aimed at the whole object and, in a certain sense, I can say that I devoted myself to the whole object and that reciprocally, without my efforts, the whole object would not have existed. But everyone can say the same thing. The result is that this object belongs wholly to me and wholly defines me exactly to the extent that it defines any other operator. Here, as a consequence, we no longer have a *We*—that is, a concrete organization of I's, as objective creations—but the common belonging of one I to everyone. Hence each one of us possesses a *We*, insofar as he grasps the evanescent result of his operation in the object, and an abstract I, insofar as he appropriates “object X” as his own creation. The infinite thickness of this I, the contraction of a thousand concrete I's, has a reassuring solidity. At the same time, it also has a density of being that allows me to avoid the anxiety of being responsible for my I. And, to the extent that the Me of impure reflection is the synthetic unity of the operation, it retains within itself this common structure, and the formal unity of my enterprise is that unity of everyone who collaborates in it. There is a transcendent unity of all the subjects in a single subject.

This unity is easily transformed into *We* as soon as there is a change in the direction of my attention and I grasp myself as engaged in the common enterprise and as part of a common organization. A functional “I” like the Kantian “I think” that is transformed into a concrete “We” (the *We* being the explicitation of this I or the I being the condensation of this *We*), such will be consciousness's

135. Cf. “The We-Subject,” *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 423–30, esp. pp. 423–24.

creation. This will also be the initial aim of its choice. This is what explains the appearance of the *One* at the limit. Once the set of creators of what is common to them all is overly extended, so that one can no longer embrace them all in one concrete act of knowing, into the I as well as into the We come elements that are intended emptily, whose function is merely thought abstractly but not really grasped in the concrete, lived intention. In this way, pure, abstract possibilities are combined with concrete realities in constituting the I and the We. They do so *anonymously*, and drag the whole into anonymity. In this way, I create myself as anonymous and as though I am not what I create. I become *One*, on the two levels of the object X (which will itself be too large to be grasped in one look) and my own partial contribution. There are men in general [*hommes-on*], and they include nothing of the Me, even though they still use this expression to designate ipseity, which they cannot lack, or their physiological individuality. But this expression "Me," which causes an illusion, is *merely thought*. The concrete unity of their enterprise is the *One*. *It is at this level that we may speak of the Hegelian Cause or Thing itself (die Sache selbst)*. I shall come back to this point.

For another thing, from the beginning impersonality can be in a task or its techniques which are imposed upon the creator and which his situation leads him to choose, if he is not to die of hunger. The impersonality of instruments of labor in modern machinery-oriented work, the impersonality of a task in large-scale industry, slip in behind the worker's enterprise. To the extent that his work is the general utilization of a general mode of employing a tool acting upon abstract matter, his creation not only is part of the type of anonymous organization I was just talking about, it is anonymous and abstract in its very project, in its efficacy. He is constrained to create himself as interchangeable in his very operation. His creation is abstract and one among many. It is merely a use of a tool and takes on the character of a tool. The *Me* who is engaged in it therefore has both the anonymous character of the *One* and the interchangeability of *someone*. To the extent that the object reflects back to him the traces of a machine, man is reflected to himself as a man/machine. What protects him—what protects any creator—is that man's work is always complex and not strictly harmonious. Hence there are various layers in the Me. Still the possibility of being anonymous and one among many in the whole always remains open. Hence we may ask of Hegel when he speaks of the *absolute subject*: but what species of *subject* will the absolute be (anonymous, abstract, one among many, concrete We, condensed I, concrete Me)?

Conclusion: one creates oneself in creating the thing, and one creates oneself as one creates the thing and in the same way as one creates it. So there are various kinds of unifying rubrics for an enterprise, linked to ipseity, and that have no other commonality among themselves than all to be functionally centripetal reflective units of the enterprise. Nothing is gained concretely or by the hypothesis whereby one would like to make an individual pass from one species of Me to another, by seeking to make him change his internal dispositions at

the same time he pursues his creative activity. In reality, there are only two ways of passing from the anonymity of “someone” to “I”, only one of which depends upon him, and that is that he change his originary choice. But this is possible only in certain situations and for certain given structures of social life. The other is to change the structure of his work from the outside by externally dissolving the work, changing the realm of production, etc. Mere education or maieutic is totally useless. It is impossible, contrary to what the idealists may believe, to change the relation of a laborer to his Me all the while leaving him a laborer.

5) The problem of the Cause (*die Sache selbst*) remains. It is quite clear that consciousness surpasses its work to the very extent that it brings it about. But not because the Other takes hold of it and changes it—since it is part of the very nature of a work to be brought about in the setting of the Other—rather simply by his existence as consciousness. Once the work is done, it closes in on itself, it becomes the Other that I am and, more precisely, I am Other in relation to it, all the while being it. At the same time, it slips into the past and it becomes the Me I have to be in the form of having-been it.¹³⁶ In the end, it belongs to others more than to me. I no longer recognize myself in it any more than those heroes of Proust *recognize themselves* in the love they felt ten years earlier when their loved one came on the scene.¹³⁷ While the work is still happening, I can already surpass it toward other works, or toward its value, or toward the value of any productive activity. I can contest it, either by recognizing that I am a poor novelist or by limiting the general importance of the art of the novel.

In one way, quite generally, at the same time that I know myself in the work, I cannot not lock myself up in it since I am the one who is creating it. My nonthetic consciousness (of) myself can only oppose itself to the consciousness of my work. And precisely as the fact of being conscious *of* the world is a continual and lived proof that I am not the world, so too my consciousness *of* my work necessarily separates me from myself. Hence, I am both the one who expresses himself through the totality of his work and the one that no work can express.

But must we pass from here to the *Cause*? Certainly not. Indeed it needs to be noted that, although Hegel makes the Cause spring up beyond the disappearance of the work (the work already done, expressing the person—for example, for Rembrandt or Van Gogh, the failure of his work even though it is an aesthetic success), his examples and his dialectic are directed less at artists or intellectuals who succeeded in their work on the aesthetic plane and who, *in spite of this success*, experienced a deeper, almost ontological failure, than at

136. The “past is the ever growing totality of the in-itself which we are. Nevertheless so long as we are not dead, we are not this in-itself in the mode of identity. *We have to be it*” (ibid, p. 115).

137. Marcel Proust (1871–1922), French novelist and author of *Remembrance of Things Past*, 3 vols., trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, and Andreas Mayor (New York: Random House, 1981). Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 168–69.

failures who did not succeed in their work or who did not carry it out, and who console themselves by recourse to the Cause, which they make of what they will. It is not by accident that such is the case. Rather it is that it was impossible to point concretely to a Rembrandt consoling himself for the ontological failure of his paintings while assuring himself that he served Painting in itself. It is quite clear they never thought that. It is critics who talk of Painting or who say of an Artist that he sacrificed his life to art. The painter sees the object and wants to depict it, he has no impression of sacrificing his life to anything, but merely of living.

In truth, it is that, for Hegel, every positing of consciousness implies an opposition in the In-itself. Hence the obverse of Negativity positing itself as infinite is the Cause. But precisely, for Hegel, everything happens according to the process of Knowledge by which the subject knowing *himself* splits into an object. In fact, the consciousness of surpassing the work is not *knowledge* of this surpassing. It is only when it turns into knowledge that it hypostasizes this surpassing into a Cause. Hence there is perpetually and simultaneously construction and contestation of oneself. And the value of a person is always proportional both to the scale of the construction and that of the contestation. He is always wholly engaged beyond this work since he cannot ever fully project himself as a form of surpassing into what by nature is meant to be surpassed. In any case, pure surpassing in order to surpass something is an abstract form of uneasiness, pure, empty thought that one is worth more than what one does, which leads, in terms of knowledge, to positing the Cause as being beyond every individual creation. In fact, surpassing is always concrete and lived-through. It is a concrete uneasiness of the painter in relation to some particular work. He could have gone further, done the painting better, etc. Or it is an uneasiness in relation to all of the canvasses he has made. He needs to change his style. Or it is an uneasiness about painting in general. He needs to be politically active.

In other words, there is no real contestation except in relation to a concrete goal, posited spontaneously beyond the realized goal or beyond the one that is just being realized. Hence bad faith consists either in locking oneself up in one's work, or is positing a purely fictive surpassing which refuses any compromises. In truth, such a surpassing would be a surpassing *by nothing toward nothing* since *I am* nothing but my work. Surpassing has to be experienced as infinite and universal surpassing in and through a surpassing toward concrete, individual goals. As for the Cause, being the hypostasis of all surpassing for some given region, it rightly figures what cannot be surpassed. Hence the image of surpassing in the In-itself, as one may foresee, is just its negation. Everything takes place as if, to create a Me, one has to leave it to the hands of others, to abandon it, but as though at the same time one surpassed it toward other goals, with the result that, at the very moment that others seized you, they would only have an empty shadow in their hands. However, at the same time, you *have to recognize yourself* in this work and in this image stolen from you which you are in the

mode of having-been, even while you are beyond it in the direction of other goals.

84 generations since the Roman Republic, says Dilthey.¹³⁸ But how are we to define a generation? And is it a *cause* in History as some have thought? That is, can the division into distinct generations *explain* historical evolution? It would be necessary to admit a stratification of History and that one and the same process changes and gets changed in being refracted into each particular layer. The overall curve of the process would be obtained from the series of deviations it underwent in passing from the first to the last layer. In fact, things are more complex than this. For me, generations are not an explanatory factor of this process but rather a constitutive ontological one; that is, they in no way explain why this rather than that developed, but they do give an account of its ontological structure.

In the first place, it is necessary to define the lapse of time that separates one generation from another. We say, for example, 25 years. By this, one means that the normal age when a European male will be a father is 25. Hence the son will always be 25 years behind his father and we will have defined a generation by this gap. This would be all right in the case where there was just one offspring or if all offspring had fathers of the same age. But, in fact, what happens is that it looks as though there were an infinity of offspring each of whom differs from his closest neighbor by an infinitesimal difference. If therefore we represent births by a series n whose initial term appears at the instant t , the second at the instant t_1 (infinitely close to t), the third at the instant t_2 , etc., up to the optimal distance of 25 years, we would then have a more exact, if still false, view of reality.

But then it seems as if the very idea of a generation has to disappear. However it does preserve a practical reality, although it is absurd to define it in terms of parenthood. A generation is not defined by its parents, otherwise we immediately fall into an argument like that about baldness, as well as into the dialectic of the continuous and the discontinuous. (Marcel, who is 25 years old, belongs to the generation that follows that of Pierre, who is or who could have been his father. But does René, who will be 25 years old in three months, still belong to this generation? And what about Jean, who is 23 years old, but who has always hung around with Marcel and René? And what of Antoine, who is 16 years old? If Antoine belongs to the same generation as Marcel, then the notion of a generation no longer has any precise limit. But if Antoine does not belong to that generation, then there are as many generations in a country as there are individuals of the

138. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), “Über das Studium der Geschichte der Wissenschaften vom Menschen, der Gesellschaft und dem Staat” (1875), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1964), p. 37. In fact, Dilthey refers to eighty-four generations since Thales, the Greek philosopher.

same age, that is, a great many.) A generation can only be defined by its operation or work. In this case, its temporal limits are variable and fixed *a posteriori* by its enterprise. Take the example of our fathers' enterprise, which was the world war of 1914. Given the importance of this phenomenon, we can consider all the men who *made* this war as belonging to the same generation; that is, all those for whom this was their concrete enterprise, with its sufferings and its risks. But even then it is still necessary to make distinctions since it was, in a way, a risk for some old men (Clemenceau)¹³⁹ while others—either indifferent or reformed—did not consider it to be *their* war. Yet, for the most part, we see a group of youth and young men launched upon a common enterprise, running the same risk and having a common experience. These same men, once the war was over, preserved certain rights with respect to it. Those of being called "*Anciens combattants*," of alone being able to talk about it and draw the lessons of this experience, those of exploiting its results, and, especially, of carrying out a war veterans' politics. In this way, they do form a relatively homogeneous whole and are to be distinguished from the old men who can no longer do such things and the young who cannot yet do so.

Yet there is a marginal halo: those adolescents who reached the age to be in the military just when the war was ending, who believed they participated in it. They had prepared themselves for it, they profited from the experience of their older brothers. For them, it was a concrete reality and the importance of the difference in age between them and their older brothers was thereby wiped out. With these older men, they have carried out a politics and a brand of wisdom drawn from their war-time experience. Hence they form a limit layer to this generation. Conversely, some men 40 years old who were not mobilized made war in the rear lines as organizers and did risk themselves, not so much perhaps but sufficiently so that it does belong to them and they recognize themselves through it. This concrete operation, therefore, defines a generation, which has moreover been called the generation of 1914. Most of this generation was between 20 and 30 years old with others being as old as 40 or as young as 16.

But there are also the young, such as Radiguet, for example, whose age distanced them from the war.¹⁴⁰ They had no chance to take part in it, except for the improbable case that it would have lasted ten years. They were not mature enough to be interested in its political or social implications, which they were not concerned about. Some saw in it a big vacation, others the chance for a rather mild form of exultation. The warriors who returned home could not communicate to them their experience, made of words and common principles. Later, when the fathers remained peaceful, held back by their horrible memories, the sons, who did not have these memories, could become warlike. Therefore I will call the set of children born between 1900 and 1914 the post-war generation.

139. Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929), French premier from 1917 to 1920.

140. Raymond Radiguet (1903–1923), precocious French novelist and poet.

What these children have in common is that the war was not *their* war, however, as it did belong to their fathers and older brothers, it is part of the recent and still fresh history of the collectivity which they live in. But since they cannot act upon it, even though its implications are developed in their lives, they have as a situation what for the preceding generation was an enterprise.

This means, in the first place, that they do not hold themselves *responsible* for its being declared nor for its victory or final defeat. I recall the following piece of Petainist flattery from Pierre Dominique to the young people of 1940: “No, those under twenty did not lose the war.”¹⁴¹ For us, in captivity, who read this article, it created a gulf between this generation and our own.¹⁴² Not being responsible, they could be judges. This means that this enterprise necessarily appears to them as an object. They were already surpassing it even while we were still engaged in it. They did not ask to be born in this age and even though they do take up the war as their own, since they do not take the escape hatch of suicide, they do so in another way than we did. It is their facticity—that is, it lies on the side of their past, of their body, of the contingency of their birth—while for us it is on the side of our project, our future, and our work. Owing to this fact that it is rightly for them *what has to be surpassed*, they already stand in the attitude of surpassing as regards other ends as well, while we still consider them to be part of our horizon. They will be men beyond the war, while we will be so in terms of it. It matters little, then, whether or not they take up the work already begun, necessarily they will do so in another spirit.

Thus one and the same historical process (which already includes within itself battles and conflicts of every sort) is at the same time a future in the proper sense of the word and an indifferent past, something to do and a given to be assumed, a setting from which stem judgments and even scales of value and something dead which has to be judged by men who coexist in one and the same collectivity. No doubt we can even say that, *during* the war of '14, Radiguet's youth rendered this difference insignificant. But the fact is that toward 1920, these youth in turn became men, entered the lists, acted, and, by this very fact, turned into something dead what had been a living reality for the veterans, who were not unaware that their war had a deathlike structure for their younger brothers and their sons. This was a true dimension of this process, even though it escaped their concrete intuitions. Reciprocally, the “serious” dimension of this dead war did not escape the abstract thoughts of these adolescents.

The distinction between generations therefore, by its very nature, renders a historical phenomenon heterogeneous with itself. It provides this phenomenon

141. Philippe Pétain (1856–1951), the French war hero of World War I, who was chief of state of the French government at Vichy during World War II. Pierre Dominique (pseud. of Pierre-Dominique Lucchini) (b. 1889), author of *La Commune* (Paris, 1931).

142. Sartre was held by the Germans as a prisoner of war from 21 June 1940 to mid-March 1941.

with dimensions which, in their concrete content, escape its witnesses as well as its actors, yet which haunt and influence their actions. Or, if we consider things in terms of their movement, a historical phenomenon is a perpetual process of decentralization, like a movement that has several axes of rotation at the same time. In this sense, every human enterprise is *already past*, even when its outcome is still uncertain. There is a perpetual dislocation of everything one does. One sees that the distinction between generations cannot serve as an explanation of the content of the historical fact, but that it may serve as a formal description of its ontological structure. Any act contributes to creating a situation for adolescents at the same time that adults consider it as work to be done. A project when it is being done, a thing when it is something absolutely undergone.

A Right: affirmation in each particular case of the nonvalue of the realm of being. Generalized destruction of *everything* that is. If I affirm my right to property, it is not just against any current plundering of it, but against the state of affairs in general that led to my being plundered and to total indifference to my means of recovering my goods. In this sense, a right is a destruction of being or my own destruction. I am only a right; that is, a radical negation of what I am *in fact*, a separation of the spirit from everything that is not itself, my body, and my present condition. I am my death.

A Right: would disappear if everything happened in conformity with it. Then it becomes a custom. It springs up only when it is negated and as the negation of what it negates. If we conceive a perfect society (the Kantian kingdom of ends) where each person gives the other his due, where the ought-to-be is absorbed into the real functioning of the social cog wheels, rights are implicit. But, reciprocally, a right is contested if it is the right of the dominant class. Not being *recognized* by the oppressed layers, it is not universal. Our right is contested by the proletariat and the colonialized. By this fact, the affirmation that I am acting according to my right is vitiated in its principle. Yet it is precisely in societies that a right can exist, because of the gap between being and what ought to be.

There are always two theories of rights, the spiritualist theory and the realist one, because a right has this double aspect of *not being* (value, negation of the real) and *being* (the real juridical system of a society).

The project is surpassing something given toward an end. But this end, which is a change in the current state of affairs, must be constituted in and through the current state of affairs. A right is originally the negation of all reality. All the bridges are cut in order to arrive at the affirmed right. This, by the way, is not projected into the future beyond the real but quite frankly into the eternal (or the absolute). However, it is not projected as a deeper truth beyond these

appearances (even though there is sometimes confusion and the existence of a right becomes at the same time a reality, as in the case of Brochard¹⁴³ speaking of the existence of the right of the universal behind existing images) because the most profound truth still is being, and therefore homogeneous with appearances. No doubt it destroys appearances, but no doubt it also founds them and interconnects them. On the contrary, a right appears, in the very destruction of all being, as that which, behind being, is not in any way at all. Its reality is a demand. When one demands something, one demands it in the name of something.

A demand is one of two ways of addressing oneself to freedom, the other is the pure proposal. One either gives oneself to a freedom or makes demands upon it. To demand is to posit a goal while at the same time positing that no factual circumstance can be an excuse for not attaining it. In particular, the actual moods or feelings of the person whom one is addressing. Therefore it means to posit the goal as what is essential and the concrete person as inessential and dependent. Therefore the demand stays constant while the temporal process bears it away. It destroys and contests all real evolution by refusing to take account of it. Therefore it is addressed to freedom, since it posits that it is possible for man to disengage himself entirely and at any moment whatsoever from the concrete process. But not to a freedom, which penetrating the feelings, would be generosity—rather to the purely negative freedom that affirms itself over against the concrete man I am.

And what it demands, it demands of freedom *in the name* of this very freedom. That is, it recognizes freedom by the very fact that it is addressed to freedom and by the fact that the goal that it proposes is subordinated to freedom's recognition of itself as free. I posit a goal *so that* it defines freedom (since it is the negation of nature). If I then pursue it, it is because I recognize myself as free. And, reciprocally, I can be free only in pursuing it, otherwise my freedom would remain formal and empty. Therefore, I make demands because my demands make freedom appear, and this freedom becomes conscious of itself by way of a concrete negation of some *being* [*l'étant*]. This is the case for the husband of Doña Prouhèze, who is certain of finding an accomplice in her from the moment that the goal he proposes to her is destructive of her and her love.¹⁴⁴

Freedom therefore takes up its goal insofar as it destroys what is given in order to posit itself as free. As for the goal itself, it cannot be an object in the world since the world is destroyed. It can only be *my freedom*. But since I *am* this freedom, I am one with my demand—or rather, I *am* a demand through my very existing. My existence is the demand to be recognized as freedom and as created as such by way of the destruction of the real world by another freedom

143. Victor Brochard (1848–1907), French philosopher. He is best known for his book *De l'erreur* (1879).—Ed.

144. The reference is to Paul Claudel's *The Satin Slipper*.—Ed. See *Being and Nothingness*, p. 398, n. 11, for an earlier reference to Doña Prouhèze.

whom I create in making a demand upon it. (I shall show that true freedom *gives*—that is, proposes—recognizes inventions—that is, recognizes freedoms by way of what they give—and manifests itself by way of the construction of a world. But then rights disappear, true freedom is an *occasion* for other freedoms.)

At this level, I am a purely formal demand since the concrete content of my person has disappeared. Pure, universal freedom—that is, identical in me to what it is in the other. This is the formal aspect of the detotalized totality. A totalizing unity would suppress rights because freedom is not a demand for itself. Its goal has to be upheld in existence by another freedom. The freedom that for Kant upholds the categorical imperative is noumenal, therefore the freedom of *another*. It is separated by that slight stream of nothingness which suffices so that I *am not it*. It is the projection of the Other into the noumenal world. There is a demand only for another freedom. Therefore, the ethics of duty and rights necessarily presupposes detotalization.

At the same time, it presupposes that each one *should exist for the other*, therefore a quasi totality. Hence the abstract right of the person results from the counterpoint of For-itself in the detotalized totality. It is indeed the discovery of freedom, but it becomes manifest at this level as a pure demand to be. It is negative and depends on others. It conceives of the realm of the Spirit, not as the *penetration* of the world by the spirit, but as the negation of the existing state of affairs. Since it is a goal for the Other, in its very act of grasping itself as a demand, it becomes manifest as a goal in its very existence. It exists because it is an end. But since it is an end only because it makes a demand, it is in the last analysis an end that posits itself and that brings itself into existence through the intermediary of others. This setting is inessential in relation to it. Hence, in the last analysis, it is *causa sui*.

No doubt there is reciprocity and awakened freedoms can and must constitute themselves in turn as a demand. Only these moments are distinct. Each one in turn is the subject of rights; that is, there are two distinct moments: 1st, when he recognizes through his demand to be recognized; 2d, when he is recognized in order to recognize. Finally, one finds oneself as just a pure universal and one has missed the truth which is that a freedom is an infinitely concrete and qualified enterprise that has to be recognized *in its enterprise*. What is more, the demand “treat me like a freedom” is purely negative since all concrete contents are destroyed along with the world and only I am a purely formal goal. This means: do not touch my freedom, do not treat me as a means, etc. But never: help me in my concrete operation because it is this operation that is my freedom. Whatever demand it may place upon others, at this level freedom is not something *to be done* by the creative operation itself. It already is as its own goal. The whole here is static. The goal is content with being taken as a (negative) goal by others. For example: Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 38: “The unconditional commands of abstract right are restricted . . . to the negative: ‘Do not infringe personality and what personality entails.’ The result is that there are only prohibi-

tions in the sphere of right, and the positive form of any command in this sphere is based in the last resort, if we examine its ultimate content, on prohibition.”¹⁴⁵

What does it mean, to take an example, to treat me as an end? To consider me as pure freedom, that is, to abstract from my being-for-others. But my being-for-others is precisely my surpassed transcendence and my body.¹⁴⁶ To the extent that I have a being-for-others, I can be the object of violence. Recognition of rights is negative in relation to this being-for-others. I demand of the other that he treat me as an end over and beyond the destruction of my being-for-others, insofar as this being, as Hegel says, is capable of receiving the form of a thing. So I become a universal end, pure freedom, with no place of application. For example, the negation of the Body of the Negro and the Jew gives them a right as a merely human person who cannot be distinguished from any other person, that is, as mere undetermined freedom. But all at once this right completely misses the problem and becomes ineffective. My freedom is the pure power of doing whatever does not limit the freedom of the other. And I am nothing more than this power. Yet since the negation of *the other's body* does not really bring about the intuition of his freedom as pure subjectivity *hidden behind* the body, what I attain in the Other is myself and it is for himself that the Other demands a certain kind of treatment. Or instead it is a question of a purely universal form of negation whose exemplifications take place in the abstract and only on the basis of an external point of view. A right replaces being-for-others with exteriority and it replaces concrete transcendence as it is discovered in the world with the abstract form of freedom.

From this it quite clearly follows that any concrete activity of a person falls outside the sphere of rights and, from this point of view, becomes pure nature for the spirit. Once I have posited that I can do anything at all so long as I do not interfere with the freedom of others, I think I have done enough from the point of view of freedom. Therefore, I in no way demand of others that they should recognize my freedom in the concrete content of my activity. This is without importance. From this it follows, on the one hand, that activity is *any* activity, man appears as *any* man inasmuch as he is pure freedom. Whence the tiresome character of a humanism founded on rights. On the other hand, it also follows that all the inequalities in the realm of property are allowed, provided that these properties were transferred legally or acquired in conformity with the laws. If every man *has the right* of possession, it doesn't much matter what he possesses. The sphere of actual behavior, goods, and works is left to the jurisdiction of religion and ethics. The gift becomes *charity*. The notions of justice and charity are closely linked with abstract personal rights. For justice comes down to rendering to each person what is due to him under the law, that is, what is due

145. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

146. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 339–51, “The Body-for-Others.”

to him by purely formal *a priori* principles. And charity is devoted to compensating for material injustices. But it is pure gratuity. In this sense, it is closely akin to that generosity that is pure gratuity. But generosity as pure gratuity is neither a virtue nor a gesture from the heart. It is the only way of concretely reaching a freedom in its heart insofar as it is subjective freedom. Whereas charity is conceived of as being both a virtue (that is, a habit marked by value) and a contingency (something nonobligatory).

The work of art, for example, demands that its content be recognized materially by the freedom of a concrete public. It is gift and demand at the same time, and only makes a demand insofar as it gives something. It does not ask for the adhesion of a pure freedom but rather that of a freedom engaged in generous feelings, which it transforms. It is therefore something completely other than a right. It is the means of directly affecting a qualified freedom.

Relations among men must be based upon this model if men want to exist as freedom for one another: 1st, by the intermediary of the work (technical as well as aesthetical, political, etc.); 2d, the work always being considered as a gift. The beautiful is a gift above all else. The beautiful is this world considered as *given*. The work being the particularity of the person and his image as given back by the world, it is in treating my work as inhabited by a concrete freedom that you treat my Me as freedom. Whereas if you turn directly toward this Me, it evaporates into abstract freedom. To help in doing the work by giving oneself and by recognizing the work done is to communicate in and through the world with the freedom of others. Just as the world is the intermediary between the For-itself and the Me, so too it is the required intermediary between two freedoms in search of each other.

Question: how are we to recognize the operation of a worker who is abstract?
Answer: there is no way to do so. Precisely one of the aspects of the current situation is that there are men whom one cannot recognize. This is why it has to be changed.

All ethics presupposes the end of History (or rather the end of History and the appearance of the realm of ethics). But the end of History is also death.

Relation between rights and force: a right is the strongest demand to be treated as a person by the one it is invoked against. The relation of a right to force is quite clear. Without a situation of force, there would be no rights since given the hypothesis of a harmonious and egalitarian society rights would disappear. They never appear except when they are contested, therefore in periods of injustice. But it is something other than force for a right is the after-the-fact justification of such force. The conqueror imposes some form of functions. He may stop there. But he wants to be recognized. He cannot accept that his victory should only be a fact, he wants it to be justified. Therefore he recognizes

in order to be able to make demands. However what he recognizes is not concrete freedom, it is abstract freedom. At the same time, he recognizes the situation of the conquered as a situation of rights so that the conquered will recognize the situation of the conqueror. For example, he recognizes and legitimizes the property of the conquered because it is minimal, so that the conquered will recognize the property of the conqueror which is immense. Rights always exist on the basis of a status quo that one does not undertake to change. That is, the conqueror does not use force to prevent the conquered from turning to violence. He requires of him, as abstract freedom, a moral commitment not to turn to it. The hand is thus played out. The oppressed has as many rights as does the conqueror, therefore they are equal as moral persons. Except that there are *as many* rights on the basis of *fewer* possessions.

The hypocrisy of modern oppression can be seen, for example, in the case of Blacks in North America who have the right to vote but who, given the heavy poll taxes, do not vote. The oppressor simultaneously treats the oppressed as an abstract moral person and as a concrete object. In other words, at the same time that he considers the oppressed as a transcended transcendence or as a body and while for this reason he exercises a concrete albeit negative violence over him, he also denies the reality of this factual situation by conferring an absolute and universal freedom upon him by his very demands. And, the freedom being abstract, the concrete violence is not defined in the right. One is free in terms of the status quo, that is, in some definite social situation. But, on the contrary, to change this situation, the oppressed has to use violence, to deny the right of property, therefore to refuse the right. Hence a right is an absolute denial of violence that can only serve the oppressor because the violence from which the right came is prior to the establishment of the right and because the concrete inequality lies entirely outside the juridical sphere.

Crime is defined negatively by the positive right. It is a form of violence against the material situation and, consequently, a refusal to limit oneself to the right. The right of property is universal. But if someone *has no* property this right is derisory. If this person wants to change something in this factual situation, he may use violence in relation to the property of others. At this moment, he attacks the right and treats a person as a means, not as an end. He has committed a crime. The mystification stems, therefore, from the fact that one secretly obliges the oppressed to recognize material inequality by the very way in which one recognizes his formal freedom, that is, his formal equality. The union of the oppressed will come about, therefore, through violence and it will *always* contradict the existing right.¹⁴⁷ In one sense, it will therefore *always* be blameable and punishable. If it is victorious, it will set up another right, or, more exactly, the situation will automatically be transformed into a situation based on rights,

147. Cf. Sartre's Preface to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), pp. 7–26.

because man is by essence juridical, that is, he is not just a force but also a freedom and because what he brings about by force must also be considered as an expression of his freedom.

The man who establishes a right resembles the one (the clown or child) who, having struck his comrade, lifts his finger and says "I give up" when this person wants to strike him back. A striking example: the proprietor of a public accommodation refuses an American Jew entry. He explains his behavior as follows. "This place belongs to me. I am free to serve whom I please." In refusing the Jewish captain entry he does violence to him, but on the *material plane*. He considers him in terms of his bodily particularity (Jewish) and not as a concrete freedom. Yet in forcing his way in, the captain would have struck out against the *formal freedom* of the proprietor, that is, against his freedom to do as he likes with what he possesses, whatever this might be. This kind of reasoning is classic in the U.S.A. It was used by slave holders in the 19th century. As for the proprietor, he does not carry out any formal violence against the captain since he does not prevent him from *possessing what he has*, or from going where he wishes (except for this public accommodation which does not belong to the captain, etc.).

Historical evolution: let us consider the incontestable facts. The passage from the concrete freedom of one person to the abstract freedom of everyone. In the beginning, man grasps himself as seen by a freedom that he does not see (the sovereign), therefore as transcended transcendence. Period of the man/object. The recognition of abstract freedom (rights) takes place without oppression ending. It is purely negative and formal. The passage from the particular to the universal also occurs through the rendering uniform of a mode of production, hence through customs. One World.¹⁴⁸ Here again, abstraction. The uniform is abstract, it gives back the image of the *one*. The one World is the sphere of empty implications in comparison to the city. The passage from the concrete to the abstract also occurs through mechanization. Abstract labor—the finished product gets away. Passage from (concrete) magic syncretism to (abstract) scientific analysis. Passage from the concept to the judgment. From the immediate to the mediate. From objectivity (man/object) to subjectivity (man/subject). Internalization and reflexivity. From observation to experimentation. Population growth: from man, this (concrete) neighbor, to man, this (abstract) unknown person. At the same time, the passage from naturalism to *antiphysis*. Three factors: population, science, mechanization. Beginnings of a new change: the synthetic spirit (nazism, fascism. With its profound error of returning to despotism and its progress). Progress in communications (the one World will become my garden) suppressing the abstraction of distance. The problem: to rediscover the concrete in the universal. Man is lost because he is too *numerous* for himself,

148. In English in the French text.

because the world is *too big*, because the machine is abstract. *The concrete Universal*. This presupposes, by the way, an internal change (an enlarging of one's views, a more supple form of reasoning).

Hyppolite (Preface to *The Philosophy of Right*): "From his youthful works onward, Hegel knows that the tragic destiny of love cannot be indefinitely extended without it being lost. Abstract humanitarianism that is confused with individualism cannot make man coincide with his history. This history is that of peoples or States each of which represents a concrete Universal" (p. 13).¹⁴⁹

An abstract or personal right is not the first form of right. It is just a pure right or one without any content. It is pure formal negativity. However, right appears—as does every formation of the Spirit—with a concrete content from which it is not originally distinguished. This content is precisely the current state of society considered as what ought-to-be. Here the right is the status quo as a negation of all historical development; that is, in the last analysis, as a negation of temporality. In this case: 1st, being is considered as what ought-to-be; 2d, time is denied. The demand occurs in relation to the content and is addressed to those who deny or who are tempted to deny this content. Fundamentally, the right in its original structure is exactly the obverse of a value. This latter carefully distinguishes being from what ought-to-be. What ought-to-be is precisely what never will be, and Hegel rightly says that a realized ethics evaporates. On the contrary, right considers that what is *must be*. This is possible only as a demand over against other consciousnesses who call what is into question. If everyone agrees on what is, right disappears, it remains as a fact. A right, in a society of oppression, therefore is the demand that the oppressors formulate over against the oppressed: that they should recognize being in the form of what ought-to-be. Reciprocally, this signifies that they must also consider nonbeing as not coming to be. Which means that being is the measure of what ought-to-be. But, conversely, the *raison d'être* of being is that it ought-to-be. We are in the presence of the *causa sui* [that which is its own cause].

A society formulating its right grasps itself as being-because-it-ought-to-be. Hence the evolution of right goes from the concrete to the abstract but its meaning stays the same. Right is initially concrete because it is addressed to consciousnesses in order to demand that they recognize the situation, that is, the status quo (divine right, nazi right, etc.). In this status quo there is a subjection of concrete categories of persons who are therefore *subjected by right* (Jews, slaves, the colonized, etc.). The difficulty here is the contradiction: if one demands of

149. Jean Hyppolite, "Préface" to G. W. F. Hegel, *Principes de la Philosophie du Droit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), reprinted in Jean Hyppolite, *Figures de la Pensée philosophique*, vol. 1 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), pp. 73–91. The passage cited is on pp. 81–82 of this latter edition.

subjected peoples that they recognize their subjection, one deals with them as freedoms, yet their subjection consists precisely in their being treated as objects. Right is entirely vitiated by the existence of a slave. As soon as it universalizes itself, it passes over to the abstract and, by this cunning of the dialectic, it turns out once again to protect the status quo since, in the name of formal freedom, it forbids any recourse to violence. Hence the *real* society falls outside the juridical sphere. One does not say that it is good, rather one simply forbids changing it. This time, one addresses the oppressed as oppressed. Whence the mystification. The right of liberalism is therefore mystification in its most pure form.

In ancient forms of right, as in the modern form, freedom is engaged. If the monarch is said to rule *by divine right*, this means that he requires a kind of recognition from his subjects that force alone cannot procure for him. Therefore he addresses himself to his subject inasmuch as this subject is free. No doubt he bases himself upon force and wealth. But what has to be understood is that this force and wealth are symbols of a *plenitude of being*. The most powerful one is God, *causa sui*—that is, the existing being whose being is infinitely rich and infinitely strong. Force is also the symbol of what ought-to-be since being gets juridically confused with this ought-to-be. The more force a government has, the more right it has. What is stirring about military parades is the grasping of being as ought-to-be. Except that this freedom is recognized in an implicit way. In fact, everyone is asked to recognize the freedom of one person. The whole thing is possible only if this *one* incarnates in himself the freedom of everyone. Not on the grounds of some democratic contract. Instead it is a matter of freedom considered as pure ecstasis.¹⁵⁰ The freedom of the *Whole* is incarnated *outside* itself. Hence the Whole is an object for this freedom. Subjectivity consists in thinking about oneself as an object. And my justification is precisely to be contained along with the whole of which I am a part under the gaze of the sovereign. In this way, through the force of circumstances that necessity of structure gets expressed whereby the totality is detotalized; that is, that there is always at least *one* subject who is not a part. The king is never an object. He is the justifying gaze. And this gaze is freedom. In a monarchy, the king is everywhere. He has divine ubiquity, since each *subject* is transformed into an object by his gaze. The relations between subjects are fixed in a similar fashion, the entire kingdom lies under his gaze. He stands in that internal disposition of a subject who can think of himself as transcended transcendence and therefore as justified. Religion doubles this relationship, religion is its projection out to infinity. God is the assurance that being is an ought-to-be.

The *catholic* idea adapted to the Roman Empire finds its expression in the myth of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire. The *Reformation* finds its expression

150. Or ec-stasis.—Ed.

in the nationalisms of the 16th century (submission of the Church to the State). This was the *new* form that Christianity *had to* take on. Its failure proves that what is expressed most rationally in a situation does not necessarily triumph. *Concrete persistence of errors.* Reformation: relation of the prince to the subject without an intermediary, of God directly to the faithful. If it had triumphed, religion would have wiped itself out with the fall of the last sovereigns. Surviving Catholicism necessarily preserves Protestantism as a reaction-struggle against Catholicism. And Catholicism maintains itself because the body of the Church maintains itself.

Religion as a universal structure of human reality is the operation that presents being as having what ought-to-be as its intimate structure. The most important proof is not the ontological proof but the one *a contingentia mundi* [from the contingency of the world]. Secondly religion is a justification of the status quo and privileges, but originally it is a *justification of the subject*. This is what explains that unique attitude of the subject named faith. One does not believe. One believes that one believes. If one could believe (and one did so in the Middle Ages), life would be overturned. If the Pascalian wager¹⁵¹ is not to poison all earthly pleasures, if we are not to await death with ecstasy, what is needed are two planes, like for those insane people who think themselves to be Napoleon but *know* themselves to be shoemakers. Two orders of reference, one of which is the object of a kind of certitude and real assumptions, along with an order of myth, of playfulness, the as if. This is all helped along by bourgeois utilitarianism which refuses to consider ultimate ends, only paying attention to means. There is a repugnance among the bourgeois about discussing ends. This may signify agnosticism. It does mean that one adopts ends without examining them.

The Christian's faith is bad faith. Besides, the very nature of God forbids us to believe in him. Not just because it is contradictory (that would not be anything), but because it is opposed to the psychological structure of belief. Belief replaces experience, intuition, etc., therefore those operations that can be *carried out*. However, we are taught in the first place that these operations cannot be carried out when it is a question of God. Hence we can neither see him nor grasp his infinite nature through rational intuition. Therefore we cannot found ourselves on any concrete operation, and so our belief is a belief *in nothing*. To be legitimate, it has to borrow from the sensory world of intuitions (nice old man, Christ on the cross), which is only possible for children or those who have a shoemaker's faith. In moments of prayer, the believer is like a psychasthenic person: he mimics faith just as the latter mimics pain. Everything comes from him, only passivity is lacking, as in the case of the frigid woman who does not want to be so and who twists in pleasure without any pleasure. Yet through a ruse, it is said that faith creates itself, that one constructs one's faith, and that

151. See Pascal, *Pensées*, pp. 149–52.

therefore it is always beyond any concrete form of faith. Hence any experience of a vain pursuit of faith only shows that it is beyond us.

But is this not what one asks of religion? What counts is not turning one's gaze toward God and looking him in the face. On the contrary, it is feeling oneself looked at by him. In this way, he is the object of a marginal form of belief. One believes when one does not think about it. Against this, we have the perpetual experience of being a looked-at-object because in fact we do have the experience of others as an original dimension of being (even in solitude), which is to exist as looked at. To believe in God is just to hold that this gaze (which is that of a sovereign) that exists as a fact be at the same time a kind of ought-to-be. This is a convenient enough sort of falsification since a gaze is by nature freedom. God as the sovereign is the setting of our necessity. Men by divine right.

Relationship between God and rights: God is the necessary guarantee of any concrete right. For everything that is must be so if God created the world. However he is the justification of *every right* since he allows them all (just as the Church accepts each and every regime). Therefore God is the guarantee of force, for it succeeds through his permission. Without God, no justification whatsoever of any state of affairs, which is necessarily contingent. Whence the passage to abstract right. By renouncing every justification of a factual state of affairs, of the status quo, one ends up by making it disappear. It is contingent and it will remain so. By the very fact that it is denied and—apparently—left to chance, pure negativity or negative freedom appears, which requires being dealt with as such. Yet precisely because it is negative and a nihilation of the world as such, it favors the status quo since it forbids any change. In effect, any material change is juridically indifferent in itself since, if it is brought about through violence, it runs the risk of harming pure negative freedom which wants to be treated as an end in its strictly formal negativity, that is, as a pure end without any content.

Being and Nothingness has been condemned for nowhere speaking of *affirmation*. It is not a question of denying affirmation but of putting it in its place. Just as Spinoza did, Hegel taught the philosophy that any determination is a negation, that is, that every definition of an object comes about only by cutting it out from the infinite ground of what it is not,¹⁵² similarly every affirmation is conditioned on another level by a nihilation. Every perception of a form implies that one leaves everything else in the *background*. The condition for my affirming that A is X is that: (1) I tear myself away from the entanglement with Being in order to distinguish *beings*. Therefore negative freedom. Determination in terms of causes (being by being) leads to the permanence of inertia, not to affirmation. In order for me to affirm *myself*, it is not sufficient that I exist, I have to hold

152. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 14–15.

myself at a distance from myself, to make an effort at reflection. (2) That I should be motivated by the positing of an end, that is, something that is not yet. The first affirmation (which is that of some end) is the affirmation of a nothingness of being, that is, creation. (3) That I carve out the object from the continuous *plenum* of being. Besides, what is opposed to negation (as judgment) is indeed affirmation. But what corresponds to nihilation as what is derived from it is *creation*. Affirmation as taking something up for my own account, assumption, uprooting from indifference, presentation in a new light is precisely a *lesser* creation. Human reality is nihilating/creative precisely because it has to do in its own being with what it is not. In any case, creation (along with its weaker form, affirmation) is not a mere consequence of negativity. It is itself creation in relation to nihilation. Man can create only because he creates himself as creator. This is what we have to examine next.

Creation. Plan.

1) How the For-itself as pure negation is a *creator*. Being-in-the-world as creation.

2) For-itself and creation. I create *myself*.

3) For-itself and others: the gift. In sacrifice I follow and I prefer the other. I prefer what I do not prefer. But I *am* the gift to the other.

4) Joy.

5) Dispute.

Initially, creation is a vain pursuit of the In-itself-For-itself. Through nonaccidental reflection, it is revealed as creation properly speaking.

Affirmation is taking up being-in-itself for my own account. When I affirm, I touch what is through my freedom. The pipe is on the table. This does not mean anything yet, it is the indifference of exteriority. But if I say that the pipe is on the table, I uphold it in being. I make it the product of a freedom. I *manifest* it and I constitute myself as the being for which there is being.

“One wants to be everything,” says Bataille.¹⁵³ Incorrect. One would like to *found* everything.

Affirmation: to put its freedom as a foundation beneath a being. But it is, in turn, the foundation of this affirmation. The foundation of negation was a being that would itself be its own nihilation. Would the foundation of affirmation then be a being that would be its own affirmation? No, for it would suffice that it affirm itself in a total act so as to exhaust itself fully in this act. The foundation of affirmation can be a being that affirms itself only if we comprehend that the

153. Cf. above, p. 96.

condition for this affirmation is a withdrawal in relation to oneself and its ultimate failure (therefore two forms of nihilation). The failure of the affirmation of myself by myself entails the affirmation of what is not me, of the being that is not me, that is, of the world.

What is creation? 1st, the created being is an entirely new appearance in being. 2d, this appearance by itself is not sufficient, the creation has to proceed from an intention. 3d, yet this intention cannot be *either* the creation itself (otherwise: emanation) *or* ordinary causality since an effect contains nothing more than its cause. If there is nothing more, it is not new. If there is more, it is a gratuitous apparition, not a creation. In fact, there is an apparent contradiction here in the very idea of creation. In one sense, as creation, it has to be covered over in its being by the productive intention, while in another sense the created being has to escape this intention, otherwise it would remain an emanation. In a word, the intention has to *give* being as external in its being to this intention. *Give* is the right word. For if we assume that being springs up within the framework of intentions without being *given* by them, it is new in relation to them but in the exteriority of indifference.

For one thing, one only gives by essence what one has. It seems then that creation has to be a communication from *being* to *being*. But *being-in-itself* cannot create. It cannot do so for reasons both internal to its being and essential to the created being. If we consider being-in-itself, we see that it exhausts itself in *being itself*, consequently that it cannot *produce* anything. Only by being broken up can it ever do so. A *passage* is required and the abrupt apparition of a being-in-itself can never be linked to another *being-in-itself*, except by an external consciousness.

For another thing, if we were to assume a transformation of the first being-in-itself into the second one, we would not find any satisfaction because creation requires that the creator not be exhausted in his transformation. He has to remain over against his creation in his integrity. Yet if there is an integrity of the In-itself, it remains without any *relation* to its creation. Hence creation is originally a relation to the Other at the same time that it is one of Identity. This created being is necessarily the *Other*. It is related to me in terms of the relation to the Other. Yet, for another thing, if it is an absolute other then it is not my creation. Therefore it is really my creation to the extent that it can be fully referred back *to me*. But if it is *me*, then it gets wholly annihilated into identity. In fact, it resists me only through *its being*. It is me in the dimension of the Other. That is, me *in the dimension of the In-itself*. But this immediately implies that I myself am not *In-itself*. Nor that I transform myself into an In-itself (otherwise I would be metamorphosed but not a creator). Therefore originally what one creates is oneself. But one does so *in* the dimension of the In-itself that one does not have. Creation is the act of a For-itself that produces itself in the face of itself as In-itself *in* itself.

What has still to be understood is the relation of the intention that is not itself but For-itself, to the In-itself that emanates from it. We have to back up and consider the notion of a *cause of itself*. Originally, a “cause of itself” does not take us outside of Being. It is a being that, as being, is its own cause. In itself, the cause in itself of the In-itself for the In-itself. However, it is precisely the distinction of a moment of the cause (even were it to be strictly atemporal) and a moment of the effect that introduces an element of withdrawal within the very heart of the In-itself, therefore one of nothingness. People have tried to deal with this dramatic notion by transforming it into something logical. The In-itself cause of itself is the being whose essence implies existence or which necessarily exists. But the constituting necessary relation here has to be synthetic: one proposition necessarily follows from *another* proposition. The necessity of the principle of identity, being analytic, remains purely formal and not generative. Hence the necessity of the In-itself cause of the itself is synthetic by definition, which signifies that it implies in being-in-itself a shrinking back in relation to itself, a perpetual otherness in relation to itself through the existence in principle of a negation. And this negation itself cannot be supported by anything outside itself. Being-in-itself has to bring about its own negation. In a word, the In-itself cause of itself cannot be some logical necessity. It is, if it exists, a dramatic existence. Or to put it another way, it cannot be in relation to its prior not-being in some relation of exteriority of indifference, as though this Not-being were to be confirmed by some external witness. The indifference of the exteriority of Not-being is contingency. Hence the Cause of itself exists as its own nothingness *in order* to withdraw itself from itself. It *has to be* its own nothingness in the mode of bearing witness to it or suffering it. In a word, it is Nothingness as a lived relation of Nothingness to Being.

This argument can be presented in another way (the ontological argument). Perfection is envisaged as a *power of being* (in Gilson, for ex.).¹⁵⁴ God has such a power of being that he is his own cause in relation to himself. But these are only words for the notion of power is not included in the idea of being. Being either has power as a surplus added to it, but then it already exists and this power, being one of its attributes, cannot turn back on being to create it, or this power creates Being, but then it is *not Being* but rather that which has to produce Being, which in the final analysis is the absence of Being posited both as essence and motive. So the absence of Being that underlies the ontological proof is a Nonbeing haunted by Being and defined by it. It is the Nonbeing of this Being and exists for it as the *nothingness of this Being*. But because this Nothingness had to have been, it follows that the nothingness of being itself gets set up on the basis of some being. So the critical moment is one of Being, not of Nonbeing. Nonbeing appears as what has to efface itself for Being to appear as well founded.

154. Etienne Gilson (1884–1978), French philosopher and leading historian of medieval philosophy.

In sum, it is the absence of Being become consciousness that produces Being. Or, to put it differently, Nothingness as pure, unthinkable exteriority of indifference has been transformed into a lack of being. As a consequence of Being being the critical moment, it is what supports Nothingness in being. Therefore, we have the choice: put Being on this side of Nothingness or beyond it. That is, either turn it into a facticity or a summons. However, as a summons, Being already has a sort of existence at the extreme tip of Nothingness. It cannot come from Nothingness, therefore it must already be in some way in order to uphold Nothingness in its being. The result is that finally it is Being that upholds the Nothingness that must found it. So that it finally comes down to saying that Being is either beyond or on this side of Nothingness. To put it simply, if it is beyond, it has need of Nothingness to give it its being, which is absurd; if it is on this side, it already is and it requires Nothingness as its foundation. In other words, if nothingness is originally conceived of as an infinite lack of Being, there has to be an infinite being that turns itself into a lack of Being, for Nothingness conceived of as Nothingness-for-itself is necessarily conceived of as being in some way so as to turn itself into a lack, therefore it is identical to Being. This means that the essence of Nothingness is to be in the manner of having been [*est d'être été*] as its own internal negation or nihilation. As soon as it *is* without being as having been, its concept gets identified with that of Being, as Hegel made clear. Hence, in the cause of itself, in the final analysis, we do not find a nothingness that produces Being but a being that grasps itself as lacking a foundation, that is, that projects the passage from contingency to necessity.

If we come back again to creation, we see that, creation being the projection of oneself into the Other, or, if you will, of the For-itself into the In-itself, our problem was to know how the For-itself could, as a nihilation, produce an In-itself.

In a word, from where does the In-itself draw its origin? The problem of the *Causa sui* is the same problem: since in the *Causa sui* we see a nothingness define itself precisely as a lack of being and we see Being come forth from this lack that defines it. But, at the same time, we have the outline of an answer to our twofold question, since we now know that, in the case of the *Causa sui*, it is contingent being that seeks to found itself by way of the intermediary of this lack. The characteristic of lacking something, in effect, means to be refusing to be oneself. An inert lack, existing in the exteriority of indifference, can be conceived of only in the form of a lack confirmed by a third-person observer—and this third-person observer has to be in the position of the *nur verweilen bei*¹⁵⁵ if this lack is truly to be conceived of as a pure unsupported absence without any element of a dynamic summons. Furthermore, at the limit, it will be purely

155. In *Being and Time* Heidegger speaks of the “mode of just tarrying alongside,” *das Nur-noch-verweilen-bei*, which “lets us encounter entities within-the-world purely in *the way they look* (εἶδος)” (p. 88). Cf. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 2, p. 24 n.

being-without-a-lack, like this hole in the ground which may be grasped as a mere configuration of the terrain. Whereas the lack that becomes present to itself as a lack is precisely self-consciousness and can only be self-consciousness as a refusal of itself, that is, as a project toward . . .

Hence in the *Causa sui*, as also in creation, we find three modes of being of the same being: primitive being-in-itself, the same being as presence to itself or lack, the same being as itself projected into being. In the case of the *Causa sui*, the independence of the lack in relation to the produced In-itself has to remain, otherwise, once produced, the final In-itself will become contingent again, at least in its perpetuation. The same thing applies to creation. Otherwise we have pure transformation.

Let us now see what the *ens* [being] produced has to be. It cannot be in the inertia of indifference, that is, it cannot continue to exist as contingent. This is the meaning of *continuous creation* for Descartes.¹⁵⁶ He saw that Being, if its creation is not continuous, *either* falls back into Nothingness *or* into a contingency that renders its creator useless. Therefore the creative intention has to slip into this Being, that is, it must perpetually be part of the being-in-itself of this Being. Yet, on the other hand, and reciprocally, it has to stay outside of it and, what is more, it has to be affected in its nature by the In-itself. In other words, it has to be the foundation of the In-itself and itself in-itself, both nothingness and in itself. This applies to the double case of the *ens creatum* [created being] and the *ens causa sui*. To put it simply, *ens creatum* and *ens causa sui* have the same nature. The origin of creation is the cause of itself.

And, as we can see, this elucidation of the concept of creation and of the *causa sui* brings us face to face with the original structures that the For-itself discovers in itself.¹⁵⁷ However, let us take up again the question of Being as the cause of itself. It is the lack of *that* being that it itself is. And, at the same time, it is the *lacking being*, hence it is what *qualifies* the lack, what colors it, and what confers a kind of being on it. In a word, without Being, the lack could not be a lack. It is both determined by the Being it lacks and qualified by the Being that *is* this lack. Or, to put it another way, it *is* the same Being along with the modification of this lack. In any case, if it is to be the cause of itself, this lack cannot be merely a transformation of Being. It is both *nothing but* this Being and at the same time a first beginning in relation to this Being, otherwise contingent Being, founding itself as a lack, would communicate its contingency to it.

Here is a vicious circle we cannot escape. Or, to put it another way, even though it is in the mode of having been in terms of Being, Nothingness as Nothingness has to be its own motivation *to create* Being. And this is what it is precisely as presence to itself. The first beginning is the appearance of Being

156. Cf. n. 58.

157. This demonstration is taken up again below, pp. 516ff.—Ed.

before itself that entails the positing of the being to be created, as itself being a first beginning. In this way, the fissure in Being entails a twofold distance in regard to itself: the distance of the pair reflection/reflecting¹⁵⁸ and that of the past/present. Being is at the same time past as the *foundational In-itself*, present as presence to itself, and future as *ens creandum* [being to be created]. Whence a twofold, paradoxical condition of the being of the For-itself. It is what it flees or what it is not. This being that is not Being is precisely the being that it is not.

Or, if you will, there is a double determination of the past. It is both withdrawn in relation to the Nothingness that it founds and upholds, and all that there is of reality in this Nothingness, everything that insures that a certain side of Nothingness *is*. It is, if you will, the coloration of the negation of itself. Hence the past escapes itself and gets rediscovered in another form in terms of this very escape. For example, those thousands of past embraces of that woman who is absent. They are the very coloration of my For-itself, they are my For-itself in the form of desiring to see her again (to embrace her again). Yet they are so as a *question* and a lack. Hence the lack can be a lack only in relation to some being that *is* this lack. Its coloration and “substance” cannot be other than it is. My past is not just behind me, it is me. I do not have just to be it behind myself, I exist it. Concretely this means that my decision takes place in terms of what I am. However, *I am not what I am*. For this past as a lack is For-itself and not itself, and it is at the same time in the form of a refusal of this lack, that is, a refusal of itself as regards or even as a first beginning. I am my past in the mode of being it and not being it. I am my whole past, I am only my past, it is the very framework of my existence, yet at the same time I am this past as a decision, hence as new.

Of course this is only an example. It shows us freedom as always *individualized*. Freedom is precisely determination in the future of the meaning of the past; that is, it is a question for freedom of producing a being yet to come that will be the justification of the past or its foundation. Here, for the first time, appears the notion of the *for*. Since the past as being-in-itself cannot be directly founded by Nothingness, this nothingness produces a being yet to come such that this being yet to come will present itself as the *raison d'être* of what has been. And this being yet to come is a *raison d'être* because it presents itself precisely as *ens causa sui*. In this way, everything gets justified: a being that is the cause of itself appears that is only because it is the product of a contingent being, yet this contingent being only was *in order to* produce the *Causa sui*. The whole is justified.

Hence a first explanation of creation: not whence comes the being-in-itself of the *ens creatum* (a question to be dealt with later), but instead what is the

158. Cf. Hazel Barnes's discussion of these terms in her translation of *Being and Nothingness*, p. 151, n. 8.

meaning of the being of the Nothingness that nihilates itself? Quite clearly, the Being-in-itself that founds Nothingness. This Nothingness by itself could not produce a *meaning of being*. But as Nothingness relative to Being, it is the being that is borne by Being through the nihilating relation. Hence the For-itself is a *comprehension of being* (in the Heideggerian sense of the term) because it is an ec-stasis of being.

We have still to grasp whence comes the being of the created in actual creation. (For, in sum, actual creation is a degradation of the *Causa sui* as a failure to found itself. The ensemble being/nihilation can produce a *meaning of being* or a comprehension of being but not a being.) To make sense of this, let us return to the appearing of the For-itself. As such, being individualizes itself. But not as being and as such—rather as For-itself. The being from which the For-itself emanates is not *a* being [*un être*] within Being, nor even *Being* [*l'Être*], for the definite and indefinite articles [in French] as qualifications are a type of relation and therefore subsequent to the form of existing that is itself a relation, the one by which this relation comes into the world.

However the relation to itself cannot be a relation to itself without also being a relation to the whole of Being. Because a relation is a determination and a determination is a negation, also because being does not *bear* this negation as an indifferent burden, but rather has to be everything that it is (at the level of the lack), it has to be this negation of the whole of Being.

Let us be clear what this means. If we presuppose the prior unity of all Being (Spinoza's absolute), we cannot get from there to any particular determination for there is no way for absolute plenitude to contain its own negation within itself *from an individual point of view* (which would be its mode). Furthermore, from the point of view of pure negation, we cannot conceive that it should appear on the ground of absolute unity, for then it would be necessary to negate this unity in its very simplicity all at once. And unity is necessarily unification. It is never a *given* but always an act. The given is necessarily plural and it appears as given only to a being that is its own unity. In other words, unity—as Hegel saw—can appear (if it does appear) only at the end of a process of unification. It is never at the beginning. However, correlatively, neither is plurality simply given, for it presupposes, on the one hand, a plurality of accomplished unities, hence of unifying processes that have reached their ends, and, on the other hand, a witnessing external consciousness that realizes its own unity as the witnessing consciousness of an exteriority of indifference (it is this exteriority of indifference of accomplished unities that is the plurality in question). Hence unity and plurality originally presuppose a being that realizes unity and plurality in Being, that is, that would be its own relation to itself.

Being, therefore, before the upheaval of the lack, is neither one nor many. Not that it is *something else*, it is just that a being is manifested as one or plural only with the appearance of the “there is.” Perhaps someone would like to oppose to the theory of progressive unity the cohesion of the In-itself. But this

is not unity—for unity presupposes diversity—it is mere density or compression. It is exactly decompression,¹⁵⁹ in creating a withdrawal, that at the same time produces a quasi plurality. It also is what posits plurality and exteriority. For the For-itself determines itself as *not being* the whole set of beings. When I see a circle, I can assert from outside it that it *is not* a triangle, a rectangle, etc., and that it does not occupy the place of some other figure. But originally, if the circle were to exist as for-itself, it could only do so in existing its not-being a rectangle, etc. And not in some abstract and *a priori* manner but concretely in relation to what is given in space.

Such is the case for that lack that abruptly wells up within Being. It can be itself, at present, only as a relation to itself and it can be a relation to itself only in existing its relation to the world. What it is *for the world* is strictly correlative with what it is not (a connection to what is outside). However, reciprocally, what it is not stands in an immediate correlation with what it is for-itself. The reason why one says just that “every determination is a negation” is that one sees such a determination as being imposed from the outside. This is the real sophism that runs through all of Hegel. Consciousness is for-itself, but for him it always receives a status that is imposed upon it. Instead the truth is that the For-itself is an internalization of its own finitude. It *has to be* finite. (Which is why we are working on an ethics of finitude.) Its limits get “existed” in the underlying freedom of its being. And, in a certain sense, they cannot be surpassed without the death of this being, which at the same time would suppress the very existence of this limit.

Note that the limit properly speaking comes from the *being* that nihilates itself. If the For-itself *is not* this table, it is not because it is nothing, but because it has to be this body and this past. But naturally *there was no* body, no past before the welling up of the For-itself. Hence the twofold operation of grasping oneself as *not being* the totality of Being or of being oneself one’s own qualified lack is just one and the same operation. Except in no case can this being grasp what it is. In the case of the negation of the world, it does grasp what it is not as a totality. In the case of the interiority of the Presence to self, it is behind the Reflected and the Reflecting as their framework and their context. It is the same simultaneous absence. Simultaneously it grasps itself as this receding context that *is not* the totality or that exists for-itself as not being this totality.

In a word, the existing being defines itself by opposing itself to itself. A completely full being could not oppose itself to anything, and, consequently, could not define itself, it would never be *this* lack. Indeed, the comprehension of what is lacking implies the comprehension of what does the lacking, for the lacked and what lacks it are in a situation that is reciprocal by definition. The *whole* of being cannot exist as a lack because its totality is indeterminable, if it is infinite or indefinite. And if it is finite it is because there are other beings,

159. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. lxv, 74, 78, 84.

even if these are just a nothingness that supports being, which would thus itself be a being-in-itself. However the term finite appears only with relations. And a relation is necessarily a relation to everything in order to be a relation to itself, because the individual is the whole but the whole that he is not. Hence, since the relation is “existed,” it denies the *whole* in order to be a relation to itself.

The result is that there is an individuality that gets translated into two languages, one of which is the negation of the whole as not-for-itself, that is, as an immediate establishment of the *other* (consciousness is the other, but being is other than the other), and the other of which is the presence to oneself of the *context* as the first relation. However, these two types of existing are not homogeneous. In the lived opposition it is the other term that is essential, the one that we are not and, particularly here, because it is pure Being. We are not it as being or as a way of being. Therefore we are *at a distance from it* and we grasp it without any distance as being at a distance from us. The decompression of an in-itself takes place in the form of a presence/relation to the whole of the In-itself. As nothingness, it is everywhere as not being; as being it slips into the presence to oneself. Hence the being-in-itself that surrounds me announces to me what I am by showing what I am not.

Contrary to this, the other mode of existence or presence to oneself is very different. In the pure negation of opposition, it is only a negation because being-in-itself has no need of being affirmed in order to be. The “that there” is not affirmed—no affirmation comes from me. In the relation me/that there, I am its negation and it *is*. It upholds me in being as not being it. In the presence to oneself, on the contrary, it is the being that I am that is present to itself. But due to this fact it always escapes me. The reflection hands over its texture as a self to the reflecting, but the reflecting has this same texture and as reflecting escapes any presence to itself. Reciprocally, the reflected that becomes the reflecting escapes it, there is a perpetual circulation of being, an exchange of being between the reflection and the reflecting.

So presence to oneself is *nonthetic*; that is, there is nothing in it that is *posited* as being. However it is this perpetual game of hide and seek of being that upholds Nothingness in being. Or rather Nothingness is not anything but this game of hide and seek. Here we find an initial rudiment of affirmation. In affirmation, in effect, that is being and nonbeing. An affirmation is not Being and yet it posits it, that is, it is itself *giving* in relation to Being. Therefore it is in one sense the being that it is not. This is precisely the case of presence to oneself, where the crisscrossing of being means that the reflected/reflecting is perpetually in a *giving* position in relation to the being of the reflecting/reflected, but this crisscrossing is also the destruction of the affirmation because Being is never where one looks for it, but always on the side of the unreflected or the reflecting. Hence there is a quasi affirmation.

The connection between the giving and the fulfilling appearing of the external In-itself and the quasi affirmation of presence to oneself is that this presence to

oneself is presence to oneself colored by the texture of the being of nonbeing—transcendent being. In other words, this not being is *existed*. It is existed in terms of *a certain coloration of being*. The welling up of Nothingness presupposes *the whole of Being*: the being that it is not, as an internal negation of transcendence, and the being it has to be, in the mode of not being it.

Let us turn back for the moment to the *Causa sui*. I am a lack of being that refuses its lack within the setting of a world of n dimensions that surrounds me on all sides and that I am not. A double movement results from this: the movement of creation and the one of reflection.

First that of creation: that being for which I have the *meaning*, I can create only within the dimension of Being (since it is in itself). Being is given all around me. Next I can create it only *in this concrete being* since it has come to me as the Being that I have to be in terms of its very foundation, that is, the For-itself as set within the world has to create itself in the world. Hence it is within the world that I am a future to the world. And since the world, before anything else, is for me *the pure dimension of Being*, it is in the world and along with manifested being that I have to create myself; that is, I have to give my freedom as the foundation of this being that manifests itself to me.

It is really a question of creating being beyond Being but by means of *this Being*. Without a doubt my freedom will be the foundation of the being that I am not. But as we have seen, it cannot be the foundation of the being that I am. It has to uphold in being a being that cannot be purely itself. That is, it has to inscribe me in Being. This means that in creation Being is originally conceived of, by abstracting from its being-this, as the being/setting in which I have to produce my being. For, since I cannot produce it in the void (not just because I cannot produce being by myself but also because there is no void but plenitude everywhere), I can therefore only produce myself within this plenitude.

This can be expressed another way: the For-itself is conscious of itself as lacking itself, that is, as a future reality of itself. But this future is itself future, that is, it is itself as it is for itself as presence to itself, but in the dimension of being-in-itself. This itself as presence to itself is precisely the internalization of the opposition to the whole of Being, or, if you will, of the relation of negation. “Oneself” is the double relation to itself and to the world. Therefore the being that it has to set up in Being is the one that both appears and recedes in this double relation, and that, as a consequence, implies the world as its surroundings. Conversely, the world that I grasp in the relation of opposition as *not being me* appears to me in the double form of *foreign to me* and *empty of me*. It is everything less me. It *is not* me insofar as I am pure presence to myself and it is empty of me insofar as this self-presence is consciousness and the refusal of a lack. Hence, by way of the world affected with a void, a full world is profiled which is the totality, that is, the world plus me. To create is to fill up the world. But since the For-itself through its negation of the whole is the unification of the many into a whole, its inverted projection beyond Being becomes the positive unity

yet to come of the whole. Creation projects a being-in-itself, founded by the For-itself and that, being within-the-world, is a positive unity of the world. Hence for the world to lack unity or for it to lack me is one and the same thing. As for me, I come to myself as the being that I lack and as that lack of me that belongs to the world.

Consequently, *invention* (an essential element of creation) is a projection beyond the world of a being yet to come which is a synthesis of that being that haunts the For-itself as its *self* and that totality that is the world I negate which lacks me. And since this lack of me is spread throughout the world, each particular “over-there” is a witness and a symbol of this lack of me and presents itself as having for its beyond the over-there it will be if I found it in being, that is, if *through it* I introduce myself into the world of Being. Simultaneously, I appear to myself as the one who lacks something in the perspective of *this* over-there and this over-there becomes a means, that is, the being that lends its being to me. Creation then becomes “*possession*” in the magical sense of the word. I slip into the being in each over-there in such a way that my freedom becomes the foundation of its being and it becomes my representative in the world.

This can take place in two ways: by creation, that is, by introducing real modifications into the over-there under consideration, or by *affirmation*. An affirmation is a pure and simple making use of Being. I do not produce it. When I affirm that “the book is on the table,” it is clearly understood that its *being* does not come from me. Otherwise this would be a case of *imagination*. However neither is it a matter of a simple negative intuition (I am not that book). I take up the being under consideration for my own account, which means that I consider it as lacking a foundation. Therefore I give it the foundation of being taken up and created by me. With this, it becomes me, it symbolically represents me as the me that I found. It lends me its being and I lend it my freedom. Hence an affirmation is the result of some organization: 1st, of a freedom; 2d, of a being-in-itself; 3d, of a future. It is the opposite of facticity. Facticity is the being upholding Nothingness in Being. An affirmation is this Nothingness placed behind Being in order to uphold it in existence.

I add here, although this level of affirmation will have to be the object of further elucidation, that an affirmation is a *gift*.¹⁶⁰ I ground Being in giving it, the result being that it is there *to be given*, that is, placed in danger by another freedom. So an affirmation like a degraded creation can be considered as a purely conceptual step of creation. It is a creation without anything created, a creation that does not bring any modification to Being, or, if you will, an ideal creation.

160. Sartre will draw in what follows on the semantic relation in French between *donner*, to give; *la donnée*, what is given; and *le don*, the gift.

Where does the “power” of affirmation come from? From being present to the self in its very lack and, closely tied to this, from the affirmed being. When this being is absent, the affirmation takes place through the *word*, the substitute being for being. And the aspect of creation reveals itself since there is a creation of the *sentence*. The created sentence *stands for* the created being.

True creation is manifested by and realized through a transformation brought about on Being. Here the problem of transformation arises. The first thing to note is that the spirit of analysis has confused everything here by making transformation the assembling together of different identical elements. In fact, every modification of Being is a modification of the whole of Being, form and matter. What is in no way changed is the being of this Being. Hence it is really the appearing of a new object that interests us. If, indeed, one takes the scientific point of view of the atom, for example, so as to consider all creation as a *redistribution* of atoms, it is not just the meaning of the created object that vanishes but also the meaning of the previous object as well. From this, the very idea that one wants to create loses its meaning. There has to be an absolute truth of the human world for there to be any creation. And, indeed, this human world is true, owing to the fact of the absolute existence of a consciousness within the world (as is the scientific world for another attitude of consciousness). Therefore a creation is the appearing of a new Gestalt, form and matter, because the form modifies the matter. The problem here is instrumental: being-for-itself is a being that concretely modifies Being.

Trotsky: *Their Morals and Ours*.¹⁶¹ A powerful, although short book. Let us first make note that sometimes he makes use of bourgeois criteria. He writes, page 395: “The ‘amoralism’ of Lenin, that is, his rejection of supra class morals did not hinder him from remaining faithful to one and the same ideal throughout his whole life; from devoting his whole being to the cause of the oppressed; from displaying the highest conscientiousness in the sphere of ideas and in the sphere of action; from maintaining an attitude untainted by the least superiority to an ‘ordinary’ worker, to a defenseless woman, to a child. Does it not seem that ‘amoralism’ in the given case is only a pseudonym for a higher human morality?” What bourgeois democrat would not salute a scholar, for example, or a member of a religious order for having remained faithful all his life to the same idea? Who would not approve of the intrepidity in action of Foch or Bayard?¹⁶² Who would not praise, in the very name of Christian morality, the

161. Leon Trotsky, “Their Morals and Ours,” in *The Basic Writings of Trotsky*, ed. Irving Howe (London: Mercury Books, 1964), pp. 379–99. Sartre refers to *Leur morale et la nôtre*, trans. Victor Serge (Paris: Editions du Sagittaire, 1939).

162. Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929), marshal of France and commander of the Allied forces during the closing months of World War I. Pierre Terrail, Seigneur de Bayard (c. 1473–1524), French soldier known as “the knight without fear and without reproach.”

fact of giving oneself over to the oppressed like those mythical wandering knights of the Middle Ages or Florence Nightingale or even Arsène Lupin?¹⁶³

To put it more simply, the notion of the oppressed person is not necessarily Trotsky's: in a society where the bourgeois democrat says he is satisfied, there still exist anomalies; and among the ones that the strict application of the law cannot suppress there is the fact of individual oppression. Devotion to the cause of the oppressed comes down therefore to committing his individual life to the suppression of certain anomalies, by means of individual action. And is being scrupulous in the sphere of ideas not to seek above all to think and speak the truth? What is more, Trotsky says, pages 394–95, that the Bolshevik Party in “the period of its revolutionary ascendance . . . was the most honest party in history. Wherever it could, of course, it deceived the class enemies; on the other hand it told the toilers the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” It is certain that those bourgeois moralists who allow trickery in war would see nothing to reproach in lying to the enemy. What they will deny is that it is my neighbor, even during an oppressive period, who is my enemy. And Trotsky himself comes back to the bourgeois comparison of deceit during wartime to explain and justify lying to the enemy.¹⁶⁴ In other words, he considers lying *as violence*, but justifies it only in a society based on violence and as something to be used against violence. He believes that in a collectivity not founded on oppression, on the contrary, lying must cease: one must not lie to the working class. And he writes: “Nevertheless, lying and violence in ‘themselves’ warrant condemnation? Of course, even as does the class society, which generates them. A society without social contradictions will naturally be a society without lies and violence. Yet one can build a bridge toward it only by violent methods” [p. 387].

In sum, Trotsky holds, on the one hand, that every end becomes a means according to the dialectic process (a good example: p. 377: in some periods democracy is the “end” to be pursued in the class struggle for which it afterwards becomes a “means”) and, on the other hand, he outlines an absolute end that *in fact* is the background against which each particular end appears. In this case, it is not surprising that for him the relative end becomes a means: it always was so. Indeed, beyond the class struggle is outlined the final end which is collectivist organization. Page 395: “A means can be justified only by its end. But the end in its turn needs to be justified. From the Marxist point of view, which expresses the historical interests of the proletariat, the end is justified if it leads to increasing the power of man over nature and to the abolition of the power of man over

163. Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), founder of trained nursing as a profession for women; she worked with the British army during the Crimean War. Arsène Lupin, “the gentleman burglar,” the fictional hero of numerous short stories and novels by the French writer Maurice Leblanc (1864–1941).

164. “The life and death struggle is unthinkable without military craftiness, in other words, without lying and deceit” (Trotsky, “Their Morals and Ours,” p. 394).

man.” Here therefore we have an absolute end. Social antagonisms having been suppressed, man becomes an end for man, lies and violence are banished, all the forces of the human species turn toward nature which man undertakes to conquer. Here I see a Kantian ideal: it is the city of ends.¹⁶⁵

Note that when Trotsky seems to justify a means by the “class struggle,”¹⁶⁶ he does not reach down to the basis of his thinking. The class struggle justifies nothing in the Marxist’s eyes or else it would justify everything—for the class struggle *also* exists for the bourgeois class and as a historical principle it *too* has to justify its own lies to the worker, violence, etc. If such is the case, there would merely be two struggling adversaries, each of them forging the principles and techniques he needed for this struggle. But the class struggle by itself justifies nothing.

Still one must be *on the side of the oppressed*. 1st, oppression is condemnable. Why, if not in the name of a human ethics? 2d, because the only human group in a position to conceive a human ethics is the oppressed who posit as an end a society without classes, therefore without violence, without lies, for a free mankind. But we know that the bourgeois *also* claims to be seeking a classless society. Only he claims to realize this society *right now* by means of a mere inner disposition. Between a worker and a boss both animated by generous ideas, the class barrier disappears, only men remain. What is more, this absolute end forbids certain means. It forbids them, I am well aware, not because they are immoral by themselves but because they are means only in appearance and because in reality they are destructive of the end itself. “Permissible and obligatory are those and only those means . . . which unite the revolutionary proletariat, fill their hearts with irreconcilable hostility to oppression, teach them contempt for official morality and its democratic echoers, imbue them with consciousness of their own historical mission, raise their courage and spirit of self-sacrifice in

165. “I understand by ‘*kingdom*’ a systematic union of different rational beings under common laws. Now since laws determine ends as regards their universal validity, we shall be able—if we abstract from the personal differences between rational beings, and also from all the content of their private ends—to conceive a whole of all ends in systematic conjunction (a whole both of rational beings as ends in themselves and also of the personal ends which each may set for himself); that is, we shall be able to conceive a kingdom of ends which is possible in accordance with the above principles. For rational beings all stand under the *law* that each of them should treat himself and all others *never merely as a means*, but always *at the same time as an end in himself*. But by so doing there arises a systematic union of rational beings under common objective laws—that is, a kingdom. Since these laws are directed precisely to the relation of such beings to one another as ends and means, the kingdom can be called a kingdom of ends (which is admittedly only an ideal).” Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 100–101; cf. *ibid.*, p. 131.

166. “Bourgeois evolutionism halts impotently at the threshold of historical society because it does not wish to acknowledge the driving force in the evolution of social forms: *the class struggle*” (Trotsky, “Their Morals and Ours,” p. 377). Morality “is a function of the class struggle” (*ibid.*, p. 380).

the struggle. Precisely from this it flows that *not* all means are permissible. When we say that the end justifies the means, then for us the conclusion follows that the great revolutionary end spurns those base means and ways which set one part of the working class against other parts, or attempt to make the masses happy without their participation; or lower the faith of the masses in themselves and their organization, replacing it by worship for 'leaders.' Primarily and irreconcilably, revolutionary morality rejects servility in relation to the bourgeoisie and haughtiness in relation to the toilers, that is, those characteristics in which petty-bourgeois pedants and moralists are thoroughly steeped" [p. 396].

Quite clearly, the end under consideration is not a *value* in the current sense of the term. 1st, it can be realized and once realized it continues of its own accord. The bourgeois value of "speaking the truth," being an imperative for each individual, perpetually needs to be *carried out*, even in the case of the person who does speak the truth. In Trotsky's case, once the classless society is realized, it is a permanent fact that no one will lie anymore, because there no longer are any *motives* for lying. 2d, for the same reasons, it is a matter of an organization to be realized within History and that, consequently, far from being eternal and transcendent to History, gets realized in and through History and in terms of a limited future. In appearance, therefore, this enterprise resembles any finite enterprise, which by the very value of its project indicates the means for realizing it, rejecting those easier ones in appearance that would lead to compromises.

But, in fact, we need to see that the end, situated in a future out of *our* reach, functions as an *ideal*. This objective reign of morality, by the very fact that it is not conceivable that I should ever achieve it, leaves behind the concrete tie between goal and means (in an undertaking, the goal: increase production during the next three years—is a sanction for the means used during those three years) to become a regulative principle of the means adopted. If the science of History exists, that is, if the linkage of means and ends is fixed in some determined circumstance, then end and means arrange themselves in such a way that the normative character of the end is clearly attenuated. But if *judgment* (in the Kantian sense) retains a place—that is, the hypothesizing of a future and the inventing of behavior—then the regulative and normative end intervenes as an imperative. That is, one can stop seeing its concrete tie to the situation in order to grasp it only as an interdiction, a restriction, or an internal refusal. That in no case is one to deprive the working class or take away its confidence in itself, becomes an *unfounded* prohibition, and in the face of this prohibition there is the concrete situation: should one, in this particular case, collaborate with this bourgeois government?

This much is clear, for example in France in 1947: Stalinism saps the working class, takes away from it any sense of a union, and by refusing it democratic means within the party, takes away its confidence in itself and its educative experience. Furthermore, Russian Stalinism appears as the danger of a threatening war. Are we then to think that we ought to destroy Stalinism *by all available*

means? Koestler is of this opinion.¹⁶⁷ Concretely, this means that he joins forces with the reactionary forces (America—Gaulism, etc.) because only reaction is capable of causing the U.S.S.R. and the C.P.s [the Communist parties] to fail. However, the triumph of these forces would not just signify the liquidation of the C.P., but also a reinforcement of the oppression of the workers and a total loss of the confidence this class has in itself. Koestler accepts this consequence. Along with others, he thinks that there will be time, after the Russian-American war, to take up the effort again.

But if we, on the contrary, consider that in no case is one to diminish the confidence which the working class has in itself, we cannot associate ourselves with this maneuver. In other words, a Trotskyist will *a priori* refuse the option of reaction. But *the fact* is that the great majority of the working class is in solidarity with the C.P. The fact also is that reaction threatens. In this moment, the Trotskyist deprives himself of the possibility of preventing war or of attaching himself to one or the other of the two camps. He refuses *realistic* politics in the name of an imperative that appears to have no connection with the facts. In his turn, he too becomes an *idealist*. In the first place, because *in fact* he has no direct hold on the working class and it is, in these conditions, abstract to decide whether one will or will not take measures to diminish the confidence that this class has in itself. Next, because one prefers a less efficacious position to a more efficacious one, because one condemns oneself to be a witness or to acting homeopathically, in sporadic small doses; to taking up the protesting attitude of the man who judges *the course of the world*, that is, the attitude of the virtuous conscience.¹⁶⁸ I am not saying that this attitude is condemnable or that one can do otherwise in certain circumstances. I am only saying that this attitude is *moral* and abstract. If, on the contrary, Trotskyism had won over the masses, it could have become *concrete*, but this would have been a concrete *ethics* at the same time as it was a politics.

What therefore is the difference between the Trotskyist position and the position of democratic and bourgeois ethics? Both conceive of a city of ends. However the latter conceives it as capable of being realized atemporally through the pure accord of good wills but, in the end, acknowledges that this always *possible* realization is never given in fact. Whence comes a pessimism tied to an *a priori* moral optimism. Trotskyism, on the contrary, starts from the nonexistence in fact of this city of ends and the historical impossibility of realizing it at just any given moment. In other words, it is not original sin, or human wickedness, or the separation of consciousnesses that the Trotskyist reproaches for preventing this realization, but a precise historical situation that is the oppression of man by man. However, they do allow, 1st, that this reign of ends will maintain itself by itself once the liquidation of classes has been brought about;

167. Cf. Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, pp. 149–51.

168. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 228–35.

2d, that within the very situation of the oppressed is found a dynamic element that will allow the oppressed to realize this city of ends. In a word, there is a prefiguration of the socialist situation through revolution in the situation of the oppressed, if not in the “human nature” of bourgeois moralists.

No doubt someone will say that it is oppression itself that dialectically engenders the project of ending oppression. But if this generation is dialectical and not mechanical, what qualifies this oppression is that it is the oppression of a *person* who has already sketched out his future and that this oppression makes certain modifications of the future necessary. One does not oppress a hammer or a nail—one oppresses a being who has projects, and this oppression takes place as a radical modification of every project or as alienation, and revolt is the projection of what is possible beyond this original alienation. I would express this myself by saying that there is oppression only of freedom by freedom. But this is not the Trotskyist vocabulary and therefore does not enter into consideration. What must be said, even within the Trotskyist perspective, is that behind all the manifestations of oppression and class struggle a future is indicated. There is a presence of *the whole* in each moment, as in Hegel. The classless society is present as a goal to be attained by way of revolt and even, in a sense, by way of oppression. It *defines* oppression.

Finally, across all the concrete detail of struggles, the cunning of the bourgeois class, etc., oppression is always what is *negative*, that is, the bad form of social organization that *prevents* the establishment of a rationally organized society. So the struggle against oppression is a struggle against the negative. In Marxist terms: negation of a negation. This gets carried so far that the Communist-leaning Kojève in explaining Hegel declares that everything positive was brought about in and through the slave’s struggle against the master. For him (at least according to Hegel), the master is a dead negation. But, as Hyppolite shows using the *P[henomenology of] S[pirit]*, the negation of a negation can be a positivity only by the presence of the whole in it.¹⁶⁹ Hegel acknowledges this when he says: each moment is but one moment of what is of essence, yet posits itself as essential. This limitation of the moment of what is of essence *implies* that it bears within itself this essence as what it is a moment of. Hence, in whatever way one understands it, the classless society is present in some way in revolutionary activity. It is its ideal, the meaning of its project, the direction of its negation. It is *positivity*.

Finally, revolutionary activity is violence insofar as it is negation of a negation. And it bears within itself the elements of failure that come to it both from what

169. “In our opinion, if we are to understand Hegel’s argument here we must assume that the whole is always immanent in the development of consciousness. Negation is creative because the posited term had been isolated and thus was itself a kind of negation. From this it follows that the negation of that term allows the whole to be recaptured in each of its parts. Were it not for the immanence of the whole in consciousness, we should be unable to understand how negation can truly engender a content” (Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 15).

it negates (already itself a negation) and the very nature of its work (destruction/negation). Trotsky writes: “The revolution is itself the product of the society divided into classes whose stamp it necessarily bears.” What, therefore, is the one justification of this “wretched” activity? Trotsky himself tells us: “Only in the historical content of the struggle lies the justification of the decree [to take hostages, ordered by Trotsky himself in 1919] and in general the justification of the whole civil war which, too, can be called, not without foundation, ‘disgusting barbarism’ ” [p. 388]. Naturally, the object of the struggle itself has to be justified and for this it has to be present in some way as *coming*, that is, before being realized, that is, as a *value*. The positive totality present to the negative and destructive activity dominates it. Its justification is precisely its *value*.

Hence the notions of value and, in a certain sense, freedom are present in Trotskyism. Except that its great difference from bourgeois ethics lies elsewhere. Bourgeois ethics like bourgeois law is *abstract*. It considers a person to be a pure subject of rights and leaves aside any concrete circumstances. For example, the class struggle falls outside of ethics as a mere empirical circumstance. As a result, moral activity is held to be *independent* of historical circumstances. It is pure positivity and can occur anywhere. Negativity properly speaking never colors moral action. Instead it counts as part of immorality. Evil is not to be conquered by Evil (negation of a negation) but by pure positivity. One fights oppression by charity, lies by telling the truth. A socialist wrote to me: “It is by acting as a socialist, by carrying out the work of the S.F.I.O. that one really fights communism.”¹⁷⁰ That is; by being the most *positive* of all, one makes the negativity surrounding one vanish.

At the same time, the object of moral activity is indeterminate. It is a question of bringing about the rule of ethics but not in terms of any concrete circumstance. You are to treat your wife as an end, but you do not preoccupy yourself whether it is *possible*. Or rather you draw the affirmation of its possibility from the single fact that your wife is a person (an abstract and empty characteristic) and that you yourself are also one. Hence, by wanting to be a pure positivity, you present yourself to yourself as an abstraction, that is, as a negation of what is concrete. Ethics is negative as regards the operation of seeking to change the situation. In other words, it is the negation of a negation. But this concrete negation being the negation of oppression, ethics is the negation of the negation of a negation; that is, it both leaves things intact and, at the same time, it gives itself off to be an impediment to concrete action which is necessarily negative (destructive) *and* positive at the same time.

In other words, in seeking to be an absolute positivity, ethics becomes the impediment that the person throws up before the means of changing his fate. Which is why it never says *what has to be done* but what, in any case, one ought not to do. Professional or family ethics, like social ethics: a set of negative rules

170. Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière, the French Socialist Party.

that limit what is possible (as does the law) on the assumption that beyond oppression the reign of ends can always be established. That is, basically, that the reign of ends is eternal and that, by moral action, we participate in it. Hence the reign of ends becomes a background, the pure universal.

On the contrary, for Trotsky man's original goal is a concrete and historical end—the reign of ends come to earth is the socialist society that has to be realized. At the same time, moral activity becomes negative in relation to the concrete situation. Because it has a definite goal and because it becomes a concrete project, a concrete form of transcendence. However, let us note that this is the city of universal and abstract ends. Marx himself said that, given our current categories, it is not possible for us to represent to ourselves the nature of this society. What difference does it make therefore? Is it sufficient to bring down the city of ends from its reign in eternity to some place in the future if we are to give it flesh? No, but what is essential is that they explain to us that it is to be realized by *certain technical means*, that is by a radical economic transformation. Economics was just what in principle fell outside of universalist ethics. It was merely man's set of organic means of subsistence. One paid tribute to them and then human activity got underway.

If, on the contrary, we have shown that these means condition the attitude of man in the face of man, than our undertaking becomes abstract concrete and universal particular. At this particular moment, it is a question of destroying a particular form of organization. Whence comes a concrete interplay of negations and affirmations. Negation passes over to the next end. The construction of a new society is quite clearly a subsequent thing. Yet, on the other hand, a destructive instrument has to be brought about, for a pure, ideal negation (precisely what democratic ethics gives) will be inefficient. Whence comes affirmation (class consciousness, emancipation of the proletariat, radicalization of the masses, organization of a party). Cf. the texts from Lenin, for example in "*Left Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*.¹⁷¹ The negative and the positive faces are connected to each other (fundamentally, by the Spinoza-like formula: the tool forges itself in forging). One forges the destructive instrument by using it to destroy. Yet precisely by giving to the mass that discipline, that cohesion, that abnegation, that confidence in itself, and that comprehension that makes it such a powerful destructive instrument, so that it can destroy, one also prepares it for its positive role which is to become the city of ends by itself. For the destructive instrument and the positive end are one and the same thing.

Hence, at present, it is the means that make the end concrete, that, in a way, give it a body and individuality. Or, if you will, it is within the means (the instrument) that one finds the end (preparation of the consciousness of the masses for socialist society). And the negativity becomes an internal positivity, contrary

171. In *Lenin on Politics and Revolution*, ed. James E. Connor (New York: Pegasus, 1968), pp. 283–319.

to democratic ethics for which the abstract will toward positivity turns into absolute negativity. In the same way someone will say, in dialectical terms, that the absolute end will be more concretely seen to the extent that, through negations and successive constructions, we have taken up more advanced positions. The proletariat transforms itself into its own end. In sum, the end is already grasped, but abstractly, in the sporadic suffering and the individual revolt of members of an unorganized proletariat. In the organization *against* the oppressive class, the proletariat becomes conscious of being its own end for itself. It assimilates its cause to that of man.

Hence it is easy to understand why Marxism is a dialectic. If it were a pure determinism, the future would be a completely predictable result without any action in the present. But the present being violence and negativity, what saves it is the *action of the future*. If the future does not in some way shine on the present, the present is nothing more than it is. At that moment, violence, trickery, lying become Machiavellianism. Indeed, every action is determined by the immediate past, it bears its explanation in itself through this connection to the past, and, insofar as it is violence, it can explain itself but not justify itself. Hence the dialectic is an attempt to introduce ethics into the concrete. In determinism, the concrete goal has no value since it is defined by the action of the past on the present. The human enterprise is therefore *a priori* without value. Man is a wolf for man, and nothing distinguishes or gives any value to one class rather than another. The Machiavellian only grasps the situation from *his own* point of view. Furthermore, if he acts on the members of his class it is only insofar as they are determined by passions and needs. Consequently he has no need of *respecting* these passions and needs, because they do not bear the future within themselves, because even in the demands for a raise in salary there is no prefiguration of the city of ends.

The dialectic is the action of the whole on the parts and of the future on the present. Yet the ambiguity remains: is this *whole* ideal or a necessary future? In the latter case, the enterprise is not saved. In the former one, hope disappears. It is the notion of the future that allows the Marxist to play on both sides. Present, it would just be and thus cease to have any value, becoming a mere fact. Pure ideal, it cannot justify such efforts. But as *to come*, it has no *being* and becomes a value.

This ambiguity is the ambiguity of the Hegelian theory of freedom. In his theory, Hegel makes a leap like all those who have spoken of freedom. He defines it negatively as the perpetual power of escaping the given. But he corners it on the other end by assigning it the function of necessarily realizing the future. In reality, the individual consciousness is not free; through it, the totality denies all individual determinations. Free from the given, freedom is not free from the future. As Hyppolite has shown, the whole has to be present in some way in the part if the negation of a negation is to be constructive, that is, if it is to operate *in some direction*. This comes down to saying that if individual freedom

exists, the result of the negation is not determined. Yet it is precisely insofar as it is not determined that it can be a value. There is a value if consciousness is its own future through surpassing the given, and if this future is in question with respect to its being and not necessarily realized. The necessary future leads back, in spite of our excluding determinism, to Machiavellianism. Every means is justified, since it is the future itself that brings them about. When Trotsky rejects certain means, in so doing he posits the existence of values and of freedom.

The Stern Group: terrorist.¹⁷² But unlike most terrorist groups it does not aim at the liberation of man. Just that of Palestine, along with the neutralization of the Mideast. No doubt other goals may follow, but in this case violence is justified from the point of view of a strictly finite enterprise. And undoubtedly this enterprise, too, is a step on the way toward the liberation of men. But a finite liberation in relation to certain finite conditions. Hence just the direction of the action is what justifies the violence (against violence). Here the end is not posited as a means of obtaining another more complete liberation. It is absolute. The English have to go. Here, therefore, the case is different since there is no kind of idyllic future acting on our current malediction so as to justify it. Palestine freed of the English may perhaps fall under Russian domination, they admit, or perhaps the Palestinians will not arrive at a collectivist organization for a century, for ten centuries. The Palestinian liberation is only an *occasion* provided to the Palestinians (and to other nations).

Besides, and to be exact, the sought-for goal is the *departure of the English*. This can be seen in how they reason. If someone says to them, when the English leave you will fall under Russian domination, they reply, when have you seen the oppressed let themselves be turned aside from their struggle against their oppressor by the threat of a more distant oppressor? On the contrary, they may even enter into an alliance with the latter against the former. Afterwards we'll see. Exactly the opposite of the *wisdom* represented by the old woman of Syracuse imploring Dionysius to fear an even worst tyrant. A finite operation having as its goal a partial liberation, including violence and risk plainly assumed, because this liberation is just the occasion for freedoms to pursue liberating activity or to hold it back.

And what if, conversely, it were the concrete goal that gave its value to the city of ends? Or, more exactly, if the implication city of ends/concrete goal were of a wholly other nature than we have spoken of to this point? If, indeed, we

172. Eleven members of the Jewish resistance organization Irgun, often identified with the "Stern gang," were arrested at Choisy-le-Roi on 7 July 1947. *Combat*, 8 July 1947. More arrests followed the next day. On 30 July 1947, in Palestine Irgun hanged two British sergeants in reprisal for the execution by British forces of three of its members as terrorists (*Combat*, 31 July 1947). On 9 September 1947, thirteen other members of Irgun were arrested in Paris as "Zionist terrorists." *Le Figaro*, 9 September 1947.

take man in his reality, we see that he is transcendence, that is, a projection of himself beyond himself, creation. He never intends himself as he is but always across the organization of the world that he brings about. And it is essential that this organization be intended for itself, not because he finds his image in it. His work has to be a *gift*. One of the essential structures of the gift is the recognition of others' freedom. The gift is an *occasion*. And the freedoms are here considered in terms of their power to *do something*. That is, to transform the given into another creation, in short, into another *gift*.

Hence humanity never is completely closed in on itself, it is always open, for in no case does it take itself as an end. It is the object of a lateral form of realization. It realizes itself beyond the transaction in question. Whoever takes his freedom or that of another *as an end* substantializes it. He should consider it only as a transcendence *toward another thing*. The goal is not that we should love one another, or respect one another, or assist one another, or live in a classless society. The goal is *what we shall do* when these conditions will have been realized. Hence humanity always realizes itself by the projection of a transcendence. As Nietzsche writes: "No one hesitates to sacrifice himself for the ideas of 'God' or 'country' or 'freedom' . . . the whole of History is only the smoke floating about this type of sacrifice" (*Volonté de pouvoir*, 127).¹⁷³

Naturally, there most often follows some form of *alienation*, that is, that the goal, as soon as it is collective, becomes what is essential and the person becomes what is inessential. Their true relationship is not disentangled until one has put an end to the spirit of seriousness and seen that the person *is* his goal in the form of an ec-stasis and a gift. However, if humanity becomes its own goal by way of individual wills, the concept falls over it again. This can be seen particularly well in Hegel where the final society can do nothing more than vegetate. It is true that he adds that the Spirit is inquietude, but he draws just one consequence from this: that there will still be wars. In an ideal society so conceived, humanity has closed in on itself. The individual man is exhausted by his relations with the whole, and the whole is exhausted by its relations with each individual. This, precisely, in one way or another, is the city of ends. It is also visible in A. Comte. The city of ends is a closed society in the Bergsonian sense of this term.¹⁷⁴

At the same time, moreover, freedom becomes a pure myth since it is a matter of preserving a certain relation of the whole to the parts. Transcendence founders in immanence. In other words, nothing is further from the city of ends than the realized city of ends. This is why every historical system that *stops* the development of humanity at the phase of the self recuperating the self becomes a form of authoritarianism. This, properly speaking, is the *totalitarian idea*. Marx was

173. This quotation does not appear in the English translation of Nietzsche's *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968).

174. See Bergson, *The Two Sources of Religion and Morality*.

correct to call what Hegel called the end of History the end of prehistory. Hence the city of ends, in realizing the human totality, because each man becomes an end for all others and all others ends for him, in fact realizes totalitarianism.

This is necessary, by the way, for another reason. This totality cannot realize itself. Someone always remains on the outside (the Leader, the Führer) since in principle the human totality is detotalized. Hence human transcendence will be represented by one person. This person will have contact with the world and be aware of the agony of the project. The rest of mankind will know unity only by way of alienation.

So what forbids the city of ends from being the only goal that must be pursued is that the course of the world is strictly against it. Thus it takes on concrete aspects and becomes a concrete goal in this world in terms of some transcendent form (the Liberation of Palestine—Neutralization of the Middle East—Third Force,¹⁷⁵ etc., etc.). At this moment, *incarnated*, concrete, it becomes a precise and transcendent goal for man. By attempting to realize it, he finds himself in contact not just with the other as a transcended transcendence and transcending, but also with the world. It is not a question of realizing the city of ends by an internal transformation of subjectivity but by changing the economic aspect of the world, by chasing away the English, by acting on machines, on objects, on men, in short, by *working*. Hence we rediscover the level of necessary transcendence. To cure cancer is no doubt to put man in possession of himself, but above all it is to be in contact with microbes, rats, instruments, in short, the nonhuman. And a partial work, in turn, presents itself as an *occasion*. In other words, by pursuing the city of ends in and through a wholly concrete goal, one marginally realizes it by proposing his work to freedoms. Hence it is the transcendence and the singularity of the nearby goal that gives a value to the city of ends taken as the final goal, even though the latter gives value to the former.

On violence. Originally derived from the concept of force (*vis*). Force brings about positive effects by acting in conformity with the nature of things. In other words, it is the transcendent unity of the moments of a positive operation or of one considered in terms of its positivity. Violence is characterized by a negative aspect: I put the sword back into its scabbard and it slips right in, I manifest a certain force. The operation took place in conformity with the nature of the sword and the scabbard. In no case would one speak of violence here. However, there was the destruction of a certain state of the world (empty scabbard and the sword on the table). Yet this state (because of its exteriority of indifference) is not considered as a *nature*, there is a new disposition of things but one does not conclude from this that destruction has occurred because there was nothing

175. In English in the French text. “Third Force” was the term used to designate attempts to form an alternative majority government of the Center-Left and the Right in France in the late 1940s, thereby avoiding the choice between either the Communists or the Right.

to destroy. In fact, there is an error here because, from one point of view, the upheaval of human reality into the world organizes everything into a *situation* (a relation of tools). In fact, there is a *form* that is destroyed.

But we are more than anything else sensible to the external relation of being to being. In violence, I have placed the point of the sword into the scabbard crookedly and I use my force to make it go in anyway. There will be destruction. The sword will be dulled, the scabbard scored. But perhaps the operation will succeed (if my goal is not to carry out the operation according to the rules but to *get the sword back in at any price*). For example, it is necessary to show that there hasn't been a brawl, a duel, the police are coming, I get the sword back into its scabbard before they arrive. It does not matter, thereafter, whether or not the sword can be drawn out of its scabbard again or not. I reached my goal, no one can see I was fighting.

The ambiguity of the concepts of force and violence is shown quite nicely by the fact that here one uses the expression (the neutral verb) "to force." One will say to someone who wants to push a sword into a scabbard *by force* that he is "forcing" it in. One will say to him: do not *force* it. Hence the first notion that comes into play is that of destruction. Destruction of a *nature*. However, there is necessarily destruction if there is resistance. Note, too, that one can speak of a resistance of the weight of the hand that wants to force the sword into the scabbard. But *precisely* it is a question here of a force of *inertia* (exteriority); that is, a force external to oneself and one that is not disordered. Against the disordered, the external to oneself, the diverse, there is no violence. There can be violence only when the resistance is the resistance of a *form*, that is, the organic unity of some diversity. There is force when the action conforms to some rule (here we are in nature, therefore it is a question of an operation conforming to the internal laws of an object), and violence when the action is external to the law. If I uncork the bottle, it is force—if I break its neck, it is violence. This example shows that violence occurs where force is inadequate; that is, it is originally born from the failure of using force.

Whence the partially true idea that violence is weakness. We shall return to this. In order to accept this idea, however, we have first of all to posit that there is a theoretical supremacy to action accomplished in conformity with laws over an action that is accomplished against such laws. Yet I may prefer the nonlawful; that is, I can place destruction as a means of obtaining an end above respect for what is. In this case, I affirm the inessentialness of everything that exists in relation to me and my goal. Violence implies nihilism. But at the same time, the very style of my act is altered. The action that observes the laws is *composed*, the action that does not do so is *decomposed*. To affirm with force is to remain composed. To affirm with violence is to lose one's assurance. This is natural because all violence, beginning where force leaves off, implies a certain confidence in chance (taken as unknown laws). If I hammer harder and harder on a nail, there is no violence. But a moment arrives when I am no longer in control

of my gestures. At this moment, I count on statistics: twenty blows of the hammer will fall somewhere by chance, but one will come that will strike the nail. I do not count on what is known but on what is unknown, there is *hope* in violence and *certitude* in a lawful operation. Recourse to magic.

What is more, it is clear that violence is addressed only to organized natures, there is violence only toward living organisms, tools, human establishments, and men. However, there is violence toward life only at the level at which one can assimilate it to the human. One is violent toward a dog, a horse, a monkey. The idea of saying that one does violence to a crab by plunging it into boiling water only arises, if at all, through an extension to infinity of the exact idea of violence. Naturally, the limits of violence and nonviolence are extremely difficult to trace from this point of view, or rather they are variable depending on the attitude assumed in the face of the ambiguous phenomenon of life. Malebranche did not think he was being violent to his dog when he kicked it.¹⁷⁶ Besides, if one posits a series of natural, inviolable laws (Physics), there is another reason why one cannot do violence to nature: one only obtains a result by obeying its laws. No amount of violence can make an airplane fly whose motor has broken down. There will be violence only when the form that is opposed to you is destructible, in other words, when the laws of normal usage are established by wills. When, in a word, it is a question of some human lawfulness.

Here we see that violence is not one means among others for attaining an end, but the deliberate choice of attaining the end *by any means whatsoever*. Which is why the maxim of violence is “the end justifies the means.” However, we need to be on guard about this formula. It is profoundly ambiguous. In sum it means: all the means that contribute to bringing about the end are justified. But the meaning varies depending on whether we consider the end as being in relation to the means in terms of the exteriority of indifference, or in terms of the organic unity of the means. In the former case, violence at this point is justified in that it is no longer really violence. But in the latter case, violence is an alteration of the whole series of means and therefore of the end. The intended end changes along with the means, hence the violence is left hanging. If, half dead with thirst, I find a bottle that I cannot get open, the violence I do in breaking its neck is irrelevant in relation to the end. If, on the contrary, I am invited for a drink with friends, the end (social drinking) implies some kind of ceremony, therefore a respect for all the rules, in particular the orderly use of objects. Violence (breaking the bottle’s neck) changes the end by breaking the social bond.

The intermediate term is the *orgy* where the goal precisely is violence. That is, the negation of lawfulness, the destruction of the world which leaves you confronted with the end conceived of as absolute.

176. See Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), *The Search After Truth*, trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), p. 323.

It is not the end that justifies the means, it is the means that justify the end by conferring on it an absolute value through the violence (sacrificing the whole world for the end). In this case the end of the violence is to bring about the universe of violence.

The universe of violence is certainly one way of affirming man. It is in no way, as it is too often said, a return to bestiality. No doubt beasts do kill one another, but we have no means of determining if their fights put them in a project of violence.

Since all activity is at the same time some value, violence bears its own justification within itself; that is, by its very existence it claims *the right* to violence. And since violence is destructive of real chains of events and of natures, this right implies the position that every form and organization are dirt cheap. The universe becomes inessential to the price of the goal that man has set himself. At the same time, it takes on the aspect of being a pure obstacle—at least insofar as it is given. In fact, in ordered action things have an ambiguous aspect. They are partially obstacles and partially instruments. But what is important is that one allows his force to be channeled through their organization. One depends on them. Here, on the contrary, there is a refusal of prior techniques and forms, therefore just the aspect of being an obstacle is present. This aspect brings together and simplifies objects to the extreme. They only have one aspect left: density, since they are correlated with the activity of breaking them. The unity of such forms is their pure massive cohesion. The resistance of the bottle, like that of the crowd, the colonized population, the foreign government are grasped as unities of cohesion. Violence is disconcerted by labile matter, the kind that slides through one's fingers, that crumbles, that is oily. For violence does not know how to put things together. The universe therefore becomes a universe of masses.

At the same time, violence is a negation of time since the measure of time is the action that composes it and makes use of it. If I am waiting for the sugar to dissolve, I am depending on the character of the water and the sugar. Time passes. The violent person throws the glass. It is destroyed in an instant. This indicates that he wants everything and wants it immediately, like Anouilh's *Antigone*.¹⁷⁷ The violent man's refusal to compose himself is equivalent to a refusal of being in the world. "Don't waste your time, cop," signifies: don't

177. Jean Anouilh (1910–87), *Antigone*, trans. Lewis Galantière, in *Five Plays* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1958), pp. 1–54. "*Antigone*: I spit on your happiness! I spit on your idea of life—that life that must go on, come what may. You are all like dogs that lick everything they smell. You with your promise of a humdrum happiness—provided a person doesn't ask too much of life. I want everything of life, I do; and I want it now! I want it total, complete: otherwise I reject it! I will *not* be moderate. I will *not* be satisfied with the bit of cake you offer me if I promise to be a good girl. I want to be sure of everything this very day; sure that everything will be as beautiful as when I was a little girl. If not, I want to die!" (ibid., pp. 42–43). This play was first presented in Paris in 1944.

spend time on his reasons, don't play the game, don't accept his existence. Hit him, reduce him to a simple resistance that will reveal the truth under the blows.

The intransigence of the violent man is the affirmation of the divine right of the human person to have everything, and to have it immediately. The universe is no longer a means but the dense and inessential obstacle between the violent man and the object of his desire. As for this object, it has necessarily to exist already or to be posited as existing. Indeed, violence, being destructive, cannot *produce* an object. It can only remove the obstacles that conceal it. The bottle is no longer the instrument that holds the liquid and *helps* it to be poured out if one knows how to do so. It is the liquid's prison, the obstacle between it and my mouth. But the liquid is already there. It is waiting for me. Hence violence is Manichean. It believes in an order of the world that is given yet concealed by bad wills. It suffices to destroy the obstacle for this order to appear, and this applies to the anti-Semitism that would liberate the order of the world by destroying the Jew, as well as to the surrealist who would make the surreal appear at the horizon of his destructions. Therefore violence implies a confidence in the Good, but instead of thinking of the Good as something *to be done*, it thinks of it as something to be delivered.

At the same time, it is confidence in chance (the hammer blows), that is, in the order of the world grasped as an undifferentiated unity in relation to the differentiated and organized island that it negates. It refuses *technology* as the individual order and concrete lawfulness of the envisaged form, but it has confidence in a form of lawfulness conceived of as a vague sort of help provided by the background of the world. Yet, at the same time, the violent man is *intransigent*, precisely because he refuses to compose himself. In fact, he will choose the destruction of his goal and of himself rather than acknowledge the rights of the world and of some operation. If the goal is only to be attained by the utilization of some instrument, then let the goal and the instrument that was the only way of reaching it go to hell. The violent man is a pure man. A Cathar.¹⁷⁸ He will not accept failure except for death and at the limit replaces destruction for the sake of a goal with destruction for the sake of destruction. Hence violence is a meditation on death. To have everything, right now, and without any compromise, by leaping over the order of the world, or to destroy myself taking the world along with me.

But, by this very fact, we have to go further still. Note, first of all, that in the universe of violence there is a reversal of the relation between an end and its means. The end is justified by the violence. One can no doubt uncork the bottle at an orgy. But one doesn't want to do so. One doesn't want to do so because

178. A member of a heretical Christian sect that flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth century in Western Europe. Cathars professed a strict neo-Manichean dualism and, at least among the so-called perfect, practiced an extreme asceticism. The Albigensian Crusade (1209–1229) was directed against them.

the goal is to destroy it in using it. Violence is an operation in the world, therefore an appropriation of the world. However, appropriation by destruction. That is, the object belongs to me in its slide from being into nothingness only if this nothingness is brought about by me. Not being able to found its being by my freedom, I use my freedom to found it in its nothingness. I am at the origin of the nothingness of the world, I am the Anticreator, I dream of a continuous destruction. And the image that comes back to me of my operation is the image of an Ego that, rather than founding my being, is the foundation of its not being.

To put it another way, it is my facticity that I symbolically destroy by way of the world. I want to be pure nonbeing. But to be pure nonbeing is not not to be. It is to be a pure nihilating power, pure freedom. Violence is unconditioned affirmation of freedom. Here we come back to the Hegelian analysis of terrorism: “absolute freedom becomes explicitly objective to itself, and self-consciousness learns what absolute freedom in effect is. *In itself*, it is just this *abstract* self-consciousness, which effaces all distinction and all continuance of distinction within it.”¹⁷⁹ For us, on the other hand, what is negated is the fact of being in the world, of having a facticity. It is also the given features of character. One is pure destructive power. And behind the world that collapses we find the unveiled Good or the Ideal, absolutely necessary to violence, that only subsists in the end through the world to be destroyed and that considered in its nakedness is, whatever its alleged content may be, the *right to destroy this world*; that is, essentially, myself in face of myself as the pure right not to be the world or, to put it another way, to recuperate it in its destruction. Indeed, the instantaneousness of violence is the coincidence of me with myself by way of the nihilation of the world as an intermediary.

The contradiction is that the world is perpetually necessary as an obstacle to be nihilated. The violent man is therefore a person of bad faith because, however far he carries his destructions, he counts on the richness of the world to support them and perpetually to provide new things to be destroyed. In terms of psychoanalysis, one could say that violence is the refusal of being born. It is also the refusal to go from the parts to the whole. But, besides this, as we have seen, violence is first of all addressed to men’s works, then to men themselves. One does not beat up a rock. Although one does break a glass. But breaking the glass or the neck of a bottle is a refusal of the *meaning* of the glass or the bottle. If I break the neck rather than using a corkscrew, what happens is that I refuse to enter into a series of operations that have already been marked out on this object—as a form of restrained lawfulness—which indicate that men have intended me in their intentions.

The bottle refers to me in two ways: 1st, as *One*; 2d, as an object of a gaze, as transcended transcendence. If I consent to taking up the corkscrew, to inserting it in the cork, to twisting and pulling it, etc., I pour myself into a personality

179. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 360–61.

prepared by others, which is *general*, and I am equivalent to everyone else carrying out the same operation and defined just by this general operation. Against this, I affirm my individuality as a destroyer. That is, I posit myself as different from everyone else, that is, from the *one*. But by choosing pure universality instead of generality. For if the choice to destroy something is individualizing in relation to the choice to construct something or do something, its operation is universal since it is destruction and at the end of this destruction all that has been destroyed is equal. My individuality is to have chosen universality. (The reason for this choice is that creation borrows the being that it finds and grafts itself to a foreign element whereas destruction is destruction of both being and form. Form and matter both go up in smoke.)

In the second place, my refusal of being-in-the-world is, *a fortiori*, a refusal of being in the midst of the world, that is, of being looked at, of being something other than a pure transcendence. Violence is a refusal of being looked at. The human gaze drives it crazy because it transforms destruction into a vain agitation within the midst of the world, ridiculing its destruction of *one* object from an infinite collection of existing things. The artisan, the engineer, the technician *look at me* across the tool that they made for me. Consequently, to destroy the tool is symbolically to destroy this gaze.

Above all, violence affirms the right of doing what one wills with the tool, not what is prescribed. We are here coming to the ground of violence. Violence seizes the objects of the world as pure densities to destroy because the objects of the world present themselves to such violence as human: What one destroys through them is precisely man and even the unity of cohesion that one wants to break apart is also like a bad will that one grasps in the object.

Here the curious ambiguity of the violent man is made manifest. He wants to be pure, universal and destructive freedom, that is, the ruin of the world, the disappearance of being. But he wants to be this insofar as he is *alone* yet related to the universe. In the presence of man he feels himself trapped by a gaze and to escape his being individualized into facticity, he transforms himself into *pure being*, but he is the *devastating being*. The devastating being, that is, the boulder that crushes all beneath itself, the cyclone, or the avalanche. Pure universal freedom *for himself*, he wants to think of himself *for others* and in the dimension of the In-itself as some devastating substance. He wants others to see him as an element, so that his biological unity with its weaknesses does not appear to their gaze. He is man (that is, pure destructive consciousness) when he destroys the given in itself of the world and he is a *thing* when he destroys man.

Because it is man who can destroy the universe. But it is the universe that can destroy man (man can naturally destroy man, but then we have an internal movement—within humanity). And the obverse side of freedom, seen by others, is mathematical necessity. Expressions about pitilessness, inexorability are often used in violent oaths. As much as being frightening, they are warnings against oneself and ceremonies meant to give the self a fitting image before others. Even

a physical force cannot be inexorable. One can struggle against it, throw it off course. However, analytic necessity is inexorability itself. The violent man is therefore pure freedom for himself. Seen by others, he acts as the *pure being* to whom nothing can come from the outside, that nothing can change, who rests in pure identity, and whose acts are the pure analytic consequences of his essence. Two equivalent ways of negating time. The whole of being in order to destroy man, that is, the whole world as hostile to man. Pure man in order to destroy being. He vacillates perpetually between a refusal of the world and a refusal of man. Practically, he refuses to be born among others in the world. Therefore, fundamentally, he is on the plane of pure right. The world ought not to have been, men ought not to have been, I ought not to have been born.

But we have demonstrated above that right as an absolute demand (to posit a goal while considering that no factual circumstance can be an excuse for not attaining it) is precisely the destruction of the world. Hence pure violence and pure right are one and the same. If I am strengthened by my right, I refuse any discussion, I refuse to compose myself. I make use of force (I call the police or I strike out). I take no excuse into consideration. I destroy the factual state of affairs. Violence can never be anything other than a right that affirms itself against every form and organization of the universe. Soldiers rape *enemy* or *civilian* women, anti-Semites beat up *dirty* Jews, Negrophobes lynch obscene and criminal Negroes. All violence presents itself as the recuperation of a right and, reciprocally, every right inexorably contains within itself the embryo of violence. "I was tired, I was sitting here." "You have no right to do so, that was my place." "I am old." "You have no right." "I am sick." "You have no right." These repeated affirmations of a right are symbolic violence against the sick, old woman. *There has never been any violence on earth that did not correspond to the affirmation of some right*, and even if in its original upheaval violence was not at first a right, in its very upheaval it had to constitute itself as a right. "You are upsetting her," says this cruel beast, "and I know you slandered me last year."

Hence by itself violence is a demand on others. It requires that it be recognized as such, that is, given such and such a value by the other. Here we come upon the most deep-lying contradiction because, on the one side, to do violence to others, I have to acknowledge the divine right of violence, that is, to consider myself as pure freedom, the source of every right, and to consider all other men as inessential in relation to me. Yet because violence is a demand and a pure right, the Other becomes essential because he has to recognize my violence as legitimate and justified. What has to be understood here is that violence, being *for me* a pure exercise of my freedom, must be a first beginning. Any excuse that one may find will only offend me. It is not because the situation is becoming intolerable that I am violent, nor *because* I was unhappy. It is because it is my pleasure to do so. The police officer, before handing over the tobacco, hits the table to break off the questioning: "Ah, now we are getting to serious things," or "OK, stop fooling around," so as to give what is only a custom in interrogating

someone the aspect of an absolute decision. Consequently, violence wants to be acknowledged, and it can bring this about only through violence. Therefore one is violent to the other in order to require him to recognize how well-founded this violence is.

But what, therefore, *does it mean to do violence to a man?* In the first place, it is to recognize him as freedom. Since I require something of him, I recognize him as free. But at the same time it is to declare him purely determined. That is, to consider him both as essential and inessential. If he talks when I torture him, he recognizes my preeminence. His freedom gives way before my own. But since it is torture that makes him talk, he is reduced to the level of a determined thing. And, in the last analysis, the torturer wants both of these at the same time. For if freedom resists him, he no longer has a right, his demand becomes mere desire, he only has *violence* left, he is a monster. But once he has given in, the victim becomes inessential, he has given in to evil, his recognition has no value.

As for the hypothesis of free recognition by an equal of the right to violence, this would not be satisfying to the violent man because it would be a *gift* and not something taken. It presupposes an equality that is excluded by nature by the violent man, as well as relations beyond violence between men. Violence founds itself and affirms itself in terms of the destruction of the Other, it denies him the right to judge. However, precisely as a demand it demands that the other acknowledge that he has no right to judge. In other words, it needs the freedom that it denies. Destructive of the human world, it needs the human world to acknowledge its destruction. At the same time that it means to establish its absolute right over men by the spectacle it presents to itself of their abjectness. In this way, violence demonstrates to itself that it can treat them as things or beasts (it administers this proof through determinism: and in so doing it proves to itself that it is not violence but force, that is, that it uses certain means precisely and rigorously—the German who in the quiet of his office studied physiology in order to find the most painful ways of hurting the body). But here again is its bad faith. While on the surface it wants to be force, deep down it is violence for it is addressed to the freedom of the Other, both to destroy it and to obligate it to freely acknowledge this force. Hence in a curious way the violent man can pass from the representation of himself in terms of the *purity of a right* (reflective and subjective) to the (external and objective) *innocence of a force*.

Everything just described is the universe of violence, that is, the universe as it appears when violence is taken as an end. The extreme case. Ordinarily, violence serves some end. This does not mean, however, that during an act of violence one does not catch sight of the universe of violence for an instant—in fact, it was for this that we described this universe first—but it is modified, unstable, and other elements intervene. The cases we are now envisaging are

those cases in which the end is essential and seems to be so important that it entails the choice to attain it by any means whatsoever.

For example, the frequent case of the rape of a young girl by an agricultural laborer. In this case, the end imposes itself as an obsession. The man, deprived of sexual relations, ends up by fixing his desire on some young girl. His desire in its obsessional form has become violence from its first appearance because, with regard to this end, the whole world has become inessential. What is more, the very meaning of a desire taken as absolute is that the absolute perfection of being, the totality appears when the desirer and the desirable are joined together. There is a fusion and an appearance of *being* by way of the collapse of the inessential. Naturally, desire has to do with the body and comes by way of the body, it is facticity that lends it its weight. However, what makes it irresistible is the hope for the absolute that is at its base. This absolute, at the same time, becomes a pure justification of the individual himself and the world's meaning. From this instant on, all the world's resistances are something to be conquered. *By any means*. Preference is even given to force because the use of force allows for a semi-immediate realization. Seduction, if it were possible, would involve long preparations. Furthermore, it would presupposes that one attached some importance to *consent*, that is, that one sees coitus in terms of human, loving relations with the girl. But precisely there is none of this. It is a question of a pure act.

In any case, this refusal of human relations is itself complex. Because originally there was a refusal of the Other and the Other's having a part to play (the day laborer cannot procure a woman—he is dirty, ugly, etc.). Then there is a fear of human relationships. The choice of a young girl is significant in many of these rapes: a woman would be bothersome because she represents an adult consciousness. Note: here the rape is *indifferent* to any consent—whereas in bourgeois and sadistic rape or military rape, what happens happens *against* some form of consent. Furthermore, the end being the immediate and total fusion of the desirable and the desirer, it has to be realized in *an instant*. This is the instant of intuition, of ecstasy, of some mystical experience. It is the Eternal in time. Note here also that one better *possesses*, in one sense, the world that one is destroying than one does the world that one creates, just as one better possesses the Other when he *refuses* than when he *consents*. Consent implies the return of a whole future, of a freedom that escapes one's grasp, etc. Refusal, if one goes beyond it, demonstrates that freedom is inessential. (In fact, above, we have seen the ambiguity here.)

Yet if the fusion of man and his desire is the Eternal, this implies at the same time total disinterest as regards what comes next, that is, the future. In a word, violence is the choice to live in the short term, and to do so *in terms of* the instantaneous and eternal nature of the end. And since, in fact, the act is prohibited, this defense ultimately leads to the certitude that *there will be no future*.

This is why rape is frequently followed by murder. Of course the explanation usually given is: to prevent her talking. But this is simple-minded. In fact there is an idea: prevent there being an *afterwards* for a consciousness. That an event in the past becomes *what one talks about* is what a consciousness represents. It has to be made eternal. The death of the girl will turn her into eternity as an absolute event. And, at the same time, there is a certain attraction to the crime because it entails the death of the criminal. That is, in the very act there is the refusal to survive. However suicide is rare following a rape or a crime. Instead, violence here abandons itself to the great Nemesis of the human universe. During the act itself, the hostile universe gathers around the violent man. One more moment he holds it at a distance, he cuts off the cries of his victim, and then, the act over, he abandons her, he abandons himself. Hence, in rape, the universe and time collapse, leaving the instantaneous intertwining of two bodies, which the very flame of violence has to reduce to ashes.

In this example, we see that there exist ends which by themselves indicate violence as the only means adequate for realizing them. These ends are absolute and instantaneous. If they are *absolute*, they justify *every* means, except those that clearly contradict them. But if they are instantaneous no means can any longer contradict them. Indeed, what do we mean here by *contradict*? A means contradicts an end when it allows one to attain this end in appearance while it secretly ruins it in reality. For example, rape allows one to obtain the body of a woman *once*, but if I want to be the real possessor of this body for life or a long relationship, it ruins this possibility. However, in an instantaneous end, appearance and reality are one. And, very much to the contrary, if I *want* the instantaneous, by this very fact I set aside all those means that would allow for a discursive prolonging of the result. In sum, I desire there be the destruction of the end by the means so that this very destruction should be fixed forever in the absolute. The end, that is, the other and myself. Therefore there is self-destruction. This is why violence is confidence in something worse.

These considerations lead us to consider two even more complex cases: the one where a man takes by force a woman that he wants to have at his will—the case of religious violence (auto-da-fé).

In the first instance, the original project is one that excludes violence. In effect, the end is a liaison that has to be grounded in time. The possession of the body signifies consent, a gift. Consciousness, mind has to descend into the body. However, originally, the fact is ambiguous, as is established by the acceptance of some violence in amorous relations. In effect, desire has to be cloudy. That is, both free and forced. It is consciousness that turns itself into a body, but it is also the invasion of consciousness by the body. It is the sticky, clinging consciousness that I have to touch on the body. In a certain sense, the very fact of desire is violence (in the sense that torture is violence: in both cases consciousness *surrenders* to the body). In this sense, the presentation of one part of the seducer's

body (Casanova put his penis in a woman's hand)¹⁸⁰ is just as much violence as is the presentation of an instrument of torture to a prisoner. One result is that woman's behavior (*décolleté*, her dress emphasizing her shape, etc.) is perpetual violence. She turns herself into an object so that the Other transforms himself into an object. Whence the rancor of many people after sex.

Except this violence (we shall return to this) is a type of controlled violence, violence dominated and made use of by freedom. It sees a future ahead—even though the act of desire may be a pure suppression of time and the positing of the instantaneous. Everything else passes over to the inessential. The foreseen future is *at least* the repetition of the act.

What is more, consent is foreseen as forced but at least it has to be there. From the moment that consent disappears (the trickster of Seville passes himself off in the night as the husband. Any consent is null because it was given to the husband who is not there. The act, therefore, is purely physical, even though it may not be a rape, there is violence), we have violence and condemnation. In the case where the lover decides on rape, it is no longer true that he is limiting himself to *the same result* by other means. For rape precisely destroys the original end. Following the rape, the woman will no longer see him again. The future is destroyed. Hence the lover has displaced his end, he has *changed* it. He has taken its future away from it. He has qualitatively modified his idea of possession. From the unstable equilibrium of desire that is consent/refusal he retains only the refusal. He will possess by way of the refusal. In this violence there is a renouncement, leave taking. In one sense, it is a departure that means to be definitive. Burning one's bridges. In another sense, one wants to bring the whole future together in one instant. One wants to *have had* everything of this woman. And since it is a matter of conquering her refusal, the essential element becomes this refusal. It is a question of obtaining the positive by negation of the negative.

This accounts for the hope in many cases for an abrupt appearance of something positive (once the negative is negated): once raped, she will experience physical pleasure, her resistance overcome, she will understand her own interest in her body, she will love. Or the saying, "all women want to be taken by force." But at the same time the negation of the negation is concrete. For the refusal is the form this woman's freedom has assumed. There is therefore a conflict between two freedoms and it is a matter of demonstrating the impotence of human freedom (on the woman's side). If it can be shown that freedom is inoperative here, it becomes just an epiphenomenon and the refusal is disqualified. You must, therefore you can—she must not refuse because she cannot do so. Better, she *must* not refuse. She does refuse because she attributes an exaggerated value to her freedom. In fact, this is an error.

180. Giovanni Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798), Italian ecclesiastic, writer, soldier, spy, and diplomat, best known for his twelve-volume autobiography recounting his adventures as a libertine.

Whence the first justifying maxim about violence: one must not refuse what one does not have the force to prevent from happening. This leads to an identification of freedom and force and the beginnings of an ethics of violence. We shall return to this.

The rapist, however, may appeal to both sides. He can identify his freedom with force (the more force one has the more freedom) or he can completely deny freedom. Between men there are only relations of force. But to affirm the second option is to renounce what accounts for the price of desire: consent. What is more, his affirmation of his force knows that it is ephemeral. He will be pursued, beaten by men stronger than him, lynched or imprisoned. But by his choice of violence he affirms that truth lies only in the instant. He has reduced his claim, yes, he wanted to possess a woman and he only gets a beast. But this is because he has also reduced the woman to the rank of a beast. In fact, *there is no longer* a woman to possess. There is only a living and bound body. So by violence he has reduced his claims but by degrading their object. One possesses the other's freedom through destruction. *Through me* it becomes a mere *flatus vocis* [empty noise]. One refuses the dimension of the future to time, but one insists on the irreversibility of the instant. That woman cannot any longer act as though she was not had by me. She is marked. As for myself, I will have possessed her forever.

This is the same as saying that one constructs a false future which is the perpetuating of the regime of the past. For the progressive construction of a lifelong liaison, I substitute the ontological irreducibility of a fact that *nothing can change*. Violence is always in quest of the irremediable, the irretrievable. In this sense, the violent man prefers *being* to doing. He wants to define himself exclusively by an irretrievable past, by a state of the past that he *is* unable to change.

And if he kills the woman rather than raping her? Here too there is a renouncement but it is of another kind. Here we have to start from the idea that the irremediable is already given. He knows that in no case will he have or will he any longer have that woman. If he kills her, it is obviously not to possess her. He can possess her by raping her first or in violating her corpse, but he does not do so. Rather, first of all, he wants to take hold of the irremediable in the instant. It is not an issue for him of realizing this irremediable something throughout his life with its alternatives of hope and despair. What is definitive has to occur within the instant.

In sum, what is required is that the man links up with himself in one absolute point in relation to which all that follows will be only inessential modulations. At the same time, death represents [a] negative form of appropriation. Since I do not have her, no one will. Violence is not just the refusal of making use of something, it is the destruction of the possibility of such use for everyone, the refusal of *all* lawfulness. Finally, radical nihilation of the freedom of others, in such a way that the refusal to commit oneself has as its consequence the impossi-

bility of being. And reciprocally, an attempt to give a radical reason as the basis of his refusal to commit himself (which is irritating because he justifies himself by himself), which does not have its source in freedom but in the total absence of being. I did not have that woman because she did not want to. At present, I no longer have her because she *is not*. One cannot have what is not—replacement of negating freedom by logical necessity. At the same time, destruction of myself as the man defined by *this* desire. I am destructive of my essence because this desire, being bound in its concrete form to the free and conscious existence of this woman, gets annihilated (at least in this form) along with its object. I do not know what will happen next, maybe something worse. But here again, I am confident about something behind what I have destroyed, a Me behind me. In this sense, an electric shock is typical of violence. There is a brutal form of destruction and, on the basis of this experience, one is confident about the underlying order.

Similarly, in the auto-da-fé, I find a confident recourse to an absolute and transcendent order. First we have the *Cause*; that is, the glory of God. And the first point is that it is just this (an absolute and transcendent positivity) that no means can alter. Here the justification of the means by the end is not logical, dialectical, or automatic. It is a matter of an intention that moves back from the end to the means. God will bless the militant Christian, he sanctifies the means he uses. This allows us to understand something extremely important: if the end is something *to be done*, if it is a choice and a risk for man, then it can be changed by its means for it is what one *does* and it gets transformed to the extent that man transforms himself by the use he makes of his means. But if the end is something to be *rejoined*, if in some sense it has a sufficiency of being, then it is independent of the means. So here one can choose any means for attaining it.

In fact, an end never exists ready made. The end here is not wholly God. It is the reign of God on earth, that is, the acknowledgement by everyone that God exists. But if God were only an ideal, the *way* in which he were recognized would be much more important for it might alter this very ideal. Since God is *the Reality*, what counts is opening a soul to this reality. And the means hardly count. If the soul opens, the rest can be left to God. The phrase “God will recognize his own” pronounced in the middle of a massacre where one strikes out blindly at both the faithful and heretics is typical of violence. One counts on God to make the choice, to carry things through. Hence man has only to destroy. The principle of *human* justice is: allow ten guilty men to escape rather than destroy one innocent person. That of a justice that has confidence in Providence is: destroy ten innocent victims rather than allow one guilty person to escape. The innocent person will get his reward because God *will make amends* (he will give him eternal life).

Furthermore, there is confidence in God by way of man. The divine order lies at the bottom of each of us, in the heretic’s or the atheist’s heart as well as in that of the Christian. It is just that some people oppose a *refusal* to this order,

they do not lend their ear to the voice of God that is in them. Therefore it is a matter of the negation of a negation. And, here again, there is a decision about human action. Everything positive being God, man by origin is negative (error, vices, crimes—all something negative). Therefore he is on God's side not in creating the *positive* (which he cannot do since everything that can be already is), but in destroying the negative. By applying that negativity that is his own to destroy negativity. One *resists* vice, one *suspends* his judgment to the point of being blinded by the positivity of being. Beginning from the original relation of the individual with himself, violence is the symbol of negativity. The cilice, the hair shirt, ascetic discipline are forms of violence. It is a question of destroying the body as the symbol of our finitude and negativity.

In this way, we rediscover the Hegelian dialectical schema at the very heart of Christianity since the sins of man stem from his finitude in the face of the infinite principle. A finitude that destroys itself as finitude, surrounded as it is by the ideal presence of the whole, is this not the Hegelian negation of negation and its tragic universe? The Hegelian dialectic is the very image of violence because he has described the negation of negation and is confident about a whole that will make the positive spring forth from this negation of negation.

If there is a creative positivity in man's power, there would be some recourse against Hegelian violence. In any case, in the auto-da-fé we see one of the essential principles of violence come to light: it always occurs as *not having begun*. The initial violence is always something that was committed by someone else, just as there is never an offensive war but only defensive ones. Because it is the negation of a negation. Therefore, somewhere there is a negation of the *true*.

However, there are two ways to negate negation. One may think that it has nothing positive about it or that one negates it by adding to the finite or the untrue the positivity that completes it. In either case, the negation is overlooked (this is the principle behind the phrase of my socialist correspondent: be against communism by being a good socialist). Make the negativity disappear by reinforcing the positivity. However, in the second case, one does consider that negation is, in a way, positivity. It has to be destroyed, which means one has to destroy the positive being that supports it. *This* is the violence. There is an ambiguity here and, in one sense, bad faith: it is, in effect, a matter of destroying the negation (which is not *nothing*) to reveal being. But, in fact, one substantializes the negation, one makes it a being and assimilates it to the being that one negates. One thereby destroys this being in order to destroy the negation. Clearly this stems from the fact that the concrete negation is a *refusal*, that is, a form that assumes freedom and *resistance*. It also stems from the fact that everything positive can be taken as a negation insofar as it is a determination. A heresy can be a positive *invention*. But it is *not* orthodox Catholicism. Therefore it gets destroyed. Except this negation is reciprocal. One can just as well say that Catholicism is *not* this heresy. It is just that violence considers the negation here as a univocal relation. In fact, the violent man is on the side of positivity. Hence

negation gets confused with affirmation. And the more the heresy is positive, the more one considers it to be a negation. In one sense, therefore, to do violence is to return things to their proper state.

What is more, of course, in an auto-da-fé the violence is addressed to freedom. We understand now that violence is always addressed to freedom, because one of the faces of freedom is negative and because it is always freedom that has begun things since one of the aspects of freedom is its refusal of order. But this *refusal* is out of reach since it is the very essence of freedom, its escaping the past and facticity. The only way of reaching freedom is in its positive constructions, because these constructions *are in the world*. For example, one destroys a mosque, which is a positivity, with its marble and its architecture, to reach the Muslim, conceived of as a *refusal* of Christianity. In the end, one reaches the heretic in what he *is*, the body-for-others, to destroy this refusal (that existence that is what it is not and that is not what it is).

Freedom by definition is *suspect* to Being. But Being is what it is, and as a consequence it cannot take up any position as regards freedom. Except that there are those *who place themselves on the side of Being* and for these people freedom is something to destroy. The violent man, therefore, is the man who espouses the party of Being (of the past as being, of causality, of instantaneousness, of the indestructibility symbolized by irreversibility). More precisely, Being as it *would be* without finitude, temporality, the necessity of waiting, of going from the parts to the whole, the diversity of things, the determination of means by the end. Behind all this is *everything* that man's sin conceals (Original sin: a means of considering man as guilty insofar as he is free. Paradise lost: hidden totality).

Naturally, in the auto-da-fé we rediscover the original failure—the effort at *conversion*. To convert is gain adhesion by appropriate means, that is, demonstrations, discussions, evidence, appeals to freedom as a positive power. Violence appears on top of this failure. We rediscover the situation analyzed earlier of the man who kills the woman whom he cannot possess. Except that myth in principle cannot be either a demonstration or evidence. Its “force of being” is its guarantee. Hence, since freedom is free in relation to every force of being, there is an original failure in myth and this necessarily implies a recourse to violence (principle of authority).

Another aspect of violence also arises from this: one makes use of *being* to destroy *being*. The negation is never directly addressed to the negation. And because of this, in the end, the violent man does not think that he can suppress *being*. On the contrary, he thinks that pure Being is indestructible. He thinks he can destroy the diversity on the surface of Being. In ancient forms of corporal punishment (throwing someone into the sea, or off a cliff, leaving someone to the wolves, to the ants) there was the idea of bringing about a return to nature, that is, of making Being take up Being again. Whence comes that confidence we spoke of in total order as opposed to partial lawfulness. One is confident of Being as the totality over against its part. Being devours Being to end up at the

Parmenidean sphere.¹⁸¹ The goal and final justification of violence is always *unity*. If a situation requires violence, in springing up, this violence projects before itself the total unity of being through destruction. For example, the communists, obliged to make use of violence, saw their idea of the liberation of the proletariat change into the myth of the end of History, of the absolute unity of the masses, of the dissolution of the individual into the mass, of the absolute unity of the human realm.

From this we can establish some principles of the *ethics of force* (which is simply an ethics of violence justifying itself): 1st, the victor is always right; 2d, the principle of harshness: it is better to be un pitying than to give way to acts of goodness which are signs of weakness; 3d, love for the struggle: the shortest route from one heart to another is the sword; 4th, the value of evil that cleanses and purifies like a fire; 5th, one has no right to resist force unless one is strong enough to hold it back; 6th, aristocracy; 7th, the vital values: nobility, ferocity, the refusal to subordinate the body to the spirit; 8th, the ethics of the weak. The refusal of slave morality; 9th, risking one's life. Acceptance of death (the master and the slave). The idea of hierarchy; 10th, the principle of ethics: the identification of force, value, and being; 11th, if every means is good it is because none of them is *essential* to the end. Incommensurability of end and means. For an absolute end, inessential means. Violence itself, violent acts, and the violent man are all inessential to the end. Whence, at the same time, abnegation and contempt for men. Abnegation because as a diversity man is bad. He is good only through participation in the whole (being/value) that justifies violence. The violence has *always already begun*. Therefore human nature is bad. The anti-individualism of the violent man (hiding a shameful individualism); 12th, the value of purity (that of the cleansing fire); 13th, the beauty of *pessimism*. Violence and aesthetics; 14th, realism, in the name of efficacy. Idealism is the end posited without force. However, realism is itself a form of idealism: it is the idea of the *value* of Being.

Put this ethics in order. This yields:

Being is a perfection. Value and Being are one and the same thing. The more Being there is, the more perfection. The highest Being is the highest value. This Being is not necessarily God, it is the totality of the given. However, imperfection, being a lesser form of being, every determination is negation, therefore less being. Absolute being, being wholly positivity, abolishes all distinctions in itself. It is pure being. Immobile, inexorable, atemporal, unqualified. The Parmenidean sphere. Every destruction is positivity as a nihilation of the particular, of the

181. "But since there is a furthest limit, it is complete on every side, like the mass of a well-rounded sphere, everywhere equally poised from the midst." *The Way of Truth*, frag. 8, lines 42–44, in Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, p. 44.

determined that leads back to the undifferentiated state of Being. Everything that is *good* as *being*, bad insofar as limited, therefore not being. Hence the totality of Being is worth more than every particular, the particular is worth more than what is what is not yet. That is, what is is always worth more than what is *to come*, than *the ideal*.

Realism and pessimism go hand in hand, something that may seem paradoxical but which is easy to understand. Love of Being, reverence before Being, condemnation of the way of being. What is most valuable is what has stood the test. The indestructible. Therefore traditionalism and an emphasis on the past. Human reality is all the more superior to the extent that it participates in Being. The human expression of Being is force. Being has the right to be. The more force I have, the more being I have, the more I have the right to be. The strongest man is the one who expresses the highest quantity of Being. He symbolically represents the totality of Being.

Force that is not edifying; it is not *operative*. Work makes use of force but deviates from its meaning because it undertakes to construct the particular (therefore to introduce a negativity into Being). Furthermore, it subordinates what is to what is not (the ideal or the end). True force aims at two opposed but complementary ideas: to destroy and to preserve. In the third place, it aims at conquest. It destroys in order to negate negativity. But if the object resists, it is because it has more being than the force directed against it. In this case, the force submits to it (the challenge of the young, a fight, the winner makes the loser *submit*. *A priori*, it does not matter to the vanquished whether he submits or is made to submit. Determining his place in the hierarchy through combat is the issue). The moral order is respected. Force then becomes conservative. The Being it submits to becomes its end. Force *conquers for this Being*. To conquer signifies both to preserve and to destroy. One conquers countries (particularities) in order to unify them in the Being that one serves. In this way, they lose their singularity within some larger whole, the symbol of the undifferentiated totality of Being. The battle is originally a test of being. To the extent that wealth is equal, there is an equality of force, therefore of being. Whence the loyal recognition of equality—esteem in private. This is the real relation between men. As soon as one of the adversaries gives way, he must be made to submit, to be assimilated, unified. The only one who has the right to defend his point of view, his particularity, is the one who has the force to do so. If this force is lacking, the point of view becomes ideal, it *no longer is*, therefore it is contemptible. Contempt for lost causes.

The violent man as violent incarnates Being. He has value only insofar as he is fundamentally identical with pure Being. Therefore he is the incarnation of necessity. Being necessity, he spreads the cult of necessity everywhere. He is the man who by necessity expresses himself in the world. The principle of necessity is that the lesser being gives way to the stronger and that every event is necessarily a passage from diversity to the unity of some greater being. Necessity is mani-

fested in him by his pure affirmation of his right to be what he is. He does not give in, *he is what he is*. Whence inexorability. Inexorability being the sign of the greatest quantity of Being, any attempt to deflect the violent man has to be in vain. He is not accessible to pity. But, at the same time, he honors his adversary. He brings him to the maximum of Being by the very violence he performs on him. So long as he resists, all is perfect. Afterwards, he breaks—there is no longer any question about him. “The heart must break or turn to iron.”

At the same time, a refusal to *comprehend* the other. There is nothing to comprehend. One must make the other submit or submit oneself, be destroyed or destroy. To comprehend would be to change. There is nothing to be learned or to comprehend. It is violence that creates violence; by resisting this violence, the violent man *will become what he is*. By being violent to himself he will purge himself of his particularity. Hence it is necessary to love *Evil* which basically is evil only in relation to particularity.

Fundamentally, there are two *evils*: 1st, the true, the most profound evil is the Good of Slave Morality: to preserve one's particularity as such, to help weakness, to be accessible, tolerant, to change, to evolve. This is the perpetuation of weakness, of diversity, of freedom. 2d, What is evil, for slaves, becomes the violent man's Good. It is that great necessity that breaks down all particularity and which he incarnates. But, first of all, it happens to him, cleansing and purifying him. Hence there is a communion among the violent (a merely represented communion): one does violence to the other and in so doing purifies him of all weakness. The second man loves this violence that tempers him and from this it follows that he loves the one who attacks him. To render the Good that he has done back to him, it is necessary to be violent to him in turn.

This, by the way, is what gives *value* to the violent man (as with Hegel's Master); that is, he has accepted dying. To die, that is, to become integrated into the totality, completely dissolves that individuality that is negation within the highest positivity. So there is only a *provisory* and *borrowed* particularity, which gives him the right to consider himself to be an expression of the totality of Being. The death that he will be, that he already is, justifies the enterprises of the living human being.

As for the end (France, God, etc., in short, the incarnation of the whole), it is only a matter of preserving it and of conquering new domains for it. Therefore it does not depend upon the means used. Hence any and all means are inessential, they are all *good* because of the end and *indifferent*. Violence, violent acts, and violent men being inessential (the violent man is inessential as particularity), contempt for man goes along with abnegation. The being and the force of the violent man are incarnated in and expressed through his *body*. Corporeal values are valuable to the extent that they express *Being*. Therefore a hierarchy occurs based on vital values: physical force, ferocity, nobility. The exterior of the violent man mimics what is inexorable, destruction. Firmness, cunning, liveliness, ag-

gressive movements: eyes of steel, an impenetrable face, silence. Violence wants to be recognized through three feelings: esteem, anger, fear. Esteem and anger are one since he accepts esteem through the challenge and anger. To esteem him is to do battle with him. Fear is the acceptance of the hierarchy that he imposes.

This is the first and stupidest form of the ethics of violence. We shall see that it will be later more nuanced by *Machiavellianism*. But let us note already its contradictions and bad faith: a freedom that dissimulates itself, an alleged Being-in-itself which in its manifestation in force becomes the contradictory “In-itself-for-itself,” a shameful form of individualism, fear of oneself.

We come to violence in everyday life. Note that the ethics and the ontology of violence are exceptional and come together only in the case where violence is a conception of the world. The most constant elements of violence are: a certain way of holding oneself at a distance and without a middle term in the face of the object of desire, like the mystical believer faced with his God, based on the collapse of the world; a desire for and an affirmation of the absolute; a need to fight time by the creation of the irremediable, generally by means of destruction (because every construction is *destroyable*, whereas destruction cannot be wiped out).

We rediscover these features in everyday relationships. There is violence in the relations of parents to children. In education, parents must, no doubt, give orders. But they must also explain. Hence they must appear to children not as arbitrary powers but as the interpreters of an external form of necessity. If this necessity takes on the aspect of an order, it is because it is simply rethought by the father or the mother who regurgitate it and give it to the child as child. He is within the family as the embryo is within the mother and the form that the exterior necessity that is already under way for him takes on is that of a freedom that protects him. If he goes into the basement while sweated up and without a jacket he will catch cold. This necessity which does not seem evident to him is manifestly evident to his parents. Father would not go down into the cellar like that. He would be prevented from doing so by his clear vision of the necessary relation. This clear vision along with its negative sense becomes an *imperative* when it is directed toward a child. What is more it is a matter of an impersonal imperative: “*No one* goes into the basement in that condition.” Father thinks of himself as a mere *link* to such imperatives. He is the one who transmits them by enunciating them. Indeed, quite often the imperative that he transmits to the child is already an imperative for him, the father. “Do not lie. Do not steal.”

However, let us take a closer look. First there is the metamorphosis of the hypothetical imperative into a categorical one. The correct form of imperatives based on empirical connections should be: “If you don’t want to catch cold, don’t go into the basement.” Evaluating the situation and the final decision being left to the child. For there is a *risk* of catching cold and the human enterprise implies

accepting risks. As a free human reality, the child can decide if it is better to risk a cold than to give up his play. But the father, on the contrary, thinks that no end chosen by the child *has any value* if it carries the risk of catching cold. Of course, there are cases where he will take the risk *for the child*. But he *a priori* excludes any ends that the child himself can choose. The prohibition here becomes an *absolute* for the child even though it is not one for the father. Or, if you will, what is on the level of means and risk for the father becomes an absolute negative end for the child. This indicates that we populate the universe of childhood with irremediable things.

And, at the same time, every prohibition or commandment accentuates the aspect of temporal irreversibility: the prohibition comes forth in some given instant. And all at once it constrains the childish ends forever. One does not question a prohibition. But because it is the father who decides what is irremediable, he turns an irremediable face toward the child. He feels himself to be irremediable, irreversible in the child's eyes. Therefore he comes to constitute himself on the plane of the irremediable through the freedom of another person; that is, he places himself on the level of one of the elements of violence. And the usual way of mimicking parents in relation to their children who are entreating them is to play out this blindness, this deafness and dumbness. The expression on their faces is blank. What remains is *stone*. Naturally, if we imagine the ideal father, he would himself serve this prohibition. Except that he is its living symbol. He incarnates it. He mimics inexorability in order to constitute himself as a prohibition by means of the child. At the same time, he considers the child to be a *lesser* freedom, that is, the child is free to the extent that he must receive these *demands* and endorse them and, furthermore, there is an *a priori* devaluing of the ends that this freedom might posit for itself.

This is manifested in two ways: *the first one* is that the father's freedom tries to penetrate into the child's and to make it recognize from within by itself that it is a lesser freedom. *Influence*. This introduces a doubling of his freedom for the child. It turns back against itself in order to devalue the ends that it posits and to subordinate them to an end that it does not posit. This is precisely what we call *duty*. In doing one's duty, one does not want what one wants and wants what one does not want. Freedom that is in agreement with itself sacrifices itself to freedom that is not in agreement with itself. At the very heart of duty there is an alienation of freedom since the imperative *reduces* ends spontaneously posited by freedom to just being instincts, that is, false ends, pseudo-ends which in reality are determined.

Within freedom, the imperative reduces personal freedom to the order of determinism and the body. This sinking of freedom into the body is contrary in origin or movement to the origin and movement of torture. But the result is the same. In the case of torture we have the conquest of freedom through the body and a hybrid result: a freedom that makes itself a body while remaining freedom. In the case of the imperative we have a freedom that declares itself to

be inessential and determined; that is, that lowers itself to the level of a fictitious body. And it does so in the name of the other's freedom. The imperative is the presence of the other's freedom as a transcendence internalized into my own freedom. Its origin is the look. In the look, I am in communication (as looked at) with the other's freedom. And I grasp myself as a transcended transcendence. If I am influenced, moved by the feeling of my impotence to consider that the other's look excludes the reciprocity of looking, that is, that the other looks but is never looked at; if furthermore this look defines itself and reveals itself in its pure freedom as freedom having an inexorable content, this look gets internalized by me as an *order*, it perpetually makes me present my own freedom to myself as transcended transcendence and at the same time it reveals to me (through its maxim) the *sense* in which freedom has to be transcended transcendence. Respect. In manifestations of respect one *does not look* (one lowers one's head before the king, before an offertory). A deferential greeting (head lowered—one bends before him) is a resignation of one's own look. One accepts being looked at without looking back. Hence duty is the will of the other in me, it is the alienation of my own freedom. Hence by obligation properly speaking the father does violence to the child but with the complicity of the child.

The second operation is the use of force. If the child wants to go ahead anyway, the father prevents him from doing so *by force*. He holds him back, locks him in, hits him. The use of coercion is quite clearly limited. One does not hit hard and only on certain parts of the body. If one holds the child back, one does not do so by tying him up. Hence one cannot say that one uses *any means whatsoever* to prevent the child from disregarding a prohibition or to obligate him to carry out an order. However, symbolically, one can say that all means are good ones, since, in small doses, one does make use of terror, pain, physical or moral torture. (One sees fathers strike their sons until they cry uncle or they deprive them of the right to go out or to play until they obey. This is action on their freedom by force, by the body. Action of the superior person on the inferior one.) And it is clear that the *means* really don't make much difference. If the child asks for forgiveness or obeys through fear, pain, weariness, the violent desire to regain the lost good, the end does not seem to have been destroyed by the means. He *had to* ask for forgiveness. Why? Because the end is *his* Good. Yet, in essence, this end lies outside of him. He cannot recognize it. This Good is the man he will be.

I do understand that there are two kinds of parents. 1st, those who conceive of the Good as already existing. It is the Good of the society they live in. In this case, we have a clear relation to violence. The Good is the existing order and every way in which the child differs from this Good is a noxious weed to be destroyed. Here education is negative, destructive, and one places one's confidence in an already existing order (as in the case of an auto-da-fé or anti-Semitism). 2d, those, more liberal, who want the child to be able to choose his own good when he grows up. But even in this case, this free choice is a future

end that lies outside him. And the situation is such that many of his childish projects will go against this end. Hence the child's Good lies outside of his concrete projects. None of these projects can aim directly at it and if some of them come close to it, it is by chance. So it is necessary to assist its development in the child with the use of propitious instruments, but not for what these things are in themselves.

To use Kantian language: The child may happen to determine himself in conformity with the law, but he will never do so through the representation of the law. Therefore one instigates in him projects that conform to the law, that is, one is a Machiavellian with him. The father, a Hegelian without knowing it, represents the cunning of reason in his own eyes. That is, he incarnates the universal order that step by step carries the child to the vision of the True, although by roundabout ways. From this point of view, education resembles the politics of the C.P. In the case of the C.P., one sacrifices the as yet unemancipated working class to a fixed Good which is the classless society. In the case of the child, one sacrifices him every day to the man he will be.

The solution of *Emile* is not really one.¹⁸² So that the child can grasp the analytic sanctions of his acts, one manipulates the nature within which he lives. Nature does not convey things so readily. If I break a pane of glass in my room, by accident or in anger, I call the glazier. I do so because I live in a social world where everything is organized to *repair* mistakes, individual errors. This is what is true, nothing else. We do not live in the natural world. If the child breaks a pane of glass, I do not replace it. But this is cunning and violence, for the moment the glass is ready it can be replaced. What is more, the sanctions that the child will encounter later are synthetic. I mislead him in making him take them to be analytic, that is, in making him *accept* them even though he could have, perhaps, revolted against them. In any case, I choose the means, being assured of the Good. That is, instead of tying the means to the Good by thinking that the means makes the end as much as the end makes the means, I first posit the Good and *then* I choose the means most likely to lead to it. We are still on the level of the Absolute.

To reason with the child is still to minimize his freedom. In effect, my freedom overrides his, just as God's does mine. Therefore I choose to clarify one point while leaving the rest in the shadows. And the arguments that I use do not have an absolute force because they cannot have one except in connection with the whole of man and the world which the child cannot know. In one sense, they resemble mathematical arguments that are not based on the intuitive contemplation of essences but on the negative necessities of a construction. They are crushing without being convincing. The child knows it. He knows that the

182. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile; or, On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

reasons one gives him depend on an immense zone left in the shadows. In this domain, one appeals to his *faith*.

If one explains to him that he ought to be polite to the domestic help because they are human beings just as we are, he may have a presentiment that it is not normal, in this case, that people whom we declare to be our equals should be deliberately placed in such an abject situation. He doesn't understand. For in being insolent to them, it seems to him that he is taking into account their manifest inferiority and acting in conformity with the Good, since the Good is the Adults' order. But one explains to him that he should treat them with respect. Therefore there is a contradiction that escapes him, for giving someone orders and making him empty the garbage is not to respect him. However, the simple idea of equality is accessible to him and it is easy to demonstrate to him that the domestic help are our equals. "Look at Marie. Well, she has a little boy your age and she worries about his health just like I worried about yours last year." The child will accept this, but he is being duped. He thereby takes on the habit of believing in the principle of authority. Instead of the constant use of Reason habituating him to think for himself, this kind of reason confronts him with an infinite Reason that is a force of nature and of a different quality than his own reason. Instead of thinking that one ought only to be take pride in his own Reason and that common sense is the most common thing in the world, he believes instead in a hierarchy of human Reasons and learns to mistrust his own reason. When a reason is not the *whole* reason, it becomes violence.

But what we need to understand is that one cannot tell children the whole truth or, if you will, that one can do so but they will not comprehend it. We thereby come to the conclusion that forces itself upon us: there are *violent situations*. In violence one treats a freedom like a thing, all the while recognizing its nature as freedom. More precisely, a child is *freedom*. But since this freedom is *limited* in relation to our own freedom, it is a thing to the extent that it is freedom. Nothing can change this fact. The child *is wrong* and we have no means adapted to his comprehension that can turn him from his erroneous ways. The child goes through stages of error, and each one of these stages are ones that humanity has already gone through. The child chooses himself in error and this choice runs the risk of being definitive; and we know that this choice orients him toward consequences he did not *intend* and does not intend.

But, on the other hand, it is clear that the violent situation is created by our existence, not by his. It is the concrete relation of his freedom to our own that defines his ignorance as an *object*. Society's ignorance during a certain period is not experienced as ignorance, it is *nothing*. Yes, one knows that one does not know some things. But the fact of defining these things, of circumscribing them, of formulating them as problems gives some knowledge of them. An epoch is limited only by itself and it creates its own experience of itself. If you haunt it with the presence of the Whole of knowledge, as though a consciousness looked

at it (Hegel), it becomes fixed into some state of affairs. This is what happens, for example, when the child goes through the animist stage. He freely finds solutions to his problems. If he were alone, his ignorance would not count for anything. It becomes ignorance only through the look of later stages of his development and, what is more, a recuperated ignorance since it will have brought him to the stage he is at. To the look of a freedom assured of knowing, a lack appears as a state of something. That is, the set of things we do not know form *an object* to our eyes. They are definable, they are named mathematics, sociology, history, etc. And from the fact that they are an *object*, the child's freedom and knowledge become a lack of this object and an object in turn.

However, conversely, *for the child* who becomes aware of this situation, his freedom becomes alienated in his own eyes owing to the objective definition of his ignorance. No doubt I, an adult, do not know many things. But I *can know them*. While the child knows that he does not know, does not know what he does not know (what subjects it has to do with), and knows that he cannot comprehend what he does not know. By himself, therefore, he cannot comprehend what he does. 1st, his spontaneous acts are marked by ignorance. He already knows (that he does "dumb things") that can have consequences that others foresaw but not him. 2d, his acts that conform to an adult's will have a meaning that *escapes* him. Therefore a value he did not give them. The alienation is total, but it does not come just *a priori* from the adult's violent action. It comes from his mere *presence*.

Or, conversely, the essence of the adult/child situation is that *I cannot* treat the child as freedom; and neither can I treat him as a thing. He himself wants to be treated as a freedom and at the same time for me to impose a rational universe upon him that he can take confidence in. In the father/child hierarchy, there is a failure, as in every human hierarchy—which presupposes a qualitative impermeability. As for the position of the father over against the child, it necessarily constitutes him on the level of immorality. For ethics, he is immoral.

The means of limiting violence in the education of the child is clearly to consider the age of adulthood as a regulative principle and concrete, everyday emancipation as the real end. The child has to be taught to judge and choose for himself in every case, since, as freedom, he ought to be recognized for himself. And this emancipation as an immediate end must serve the future. In other words, we have to renounce seeing the future man in the child as an absolute end that justifies every means, instead considering that this end can be attained only if, in each case, the situation of the child is the means of his concrete and real emancipation. The future has to be seen through the perspectives of the present, we have to comprehend that it is *the future of this present*, giving each present along with the future it foreshadows an absolute value. But it remains nonetheless true that there are cases where the end does become unconditioned again. If, for example, we foresee that his imprudence will lead to his death or a serious illness. In the same way, it is all right to let him have his

experiments, but the single fact that one *lets* him have them only disallowing that they have nasty consequences, that is, the single fact that one makes use of relatively isolated systems, implies intervention and distortion.

On this basis, we ought to examine whether lying and cunning are forms of violence. It goes without saying that a lie is used to incite someone to do what one wants him to do or not to do what one does not want him to do. Therefore lying begins from the certitude of failure. In the presence of reality as it is, the Other's action will not follow my wishes. Therefore I hide this reality from him. He remains free to determine his own action as he chooses. But his premises are wrong. I have changed the given that has to be surpassed. What is difficult to determine is the extent to which I still treat this freedom as free and the extent to which I treat it as an object. In order to be praised, I say that I have done something that I have not done. The goal is *to be praised*. But praise has no value unless it is freely bestowed. Praise offered owing to a death threat may satisfy the tyrant because it shows that the will has been broken, but it is not *directly* satisfying as praise. For that, it would have to be spontaneous and freely given.

Hence in lying in order to be praised, I make a claim on the freedom of the one who does the praising. In one sense, even, I require it. In effect, I loan myself an action endowed with *value* and what makes it a value is that, by stating it, I demand the assent of all men in the name of their freedom. But if this freedom conserves all its spontaneity by providing its own motivation in the face of an end that *requires it* and if it is indeed *just* and conforms to its nature as free when it gives value to this value, it is nonetheless true that it attributes this value to a subject who *in fact* does not possess it. And it does this in the name of the *confidence* it has in me. This confidence itself is addressed to my freedom. It is not because I have never deceived her (or because she thinks I have never deceived her) that she has confidence, but because the fact of never having deceived her seems to her to be the symbol of a constant freedom that treats her as free and that is dedicated to the truth.

Thus in lying I address myself to the Other's freedom and I demand to be doubly recognized as free: in terms of what I *say*, because I state the facts, and in terms of my attributing this fact to myself (that is, in that I am praised for having freely carried out some worthy action). Therefore freedom everywhere. Where does the fault lie? It is that freedom is in a situation in a real world where I am. Even if freedom brings itself to think something imaginary, there is a synthetic connection to the real world that is present as what it turns away from, as what is negated by the imaginary something. And this imaginary something is expressly conceived of as such. Further, this real world that is its situation is something that it surpasses toward other ends. By lying, I present it with an imaginary situation and I make it take this imaginary something as real. Freedom surpasses this situation toward its ends and thereby confirms itself as free in this situation as in all other situations. But since the situation is unreal,

its surpassing it is equally unreal and the meaning of its works is also unreal. The set of operations that it carries out does have a real effect in the world. There is a displacement of objects, constructions, etc. But the meaning, which ought to have been the final reality, is wholly inefficacious. It is a mode of as if. All at once, this freedom, which was to have surpassed the world-wherein-I-am toward its ends and in which I was perpetually in danger and perpetually in question, is withdrawn from the world, it is itself marked with unreality.

The relation that makes all freedom freedom is a concrete and open relation within the world with my freedom, in that I can transcend this transcendence on the condition of also being transcended by it. But this freedom derived from the imaginary no longer transcends me. The object/me that it transcends on the way toward its ends is something imaginary. It falls outside me. It is a transcendence that can no longer transcend me and from this fact can no longer transcend the world. With this, it tumbles back into immanence. It has lost its being-in-the-world, it has swapped it for being-caught-up-within-the-world. Indeed, pursuing an imaginary goal, and interpreting real events in terms of what is unreal, it submits to them like a thing without modifying them.

If I persuade [Paul] Guth that I am [Pierre] Bost, he talks and does things.¹⁸³ But his words, his looks reach neither me nor Bost. Not Bost, because Bost is not there, not even known to Guth. Not Me, because he doesn't see me, *me* Sartre, rather he sees Bost through me. His look is dulled. No doubt he does see that I am blonde and wear glasses, but he synthetically organizes these perceptions along with the fact of having written *Le Scandale* or being the son of a Protestant pastor.¹⁸⁴ Hence his look is *limited*, obturated by the imaginary Bost whom he takes to be the real Bost. It is as though there were a screen at the end of his look.

From the moment when, in the pair freedom/end, I no longer intervene as a surpassed means or as a means that one can always surpass, as soon as the world is no longer the set of instruments and matter to act on, freedom has fallen into the world—precisely because its end is extra worldly—it is a *thing*. A thing because it is surrounded by emptiness. Of course, it really is so. That Gestapo creep who executed Bourla and his father, persuaded the father's mistress that they were in a camp at Villeneuve.¹⁸⁵ He promised to take any letters

183. Paul Guth, at the time in question, was an aspiring writer. Marc Zuorro, an acquaintance of Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, wanted to play a trick on him and said he would introduce him to Pierre Bost, an already established writer and the older brother of one of Sartre's students. Sartre played the part of Bost. De Beauvoir recounts the incident in *The Prime of Life*, pp. 248–50. See also Claude Francis and Fernand Gontier, *Simone de Beauvoir: A Life . . . a Love Story* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), pp. 144–45.

184. Pierre Bost (1901–1975), *Le Scandale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

185. Jean-Pierre Bourla was one of Sartre's students at the Lycée Pasteur in 1941.—Ed. See de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, pp. 577–78.

she would write to them. In fact he put them in his pocket and then threw them in the fire.

The series of acts she carries out: she sits down, chooses a *good* pen, ink, paper, weighs her words, looking for those that will be encouraging, seals the letter, etc.—all acts not addressed to *anyone*, acts that can be correctly interpreted only from the *outside*. They only make sense in the world insofar as they are related to the deceiver's will. In this case, they are effective. He *makes her write* the letters to distract her, to gain time, the time necessary for the deceivers to gain their ends. No doubt there is an *inside* (conviction, tenderness, love, etc.). But this inside itself becomes an outside because it is necessary that she be moved by and cry over the letters if they are to occupy her.

In the same way, I can act on her as a *cause*. No doubt, because she is in love, I can be sure if I tell her true facts about Bourla's life (pretending that he is alive) that she will react with tears, joy, or sadness. Except these reactions, however predictable they may be, are nonetheless spontaneous; what is more, they get inscribed in a real world and touch me in return (I will be moved, horrified, I will decide to help her); in other words they will be free because they will have taken place in the interworld of freedoms where the act of the Other person affects me too. In this case, I am not a *cause*, I am a messenger, a mere interpreter, and it is a free reaction to the world. But then she *belongs to the world* without knowing it, her acts no longer affect reality, her freedom gets stuck in the imaginary. Insofar as I present her with a moving image of Bourla, she is free. But insofar as this image closes off a circuit, insofar as her freedom becomes finite, cut off, nothing beyond her, she is no longer freedom for me and I can determine her like a thing, by foreseeing the word that will draw forth from her a purely determined, predictable, and manipulatable reaction, which will never turn back on me, and which from this fact transforms her into a mere instrument to be used following this or that method. Naturally, the reaction is spontaneous, but only within a closed circuit. Above all, it has an *outside*.

The person lied to is exactly comparable, although free, with the thoroughly determined patient dreamt up by Freud.¹⁸⁶ For Freud, an act or conscious desire think themselves to be free, but this is an illusion of consciousness. In fact, they are *explainable* in terms of the unconscious libido. They are one form of it that is not aware of itself as such. And the result of the act is *false* to the degree that one ties it to consciousness (it is not true that I love trophy sabers for themselves and this one that I have is not explained by my free desire to collect them). Yet

186. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the founder of psychoanalysis. "Thus psychoanalysis substitutes for the notion of bad faith, the idea of a lie without a liar; it allows me to understand how it is possible for me to be lied to without lying to myself since it places me in the same relation to myself that the Other is in respect to me; it replaces the duality of the deceiver and the deceived, the essential condition of the lie, by that of the 'id' and the 'ego'" (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 51).

true to the degree that one relates it to the unconscious psychic order. The description is quite thorough and makes us draw the conclusion of determinism. Except for this, the unconscious psychic order is nothing more than *another consciousness*. What Freud—so perfectly—describes is the relationship deceiver/deceived, which is a deterministic and causal connection because the contents of the consciousness of the deceived one are *explainable* only by the intentions of the deceiver and because the signification of the deceived one's acts are incomplete insofar as this meaning is explained by his acts. It is valuable only if one relates [them] to the deceiver's intention.

This is indicated exactly for the imagination by a *feint* in boxing. I have before me a redoubtable, free adversary, who is looking at me and who parries my blows or gives them back to me. I feint. By a movement of the body, I create an *image* of myself in another location in the ring. My adversary jumps toward it. And as a result, his look is blind, his fists ineffective, he leaves his left side open to me, he is nothing more than a *thing* which I have only to hit with all my strength. He is obturated, touched, tied up by the imaginary something I have created.

So the lie transforms man into a thing. But at the same time it wants to keep him free, at least in most cases. If I lie in order to be praised, what at bottom I want is to be the object of that agreeable determination of other people that is praise. And from this point of view I cannot constrain the other person for it is a freedom directed toward me as valuing me that I am seeking. What we have here is, at the same time, me and not me that is praised. It is the man who accomplished this act. But it is also *me* if I have accomplished this act. It is me that is praised by the act that is my end, it is toward my figure, my eyes, my smile, my known *εχτις* that the praise is addressed inasmuch as they have produced this act.

In sum, I provide the substance of the operation and, in the end, the act is only an accident of this substance. And then the praise is addressed to *my* freedom; that is, basically, if I want to be recognized as having done this act, this will also lead to my being recognized as a permanent capacity for doing it again. And this is just what I *believe* I am.

Fundamentally, a liar who says, in lying, that he has done such and such an act, affirms, and believes to be true, that he can always do such a thing. A liar who says, in lying, that he did not do some act, is persuaded that he did do it, but his intentions and the consequences of the act are as though he had not done it. In these two cases, there is the idea—already noted with regard to violence—that the truth does not just imply the truth as a *means* but also what is in error. That is, the final goal is the relation of the other's subjectivity to reality. This goal can be attained by *designating* reality (by speaking the truth) or it can be attained indirectly by saying what is false. But the goal is to bring about the truth.

In short, to obtain a certain subjective state of the other that one judges to

conform to the truth, one holds that every means is good. Why not just speak the *truth* in order to bring about the *truth*? Because it might be misinterpreted. For example, there is the case of the other's defiance. He is a lesser, demonic freedom, one must take his freedom of evaluation from him so that he will evaluate things properly.

The idea in a lie: truth has not come about, it is a being. In other words, for the man who speaks the truth, truth is a synthetic process, something in the process of becoming which includes within itself moments in terms of which it produces itself. Even if it were true that, not having carried out this act, I was prevented from doing so by fully external circumstances and that I meant to really do it (which, by the way, is an unverifiable affirmation in any case), at least this affirmation has another meaning if one refers to the "strictly external" circumstances which, in fact, are almost always "strictly internal ones" (because it was not them but rather our evaluation of them that held us back) that *limit* our subjective *εχϋς* as the ability to carry out the act in question. Instead of the liar wanting, deep down, to speak some truth (or what he judges to be some truth: that he is ashamed of not having accomplished this act, which he had accomplished in other circumstances, that one cannot judge such things anyway and he is worthy of being praised for what he *is* more than for what he has done and one robin does not make spring), the truth is a subjective *state* of the Other or a Being, independent of even the words that express it and the means that produce it. The truth is the esteem that the other bears toward me because, through this esteem, he discovers my true being.

And it doesn't matter if this esteem is brought about by lies. What is essential is that it be *there*, it is totally independent of any means used to bring it about. And, in particular, it doesn't matter that the Other realizes this in his freedom by evaluating the truth or that it should be *realized* in him *by causality* by means of a lie. So the person lied to is free and not free at the same time. Free, because I require his free esteem, not free because I bring it about. Thrown onto the imaginary plane, his freedom is obturated by the imaginary state of affairs that it intends. But at the same time that it is inoffensive, it still is a freedom that concerns me however much I decide not to be concerned about it (in that it is *me* that it concerns). The lie places the other's freedom in parentheses. It does not destroy it, it isolates it, withdrawing it from the world by an emptiness, and it is the master who decides whether the object it intends is imaginary or real.

So we find the following ideas in a lie (which belong to the essence of violence): treating freedom *at the same time* as an end and a means, through the superiority of Being or the State over becoming or the dialectical process, therefore wanting to realize the end immediately, and by any means, guaranteeing oneself against a free consciousness by transforming it into a thing, yet in a way depending on his recognizing this. At the same time, there is an element of destruction, but the *reverse* of the one we find in physical violence. In physical violence, one appropriates the freedom and the refusal of the human-reality-in-

the-world by crushing it with the world, that is, violence affirms the superiority of the world over consciousness—in a lie one appropriates this freedom and refusal by *destroying the world* for-the-consciousness-of-the-other, one destroys it subtly by hiding it by means of the imaginary. One takes one's necessary point of mooring from this freedom, and it gets transformed into a dream of transcendence, that is, into pure immanence and passivity. Finally, the lie stems from a failure (real or predicted: the impossibility of getting the truth evaluated for what it is).

However, the lie we have examined lacks equilibrium (getting praised). Instead I will consider it as an intermediary lie sliding back and forth between two extremes. In the first one, it is a question of really making man a means, of reducing his coefficient of adversity, of totally suppressing his freedom. At night, I send someone to the right, knowing he will tumble into a pothole and that the correct path is to the left. Here I make use of his freedom (his confidence in me) to destroy his freedom and, in the end, him too. Or I lie to protect myself against him. The woman who is deceiving her husband conceals it from him. It is not a question here of asking a deceived freedom freely to confer some value on you, but only of separating one freedom from the other by nothingness. By *not saying anything*, I open up a slash of nothingness between two parts of the universe, I create two unconnected universes. But at the same time, the universe where the deceived person lives is distorted, hence false and, moreover, *contained* within the overall universe that includes these two universe. I have set up walls around the person being deceived.

In a word, freedoms are normally side by side, each pulsation of the one being felt by the other, each one being a situation for the other. A lie unglues or sections off freedoms from each other. One of the two is butting up against the void. A lie is a withdrawal. I deliberately transform a freedom into a thing. At the same time, I take away every concrete signification from the other's words and gestures. If my fellows are in on the game, the deceived person is like the blindfolded player in blind man's bluff. I see him but he doesn't see me: perpetually transcended transcendence.

It may happen, however, that I preserve his freedom as a value for limited uses. For example, I may continue to approve his free judgment about works of art, politics, etc. (which, by the way, the fact of being deceived does not really affect). In this case, he has two sides: I can *at my will* take him as freedom or as a thing. But his freedom is totally modified in its form even though it is intact in terms of its matter (his value judgment may be true) because it is freedom only at my pleasure. In effect, if I have decided to deceive him about one thing, by convenience or magnanimity, I have also decided not to deceive him about other things (or through prudence or laziness, etc.). In short, I am the master of my deception and also of the other's freedom.

Next comes the lie analyzed above for which I have need of the other's freedom as being both wholly a *thing* and wholly *freedom* AT THE SAME TIME.

Note that in this regard, violence is its own justification. If I deceive, I have the right to do so. The alienation of a freedom proves that it is alienable, therefore that it is not pure freedom, therefore that I reach it through a chink in its armor. The universe of violence is the justification of violence. Violence is a metamorphosis of the universe such that violence becomes a right.

Finally, the last category of the lie: what one does for a *cause* to the upholders of that very cause.

A) Religion for the people. Naturally, it is taken as an error. What is the absolute cause that justifies it? *The social order*. Hence an unconditioned cause to be brought about by any means whatsoever. In particular, the illusion of a religion consists in giving the modification of the imaginary to every act of those mystified by it. Their endurance, their submission, the efficacy of their work, their respect for the laws, the charity they have toward one another are all *stolen* acts. One steals their signification since it remains an imaginary one. All these acts are done from the perspective of a divine will and justice that do not exist. Therefore they are stripped of their value and, in a sense, this happens from their very beginning. They are extrawordly, they fall outside the world. One prepares for eternal life with the same absurd attention to details as one prepares a dinner for guests who have decided not to come. Everything is false down to the smallest detail from the smallest movement to the largest undertaking.

However, the first advantage one thinks of: to preserve order by making use of people who have an interest in destroying it by conceding them a fictitious advantage somewhere else. Here the social order is an absolute end. It is what is essential and the masses are inessential. But they are the inessential means of preserving the essential end since it is only by means of them that the order is upheld or falls apart. They are, therefore, (a contradiction internal to violence) both essential (because they are essential to the essential end) and inessential (because they get sacrificed to this end). A nondialectical contradiction for they are both of these at the same time and in terms of the same relation.

Furthermore, religion for the people considers acts to be effective and real on one level that are imaginary on another level. Respect for the Boss is brought about by a mystification. It has no more value than the respect I might address to my shadow if I took it for a man. It falls into the void, it is nothingness. Yet on the other side, whether nothingness or not, as the concrete relation of the worker's freedom to that of the boss, it is real, it produces real results: *no strikes*, etc. In this way the worker is transformed into a machine. He is unaware of what he does *for the good*, his activity is the totally unconscious activity of a robot, it is the *absolute outside*, the purely objective. What he believes himself to be doing does not count (saving his soul). It is nothingness. Man is transformed into a thing and his consciousness into an epiphenomenon.

However, the enlightened elite does not want this robot's activity to be completely without some counterpart for the mystified person. It provides him with high points, hopes, promises of happiness. Happy during the mass, happy when

he counts on eternal life and on justice, happy when he prays, etc. The elite considers these forms of happiness as something reached at the end of a critical process. It is not a question of *installing* themselves in their activity without any discernment. Happiness must come as a free evaluation of reality. Therefore it has no value unless he is freedom. But when this elite thinks of the popular layers of society, it holds on the contrary that this happiness has to be installed in each person as a *state of affairs* completely cut off from the process that brought it about and, in particular, from the real situation. Man has to be *affected* with happiness. It is a *tonality* given to him. Contradiction: if one does take care to give him happiness, it is because he is a free creature—but in order to give it to him, one turns him into an object.

Hence the alienation from lying is total. One submits the mystified person to an external order that he objectively serves without being aware of it, with the same unconsciousness as a machine. Internally, one installs in him a state of affairs cut off from all the moments of its coming to be, a state of affairs to which one submits every free project and every internal process as inessential, with the result that this state of affairs, rather than being the end of some free evolution, is like a *cause* from its onset. Indeed, it is not sufficient to call it a motive. Since it is maintained in us by the will of others, it is—we have seen—a cause. Indeed, it does not get modified along with other projects and does not react to them. It determines them without being altered by any recoil from them (what would happen if it were a form of individual spontaneity). In fact, naturally, it does change, but its external organization, that is, the freedom of other people, ceaselessly renews it in me by a process of continuous creation.

So here I am totally alienated. The other person is in me as a fixed gaze, he steals my thoughts from me by determining them through the projection beyond me of a fixed future (also by the presence of duty), by provoking them, by determining them through motives created and maintained in me (fear and hope). Finally, he steals my acts from me by making them, on the one hand, dreamlike initiatives, sleepwalking forms of nothingness, and, on the other hand, the realizations of an automaton. From this moment on, I am dehumanized, reified both internally and externally, therefore the object of perpetual violence whose result is strictly comparable to a physical force.

B) Lying within a party to the members of this party by its leaders. Here the starting point is pure freedom. The unity of the party comes first of all from the fact that the same end is chosen by each and every one of them, and in freedom (adhesion). Therefore if I lie, it is in the name of freedom. Everything occurs as though one were saying: “If you freely want to reach this end, you ought freely to choose the means to attain it, therefore you ought to be willing to be lied to if necessary.” But, in fact, one does not say this. To the degree that it is tacitly understood, there is a justification of bad faith on the part of the underlying freedom. The soldier ought to desire that he be given all the means to fight the most efficiently: weapons, food, morale. To admit defeat to him is

take his morale away from him. In fact, it was contradictory in 1940 to ask the soldier to risk his life to slow down the German advance while also announcing to him over the radio the meetings about an armistice. Therefore we may imagine prisoners demanding of the government, "Why did you give us such lousy morale?" I even heard some prisoners who saw treachery in the defeat of 1940 say, "It was done deliberately." Hence morale becomes a state of affairs that has to be maintained. Just like faith (religion for the people). It is one of the basic means, the end being victory.

I willingly concede that the troupes and their leaders want it this way. But, fundamentally, this means that the men of the party in their free criticism consider themselves inessential in relation to a *state of affairs* that itself is a means to reaching the end. The means to attaining this state of affairs don't really matter. Here once again we have an end external to its means. What is more, the end is supposedly chosen by everyone. But here the *will* is a curiously *objective/subjective* notion. If I say that the masses cannot want reaction, I am speaking of their essential will, but I do not exclude the possibility of their being bewildered or of counterrevolutionary propaganda. Basically, I mean to say *both* that they do want revolutionary emancipation and that their situation dialectically implies the liberating Revolution as the necessary perspective. But it implies this *in itself* and *for me* (as directing them). Not necessarily for them. Hence their will, to conclude, has to be deciphered, which is to say, that I will decide what it is.

Feldman's insightful words to the soldiers who were about to shoot him: "Idiots, I am dying *for you*."¹⁸⁷ This means: I see better than you do your underlying desires for yourselves. Naturally, one step down—and the slope is a slippery one—the ambiguous notion of an underlying will that includes elements of subjectivity becomes that of an *interest* which is strictly objective. If I comprehend the *interests* of the masses better than they do, this means that I comprehend a certain *object* better than they do. For an *interest* is external to a person. It is not a reason because it is *mine* and I have some intuitive, internal knowledge of it. It gets inserted into a set of knowledge and values presupposing philosophical and anthropological assumptions. Hence I can decide the other person's *interest*.

Finally, the ambiguity of my relation to the masses makes me perpetually vacillate from the idea of a manifested and subjective will to that of an underlying (objective/subjective) will, and from there to the idea of a (strictly objective) interest. At that moment everything comes down to my own subjectivity. I can rid myself of this if I believe in a science of politics. In this case, I limit myself to reading the masses' interest in the facts along with the means of bringing it about. In this case, subjectivity has completely disappeared. All that remains is a world where ends and means are dialectically intertwined. Except at this

187. Valentin Feldman, member of the Resistance group F.T.P., who was put to death by a firing squad at Mt. Valérien on 27 July 1942.—Ed. F.T.P.: Francs-Tireurs-Partisans Français, the resistance group of the Front National, largely but not wholly led by the communists.

moment the importance of the goal has completely disappeared. With it, by the way, also disappears the idea of violence. All that remains is the idea of efficacy. Absolute determinism kills the idea of violence—as well as the intuition of absolute freedom.

Violence is an ambiguous notion. We might define it something like: to make use of the facticity of the other person and the objective from the outside to determine the subjective to turn itself into an inessential means of reaching the objective. In other words, bring about the objective at any price, particularly by treating man as a means, all the while preserving the *value* of its having been chosen by some subjectivity. The impossible ideal of violence is to constrain the other's freedom to choose freely what I want. In this sense, the lie is closer to the ideal of violence than that of force. With force, it is clear that I constrain the other, therefore his freedom appears more purely as a refusal of this constraint. In lying, on the contrary, I fool myself for I make myself take the deceived freedom, the freedom set out of play, as free will.

Finally, the lie in the party has the goal of bringing about *unity*. The lie in the party is usually simplifying. To a many-faceted truth correspond a variety of interpretations. The lie seeks in modifying this situation to create a simplification such that only one reaction is possible: indignation, for example. The situation of the liar in relation to the person lied-to is thus profoundly ambiguous: 1st, fundamentally the liar belongs to the *party* of the lied-to. A comrade in the struggle. He stands with the lied to against others. He recognizes him as his brother. They are united in the same fight. Brothers of the same class, brothers in arms—a great totality surpasses them and unites them.

2d, except already, in their very relations, objectivity slips in as a factor of metamorphosis. Unity is not agreement between two contracting wills. Nor is it merely a transcendent form of unification brought about by *the operation both desire*. It is an objectivity that runs through all the subjectivities in question. It is an *essence*. The essence of the individual and *what has been*. But the essence of the party member is what was, what is, and what must be at the same time. The essence and end of the project. Being and value. But an objective value. It is not posited by my subjectivity which is inessential to it, rather it *goes without saying* [*elle est de soi*]. Transcendent and immanent at the same time since it is both my deepest *being* and the unity of me and the Other. Here the notion of *comradery* is not that of agreement in the enterprise which is the life of distinct wills, but that of an objective identity concealed behind an inessential diversity. My comrade is me in the inessential and I am him. Oddly, we thereby rediscover the Hegelian conception of the Recognition of Consciousnesses.

3d, the underlying will and the underlying interest emanate from this *essence*. In a certain sense, confidence in the masses is confidence in the order of being. We have found this everywhere in violence.

4th, whence the first contradiction: as some member of the party, I must express the will of the party, that is, the will of my essence has to express itself

across my inessential individuality. Yet, on the other hand, it is not certain that it is my essence that will get expressed by my vote. It might be my inessential individuality. Therefore it is right that I submit my inessential individuality to my essence. Therefore, as freedom, I am obligated to be a *means* for realizing the end that is *objective*. My existence is submitted to my being. But what will be the underlying will of this essence? In Rousseau, the underlying will is the one that gets expressed by the general will. The objection is simple: the general will may deceive itself, for if I can mistakenly interpret my essence, why should *more* interpret it better, why should the average derived from all these errors give the truth? As a result we get hierarchy and leaders.

5th, the leader *understands me better than I understand myself*. In one sense, he is me since like me he has the essence of a party member. He is a comrade, he is me. But he is also *another*. And one who characterizes himself as knowing the underlying will of the party, its interest, and the means of bringing about this will. Therefore, over against me, he is exactly like the psychoanalyst over against his subject. He knows what I do not know about myself. He sees through my existence what I *am*. And what I *am* is not some individual but a member of the party, that is, in the last analysis, the party. From this moment on, all my individual *Erlebnisse* become inessential and represent just diversity, therefore error. As an individual I am suspect. And it becomes indifferent whether the party makes its decision through me or through someone else since in any case it is *the party* that decides.

In one sense, it is even better if the Other decides, that is, the party's qualified interpreter. But how are we to discern whether he is qualified? His qualification may be manifested in two ways: either the being-of-the-party is always behind him, but inspires him. That is, his free choices are mere transcriptions into the domain of free existence of the interest and underlying wills of the being-of-the-party as being. He wants what I do, except for him his inessential individuality is identical with his essence.

Note that it is a question here again of a false synthesis of the In-itself-For-itself. Each particular choice of the leader is for-itself, but at the same time it is in-itself, it emanates from the In-itself, it is the project of the In-itself into the world of freedom. For the leader, essence precedes existence and absolute subjectivity is completely identical with absolute objectivity. He is the end and he *serves* the end. It comes down to the same thing to worship the leader or to serve the end, which is, moreover, myself. The leader is not God for God is a freedom that gives itself being. The leader is God overturned: pure being manifesting itself as free.

At this level, we already have violence. I submit my freedom to a freedom because I posit that this freedom emanates from Being. I accept being mere transcended transcendence because I limit my freedom by Being. However I remain a lesser form of freedom in the sense that I transcend Being within the limits set by the leader's will, that is, by the being it symbolizes. The leader is

the universal that gets inscribed in the individual, the caprice that is law. If his look is blind in the image we give of this kind of leader, it is to indicate that he does not see the contingency of being. He is spoken to from behind, he hears its voices.

The other procedure is deciphering and science. In this case, the leader is *outside*. He is now only nominally marked by the essence. Instead, he looks at it. He is a pure freedom *for seeing*. He deciphers the essence, determines *my* interest, not from having felt it but in order to decipher it. He is a pure looking. His gaze, like God's, pierces me, dissolves every accident (subjectivity), and goes right to the essential. Therefore I am perpetually under his gaze, *I live under this gaze*. From this moment on, for him, as for me, the lie loses its injurious character. Indeed, since he knows what I want, it hardly matters whether he uses this or that means to make me realize it. In effect, he addresses himself not to my essence, but to my inessential *Erlebnisse* which are already outside reality. In the final analysis, the lie *is me*, it is *in me*. I am a lie and in error to the extent that it is by means of *Erlebnisse* that I realize my operation, where precisely these *Erlebnisse* are uncertain of themselves, confused, false and guilty refractions of the essence of my underlying will. They are already dreams and one can act on them only by provoking counterdreams.

Everywhere we find the excuse of violence: the other started it. The set of dreams and counterdreams breaks away by annulling the underlying will. Hence the leader is in no way comparable to the elite that wishes a religion for the people. He oppresses my individual freedom which he detests in order to free up my underlying being as a proletarian, a Frenchman whom he loves. And in this underlying being he rediscovers a freedom (the underlying will) that he respects. Hence I am a *thing* as a deciphered essence, which someone makes act by cunning and lying, and which is ignorant of what it is doing, whose destiny is outside of it, but *at the same time* I am a freedom whose underlying choice is listened to, which one auscultates and respects. The leader then more resembles the priest. The essence of the communist or the proletarian or the Frenchman, which I constantly betray, yet which remains, both as a being and a value, as a project and a given, is quite precisely the Christian's eternal soul. And the eternal life without any relation of continuity with terrestrial means, which one seeks to reach in the dark and by groping, which *cannot be* the organization of means or decide upon the means just because one does not see clearly and cannot decide upon what will change it—this is comparable to that future beyond compare, blocked off by a Revolution which figures death, which is obscure since we have other categories for living and conceiving it (just as after the Revelation that follows death), which has to be attained by *all* means since it is too vague to exclude any of them.

In sum, the more a goal is beyond compare, the less definite it is, the more the relation of goal to means is indeterminate, the more it appears to be independent, the more admissible it is to make use of *any means whatsoever* to reach it,

since by itself it does not exclude any of them (or almost none). Conversely, if the goal is concrete and finite, if it is part of a future available to man, it has to exclude violence (at least in that it should not itself be violence or evil), and if one is obliged to make use of violence to attain this goal, at least it will appear as unjustified and *limited*. This will be the failure at the heart of the success. The finite goal is present in the means, and the means, 1st, do not cease to be a means (rather than becoming a goal, if they are too far from the ultimate goal); 2d, are a goal at the same time, if they participate in the goal (if the ultimate emancipation of man is at the same time emancipation of each minute. But for this, the ultimate emancipation must be regulative and in each case the goal has to be a *finite* emancipation in terms of some determined point). Emancipation has to be considered *both* as progressive (History) and permanent (freedom). It will never be finished and it is immediately realizable. The meaning of this immediate realization will be putting it off to infinity and this will take on flesh only through the possibilities of the immediate realization.

In effect, the contradiction immanent to ethics (which justifies violence) is as follows: the situation and the maxim of the wills on the scene imply that I cannot treat a man as an end, even though I want to do so with all my strength. Therefore I can only prepare a world where man will be treated as an end. Yet if I project a world of this kind, which is distant and infinitely far off, and if it is impossible for me today to treat man as an end, then it will be the means of attaining this end *ad infinitum*. If it is impossible to have concrete, true relations of means to end with the representatives of the working class, then I will treat them as a means, I will sacrifice them, if I have the power to do so, to the sought-for end. But with that I kill my end. For in creating the universe of men/means I alienate man from the absolute end (even if it is *humanity* or the city of ends), and since this universe would have no meaning except insofar as it is freely chosen, it founders. What remains is its caricature.

The solution to this antinomy is not to distinguish the end from the means, but to treat man as an end to the same extent that I consider him a means, that is, to help him think of himself and freely want to be a means in the moment when and to the extent that I treat him as an end, as well as to make manifest to him that he is the absolute end in that very decision by which he treats himself as a means.

So far we have considered offensive violence. Let us now consider defensive violence. A treatise on violence would have to include three descriptions: 1st, offensive violence; 2d, defensive violence (as a violent defense against nonviolence); and 3d, counterviolence. What I am calling defensive violence is distinguished from counterviolence in that this latter is a riposte to some aggression or effort to secure a hold maintained by force (State) while defensive violence is a recourse to violence directed against nonviolent processes.

For example, during a discussion, I suddenly refuse to discuss things anymore.

Therefore I bring about a unilateral break in the tacit contract that I made with the other. That is, having admitted that the discussion should lead to a reciprocal recognition of freedoms stemming from our common agreement, I suddenly decide to consider just my own will and to put the other in an impossible situation. It is an impossible situation that he will run into when he tries to talk to me, since I will refuse to answer. Where his argument had been a requirement directed to my freedom, he is now weaponless since he only encounters a deaf-mute. In this way, I oppose his freedom not with the limit of my own (as when I dominate him with the force of my invented arguments), but rather with the limit of my facticity (I really stop up my ears and start humming). All at once I make him encounter his facticity as confronted with my own (his voice *cannot* pierce this wall) and his powerlessness as a fact, that is, the *given* separation (nihilating pure being) of consciousnesses. If he insists on continuing, I get angry and we fight. The strongest one will win, the order of arguments will disappear, replaced by the rule of force. Not completely, however, for if I beat him, I am aware of having proved that he was wrong.

What am I defending myself against? Let us say in the first place that I am refusing the rules of the game. In the beginning it was a question of a freely agreed to rule-governedness. The subject was determined, precise. It was a matter of not leaving it behind. There is an initial act of *violence* if I do abandon it.

Argument *ad hominem* is a kind of violence. Why? An example: A: "Gischia is a bad painter for such and such a reason."¹⁸⁸ Me: "Anyhow, with the pictures that you do, in your place I would not allow myself to pass judgment." The one who is judging has placed himself on the level of freedom. He is at home with himself, he responds to the requirements of Gischia's paintings as well as his own, incited by the former, not finding himself satisfied. So he asks of others, as free, that they share his discontent. And it is just on the level that I place myself, since I accept the discussion about Gischia (at least in the beginning). That is, I agree that Gischia's works should be *given some value*. I do not answer, for example, "As for me, they please me, but I don't know much." As soon as I say they are good, I invite other people and, consequently, my interlocutor, to judge and to feel free, to agree with me. But he *does not do so*. There is a sudden discovery of a failure of freedom. My freedom *as such* seems an agreement among freedoms or, you may say, one wanted to realize in and through Gischia's paintings the city of ends. By wanting someone to recognize the value of Gischia's painting, my freedom asks other people to make themselves freedom by recognizing my own freedom as freedom.

There is a refusal of recognition. This signifies that other people do not recognize me at all as pure, valorizing freedom but as alienated, distracted

188. Léon Gischia (b. 1903), painter and theater designer, especially for the Vieux-Colombier.

freedom. They refer me back to my facticity and recall to me that everyone else also has such freedom but may use it to affirm and feel a diametrically opposed value. So I have to choose: either deny my freedom, and consider that I have been fooled, make a radical conversion, which means at the very moment when I am pure freedom, I have to consider myself as pure facticity (I have no taste, I was fooled, I like Gischia because I do not know Picasso), or deny the other's freedom, *explain* his judgment: you have no taste, you know nothing about painting—that is, quickly create an order of determinism such that the other's judgment appears as a passion, or perhaps, in the case under consideration, to find in his activities a reason for generally refusing his judgment: he is a bad painter himself.

What does all this mean? Everything happens as though we posited the maxim: bad painters have no right to judge painting. This means that we consider the bad painter to be a vitiated nature as regards painting and everything he does regarding painting is falsified. We do appeal to his freedom, but only so that he agrees about this *nature* in himself and so that at the same time he denies himself.

There is, moreover, the idea of *indignity*: some faults banish one from human society. The bad painter does not have the right to judge painting just as the criminal does not have the right to vote. At the same time, moreover, I take refuge in an agreement made (or which I take as made) between freedoms, which confirms me in my idea that I am free. (Before me, X, Y, and Z treated A as a bad painter. At that moment A was the *object* of a judgment, not a judging subject, and was characterized as a limited and negative essence whereas I was pure freedom through reciprocal recognition. Therefore what I am showing here, by referring to this conversation, is that A is an object while I am a pure, free subject.) In a word, I ask of A's freedom that it deal with itself as mere transcended transcendence, as a mere, limited object. I ask it of its own free will to withdraw from the circle of free men. I refuse A the right to be treated as a man.

At this moment, I reverse my earlier position. I freely call upon all men to make use of their freedom as regards Gischia's picture in order to give it a value. This demand is also hope for confirmation. Except that here there is no statute. Unanimity is required. A majority pro or con doesn't mean a thing. Whence the profound ambiguity of my summons: if they *all* were to disagree with me, I would still claim the right to make my appeal. Instead of tossing up a demand/question as I did in the beginning, that is, instead of calling on freedoms to make a statute, with favorable prejudice, in favor of the picture, I pass over to the spirit of seriousness and make the picture a *value/object*, a being/value that will serve me as a touchstone for classifying men as free or unfree.

There is violence because: 1st, I have posited an absolute end. Not the *internal end* of freedoms, but an external end, in itself. Passage to the spirit of seriousness. Here we can see that the spirit of seriousness is violence because it posits values

as transcendent to freedoms. So instead of value, as a demand of freedom, *only being able to be obtained by freedom*, it becomes a demand *on* freedom, above all a pure demand of being. In this case, it can and must be attained even by the suppression of freedom, even through the suppression of freedom. In general, once one posits values as external transcendences, freedom becomes the means of attaining them, which strictly presupposes the possibility of making use of other means—and violence is not far off.

2d, I have posited this end *against the background of a failure*. I was seeking agreement among freedoms and I found refusal. I did have the abstract possibility of making the other overturn his refusal (by *proofs*). But I do not have this possibility *concretely*. It should be noted that this is so for three reasons: (a) I do not possess enough intelligence, education, skill to *convince* him, that is, to illuminate the situation in such a way that the other's freedom will change its mind. (b) The other *refuses* to be convinced. In other words, he is already on the ground where his opinion has become a transcendent end and freedom its means. (c) The subject matter is such that it is impossible to *find* arguments, insights. For example, doing so would require long training.

What is more, all three aspects are often present at the same time. The *second* one (b) brings us to the problem of violence against violence. The other's refusal, if he is obstinate, is already violence. Except that this aspect is rarely *manifest*, just as good will is rarely manifest. From this follows one of the reasons for violence, that I suspect violence on the other's part. Every refusal is likely to be taken for a form of violence. Because the negation that opposes two for-themselves is a negation of interiority. Refusal transforms this negation of interiority into one of exteriority. I break off contact with the other's freedom. I make myself impenetrable and a pure for-itself over against this freedom and do the same to it in relation to myself. Refusal introduces into detotalized totalities that mode of relationship which is the exteriority of indifference.

Here once again violence gets presented as not yet having begun. And, in fact, its ground is the facticity and the existence of *Others*. Violence is one way of living out ambiguity as failure and its ideal is something transcendent that totalizes the detotalized totality by force. It is on the side of Being and wants to be being because the nothingness that separates consciousnesses is also *on the side of Being* (owing to the double negation of interiority that makes one of the two negations—the one by which the other makes himself not me—a negation that I do not have to be, which is in a relation of exteriority with the one by which I make myself not be other people).

The third instance (c), which occurs frequently in discussions where the subject is aesthetics or politics and requires a long education, the spirit of finesse, creates *in spite* of the discussants a provisory hierarchy between them. How can you *demonstrate* to an uneducated man that Picasso's painting is valuable? In fact, it would be *possible* to change his judgment on this subject, if I had enough time (to take him to museums, to show him the evolution of painting and of its

problems since Impressionism, etc.). But he must be convinced *right now*. So another theme of violence appears: the refusal of the temporal and the discursive.

This does not spring from some arrogant decision of the violent man. It is the situation itself that invites violence. It creates a hierarchy in my eyes—a relative hierarchy, naturally. This man who lacks artistic training may be more intelligent or better than me. Yet this relative hierarchy, in this situation at this time, within the perspective of our projects, is experienced as absolute. Furthermore, it is *bothersome*. It is not experienced as some haughty form of superiority, or not just as that, but rather as a disturbing form of separation. I know *too much* to agree with him and I lack the means to bring him to my knowledge. What is more, this hierarchy tends to turn the other into an *object* because in my eyes he is ignorant and therefore determined from the outside by an objective lack. In my eyes, his freedom gets altered.

All I can do therefore is to ask for *his confidence*. Except such confidence is really a free solution only if it is momentary and relative to a precise project. I have confidence in someone to guide me based on the outcome, in an operation whose final outcome will reveal what will justify that confidence. Here my confidence cannot bring about this outcome (true, free confidence would be my saying to him: have confidence in me, work with me six months and you will end up *understanding* modern painting). Such confidence can only end by accepting without seeing it the postulate that modern painting is worthwhile, and is so for reasons external to painting (because I have good judgment, a reputation for good taste, etc.).

Therefore it is normal that the other refuses my proposal. Except that he continues the discussion and I judge that he lacks the needed knowledge, so his freedom appears to me totally like an object. It is something *to work on*, something *closed in on itself*, he is *off track* (all formulas that indicate the transformation of the subject into an object. Since this freedom turns itself into an object in my eyes, there is nothing left for me to do but to treat it as a thing [intimidation, the principle of authority, etc.]).

But here we rediscover the principle of violence. I treat a freedom as a thing in order to liberate it as freedom. The enslaving of freedom gets posited as a means of liberation for this very freedom. As for my interlocutor, he is in fact *free*, he evaluates and transcends his situation as he must do and with the means at his disposal. Once again it is the upsurge of my freedom in a situation that affects the other with ignorance and that objectively alienates his freedom. I steal his world from him, I transform his free efforts to think and to transcend his situation into inefficacious, vain, and derisory attempts. For me, his transcendence lies in immanence. Whence the temptation to consider it as negligible, in the name of a transcendence I want to give him, which is in fact my own.

In a quite general way, one of the perpetual alienations of human freedom comes from what the *facts* do not demonstrate. That is, that I cannot *reveal* to the Other what I alone have seen or done. In the order of everyday life, the

majority of convictions (*facts*: yesterday I was in Rome—*evaluations*: I find him sad—*psychological constructions*: you saw how he looked at me, he envies me—*political and social opinions*: anti-Semitism, socialism, etc.—*system of values*: ethical concepts, aesthetic judgments, myths) are neither directly nor immediately communicable. Often, to reach agreement, one has to give one's whole life to the other person. If there is some urgency, the temptation is to turn to authority. Therefore to violence.

The *first aspect* (a) can assimilate itself to the second by way of bad faith. I cannot communicate my opinion because the other is more intelligent, more skilled in discussion than me. This time it stems from a failure for which I am personally responsible. This is not the failure of all human communication—it is *my* failure. Of course I can interpret it as evidence or at least as a sign that I am wrong. But it is also true that this is by no means certain. It may well be that I am right even though incapable of making my reasons carry the day, while the other's skill is a false front. It is for me to decide. To acknowledge my error too quickly may be a mistake provoked by an inferiority complex. Yet if I decide that I am right, I am in a strange situation. All the arguments, evidence, analyses, and insights *are on the other's side*. Truth is on my side. But it is a singular kind of truth since everything I say to justify it gets knocked down. It is also a *simple and immediate* kind of truth since, being unable to set it forth beginning from positions accepted by the other person, I cannot *turn it into truth*. It is no longer a discursive truth. It is reduced by the other to the status of an *intuitive truth*. Finally, since it is *truth* and I regard the other's discourses from its point of view, I have to consider them as inessential and even bothersome. In a word, all that is intellectual work, invention, experimentation becomes *suspect* and appears as that set of procedures that keeps us from seeing the truth. I am reduced to *Credo quia absurdum* [I believe because it is absurd]. And since I refuse my adversary's procedures, which I *judge* to be contrary to my truth (hence to all truth), I want him to share in this truth *against* these means or, if you will, by all means.

In this way, I am reduced to violence, I am in the position of the priest who brings about the auto-da-fé. What is more, since the reasoning goes against me, I want him to share my truth against any reasoning, and since he does not have the self-certainty I do, I want to give him a *faith* in this truth. It doesn't matter that he does not have my illumination if this truth gets *installed in him*. Fall on your knees and you will believe. Recourse to *intuition* is frequently found among women: "I am quite intuitive," to the extent that, as spouses or girl friends of technicians (engineers, lawyers, doctors) who regularly beat them in discussions, they can only preserve their truths by putting beyond the control of discussion and discourse, of criticism. This weapon of the weak leads to violence, but may, for the weak person, rest on a secret and inoffensive plane.

We find some of the same elements in the opposite attitude: the attitude of

the person we want to persuade but who does not want to be changed. One panics before the insinuating force of the other's reasons. What is to be noted is that the Other's reasoning can be a figure of violence *for me*. If I do not see clearly where it is leading, I am led from one affirmation to another without my knowing how to affirm the contrary of what I am affirming. I have the impression of being misled. Mystified. Because reasoning is not, in fact, a dead thing nor some inward discovery in this case. It takes on the style and the image of the other. It is one of the other's undertakings, a free *invention*. Therefore it is in part logically rigorous, in part freedom. To some degree, it is *the other in me*. Those words I just heard which had a kind of nasal sonority by means of which the other as whole entered my ears, in me lead to an adhesion against myself, against my refusal. Reasoning has a human air. And it is not merely the objective presentation of arguments (as in a philosophy course). It is also a struggle and tactical. There is a will in that voice which wants to find me wrong. Through this very idea of a struggle the idea of violence enters into me. Above all that of cunning. Reasoning can be specious. The art is to conceal that it is so. Perhaps with reflection I may discover the weak point or the sophism, but everything happens too quickly. So I do not know whether the other is lying to me or telling the truth—and even this would be imputable to the other. Besides, the ambiguity of the argument prevents me from feeling any good will toward him. All the more so in that initially I do think he *is wrong*. And his arguments, if he is wrong, are only ruses, misleading appearances. Yet I cannot discover what is misleading. Therefore I am in the attitude of someone who gets mystified. He is stealing my thought from me. No doubt it would be easy to acknowledge that the other is right, but I cannot do so since I think I am right.

There is a vicious circle: if I am to consider his arguments as expressing the truth (as when I am taking some professor's course), I have already to be convinced by something other than the truth they demonstrate. No doubt there is such a thing as *evidence*. But ordinarily arguments are aimed at probable things, and are based on facts that have been assumed, or on presuppositions that do not get discussed. They aim at constructing a form that will suddenly reveal itself to us and bring about our adhesion by the mass of facts that they encompass. If I refuse this construction, I will have these arguments pressing upon me which I can neither refute nor admit. Therefore I am threatened in my integrity. What is more, this integrity which I appeal to, which must not be changed, is my *essence*, that is, my being. Hence I am defending what *I am* against any change.

In the final analysis, things take place for me as follows. He is attacking my being with cunning tricks. The system of these tricks is codified and he wants me to defend myself just using the same code. There is a system of rules. But this system of rules turns into violence as soon as it better serves my adversary, who is more skilled in its use than I am. Therefore it leads to a deeper lying illegality. Therefore it is legitimate for me to defend myself by all possible means, that is, by breaking off the system of rules and the game. By making the

inexorable move, the one that cannot be taken back. I refuse: 1st, the relationship with other people. I turn myself into a stone. That is, I make use of my characteristic of being a transcended transcendence, which makes me an object, in order to mimic the most elementary of objects in the other's eyes, that object that stands in a relationship of pure exteriority with every other being: being a mineral object. And here (as always) the mineral is the symbol of pure Being. My refusal is always an effort to change the reciprocal negation of interiority into a negation of exteriority.

2d, I refuse temporality. In order to refuse the other's action, I refuse all change, that is, I refuse time. I refuse any future for my thinking, and in this way also *my own future*. Time is changed into an empty framework incapable of change. Eternity and the instant are one. I am an *oath*. Whatever happens, I will not change. This signifies the opposite of ordinary violence which is the acceptance of every possible means in order to produce some effect. Here, in advance, I repel every means used to make me change.

However, the affirmation common to both attitudes is that in both cases the means are *inessential*. In a word, by my initial refusal I withdraw from the community of men. It is not (as in the preceding case) my adversary whom I dehumanize, it is me. I negate the essential relation of interdependence among freedoms, withdrawing into absolute certitude. Correlatively, I affirm my identity with myself, I deny the becoming of truth, of any project, of change. I am pure being and my existence means *being alongside* others, with no connection to them. What we have is *obstinacy*. The difference between such obstinacy and the will is that the one is a decision to serve some goal "by all means" and the other defines the means that it will use in the very moment that it chooses its goal, that is, the optimal means and those which one may turn to *if absolutely necessary*. That is, the former refuses time and the latter bases itself in time.

If, however, the *other* stays and pursues his attempt to make his case, I cannot *not listen to him*, but since he has not taken into account my refusal, I feel myself *attacked*. Once again my position is paradoxical, for in wrenching myself from the community by my refusal, I also require the other to respect me as though we were in the city of ends. Also because in transforming myself into pure *being*, I still preserve myself as a freedom that may be violated, even though being, by definition, is beyond any and all violence. Therefore it is legitimate for me to suppress this violence by any means whatsoever. This means nihilating my interlocutor in the name of my freedom's right to want to be respected even in its decision no longer to be freedom.

I can nihilate him symbolically, by leaving. This attitude—"I quit"—is another form of violence, albeit disguised. Outwardly I give myself the air of someone who refuses to use all possible means, who "gives in" on some point in order to leave the responsibility for having used violence with the other. In fact, this is violence through an absolute refusal to hear the appeal of another freedom. I nihilate that freedom by leaving, I render it powerless in relation to

me, by replacing with a *real* exteriority (distance, walls) what had been an abstract positing of exteriority by my refusal to listen.

If this solution is impossible, then it is necessary to *shut him up* by any means whatsoever; that is, to destroy the project of his freedom and even this freedom itself. I strike out. That is, I now envisage this freedom in terms of its facticity. But I only do so obscurely because I also suspect that he is addressing me in my facticity (by speculating about my lack of knowledge, my naïveté, my slow-wittedness, which are my outer sides). I give him back the same in return; that is, since his freedom addresses itself to me in my facticity, not acknowledging my freedom, it will find that it is my facticity that is addressed back to his facticity (my physical force which for me belongs to the same domain, *the given*, as my intellectual weaknesses). It is a question of nihilating a temptation.

All the preceding analyses allow us to understand how violence appears in the world as a pure possibility from the moment men appear. But to make this clear, before going any further, we will have to describe the true relations of one person to another, in order to situate violence at its proper ontological level, not as a sin or a crime, but as a type of relation to the other. Therefore we need to study the different kinds of claim that can be made on the other: prayer, appeal, expectation, proposal, demand, along with the other's response: refusal or agreement. Threats. Defiance.

1. Prayer and Demands

Prayer and demands, passage from demanding something to making threats, threats.

Prayer and threats are linked by a common vocabulary. "Neither by prayers nor by threats." "Nothing fits here. Neither prayers nor threats." However there is an intermediary term: the *demand* or passage from a prayer to a threat. In a prayer, I present myself as a mere insufficient motivation to the other's freedom. In making a threat, I am freedom over against the other. My demand is addressed to the other as pure freedom while taking into account that he is freedom in a situation.

Prayer. Let us examine the attitude of prayer, the world of prayer, and the situations in which one prays. Prayer is addressed to God or to man. But in both cases it is an invocation of the look: "Oh God, who sees my suffering . . ." "Achilleus, look at me, I am Priam, etc."¹⁸⁹ The being to whom one addresses

189. See *The Iliad*, Book 24. "Tall Priam came in . . . and caught the knees of Achilleus in his arms, and kissed the hands / that were dangerous and manslaughtering and had killed so many / of his sons. . . . Now Priam spoke to him the words of a suppliant." *The Iliad of Homer*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 487–88.

himself is a looking look. And this look looks *at me*. The man who prays is initially in the attitude of someone who is suddenly caught by the dazzling beam of a searchlight, caught in this look like a dust mote in a ray of light. The look, the light, the dazzlement. He does not look at this look, he feels it. The look being the pure freedom of the other, the praying man feels himself suspended in this freedom. He is from the onset transcended toward ends that he is unaware of or only half knows. But in principle, he approves of them, takes them as legitimate, because they emanate from a pure freedom. Indeed, the freedom in which he is suspended, is in no way marked by facticity. It is a pure positing of the order of ends, beyond him. God's plans are both impenetrable and absolutely good, Achilles's anger is legitimate. And since these ends get realized beyond me, in the world, I bet on this look on the basis of the organized and good world, penetrated, in any case, with freedom. In this world, I myself am in a situation and, insofar as I am in the world, I am not just looked at by this look but also unilaterally organized along with this world into a legitimate order. I am a *means*: "Let God's will be done."

Prayer implies *acceptance*. There is an *a priori* recognition of an operative freedom and its operations. As soon as I no longer agree, I can no longer pray or I pray in bad faith—and my project becomes a form of horror. It is true that horror can lead to prayer: "Don't strike me, I beg you, I will give you everything you want." Then it is born from a feeling of total powerlessness wherein one stands and a feeling of the other's infinite power. My powerlessness gets transformed into a negation of my freedom and the feeling of the other's power gets transformed into a revelation of his pure freedom. I accept his order and his ends. To hand over your wallet to a thief while beseeching him for mercy is to take the theft to be legitimate. I may even address myself beyond his current demand to his *good will*. But this is first of all to assume that a noumenal good will lies behind his accidental one. It means believing in man's original good will. Next it is to address oneself to this good will not in the form of a demand—which would be a possible relation of one freedom to another—but precisely as a beggar, that is, *with no right* to do so and as accepting in advance his right to cut me off. The original relationship is thus truly to an absolute freedom.

More exactly, the freedom that is beseeched is not, as in the case of Leibniz's God, itself submitted to the Good (in this case, one can beg *in the name of the Good*),¹⁹⁰ but rather like Descartes's God, is itself constitutive of the Good. Yet the *means* which I am in the world where this freedom acts is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, he accepts the universal order and the place one confers

190. See Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), *Discourse on Metaphysics*, in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), pp. 35–68, especially Proposition II: "Against those who claim that there is no goodness in God's works, or that the rules of goodness and beauty are arbitrary" (*ibid.*, p. 36). See also *The Monadology* (in *ibid.*, pp. 213–25), especially § 46, p. 218.

upon him in this order. He makes himself a *means*. On the other hand, he has his own ends and these disturb the order established by this absolute freedom. If God's will is to submit me to a test or simply to make a civil war break out in the country where I happen to be, the Good comes about for me through this very war or testing. To the extent that I am horrified by the test (the mortal sickness of my only son) I am against the Good, I risk disturbing the universal order.

From the outset, therefore, I accept a hierarchy of freedoms. The ends of my own freedom are secondary and inessential. They cannot establish the order of the world. My freedom can only accept this order, and either contribute to maintaining it through submission to the principal freedom or disturb it in passing. It cannot replace it with another order that would be my own. It is only capable of creating disorder. In other words, my ends appear as clearly peculiar to me in the face of a will that upholds the universal order. Better still, in their very peculiarity, they can exist only if they are upheld by the universal order.

As a believer, I am a creature of God, the very words I address to Him get their power from His Will. A subject, I am not a citizen, I can only posit myself as an individual thanks to the law and order that the Sovereign's will upholds. In one sense, we could even say that I have a doubly ambiguous existence: as particular, I do not exist, I am Evil and nonbeing and yet, as such, I am still a certain desire. Inasmuch as I *am*, I ground myself in the universal order of subjects, slaves, or creatures.

I explain my sufferings and my upsetting desires *through the body* to this freedom, by what in me is not already pure freedom: "Lord, I am weary, I am old, I can no longer bear this testing." Yet, on the other hand, to just the extent that my body escapes me, it does so in order to found itself in the natural order where it becomes good. There is a game of trading places here. The body is pure being, therefore the result of some organizing operation of freedom. Freedom is the recognition of the Lord's will, therefore assent to order. Neither the body nor the free will can escape this order.

What it does not include is freedom subjecting itself to the body and by so doing losing its nature as freedom. But this is not *nothing*. It is a double negation: freedom *is no longer free* and the body interpreted by freedom *is no longer* a element of the universal order. In other words, each one of the elements no longer has its nature in itself or in the order that is homogeneous with it, but in the other. And insofar as it depends on the other, insofar as it no longer finds its reason within itself, insofar as one can no longer assign to it an exigency plainly in conformity with its nature and its organizing will, to that extent it puts up a resistance *that does not come from it*, and to the extent that it is conditioned from the outside, it takes on that appearance of positivity that is in reality only a negation and something external.

Thus, for example, in the very moment that I do not approve of the established order, I disapprove of myself for not approving it. Not completely, however.

For if I disapprove of myself completely, that is, if I condemn myself in the name of the greater freedom, I will not be offering my desire as an oblation to the Creator, the Lord. I will be trying to conquer him. In fact, my desire remains legitimate in itself and partially coherent with the Creator's will. If it stops being in conformity with this will, then this will must have changed.

For example, rarely does one pray for his neighbor to die. But I do pray for my sick son to be healed, because it is God's will that I love and aid my son. What happens is that the general order somehow implies that this son should be threatened with death. From this moment on, my affection for him is illegitimate insofar as it prevents me from adapting myself to this order. It may happen, in the case of a plea to my Lord, that my son has to go to prison. My Lord also requires me to be a good father. Therefore I both conform to his orders in bemoaning myself and contravene the general order in wishing that my son did not have to go to prison. It is the past will of the Lord (be good to your son) that gives a semblance of being to my present will. Above all it must not be directed against him.

In prayer, I accept and do not accept the event, but to the extent that I do not accept it, I am without any *right*, any virtue, any reason, and my nonacceptance only has a semblance of reality from the fact that it is the expression of another aspect of the sovereign will. Thus it is not presented as *a refusal*, that is, as the free and autonomous exercise of an inalienable freedom, but as an impossibility that has to be accepted. I am a father, I recognize the law. If my son is guilty, he must perish. But since I am also *this* father who obeys the law of fathers, this limited creature, who is what God has made through his creation, what the Lord has made through education and customs, I cannot ground myself entirely on his will. The Look knows this, since it sees me. Being-looked-at includes the idea of transcended transcendence. In prayer, I offer myself as transcended transcendence, that is, as a *pure object*. And since the freedom to which I offer myself is absolute, constituting freedom, it goes without saying that the aspect in terms of which I exist for this Freedom is *my* absolute truth.

So therefore in Prayer I am first of all an object. My nature is to be an object within this freedom. This in no way means that I abdicate my freedom, just that this freedom becomes one of my objective qualities, one of my properties. I encounter myself in my truth which is to be a *Being*, not an *Existent*. What is more, I am seen through by the Lord's or God's look who knows me as I know myself. When, as a father, I am going to ask the Lord for mercy for my son, I do not assume that I have to tell him about any details of the situation that he may be unaware of. He knows the extent of the fault better than I do, the importance it may have as an example, and he also knows my pain as a father better than I do. He is a father, the father of his subjects, he knows everything I could tell him.

From this follows the particular kind of language used in prayer. Such language is not *informative*, it teaches nothing. This is even more striking in the

case of the believer since God's look penetrates to his most secret thoughts and, therefore, transforms them into objects. Furthermore, while these thoughts appear *to him*, he sees beyond them and knows my place and function—which I am not aware of—in a general order—which I can only suspect. At the same time that I know my desires, he knows them too. He knows them not because I tell him of them but because they exist. Whence the particularly *poetic* character of prayer, whereby one speaks without saying anything, since one is naming and describing feelings and desires to the Other that he knows more thoroughly and better than I do. Not only do my words describe to God or my Lord elements of myself that he already knows, they do so only in appearance. They are not even true for this language, since there is a deeper-lying truth, my place in the organized universe that this sovereign freedom knows better than I do.

So prayer, aesthetically considered, is pure language, because its words are so far removed from the function of prose which is to *inform* the other about what he does not know. Because of this they gain a ceremonial importance. They are like the musical accompaniment to an intuitive knowledge that is an immediate relationship. Such language spins its wheels and posits itself for itself.

At the same time, it has another function: it does not signify in naming, rather it gives. If I say, "Lord, I am weary," I know that the Lord already knows it. But I make manifest that I am especially addressing myself to him, I give him my weariness. In fact, I am on the reflective plane. I grasp my weariness by way of the fictive look as an *Erlebnis* crystallized into some state of affairs and, by my word, I cross through it and direct it toward someone to whom I give it. In meditations, heightened spiritual states, and prayers there is a angry logomachy that manifests the habit of talking so as not to say anything. In all these cases, language is not used either to express my thinking or for clarifying it to my own eyes, but only in a sacrificial sense. Through it, I *hand myself over* to God or to my Lord. I hand myself over to him, I give him both my desire and my acceptance of his order.

But what do I want from him in this case? "Lord, do not let my son die." This means: "Lord, your Good is my Good, if it requires my son to die, I put myself in your hands and I acknowledge that my desire that he get well again is a form of nothingness, something evil, an error. However, since, to some extent, the dignity of being of this desire and its legitimacy come from your upholding it in existence, let your order be such that my desire is a perfectly legitimate part of it and let it be fulfilled." I am not asking that God make an exception for me, but rather that I stop being an exception in his order of things.

This may happen in two ways. And my prayer is ambiguous because the adopted situation is itself ambiguous: either by making the order such that my desire, which conforms to it and therefore agrees with God's will, finds satisfaction through its own merit, or by making my desire, the order being what it is, transform itself into wanting God's will to be done. "Lord, give me the strength and the courage to uphold your will. If my son should die, allow me to bear it."

The first wish basically rejoins the second one. One does not really want to change God's will. One desires that his desire, being somehow upheld in being by God himself, will be revealed as being fundamentally the same as the divine will. God seemed to want my son to die, but my desire that he live contains such fullness deep down that it has to conform to God's will, that is, it is a sign and a proof that my son will live.

However, if this is the ideal prayer (that my desire should conform to your order, that it be a part of your order, or that your order be suddenly revealed as conforming to my desire), it thereby follows that ordinary prayer is the mere enunciation of a partial vow: let my son live. In this case, one preserves the belief that the divine order has its holes, that there are several indifferent ways for reaching the same goal (the one being the death of my son, the other this or that path), that the future is not entirely over and done with. And this renders a kind of homage to the Lord's or the Creator's will: it is not a question of some mechanical order but a living one. The Master is so powerful that he is not bound by predetermined ways in bringing about what he wants (against Leibniz and the principle of sufficient reason).¹⁹¹ The future of a freedom is not fatality, etc. Above all, if the Good is what God wants, it suffices that he should want a certain outcome for that outcome to become the Good, and what he did not want becomes Nothingness or Evil. Hence he has only to want what I want for me to want the Good.

Prayer drifts among these various meanings. One vaguely admits that the King has an established and strict order, since he is an all-powerful sovereign. But one also admits that one exception will not change this order. Also that *the order being absolute*, any means may serve it, therefore that there are a number of means available to realize it. Finally, it is not universal justice that is the Good. Otherwise the King would have to obey it and would be limited and not all-powerful. It is rather the King's own will.

In this latter conception—tightly bound up with the others—my prayer is not an evil (for it is not a refusal or a demand, it is essentially unconditional acceptance). If it is not granted, it grounds itself on the acceptance of order. And it can become a Good. Then it will get transformed into a will. For this, it suffices that God or the King will according to my prayer. Make me want the Good. One is playing with two different propositions: make what I want the Good, make the Good what I want.

Yet, at the same time, prayer is *efficacious* or wants to be so. How can one hope that prayer does something? *How can I act on his will?* Here is the contradiction of prayer or its bad faith. By accepting, and through my acceptance, I want to obtain the opposite of what I accept. I submit to what I do not want so that the Master wants what I want. I silence my own will so that the Lord's will becomes my will. To obtain what *I am asking for*, I make myself with my

191. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 219.

freedom into an object hanging from the other's freedom. How is this possible? Initially, I demit myself of my freedom because it can upset or irritate. I declare that my freedom is freedom when it wants what the Other wants, and nonfreedom when it wants its own ends. In other words, there is just one freedom in the Other and in myself: the Other's freedom.

It is comprehensible, therefore, that everyone should pursue the death of the Other. What offends is the otherness of consciousnesses. I suppress this otherness by suppressing my freedom. There isn't any longer more than one freedom in the world. For myself, I have made myself an object and an accomplice of this freedom. Through my enslaved freedom, I pass through it. Therefore I become something that belongs to it. In prayer, I give myself. Except, in becoming something belonging to *him*, I preserve a desire that I propose to this all-powerful freedom. Since I belong to him, this desire is originally *his* desire. It is a solicitation made to his freedom, just as hunger can be a solicitation for me to eat—a solicitation that I can take account of or not take account of at my will. Being an object, I propose myself to the Master as a *motive*. Since I am *his*, my pain, which I propose to him, is *his* pain. It cannot offend him. It is not a reproach. It does not even have the aggressive character of some pain that he may come upon with the face of someone indifferent to it. It is already familiar, mitigated, a gift, it is acceptance and resignation, it considers itself to be nothing, all the while expecting to be really plunged into nonbeing or, on the contrary, turned into his freedom. Therefore it manifests itself just like an *Erlebnis in him*. He turns his reflective look upon it. Therefore it presents itself as an occasion for his activity. Indeed, we have seen, that it offers itself.

But this is just its cunning. A pain that would be closed in on itself would surround the hostile person of the slave before the Master's Will. This pain, on the contrary, will seek out God or the Lord down to the very source of his freedom. It *belongs* to him, it is *devoted* to him. My pain, my desire, which as belonging to me are not nothing, in belonging to the Master are everything, bringing about the intermediary, the connection between the Master and me. They are *me in the Master*. The looked-at object by offering itself to the lighting/look half founds itself in this look, dilutes itself into it, and all at once becomes an internal motive of this look, a solicitation for freedom. At the same time, and in another sense, my freedom declares that it never was mine. Either it is *nothing* or it is the other's freedom passing through me. I want what the Sovereign wants. I am, as freedom, the prolongment of His freedom, as body, one of His instruments. But these pains and desires that occur, unperceived, neglected in *my* freedom, also occur in His since the two are one. By identifying itself with His freedom, my freedom cunningly confers desires on it. The game takes place through these secondary formations.

Desire, says the praying one to the one prayed to, is nothing or it will be *yours*. If you do not want anything to do with it, give me the strength and the courage to resist it. This means, pierce me with your will, and resist my desire

in me. I give it up and give it to you; I discharge it on you. In this way, the Master's will gets encumbered with a desire it did not have and that it is obliged to pass judgment on as one of its own desires. It becomes one motive among his motives and it is with these motives that this will constructs the universal order.

In truth, through prayer I constitute myself as a temptation for the sovereign freedom; by a trap, I constitute a possibility for it that becomes *its own possibility*.

An object is never a temptation. The classic temptation is the Queen of Sheba: she is both object and freedom at the same time. She reveals herself to Anthony's look, naked or almost so, and the first aspect she shows is docility.¹⁹² That is, she reveals herself as not having another will than Anthony's will (just like a ductile and malleable thing). What Anthony sees in her is his own will. But, at the same time, she does something and shows that she too is a free will, that she has the *property* of being free. Except that she presents this free will as a prolonging of Anthony's own will. She is not just empty expectation, as in mere submission. But with her body she indicates a possible project for Anthony's will, she mimics abandon. As yet, she is nothing more than a project that can become Anthony's project. He rediscovers his own will calling to him in her. If he decides, the woman who was *nothing* becomes him in the other, him in another body. He does not have to take these arms and put them around his neck, as though they were objects one lifts up and makes use of as one wills, they will do so themselves with a sign from him.

Hence the unfathomable freedom of the other becomes *his* unfathomable freedom. And there is a kind of vertigo precisely because this unfathomable freedom that is his own remains sufficiently other so as to present to him out of its own depths an entirely possible act, one without any obstacles, that is not separated by anything from his own freedom. For [in] temptation, the tempter constitutes the tempted person as absolute freedom. Everything depends on him, as tempted. He is constituting freedom. No obstacle, no coefficient of adversity can retard his project. If he wants it, it will be done. This is the worst cunning one can have: to reveal to a freedom that it will be absolutely and unconditionally freedom as regards some determined act, to express this act as the absolute image of the freedom facing it, without giving any reason for doing it (for this would lead to a limited freedom), but to present it in its total gratuity as obeying a gratuitous freedom (at the same time as one cuts it off from the world: no one will know, it will have no consequences. It is an absolute creation. There is no reason for doing so other than there is none for not doing so, and by doing it I affirm my unconditioned creative power). Thus my freedom attracts me in the

192. Sartre seems to have confused Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, who was allied with Marc Anthony (82/81–30 B.C.) at the time of his defeat by Octavian in the last of the civil wars that destroyed the Roman Republic, with the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon “to test him with hard questions” (I Kings 10:1).

other as a crack in the future. And it attracts me precisely because deep down it is not my freedom. It is the other's freedom, playing with my freedom.

In prayer, we find analogous structures. The ruse is to put the Lord or God face to face with his own freedom. "Of course, you have no reason to save my son. On the contrary (unlike temptation), you have every reason for not doing so. He is guilty, it is necessary to your order, to your justice that you punish him. As for me, I am only your will and with you I approve of your order, you will not find in me *the slightest reason* for making an exception. Yet there is, deep inside me, this nothing, which is not against you, which only exists through you, this nothing that has no expectations and that simply addresses itself in me (that is, in your thing, in your creature and your subject) to your total freedom, that you use your freedom to act or not act, to abandon your just anger, your projects, even to change your order, because you are the Good, and the Good is what you want."

In this sense, prayer is not a request for an exception, but the even more ambitious request for changing the order of things. (Whereas the temptation is an exception.) Prayer is addressed, therefore, to freedom outside of any situation and it makes this freedom realize itself in relation to itself as vertigo. And, in fact, the one to whom one prays, persuaded by this prayer that he is outside of some situation, does not do the prayed for act in order to be good, since it was suggested to him and he is convinced that whatever he does is Good. He does the act so that his freedom gets affirmed in the alien consciousness due to its supreme gratuity, so that it liberates itself from the set of all the reasons why he should not do it, so that it does some free creation.

The answer to prayer is *generosity*. Yet the underlying immorality of this generosity is that it is done from on high, that it emanates from a freedom that knows how (fictively) to leap out of its situation, that it regulates the order of the world without submitting to it. It is the freedom of God who wants to affirm that the world is inessential and that his caprice is what is essential. It just wants to rediscover itself in the other. It seeks to rediscover itself in an alien but inferior consciousness, just free enough to recognize it, just alien enough to confer on it the objectivity that a mirror gives my face, just limited and docile enough so that in no case is there any risk of refusal or of blame. What is accessible to prayer is the generosity of the all-powerful—which has no value. In this way, prayer cunningly brings about a promise: "Grant it in order to feel your freedom as an Absolute. Through me, through me alone can you feel it to be so."

However, prayer is an *act*, not a state: *I pray*. It is an original transformation of my relations with the other of which I am the free author. The act of praying originally presents itself as freedom and its value is founded on freedom. It is freely that I make myself an object before the Lord, freely that I carry out the ceremonial act of prayer—on my knees with my hands folded. My folded hands clearly indicate that each hand holds the other one, that is, that I reduce myself

to impotence, I no longer act. The genuflection is meant to symbolize and make concrete my acceptance of the difference in height. In fact, this difference may already exist. The king on his throne is higher than the supplicant. But I have *to hand myself over*, to diminish myself. At the same time, I paralyze myself, I take from myself the power to walk away like the king can. However, I do not prostrate myself, which would be a complete resignation. When I prostrate myself, I only wait for his orders, I do not want to act through my humility. I am completely spread out before him, in a movement that lifts me toward him, just as my joined hands reach toward him. But at the same time that I reach toward him, I abase myself before him. I am a reined-in spirit compensated for by a fall.

Classical movement: I lift up folded hands at the same time that I fall to my knees. The reciprocal neutralization of these two movements presents an inoffensive sense of elevation, contained within a fall. If the Sovereign *lifts me up again*, he is adopting me as a possible *motivation* for his freedom.

This act can therefore be defined in its complexity as follows. To deny his own freedom by an act of pure freedom, and to recognize at the same time the freedom of the Other as unconditioned and to offer himself from below to his look on high like a small vertigo of his freedom, while totally renouncing his own desire in order to become the Other's desire, while at least theoretically accepting the risk that he will annihilate everything good. The ambiguity of the Sovereign's demand is that he wants a total freedom at the origin of the prayer that has the effect of presenting an alienated freedom. In prayer, the free avowal of freedom alienates itself and renounces itself so as better to realize itself. In other words, it realizes itself, as what is upheld by freedom, at the price of refusing its own freedom, that is, by any and all means since the freedom at the origin of the desire nihilates itself so that the desire should be accomplished. The desire and its object therefore become more important than the freedom itself. What is more, they do not become *reality* until they cease to be upheld by my freedom, to be taken up and be upheld by the other. At this moment, objectified, poured into me by a sovereign constituting consciousness, they become absolutes.

Prayer is the request that my desires become absolute *values* for me, that is, that I should be able to consider them with the spirit of seriousness. One sees that the act of prayer is complex. At the same time, in one sense, it remains symbolic. Since I am powerless, I accept what already is, I accept what I cannot prevent from happening, I give what is already taken. If I say: "See, I am in your hands," to a tyrant who has taken me prisoner, I am telling him what he certainly already knows. The cunning, basically, is that I give my freedom as the foundation of a situation that is imposed upon it. I present it, this situation, as though I had wanted it to come about, in the case where it was possible for me to have wanted it. But since this very situation remains disturbing and suspect for the Sovereign, since it implies the possibility of a refusal, I absorb my freedom

into acceptance, I make it drink up the situation and I tie it to this situation. In accepting *being an object*, my original freedom passes over into the object that I am in the form of one pure property among others. Thus I cast a spell over myself to exercise a dizzy and charming attraction on the Other's freedom.

So, from here, we can conceive *the situations for prayer* and the world of prayer. I pray when I am perfectly powerless to obtain what I want by other means. The original situation of prayer is therefore *powerlessness*. This powerlessness can be absolute. I am bound, in chains, and they want to put me to death. It is not even a question of saving my life by some bargain (by handing over my wallet or revealing the name of my accomplice). It is too late. No act, of any kind, even were I to decide to save my life by any means whatsoever, can come from me that will modify the situation. This may be powerlessness relative to some determinate end. That woman refused, I have used seduction, money, even threats. She still refuses. All the means are used up. She is a free and absolute will in relation to my desire. The decision to give herself to me can only come from her. This example also implies that my powerlessness is also a refusal of some means. I resolve not to use violence (kidnapping, rape, etc.).

Let us consider this first case as connected to some intermediary ones (my son is going to die of some illness, no doctor can save him, I address myself to God; he is condemned to death by the legal authorities whom I can neither convince, nor bribe, nor intimidate, so I throw myself at the Sovereign's knees). In these different cases, my powerlessness comes from a certain order of the world. Ordinarily the order of the world serves my freedom which is inserted into this order as into a corner. If the world's order (natural events, cataclysms, legal proceedings, politics) stops serving my freedom and reveals itself to be totally hostile, I myself become *a thing in the world*, I am reduced to my facticity. No initiative can save me (if I resist they will take me by force to the scaffold), my freedom is superfluous. It floats above me separated from my facticity. No doubt I can decide to accept the situation: to march to the scaffold with courage, to give the order to the firing squad myself, but: 1st, even this is not always possible: I may be given the coup de grace while bound and gagged; 2d, these pretenses are purely symbolic; they are intended to make me believe that I am the direct origin of acts that have absolutely no need of me to take place. This is one direct motivation for prayer which is also a symbolic giving of what is already given. Between commanding the firing squad and begging the captain to free me, there is this in common in both cases: I spontaneously accept, through a quick inversion of my freedom, what I cannot submit to. The difference is that in the first case I spontaneously accept dying with my freedom (bad faith is to take this as efficacious whereas it is only an epiphenomenon). In the second case, I accept placing my freedom, which I demit, at the service of my desire (to save my life).

3d, and next, above all what my freedom asks my freedom to accept is a world where freedom no longer makes sense, where everything happens by

cause and effect. This is concealed if I command the firing squad, evident if they drag me onto the scaffold. The solution is quite clearly *refusal*. But we need to understand that refusal is possible only if something is still at stake. I can refuse the Germans in the name of the Resistance, refuse Death even while undergoing it, if there is still some means of avoiding it (to hand over a name) and I refuse this means. But refusal becomes completely unefficacious, pure *flatus vocis*, if, for example, I am a young man arrested as a hostage where an assassination has occurred and executed as such, even though up to then he had not taken a stand either for the F.F.I. nor for the Germans.¹⁹³

Here despair properly speaking intervenes, which is the situation of a freedom that may well be able to accept the death that it has considered as risk to be assumed, but that may not be able to accept it if it comes by a legal order where freedom plays no part. Nor can it refuse this death in any efficacious way. Refusal here is as much a negation of freedom as is acceptance. To accept is not to accept dying, it is to accept being an epiphenomenon, to posit oneself as absolute freedom to say yes or no, so as to turn against oneself and to declare in the name of the absolute power of freedom that this freedom does not exist and does not have this power. If one does refuse, on the contrary, one does make use of the power to say yes or no in a coherent manner, but it is to bring about a concrete experience immediately connected to the no of the inefficacy of this free power. At this level, close to madness, freedom and consciousness, which are one and the same thing, constitute themselves as an illusion. The world is the unique reality, its inflexible necessity is the only truth, and consciousness dreams itself in the presence of this world.

And yet in the very moment when it overtakes itself as a dream whose awakening will be death, it also grasps itself through the prereflective *cogito* as that by which *there is* a world. In this way it reaches that state Hegel speaks of regarding the way of the world although with a completely different intention: “consciousness, in its law, is aware of being itself this reality; and at the same time, since the very same essentiality, the same reality, is *alienated* from it, it is *qua* self-consciousness, *qua* absolute reality, aware of its own nonreality. In other words, it holds the two sides in their contradiction to be immediately in essential being, which is thus in its inmost being distraught.”¹⁹⁴

In other words, consciousness takes itself at the same time for a certitude (*cogito*) and for a dream (the world is not aware of it), as essential (that by which there is being) and as inessential (what will disappear without Being disappearing along with it). It takes Being as both inessential (what can only be in the form of the *there is* when surpassed by consciousness) and essential (what crushes consciousness). If it takes refuge in itself, fortified by its certitude and its freedom, it sees the world as a nightmare. But if it falls back into the thesis of the existence

193. Forces Françaises de l'Interieur: the umbrella organization incorporating the major French resistance forces from early 1944 to the end of World War II.

194. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 225–26.

of the world, through the spontaneous distinction between dreaming and being awake, it is its certitude of itself that gets called into question since the mechanical strictness of facts rejects the freedom that upholds them in being on the side of powerlessness and Nothingness. Along with its own possibilities and certitude of itself oscillate the notions of Good and Evil, which no longer have any meaning in this inexorable becoming of pure Being. *There is nothing more than Being.*

In this situation without an outcome, consciousness has just one recourse to reestablish the spontaneous hierarchy that emanates from it, to rediscover freedom as the basis of the world and the structure of Being in this world as well as of Good and Evil, this is to discover that this inexorable order is the concrete effect of a free will. This illness of my son which, minute by minute, is surely bringing him to death is not the unconscious and totally indifferent action of microbes, it is the test God wanted to bring about. This justice that condemns me to death is not the systematic and strict application of a Code already established by indifferent, upright organisms, it is the King's will. That is, in both cases, someone whom one may address, who can understand, who can change his mind, and who, even though he oppresses it, *recognizes* my freedom, intends it, and makes it essential. All at once the blind universe becomes what is inessential, its necessity just reflects the constancy of a freedom, the situation no longer is *what no one can change* but, on the contrary, what can be modified in essence, my freedom becomes once again what is essential since it is violated by God or the Sovereign. It is indirectly responsible for the order of the world since someone wants to touch me by means of it. Except if my free will becomes the essential, in relation to the world, it is inessential in relation to the envisaged freedom. Indeed, this freedom gets uncovered through the overwhelming discovery of my total powerlessness. It defines itself over against me as absolute power since it has to give itself as the foundation of the world's blind necessity which crushes me and, in so doing, renders this necessity inoffensive. It is the order of the world in relation to which I am inessential.

By uncovering it, therefore, I discover myself to be inessential to it. (At least if I do not take up the attitude—which is already an improvement in relation to despair—of absolute refusal, that is, Hate. I can at least refuse *one thing*: the legitimacy of this freedom. As a refusal of recognition, this negation preserves a meaning.) Furthermore, since it appears in such a way that Good and Evil reappear along with it in the World, it is precisely that by which there is Good and Evil in the World. Since I am powerless, this Good and this Evil are absolute. In relation to them, I am just a means.

And here for a second time I can choose to refuse this Good of the sovereign will (which for me is power, plenitude, agreement with itself) and die in powerlessness and hate, since this Good that is my evil triumphs. Or I can, on the contrary, consider the Good of the all-powerful Will as my Good. (There are intermediary stages: the King didn't know, he was poorly informed, if he had

known, etc. But, by our hypothesis, these are set aside: the King *knows*.) Since, indeed, this will was called up from the depths of nothingness to serve me as a witness, to save me from blind necessity, to assist my failing freedom in its affirmation of the unconditioned power of freedom, his Good has to be my Good, it is my only salvation. If I consent to it, this Will will approve of it in me, it will approve of me and even if I cannot prevent my death, it will become in some way a human event, a good event that is still a triumph of will over the world. As for me who am an object for this freedom, at least I am not totally in the world, I am a privileged object, a final end. In a word, by my springing up in the world, I made this world something for man. Tied down by my facticity, I glimpsed for an instant that man was the world's plaything. Immediately I charge some freedom to rehumanize this world that is crushing me. I prefer to die crushed by a man instead of by the world, because that will save man. But also, perhaps, by totally adopting his point of view, I will affect him, disarm him.

Here is where the episode of prayer, described above, fits in. At the same time we see the underlying meaning of the world of prayer. It is a desperate decision for *optimism*. At my death, I decide that the world is good, because I cannot support its being nothing. (The desperate decision that it is bad is also more supportable than its being nothing. It ends up with the *Curse*.) Therefore I declare that just this *course-of-the-world* is good. Just this course, precisely, and since it has no material good, since it is crushing me, I consider it as formally good, inasmuch as it is wanted by a human will or one made in the image of man. And in turn I consider this will as good because it is all-powerful and absolute. The *Good* in prayer is the omnipotence of consciousness over things. Owing to this fact, I make the world a lesser reality, and I take refuge in this will of the Other.

The hidden argument of prayer is something like this: a freedom cannot be good unless it is at the same time powerful. Being capable of *everything*, it cannot want Evil, for Evil is a limitation, powerlessness, and nothingness. All at once I myself am *on the side of Evil*, because of my own powerlessness. And I am happy to be on the side of Evil because then the World is good and even my punishment is good. Here masochism clearly enters into play, but as an *outcome*. Not being able to escape punishment, I am *justly* punished. In this way, everything is put back in order. But, naturally, I am on the side of Evil in order to be taken up again by the Good. On the side of Evil only insofar as I spoil the World's order. On the side of Good insofar as I come back again. There are some moments in Roubachov's relations with History (*Darkness at Noon*) where something is analogous to the initial structures of prayer.¹⁹⁵ For starting from

195. Roubachov is the protagonist of Arthur Koestler's novel *Darkness at Noon*, trans. Daphne Hardy (New York: Macmillan, 1941). The French translation was published with the title *Le Zero et l'Infini* in 1945 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy).

the moment when the order of the world is human, I return to it. Thus I projected my freedom into the Other in order to save it, like someone who, on the point of being captured, hands over to someone else a precious object that he wants to keep intact. At the same time, I transform the universal necessity whereby my individuality gets lost into a universal wanted by a will that can consider me as an individual and a person. I transform the order of things into an order of ceremonies. There where I cannot act any longer by a real operation on the course of things, I can still act by a ceremony. For the order of freedoms is such that one can act in it through symbols. My powerlessness in relation to the course of the world is a pure powerlessness of exteriority. If a will is present, I internalize it, this powerlessness, I make it an aspect of my personality freely consented to and I offer this personality to it.

In this sense, the world of prayer is internal to the world of poetry. (There are few examples of poets who did not write "Prayers.") For prayer is a metamorphosis of *failure as failure* into a symbolic victory. In effect, it posits the alternative: either my powerlessness as powerlessness changes the sovereign will and therefore the course of the world, or it remains powerlessness yet it is saved since the divine will wants it as Good as part of the course of the World. But prayer is on the level of this alternative, not on that of the final decision. Here powerlessness and desire are ambiguous, being and nonbeing simultaneously possible, failure as failure is good and may become a triumph. It is at this level that poetry appears.

This is all the more true in a kind of prayer in which failure is already taken as certain, as wanted by the Sovereign Will, and where one prays that this will preserve the aspect of unwanted failure for an instant rather than to change its will, as a timid affirmation, which is not yet a refusal, a desire that one knows must not be granted, before that resignation that makes the failure disappear along with my desires into the Good, that is, the course of the world upheld by this will. "My God, he doesn't have to die, he doesn't have to die." When one knows that he is already on his last legs. For a moment one upholds his desire in its nothingness even against the divine will, but it is just a brief delay, an affirmation in and through the failure of human reign, just before the divine reign begins.

Poetic prayer: desire affirmed in its powerlessness and in consciousness of the failure of that affirmation, to a reign of freedom upholding the world, whose ambiguity comes from what the poet does not decide, whether it is something that has-to-be or an existence, concerning which in any case he knows that his desire will in no case find a place. An appeal to the impossible. That is, a proof of human freedom, not through its efficacy but through its vows. Thus, in this first description, prayer is the creation of a situation that is an exception in a universe governed by human freedom where at the same time one refuses to be an exception. It is the creation of a feudal order. One prefers to submit to another freedom rather than to an external order. One alienates himself and externalizes

himself so that freedom may triumph in the world. That is, so that each event in the course of the world will be an appearance in its blind necessity and have as its substance a first beginning determining itself within the setting of consciousness.

However, in many cases the freedom one prays to is not originally outside of all situations. It isn't, as is symbolized by the elevated position of the throne, the wealth, the power. It is a freedom, like my own, engaged in the world through its whole facticity. It operates on and in the world only by making itself passivity as well as activity, it is in danger in the world, it undergoes the pressures of everything, and it is strictly limited by other freedoms. What is more, it may even happen that in the name of certain hierarchies that I establish myself or that social groups have established for me and which the Other also believes in, I can consider myself superior to it.

That woman who refuses me is a *petite bourgeoisie*, married, the mother of a family. She is subject to the constraints of her social setting. The ethics of conjugal fidelity is placed in her as a *requirement* by the consciousnesses of others. She fears her children's judgment. She is afraid that adultery will lead her husband to divorce her, stripping her of all resources. She is also afraid of public opinion. Finally, if she has some physical trouble, she finds the strength to resist her immediate desire (described above) out of consideration for *her projects*, that is, the future that is her own possibility. As for me, I am, for example, a fat industrialist, from a social setting that I judge equal to or higher than hers. Besides, I consider myself free of the scruples or fears that bind her. In a certain sense, therefore, she is an object for me and I take her refusal to be unfounded. It goes against a free and reasonable ethics.

Finally, my own plan is to "possess" her, that is, to catch hold of her consciousness by way of her body.¹⁹⁶ We know that desire is the desire to possess the other's transcendence as pure transcendence but also as a body—that is, that the goal of desire is to appropriate another's freedom for oneself—is exactly the opposite of the goal of prayer, which is to give oneself to another freedom like a vassal before his sovereign. However, often enough it turns out that the man ends up pleading. This was especially an acceptable form of behavior during the great period of adultery (at the beginning of the 20th century).

But notice that pleading comes into play here just at the moment when violence might find a place. They are here two equivalent means of obtaining what a freedom definitively refuses with no possible recourse. In both cases, there is a break in the rules of the game. The goal is no longer itself decisive as regards the means. Through violence one wants to possess a freedom that consents to it, but one only takes hold of a body in chains in which freedom is bent on refusal. In pleading, one would like to appropriate another freedom for oneself and to provoke in it some disturbance that will enchain it, one wants to

196. See above, n. 125.

be the master. So one makes himself a slave, one places himself in the hands of this free person that he wants to possess. The goal, therefore, is completely cut off from the means.

It goes without saying that this transformation implies a metamorphosis of my person, that is, that the end which was impossible with regard to all my possibles subordinates all these possibles and even my freedom as the power to project them. "I can't work any more, it's all I think of, etc." The end becomes *serious*. It does not depend on me any longer for I am no longer free to reject it. I am in chains myself and my freedom no longer grasps itself as transcendence, that is as the perpetual power of surpassing a situation, but rather as immanence, that is, as only being able to do anything within some absolute situation that limits it, and it is just as subject to inventing means for attaining the end that is limiting.

So freedom appears as a means and the end decides how it will be used. This just means that freedom can fully sacrifice itself so that the end comes about. The end is the destiny of this freedom, because freedom posits *the impossibility* of renouncing this end. But since freedom had posited this end and the original operation had to have been the revealing of this freedom to itself as a creative power *a propos* this end, freedom becomes a destiny for itself, that is, it wants to be a fate for itself. Besides, the end can be limiting only if it cannot be attained, even if it is not a value, or a myth, or an ideal. An end that is not contradictory or that does not lie at infinity can be an *impossibility* only if it gets presented within the setting of an other who refuses it. Hence my freedom is destiny for itself given the occurrence of an other's negative freedom.

What brings about the objectivity of my goal is that it has not just its subjective face, turned toward me, but its shadowy face turned toward the other's subjectivity. Subjective for me in that it was freely posited, it is objective for me in that it is freely refused by the other. From this point of view, the other's freedom appears as unconditioned in the sense that, only being a refusal, it is not limited by the end under consideration and because it *brings about my destiny* without doing the same thing for itself at the same time. It is the free artisan of my destiny, it locks me up—at least I think it does—in this confined situation from which I cannot escape. The result is that this relationship gets established as a freedom/destiny in relation to an absolute freedom. Spontaneously, a hierarchy gets set up.

However, I can, after inspecting the situation, say with good faith that this freedom is unconditioned only relative to me and its refusal. Perhaps it has its own destiny (her child, spouse, complexes, etc.). But this destiny is not related to my own. Perhaps, as destiny, I can transcend her, judge her petit bourgeois and petty scruples. Perhaps I have tried to change them. This woman whom I transcend with all my transcendence as being-in-the-world totally transcends me by her refusal. And the more I try to make her accept by changing her situation (I reason with her, offer her money, show her that her husband is not as good

as me), the more her refusal turns into pure gratuity, if she sticks to it; that is, unconditioned freedom. Or, more exactly, I move back and forth between both interpretations: that of a free, gratuitous refusal and that (deterministic) of an order of psychic causes (complexes, etc.) which make a decision impossible for her.

But in the second case, precisely, the destiny of my freedom becomes the natural order, the course of the world (psychic—psychological determinism). I rediscover the contradiction referred to above: the world is the destiny of my freedom in its mechanical order, my freedom becomes inessential. Therefore I choose, on the contrary, to posit the freedom that refuses as unconditioned to my own eyes. But I also mean to posit it as unconditioned in her own eyes. I *plead*. This signifies that I fully recognize her independence in relation to me, but I do so to persuade her of her independence in relation to everything else. I could not turn her by arguments about her husband and children, to whom she subordinates herself. But what I could not do by arguing, I now do by pleading. Kneeling down before her, I constitute her as freedom that can do whatever she decides to do and that gives absolute meaning to the world. She is to decide not only about my life but about the value of her husband, of her affections, of her duties. I put her above the world. She is the one who will constitute its values and her system will be my own.

By pleading, I submit myself in advance to her decision. At the same time, moreover, I accept what in the beginning I would have refused: that she accede to my request by a pure and simple decision. When, in the beginning, I was trying to seduce her, if she had said to me, “Very well, I will satisfy you. I do not want you, but let us go to bed together,” I would have refused with horror. Now, this is just what I am asking her to do, because the goal has been transformed. By becoming unconditional, it has lost its concrete substance. It is something abstract. But at the same time that I make her aware of her freedom, I constitute myself as a temptation. I am like the sketch of a universe that she can create, uninsistent, not making any appeal, but just like the suspicion of an idea in her mind. I can be neglected, but to do so would not be diverting since, fundamentally, by my total submission to her will, I am pretending that her goal will be reached. Reality and her end come together in me and are fulfilled. Her refusal has borne fruit. I accept it. I am going to leave; a page in her life, in her undertakings has been turned. However, I stay, half gone, half present, hardly anything to her. There is still a second to my submission and my departure that has yet to render her decision irreparable, something like a suggestion that she not close off her world, that she not use her freedom indefinitely to pursue this work whose principles and reasons are behind her, but rather prove to herself, in the moment and for an instant, that she is pure, creative freedom that decides its own Good.

By affirming through my submission that it is *to her* that I submit, not

conditionally, but to her insofar as she serves some Good, I affirm that this Good is her will whatever it may be, and also, therefore, taking me on at the cost of her own home life or rejecting me at the cost of my life. Suddenly I *belong to her* and I become a motive, and, what is more, my submission acquires merit for me. Being defeated and defeated by her, I merit her considering me more than she had previously done. A claim arises which I claim not even to notice. I have a greater value in the eyes of this unconditioned freedom than do the husband or the child who impose their demands on her. She herself has to choose between that life where her freedom subordinates itself to categorical imperatives—that is, to a Good that alienates it—or the decision to become herself the measure of Good.

I plead so as to unveil this freedom to itself. But it is a ruse since I uncover it from the perspective of just one act to carry out. I persuade her that to choose her home is once again to demit her freedom. So that she is free to do what I wish. I make her *leap out of her situation* in her own eyes. The truth is that she is free in this situation and free for long-term undertakings that imply sacrifices and hierarchies of goods. Her freedom is temporal. It is *itself* in its operations in time. It is itself transcendent as regards its ends in a concrete situation endowed with a certain permanence. But I propose to her freedom outside of any situation through creating her situation. I propose to her the model of an all-powerful freedom, the creator of the world and of the Good. That is, she can only be this through a refusal of temporality and *in the instant*. As soon as the instant gets transformed into a lapse of time, she will rediscover herself a petite bourgeoisie committed to a conjugal life and I will be, over against her, an industrialist more rich and more powerful than she is, whose humble pose is a ridiculous joke. What is more, if she gives in, she will say that she “forgot everything” or that she “forgot her duty.” This means that she will have chosen the instant to be unconditioned. The trick will be that in fact she has just thrown herself into another situation. She is my mistress, she has a duty toward me, she will have to face up to public opinion, etc.

In this way, the unconditioned instant gets transformed into a conditioning of lived temporality. As for me, on my side, from the fact that she gave in to my pleading, she will rediscover me as her master, the one who caresses her, cajoles her, possesses her. And I always knew this. I addressed a plea to her that destroyed itself in its effects. A plea/temptation that did violence because it was a lie—because I did not have the right to plead. One never has the right to plead to a freedom in a situation because such freedom has the power of tricking itself and of throwing itself into an over-determined situation.

Furthermore, a new fact has come into play. When I address myself to God, and often also to the Lord, I can offer a pure prayer or plea. But when I address myself to men in a situation, I also seek to move them, to make them feel *pity*. I ask this woman to have pity on me. What is this pity therefore? The person

who has *pity* has already accomplished his duty of justice. He owes nothing to the one who has pitied him.¹⁹⁷ If he gives anything it is through generosity, hence by pure freedom. However, he does have a motive for giving. He *feels* pity. This signifies that the situation of the pitiable man is not unjust (otherwise it would give rise to indignation), yet it is insupportable. What it represents is a *diminished* man. And it is true that the diminution of the man to whom I address my pity touches me directly. But not, as one says, because, through imagination, I put myself in his place, but insofar as it is a diminution of the human in his person. I am not *him*, I do not slip myself into his skin, but we have a common task: to bring about the human realm, and if he is weak in carrying out this task (that is, if he stops being a freedom that transcends its situation toward its ends), it is the whole human realm that is suspect, and me along with it with all my undertakings.

The appeal to pity is therefore the intentional presentation of the forfeiture of that by means of which one appeals, beyond each person's own undertakings, to the general human enterprise. In pity, I make myself pitiable, I have no right, but precisely because of this I have every right. Pity is a demand. It is the right of the one who has no right. We pass easily from prayer to the appeal for pity because in both cases the submission and the powerlessness are absolute. Except the appeal to pity presupposes a reflective *prise de position* about this state of powerlessness and the judgment that this state of forfeiture is not sustainable and cannot be wanted by anyone. No one can want my freedom to be annihilated by the natural order. To want this is to want the course of the world to triumph over every freedom.

So the plea I make to men underhandedly implies an *appeal/demand* for pity. If originally I do not have a right to pity it is because the event *stems from my fault*. (One will find it difficult to say of a half-dead victim of a bombing that one has pity on her or it was a thoughtless act. If I have pity on a beggar, it is because I nourish the reassuring illusion that he is *guilty* of being a beggar.) If I deny having erred, I can perhaps invoke other rights. It is just that in desperate situations I run the risk of having them refused. In particular because it will then be in the name of undertakings that run up against the undertakings of others. Unless the human enterprise is general. Therefore I acknowledge my effort and in so doing I constitute myself *as a man* in the face of the Other. This recognition is already a merit. At the same time, because the recognized fault is not suppressed, I present myself as an effort toward humanity, stopped at the starting line. From here on, I am pitiable.

Hence in the case under consideration, I acknowledge my fault, which is to have desired this honest woman. Oh well, I am guilty and I have no right other than to be blamed. Except this fault stops me from acting, from thinking freely; my freedom is alienated, I am caught up in immanence and want to get out of

197. This text should probably be: "the one on whom he has had pity."—Ed.

it. Consequently it is a duty for this woman to give me my freedom, in the name of our common undertaking: to make men exist. "I am suffering *so*." This "so" is the appeal for pity, as in "I'm *so* blue."¹⁹⁸ So *that, tant que*. But the "that," the "*que*" are suppressed. It should be: I am suffering so much *that* you should do everything to help me. But one doesn't say it. This ellipsis exists in every language. But it is not one of politeness. In fact, the sentence, the thought *does not go any further*. It is the very structure of the claim that gives rise to the pitiable. The "so" represents the demand halted in midcourse, not finite, *infinite*; the appeal that does not complete itself remains an appeal between being and nonbeing. It is just that one is aware of *a bit more* than the violence of these sufferings. Just a little bit more: it is a kind of violence that heads toward the other and becomes an expectation. It is hindered in its flight by the other aspect of the pitiable: the fault. The complete sentence would be: "I know that I am guilty, *but* I am suffering so." This slippery structure is the structure of pity. The incomplete demand, cut off in midflight, turns into an obsession. I am suffering so . . . so . . . so much. So here is the conquered seducer: guilty, powerless, claiming his guiltiness and his powerlessness. One never conquers a man, he turns against himself, turns any shaft into an arrow and heads for a new situation away from his old requirement.

A final comment: those who beg women are the ones who the least voluntarily would beg something of a man. Why should this be so? First, because they are aware of submitting where they could have used force. It is the certitude of being able to force their way that leads them to humiliate themselves. It is also why begging is the last means used before turning to violence. Often the two structures actually get mixed together. Begging is resistance against the violence I feel aborning in me, I fall to my knees, I fold my hands in order to *affect myself* with powerlessness as much as to symbolize it, and waves of disorder run through my body, my voice trembles. But usually the consciousness of a held-in violence allows me to beg, to plead, to pray, it puts my prayer at the end of my freedom. I was not forced to do so, I forced myself to do so out of respect for my weakness. There is a reciprocal determination. I choose to be moved by my powerlessness, but I was incited to do so by the unveiling of the woman's powerlessness, her weakness. Here, as violence leads to violence, weakness leads to pleading. In the woman's very being, in her powerlessness, I discover a plea. She first made a plea to me. I can already see, if I force my way upon her, freedom submitted to the natural order, denying itself. All at once, my plea, like the grace a sovereign grants, is like a vertigo of freedom.

And, by a curious contrast, it happens that I feel myself to be all-powerful in the moment when I fall to my knees. But as soon as my knee touches the ground, my freedom takes over: I beg for the truth. Except, at the same time, my plea is put between parentheses, it is a freely chosen means. An effect of my freedom.

198. In English in the French text.

It is not therefore that true pleading in which I have no choice. At the same time, the woman, being outside of the circuit of the struggle for life, is posited as an absolute end outside the world. She is both a witness to and the judge of the struggle. She is the one who will give it a value, who *recognizes*, in giving herself, its force, its prestige, its merit. As such, she appears as a freedom organizing the world, she is the symbol of God because, being passive, she does not appear as engaged in the situation.

Finally, the result of the plea will suppress the pleading. If she *gives herself*, she belongs to me, I have only made a plea to myself. So this recognition costs little. What is more, the plea aims at the instant. It leaps out of the situation, *forgets* the prohibitions, claims the gift of an instantaneous selfhood. It aims at immediate pleasure, it constitutes the instant in the world (as does violence). The idea of an *afterwards* connected to the plea (I become the one who pleaded, I have to assume my plea as my essence behind me) is as far from his thought as the idea of assuming the gift of self is from the thought of the woman who gives in. In the background there is the intention of destroying the discursive world in order to remain pure burning freedoms, as well as that of destroying the other's freedom along with the world, and also of abasing oneself in nothingness, along with the world and the other.

The prayer or plea aims at obtaining everything, now, that is, immediately, in the instant, and, in the end, the instant of death. Something analogous can also be found in *prayer/humiliation*, for the man to whom you plead now has a right to lordship over you. He becomes the one who was prayed to, the one whose freedom was recognized by you as higher than your own. And in the frenzy of the prayer, in its effort to obtain grace right now and at any price, there is something like the setting up of the instant and death, all constituted as a bad dream, outside of the enterprise undertaken. Tomorrow I shall return to my real life of freedom engaged in some undertaking, this will be a dream. The prayer is the passage from the nightmare to being awake, awakening. Everything will be lost, will fall into the night of sleep. And, of course, nothing gets lost. In the case of the woman, there is a supplementary aspect: the woman who gives herself will be a freedom in chains, and it hardly matters whether she remembers or not. Her memory is similar to forgetfulness, she will remember as in a dream. The more I pray, therefore, the more frenzy I put into my praying, for the prayer itself becomes a motive for me to wipe out the prayer. I have all the more inclination to pray in that its result will be the wiping out of the world of this Prayer.

Hence prayer includes within itself a whole dialectic of freedoms. I recognize the other's freedom in order to save my own, but I never recognize both of them at the same time and in the lucidity of my consciousness. One of them always gets concealed, either by cunning or by bad faith. But naturally, I conceal it so as to avoid recognizing it, which is itself another way of recognizing it. Thus in prayer there is an effort, albeit a contradictory and confused one, at recognizing

the human order, that is, at uncovering the universe as a product of human freedom and positing the order of causes as inessential in the face of a free and finalistic operation. In one sense, I save man by abasing myself. This also results, by the way, from the fact that if the torturer yields to my pleading, if he puts a brake on his fury or his sadism, there is in a way a triumph for freedom as such. Except at the same time I destroy the human order as an agreement among free wills, by establishing and recognizing a hierarchy of freedoms—this introduces a *given* into being-free, a being into existence. The act of prayer is like feudal homage a recognition by two people of a hierarchy founded on worldly power. Finally, prayer saves man by destroying the human, which is the undertaking, since it introduces in its place the universe of intuition, of the ineffable, of the instantaneous. Once one enters the world of prayer, one gets caught up in a dialectical turmoil from which one can exit only by breaking it off, that is, by waking up again. The only possible awakening is the *cogito* or consciousness of my own freedom. But we have seen that this consciousness is aberrant if the physical situation stays unchanged (if I remain tied up, powerless, subject to the order of causes).

In the opposite case, where powerlessness is relative, the Other's refusal can have the effect of cutting off my pleading. For one thing, it forces me to reject my prayer as an inefficacious means. In any case, prayer implies a repeated action that endures. Since I act out of fascination, I have to present myself to the other's look *for a long time*. Yet a repeated refusal persuades me of the inefficacy of doing so. Furthermore, by refusing to sanction my desire, he throws it back into my subjectivity. And, of course, I can submit as I had promised to do. But in this case we have to assume that the desire was weak. There was bad faith in my promise to submit. If, as is normal, I am rejected in the face of a desire that is still strong and violent, the other's refusal by rejecting *me* before *him*, makes me rediscover the freedom of my desire or, if you will, my freedom *in* my desire. I rediscover myself therefore as a free man, with a free desire before an unconditioned freedom that refuses this desire. Then is born the *demand*.

However, a demand does not find its original structure in an inversion of prayer. It may be born spontaneously. Therefore we have first to envisage it in terms of its *a priori*, so as to be able next to grasp it when it is born from the negation of prayer. Apparently, in a demand there is some information from one free consciousness to another free consciousness touching upon a duty. I communicate a *categorical imperative* to the Other. However, things are not so simple. Indeed, to say, "you must act in such and such a way" is not necessarily to demand it. Consulted by a friend, I may well answer him, "you must, etc." This means that what he has told me has revealed his situation to me and that I am communicating this to him. Therefore, in a demand there is something more. I am not just an interpreter and human reality is not just what is revealed. I am bound in some supplementary way to this duty since it is *I* who demand

it. There is here a synthetic union between personal individuality and the universality of duty. This is what we have to uncover. And we shall also have to examine whether the original source of a demand is duty as universal and unconditioned or whether, on the contrary, it is in the demands of some *person* over against another person that duty finds its origin.

In two places above we studied the idea of an imperative that is included within a demand. Let us return to this. And let us begin by saying that in the structure of "obligation" of a demand the end is posited outside of any consideration for the situation or the world. "You must not lie." This means: in no case no matter what the situation. In other words, the world is inessential. Let us also add: my life, my projects, my desires. But since it is with my body and my life, my personal inventions, the instruments of the world that I can carry out an obligation, this means that all these means are inessential. By itself, the categorical imperative does not indicate any means whatsoever of carrying it out. Nor does it exclude any. At most, it can be limited by other categorical imperatives. For example, "never lie" by itself implies that one treat human freedom as a *means* in certain cases. Indeed, I may be brought in this way to go against freely agreed upon projects that have the universal for their end. But the imperative: "always treat your own freedom and that of others as an end" contradicts the universality of the first imperative. No synthesis is possible, no accommodation, no *balance* in every case, since these two imperatives are *external* to each other and have no common zone of comprehension between them. It is not therefore in terms of the internal and through the situation that the imperative gets modified (that is, by the means). It is from the outside that it is limited, without it being possible, moreover, to take this limit, which does not *penetrate* it, into account.

Furthermore it belongs to a demand to refuse absolutely to submit itself to any means. It is unconditioned. "That is your problem." "I do not want to know." This does not mean that all means are good, but rather that one leaves it up to human inventiveness to find a means, that is, to create it. A demand implies a confidence in the human order and an indifference to the world. The world can never be conceived of as an absolute resistance. "You must, therefore you can," for Kant has an *analytic* signification. It is acceptable. This means: obligation implies that you are not caught within the chains of determinism. A free intention is possible since it is demanded and the very interhuman fact of the demand implies the existence of freedom, for only freedom can *conceive* the demand. Except we must not confine ourselves to the intention. It has to fulfill itself in the act. It is not a question of conceiving and wanting some act; besides, this the situation has to make it possible and I have to know it. What could the intention to do something that I know to be perfectly impossible mean? A demand, however, will *a priori* admit of no conditions, by anything. And the "you must, you can" implies a magical and optimistic claim about the world. It is not just "only a freedom can conceive of a demand," but "the upsurge of

a demand in the world proves that the world can in every case serve such demands.”

This means: the demand proves that the order of the world is submitted to freedom. But to *which* freedom? This is quite complex. The one who does the demanding has confidence in the freedom of the one whom he requires to do something, as the power to invent means. This signifies that one can always find a middle term between an economic, social, biological, psychological, rigorously determined situation and a universal imperative. And one can find it precisely because freedom is unfathomable. That is, it is beyond the possible and the impossible. There is therefore confidence in man's freedom, which posits this freedom as if it were God's freedom, that is, absolute creative freedom. It is originally an unfathomable relation to the world, sovereignly deciding on the course of this world. “The impossible is not French.” Note that this is even a law. The ethics of demands is such that it has to count on the world's obedience.

With this, one can, perhaps, allow for extreme situations where the obligation cannot be carried out—but these are teratological. And in these cases it is understood that the one who is *under obligation* should prefer to suppress himself rather than give in. In a curious way, here death appears as a solution. If the world refuses my demand, then I refuse the world, and by the fact that I then die, my demand passes over to the eternal, it is an eternal mortgage on the course of the world.

What needs to be noted here is that a demand is not just addressed to the Other. It is also addressed to the world. It implies a peculiar kind of syncretism: on the one hand, unawareness of the means and a refusal to know them (absolute confidence in human inventiveness—in human work); on the other hand, a demand turned toward the world that it submit like a freedom. This signifies that the demand stems from a master who never sees the world except as already penetrated by the slave's freedom. He acts on the world through his command by means of interposed persons. However, on his side, the slave takes the demand to be realizable, he has confidence in the master's will. If the master demands something it is because the master's right extends to things, the slave is secure in the master's will. The master's omnipotence over the slave is a guarantee of his omnipotence over things.

In a sense, oppression humanizes the world for the oppressed person, on the condition that he recognize the oppressor as having the right to be oppressive. If oppression conforms to nature, nature conforms to the oppression. Hence the demand is an interhuman fact that circulates in a humanized world and implies man's confidence in unconditioned freedom. We immediately can see that the demand, like prayer, leaps out of the situation and that it establishes pure freedom above the ruins of the real world. This must immediately inform us of the following point. Any attempt to ground obligation (duty) on just the freedom of the subject is doomed to fail. In fact, individual freedom proposes its goals to itself in taking account of its situation. Better: its goals are inspired by the

situation that they surpass, and the means are so closely tied to the ends that they are what indicate them. This is what we have to analyze more closely.

1) Freedom is the surpassing of some being that I am and of a certain number of external objects (placed into relation by this very surpassing, along with my surpassed being). This ensemble as surpassed constitutes the situation. But this surpassing appears as constituting a future for this set of objects, that is, as the project of another distribution of the being that surrounds me. I am a surpassing of this being (the face of the world that surrounds me), and it is because I surpass this being that I am this surpassing. Since it is a matter of nonthetic consciousness, at this level we are considering, let us say that everything happens as if by springing forth into the world, I uncover a future of this world that awaits me. But this future in which I am engaged and that I contribute to constituting in the time it unveils, is like a face of objects not yet turned toward me. It is indicated by the objects that surround me and, in the moment when it is *my* possible, my possible *operation*, it reveals itself as being a possible state of these things. With this these things are constituted as usable tools, as potentialities at the same time as being antipotentialities (coefficient of adversity). They designate themselves as potentialities and usable tools by their future, but reciprocally it is their potentialities that uncover their future. These two moments are one.

For example, for the hiker, the mountain reveals itself as *to be climbed*.¹⁹⁹ But this “to be climbed” signifies a path toward the top. We could say that, just as truth *became*, just as for Leibniz the whole effect gets identified with the whole cause, here the whole end gets identified with all the means. Sever the end from its means and it wastes away. It is not a question for the mountain climber of transporting himself to the summit of the mountain by a wish and a flying carpet. This is not how the end was *indicated* to him. Rather by the very movement of his eyes he traced out a path on the mountainside that ends at the summit. At the same time it was a matter of appropriating the mountain for oneself by an operation and constituting it as the potentiality of being climbed. In this way, each means becomes essential because it is a partial structure of the end, from the moment that I put on my mountain climbing outfit to the moment when I am on the last ridge. The world teaches me my ends as much as I propose them to it, and its way of teaching me my ends is to constitute itself before me as usable tools.

What remains, someone will say, is that end common to every end, to create, which surpasses every particular end and cannot be evaluated in terms of them. But I cannot overemphasize that this end is abstract. It is up to philosophy to draw what it can from this. But it is just a structure of *this* operation now. And if one considers that end with this degree of abstraction, the world has to be considered with the same degree of abstraction. For it goes without saying that no creation can even be conceived of except on the ground of an initial relation-

199. Cp. the discussion of a crag to be climbed in *Being and Nothingness*, p. 482.

ship to Being. One creates with being, in this world. Fundamentally, the bad conception of end and means clearly comes from a certain ontological and analytical way of doing things that we have had since the 18th century of considering man as a whole closed-in on himself faced with another whole closed-in on itself, the world. In this case, quite clearly, man has his ends *a priori*. They result solely from his being. Afterward he relates himself to the world in order to realize them. But since the world does not announce his ends to him, it can only be an inessential means of realizing them.

So analytical realism leads to ethical idealism. However, if we start from being-in-the-world, that is, from the original and ontological relation of man to the world, and if it is clearly understood that man constitutes himself in and through surpassing the world toward the world, the end and all its means become indiscernible. For the world-yet-to-come clarifies the present world and the present world is a certain sketch of the world-yet-to-come, and all the concrete features of the world-yet-to-come are provided to the project by those of the present world.

Hence I can say that I learn my ends in the world, that is, that I learn my ends by their means. This bunch of grapes is given me in passing as something to be picked. Is it end or means? One cannot tell. End: it has awakened my thirst, it posits itself as desirable. But is it not a means of satisfying my thirst? Would I think of my thirst again if I didn't want to satisfy it by *just this means*? There is a stream over there, an inn a hundred paces off, but I don't even give a thought to stopping at it. What has revealed itself to me is these grapes waiting to be picked. Reflectively, I find in myself a thirst-to-be-satisfied-in-passing without my stopping for just these grapes. Naturally I am going to run into some adverse objects: the world is not organized to serve me. I will have to climb a wall, to break through a barrier. But my very perception is already organizing the end-means whole. Already the height of the wall determines the possibility or impossibility of my desire. Already they are grapes-waiting-to-be-picked by climbing over the wall. This does not mean that my thirst is a *relative* end. The complex is an absolute, but its internal structures mutually reinforce one another or are self-destructive. The indicated end may vanish through an internal contradiction of the *complexus* or, on the contrary, be reinforced. This is what Alain meant to say when he showed, in *Art*, the resistance of the matter as *indicating* his Idea to the sculptor or the dramatic author.²⁰⁰

No doubt there are limit cases where my end is posited with no means in sight. Such is the case with desires/needs stemming from the body. I can *be hungry* with no means of assuaging my hunger being given to me. But then my desire appears in terms of the collapse of my situations. Ordinarily, I have a series of organized means that allows me to satisfy my hunger and it is enriched and *grasped* through these means.

200. Alain (Emile Chartier), *Système des beaux-arts* (Paris: Gallimard, 1926), pp. 212–15.

For example, to eat is not just unconditionally to posit an end that any food can satisfy, it is to like this meat, that dish. And this dish, abstractly considered, is a *means*, become indiscernible from its end. "One should eat to live, not live to eat." In reality, the first imperative, "one should eat to live," rarely appears in its unconditioned form (besides, it should be a hypothetical imperative: if you want to live, you have to eat). It is not either that one eats to live or that one lives for eating, but that one lives-and-eats. One lives *in part to* eat when one is hungry, and one does eat in part to live.

However, this optimistic view presupposes that the world is organized in terms of our desires. In fact, things happen whose coefficient of adversity abruptly separates us from our end. Then it is true that the end is partially separated from its means, it does appear as *more abstract*: to eat is to go home, find my wife and children, tell them about my day, as well as the pure act of ingestion. A subway breakdown, a strike, and I am stuck on the other end of the city. Now it is necessary to satisfy a more naked, more abstract end, which is *to eat because I am hungry*. Except that even in the adverse object there is an indication of a new means: I will go to a restaurant, or to friends who live in this quarter. That will allow me to see them again, I was wanting to speak with them about something, etc.

The end remains abstract for only a moment, it immediately gets filled in. Furthermore, it never passes over to the unconditional. It is a relative end, a means itself that *as a means* gets involved with other ends that it cannot destroy by positing itself as an absolute end. I eat in order to stay healthy, for the work I have to do this afternoon. This work is a form of social integration, it is part of my honorableness, and I need to be honorable in order to do it, etc. It immediately implies that I cannot satisfy my end by *any means whatsoever*. Not only will I not steal food from the grocer, I will not go into a restaurant beneath my condition. Even at this level, the end indicates the means of satisfying it; in any case, it sets aside other means.

And, within the series of permitted means, I still have to invent one while taking account of my tastes. Perhaps I shall not go to the restaurant because I don't like it, perhaps, on the contrary, this contrariety will become an *occasion*. Now is the time to go eat in that park because I always wanted to visit it, etc. What is more, there is always the possibility of *not* eating (skipping a meal). That is, the end that depends on certain means/ends (to eat is *also* and *above all* to see my wife again at midday) disappears if these means are not available, even though, at a higher degree of abstraction, it may be satisfiable in other ways.

Or the end may find its place within some situation that envelops it: work *over*, house "just a few steps away," etc. But in fact I am far away and the work is not done. So here I am engaged in a series of means/ends such that the end, usually pursued at midday, slips away and is wiped out. It has a meaning in one aspect of the universe that it retains and symbolizes, it no longer has a meaning when the universe takes on another aspect capable of being expressed by other

ends. In other words, current ends sum up, gather up into themselves and symbolize a concrete and much broader situation, they refer me both to a certain image of myself and to the world, at the same time they are concrete ends, condensed images of the infinity of means that are the structures of the world, therefore images of the world and images of myself. They stand in total and perfect cohesion with me, they are me in the world. They change me to the extent that I preserve them for a moment despite the absence of the usual means for realizing them (because in inventing new means of realizing them, I become other through my making use of these means: it is a change in his self for the functionary, who usually dines with his family, to eat in a restaurant: impression of freedom, of rejuvenation, of adventure, etc.), and I change them in changing myself when I judge that the absence of means for the invention of other means will alter the end.

In a word, there is a certain *elasticity* to ends that corresponds to my own elasticity. This signifies that my present means are surrounded by a zone of possible and absent means and that there is an interchangeability between them. The replacement of usual means by marginal ones alters the end in its content without modifying it in its form; one more change and it bursts. If I dream of feeding myself, it is not a question of feeding some animal, but of renewing the strength of a decent and dyspeptic functionary, married, in the habit of eating at home, who dislikes oysters, has a rank to uphold, etc., and who does not like eating in public. If I destroy that, I destroy myself. I cannot eat in some worker's eatery where I might be seen from the outside by a colleague.

For this point of view, psychological discussions miss the point. I do not have to ask myself if I prefer eating and being seen by a superior who will hold it against me or if I can avoid this and still get some food, for it is not a question of two ends *external* to each other that allow for or require a balancing, like two weights on the pans of a scale separated by the indifference of exteriority. In reality, both ends are means in relation to a larger end, my "standing."²⁰¹ My deliberation in reality consists in envisaging which runs the lesser risk of upsetting this end. In other words, in one sense everything else (higher ends) gets reflected from on high down in my average means. But at the same time, these ends, these average means, do reflect means, that is, the pathways of the world. To choose is to decide what I am, either to upset one scale of values (if I decide to go to the bistro anyway, I am a new problem for myself: have I given in to my animal desire to eat—then I am *less* than a functionary—or to a higher desire for liberation and adventure—then I am more) or, on the contrary, to preserve it.

Let us now imagine one of those minor Italian functionaries, decent and honorable, but caught up in poverty, ruined by the fall of fascism, who do not go out or only do so at night in order to preserve their dignity. This signifies,

201. In English in the French text.

quite clearly, that dignity being the end, cleanliness, pleasure, etc. are considered inessential in relation to this dignity. However, his hunger is too much, he goes out and steals something. It is clear that his dignity, in turn, is taken to be inessential. Let us note in the first place, however, that it is not a question of satisfying oneself by any means *whatsoever*. Murder, burglary, etc., are excluded. What is more, the means (theft) are determined. It is not a question of being ready for everything but of determining to use one definite means. So I go out, determined to steal something from a grocery that I know quite well and where I have noticed one can steal something without being seen, so I go out with the vague intention of hanging around and of stealing something if the occasion should present itself.

In both cases it is still the world that makes the difference. The actual change lies elsewhere. In fact, there is a precise act that I am already sketching out and that my hunger renders fascinating, there is a vertigo of the immediate and of renouncement that implies a reclassifying of my values (it is impossible to decide *a priori* if I will not steal something through cowardice, or through the impossibility of any longer maintaining my honorability and in order to place myself definitively beyond such a possibility, through a desire for death). We may consider this end as a decision to appease one's hunger by means that one had not accepted up to this point or, on the contrary, as a decision no longer to uphold one's honorability *by any means whatsoever*. That is, the revolt of a concrete end against the indicated means, since an end that loses its elasticity becomes rigid and runs the risk of becoming *the end* to be satisfied by any and all means.

Temptation, in general, is the revolt of the immediate against the undertaking, of the unique against repetition, of the world against an end that ends up being outside the world, of the path that indicates a goal against the goal that has to prescribe its ends without any regard for their nature, of the concrete pair end/means against the end cut off from its means. This is the moment when the elasticity of the end reaches its breaking point, that is, when the means used suddenly reveal themselves as destroying the sought for end (one cannot prefer honorability to life because to be honorable one has to be alive) or when the end itself, reconsidered from the perspective of higher ends, appears as inessential, whereas the humble, subordinate means appear as directly tied to the higher end.

So the end is usually pinched between the world (the means and subordinate ends, means that change this end when they themselves change) and higher ends. As in Kafka's world,²⁰² we can say that means, which are subordinate for the one who takes for himself the point of view of the average ends that prescribe

202. Sartre delivered a lecture on Kafka under the sponsorship of the Ligue française pour la Palestine libre on 31 May 1947 (*The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, p. 182). See also the reference to the use of Hebrew in Palestine below, p. 246.

them as *their* means, are at the same time—almost always—bound by a secret intimacy to the final end, and that, from this fact, from one point of view, they are more important than the end, while the end, from another point of view, is more important than the means. Means A may be required in the first case and condemned in the second, condemned in the first case and required in the second. And the relation of the first case to the second one is itself variable. The one that seems to be primary may be the last one or they may vary.

To conclude, the totality of the world is end and means at the same time and the same relation applies to the totality of my project.

Finally, the act reveals the end gradually by the means that it has at its disposal. There is a perpetual life of the ends over the course of my project. Every end in the course of realization becomes a means. Passing the examination for the aggregation for B is an absolute end. If she passes it, she is on the other side—the aggregation is no longer anything more than a means. My ends, therefore, are never abstract ends to be realized by any means whatsoever. On the contrary, it is often the means that reveal them, and which always give their flesh to them. They become unconditional only in two cases: α) the case where the world presents itself as perfectly smooth surfaced and lacking any means, while the end is a vital need. The hunger of the soldier who does not get new provisions. This hunger loses its concrete coloration because there is no longer any means of assuaging it. It becomes something abstract and, as such, much more difficult to assuage, also much more urgent. In the last degree, it gets identified with the very life that needs to be saved; β) the pathological case.

In this latter case, the end appears an absolute and unconditioned end. But it is because I am pathologically unable to satisfy it or to change it: B and the aggregation. In fact, I put it above everything else so as not to be tempted to follow another end which my *abulia* will also prevent me from satisfying. The aggregation as an unconditioned end justifies my not reading anymore, that I don't see my friends any more, etc.; it allows me to take as inessential all the ends I can no longer satisfy. At the same time it gets posited in advance as being satisfied by any and all means so that the concrete ties that draw it toward efficacious and particular means get broken. In other words, what counts here is not the obligation or the permission to use any means whatsoever, but the *indetermination* of means. So I am never obliged to choose the means that fit. There no longer are such means. Finally, its passage to the absolute, by cutting it off from the Real world, by making all the paths that might lead to it disappear, makes it an end impossible to realize, therefore a justification for every form of cowardice and laziness. Whoever wants to do too much does nothing. So its aspect of unconditioned end is in reality a *means* for my freedom to withdraw me from the world of projects. The unconditioned end is chosen, in general, as out of reach. It is the limit-property, the limit-order, etc. that renders every partial property valueless and therefore releases me from having to occupy myself with it, every partial order and allow[s] me therefore to live amidst disorder.

2) Even in this case, the end that my freedom posits never has the character of a demand or a duty, but only that of an ideal. My free choice posits values and objects of value. It cannot posit obligations. Let us try to conceive the precise character of *obligation* and to distinguish it from that of value.

If I am entirely in agreement with myself in the pursuit of an end, this end cannot be said to be obligatory, even if it appears unconditioned. In reality, it is *my* possible. It defines me and awaits me. Indeed, it only appears to me in and through the act by which I want it. There can be no contemplative unveiling of *my* end, otherwise it would be a alien object, that is, *the end of an other*. In reality, the end is really a transcendent noematic correlate, but it is not the correlate of a pure intuition, but rather of a creative act and of a determination of my freedom.

Clearly, values demand a foundation. But in no case can this foundation be Being for any value that based its ideal nature on its being would thereby cease to be a value. However, it *is not* my freedom. Rather, in one sense, it is part of *the world*. Freedom has no positional intuition of itself on the prereflective plane. It is the positing of an object in the world in the future. For example, I want to reform teaching or the official use of the Hebrew language in Palestine. Freedom, being the surpassing of the world, retains in itself the world that it surpasses and the end is freedom turned back and objective. What one wants on the unreflective plane is necessarily an object outside of oneself. The wanted object being the future of an existing object therefore has in some way the characteristics of future being. It *is not yet* and it *will be*; it is the possibility of some existing object, that is, its *possibility of being*. Therefore it is transcendent to my freedom, just as the tree that I see is transcendent to my consciousness. Yet, on the other hand, it does *have characteristics of freedom* since it is sustained by a freedom that projects it. It is not therefore a pure “will be,” such that I could confirm in some contemplative intuition: “it will rain tomorrow, etc.” First, because the “will be” of “it will rain” appears in Being on the foundation of Being. It is the images that I see that will present the rain in conformity with their nature.

Therefore it is partly true to say that the future of Being is already contained in Being. Whereas the form of the statue that will come into the block of marble is no doubt a future being, but that being which exists in relation to a freedom does not come to Being through Being but as a first beginning.

Therefore just as freedom, noetically, is a nihilation of its past and a nihilating surpassing of the world and of Being, so too its external correlate, the future object, is not necessitated by any present structure of Being, it denies them, it refuses to allow itself to be derived from them, it is the Being that is not yet but that will be without leaving Being. It is a being that comes from Nothingness to Being. But since it is not yet, it founds its (future) being on its springing forth from Nothingness. And since I decide to fashion Being in such a way as to give it a form that I have conceived, this form or end, the inverted image of my

creative freedom, is a pure claim *on Being*. And not on me, as a demand would be. What it is for me is my freedom inverted, Being as the mirror of my freedom.

But my freedom is spontaneously creative. That is: α) positing of the future object, therefore correlatively and turned into a noematic passivity, the future object is α'), what comes from Nothingness to me; β) surpassing of the present toward the future by the decisive intention. Turned into a noematic passivity this yields β'), an expectation about me by the future; γ) since I decide to move beyond certain resistances and to make use of certain capacities, the end γ') subordinates itself to the world, it appears as that for which the world was made and as that in which it finds its fulfillment. Finally, since what I create is me in the world, the bond that unites me to the end is one of both identity and otherness. It is myself as an expectation and promise of myself in the element of the In-itself and beyond any *real* determinations of the In-itself. It is a promise of Being that draws its being from its promise, a claim on Being that is an expectation of my wanting something, a profound intimacy with my freedom but within the element of Being, a meaning and a justification yet to come into the world as it is.

At the same time, it is my possible. That is, the me who comes to me from the depth of Nothingness and across Being to rejoin the nothingness that I am and that springs forth from being. At each moment of the operation the end draws closer to me and I draw closer to it. In the completion of the object I foresee a fusion of the Being-in-itself that comes to me from the depth of Nothingness and the Being-for-itself that comes to it from the depth of Being. And since the element of Being lends its inexhaustible and infinite richness to it, I grasp the richness of my creation over against me, the image in the element of Being of my unfathomable freedom. The relation of identity within the otherness of the infinite richness of the future Being and the unfathomableness of freedom, which meet in the promise, is love and enthusiasm.

When Mallarmé writes to Cazalis (June '65): "I am writing a heroic interlude with a Faun as a hero. . . . I think you'll like it when you get here. The mere thought of the last scene makes me weep," he gives a good description of practical intuition as stemming from some *end*.²⁰³ It goes without saying that this fusion

203. *Mallarmé: Selected Prose Poems, Essays, and Letters*, trans. Bradford Cook (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), p. 86. Sartre began writing a study about Mallarmé in late 1948 (*The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, p. 15) which came to almost five hundred pages (*ibid.*, p. 281). Most of this material was lost when his apartment was bombed during the Algerian war. "Mallarmé 1842–1898" was published in 1953 in *Les Ecrivains célèbres*, vol. 3, ed. Raymond Queneaux (Paris: Mazenod, 1953), pp. 148–51, and reprinted in *Situations IX* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972). More material by Sartre regarding Mallarmé has been published posthumously: *Mallarmé or the Poet of Nothingness*, ed. Arlette Elkaïm Sartre, trans. Ernest Sturm (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988). This text includes a translation of the work just referred to (pp. 133–46). An earlier English translation, "Mallarmé: The Poetry of Suicide," can be found in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, trans. John Mathews (New York: Pantheon, 1974), pp. 170–78.

is never realized. The created object, the carried-through operation become things in the universe or pursue their adventure, this time in the element of the Other.

But this latter point is not in question. Rather, since *Value* is a reuniting of the one who lacks something with what is lacking, to bring about what is Lacking or the totality of the In-itself-For-itself, we do have to note that the end is not just an expectation/promise but also *desirable*, for desire is a nonthetic consciousness of the refused lack, and thetic consciousness of the lacking, whereas a value is the ever clearer indication of the final reunion, by way of the passive and worked In-itself, of the end that comes from Nothingness, along with the freedom that springs up in Being in the intuition of a *Causa sui*. In fact, Value vanishes at the moment it is actually met with. But it did haunt creative freedom, it was given with the nonthetic translucidity of the For-itself, it is at the heart of the nihilating relation “reflected/reflecting” which is everywhere and nowhere. But at the same time it has its noematic correlative turned back into the object that comes from nothingness into being in order to be founded upon the For-itself.

This is what we mean when we say that an end *is valuable*. The end is precious because it lacks me and I lack it and because it is what I make myself as *having to be*. This “having to be” does not indicate some obligation, for nothing constrains me, not even myself, except freedom. It is the responsibility that I assume. I *am* not this end, and I shall not *be* it in the sense that this wall will be dark during the night, but neither shall I be it unless I make myself be it. It is in question in me insofar as I am the being that is in question in its being and I am in question in it, with no excuses, since everything takes place on the basis of and within the element of freedom, that is, in a perspective where the In-itself is a mere tool or coefficient of adversity to be surpassed. *To have to* signifies that everything depends on me and that I am alone in my practical activity, referred only to myself. So the end is what I have to do inasmuch as I have to be it. It is being and an expectation of being, a promise of being and a question. It is haunted by *value that comes back to me*, that is, by my projection of this value onto being.

Just as the noetic value that haunts the For-itself is the totality In-itself-For-itself for which the In-itself is the missing element, the noematic value that haunts the end is the totality In-itself-For-itself for which the For-itself is the missing element. That is, the end as a promise of being and passive expectation is haunted *for me* by itself as *causa sui*, that is, as giving existence to itself, that is, as seen as that for which the essence (as the projection of self-consciousness onto Being) implies existence as its realization. Hence every end “has” value, that is, it appears as an incomplete structure against the background of the highest totality, the In-itself-For-itself.

As for the claim to being of the value that is turned back toward me that I grasp in Being, this is in no way a *demand*. It is merely the indication beyond

being of a self-consciousness that gives itself being because it is self-consciousness; that is, the indication of a being whose being is not a matter of chance nor contingent nor mathematical necessity but that comes into being by the force of its own conception, outside of any *motive* and any reason. Value is not a demand to be, nor a right to be. It is a different type, even though it is a claim on Being. It is an optimistic indication of a being-beyond-being and a surpassing of all surpassing, which, 1st, is in no way affected in its mode of being and in its claim to being by the ensemble of beings. It comes out of itself alone and no *excuse* or *difficulty* can come from Being as regards its realization.

2d, this being is me as what is lacking. In relation to this being I am not in the manner of lacking . . . in relation to what it lacks, but I catch sight of it on the basis of what I lack as its being beyond Being; I cannot *realize* a value which does not present itself as *to be realized*, rather I can realize my end, given the perspective that this realization will be the ground of the upsurge of some value as absolute. So a value is marginal, it is always what cannot be directly intended but what gives its meaning to the end that I directly propose to myself. It is not the end, it is the foundation of the end.

3d, I stand in a peculiar connection with this being beyond being which I cannot grasp directly and which I can no more bring into being (since it itself is what gives itself being). A value will be at the same time the totality of what I will be through fusion with myself as the end of my operation and, at the same time, I have a nonthetic consciousness of being the existent whose springing forth makes there be values in the world.

However, I am not responsible for the value as I am for the end. In effect, the end lies at the end of a intentional project, it is the projected result of an operation, whereas the value is what my operation cannot intend, what would not be—as the surpassing of any operation—without this very operation, but which just *marginally* haunts this operation. I am responsible for the value not insofar as I project this or that, but insofar as instead of *being* a lack, I make myself one, that is, exactly insofar as I make myself the being who is not the foundation of his being, all the while being the foundation of his nothingness. In this sense, I can live in a world populated with values that have a kind of *familiarity* to me. This also explains why a value can never be concretely intuited except against the background of some end. It is always unveiled as an optimistic beyond that haunts my end. I do not see it, I only see the end. I cannot realize it itself, I only realize the end.

Furthermore, every end has value, in the sense that every end appears against the filled-in background of a world where the legitimation of the being of Being would be the consciousness of being. A value is not man's end, it is the *reason* for his operation, in the sense that one speaks of the reason for a series. It is the ideal, familiar world that has to be incarnated in Being through the fusion of man with his end.

As for its type of being, it is not *being*, nor is it *existence*. It is *ideality*, that is,

its being gets revealed only as *to be done*, as the perpetual surpassing of doing something, as well as its legitimation. We cannot bring about some value by our direct operation, yet it is in and through some direct operation that value marginally appears, it springs up perpetually from itself into a world *to be made*, that is, a world where nothing is *given*. What is more, it springs up as giving being to itself and yet as what is lacking. That is, it appears as the being that lacks being, the being that is beyond the world and Being. But since it is conceived as giving itself being by its own consciousness of itself, it appears as a perpetual surge of a consciousness toward Being. Perpetual connection of essence and existence.

The consciousness (the For-itself) that is at the origin of value is naturally turned back on itself and reduced to its most simple expression. Rather than the absolute signifying “For-itself,” it signifies “By itself.” But the absolute and congealed upsurge of values is precisely the inverted projection of consciousness. Value has the structure of the Platonic εἶδος, that is, a being that gives itself being because it is thought, but whose being is limited in the last analysis to being that of thought. It is the minimum of being in the minimum of thinking.

At the same time, this consciousness being my projected and inverted consciousness, it is already in the element of the Other, in the sense that it is consciousness *for me*. I discover a value just as I discover an expression on the other’s face. However, with two important differences: 1st, since it is beyond all surpassing, this transcendence that I posit in the movement of surpassing (since it is a lateral *object*) cannot be surpassed. What is irritating about value is that at the same time it seems to indicate itself as being surpassable (there is a hint of surpassing in its very objectivity) and as always being beyond any possible surpassing, like Kafka’s Castle which is both geographically given and never to be reached.²⁰⁴ As soon as I name it, I constitute it as a surpassable object in the world: the Beautiful, the Good, etc., Nobility, Manliness. However this object *is no longer* a value. It is no longer anything at all, except perhaps a word.

To sum up, from the point of view that interests us, the *end* is a promise that is raised up on the foundation of an ideality. To the extent that I am left alone in my own activity, that is, condemned to want it alone and freely, it is an expectation; that is, its total submission (analogous to the slave’s) gives me vertigo and anxiety before my responsibility. And since it is what I lack, it is desirable and, finally, to the extent that it is me coming toward myself on the ground of ideality, it is an object of love and enthusiasm, although in no case can it justify me. There is not the least trace of any *demand* since a demand has the twofold character of making me obey (I am the means in relation to the required end) and of saving me from abandonment (the end upholds itself in existence, even against me; I am the privileged means, I do not have the responsibility for making it *be* as an end; only that of realizing it in the world).

204. Franz Kafka, *The Castle*, trans. Edwin and Willa Muir (New York: Knopf, 1941).

[2d]²⁰⁵ Except, on the other hand, the quasi objectivity of value gives it the necessary structure so that the freedom of another can be set up as an axis through it and so that the value, rather than being a simple unsurpassable transcendence, becomes a transcendence that transcends me.

Let us get back again to *obligation*. I see first of all that it is not the correlative of my enterprise. I discover the end and the value *in the operation*, they reveal themselves to my willing, to my creative spontaneity. Obligation on the contrary does not necessarily reveal itself to my spontaneity. It may be born *outside* of such spontaneity or *over against* it. I encounter it rather than upholding it. In this sense, its primary aspect is that it gives itself to a contemplative intuition, not, like value, to a creative one. Owing to this fact it gives itself as *independent* of me. However, it does preserve one significant aspect of value: that it is unsurpassable. Yet if a value were unsurpassable it was because it was beyond me in me, that is, it always was as though it haunted my operation. It was, to talk like Chardonne, what makes man always more than man.²⁰⁶ Whereas obligation, which is more *object*-like since it does not depend on me, is unsurpassable as a *limit*. If I turn away from a value, it disappears, if I turn away from an obligation, it remains. If I advance toward a value, I have the impression that I am about to rejoin myself; an obligation always remains at a distance and I know from the onset that I cannot rejoin myself there, since *it is not me*. If I do not respect an obligation I change myself in relation to it but do not change it in relation to me. It remains the same: fixed like a look.

What is more—and this is what is most important—a value was an unsurpassable transcendence, not something surpassable, but it was *on the side of noematic passivity*. Its *esse* [being] is not its *percipi* [its being perceived] but its existed-being [*son être-existée*]. Obligation has yet another dimension: independent of its being-existed-by-me and yet a transcendence, it gives itself as itself *existing* [*s'existant*]. In this sense, for me, it is *transcending transcendence*. I surpass myself toward an end and in this surpassing value appears, all within and at the end of my ex-static uprooting of myself. An obligation, on the contrary, transcends *me* toward its own end: it passes through me. It has an ek-static relation to an end and I am in the circuit, passed through just like an electric current passes through a carbon filament. So the nonobligatory end is the ideal horizon of my operation, it is the unity of the act of tying together the means and their meaning. The end of an obligation is a *real* and alien bumper over against which I will have to give way. The value is not a *real claim on me* since I cannot realize it directly. It just haunts the operation as the indication of the possibility and desirability of my rejoining my end.

205. Not in the manuscript, but what follows seems to define the second characteristic of value called for above.—Ed.

206. Jacques Chardonne (1884–1968), French novelist, essayist, and editor.

As Scheler puts it, in terms which are criticizable in other ways: “The ‘ideal ought-to-be’ gets disengaged from a value inasmuch as it is not realized without some specific act of the will or aspiration. It has nothing in common with a rule and is addressed to no subject.”²⁰⁷ In other words, this *ought-to-be* is a pure claim on Being, that is, on the world. Whereas an obligation is a claim on me or on the world by way of me. This is why the world of values could have appeared independent of man (Plato), or as revealing itself *a priori* to an affective intuition (Scheler’s *Werterfassen*).²⁰⁸ On the contrary, obligation directly attacks a human operation and commands it.

Note here that the content of the duty and of a value may be exactly identical. It is not true that obligation is a purely formal rule. Taboos, for example, have the form of an obligation and a concrete content at the same time, all the while being strictly illogical. Everything that has to do with Home, Fatherland, or Honor for a member of a patriarchal family is a concrete content in the form of an obligation. More exactly, every end can appear in the form of an obligation. Consequently, the perspective of a fusion between the end and myself at the end of the operation can no longer be conceived, since from the start the obligation has a dimension in the element of the other that I cannot reach. So it is not myself that I realize in this operation. Or rather I found myself along with the end, as is normal, but the end absorbs me without founding itself on me. A value gets indicated as realizing itself in the future, but this value is not me—I am just a secondary structure. Everything occurs as though through me *someone* founds himself on the end.

In this sense, the realization of the end, in an obligation, is an alienation of myself. If I have to tell the Truth, this is no longer so that Truth comes into the world through me but has to do with Truth itself. In the operation that merely realizes an end, man realizes himself in the world through the creation of a human world; in obligation, the same ends appear but as inhuman. They have to be realized in the world, but man is the inessential instrument. Truth, Virtue are the meaning of the world. The relations between Virtue and the World come first and man has to deny himself so the *Realm* of Ethics comes about. The problem therefore is to figure out how this mystification comes about: man gets alienated by his own ends.

If we put it this way, we see that *obligation* cannot come to a person through that person himself. The structures of the end, an operation, and a project are such that they exclude the possibility of this twist. It cannot be drawn from

207. Max Scheler (1874–1928), “Value and the Ideal Ought,” in *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 203–210.

208. “In certain circumstances a *single* deed or a *single* person is all we need to grasp the *essence* of the value in question” (ibid., p. 14). “Value-ception, we have tried to show, *precedes* all representational acts according to an essential law of origins. Its evidence is largely independent of the evidence of representations” (ibid., p. 201).

them. It goes without saying that this mystification is the spirit of seriousness. And the spirit of seriousness cannot come to a person just by itself.

Let us turn back to obligation again. It is an intimate and active relation to a person. Indeed, it is an end that constitutes the person as inessential in relation to this end. This indicates that the very structures by means of which the person apprehends this end get modified. In the first place, obligation does not appear head on but from the rear. Because it is, in fact, not the end to be realized (which always stands over against me) but a claim on my decision to realize this end. It is a back door kind of transcendence, that is, it lies behind the very source of my freedom, behind the staking out of my free decision. However, it gets distinguished from this freedom because, as obligation, it is in the dimension of being. It presents itself as an intention in relation to an end. In other words, *across me* it is the structure of my project. But an intention has being only insofar as it is consciousness of being. And an obligation is consciousness *for me*, but not my consciousness since if I revolt against it, it remains. Therefore it is an intention in me whose being-conscious-of-itself is not given as a consciousness that I have to be.

There is not here an *outline of duality* as in the For-itself but duality properly speaking since the *percipi* of obligation is distinct from its *esse*. It is just this aspect of coming up on me from behind that Kant expressed with his theory of rational choice.²⁰⁹ In Kantian freedom there is a duality of the atemporal and the temporal that does a good job of depicting the structure of obligation. Indeed, obligation as evidence of my temporalizing choice is beyond all temporality. My temporal changes do not affect it. It is permanent. The end is the reason that haunts my temporality. But obligation lies behind this temporality and renders it inessential. My temporality, like all my structures, is rendered inessential by the presence-in-the-rear of obligation. This is, in effect, an immediate and atemporal (eternal) relation of the project to its end. Therefore it runs through all my projects and surpasses them as inessential and subordinate projects. *Behind* me, I have the presence of this demand, and in front of me, on the horizon of my projects, the end as connected to this obligation.

“Honor your mother” includes two terms, the term *a tergo*, the demand to honor my mother, and the term that faces me, the mother as *before being honored*. But although *not being me* (which it is not as the past is, which is *also* behind me as what I have to be), this obligation is immediately a claim on my freedom. Why? Not because it is a *motive*, for it would then have no life except insofar as it is upheld in being by my freedom. Not because it is *an essence*—because it would then be separated from me by a thread of nothingness. Not because it is a *pure universal*, which is something transcendent-to-be-contemplated standing over against one, and pure *being* as the structure of the object. No being can be a demand by itself. In particular, no being whose *esse* is a *percipi*. The demand

209. See, e.g., Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 58–59.

is a demand insofar as its being an intention is given being as directly bearing on me. It is certainly a demand only if it is a motive for my freedom, that is, if it is taken up and upheld by my freedom, *if it is one with my freedom*, yet it is also distinguished from my freedom.

It is just that, contrary to everything that happens in the ordinary structures of the For-itself, it is not *me* that sets it apart from me, rather it is what sets itself over against me. To the extent that I immerse myself into the circuit of demand and end to make its project my own, so that I am *nothing more than* this project, the demand *per se* gets distinguished from me, by itself it sets itself off from me—exactly like the Other who transforms me into transcended transcendence with his *look*. Except that as regards the Other who looks at me, *I am not him*. Whereas the demand looks at me and passes through me and yet I make myself be it. It is a quasi look that darts into my consciousness from the backside. To the extent that it is given as making itself come into being by itself, it is consciousness and freedom. To the extent that it passes through me, it is a pure look. To the extent that I cannot turn back on it to look at it, it is a looking that can never be looked at.

What is more, since its end is absolute and unconditioned, it is not in a situation. “Tell the truth” leaps over the situation where there might be a possibility of telling a lie. And since it does not participate in my situation, it gives itself as a freedom beyond any situation, or as pure freedom, and it pushes all freedom in a situation to the side of impure or conditioned freedom. The presence of this pure and unconditioned will in me, which posits its goal as absolute, rejects everything in me that has to do with the choice of conditioned and relative ends, bound to their means, tossing them into the thinglike nothingness of not-freedom.

In a word, obligation is the presence in me of Freedom. Not as I am freedom or exist it, but as it *is*. Not freedom as a choice to be made in some situation, but freedom as a *choice already made* outside of any situation whatsoever. What defines free choice is no longer freedom but that a choice is free when it has the aspect of being unconditioned. It is this unconditionality that is the guarantee of freedom. Or, if you will, there is freedom only when a choice is the choice of an end beyond the means that allow it to be attained. But this choice is not the representation of a choice. It is freedom frozen into eternity in the very instant that it chooses. It is a concrete choice with all its structures, but an atemporal one.

That is: the inexorability, unalterability, and immediacy of the choice are an act of violence. Duty is the violence of other people but internalized. The only right Freedom has over *my* freedom is just that it is freedom. I said that it was at the source of my freedom. But we need to conceive of my freedom as emanating from it. Freedom being the touchstone for distinguishing freedom from nonfreedom, its presence in me makes what does not conform to its concrete maxim fall on the side of nonfreedom. Thus the set of my willed choices from

day to day does not emanate from it, for these are not free intentions. Rather, being installed in me, freedom proposes itself to a freedom that wants to be freedom (that is, unconditional) as the maxim to adopt.

Therefore it is a question of my taking up a goal for myself by positing it as essential and by positing my concrete person as inessential. It, this freedom behind my freedom, demands this by its affirmation that freedom can disengage itself from its situation, from its past, from its concrete desires by an absolute choice. And it affirms this simply by affirming itself as being this unconditioned choice. So it brings about this freedom in being, through its choice, the demand for and an example of this freedom. Except here is the sleight of hand: it brings about my freedom not to decide sovereignly on an end but to invent the means. It is, itself, this freedom behind my freedom, the pure absolute choice of an end, a pure springing up *ex nihilo* [from nothing] of the end that is the goal of my project. My freedom rises up in turn and is freedom only in order to choose this already chosen end, that is, to give its assent to a choice made independently of it. If it refuses, if it invents another choice, it gets characterized by this demand as nonfreedom.

So this freedom of mine that springs up within the context of duty gets mystified. It is born in and by means of the mirage of the unconditioned end. More precisely, as soon as my freedom springs forth, it becomes conditioned in its end. The archetype set behind it is that of *a pure choice of an end* and my freedom is pure freedom to adhere to this choice made by an other. At the same time, it is constrained to affirm the means as not conditioning the end, which is directly in contradiction with its being-in-the-world. The World for it becomes a phantom lacking any consistency over which it is the master (although, in fact, it is perpetually left open to losing the game), while on the other side it allows itself to be persuaded that it is not the master of its choice (which is precisely its real empire). It is not a first beginning but a second one. It chooses what it did not choose; it did not choose what it does choose. In freely choosing the freely chosen (by the other) choice, it alienates itself from itself even though everywhere there is freedom. What is more, it conjointly affirms the absolute aspect of freedom and the hierarchy of freedoms since it submits itself to a choice already made by another freedom. And since this choice takes place in inwardness, it affirms its autonomy at the moment of *total heteronomy*.

We need to invert the terms of the Kantian problem and say that there is never heteronomy when one is on the plane of psychological determinism. If this determinism were to exist, there would be neither heteronomy nor autonomy but only the necessary unity of interconnected processes. Heteronomy can only affect a freedom and can only do so through another freedom. And it consists in the fact that one freedom chooses the choice of the other because this other freely made its choice. At the same time, freedom gets fooled in that its choice of the choice of the freedom-in-the-Rear is made in order to identify itself with the very movement of choosing and thereby to unify these two freedoms, the

primary and the secondary ones, in the unity of the act. However the *Selbständigkeit* [independence, autonomy]²¹⁰ of the imperative means that it perpetually negates the second freedom so that these two freedoms are always two, the one at the service of the other. With this, the operation of the second freedom gets stolen from it, for it is no longer this freedom's operation but that of the imperative through the intermediary of the person. This second freedom makes itself into an instrument and, even though the operation is carried out by it, this operation falls outside of it. And, as a final mystification, rather than finding its fusion with its end under the sign of value at the end of its operation, this freedom gets eliminated. Just the imperative gets imprinted on things.

For example, as Kant clearly saw, it is the universal (in the case where duty would be the universal) that will be imprinted on the world. Deception is the result for people to whom one says, "you only did your duty," that is, those who want to recognize themselves in the result of their operation (generosity); but one shows them that there was just a realization of their duty. The person who acts out of duty *does not recognize himself in his work*. Acting by himself, inventing his own means, this person wants to find his free activity in so doing, but since he is alienated by another choice, he perpetually recognizes someone *other* than himself.

This is why, contrary to what we ordinarily assume, duty is not something disagreeable just because or precisely because it establishes in us the duality of desires and freedom—even if all our desires were *conformed* to our obligation and as a consequence *served* the pure Will, there would still remain an underlying duality that is the source and the ground of all the others: the duality at the very heart of freedom or, if you will, the *a priori* refusal of *Duty* as *my* end for the pure and free choice of *freedom* as such, and the lie that makes another's freedom be given as the *a priori* structure of freedom.

This gets translated in yet another way by the very ambiguity of my project since *someone* steals my being from me. In the very moment when I *choose* duty's end, I choose to be chosen as choosing this end, in other words I choose that the freedom of some other should choose and constitute my freedom. Therefore I choose my freedom as an intermediary between the atemporal freedom of the other and its end, at the same time and by the very choice that constitutes my choice as pure freedom. In the moment that I choose this end as absolute, I choose it *in fact* as phenomenal, since I consider the temporality in which it unfolds itself and temporalizes itself as an appearance and a lesser being as

210. In the Macquarrie/Robinson translation of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, *Selbständigkeit* is translated as "self-constancy." For example: "In terms of care the *constancy of the Self*, as the supposed persistence of the *subjectum*, gets clarified. But the phenomenon of its authentic potentiality-for-Being also opens our eyes for the *constancy of the Self* in the sense of its having achieved some sort of position. *The constancy of the Self*, in the double sense of steadiness and steadfastness, is the *authentic* counter-possibility to the non-Self-constancy which is characteristic of irresolute falling" (p. 369).

regards atemporality. In the moment when I make it an absolute goal and an unconditioned end, I constitute it as an intermediary that has to eliminate itself at the moment of reaching its result. There is furthermore in this ambiguity a thinglikeness of freedom, which stems from the fact that sometimes Freedom is *given* for me as the *a priori* structure of my project, and sometimes I feel myself *as given* for freedom inasmuch as it is another's constituting freedom.

From another perspective, the value that haunts every operation is, in this case, an evanescent value. In effect: so long as I am engaged in my project, I do not feel the will of the other behind me. In this moment, I exist my unconditioned freedom and I am my own project in its autonomy. This holds in that I invent the means (the secondary ends but ends nevertheless) for an absolute end. In this case the value haunts me and seems something that comes from the end. But as soon as the relative end is placed in relation to the absolute end (I do this *in order* to uphold my family's honor) the value gets transformed. Indeed, it is a fusion of *the other's* conscious intention with the end, so this value haunts me as *the other's* value, that is, as an objectified and transcendent value that passes through my subjectivity. As for myself, I am no longer haunted by my own value as that which man does that makes him more than man, rather I *participate* in a value, as linked to its accomplishment, just as an instrument *has* value because it is indispensable to the realization of some end that has been given value.

Here, moreover, lies one of the fundamental aspects of the ambiguity we are considering: since a demand conceals the ruse whereby I can be free only by *realizing* this demand, I am balanced perpetually between the following two positions. I do my duty in order to be pure freedom and it is as pure freedom that I accede to ethics's absolute, through the affirmation that the human realm is unconditioned—the proposed end lies *in its materiality*, which is creative of value—and I participate in this value as a necessary instrument for realizing it. Yet in exchange for this mystification I do have one advantage: my freedom is safe from anxiety. Indeed, it is discharged of any anxiety by that freedom in back of freedom that takes it upon itself to decide upon my ends. My freedom is no longer constituting and creative, but rather realizing. It no longer has as its task to bring about the world of ethics, but just to maintain it.

In the moment that my freedom appears as unconditioned, it also grasps itself as phenomenal. It is *inoffensive*. Furthermore, it is not a form of gratuitousness since it does not have to invent its goals. It is a first beginning that *is not* one. At the same time it realizes the original project of the For-itself: it is born from the foundation of a demand. The being of my freedom is that of a freedom called upon to be one. This happens by a kind of mirror game: for my freedom gets assimilated to a freedom/demand, and at the same time this freedom/demand forms a pair with it. The result is that the demand that gives rise to my freedom can be at the same time, illusorily, seen as freedom itself. In this way, it seems as if my freedom calls itself into existence and that the For-itself,

rather than being the foundation of its project without being the foundation of its facticity, as a demand does become the foundation of its facticity.

Except, as we see, the For-itself can have the illusion of founding its facticity only if it renounces founding its project. We see—and we shall come back to this—this duty wells up and preserves itself in an atmosphere of violence and bad faith. There is internalized violence because another in me refuses to take account of my situation, projects, temporality, and means. Another continually repeats, “I do not want to know.” There is bad faith because, to calm my anxiety and surmount my facticity, I perpetually maintain the position that *I* am an other and this other is not me. I *want*, all the while abdicating the responsibility for wanting it, a consciousness that *I do not want* what I want. If it is a question of affirming freedom as unconditioned, then *it is I* who wants it; if it is a question of taking hold of the gratuitousness of my wanting, then it is not I who want it, it is the Other.

3) What we have just described allows us to take up again our initial affirmation and to found it through a new description: the demand, the obligation, duty, come to the For-itself from the Other. These are not dimensions of the For-itself as such, but living categories of the For-others.²¹¹ Their essential structures stem in the last analysis from the structure of the detotalized totality of me and others. The demand comes first as a direct relation of the other’s freedom to my own. Duty, at a higher degree of abstraction and of greater “bad faith,” appears when the concrete person is replaced by the *One*. In duty, I discharge my existence on to the other who discharges his existence on to another other and so on. There is perpetual alienation without there being a first alienated person to the sequence.

In the first place, it is through the installation in me of an end taken up by me that the other’s end gets cut off from its means. First of all, because *my* end is seen at the end of its means. I discover it and constitute it by the concrete surpassing of what is given, which suggests it and alters it at the same time. My end stands with the given in double relation, which it sketches out and illuminates. But the other’s end—if it is not discovered in *Mitsein* [being-with]²¹² by *the two of us together*—is discovered by the other through the inseparable intertwining of means and ends, while in me it turns into a maxim. Since I cannot grasp the concrete universe from the other’s point of view and starting from his situation, his end does not come into existence for me. It gets introduced

211. The whole of Part 3 of *Being and Nothingness* deals with “Being-for-Others.” A key conclusion is “the fact that being-for-others is not an ontological structure of the For-itself” (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 282). Hence “being-for-others represents the third ekstasis of the for-itself” (*ibid.*, p. 298).

212. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, chapter 4, “Being-in-the-World as Being-With and Being-One’s-Self. The ‘They.’” “Not only is Being towards Others an autonomous, irreducible relationship of Being: this relationship, as Being-with, is one which, with Dasein’s Being, already is” (p. 162).

into my universe as simple and absolute, cut off from both motives and the paths that led to it. It is immediately given and it is given as the pure, dreamed-of end of some operation.

What is more, since it is freshly drawn from the other's world, it preserves a kind of reserve. It is the other's intention, *another* intention in me. Appearing as *other* than my desires and me, it cannot be put into a direct relation through me with my *Umwelt* [my immediate, everyday life-world] in terms of the living unity of a unified project. It is me who *must* relate it to the world and relate the world to it. And this mediation is precisely the invention of means. This invention of means as putting into relation two givens possessing *Selbständigkeit* is therefore subsequent to the appearance of the end over against the world. At the same time, the world becomes for the one who accepts and takes up the other's will, an indifferent matter wherein I have to realize it. It is no longer that *complexus* where I announce my ends to myself, but on the contrary the other's end surges into me as independent of the world. This end, moreover, is *not illuminating* since it is the lighting by which the other illuminates the world. However, once installed in me as the other's end, it steals the world from me just as the other's look steals the universe from me.

I explained in *Being and Nothingness* how a look literally empties a tree of its substance before my own eyes.²¹³ To the extent that the other's will is a *look* (the eye of God, the eye of conscience), like every intention, this look which runs through me from back to front constitutes the world that I see as an inessential appearance, just as it constitutes me as phenomenal freedom. The world that I see has a meaning for the other whose will I accomplish, which I do not see, and a secret reality. The soldier who accomplishes his mission, who makes contact with the enemy, knows, for example, that what he sees will be interpreted, reclassified according to a larger vision and in an unforeseeable way; that what he does does not necessarily have the meaning he attributes to it. In this way the other's will steals the universe, my person, and the result of my operation from me.

In reality, if my operation, the world I see, and the result I create have a secret meaning that escapes me into the dimension of the other, it is because, through my submission to the other's will, I operate entirely within the dimension of the other. My initiatives, my operation, my assertions are *objects* for him. I exist and operate *under his gaze*. And since I accepted the hierarchy, this means that the other's look being that by which actual truth gets unveiled in the world, my subjectivity is an appearance and an illusion. The truth of my existence is my objective being through which I escape myself.

Hence, for the slave, the order/look of the master creates the immense field of the *looked at*. The slave moves within the fake universe of what is looked at,

213. See *Being and Nothingness*, p. 188, where Barnes has translated *écorce* (bark) as "orange peel."

like a moth in a light beam. Objects and he have in common the dimension of being looked at. And in this universe of pure objectivity, which is a secret dimension of my universe and where I am through a secret dimension of my being, my acts have another importance and another value than the ones I attribute to them. So I cannot decide to what extent the means I choose for attaining a prescribed end may be destructive of that end since I am not aware at bottom of the meaning and the value of this end.

In these conditions, all means that have not been forbidden by the master are good. That is, they do not contradict the end. Similarly, the captain who has received an order to hold a piece of land no matter what, must not consider whether the possession of these few acres is or is not worth the loss of a thousand men, because he does not know whether this sacrifice was conceived in order to delay the enemy's advance or as part of a diversion wherein it constitutes a much more significant operation. The order, therefore, is always unconditioned. Even when it includes conditions in its maxim. You will hold on for twenty four hours, but if you see that your losses get beyond a quarter of your troops, you will fall back. These conditions are not so much a conditioning of the end by the means as a more precise definition of the end and the delimitation of the zone within which the means remain undetermined.

So we have seen, first, that any end conceived by me for my carrying out is a synthetic unity of means and gets modified along with them. We now see that any foreign end, even though for the other it may be a concrete end and bound to its means, gets inserted in me as a rigid, unconditioned end, cut off from its means. What is more, we can understand that such an end, to the extent that my will submits to the other, is impossible to modify since only a living will that posits an end can modify it in and through the subtle twisting of the means, or renounce it in the case where the means utilized will define or destroy a more important end to which the first one is subordinated.

For the slave, the master's will is inflexible because it cannot be modified by his own freedom. In other words, because it is *past*. Indeed, the order is always past in relation to its accomplishment and the modifications that this accomplishment brings about in the situation since it *was* given. On the other hand, my personal will always occurs in terms of all three temporal ecstases. It is always contemporaneous with the past where it was decided upon, with the future where the end gets modified, and with the present where the means used modify the end.

What is more, that the master himself lives in such a way is indicated by stories that are full of events like the following: The slave has risked his neck and committed crimes to obtain the object desired by the master. When he returns with his booty, the master has no longer wanted it for a long while. In this way, the master's will is doubly *past*: past for the master who has changed his mind, past for the slave since it had one meaning in a given situation and,

the situation having been modified, it now survives as a remainder of it. The order is the presence of the past in my present as an absolute present. Therefore the order is a negator of temporality since it considers the present and the future as inessential and posits the ontological primacy of the master's words as a perpetual present.

These considerations will allow us next to describe the attitude of demanding something. The demand is not a structure of my freedom, it is not a form that the end that I project can take on, it comes to me through *an other*. The same thing applies to a command, an obligation, a duty. Demands and all obligatory forms *originally* imply, therefore, a relation of one person to another. They are possible forms of my relation to other people and there can be a demand only if two freedoms are separated by a nothingness. It is this singular form of diaspora, which makes me and the other conjointly appear, it is this form that necessarily constitutes the foundation of the demand, by making my will an object for the other, while the other is an object for me. The original form of the demand is the *order*.

Immediately note: the order is radically different from a demand accompanied by threats. This latter *first* constitutes the threatened being as an object. The order, on the contrary, appears against the background of a reciprocal recognition of freedoms. Except that this recognition is hierarchical. The master recognizes the slave as having the secondary freedom to recognize him as master. The slave recognizes the master as having absolute freedom.

This poses a problem somewhat beyond our inquiry: how can a man recognize himself as being inessential in relation to another man? This cannot stem from his considering himself in one way or another inessential in relation to the objective structures of the world. In the most favorable case, he accepts the order because he believes himself less essential to the operation than the leader. But then he places the operation of some human person above the person. In the least favorable case, Hegel's explanation holds. The slave is the one who preferred his life—that is, his being-within-the-world—to his freedom. The master prefers freedom to life and has proved it. So the master dominates life and the slave is dominated by life. The master dominates the slave, therefore, by the intermediary of life. "But the lord is the power over this thing, for he proved in the struggle that it is something merely negative; since he is the power over this thing and this again is the power over the other [the bondsman], it follows that he holds the other in subjection."²¹⁴

In other words, the slave experiences his facticity in two ways, in the conditioning of his freedom by the world and in his cowardice, since he prefers to live rather than to affirm his freedom over against the world that crushes him. He has, therefore, chosen his freedom as inessential and, at the same time, the

214. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 115.

master's freedom appears to him as unconditioned since he both prefers death to slavery and it is he who has determined the slave to become a slave through the intermediary of the order of the world and the slave's facticity. The slave is bound to the master therefore by a bond of complicity. In preferring life to death, he preferred the master's free consciousness to his own. We have seen in Pleading (which he offers at the moment when he asks for mercy) that he constitutes himself as an object for the master. At the same time, to save his life, he accepted that his freedom should be nonfreedom when it wants its own ends and freedom when it wants what the master wants. Therefore, in making a demand, the master draws upon a pact of complicity having to do with the enslavement of a freedom. There can be a demand only on the basis of such a submission. Otherwise I may well demand something in words, but this empty noise will only get me laughed at. My demand is nothing more than a formula.

Hence when I require something, I grasp my own freedom as unconditioned: 1st, because another freedom has made it exist in this way by recognizing it as unconditioned; 2d, because my demand, which was conditioned in itself by the world, becomes unconditioned by establishing itself in another consciousness as a maxim of his freedom *and I know it*. If I were myself to pick that flower by the side of the cliff, the danger might change my end. If I command a slave to go pick it, *for this freedom* at whose source my command is installed as the atemporal presence of the past, my momentary, changeable will becomes absolute, atemporal, inexorability. In this way we begin to understand that the demand is not just an attitude. It is an operation affecting two people. Through my demand I make my conditioned freedom go forth in the form and image of an unconditioned freedom. The slave reflects back to me my improved, perfect image. He is the setting in which my freedom is constituted over against me with the aspects of Being.

3d, so when I say "I demand," I create my freedom as the unconditioned will that guides the slave's free project from the rear. The anecdotes are well known that tell of a colonel who has forgotten the password that he made up that morning and the sentinel, who although he recognizes the colonel, obstinately bars the way. The sentinel is always congratulated in these stories. Undoubtedly this is less true in real life. But the goal of these stories is to show the master running up against his facticity, in the reality of his flesh, where his will becomes an essential structure of the universe. This is also the meaning of the sorcerer's apprentice.

So, in a demand, through the very nature of the For-others, I displace what is essential in my freedom. It is at present unconditioned *in the Other*. And, at the limit (the example of the sentinel), I become an object and inessential in my factual freedom for my unconditioned freedom, which looks at me through an other's eyes. The demand is, therefore, in one sense, a dialogue between me and myself through the mediation of the other. *The order* is thus a curious object: *myself* an object for myself as an essential object and unconditioned master of

nature, while at the same time myself as a look at myself. The order in the soldier's or the slave's consciousness is me looking at me.

4th, but through the demand, I recognize the slave's freedom in three ways: α) because it presupposes a free submission; β) because it constitutes the slave himself into unconditioned freedom (the slave is me); and γ) because it confers powers and rights on him. Let us examine each of these points.

α) This is what we noticed earlier. It needs to be generalized. Every victory by force implies some submission of freedom. There is a victory at the precise moment when the other prefers life to his goal. In one sense, therefore, all oppression implies consent. It is *true* that the workers, even when grouped together in unions, even when directed by a revolutionary party, still *accept* more than they refuse. They go to the factory, they do the work demanded of them, they take the salary that they judge a theft, and they make use of the structures of bourgeois democracy (the electoral system, laws voted upon by the Chambers, hospitals, etc.), they obey the laws established by a power that is not their own (military service, taxes, mobilizations, etc.). No doubt the revolutionary parties will give them a class consciousness, that is, they will reveal the behavior that they adopt as *imposed* upon them. But for all that they reveal the worker's condition as the result of violence, they cannot for all that constitute them into organized troops struggling face to face with their oppressors.

The class struggle is an ambiguous fact. The oppressed accepts what he refuses and refuses what he accepts. He is in solidarity with what he refuses and he rejects what he is in solidarity with. He is not at all in solidarity with the boss's interests insofar as the boss is an exploiter and steals the meaning of his work from him along with its product. But so long as the Revolution has not occurred, within the national framework and in a period of imperialist capitalism he cannot will the ruin of the boss without willing his own as well. In his demands therefore, although he wants to reduce this benefit to the boss to a minimum, he accepts—by the very fact that he wants to reduce it—this benefit which is realized on his shoulders.

So the consciousness of the oppressed is an unhappy consciousness. He cannot hate the oppressor without hating himself. This stems from the very nature of freedom. In that man always has the possibility of refusing a factual situation through death and in that, by taking this death as an ultimate possibility, he can in his project of dying testify to his refusal and even partially realize his rejection of his situation through his acts, if he lives, he accepts it.

Alain's solution—objective obedience, inward refusal (which is also Epicurus's solution)—is purely illusory. For refusal to be pure and total in its intentional subjectivity, for it to be a pure *intention*, the operation has to be carried out with zeal. If it is done feebly, a refusal is not a pure affirmation of freedom, it is compromised by its feebleness, and one no longer knows whether one refuses out of weakness, laziness, or fear, or out of intransigent purity. Consequently this refusal stems from a pact with the master and Alain in the artillery fires on

the enemy troops, thereby making himself an accomplice in massacres.²¹⁵ His students thought they could avoid this by refusing distinctions of grade. It seemed to them that they made themselves even greater accomplices by transmitting the order. I do not see why. In fact, passive obedience does not exist since man cannot be passive. There is only obedience or revolt. If the intention gets judged and known through the act, then the act of the soldier who contributes to carrying out the order in the barracks teaches us his intention, which is to be an accomplice. What is more, a moment comes when the contradiction is so manifest that a decision becomes urgent. In the case of a strike, if the order is given to fire on the crowd, will Alain's disciple shoot with some mental reservation? Clearly not. His refusal has to become effective. However this extreme case is in fact the uncovering of a situation that he perpetually contributes to upholding. He refuses, it is true. But he accepts in order to be able to refuse. He wants what he does not want so as to be able not to want what he wants. By throwing his responsibilities on the other, he contributes to recognizing the other's freedom as unconditioned, and by maintaining in himself an inefficacious refusal, he limits his personal freedom to an abstract *prise de position*.

In truth, human freedom is such that the one who does not revolt accepts, and revolt can be engendered only by a disavowed acceptance and a semicomplexity. Which is why one speaks so poorly about violence. One thinks that it gives rise to a factual situation that the conquered either have to accept or reject. But this is too easy. Violence creates acceptance because the vanquished proclaims an inefficacious refusal that conceals what in fact is submission. Were he to decide to struggle against the conqueror with all his means, at least he would take up on his own account the situation created by the conqueror, even if this meant, for example, nothing more than recognizing that one had to transfer the struggle to the clandestine battle field.

Basically, the Evil in violence does not come from the fact that it destroys Right but from the fact that it creates it. It puts the vanquished in the situation where he has *to accept* it (at least provisionally) or die. And if he doesn't die (if only so as to be able to continue the struggle) he submits, and with this the violence emanates from the conqueror and recognition, therefore Right, emanates from the conquered. Precisely because every situation, even when created by violence, is human because it is experienced by men, every state of affairs creates a state of right.

And it is in the name of this state of right that the conqueror makes demands. No doubt there are threats in the background. If I give an order to a slave, I know that he knows that he will be whipped if he does not carry it out. But precisely because he knows it and because he is my slave, he accepts in some way and therefore he accepts my order. If I recall to him that he will have a

215. Cf. above, p. 21, n. 31. Having spoken against World War I, Alain nevertheless enlisted in the artillery and spent the war as a common soldier.

thrashing, I set up a strange complicity between him and me, like the mother who recalls to her disobedient son the promised cuffs on the ear: "You know what I promised you." Here the violence is not pure. It is referred to as already accepted violence. Which is why there is always humor and therefore analytic inexactitude in saying, for example, as one says to a regiment, that disobedience is a kind of bargain: "if anyone goes over the wall, you know what will happen to him, a week in jail." In fact, it is *in no way* a bargain because, even in fooling the higher will, I acknowledge its power to put me in jail.

Here the *respect* which I shall speak of below necessarily intervenes. But since the conqueror immediately considers himself as making use of his *right* when he gives orders, it is because some freedom has acknowledged him as having this right. Violence creates a right by the intermediary of the accessory will of the other. Therefore in an order, I address myself to a freedom. I address myself to it with all my violence as a threatening conqueror, but precisely because this violence is recognized as a right by the conquered. I provoke terror in it by showing it my strength, but this terror seems to be like something agreed upon and a free choice. One does not give orders to things and if I do give them to animals it is just insofar as they are secondary consciousnesses. Sufficiently conscious to *recognize* the primacy of the master, sufficiently secondary to be able only to obey. An order is therefore the act of an unconditioned freedom addressing itself to a conditioned freedom through its situation; the affirmation of an absolute freedom through the recognition of a freedom that makes itself dependent.

β) However, I breathe my unconditioned freedom into this dependent freedom. I project into it that absolute determination of my end that is the refusal of all situations. Better still, it is thanks to this dependent freedom that my freedom, which *for me* is situated, becomes freedom outside of any situation. *For me*, it may be bad to drink wine, or perhaps too costly; I do not decide without reservations and it is not even certain that at the last moment I will not change my mind. For him, when I say, "go get me some wine," my will has become absolute and, since he submits to it with *his* freedom, his freedom becomes unconditioned in its choice of means.

Through a curious dialectic, in effect, the slave, who is the vanquished person who preferred to live, becomes the one who prefers death to disobedience. This indicates that there are no longer sufficient motives in him for preferring death, due precisely to his being directed by a freedom behind his freedom. On the contrary, the master's will, in him, dispenses him of choosing life in anxiety. It is just the order that has to be carried out and in any case. In particular, because the slave *prefers* the death received through obeying, which is only an *accident*, to the death inflicted through disobedience, which implies a decision of an absolute will, which, consequently, does not just nihilate him in his physical person but also wipes him out as a moral person, which condemns him eternally to a *bad* death. In one of these deaths something is preserved, in the other

everything is nihilated. The first one is a challenge to the world, an inverted affirmation directed against everything unconditioned about freedom. The second is the realization of total impotence, it follows upon a failure before the world and consecrates it.

In this way the slave, the bearer of an unconditioned freedom that he realizes unconditionally, is brought to choose: be free unconditionally or die. Except when he chooses unconditional freedom, his I is another. In fact, he is alienated. Through his alienation he realizes the unconditionality of the human Will. And the master's order in him defines as conditioned all the *Erlebnisse* that have their origin in his situated freedom. The order is therefore an incitement directed toward a freedom set down as secondary by a common agreement to escape the conditions and limits of this freedom's situation by positing itself as unconditioned in relation to the world and by accepting through this that it be determined by a heteronomy. I call upon a freedom that has submitted so that it becomes *my* freedom in another body. The order is a consecration. I confer my all-powerful freedom on a secondary creature.

γ) And, indeed, at the same time, the slave is provided with *powers*. Not in relation to me (except in those cases mentioned where the order turns back against me) because I *pass through* him, he is me, my representative in the face of the world. What has to be respected is not the facticity of his personhood but *my will in him*. His eyes are my eyes, I look by his look, etc. The Emperor's *representative* has the right to the marks of respect addressed to the Emperor. Whole *gentes* have fought like dogs because they have made one of their slave's quarrels their own. Hence the slave who transmits the order simultaneously experiences heteronomy and his absolute power. However insofar as he is an absolute power over others through transmitting the master's will, he *is* that will. And in the end the master respects the slave—in varying degrees—inasmuch as the slave is precisely the bearer of his will, that is, he respects *himself* in the slave. So the slave's freedom becomes impersonal at the same time that it is unconditioned. It is the absolute choice of means, that is, bottomless inventiveness, pure creative power, at the same time that it is (objectively) a *right*.

The slave's freedom is the origin of "I have the right to do my duty." No one can prevent the slave from carrying out the order. In this sense, my demand is also a promise. I call upon him in his submitted freedom to transform himself into unconditional freedom while promising him free power over things through the intermediary of men. Hence in any demand my freedom takes place and gets constituted in and through the other's freedom, it has a creative side that I am unaware of that comes to it from the other, and it turns a look on the world that is not my look.

4) These remarks allow us to describe the attitude of the demand. It manifests itself in recognized violence. Therefore it appears within the pacified image of violence (I am above the slave. The steps of a throne. The lower situation of the slave, prostration). It is first a look. By this look (which is not reciprocal) I

transform the slave into a thing, into a transcended transcendence. But it is a certain kind of look that is accompanied by words. These words, on the contrary, are addressed to the slave's freedom, proposing an unconditioned goal to him. The look gets defined for him by the words. It is not a pure objectifying of the other, it installs *my* will in that object, it lands in him like a seed. This very look is the demand because it is a communication of freedom. The slave feels it as freedom inasmuch as the look transforms him into a thing, but through the words he feels a certain freedom that installs its maxim in him. The words give a meaning to the look, the look gives efficacy to the words. In the end, it is the look that puts the words *as a look* within the slave. They are words/looking.

At the same time, this freedom installed in the slave makes his freedom start to flow just as one starts water flowing from an artesian well by striking the rock. The look looks at the slave from behind his eyes, it breaks through them to install itself in his depths, while the words propose a goal to his freedom. In this way, through a contradiction between the words and the look, the look transfixes while the words, on the contrary, address his freedom. The demand lies just here: this freedom *looked at*, both unchained and unconditioned, and at the same time transfixed, limited, and constrained in its direction by the other's look, which transforms itself into an object if it resists and which rediscovers its existence as freedom only by throwing itself into the world in the direction of the look and as pursued by it.

The demand gets generalized when it passes from one slave to another. Then the Other's will calls to me through the will of the Other in another. In the name of *your* submission to the Master to whom I have submitted, I call upon *you*. The Master's will dialogues with itself by way of our two persons. When the Master is far away, invisible, when his will is transmitted by another and I transmit it to another, the presence in all of us of this will represents the unification of every inessential consciousness by what is essential. The unconditioned will becomes abstract and each person, to the extent that he negates his concrete situation, in order to obey, constitutes himself as impersonal. This alienated freedom that makes itself impersonal in itself, negating everything about itself in order to realize an abstract and unconditioned will that is revealed to it by others who are its impersonal bearers, is *duty*, that absolute obligation each one of us can demand from the others. If each of us can make such a claim, since he is not *the Master*, it is that he is a slave. So the ethics of duty is the ethics of slaves. It matters little, since the demand is the presence of the past, that the Master might be dead; one still continues to demand things in his name. Slaves produce other slaves, and these produce still others, etc.

And we thus have a very peculiar kind of reciprocity of demands. Since everyone is a bearer of the Master's will, everyone can make demands of everyone else. No doubt the Master might have set up a hierarchy, but this very hierarchy can be inverted if the person who is at the summit prefers himself to the Master,

for then I become the authentic representative. In this way, the Master's will, through me, can address itself to the Master's will that is installed in my superior in the hierarchy. Thus there can be a demand from below to on high. This is the case in a society with a monarchic structure where the myth of God repeats the sovereign's power. There is a hierarchy of powers in that some represent the will of the sovereign and the creator more completely. But there is an equality of rights in that all are creatures of God and subjects of the sovereign. The ethics of duty is the passage to the metaphysical state of theological ethics. Just as the soul of the thing becomes a virtue, the sovereign's command becomes a duty. Originally, one has precise duties toward the sovereign and toward God. Duties are defined by the sovereign's will and God's commandments. Their gratuity is proof of their absolute autonomy and I install this autonomy in me in order to constitute the heteronomy of my will. These orders are *personal* and the society set up in this manner is a society grounded on the hierarchical relations of one person to another. It is *feudalism*.

In such a society I have duties toward my ruler and my ruler has duties toward his unconditioned will by way of me. It is a question here of something other than slavery for I can call him out against himself. Or, if you will, he calls himself out against himself *through me*. The plurality of autonomous wills creates [the] plurality of duties. I can appeal to the king, the totally unconditioned will, against the lord, to the bishop against the king, etc. Every demand, therefore, is concrete and personal, even though in flowing into me it loses its concrete character to become the unconditioned presence of the past. The unification of the feudal plurality under the power of the sovereign unifies and systematizes every duty which becomes the system of the king's commandments. At the same time, the *person* withdraws. I see my ruler, I *no longer* see the king. He sees me, his look is in me but I do not see it. The unconditioned autonomy installed in me tends to take on a formal character. The absorption of the king by the Nation, the appearance of the State as an abstract bureaucracy completes this evolution. Order becomes purely abstract autonomy, a pure concept of autonomy realizing the heteronomy of my will. Duty inhabits my soul like phlogiston inhabits fire. It is the purely abstract presence of the Other.

How did this come about? How did obedience to the sovereign become duty towards one's country? Why did obligation not disappear along with the personal power on which it depended? Because we have not spoken of a third dimension in our description of obligation. I have described the relations of me and the Other. But there is a third element: others. In no case am I alone face to face with the sovereign. Ist, the leader or sovereign, his helpers or immediate subordinates, create before my eyes a setting of unconditioned freedom through reciprocal recognition (a dimension that Hegel forgot and which, moreover, does not need to be described here. Except to say that the ideal of reciprocal recognition of freedoms is never absent from a society built on oppression).

2d, the sovereign in his personal relationship to me constitutes me as one Other among Others. His will is both personal in that it emanates from him and universal in that it is identical for all the other slaves. Therefore it represents for me and for the others a type of *recognition*. We recognize ourselves as subjects of the king and creatures of God and we have obligations, rights, and reciprocal duties as bearers of the sovereign Will. This recognition is, in fact, the sovereign Will's recognition of itself on the basis of the ruin of our individual personalities. I recognize the other to the extent that I declare him to be inessential and precious, but just as the bearer of the sovereign Will, at the same time that he recognizes me in the same way. The ceremony of recognition is therefore, on the one hand, my grasping the sovereign Will outside of myself as a sacred object and the positing of reciprocal inessentiality. This is exactly what it is for Kant. I treat the freedom *in the other* as an end, even *over against* him. This means that I refuse to recognize his freedom as him.

3d, reciprocally, it is not *my* pure, simple recognition that constitutes the sovereign as sacred. He reflects others' recognition to me. This is a point I need to emphasize. Violence created, in effect, a factual state of affairs: the conqueror rules. But this state of affairs *by itself* has become a state of right because man is ambiguous and because there is no state of affairs, wherever one billets him, that, in one way or another, does not at the same time get transformed into a situation; that is, it is both surpassed and consecrated in some way.

One can never say often enough: revolutionaries never fight *just* against a state of affairs, they fight first of all and above all against a Right, and they have a bad conscience in the beginning because they are fighting in and against themselves. Because man is facticity and freedom, and because his freedom takes up his facticity. Violence puts him up against the wall—he has to consecrate it or die. And since general suicide is impracticable, in the end there is a collective acceptance. Resistance fighters: *a*) refused what the great mass of Frenchmen, that is, *their* fellows, accepted; *b*) grounded their refusal on underlying acceptances (to eat, take the trains, etc., which was to accept them as *means* of refusing elements of the social life constituted by German authority).

Thus, when I am brought before the sovereign, I find a *consecrated violence* before me. Consecrated by others. That is, the others among whom I live and to whom I am bound (the French, the bourgeois of Calais,²¹⁶ etc.) have *already* recognized it. And, insofar as I am *one of them*, that is, insofar as they look at me (internally, cf. my note on Society)²¹⁷ and insofar as for them I am an emanation of the Whole, they have recognized it *for me*. Hence my submission has *already taken place*, I only have to enter into it. So the sovereign appears to

216. Calais was saved from destruction in 1347 when six burghers led by Eustache de Saint-Pierre surrendered themselves as hostages to Edward II, ending a ten-month siege.

217. See above, p. 110.—Ed.

me as an emanation of *my* society. The orders he gives me are countersigned by the Totality of which I am a part. And I am already on the way to carrying them out.

Let us examine here what I am for myself and for others as a bearer of this order. 1st, as looked at by the sovereign, I was—in terms of the description attempted above of society—constituted as part of a synthetic whole. He presents me to myself as inhabited by this whole. But I do not really reach myself under this look since I never experience what the other makes of me. But since the order present in me is a perpetual look, I am perpetually inhabited by this phantom of the Whole, upon which I cannot found myself. By realizing the sovereign's will, I will realize the Totality in its submission.

So we find here a supplementary intentional layer: the accomplishing of the order is not just an effort to procure for oneself an unconditioned will by accepting heteronomy, it is not just an effort to identify oneself with the absolute will through impersonality, it is also an effort to realize, in and through the operation, the unity of oneself with the submissive collective.

2d, as a bearer of order, I am looked at by my fellows, members of the submissive collectivity, and all bearers of the same will. At this moment, I find myself in the element of the Other, but not as a person, but rather as an expression of the Totality for itself. And this recognition occurs inasmuch as the Totality is both immanence and activity. It is the *alienated cogito*. The Totality sees itself *from the outside* in seeing me and in that each member of this totality *looks at* me, I am not, I do not experience what it sees. Hence I am in the submissive collectivity, as *Dasein* is in the world.

3d, however there remains another element of union, the sovereign will. I see it in the other who sees it in me. I know he sees it in me as I see it in him, that it is inside him as it is inside me; better, that it is for him by way of me as it is directly for me. Indeed, *for me* it is an *object/look* and as I present it to him, it is a look insofar as I loan him my look, and an object insofar as I manifest it to his transcendence.

Hence the plurality of consciousnesses has found the union that will turn a detotalized totality into a true totality. The master's will is the one element that, whether outside or inside, is apprehended as identical. Hegel's ontological optimism claims that I find my consciousness unaltered in the other in the form $I = I$.²¹⁸ But I have shown that in fact there is a radical alteration through reversal. Because the sovereign's will is indeed identical in me and in the element of the other because it is already the other in me. And to the extent that I try to assume it and take it up for my own account, to the extent that the other does the same, we can entertain the common illusion of realizing the totality by an operation undertaken together with each other. But it is again a question of mystification because in reality we can only mutually take each other as inessen-

218. See *Being and Nothingness*, p. 213.

tial, that is, as pure and simple appearances *to be negated*. The result of the operation will be purely and simply *the rule of the Other*.

Hence the choice of obedience is the choice to realize the human realm in the world as the rule of the Other. In more complex and more organized cases, the sovereign may also create a myth and persuade us (himself too, by the way) that his unconditioned will has as its absolute project the good of his subjects or of man in general. It follows that it is my good that I realize by obeying. And I find myself united with others submissive to the realization of man's Good. Except that this Good preserves the ambiguous aspect of being wanted by a pure, gratuitous freedom (who could have wanted the Bad). What is more, it is decided for me as unconditioned. It is caprice in its unfathomableness. It is always impossible to decide whether it is my Good because it is Good, or if it is Good and my Good because it is the decision of the sovereign will. Furthermore, it is a Good that implies the sacrifice of my personhood as well as that of others. As pure sovereign will, it sets itself up on the ruins of us and by obeying I decide that *we* are inessential to our Good. It is man's Good without man. From this moment on, the forms of violence defined above (with regard to the leader in relation to his followers) are not far off, precisely because we are inessential and the Good is absolute. To realize man's Good as the Other's good, by making myself an other than myself so that a sacred object may be realized through my human death, is the goal of obedience.

In this description the master stays out of the circuit. If he becomes a symbol or reenters the circuit, humanity's alienation is total for it is the alienation of itself by itself. This is what happens when, in the democratic State, the master takes the game seriously and, forgetting the violent origins of his sovereignty, only pays attention to the contract of submission. In this case we have the following schematism. The master gets his sovereignty from our submission; he is invested with all power by our absolute will (manifested, for example, by an election). So it is our unconditioned will that confers his power on him. Better, it is our unconditioned will that will be *his* unconditioned will, his freedom behind freedom. Therefore he has as the foundation of his sovereignty the will of the Other.

Yet, on the other hand, he gives it back to his subjects who owe obedience as the look/object and the Other's will. My will comes back to me as the will of others and the unconditioned will of the Other (the leader). By this operation, the concrete wills in a situation pass over to being unconditioned and abstract, even while, as personal wills, they become impersonal. In this instance, I am inhabited by my will which has become *the Other's will*, but the other is also inhabited by his will as *the Other's will*. And so on to infinity, it is a snake that swallows its own tail, a complete circuit, each one alienating himself to the profit of the other. And if my will is identical with my neighbor's, it is precisely insofar as it is neither my will nor that of my neighbor but a will that is *always other*. The whole tumbles like a house of cards.

Of course everything would be perfect if, as democratic doctrine claims, *my* will was really returned to me intact by the sovereign. But in fact it gets inverted and alienated by the passage from one consciousness to another and finally it is no longer anyone's will. It is oppression for everyone.

The ethics of duty is in fact a type of human and social relationship, that of alienation that spins in a circle, of slavery without a master, of the sacrifice of man to the *human*. The reason for it is the structure of humanity as a detotalized totality. As a totality, it would be its law for itself in the autonomy of its free decision. Entirely detotalized, it would resolve itself into sovereign individuals. As detotalized totality, dreaming of totalization in its freedom, it always misses this because someone is always on the outside and this someone is always *himself*, no matter which self. So either I try to realize the Other's will *in me* and make it mine. Or I constitute myself for others as a sovereign will. The society of Duty *either* puts unity in God or in the Other, who puts it in the Other, etc. without there every being any possible justification.

Consequently we can understand the meaning of "demand," when it follows the refusal that stands opposed to a plea. It appears in a society whose major relationship is one of duty. The refusal that opposes me is the refusal of an individual man, a person. In effect, in rejecting me in my freedom, he makes me discover the other as a freedom facing my freedom. Two equal freedoms being like two flying buttresses pressing up against each other, the only thing to do is to find another principle of evaluation and we are left once again with force. But force (in the hypothesis under consideration) is a type of evaluation that will not be helpful any more. Therefore I will shift the question to another terrain. I will pretend that the freedom that refuses my grace, my demand, is a conditioned freedom, that it is situated and that its decrees are not autonomous. It is anger, hate, interest, in short all the elements by which *personal* and situated freedom affirms itself, that condition it. Therefore I will call upon *his true freedom*. This true freedom being unconditioned and therefore unable to be altered by motives or the situation, I will assume that it can only choose the Good.

Whence a new ambiguity: does it choose the Good, is the Good what it chooses? I cannot decide. In the end it is always the sovereign freedom that I was pleading to earlier. But instead of placing it in the concrete project that is opposed to me, I place it behind this project and posit it as disapproving the project *a priori* because it is secondary, personal, and not free. This sovereign freedom is thus negating as regards the concrete project, it reduces this project to the level of error and determinism. Therefore it is *another* freedom in the Other. What is more, its maxim is originally fixed. It is the one I presented above as prayer. So it is a matter of an atemporal freedom, alien to circumstances, indifferent to excuses and motives, fixed in its *a priori* decision. I ask it to do violence to the determined moods of my adversary whom I consider in his person and interests as inessential.

In other words, it is as though I refused to take into consideration what is concrete—in other words, as though I symbolically realized the death of the concrete freedom opposed to me. Therefore I install a substitute for the violence that I cannot exercise in the other's consciousness. But is it *I* who installs it? In fact, debased and captive as I am, I hardly possess any status for giving an order. My freedom has given evidence of its powerlessness. So in the moment that I symbolically nihilate the adversary, I also have to nihilate myself along with him. Just as in desire I create turmoil in order to disturb, here I throw myself into the inessential in order to drag my adversary along with me into the inessential. That is, I turn my desire into the essential and unconditioned and sacrifice myself to my desire.

In fact, it is all a trick. My desire is me, therefore I lose myself in order to find myself. And the desire to which I sacrifice myself in the case of a demand, I make the maxim of the Will of the Other, in me. That is, the unconditioned source of the Good. Our two persons get wiped out. All that remains is the unconditioned Will that is *the same* in both of us. I no longer address myself to the other, we are nothing more than appearances, but the unconditioned will addresses itself to itself through me in the other. What it affirms in me, it must want in the other, or rather one knows that it does want it, hidden by the thickets and briars of the passions. Therefore it is a pure affirmation of identity, which in becoming clear through the voice of unconditioned freedom *in the other* will produce the act. This signifies that God calls upon God by way of us. Or the sovereign calls upon the sovereign. In either case, it is the will of someone who is perpetually Other. So we have the Other present as a will/look in my adversary and also reducing this adversary to a nothingness. Through my demand I have alienated him.

But there is a trick here. For I say that I am addressing myself to what in him *is higher* and what is higher in him is not him. I propose to him the most unconditioned of freedoms, and this unconditioned freedom is heteronomy. I call upon an abstract power that gets its source from violence, in calling on the highest form of autonomy, and I install this violence in him while pretending also to install it in me. But I have no means of installing this violence. It is just that we are in an alienated world of duty (we are assuming) where as soon as the *Other* appears, he overthrows every concrete state of affairs as negative freedom. In this world, it suffices to make the Other appear that everyone recognize him in themselves. If the Other is in me, alive, at this moment, he is in everyone since he is the same Other in everyone. Therefore I think of him as my sovereign requiring something of me in constituting me as his representative. Therefore, *for his use*, I adopt the external attitude of the demand. At the same time, I treat our differences as inessential. Since our projects which oppose us to each other are not free formations, we are *the same* in that we both possess the same unconditioned spontaneity. Duty in him, duty in me, his right, my right, his demand, my demand are one and the same thing. Therefore I am no

longer *opposed* to him. The demand is apparently an armistice, but underlying it is violence. Therefore it is both violence and a trick at the same time. Total alienation. Suppression of the human world, absolute subordination of man to his ends posited as transcendent, as well as to a will, which is that of no one, which I make use of as if it were my own, treating man as a means under the banner of treating him as an end.

2. The Appeal, Acceptance, and Refusal

An appeal is a request made by someone to someone in the name of something. Therefore its structure is of the same type as the demand. Except that here the differences begin: The appeal is the recognition of a personal freedom in a situation by a personal freedom in a situation. It takes place starting from some proposed operation, that is, as given by the one who appeals to the one who is appealed to, in the name of ends to want and construct, conditional ends that presuppose means and depend upon them. It is an appeal for a common operation, it is not based on a given solidarity but on a solidarity to be built through the operation in common. The goals are finite but at the same time imply temporalization and the future. The appeal is the unveiling of a situation and it is on the basis of this unveiling that it hopes to incline the other's will to want what it wants. It presents itself as firm but not immutable. This indicates that he accepts in principle the possibility of modifying itself on the basis of an unveiling that goes in the other direction and that is reciprocal. These are the considerations I need to develop.

An appeal is first of all the recognition of diversity. I do not address myself to a freedom behind a freedom that would be *the same* in the other and in me. I do not even conceive that such a freedom exists. Hence I do not consider that our joining together is given in the first instance (identity) and I do not require an act *in the name of* some prior identity. On the contrary, I conceive the act that I am asking for will be expressly destined to create a solidarity and a unity that *do not yet exist*. My request is always made *taking into account the circumstances*. If I ask for information from a shopkeeper, I take account of her preoccupations, I try to be quick and precise, and my attitude warns her that I know in advance that I have surprised her in the middle of her preoccupations, at the heart of a situation. From the beginning, I conceive that this very situation may be one that prevents her from answering me. I shall not be offended if she replies, "excuse me, I am too busy to take care of you." But this also signifies that I accept in advance that her project may be *for her* exclusive of my own. In other words, I recognize her ends as well founded. However, this in no way signifies that I accept them for me, otherwise they would be obligatory. On the contrary, it is because I respect the individual and personal will of the Other *a priori*. I take it that what is wanted by one freedom must be accepted as such

by other freedoms, simply because it is a freedom that wants it. Hence I start from the full recognition of the detotalization of totality.

But what is the ground of this recognition? Value. I recognize: 1st, that a freedom exists only in pursuing an end; 2d, that it is desirable that this *operation* be carried out because, at the limit of the operation, there is an identification of the freedom For-itself with the realized end, which is the *value*. Therefore I posit in principle that every end *has* a value and that every human activity is haunted by value. I also thereby posit in principle that it is always better that a value, whatever it may be, should be realized in the world. This is “the general and formal thesis” that Scheler, following Brentano, had already established in terms of the following three axioms: “1st, the existence of a positive value is itself a positive value. 2d, the existence of a negative value is itself a negative value. 3d, the nonexistence of a negative value is itself a positive value.”²¹⁹

This is the origin of what I will call the *help* that is originally gratuitous and disinterested. One *first* has a tendency to help someone to pursue and realize his end, whatever it may be. This is a favorable prejudgment. *Afterwards*, but only afterwards, comes the idea that this end may be incompatible with my own ends or with a system of values to which I adhere. What we have is a *willingness to oblige*, whose extent is infinitely wider than we may believe and whose principle is: every end is good, as a future realization of value, until the contrary is demonstrated. If I ask a passerby to indicate a street to me, it may be in order to steal something or to commit a crime. Distrust would have the passerby assure himself that my goals are not bad ones. He does not do so. Not because he necessarily assumes that these goals are *moral*, but because *a priori* he posits that it is good that a goal be attained. Better still, often *his* goal becomes *my* goal: I go back to see if he did “turn left,” etc. People can take an interest, intervene. A human goal has value in itself.

It should be noted that I can take another attitude toward a stranger’s goal: consider it as secondary, vain, and troubling for my values as well. In this case, I *transcend* the Other’s activity toward my ends. The Other becomes *transcended transcendence* and the pursuit of his end becomes a *fact*. “He collects stamps,” one says with a smile. In this moment, I make myself aware of the vanity of any goal that is not my own. Except this signifies, in this case, that it is not the operation that makes the value spring up but the value that justifies the operation.

219. Cf. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value*, p. 27; cf. *ibid.*, p. 82 for the reference to Brentano. Sartre in fact does not cite the second of what are actually four axioms: “The non-existence of a positive value is itself a negative value” (*ibid.*, p. 27). Franz Brentano (1838–1917) was a German philosopher whose discussion of the intentionality of consciousness influenced the subsequent phenomenological movement. See his *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, ed. Oskar Kraus, trans. Roderick M. Chisholm and Elizabeth Hughes Schneewind (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), and *The Foundation and Construction of Ethics*, trans. Elizabeth Hughes Schneewind (New York: Humanities Press, 1973).

In other words, the value becomes something unconditioned, an absolute, and I deny the possibility of surpassing *my* values. We have the spirit of seriousness.

Helpfulness necessarily implies *a refusal to transcend*. The Other's activity sketches out an end, that is, a future. This end is not completely revealed to me. I do not adhere to it, owing to its not *existing* for me, I do not transcend it because I take my own ends seriously. It is between parentheses. What counts, at this level, is its formal character of being an end. Here the problem of comprehension arises. It has been badly posed and is quite simple: to explain is to clarify by causes, to comprehend is to clarify by ends.

Jaspers's examples are all reducible to this model.²²⁰ *To comprehend* how family oppression engenders hypocrisy in a subject is to follow the operation of the subject positing his own ends in surpassing that oppression and, in particular, through the means that are at his disposal. Not to comprehend is to posit the end as unconditioned. For example, to declare, one *has* to rebel against family oppression. *To comprehend* the delirium of the general paralytic is, starting from the givens of the situation (body, ideas of grandeur, etc.), to see how the sick person reacts by positing his ends (over compensation, etc.). Psychoanalysis is a study in comprehension that conceals itself behind an analytic and explanatory myth. To comprehend the activity of a political man is to carry out along with him the project of a future starting from the present.

But it is not true, as Malraux puts it, that total comprehension implies adopting the end.²²¹ Certainly on the foundation of comprehension a new act can intervene which is this assumption. But this act is not necessary to comprehension and, on the contrary, if it does arise, comprehension gives way to something else, namely, an operation in common. Besides, a set of circumstances may *a priori* prevent comprehension from being followed by adoption. For example, historical withdrawal. I can comprehend the attitude of Plato or Aristotle regarding slaves, but it is impossible for me to adopt it since there no longer is slavery. To say, "in his place I would have done the same thing," is completely formal, since I am not nor will I be in his place.

In its structure, comprehension implies the refusal of adoption as transcending the end. However, it is not contemplative, it is not the simple intuition of a system of means organized toward some end. It is *sympathetic*. It is this sympathy that we need to describe. Comprehension is an original structure of the perception of the Other. I explained what I mean by this in *Being and Nothingness*.²²² I perceive a gesture on the basis of its end. But the end is in the world. I see a man walking, in the street, amidst the stores. His presence can be explained starting from this, but his movements transform the world around me. There

220. See n. 13.

221. André Malraux (1901–1976), French novelist, resistance fighter, art historian; he became a member of Charles de Gaulle's postwar government and was later minister of cultural affairs from 1958 to 1969, again under De Gaulle.

222. See the discussion of the "body-for-others" in *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 339–51.

is a double action. That man running after a bus, I immediately comprehend his purpose by way of the bus. But reciprocally the bus can be a structure of my comprehension only by manifesting itself to me as an end. And this end has a peculiar aspect. Its structure of being an end cannot be that of being a *fact*. I do not grasp an end in the world as I do a table. It is *yet to come*, something that hasn't been done yet. It is not a question of a prediction as when I see a tile break loose from a roof. It is an end only as the future of a freedom that *has to do it*. And it can appear to me as an end only because I have a preontological comprehension of the original structure of every end.

In other words, in grasping another's end, there is a preontological comprehension of the other's freedom by my freedom. But this comprehension is not intuitive, hence it presupposes an active, original intention that is the basis of its revelation. The other's end can appear to me as an end only in and through the indication of my adopting that end. This is what gives a meaning to the other's operation, but reciprocally it is what gets unveiled in that operation, which means that I have to outrun that operation in my own willing in order to give it a meaning. I throw myself forward with that man toward the bus. In this, we are not to understand just that I mime the operation, but that I engage myself in it.

However, in another sense, this end is not *mine*. Let us immediately note that every end is dizzying for a freedom because it proposes itself as a creation to carry out and as a means of making being exist, and because it can appear only to a freedom that roughs it out. In a sense, this end that exists for me comes from me, it exists through me, since I have to project it in order to grasp it, therefore it is upheld in being by my freedom. And this fascination for some people can turn into a waxy malleability as regards the ends of others.

Imitation. It is absurd to assume that seeing the *act* gives rise to the imitation by itself. Or as some psychologists put it, that the perception of certain muscular contractions engenders the same contractions in me. It is true that I can perceive some movements only by sketching them out myself (one speaks the words in one's own throat while listening to them), but these movements have a meaning for me only as already oriented toward an end, their goal is to unveil this end. Thus the imitator is fascinated by other's end precisely because he has to uphold it in being in order to comprehend it. And, all at once, he realizes it, carried away by his movement. But normally this end *is not* my end, it is not proposed to my situation, it is not integratable with my projects. Better, it is *stolen* from me. It is, in effect, originally perceived as *another's* end. The act of perceiving it as another's end is not distinguished from the act of perceiving it as an end.

This description apparently reveals what happens in other people's look. In their look directed toward an object in my universe, there is something like a flight of the object which stays there where I see it and yet flees me into a secret dimension that it turns toward the other. Except there is one essential difference: in the case of the look of others, the object is something transcendent that has

no need of me *to be* and that I make exist (make exist from being) *for me*, the other steals it from me by inserting into his existence a layer of existence that is invisible in principle and that gets constituted in relation to me as a *being*: a being-in-principle-beyond-reach.

Such is not the case with others' ends. For the end exists only in the other's project and I discover it in this project and in order to make sense of this project. Hence, instead of being given to me in its being and as inaccessible in one of its existential structures, it is accessible to me in the existential movement by which I posit it, and it is through its existence for the other, that is, through his being-for-me, that it escapes me. For me, it is just a pure-future-to-be-realized. But since this pure-future-to-be-realized is *for another*, its existence for another who is not me becomes for me its *being* or its objectivity. And this being escapes me. Indeed, insofar as it is to be realized by another, its realization becomes for me an indifferent event of this world that may or may not happen. Depending on how fast he runs, he will or will not catch the bus.

In this sense, the end will be (or will not be) as a pure future. Exactly as I can predict whether the ball that is rolling on an inclined plane will be stopped by a nail or not depending on the path that the folds in the cloth on the plane impose upon it.

At this level, the other's end has a contradictory structure. I want it and do not want it. While I maintain it as an end through an express willing, it is nothing more than a future whose realization I passively contemplate. And since it is me who makes it exist in the world as an objective end, I make it exist for the one who steals it from me, I mystify myself. To the extent that I uphold it through my will, I make it appear there like the shadow of a value. But to the extent that it is objectively taken as a fact of this world (it is very important to that man that he catch the bus), the indicated value vanishes, it is nothing more than a fact.

Before this value which is a Being at the same time, this Ought-to-be which is only a Not Yet Being or a Will Be, before this contradiction which gives me a painful and contradictory feeling of my powerlessness, I can choose *three attitudes*: the first is to transcend everything toward my own ends, that is, to turn the man's freedom into a pure quality, to bottle it up so that it only applies to the proposed end, to make the whole a factual part of the universe. There is a bus and a man running after it, and I limit myself to making this being exist as simply being revealed. In this way I reduce and circumscribe the problem, locking it up by outlining a tiny self-destructive circuit in the universe: man-bus. With this, I *no longer understand* (for ex., "I *do not understand* why anyone would risk a tumble to catch a bus. He can take the next one"). I have suppressed the other's freedom, which bothered me, but I have also made the values and ends that have sprung up into the world disappear. I have cheated. Inauthenticity. What is more, I am dissatisfied since in the very act of denying comprehension, comprehension is remorselessly there.

The second attitude consists in stealing his end from the other, that is, appropriating it for myself by setting it aside. Like the kibitzer who plays your game for you, gives you advice without your asking, which is to say, takes you for an instrument and ends up taking the cards from your hands. For someone like this, it is a matter of denying the other's freedom by substituting his own and making the value and the end part of his own universe. And since the end did not spring up as a correlate of his own freedom, it has the peculiar character of being entirely *existential* (that is, the noematic correlate of a free determination) and, at the same time, *being* (as the correlative of the other's willing). It is prior to the arrival of the kibitzer and it will persist if he leaves. However, he has made it entirely his own in negating the value of the freedom that upholds it in being. With this, *the being* of the end becomes *a priori*: it is the spirit of seriousness that takes value as a *being* [*étant*] which must however be wanted and willed. Another form of inauthenticity.

The only authentic form of willing here consists in wanting the end to be realized by the other. And wanting here consists in engaging oneself in the operation. But not to do it oneself, rather to modify the situation so that the other can do it. Indeed in so doing, I keep my *comprehension* since, in effect, I in no way negate the value and the end by surpassing them, but, on the other hand, I preserve their autonomy for them in relation to me. I do not steal them from anyone, they are not mine. Yet I do surpass and destroy their *factual* aspect. The reaching of the goal will no longer be an event for me that does not concern me. I contribute to *its happening* (or, in some cases, I turn away from my own ends so as not to prevent its happening).

But with this I am put in such a position that I *recognize* the other's freedom without being pierced [by] a look. In effect: I posit that his end is my end, but not because it is an unconditioned end or one that I had first posited. Because he posited it as an end. Except this in no way signifies that I recognize his freedom as having an unconditioned power over my own freedom. On the contrary, it is an alien freedom, which is *in difficulty*, and not at all the all-powerful freedom of the sovereign. And far from it being the end—however it is conceived—that gives its price to the other's freedom, on the contrary, it is this freedom that gives the end its value. This means that I want this end only as the other wants it and I conceive, in the very moment that I set out to help him, that this end holds only because he wants it and that it ought not to be pursued by me if he stops wanting it. In this way, it has for me, in its very alienness, the same aspect of *Unselbständigkeit* as my own ends. It is conditional, I do not alienate my will to it, nor do I alienate the other's.

And since I want to realize that end only because the other wants it, his acts are not conceived by me as instruments for realizing it, instead it is he who surpasses my acts toward his end. If I do something to assist him, I am his instrument in my very facticity, and he surpasses me toward his end. Hence I grasp him as a movement that surpasses me toward his end. Instead of confront-

ing his freedom and transcending it by looking at it, I see it move through me toward its end. Yet, on the other hand, I am not transcended by this freedom since I freely adopt his end, and I entrust it with continuing toward its goals, which are my own to the extent that it realizes them, also because I have generously given my help *beyond any bargaining* and outside of my own ends, which remain intact. In a word, I am both outside and inside this end. The other's freedom is both the prolonging of my freedom in the dimension of otherness—since it pursues the end that I pursue—and what separates this end from me, takes it up, and maintains it.

But it does not distinguish itself from me in terms of *conflict*, that is, through an opposition where each For-itself denies that it is the Other and constitutes the other as an object, being an active negation insofar as it denies that the other is it and a passive negation insofar as the other denies his identity with it.²²³ On the contrary, I am a *starting point*, that is, the other denies me as though he emanated from me, as though he took his first step from me, and, in this negation for the proposed *end*, continued and recognized me. However, this recognition is not alienation since he recognizes me as freely wanting the end that he wants but wanting it for him. So he freely bears my will toward the end that he freely wants. For me, he is my freedom as born from itself and as separated from itself through scissiparity. Rather than *clashing with it*, he detaches himself from it toward . . . Negation no longer has the sense of going against but of going further. He surpasses my facticity while retaining it in himself. He confers a future upon me in another dimension.

As for me, I have totally reclaimed the end without its having become *my* end because the other's pursuit of this end has become my end. It is no longer just something that happens, I take an interest in it. Whether my taking an interest will be worth it or not depends on the other. By helping him, I have realized an operation in which I have projected myself. In this way he carries me toward the indefinite future of his freedom, but in this future he saves me by bearing me along toward an end that I approve of. And in the outcome of his operation there will be a structure that is mine, although the operation is totally his. So I will be sheltered from the freedom of others in his freedom.

As for the basis of my choice to help him, it is now clear: that the world have an infinity of free and finite futures each of which is directly projected by a free will and indirectly upheld by the willing of all the others, in that each wants the concrete freedom of the other, that is, does not want it in its abstract form of universality but, on the contrary, in its concrete and limited form; such is the maxim of my action. To want a value to be realized not because it is mine, not because it is a value, but because it is a value for someone on earth; to want others to make being exist in the world even if in principle the existential

223. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre had maintained that "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (p. 364).

unveiling so brought about is stolen from me; to have a multidimensional future perpetually come into the world, to replace the closed-off and subjective totality as the ideal of unity by an open diversity of outward movements building on one another is in every case to posit that freedom is worth more than unfreedom.

An appeal refers to this ethical position. It does not *require* that one adopt its principle, not because it does not consider this principle as absolute, but because if it did present this recourse to principle as a demand, it would address itself as one unconditioned freedom to another and it would reduce the concrete freedom to which it is addressed to an alienated one, hence to a form of unfreedom. But in fact, it knows that every one of the other's ends gets outlined as a proposition since the *creation* it comes from is a value for all freedom and since the other's end can be grasped in the world only by a comprehension that already half posits it as desirable for the one who comprehends it.

An appeal, therefore is an effort to unveil the end even further, to elucidate it before others, it is a prolonging of the act by which one posits the end, just as comprehension is naturally prolonged by helping. By merely positing my end in the world, I already incite the other's freedom. An appeal emphasizes this positing of an end, that is, it makes the end a manifestation of itself, a language. It is no longer just an end posited by me, it is posited for the other in the very movement that posits it for me. It is not yet a question of the appeal for recognition that will be contained in the outcome, properly speaking, of the *operation*. For there is nothing *finite* yet to recognize. Just an appeal to comprehend the project.

Yet at the same time the appeal is a recognition that the project has an outside, that is, that it exists for others, and the appeal is *consignment* in the proper sense of the term, that is, I consign my enterprise to the other. I freely manifest it to his freedom. Except that the appeal does not propose the end to the paralyzing look of the *nur verweilen bei*, which would turn it into an object pure and simple. It presents it through an act of freedom as a freely posited end. In this sense, the appeal is *generosity*.

In every appeal there is a gift. In the first place, there is a refusal to consider the original conflict between freedoms by way of the look as something impossible to surpass. There is a gift of my end to the other's freedom in confidence. There is an acceptance that my operation will not be realized by me alone; that is, acceptance: 1st, that the other haunts my realized end, that is, haunts me inasmuch as I announce what I am through the object (hence a beginning to the moral conversion that will consist in preferring that my creation exist as something independent and in resigning myself to losing myself and to alienating myself to the profit of this creation without it ceasing to be conditional); 2d, that the other transcends me with all his freedom but *toward my end*, that is, I accept being traversed in my freedom toward my end by the other's freedom. But this gift is also a request. It asks to be understood in its turn. In a word, in the appeal there is a twofold structure. Through the first structure I reinforce and

elucidate the pure positing of my end by constituting it for the other; through the second structure, in fixing upon the other's comprehension as a secondary end, I posit the elucidation of my end as an end and I ask the other to comprehend my appeal as an appeal, that is, to comprehend that my end is freely to give him my end.

This is so true that there are appeals made in bad faith. For example, when I exaggerate my visible efforts and clearly manifest my intention of reaching some objective but without addressing myself to the other, without speaking to him, without giving any sign of taking account of his existence. So that, for myself, I have no feeling of having solicited his help, so that it can come to me like a gratuitous gift of chance, as a *fact*, without my having to recognize and accept it. Therefore it will be assimilable at that moment to one of those unforeseen, abrupt modifications of a situation that makes things *easier* than one had thought (one believed that after this peak, there would be one more to climb hidden behind the first one, and suddenly one sees, having reached the first peak, that there is just a quarter hour of easy climbing to reach the summit), without these abrupt objective changes alienating me from the world in the least or taking away that aspect of the end of my operation of being *mine*.

This appeal in bad faith lacks the structure of the gift, that is, the recognition of the other's freedom. The true appeal is a risk. The aforementioned appeal made in bad faith includes within itself its own misfortune because in refusing the risk it constitutes itself entirely as an object in the other's eyes. By not making its request loyally, it makes itself wholly transcendent and accepts the other's responding out of pity, because it can then assume that pity is an induced or provoked feeling, hence something not free. Therefore it abases itself to the rank of objects in order to abase the other to the rank of the determined. In this way, what is human collapses into nature and even the end loses its aspect of being an end.

The manifest decision of turning into an object for some freedom implies, on the contrary: 1st, the recognition of the other freedom by me; 2d, consent to the risk that this recognition will be unilateral; 3d, a commitment, on the hypothesis of this unilateralness, not to submit my freedom to the other (as in the case of prayer) or the other's freedom to my own (threats, demands); 4th, the pure and simple request that this risk appear to the other as freely chosen and that this gift of my end appear as freely made; 5th, but since the other cannot *recognize* this freedom that gives something through his look, since the look is paralyzing, and since he has to comprehend through taking up this gift and surpassing it, the comprehension that I ask for can only be realized in and through the help he gives. And the foundation of this appeal is the two following principles of my freedom: 1st, the other's freedom can want my freedom only if my freedom wants that of the other, for it then wants the free recognition of its freedom by some other freedom; 2d, freedom exists only in *giving*, it devotes itself to *giving itself*.

But the appeal is first of all concrete, not abstract recognition of the other. What I recognize is not an unconditioned freedom set above any and all situations. To recognize such a freedom would be a trick of bad faith disguised as a plea or a demand and would be *violence* since it tries to separate the other's freedom from his situation. In reality, to recognize the other's freedom concretely is to recognize it in terms of its own ends, along with the difficulties it experiences and its finitude, it is *to comprehend it*.

If I admit in my very appeal that it may not be heard, it is not in the name of the freedom of indifference, which would be placed above every yes and no. Rather it is because I recognize that the other's freedom is directed toward its own ends and may not suffice to realize them. In this way I recognize in a much deeper way the unconditionality of freedom than if I immediately posit this as one of its qualities, since in recognizing that it may exhaust itself in making a world exist wherein its ends are to be realized, I posit that it is always capable of finding sufficient resources within itself to help me make a world exist wherein my ends will be realized.

And since I neither demand nor plead, since, on the contrary, I recognize the concrete situation, I count all the more on the gratuity of the other's freedom. But at the start, I recognize that my end has to be conditional for the other as it is for me. That is, that it must always be possible for the other to refuse to help if the means used in such help will alter his own ends. However, reciprocally, I posit in my absolute confidence in freedom that, in the case of a conflict between his ends and mine (not a direct conflict but indirect conflict through the intermediary of our means), it is always possible for the power of the other's freedom to subordinate his ends to the realization of my ends. (For ex., the people who say, "I would like to help you more but do not have the time—oh, what the heck, I'll do this work tomorrow and come with you.") And it is precisely in being a full comprehension of the other's ends and situation that the appeal manifests itself to the other as freedom.

In fact, the initial moment of the appeal is already almost a kind of help to the other: "I know you have a lot of work right now, I know that you have political, financial, etc. difficulties. However . . ." A kind of quasi help because: 1st, through him I comprehend his possible refusal. I "put him at ease" so that he can refuse, as we say. "Be frank with me. Either yes or no. I will accept your refusal as legitimate." In an appeal one recognizes the total gratuity of one's request without shame. But this gratuity is exactly what makes it something ethical. It is not the idea that one *ought* always to raise himself above his own situation over the ruins of his own personhood, but rather that one *can* always enrich himself by joining to his ends an interest in new ends.

2d, in the appeal itself there is adhesion to the ends pursued by the other. I find it good that he should have his own ends. I do not ask him to give them up, I uphold them in their concrete content through my approbation. This is why an appeal is always moving. Because it is a gift, because it is the revelation

of a freedom in difficulty, because it is the recognition of the infinite freedom of the other, because it already helps and upholds the other's operation.

It is at this point that there can be a roundabout way of helping people other than by appealing to them. There is even a reciprocity of gratitude in many cases. I thank the other for having helped me, but he thanks me for having appealed to him, for having "done him the honor" of thinking of him for this task. Many spontaneous antipathies grounded on misunderstandings have disappeared on the occasion of an appeal. What is more, I do not address my appeals to someone whose ends I do not approve of. In a word, I do not ask for help from someone whom I do not wish to help.

The appeal, in effect, is a promise of reciprocity. It is understood that the person I appeal to may appeal to me in return. Not as some say, through some absurd *lex talonis* [the law of an eye for an eye], but because the help is already contained in the appeal. In a sense all the help is in the appeal and all the appeal in the help, it is circumstances alone that will decide which structure comes to light. I can *demand* of someone that he favor my projects because I neglect his person and his ends in order to address myself to an absolute freedom behind him, said to be "pure." Instead I appeal to a freedom that, even in the gratuity of its help, remains marked by its facticity and compromised by its ends. The freedom appealed to is unfathomable and personal at the same time.

If I appeal for help to the attorney general, who asks for people's heads, whereas I am horrified by the death penalty, I know that even if he does find the time to help me, his freedom will be committed to a pathway that runs lateral to its usual direction. But, at the same time, I know that this is a physical image of reality, therefore a deforming one. Even while helping me, this image upholds his ends in being. It is in a world where these ends must be realized that this image helps me realize my own. And in accepting his help, I accept this world, therefore I help him to realize it. I confer a *right* on him, as in submission. So this pure freedom comes to me burdened by all the deaths it has asked for and obtained. No doubt there are extreme cases where I would appeal to him, but *either* I alienate myself in favor of a personal end, so that (at the limit) I prefer life to freedom and any means is a good one, *or* the end to me seems indifferent in itself to the means, so that we enter into the sphere of unconditioned ends, of violence, of demands; *or*, finally, my request for help was a disguised form of help itself and through it I want to aid him to change his own ends.

Finally, I do not address my appeals to someone whose situation is so different from mine that I can not comprehend it nor evaluate the degree of difficulty that his helping me would involve, if he should decide to do so. There are *incomprehensible* situations. That of the soldier at the front for the civilian, that of the tubercular patient for the healthy person, that of someone tortured for those who have not experienced torture, that of the deported person, that of the starving unemployed.

Differences of class, of nationality, of condition form limits to the appeal in its nature. And, for the most part, these are limits whose origins lie in freedom. With the result that the appeal in itself, even while being a relation of one person to another, contains the outlines of a world where each person can call upon all the others. Often, however, this structure is veiled over by bad faith, even if the appeal is sincere. One appeals to one's equal and in a society of castes or classes, this appeal tends to reinforce the ties of caste or class.

An authentic appeal therefore has to be conscious of being a surpassing of every inequality of condition toward a human world where any appeal of anyone to anyone will always be possible. So the essential characteristic of the appeal is that it addresses itself to freedom and that it proposes to this freedom, not some end that may seduce it by its content, but rather to help another freedom in some situation—and to do so not to realize unity through a general heteronomy of freedoms (the demand), nor some common work, but rather to recognize differences and bring them into liaison through this very recognition. What has to be realized here is a supple and shifting unity in diversity, a diversity that will never be a transcendent *given* but rather a conscious intention to unite, and that will itself be in question in its being.

Finally, the appeal is the recognition of ambiguity, since it recognizes the other freedom's being in a situation, the conditioned character of his ends, and the unconditionality of his freedom. With this, the appeal is itself a form of *reciprocity* from the moment it springs up.

The structure the appeal refers to and that at first is a means to obtain the end, but that can become an end itself, is the overlapping of two freedoms in the moment of helping. I am on the platform of the bus and I extend my hand to help the person running after the bus to get on board. In extending my hand I am a form of activity. In my very act of extending my hand my intention of helping is manifested. Therefore I am the original source of my act and I am conscious of being so. Furthermore there is not a purely symbolic act of reaching out here, there is an adjustment of the act to the need. I reach out at the precise moment when it is helpful, at just the right height (which depends on the height of the runner), I prepare myself (perhaps by holding on to the bar) to receive a given load, and I set up a relation between my hypothetical evaluation of the runner's weight and my own strength. Therefore the act itself is a judgment, an evaluation of the situation in terms of an end. In this movement, the other is reduced to his facticity, it is that body that is going to take hold of my hand and that I will have to pull toward me, and the effort I will make to do this is no different than that which I will use for lifting a sack of coal.

But, on the other hand, I am a *gift*, that is, this hand that I am stretching out is there to be taken. At first glance and in its initial structure, it is there for him to grab like any pole or hand hold in the world. The act consisted in making a supplementary hand hold appear in the universe. So the result of this gift was my making myself a passivity in the world. What is more, I extend this hand

toward him so that he will transform it into a body for others, so that he will take hold of it like a drowning man who clings to a branch, and so that he perceives it just like a branch. I freely make myself a passivity. The help here is a *passion*, an incarnation.

And, furthermore, in this gift of myself, I do not seek my own ends, rather I submit myself to his. His future and his goal are in fact beyond me in time and behind me in space. It is that place behind me on the platform that he covets. So I am exposing myself to a freedom that pierces me, that grasps me as an instrument of its own future. Freedom that takes the other both as an object when it evaluates his weight, size, and course, and that feels itself free to transcend the other's end and finally to reduce it to the small, vain galloping of an automaton and that, through its refusal of transcendence, through its active comprehension, bit by bit turns itself into passivity, instrumentality, even passion, the freer it is. The process of recognizing the other's freedom penetrates his facticity with freedom in penetrating my freedom with facticity.

Yet, reciprocally, the other does not grasp my hand as a fist. He has interpreted my gesture. He counts on my resistance to his weight, he is well aware that this hand is not put forth inadvertently and that I will not pull it back in surprise if he takes hold of it. Something new has appeared for him in his situation, an unexpected, undetermined *creation*, a first beginning that modifies this situation for him from top to bottom by leading him to make a new choice. And in and through this outstretched hand he suddenly *comprehends* another's end. The hand is outstretched *so that* he should take hold of it. He may not do so (for example, if he recognizes an enemy in the person holding out his hand, an adversary, he will prefer to catch hold of the steps by himself, at the price of a greater effort, that is, to realize the act as he had conceived of it in the first place, completely neglecting the other's end as though he had not seen it or understood it. "I won't give him the pleasure." Or, if it is too difficult, he may even give up catching the bus at this price). If he does do so, he is conscious of making an alien end exist, an end set before him by another freedom. He is conscious of helping this freedom to help him.

As for me who reach out my hand, I am conscious of this. Ordinary language is filled with expressions like: you can't help someone who doesn't want to be helped; heaven helps those who help themselves, allow me to help you, which indicate this. Besides, frequently, for generous people whom one is helping, the goal becomes: make the realization of this help as easy as possible, be an efficacious agent in realizing the other's end, recognizing his *passion*.

Therefore the man who is running will accept the help, make it his goal, changing the rhythm of his course and the position of his body to make it as easy as possible to be helped. He *makes a gift of his person* to the one who is helping him, to allow him to carry out his helping. And, in a sense, he makes himself a passion. And I who am extending my hand know it. Yet, at the same time, once again I rely on his freedom. I count on his *grasping* my hand. I also

count on his doing everything he can to make himself less of a load and, for example, on his taking the bar with his left hand, pulling on it as much as he pulls on my hand. (There are people who totally turn themselves into objects as soon as they are helped, through masochism, seizing the occasion in order to put themselves entirely under a sovereign will that conceals their freedom from them and in order to hand over to the other the concern for maintaining their ends. But they are distasteful because it is a freedom that one wants to help. To reject the outstretched hand or to abandon oneself to the other like a sack are two ways of destroying the *help*—the former by refusing to *comprehend*, the latter by ceasing to uphold his ends and charging the other with upholding them, so that the other is no longer helping another to realize his ends but serves as an instrument for realizing his own ends.)

And he, for another thing, will grasp my hand as a means/freedom. This object in his world, in the middle of its setting, sixty centimeters away from him, will close around him and pull him toward it as much as he pulls on the object as soon as he snatches it. He does not take it as a mere handhold to pull on in order to increase his speed, but as *also* an active freedom that grasps him and pulls him. At this moment the *human relation of helping* exists.

Consider A and B. A runs toward the bus, B, on the platform, extends his hand. A sees spring up by a *miracle*, in the total gratuitousness of a freedom, an instrument between himself and his end. In grasping it as an instrument, he contributes to realizing his own project, hence to imprinting his freedom on the world. But in so doing he realizes an end proposed by the other, for what is a means for A is an end for B. So B's end being to serve as an instrument, A is an instrument for B in that he takes him as an instrument, that is, in that he pursues his end. And the instrument manifests itself as an end in taking hold of A's hand and pulling it. Here A is aware of his passivity, he feels himself in question for a freedom, he is the object that one looks at, evaluates, and pulls. But this does not happen against his freedom and outside of it, since the instrument gets manifested in the middle of a world illumined by A's end and in the circuit of A's project toward his ends, and since it joins A to his ends.

In other words, A unveils the other's freedom through his passion and comprehension, but he does not unveil it as a transcendence/object opposed to his freedom, nor as a transcendence/subject that paralyzes him. He unveils it at the heart of his own freedom as a free movement accompanying him toward his ends, he unveils it even in and through the perpetual *cogito* that reveals his freedom to him. He feels himself *tugged toward his own ends*, but this happens to the extent that he runs after them and the more he runs, the more he is drawn toward them, he feels his freedom as soliciting the other's freedom at the same time that he feels the other's freedom doing the same to him. Finally, when the two hands grip each other, he realizes the unity of two freedoms in a single perception. But this unity, of a unique type, is not a fusion of the two of them, any more than it is the enslavement of the one by the other. It is an

existential reality of a diasporic type of reflective units. Each freedom is wholly in the other one. B's freedom is at the heart of my freedom as the movement, stemming from my movement, and yet autonomous, that pulls against my pulling, that searches me out down to my facticity yet that is facticity for me, and that I make exist as freedom by seeking it out in its facticity.

Note one capital fact here. Help, in its facticity, is opposition overcome, that is, it makes use of the conflict between freedoms. You never help to help by letting yourself be helped, but—on the corporeal plane—by *grasping* this help, that is, by resisting its tendency to transform you into an object. If I push when someone pulls me, if I pull when someone pushes me, I am an *enemy*: jujitsu. (I can pull *an object* that someone is pushing.) If someone has to help me, I have to pull on the person pulling me, that is, I go in the opposite direction—the form of a struggle overcome. So the immediate consent that descends into the body is a traitor and a form of struggle, whereas loyal acceptance of the offered help is a natural struggle overcome and made use of.

Return to this: study the *corporeal* bases of violence. Human bodies are made in such a way that they have to *oppose* one another and it requires an interposed passivity (a being-in-itself within the world) for them to be able to coordinate their efforts harmoniously. Here the passivity surrounds them but does not interpose itself. The bodies confront each other, I make the movement of resistance that I make if I do not want to be pulled on, but rather mean to pull on my adversary. He does the same thing. But this opposition as overcome reveals, in the perceptive intuition of the hands that pull each other, their double freedom. I make myself pulled by pulling, so my freedom senses a freedom that gets engendered in terms of it and which surpasses it toward my ends. There is a reciprocal inciting of each freedom and each one is both the origin of the other and transcended by it. And each freedom possess that part of the other that escapes it, with the same movement turning back on itself and possessing it. At the same time, the whole movement slips toward the same end, and this sliding itself is like the outline of an identification of the freedoms. Everything happens as though one single freedom, which is itself, is external to itself in itself, and is outside of itself, objective and subjective, all at the same time, both giving itself its facticity and escaping it at the same time, a synthesis of being-in-itself and being-for-itself, both taking itself up and losing itself, sliding along as a broad temporalizing movement enveloping the existed time of subjectivity and the objective time of the other, toward an end that it gives itself and alienates from itself at the same time. At this level, the world itself that surrounds me is perceived through the interplay of these freedoms, since I perceive it in order to give it to the one who gives it to me in perceiving it. Here the theft is compensated by the gift.

Furthermore, the appeal and help can transform themselves into a proposal. In this case, I no longer invite the other to help me realize my end—which remains mine—I propose to him realizing some end in common with me. This

time I do not appeal to his freedom through his freedom, rather I present him with the concrete content of an end. Elsewhere we shall study this essential structure which is a transcendent unification through the common outcome of the operation and the creation of the We. In particular, we need to see what the fact of operating on the other's operation, hence of transcending his freedom at the highest point of its achievement but in the same direction that it wishes, signifies. The baton in a relay race.

For the moment we need to analyze the attitude that can correspond to the appeal as well as to prayer and the demand: *refusal*. Let us first note that the refusal, even though it often wants to be taken for one, is not assimilable to a mere assertion of impossibility. The "I can not" is, on the contrary, a way of preventing acceptance. I do not lack the good will but I am powerless. The true refusal presupposes that the possibility of carrying out the request is always a given and an open possibility. Naturally, there will be *reasons* that one will give. In fact, it is for prayer and the demand that the refusal opposed to them will be unconditioned, since in both cases one addresses himself to an unconditioned freedom. Prayer by itself presumes the uselessness of reasons. Since it places itself in the hands of a sovereign freedom that creates the good by its decision, it sets any reasons out of play. There can be no reasons for refusing. If the sovereign were to accept there being any, he would place himself at the service of a transcendent Good. Acceptance, like refusal, is the effect of sovereign caprice.

As for the demand, it sets reasons aside in advance by positing the end as the absolute goal of an unconditioned freedom behind freedom. There can be no reason for not telling the truth. If I do refuse to do so, it is either because I unconditionally refuse this unconditioned freedom or because I make myself the interpreter of an unconditioned refusal stemming from that freedom behind freedom, that is, that I refuse to recognize the demand as a demand and I reduce it to the status of personal choice disguised as a demand.

The refusal of an appeal, on the contrary, gives reasons because the appeal, being a form of comprehension by itself, already indicates reasons and motives around the conditioned freedom it calls on. Therefore it asks for an explanation. And the refusal gives it (or, if it is unconditioned, it will be an insult). Except, we ought not to forget, a revealed reason is not an exposed determinism. It just illuminates the direction of my willing, referring back to the ends that I prefer, but finally centering itself on that preference that is in reality a *free preference*. We have seen that called upon freedom is always more expansive, more generous than one thinks at first. It can give in, it can set aside its ends until later, invent reconciliations, it can even prefer my ends to its own. The refusal, therefore, whatever the reason that clarifies it, is an absolute preference, that is, a preference motivated by reasons for which the choice is absolute. Therefore it is the absolute refusal that we are going to consider in the last analysis as an interhuman relation.

Originally, I refuse something to someone. Therefore he must have asked it

of me, for the refusal through anticipation, so common in the relations of parents to children, is simply more offensive in that it presupposes that the other first freely asks, so as to be able better to deny the request. Therefore the refusal cannot be understood without the request that is an appeal for collaboration and reciprocity in action. We have seen that the request is always a form of comprehension. I recognize the freedom of the one to whom I make my request, I recognize the legitimacy of his ends, not because they are absolute but because he wants them. At the same time, I ask that this freedom recognize my freedom and my ends and that, through this reciprocal recognition, we bring about a certain kind of interpenetration of freedoms which may indeed be the human realm.

But what if the other refuses me? Let us note that what hurts me the most is that he refuses in the name of a freedom that I have recognized. Now this freedom that I recognized is not recognizing mine. Hence through this interposed freedom it is as though I were placing a limit on my freedom myself. But let us look closer. The other does not directly refuse me nor my freedom. His refusal is just a refusal to help me realize certain ends or to refuse these ends himself in cooperation with me. His refusal, therefore, has to do with his own acts, not my ends. It may even be accompanied with a declaration of high regard for and comprehension of these ends. Except this refusal will be incomprehensible and dull if it is nothing more than that.

I approached [*j'ai prié*] a functionary of the Ministry of Colonies to make a declaration on the radio about the political program that ought to be pursued in Morocco. He refuses to do so. He gives me reasons for his refusal. It would compromise some people, he would lose his chances to act in such a way to get this program accepted through persuasion when the time came. Here he is inviting me to comprehend. *I shall accept* his refusal if I surpass his situation toward his ends. He, a functionary, wants to act through direct influence on other functionaries, getting closer and closer to the minister. In exchange, of course, he affirms that he comprehends my goals. Me, a writer, I can only act on public opinion, hence I can only act by diffusing and publicizing what he prudently keeps secret. Hence our refusals still seem to be founded on a reciprocal comprehension, there is an agreement of freedom in the refusal. He helps me to comprehend him, by presenting his reasons, and I help him to refuse through my comprehending them. Our freedoms agree to respect each other and the final end, the emancipation of the colonized masses, is common to us. We share the same judgment about the political program to follow. It is just that our situations lead us to diverge when it comes to the means for bringing the government to adopt this program. Except that we must recognize that this refusal takes away from me the possibility of following the way that my interlocutor theoretically respects. He is the only one who can *speak* about this political program on the radio and he does not want to do so or inspire someone else to do so, he even asks me—in an indirect way—not to allude to such a possibility.

What is the result of all this? That his refusal is equivalent to the impossibility of my pursuing my ends, that he knows it, and that he persists in refusing.

Notice that there are other refusals less important in appearance: when the one who refuses thinks that from the point of view of the help that he can offer me, he is interchangeable with others. "You will find others who will be more helpful." But this is politeness and bad faith. No doubt, as regards distant ends, this is so. It is also so when I ask a hand not from this person but from *the passing stranger*. However, in the most concrete cases it does enter into my concrete and near end that he is the one who should help me. He knows more about it than others. He is smarter, more efficacious, his titles and reputation give him more weight, etc., etc. So overall the concrete, total operation is missing. All that is left to me is to invent another way. This will be more or less easy and it is for me to judge, not the other. This is evident in the indignation that solicitude following a refusal often gives rise to. "I cannot help you, but you will find others. Look, don't be intransigent, couldn't you . . ." One replies coldly, "Thank you, I shall see," meaning to show in this way that there is a contradiction in refusing (which is equivalent to not wanting to comprehend) and then giving advice (which is equivalent to claiming to comprehend better than I do).

No doubt, Pierre, who cannot lend me the money, is correct to think Paul will loan it to me. I thought of it before he did. Except, my relation to Paul is different (more delicate, more distant, I did a service for him and it will look like I want him to pay for it, I don't have much good feeling toward him, etc.). Therefore Pierre pretends to think that the operation (asking for so much and getting it) is qualitatively identical in the two cases and that Pierre and Paul are interchangeable instruments, whereas for me it is a question of two qualitatively incomparable operations, and if I do adopt the second, my relations to certain people, and therefore with the world and myself, will be modified. Therefore, on the contrary, it is better for me to recognize that the projected operation is *in any case* nihilated by Pierre's refusal, even if the end abstractly considered might still be attained. Or, if one prefers, the refusal, in its minimum effect, tends to transform a concrete end into an abstract and unconditioned one. Indeed, a series of refusals, by destroying all the concrete ways by which the end functioned as a unity of means (cf. above), ends up by confronting me with the following dilemma: either renounce the end or realize it by whatever possible means, that is, at the limit, through violence.

Hence a refusal is not the simple abstention of a possible instrument, as though in not making use of this pliers, I could take that other one which is not much different from this one. The refusal is a direct action on my project. The other's freedom acts just as profoundly on my freedom by its refusal as by its help or its protection or its actual action of *preventing me*. In the first place, it declares that my end, whether near or far off, is irrelevant.

That functionary, although claiming to comprehend my effort to use the radio, by the single fact that he makes it impossible in the concrete case under

consideration, prefers his own ends to mine. And since in both cases it is a question of drawing attention to a certain political program, to *prefer* his means comes down to taking mine as bad. That is, to nihilating them. And suddenly I am an object. One no longer considers my ends with a confidence based on principle and because they are wanted by a freedom, one considers them in themselves and in the *Umwelt* of the person asked to do so, and as internal to his system of values. This would still be admissible if this comparison and this examination were to lead to the bursting of this system of values of the other, but, quite to the contrary, the end is rejected. With this, my freedom that posited the end, and that is, on the contrary, evaluated in terms of the other's *Umwelt* on the basis of the end, becomes an objective quality of the object I am in this *Umwelt*.

And with this, too, the other's comprehension no longer exists since it was, in its immediate structure, an incentive to help. This entails that the end gets frozen into an end grasped abstractly as an end and as an abstract end. It remains an end because there is an empty intention directed toward it by a knowing consciousness, but it is in fact a mere possible future for the other. It is no longer what has to be but what can be and one evaluates it as a future in terms of its simple consequences in the other's *Umwelt*.

Therefore my freedom becomes for the other the simple property that certain objects have of being given in connection with a certain future that the state of the world by itself does not indicate, that is, a doubtful future in the other's future. I become an obstacle and a means for the other.

At the same time, there is a retraction of the other's freedom. I recognize it concretely so that it can recognize me, but it makes use of the right I recognize it as having to deny that it is dependent on me, to cut itself off and isolate itself from me, to let my appeal fall into the void. It insists on the detotalization of the detotalized totality, it constitutes the world as an archipelago and leaves me in solitude on this archipelago.

Yet, at the same time that I am no longer anything for it and cannot incite it to modify its future, at the same time that it replaces the internal negation, which unites us in separating us, by the pure exteriority of indifference, at the same time that my future, which was proposed to it, becomes mere nonbeing for it, it itself acts in me as freedom down to the depths of myself by obliging me to change my plans. And it does this not as an instrument that turns out to be inefficacious but as a free future in which my own future suddenly appears as in doubt. In effect, the instrument reveals itself to be inefficacious in the present, whereas the refusal constitutes *for me* a future that comes along and consumes my own. "I will not do it," means there is a future in the world that comes to your future and does not depend on you or the world as clarified in terms of its coefficients of adversity by your ends. It is an unconditioned future for you, since you cannot change it.

In this sense, the refusal is more imperative and more efficacious than the

demand. For I can refuse the demand, remove myself from it, whereas I can do nothing about the refusal, which in itself is nothing and which affects my future with this nothingness without my being able to do anything about it. My real project toward the future becomes a present dream, imagination, something that affects me and that in spite of me changes, without my being able to do anything about it, my free theoretic and thematized project gets turned into something *unposited*, the “if only he would” into “if he had,” and obliges me to break with this project, to constitute it in turn as surpassed, as past.

In this way, it determines a *failure* that gets inscribed in my past. My freedom gets inscribed in the surpassing of a past constituted as a failure. That is, there is a *lack* in the past. The past is not just the being I have to be behind me. It is a certain lack of being in the being that I perpetually have to be. However, at the same time, the key to this failure will perpetually lie in another freedom. So in the refusal, a freedom, by constituting itself as the exteriority of indifference, makes my freedom fall overboard and excludes me from the relationships of interhuman reciprocity in the name of the very recognition that I made of these relationships, it withdraws and surrounds itself with a nothingness that means that I can no longer determine myself in relation to it. However, it is not a *thing*, the refusal is an act. It is a freedom beyond reach in another world. It isolates me in my own world, it dissipates every illusion of an interworld and reduces me to solipsism.

Yet, at the same time that the refusal falls like a glass partition between the other and myself; this negation of reciprocity creates, as is logical, a state of nonreciprocity. Whereas I am not determining in relation to this freedom that for me is something undetermined, it determines me, it realizes a *causal* action on me. Naturally it is not a question of a true causal determination. What happens is that a means in the field of my universe has vanished, entailing the passage of a real future projected beyond this means into something imaginary, and transforming the concrete end into an abstract one. Yet this transformation, while not *determined*, is necessarily tied to the other's free decision; since he follows this decision no matter what I do, everything takes place according to the abstract and functional formula of causality.

So the refusal does what no violence, no demand can do. It steals my freedom from me. It is like a hand that reaches in and changes the arrangement of my projects, and yet it is *nothing*. It is impalpable, ungraspable, the mere disappearance of the other's freedom. I cannot fight a refusal, it is irremediably part of nothing. In the end, it irremediably determines my situation through a lack of being, a hole at the heart of its essence to which I have to accommodate myself. Hence the refusal *is not* violence. On the contrary, it is always done *by right*. Since I ask (rather than claim or demand or take), I recognize a right to refuse. In the beginning I saw and accepted this possibility. But even as foreseen, it is a surprise and its action is more efficacious, more direct, and more definitive than that of violence. It is worse than violence because it is always *just*, although

it may be mean. It is action by way of the negative. It tosses man into his finitude and isolation, it constitutes him as a thing acted on from the outside.

The probable reaction to a refusal, therefore, will be to destroy, not the refusal itself which is nothing, but the person who refuses. The refusal, because it is irremediable and unconditioned, leads to action by any means, that is, to violence. The other way of sheltering oneself from a refusal is to put the proposal “between parentheses,” that is, to consider it as already conditional so that it may be affected by the other’s refusal without the For-itself as freedom being itself affected by it. This is once again the Outside/Inside. Except here, if the risk is at a minimum, so is the generosity. Authenticity lies on the side of the risk.

3. Ignorance and Failure

Ignorance is a mode of interhuman relations. Its type is that of refusal in the sense that to be judged ignorant by others acts as a cause does on my freedom. When I am ignorant in solitude, either I am unaware that I am ignorant or I know it. But in the former as in the latter case, I do not know the *object* I am ignorant of, it is intended by an empty intention, if it is intended at all, and in relation to me it is either a nothingness or a pure absence that will either presentify itself or not.²²⁴ In the first case, to be unaware of my ignorance clearly is not equivalent to knowing what I am doing, but the double negative lifts from ignorance its limiting exteriority. My knowledge is limited by nothing, since my unawareness of it is nothing. There is no outside to consciousness or to knowledge. There is just an impulse toward the project, toward understanding, toward the truth, which is positive. There are affirmations but no consciousness comes along and puts them between parentheses. There is a finite but not limited positivity, my freedom is still completely there.

In the second case, I am aware of a lack, an internal poverty to my thoughts, I also see that they stop only halfway in their development. From this I conclude that I lack indispensable elements for the progress of my thinking. As for these elements, on the one hand I can conceive of them, otherwise I would not know what I am ignorant about. At most, I can glimpse them vaguely. What is more, they are outside of human knowledge as a whole as represented by me, and it is I in the unity of reflecting and reflected who notes my incompleteness and decides that it is a case of ignorance. Therefore I do not constitute myself as *someone* ignorant. My ignorance is one with my project of increasing my knowledge, it is like a regulative principle of my intellectual efforts. It is a living ignorance and since, by hypothesis, I am the measure of everything, just as I am

224. “Presentify” (in French, *présentifier*) translates Husserl’s German term *vergegenwärtigen*. Cf. Dorian Cairns, *Guide for Translating Husserl* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 123. Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Psychology of Imagination* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948; Citadel Press, 1965), p. 149.

the one through whom truth comes into the world, it is simply the provisory state of my knowledge. Beyond this there is not some truth waiting to be discovered but a being-it-itself indifferent to truth. Ignorance is therefore a pure and simple perpetual surpassing of my knowledge, it is provisory, it is life. If I am ignorant alone or if we are a collectivity all endowed with the same knowledge, humanity is there where I am, it is my present and my future, to say that it is ignorant is to say that it was never made but is yet to be made, which is a privilege rather than a fault.

It is a completely different case if I am ignorant of what another knows. This time, what is outside of me is no longer the being I have not yet made exist in the form of the "there is," it is precisely a "there is being," that is, a truth that already exists *for someone*. With this, my knowledge is no longer a living process in my eyes that will complete itself gradually as I live and that, in a way, invents its lack and its development. The lack already *is*. The idea in its totality is given for a consciousness that is not me. There is nothing to invent, no measure of the true to provide with my own existence, rather my thought is defined from the exterior as a *given* lack. It lacks a certain complement that, synthetically united to it, will give it a truth identical to the one that already exists for the other. It is, in the way Spinoza so well defined, the cut-off ideas of the finite modes.²²⁵ And he could define them in their incompleteness because the total truth already belongs to an infinite substance, which is in fact their unveiling and which is Thought.

A thought can be incomplete only in relation to another, already existing thought. But what gives a peculiar character to this incompleteness is that the other is not me. We know that a double nihilation separates me from the other and that these two confirmed nihilations imply a scission of Me and the other that approaches the exteriority of indifference. In fact, insofar as the other is what I do not have to be, what I deny that he is me, the complementary Truth is not yet refused me. But insofar as the other *makes himself an other other than me*, this truth is as surely separated from me as one object is from another object.

So rather than my thought being finite but not limited, that is, rather than it being an internal tension containing its limits within itself and measuring them by its own drive, it has its true limit *outside of it*, like things in nature. It passes over to exteriority in relation to itself, in the sense that we say that nature is exteriority. Indeed, as such, it is cut off, therefore false. False in that it is an incompleteness that takes itself for a totality. False in the sense that the moment of the Hegelian essence takes itself for essential. But its falsity, which does not come from its distortion (another case of error not studied by Spinoza) but its incompleteness, has its "reason" in the complete thought. But this complete thought is either *nothing* or is another's thought.

Every theory of Truth, since Plato, conceives of Truths as fully accomplished

225. Cf. above, p. 112.

and, while waiting for us, confines itself to giving as a model and rationale for our Truth, the Truth of Another. Platonic εἶδος, like Spinoza's affirmative particular essences, are fully accomplished along with thought, that is, along with the quintessentialized consciousness. However, it is not a matter of the thought that accomplishes itself in thinking but of an already accomplished, expressed, and objectified thought, the Thought of Another, my thought as Other. Rather than Truth being quite precisely that illuminating upsurge of the For-itself within the world that makes Being be for an existence, that is, makes it be an existential, this same unveiling gives itself to me as happening for another, that is, as an existential frozen in Being.

There are three ontological layers here: at the base, the being of Being, the support of everything, then the pure relation to illuminating subjectivity in the form of the "there is." These two closely bound structures, which manifest themselves *together*, are my structures. But not in that they manifest themselves to me as what I exist, but rather as what another exists who is not me. Withdrawn at the same time as they are given, existed by the other, they reveal themselves to me as existing without being existed [*sans être existé*], and without my being able to unveil them or turn away from them by suppressing them. With this, they are in the un pitying mode of the exteriority of indifference. And the conception of a (Platonic) ultimate intuition is the impossible dream, not of intuiting an object that was not, until now, given to intuition, but, on the contrary, the impossible dream of an already accomplished truth given to intuition and only existing in and through this intuition that is not mine. In a word, I either pour myself into an alien intuition or realize another's intuition in myself. Intuition so conceived is *already* a dream of communication, of the fusion of an objective freedom and a subjective one. All truth is surrounded with something like a halo of its fixating intuition, which is always another's intuition, and it is exactly here that it is a question of the body and that I want to grasp the relations of the For-itself that I have to be, not with the body as it exists but with the other's body.

The problem in epistemology is always to determine the relation between my intuitive thought and others' truth. Malebranche saw this better than anyone in his thesis about God's Vision.²²⁶ Man is already seen in this vision. By revealing something already revealed, he pours his comprehension into the revealing freedom of another. These descriptions translate on a mythical plane the existence of the For-itself in a society where the For-itselfs are arranged according to a hierarchy of knowledge. But, with this, my subjectivity becomes limited by the other. What was a free process toward ever broader revelations receives a number of precise characteristics from outside.

In the first place, what was its end becomes its limit. The free future that was coming toward it through the very conceiving of the project, which was in

226. Malebranche, *The Search After Truth*, pp. 230–35.

no way a *present* but something future, yet which had the free structure of a claim to be illuminating the present, which, in a sense, had a noematic existence as the correlative beyond of the world I surpassed in surpassing this world and which, as such, was an expression of my freedom, could not limit my freedom, but now it is *known* by another. Therefore, for this other, it already has the structure of the *present*. Therefore insofar as the other knows what I am seeking, he knows that this present is already surpassed by him toward a future that is precisely my future. And insofar as I know that he knows it, I know that my problematic future is a surpassed present for another. In a word, I am making the *already made*. It is the surpassed, perhaps the *Past*. In realizing itself, my future perhaps throws me two centuries backwards. Like that butcher's apprentice Paulhan speaks of who discovered the circulation of blood in 1895.²²⁷

On one side, therefore—one that runs away from me—my future is at present a being. It no longer has its simple noematic existence for me, I am no longer the only one responsible for it. If I turn away from it, it preserves itself whole, infinitely richer in itself (that is, *for another*) than it is for me. It is not my discovery but *a thing to be discovered*. With this, it limits my freedom to the very extent my freedom is engaged in it and where my freedom is independent of it. Indeed, as soon as an end stops having a purely noematic being, instead of being the outline freedom casts up before itself, it becomes what this freedom is going to *bump into*. And with this, freedom becomes relative to its end.

Indeed, if the truth is already known *by the other*, it is a matter of *explaining* why my freedom is not already beyond this past. For the Academy of Medicine, the activity of the butcher who rediscovered the circulation of blood was a surpassed activity that was unaware that it had been surpassed. If he persists in it, it is put between parentheses, there is nothing about it that can enrich, modify, or even upset the human community, it will bring neither truth nor error, simply *nothing*. And the other who possesses the truth that I am ignorant of also possesses the key to my ignorance and can foresee the process that will bring me from ignorance to knowing. So he is at present *past* for the other. His future is a past future, each one of his free efforts is a repetition, his free invention of *means* is logically necessary and dead (he *has* to do this and that).

Whence this false problem: how to reconcile the free spontaneity of judgments and the necessity of essences. One compares the existed spontaneity of a truth that makes itself with another's already made truth. This is exactly, as I said above, the mind/body problem. Thus if I know that another knows, I become *past* to my own eyes. Not because of the other's *opinion* about me, which does not matter, but because of this ontological and absolute relation that *in him* my future exists as past, and consequently I am making my future with the past of another, that is, that everything that is *to exist* for me is already *being* behind

227. Jean Paulhan (1884–1968), *Les Fleurs de Tarbes; ou, La Terreur dans les lettres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), p. 86.

him. The other's existence staggers me. It thrusts me into being and into the past. I know at present that everything I am doing has no action on the world, since the world to come for me is already past for others (the world as an organic unity, neither objective nor subjective, the *Umwelt*). Therefore I am subtly benumbed by the past, that is, by *being* in the most vital heart of my existence, my inventions are paralyzed into *repetitions*, my action on the world is placed between parentheses, finally when I believe I am rejoining my end by some discovery, I am only rejoining the other's past. Therefore I am alienated in my most complete autonomy. And, even if the other does nothing, I am in principle a transcended transcendence.

What is more, what was *nothing* other than one element of a surpassed situation becomes, through the other's very existence, a principle of explanation. My family (workers or peasants) is for me the positive something that I illuminate in surpassing it, these familiar faces, that wisdom. My original lack of education has been for me a starting point that I surpassed a long time ago. The fact of not having gone to school is also something positive, as is the long effort I made to instruct myself a bit, as revealed by my autodidact's pride. Therefore there is nothing here but positive things: *me*. And what I *know* is the positive outcome of my efforts starting from this situation. But the other, by determining me in terms of what *I do not know*, determines me throughout my life through something negative (exactly as in the refusal above). It is no longer a question of determining why I know *a* (which can be *understood* given a little sympathy for my freedom and my ends), but why I do not know *b*, it being given that $(a + b) = A$, *the truth*.

If freedom can never explain itself by what it has, it can at least define itself negatively from outside by what it *does not have*. The other sees *my case* as a lack (I am lacking *b*) and he explains this lack negatively by other lacks. It was impossible for me to know *b* since the only book that deals with the question is in German and I do not know German. Taken from this negative point of view, negation necessarily engenders other negations. Not knowing German entails with logical necessity not reading the book and in the end not knowing *b*. Moreover, not knowing German can be explained by my situation and seen from the negative side. *For me*, not knowing German can be explained as something positive through my knowledge of English (for ex., at the lycée one had to choose a language and I chose English—the whole perspective is one of positivity and freedom). For the other, not knowing German being something negative [*negativité*] is explained by other negatives graspable within my situation. His grandfather who detested the Germans was opposed to his learning the language, etc.

So we have a *necessary* negative system that underlies my positive existence and limits me externally. It is no longer a question of that lack I have to be and that is my freedom but of a lack that I am. Or, if you will, there is a mode of “not being” that affects me in the other's eyes, which is the exteriority of indiffer-

ence, not some internal negation. I *am not* schooled, I *do not know* German, I *am* an autodidact (a positive formulation of what is functionally negative: I *did not receive* any positive instruction), I *am* a beginner (I *did not receive* the benefits of a secondary or higher education). None of these qualifications would make sense if the other, knowing what I am ignorant of, did not exist, for they come to me from outside through this other.

In this way nothing about my freedom gets explained, instead the accent is put on what I am not, my internal finitude becomes an external limit and gets transformed into *incompleteness*. And since I possess my incomplete truth, which appears as such to the eyes of the one who does possess the complete truth, I myself appear to these eyes of the other as incomplete. This signifies that what I am lacking is in the other as what my truth lacks. Hence *the other* holds a part of me. He grasps himself as doing so and I, who grasp the other as knowing that he knows that I do not know, I grasp him as possessing that part of me that would allow me to be effective in the world and to be a present totality instead of being a past incompleteness. So through the existence of the other, the ignorance that was *nothing* or merely an abstract stop in the movement of knowing becomes a negative power that pierces me, reifies me, and makes me dependent on the other. However, this state can be considered *provisory* (for example, the child who will go to school) and as a condition to surpass so as to become an efficacious factor in the world. Freedom accepts being made part of the past and repetition so as to attain the moment when it will spring ahead into a new, fresh world that no one will steal from it.

The same thing does not apply when ignorance is experienced by the ignorant person as *definitive*. Again we have to distinguish. There are cases of reciprocal ignorance. I do not know medicine, but the medical doctor does not know philosophy. Each one holds the secret to the other's incompleteness. The one to whom I am an object is an object for me and in this way I deliver myself from my alienation.

It is a quite different case when my ignorance is experienced as definitive and as not being reciprocal, as happens in an oppressive society. An oppressed person reduced to servile labor or a wage earner who cannot get further education will live out his ignorance in the manner just indicated. But further, to the extent that his ignorance is definitive, he will take up in anger or uneasiness that truth, which is necessarily incomplete and where the thoughts that would complete it are definitively out of reach, belonging to others, who constitute it definitively as incomplete and inefficacious, and who, by this very fact, shut him up in the only efficacy available to him: his servile labor.

However, for another thing, he is not a purely disinterested spectator contemplating his partial truths. In fact, they appear to him inside a movement that constitutes his life as some enterprise. They are the *means* that allow him to decipher the world and to accommodate himself to it. But, if from the beginning he knows that they are constituted by the other's look as half truths, that is, as

half errors, he does not for all this know what they are lacking to be whole truths. To know that one is ignorant is not to delimit plainly the lack that marks your knowledge. Instead it means considering one's knowledge as a whole as undetermined. But then everything built upon this knowledge (opinions, undertakings, even friendships and animosities) is affected by this lack.

In one sense, it is indeed the free decision, which can be genuinely authentic, of a man in a situation who decides for himself with the means at hand. And this is pure autonomy. But in another sense, the existence of the other ("I know that I do not know," means, "I know that someone knows what I do not know") stamps all my behavior as incomplete. Drawing upon an indeterminate knowledge, it too is indeterminate. I live in a state of being rent in two because, in one sense, it suffices that I want this behavior for it to be my operation, but, in another sense, the existence of the other means that I cannot be content with just wanting it, it perpetually suffers from an essential indetermination and inefficacy, and I live it out in both ways at the same time. I consider it both from the positive point of view where it is the expression of me and from the negative side where it *lacks* what is in one who is other than me. But since this lack is not known to me, by definition, I cannot even begin to discern what it lacks.

At the same time, the *other* who does know the whole truth, can both foresee my behavior and interpret it correctly on the basis of this whole Truth. So the truth of my actions, their meaning, lies for me in the Other. The Other is present as the consciousness that I lack in my most secret considerations, which he deciphers and completes despite me. Therefore my subjectivity finds itself to be both that absoluteness that I reach through my very existence in the prereflective *cogito* and, at the same time, the set of erroneous attitudes that can be explained by my ignorance. My anger against my exploiter is my way of living the situation that has been made for me, it is *me*, me grasping the nature of my wages and their disproportion with my needs. Yet the man who knows will say this anger stems from my ignorance of the economic situation (because I know nothing about economics), which prevents the boss from raising wages without ruining his business. Therefore, if I were to know the complete truth, I would know how to deal with this anger.

My anger corresponds to a partial view of the situation, it can be explained by my *lack* of knowledge, it is a phenomenon of incompleteness, and it will not continue given complete knowledge of the truth, it will evaporate. The vanishing fruit of a lack, it is itself *nothing*. Inefficacious, transitory, blind. And the secret of its essence is in the other who, seeing it, understands it in terms of this lack. "He is angry because he does not know that . . ."

So I am no longer nothing myself, the explanations for my acts lie outside of me, all that remains are my *passions*. I *undergo* my ignorance at the same time that I am a freedom that cannot be made to submit to anything. This ignorance comes to me from the other like a nature. As for the world, it is stolen from

me since events have their key outside of me. They get presented to me as consequences without premises, which would not mean a thing except that *the premises are known by the other*. Everything I see *may be* an appearance. And this *may be* does not settle things since it means that I cannot decide that they are really appearances. Ignorance is not necessarily error. I may be right without knowing it. So in my ignorance I grasp myself as living a past as my future, as being installed in truth or error without being able to distinguish between them, as inventing what is only a repetition, as projecting enterprises that are nothing, my *cogito* grasps itself as absolute truth and as an epiphenomenon, I am existence and I have a nature whose secret is in another's hands, I am at the same time the being whose being is in question in its being and the pure passivity defined by another. Man and thing, man/thing.

With this, ignorance threatens to lead to submission. By submitting to the other's will, at least I will regain some efficacy and I will be able to adhere to the truth by way of the interposed person. Since the truth is *past*, since it is already there, what does it matter if *I* surpass it by making it exist. However, by entrusting myself to the other, I rediscover my free surpassing of a world where this truth already exists rather than exhausting myself in vain efforts to make appear what has already appeared. So to rediscover my transcendence, I alienate myself by way of the other. Hence ignorance comes to me by way of the other as a negation of my freedom. If it is not upheld or artificially provoked, it is not violence (alienation without violence), it needs only to be suppressed. Which is to say, knowledge creates the obligation to teach. If it is intentionally maintained, it is the most subtle and most fundamental form of violence. Indeed, it constitutes the other's will as true and my will as an epiphenomenon. Therefore it leads to the subordination of the one to the other. For another thing, since the other imposes himself as a way of reaching his own ends, which are conditional for him (the connection of means and ends illuminated by the Truth), and *I*, being ignorant of the Truth, cannot know of this connection, the other's end which I pursue, trusting in his Truth, becomes an unconditioned end for me. Therefore I grant the other the right to give me orders.

It is not possible to talk about ignorance without also immediately describing *stupidity*, one of its natural correlates. Here I will take two sentences, which seem opposite to each other, as maxims to examine. Jouhandeau: "The stupid man does not always have the crushed air appropriate to him."²²⁸ And Alain (*Propos sur la littérature*): "I hate stupidity worse than wickedness; but actually I don't believe in either one of them. They are the outside of timidity, which is being afraid of oneself and ashamed of oneself at the same time. . . . Is there anything more stupid than a small dog who is being dreadful? I fear these uneasy, sullen beings who are afraid and furious at the same time, a bad pair"

228. Jouhandeau, *Algèbre des valeurs morales*, p. 18. This same sentence is used as an epigraph to Sartre's discussion of Flaubert's "stupidity" in *The Family Idiot*, vol. 1, p. 592.

(p. 105).²²⁹ One of these texts emphasizes the role of being-for-others. There is something *oppressed* about the stupid person. The other points especially to the relation to oneself that is part of being stupid. However, on a close reading, the Other is present in this relation to self. Would one be afraid or ashamed of oneself except in the presence of other people? And both texts indicate quite clearly that being stupid is not congenital, rather it is one type of interhuman relationship, that either passes or endures. I note that one is, in fact, not stupid by oneself and also that one is not stupid without knowing it.

There is a kind of surly, uneasy stupidity, always close to violence, that corresponds to Alain's and Jouhandeau's descriptions. It gets expressed inwardly by a feeling of oppression. In this case, the stupid person is conscious of being oppressed by others. Is he oppressed because he is stupid, or is his stupidity the consciousness of that oppression? It seems to me that to react against felt oppression is a way of taking a stand. But there are also full-blown idiots who prattle on and say anything that comes into their heads. It is not so easy to see these people as oppressed and Jouhandeau says that not every stupid person looks oppressed. Yet it is easy to see that they "will say anything." And if they do so it is because they are conscious of being able to say it. The man who is conscious of his value and efficacy says what he wants to say, what he judges it useful and good to say. The prattling idiot attributes no importance to his words. They *are not important*. But in fact no one attributes any value to them and he is conscious of this. They treat him like a child, he knows that [neither] his words nor his acts will have any effect. The only resource left to him is to be a charming child, one who speaks either to please people or to make them laugh. Sometimes I have encountered this kind of foolishness in men but more frequently in women. This happens because in fact a woman is taken *a priori* as being inefficacious. She is put between parentheses. And similarly, stupidity is more frequent in social meetings because it is understood that one talks *in order not to say anything*.

Finally, there is a form of stupidity that has the easy air of importance, but which is, in the end, *forced*. It is simply a refusal out of fear of being convincing. So it reduces the other's thought to *flatus vocis*. In any case, stupidity is a free, intentional negation of the mind. Does this mean that there are no original differences in intelligence? The question is an obscure one, first because we find man in society, that is, at a moment when sides have already been taken and evaluations made. If my mother had decided that I was less intelligent than my older brother, this decision made by chance (because I not so quick at repartee or because I worked less in class) or by passion cannot fail to have had consequences for me. Furthermore, a comparison between men is difficult to carry out because of differences of original choice, of talents, of education. The actor says dumb things about mathematics, the mathematician does not understand playing a character. Who is more stupid? Each one in turn, depending on the

229. Alain (Emile Chartier), *Propos sur la littérature* (Paris: P. Hartmann, 1934).

situation. The blockhead who is the laughing stock of the regiment because he does not know how to do an about face is a better hunter or fisherman or farmer than all those laughing at him taken together.

Finally, and this is what links these considerations to the preceding ones, ignorance enters into the objective definition of intelligence in a big way. That person seems stupid to me because I do not know that he is ignorant of what I know. What is more, we behave in the same way toward the ignorant person and the stupid one. Their free efforts to attain their truth are for us repetitions of efforts we have already made, their goal being to bring about something that is our past. Except that for the professor who is teaching something, ignorance is transitory, he recognizes the child as having a future. For someone who takes my ignorance as definitive, there is no longer any difference between someone ignorant and someone stupid. There is one, however: I could define the ignorant person as the one I keep in ignorance through oppression and the stupid person as the one who does it to himself. But in fact I justify the ignorance of the other person by his stupidity. If I do not allow him to instruct himself, it is because he is incapable of it. Americans claim that Blacks neither want to nor can learn. So it is just my greater or lesser good faith that will decide. No doubt there are tests that allow one to outline the profile of intelligence, to determine if a child of six years, of ten years, is retarded or normal. But these tests, if we examine them closer, teach us much more about the way in which men define the stupidity of their fellows.

First, these tests are done from on high down. I do not believe anyone has thought of testing the genius, not just because the test is aimed at normality, but especially because the genius breaks the test, he is above what the test is asking for (by genius, I mean an exceptional gift). No test about numbers could *classify* Inaudi.²³⁰ Here the one tested is superior to the one doing the testing. So the tester addresses himself to people below him or on his level in a strict sense. He decides the significance of the test (standardization proves nothing against what I am saying: it proves that one uses the test in given conditions, it proves nothing about the *meaning* of this test). With this, he is a scientist in relation to the ignorant (those being tested). They are all transcended transcendences and strive to redo what the tester did himself and has done to a thousand people before them. They do not know the meaning of what they are doing, they do it without really knowing what they are doing. The ordering set up in conformity with the test will therefore be an ordering of objects. They will be classified according to a predetermined order of objective behaviors that are ignorant of what they are doing.

Naturally, the tester recognizes that he can be tested. But he plays on two keyboards. On the one hand, he works to realize the strictly objective world of

230. Giacomo Inaudi (1867–1950), an Italian who could do complex mathematical calculations in his head. In 1892 he appeared before the Académie des Sciences in Paris.

behavior (behaviorism), on the other hand, although he gives this world a meaning, he holds it in his gaze and transcends it insofar as he is conscious of doing an experiment. From here, we can well conceive what he will call abnormal intelligence and what the vulgar will call stupidity. By default, there is a gap between normal intelligence, that is, the act catalogued as being normal, and the abnormal act or behavior.

This gap is frequently expressed quantitatively by a number or a formula. If it is a question of a strict objective assertion and some form of classification, nothing better. Already though, if we pass from behavior to aptitude, we are making a dangerous and arbitrary extrapolation, we are being unfaithful to a behaviorist stance, for aptitude no longer is the present fact but the $\epsilon\chi\iota\varsigma$, that is, the same fact internalized and taken as mortgaging the future while conserving its objectivity. And if we let ourselves go down this path, we need next to account for the inequality of aptitudes. This will not be difficult and there will not even be any problem if we envisage the classified cases as a simple ascending series. But as soon as we have defined something as normality, everything changes.

In fact, here too there is an internalization and passage from fact to value. We have at most an average. That is, the most frequent results cluster around an axis A. But here we run into presuppositions about the suitable functioning of intelligence for subjects of a given age (the experimenter's *a priori* and absolute legislation) in terms of statistical results. With this, each individual, considered in himself, participates in the fact of belonging to the greatest frequency as if it were a personal quality. The $\epsilon\chi\iota\varsigma$ which itself was an internalization of behavior has become a quality. And, at the same time, the greater or lesser agreement with the normative presuppositions of the experimenter gives this quality more of a normative aspect. A natural nature is constituted. Starting from statistics and quantified behavior, one has constituted an inner, normal disposition for carrying out a series of diverse acts conforming to an established rule and confirmed by their frequencies. Naturally it is a question of a positive assertion. It goes without saying that if an individual presents himself as being *above* normal, one has to give a *positive* explanation for this behavior. In his $\epsilon\chi\iota\varsigma$ he possesses something *more*. His *gift*. But, reciprocally, if someone carries out an operation in such a way as to receive a lower score than normal, one has to account for this — a (his score being $A - a$), and since a positive explanation is impossible, this — a, a negative quantity, has to be accounted for by another negative quantity, that is, by an *antigift*. This *antigift* is stupidity.

However, it would not be impossible to conceive of this abnormal efficiency by default as produced by the action of equally real forces and, in a sense, equally positive ones, although in an opposite direction, even while preserving the thinglike schematism of the normal $\epsilon\chi\iota\varsigma$. For example, the “normal” attention span will be based on a range that runs from short to long. And these in their turn will be maladaptations resulting from even deeper lying conflicts (family

situation, physical state, etc.). In this case, *stupidity* becomes a result and, with this, it vanishes. Except the schematism at this level is *mechanical* and no longer *Aristotelian*. The idea of εἶς disappears. It is now only a question of a mechanical functioning of functions and organs, in the sense that Goblot explains, in his logic, how intelligence will head for the truth by itself if its exercise were not deflected by the emotions.²³¹ The primitive and normative notion of εἶς is one of those difficult to give up and it is so, paradoxically, because it imitates in its thinglike aspect the autonomy of a freedom that sketches out a future in projecting itself toward it. At a more degraded stage, the εἶς does not depend on any present or past state, nor on a relationship of forces. It is originally a relation to the future. And since stupidity originally indicates less development of εἶς *in relation to what is normal*, it is necessary to *account for* this lesser development. It is not just a fact, but since *the normal* is both a naturalistic and a normative conception (the normal is the average *internalized as a natural εἶς and given value as an imperative*. It is the order nature gives to natural things. But this order, not being related to a legislating consciousness, hangs in air by itself, it is a thing/order, a reified order. It is the sly passage from fact to right in naturalism. At its base lies the choice to be “like everyone else.” That is, the average classes’ preference for mediocrity, cf. *supra*),²³² stupidity has to be explained *starting from* what is normal. And since the normal is *normative*, since it is both fact and value at the same time, stupidity is both the reality of nonbeing and antivalue at the same time.

At the interior of the εἶς of intelligence (conceived, in conformity with the idea/value of a natural norm, as naturally tending toward normality, in the way that nature tends toward the Aristotelian God as its limit) is the existence of a nonbeing also conceived of as an εἶς. There is a realization of nonbeing, as though it were something that blocked our seeing, our discerning, our inventing. But this something is not defined positively. It is not a force that, although being oriented in a negative direction, would still have its own positivity; for example, like impatience, a desire to please, or a passion for gambling that holds back intellectual effort. In reality, it is a matter of a *nothing*, but one that functions as a metaphysical virtue; for example, like phlogiston in fire.

Furthermore, this εἶς being itself a type of virtue, stupidity is an antivirtue within virtue. If you were to define it or name it, you would speak of a *ponderousness*, *slowness* in comprehension, a *narrow point of view*, or even of a certain *adherence of ideas to the flesh*, of an *opacity*, of not being able to follow ideas. But these are only disguises for a substantialized nonbeing. This *opacity*, which is often considered as what is essential to stupidity, is the absence of transparency. Something has slipped into the transparency of a thought thinking itself and

231. Edmond Goblot (1858–1936), *Traité de logique* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1918). See esp. the final chapter, “L’Esprit scientifique et le rationalisme,” pp. 376–92.

232. Cf. pp. 19–20.

clouded it over. Hence it gets away from itself, it wants to grasp itself in a self-consciousness but loses itself only to find darkness where it had hoped to find the most logical type of connections. So it is alienated and turns itself into exteriority.

Yet if we ask what this opacity is, what is its *matter*, finally it is some smoke that darkens the transparency of the light, a bit of wine that clouds the water, no one can tell you more. Yet we can more or less follow the process. This nothingness, this nothing is a pure, substantialized diminution, it is — A — a internalized; in the end, it is *pure Being*. It is the Nothing that no longer has any characteristic other than Being (as can be seen in the Hegelian dialectic of Being and Nonbeing) or a Being that is nothing other than the Being of the least being, the Being of the curtailing force.

The same interpretation applies to the idea of *obscurity*. “What can be going on in that thick skull?” Obscurity is nothing other than the absence of light, but as such it is substantialized. “The darkness is so thick you can cut it with a knife.” But, with this, it is not Nothingness that, as we thought, primitively destroys the εἶς as being, rather it is the being of Nothingness that petrifies the Nihilation of the For-itself. A reversal in intention has occurred. In touching the domain of Thinking, Nothingness has become Being while Being (εἶς, “intelligence”) has become Nothingness (the pure transparency of Thinking).

We say much the same thing about the *ponderousness* of thinking (in reality, it means density, as though thinking were filled with something. Density, richness, these are the expressions we use). In fact what weighs down thinking is *nothing*. For a fool’s thinking is *empty*. A *thinking emptiness*, in this way we translate it into a tactile metaphor. A contentless obscurity, the visual metaphor. And such metaphor will find its theory in the idea of adherence to the body and to Nature. If the proverb says, “*mens agitat molem*” [mind activates the whole mass], stupidity will be the *moles* [shapeless mass] installed in thinking; a thinking dominated by the body, that is, by Nature. By this we have to understand a thinking that would be nature.

This, in sum, is what Hegel says about the Egyptians: “The obtuse self-consciousness of the Egyptians . . . to which the thought of human freedom is not yet revealed, worships the soul as still shut up within and dulled by the physical organization, and sympathizes with the brute life.”²³³ And, indeed, the stupid man is called a *beast* or an animal. His stupidity is compared to that of the goose, the cow, the bull. What does this say? This: animality seems to enclose thought within limits not included in thinking as such. The dog or the horse comprehend some signs, grasp some relationships, but get no further no matter what we do. But thinking is infinite and spirit in that it posits its own limits for

233. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 212.

itself or, if you prefer, it has no other limit than its consciousness of giving itself a limit.

It will be *nature* if, in fact, it subjects itself to its limits and if it does so as a function of the εἶδος of space. Then it will have its limits outside of itself, and this will rebound on its very consciousness of itself. Having limits it is ignorant of, this consciousness has a certain nature that it is not aware of. Its nature is to be consciousness *up to here*. Therefore it is assimilable to a plant that, in one sense, develops in an autonomous fashion by subduing its environment and, in another sense, realizes a form that it cannot surpass. If, for the materialist, reason is a bone, for the man who tries to think about stupidity, a stupid man's thoughts are like plants. Like plants, they have the limitation of exteriority and repetition, for the animal's thoughts repeat themselves and the fool's thoughts are also repetitions.

From here, it is just a short step, quickly taken, to make a sort of organic and carnal materiality and the fool's thoughts communicate through a subtle kind of participation. Then the fool is compared to the beast because his thoughts are limited by organic forms and constrained to repeat themselves. At first, this is almost comic because foolishness has been determined starting from a normative naturalism and cannot be determined in any other way. But now we have another type of naturalism to explain foolishness and to found it. In a sense, we might as well consider them as animals too, those young children who will be said to be normal if they present a certain mental development at age six, the same in every case.

Here we rediscover the idea of limits assigned by an organic form and a repetition given in the norm itself, as well as a naturalism. And this is so true, that the psychologist does not disdain using the same experiments to compare the mental development of a young child and that of a chimpanzee. In the name of this naturalism, one will liken children to beasts who have a lower form of mental development, by showing that here the organism has determined the limits of consciousness. But is this not what happens, according to the psychologist, in the case of the *normal* child? So they are all beasts or none of them is, since the same principle serves to establish the norm and any abnormality.

But, in truth, the invasion of the spirit by nature comes about through something like an image from a novel or an analogy. What, in fact, counts is the idea of *exteriority*. Stupidity appears as a kind of thinking conditioned from the outside, having its limits outside of itself, comparable to Nature in that Nature is exteriority and stupidity is external to itself, all of which gets translated more directly by the metaphors of obscurity, opacity, and ponderousness.

In sum, in defining stupidity we have simply simulated the thought of the In-itself at the moment we tried to penetrate the εἶς with Nothingness. But any thought that exists as a free conscious project, whether stupid or not, cannot be thick or heavy in itself. Metaphors of coagulation and thickening make no

sense if they are truly grasped in pure inwardness. They represent inwardness thought of from the exterior, that is, by others. Moreover, to think that something stupid is thick or that a thought coagulates and becomes viscous, we have already to conceive of it as made of some subtle and slippery form of matter that can, however, coagulate. In a word, we have already to have transported its essential characteristics into the dimension of the In-itself.

In fact, therefore, if we look closer, we see that the limit of the fool's thinking does not come from itself but is external to it. But neither does this limit come from his body or from Nature. It comes from the Other. Here we are precisely on the terrain of ignorance. The fool is the one who thinks with effort after we do a thought that we have already had, without difficulty, and he is thereby constrained to make his future out of our leftovers, out of our past. Consequently it is we who limit his thinking, since we know where it is going and what momentary stop it will impose upon itself, since we know in detail and necessarily all the resting places that it will discover. His invention is repetition *at the same time*, his future is past *at the same time*.

I say, "for us." For we in no way deny that the fool invents, unveils, or discovers something. But these different processes of a free thinking are no longer anything to us except repetitions. Hence his thinking appears to us as both wholly an invention and as limited and marked by some obscure, negative force that enmeshes it in Being and that is nothing other than our transcendence. For our personal creation of the means the fool is looking for at this moment belongs to our past, and is fixed in Being. We know its handholds and edges, we judge it, surpass it, by perpetually modifying its meaning through our existence. As a consequence the fool's present activity, which is identical to ours, is both wholly an invention and wholly out of date, wholly for-itself and wholly paralyzed in-itself.

There is still more, for we think that the fool is unaware that he is a fool. Therefore we tie stupidity and ignorance together. We are amused by the fool who *believes* in the validity of his free effort, who counts on it, puts his dignity into it, is frightened by the outcome of his effort (not yet having seen it), whereas it is a mere anachronism that breaks down already open doors. Therefore there is at the heart of the foolish consciousness a perpetual mystification, a perpetual lie, a profound ignorance. The fool is a *dupe*, his consciousness is tricked. He believes himself a man when he is only nature, he believes he is acting when he is between parentheses and struggling with difficulties that have already fallen out of the world. He believes himself my contemporary, whereas he has fallen outside of my time, which he *holds back*, as we put it. This is how the "intelligent" man thinks, stupid himself in that he does not see that his stupidity comes to the fool through Others.

It is *impossible to trace* the boundaries between ignorance and stupidity. And the fool, being constituted in his heart as a fool by the presence of the other, is indeed as Jouhandeau says someone *oppressed*. But, someone will say, *is he not*

stupid? Which is a poor way to put the question. There is not one truth about stupidity, there are two: that of the fool in his unveiling of himself to himself, and that of Others. The fool cannot unveil himself to himself as a fool. Not because his stupidity is too deeply ensconced in him, not because he is too habituated to himself, or because he sees himself from too close up, or because his eye cannot see itself, but rather because the structure “stupidity” is a structure for others that loses all meaning in the For-itself’s project of unveiling things. So there are three moments in the drama of stupidity: the moment when the For-itself is for-itself, the moment when it becomes stupid in the dimension of the For-Others, and the moment when it grasps itself as stupid in the eyes of others.

Let us look at the initial moment. That is, let us transport ourselves into the For-itself that Other people judge as having undergone an abnormal development in that it lacks something, but which does not know it. In the first place, we see that, as a For-itself capable of carrying through the reflective *cogito* and as always carrying out the prereflective *cogito*, this For-itself can not be aware of any limits external to its own existence. The only limit within its consciousness is that of its own limits. We shall come back to this in a moment. And since it is an existing being, it projects in front of itself its future in the form of its own possibilities, which comes down to saying that it clarifies what is in terms of what must be. In it, there is neither εἶς nor predispositions nor aptitudes—only those operations that it carries out and that define its being.

What is more, if this For-itself is given over to itself, it knows nothing of any particular oppression owing to things nor of a *harsher* resistance coming from the world. For it, as for me, the world is just what it is. It gets uncovered by way of this For-itself’s projects, and it is also the material for these projects. It presents itself to this For-itself completely as a world, for nothing can destroy the circuit of ipseity involved here without at the same time destroying the human-reality, although it does present itself as more or less differentiated, with areas of shadow or light, or with *vague* areas, rather than being a system of minutely established relationships.

Nor, by the way, is there anyone for whom the universe is not crisscrossed by vague or undifferentiated areas. And for everyone this depends on the original choice, on their finitude, on their situation as it presents itself, on facticity properly speaking (that is, on the instruments at one’s disposal, intellectual instruments as well as psychological ones).

1st, *Original choice*. Alain makes a lot of sense about this subject in his *Les Aventures du coeur*: “In this sense, all men love the truth beyond everything else, and exactly they love the truth of the thing loved above this thing itself, if we may put it in this fashion. . . . For I know that a miser loves the truth more than crowns or diamonds or even the legislation of a country where he does business. . . . And, in return, there is no man who is not indifferent to a prodigious number of truths. No one is curious about how many grains of wheat

there are in a wheat field, nor how many birds there are in the Ile-de-France. . . . I do not like it therefore when someone makes the whole truth into a sort of abstract object, all of whose parts one loves equally. . . . So, to cite an example, I never say that a man who loves something whatever has no concern whatsoever for the truth; he is always concerned about it, just as a general is concerned about the truth of a swamp or a ford, with the result that in one sense, the love of truth is like the marrow of any love” (pp. 10ff).²³⁴

This is correct. It follows that for each person there are within the world vast areas of *vagueness*, that is, whole regions where contradictory opinions are allowed and other regions where the truth is like a surface enveloping a mass of confused truths that one is not going to see. Thus there is a geography of the unknown and the poorly known in the *Umwelt* everyone considers as his own. And this geography correlates with my choice. It is the truth of my operation that matters to me and I am indifferent, easy going, or blind about other truths. In one sense I unveil them—by the very fact of my springing up in the world before this wheat field, by the very fact that I make this vegetal being exist as a wheat field, there is at the heart of my project the possibility of counting the spikes and the affirmation that there is a certain number of them, and correlatively that *there is* a certain number of them. But at the same time, I leave the truths that come to inhabit the world through my mere springing up in a state of not-unveiling, of not-illumination. The number of spikes of wheat is both determined and undetermined.

Thus my activity of unveiling Reality through which truth exists has limits at every moment. But we must say from the beginning that these limits are limits that *I* give myself. In this sense, it is correct to say that every project is at the same time an evasion since everything I make myself be includes as its complementary term everything I do not make myself be. And every truth that I do unveil both implies and represses other truths that will not be unveiled. More precisely, to intend emptily truths that one assumes in the abstract to be determined and that one does not concern oneself about determining concretely, is to make light of some things, to be heedless about them, a fool as regards them. It is to be *limited* because I limit myself.

Now if someone then comes along and proposes his unveiling to me, I am not open to it. Not owing to some animallike limit to my thoughts, but due to their very positive tension with themselves. Who can explain love to me when I am a physicist, physics when I am in love? The lover is a fool, as is the physicist. But at least we can *see* what he is studying. When the choice is deeper lying, less manifest, when it is a question of an operation impossible to define by just a few details, in short that operation by which we throw ourselves into existence, no one can know the reasons for our distractedness, our heedlessness.

234. Alain (Emile Chartier), *Les Aventures du coeur* (Paris: P. Hartmann, 1945).

Instead of being marginal phenomena, these latter become real causes in the eyes of others. “He did not understand because he was not paying attention,” instead of what should be said: “There is no difference between his incomprehension and his heedlessness. The latter is only the abstract name we give to the former.”

Given all this, of course, one can choose *badly*. Here, too, moreover, *badly* refers to notions we have not yet made clear. For example, one may choose desire rather than some operation, evasion rather than action, an appearance rather than reality. In this case, one will spend a whole life in projecting the truth of desire, of evasion, of appearance. But these truths will conceal others from us, those of operating, of acting, of reality. For there is a truth of appearance, but it is that this appearance is an appearance. If I cling to it, I turn appearance into reality and I shall say that everything is appearance and reality at the same time. In so projecting the truth of appearance, I lose it. I can gain this truth only by wanting to surpass appearances. I cannot not see what appearance is, for it unveils itself as such or is not, but I conceal from myself what I see. I cannot not see, if I lead a life in society, that the external characteristics of the magistrate, his office, his proffered morality, his seriousness, are appearances, but what I precisely want is that the world be made up of appearances because appearances demand less commitment and evaporate quickly.

In a word, I want appearance as appearance to be reality, I want it to have exclusive rights over reality, universality, permanence—above all, that there should be nothing behind it—and that appearance have that easygoing fluidity, that nonbeing that does not commit one, as well as that dreamlike aspect that allows one precisely to take the appearance as an appearance but not have to attach any seriousness to it.

At the same time, I have a clear ontological comprehension of what reality is, since *it* is exactly what I do not want, either because there is *some* particular reality which I want to conceal from myself and, therefore, I do not want to touch *any* reality, or because, in general, it is the reality that one finds *behind* appearances that forces you to choose, this is the unbearable reality I do not want. But in order to be able to cling to appearances, one has to make oneself an appearance and, conversely, it is to avoid my anxiety-producing reality as a for-itself condemned to be free and to remain with the appearance of myself that I see things only as appearances, that is, that I make What Appears [*du Paraître*] the underlying structure of Being.

Therefore this is a passionate choice, it commits me to a certain conception of the world, to all the ingenuity I am capable of, to seriousness, to a life of sacrifices. But at the same time, I *limit myself*—I *cling* to appearances; I never go beyond them, I only comprehend those truths of appearances which *are truths* (the relation beyond the magistrate’s charge and what he says), but, fundamentally, I do comprehend them as appearances since it is their being-appearances that I want and not their content which to me is indifferent. So I will not be

deprived, in my faked bad faith, of a certain depth, but I will rightly be a fool in the eyes of the world since I never shall comprehend reality. I can choose to desire so as not to act (the poet's failure, the imaginary, etc.).

Alain writes: "What one does, one says one wanted to do. To desire it is another matter entirely. I can imagine it, that proud woman at my feet; I can imagine it without seeing the least means nor the slightest way to start. . . . Desire is indeed beneath love and perhaps even not the way to love. . . . (Men) are painting and it is something else again to desire to be a painter. I will even go so far as to say that to desire one must stop doing something. With the result that, when man complains about never having what he desires, he is telling the truth."²³⁵ But he desires so as not to do anything, so as not to love, so as to have an immediate and eternal relation to his end without any temporalizing passage through its means, in the end, so as to set aside the world and to get rid of his situation.

This is not foolishness. However, one who has chosen desire will be a fool when it comes to action. One will say that his dreams prevented him from acting. In the sense that, as Baudelaire says, "his wings of a giant kept him from walking."²³⁶ And so we come back again to the notion of negative forces which confine, which limit, which rope one in. But such is not the case—rather he choose to dream so as not to act. His goal is inaction—not out of laziness but out of a taste for the absolute—but the one who wants something is not inactive and this goes without saying. One has to build a whole world against action, overthrow the world we are caught up in, set aside or put into parentheses those acts we are obliged to do. Whence the dream, a powerful effort. When the schizophrenic begins to talk, we do not say that he is foolish, but rather insane. But there are those who do not speak and who remain stupid. Such people can live and die fools in the eyes of the world.

2d, *the situation*. It is the illuminating of the given by the end. Yet it is *this* given that one illuminates according to its degree of complexity or simplicity. Man is simple or complicated because his operation is simple or complicated. The simplicity of what one calls a simple person stems from the simplicity of his situation. This situation may present itself in terms of broad features, without much variety, enveloping numerous minute but overlooked truths (owing to a lack of knowledge or of instruments), and organized in terms of large-scale syncretic forms. Such is the case for many women, for country women, for example: the concrete elements of the situation are simple—to take care of an aged father, then a husband and a child, within a familiar and monotonous

235. Ibid., pp. 78 and 76.

236. "He cannot walk, for he has giant's wings." Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), "The Albatross," in *Selected Poems*, trans. Joanna Richardson (London: Penguin, 1975), p. 39. Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire*, trans. Martin Turnell (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 155. Contat and Rybalka date the writing of this essay, Sartre's first biography, to 1944 (*The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, p. 147).

universe, to get from others any information about the social and political world. One has simplified the world for them, hence them too (the circuit of ipseity).

The For-itself is not in itself either complicated or simple. It complicates or simplifies itself in terms of the degree of simplicity or complexity of the landscape it surpasses and illuminates. In the eyes of those a complicated universe has complicated, simplicity will appear foolish for it is incapable of even conceiving of complications, except abstractly. Surpassing of this concrete situation, invention starting from this situation, it will retain within itself an element of this situation. There is nothing there that limits it except the fact of being in a situation and of never being concretely except in and beyond this situation. These limits, which are *nothing* and which can be grasped only from within a situation that envelopes this simplicity and surpass it, are in no way *for* the consciousness in situation. And, indeed, this consciousness grasps itself as an indefinite surpassing of *this* situation toward new situations.

But, of course, if certain situations present themselves as particular cases of other, broader situations (as, for example, a circle is a particular case of an ellipse and two-dimensional space a particular case of three-dimensional space, one of which is equal to zero), it follows that the objective totality of human reality can itself appear as a particular case of my own reality. It is caught up in my particular dimensions: this hunter, Don Juan, artist, sportsman will have the impression of surpassing in every way his friend who, brought up strictly, knows nothing of hunting, women, art, sport. In fact both of them *are in the world*, entirely in the world, although one of them is in a more detailed, a more elucidated world in terms of place, while for the other the world is flatter, with zones of generality. Indeed, the more we are in contact with generalities and repetitions (the world of alienated, impersonal labor, the world of the "they," of habits, of customs), the more our own operation will harden into generalities and repetitions, and these calluses will affect our ends which will have an aspect of generality. At the limit, we shall have impermeable languages and experiences (bourgeois, workers—workers, peasants), even when it is a question of freedoms that can in each case *recognize* one another, at least theoretically.

The peasant is willingly likened to a fool because he is not a surpassing of either the mechanical universe of the worker or the polite universe of the bourgeois. He surpasses the organic universe. His freedom is not directed to manipulating things that can be given orders but to letting things occur, to letting things grow, and to waiting. Here, naturally, is the place for that ignorance that is never a limit by itself but which becomes one as soon as the overlooked truth appears as upheld in existence by the existence of the Other. Here are going to appear, in its very situation, limits for the For-itself. Limits that it has not posited. But we have already worked out this idea above and we shall come back to it later.

3d, *instruments*. Let us move from the instruments I use closer to the instrument I am. The instrument is not just a tool, it is a way of seeing. Saint-Exupéry

has shown this as regards the airplane,²³⁷ Bloch for the locomotive.²³⁸ A change in speed, altitude, the use of the microscope, of the precision scale, of the jack-hammer are ways of unveiling matter. In truth, the instrument is already in the world. It is one object among others, but it is also an object by means of which other objects are revealed. I surpass the lens toward what I see through it and, with this, the lens as surpassed, passed over in silence becomes an element of my person, a pure unveiling that in itself does not unveil itself. Hence, depending on the instruments ordinarily at my disposal and which I know how to use, I will surpass my perception toward more detailed things and more numerous truths, otherwise I will have fuzzy and undetailed perceptions.

However, there is an ontological equivalence between the surpassing of one instrument toward the organization of its instrumental field and that of another more precise instrument. In the same way, the *use* of one instrument is a kind of exercise and formation just as is that of another more precise one. But through the complication and precision of the latter, I constitute myself as more precise and more complex than is the case with the former. The operatory field and technique of the hammer are in no way comparable to those of the airplane, even though the same human problems arise on the occasion of learning to hammer as in that of learning to fly.

The same remarks apply to intellectual instruments, so close to us that they seem to be part of ourselves. We are in large part the operatory use of our intellectual techniques; surpassed toward the goal, they tend to disappear, our attention reaches through them to go unveil the world by means of them, and yet they are still part of the world since I can fix on them by themselves against the background of the world by an individual act of attention. By this intellectual instrumentality, let us also understand the techniques of physics or of mathematics with their models of reasoning or of construction, which become operatory schemata as much as the techniques of philosophy, as well as those proverbs and myths which are an initial way of grasping the realities of the world just as are philosophical schemata (the critical idea, the habit of inverting the givens of a problem by a Copernican movement, a habit, à la William James, of talking: it is not because I am sad that I am crying but . . . ,²³⁹ dialectical schemata, etc.).

237. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900–1944), French aviator and writer, killed on an reconnaissance mission over the Mediterranean during World War II. The *Critique of Dialectical Reason* also refers to Saint-Exupéry and the “astringent power of the aeroplane (as an instrument which reduces travelling time)” (ibid., p. 452).

238. See Jan Gotlib Bloch (1836–1902), *La Guerre*, 6 vols. (Paris: Guillaumin, 1898–1900; Russian original 1898); *The Future of War in its Technical Economic, and Political Relations*, trans. R. C. Long (Boston: Ginn, 1899; New York: Garland, 1973) is an English translation of volume 6.

239. “Our natural way of thinking about these coarser emotions is that the mental perception of some fact enters the mental affection called the emotion and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. My theory, on the contrary, is that *the bodily changes follow directly*

At a still more primitive level lies language, an immediate instrument, made so as to be immediately surpassed toward the thing, whose every word is an operatory schema, and the object surpassed toward the concept. Constructive intelligence depends eminently on words. A flat syntax allows one to form only flat thoughts since thoughts are the unveiling of things by way of the organization of our words; a poor vocabulary corresponds to poor ideas. As is demonstrated by the example of people who, when beginning to think in a foreign language, feel singularly slowed up and impoverished.

So man reveals a more flat or more complex, more monotonous or more varied, more particular or more general world depending on the instruments at his disposal. And these instruments, once again, are provided by his situation (education, instruction, language, profession, haunts, class) amidst *Others*. It is once again a matter of subtle limits which are nihilations: a fool in proportion to the tools he *does not have*, capable and intelligent through the way he uses the ones he does have. But what he is is what he does with the means at hand. Any negative determination comes to him from the outside.

These considerations allow us to address the most delicate problem: that of the instrument we *are*, which is the body. Through the body, which is the contingent form that the necessity of our contingency takes, the For-itself is totally thrown into the midst of the world. It is surrounded and laid siege to by the world. But what makes *there be* such a siege is the project. And it is the project, at the same time, that is the only way of surpassing this being besieged. In a word, the only possible surpassing of the being-there of consciousness is the *future*, that is a nihilation-of-being that has to be posited beyond Being. This escaping of Being through Being and by way of Being is precisely the body. In a word, the only way in which the For-itself is not the In-itself is its perpetual *operating* on the In-itself. But the only condition for operating on the In-itself is to be an In-itself that surpasses itself in surpassing anything at all.

One can act on Being only at the heart of Being, that is, by springing forth as a contingent point of view on Being set within Being. One can act on Being only through Being, that is, it is the surpassed In-itself that I am that operates within my surpassing on the surpassed In-itself that I am not. So the body is a pure passivity traversed by my activity, pure exteriority of indifference synthesized with other similar exteriorities by my surpassing them. So the body acts by making itself a passivity, by passively exposing itself to some reaction. Because I can carry things, I can be crushed. At this level appears the contact by which I surpass both my passivity and the passivity of the thing toward my end, where the thing determines the body as what remains behind my surpassing, while the

the perception that is the exciting fact and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion." William James (1842–1910), *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1950), p. 449, emphasis in original.

body assimilates itself to the thing as that in terms of which I outline a future.

Hence I exist my body and know it through the world that encircles it, at the same time that it perpetually indicates something beyond its passivity. I am neither *in my body* nor behind it, nor *am* I my body, but neither am I *something other* than it—I exist it. This means it is as vain to seek a monistic explanation as to set up dualistic relations between two substances. Here there is simply a different type of being which is existence.

Consequently: 1st, any action of the universe on my body is conceivable and even necessary. To have a body is to be in danger in the world in order to change it. This is what justifies pessimism and suppresses it at the same time. Everything may always turn out badly, but I am the being through which all good *and* bad endings come into the world. I am the being from whom *risk* is born. However, a change from the exterior can only address itself to my body *as passivity* and is itself conceived and experienced in a world that I transcend toward the future. In no case, except that of death, can it be *received* by the For-itself, because the For-itself is pure existence and freedom. Just as the firefly reacts to every kind of light, the For-itself reacts to every modification of the body/passivity by throwing itself freely toward its ends by way of this instrument. Or, if you will, the body itself is the perpetual outlining of ends beyond the modifications that get imposed upon it.

In no case can one act directly on existence. Rather, by modifying the instrumentality, one transforms what is *surpassed* through this indomitable consciousness and, with this, surpasses it toward elsewhere and otherness. For a period of time, the chosen surpassing survives the progressive transformation of the body (the aphasic *says* what he means by inventing phrases with the words he does have, the cortex supplements for the surgical removal of a part of the cerebellum, the person wearing glasses that turn things 45 degrees askew *regains* his equilibrium, etc.). Further along, the project changes, just as an essence will break if we alter certain of its elements. But it is not the body that makes it change, rather the *intimate situation* is different, other.

On the other hand, desperation to maintain a project or to posit one makes some people crazy. This is what gives amputees their illusion, etc. There is no sickness, amputation, intoxication, or lesion that, seen from the outside by a physician, is not the alternation of a passive substance; there is no sickness, delirium, amputation, lesion, or intoxication that is not existed from the inside as a *project*. It is absurd to say that fever causes delirium. Delirium is the way the sick person lives out his fever in projecting himself beyond it toward the world. Similarly, a dream is not produced by sleep, it is the sleeper's enterprise, the way he exists his sleep.

If not existed as a surpassed instrument aimed at the real future—because it has become an unusable mass—the body gets surpassed toward the imaginary as a pure analogon. And the imaginary so projected is *my total project* (whence

psychoanalysis), but it is so having undergone the modification of nonpositionality.

A lesion neither gives nor takes away thoughts. It transforms my instrumentality, hence both this body that I exist and my relation to things: loss of small motor movement (therefore of detailed impressions, therefore of precise emotions, therefore of the shame to be found in general paralysis, which ends up making me project my enterprises into a world without shame), loss of equilibrium, of language, or of the possibility of constructing mechanisms (hence a project in a more mute, more bound, etc. world).

Let us use the example of drunkenness and also that of menstrual periods. The drunk man's project has not changed. In him, we find his bitterness, his love, his jealousy, his rancor. Except the instrument has changed and its relation to the universe. There is a loss of memory, of delicate mechanisms, hence of shame and control. His project gets expressed with a simplified body, whence a simplification of the surrounding universe and, in return, of the project itself. He does not open out into a thousand nuances, he draws in on himself, stereotypes himself, and becomes monotonous. There is in the drunkard a confidence in the world and in himself that comes from the disappearance of controls owing to the loss of exact *postures*, as well as a synthetic incapacity stemming from the intoxication of the organs of perception. Hence it is within a simplified world, but one worthy of confidence, that the project has to express itself with its imprecise instruments. It is this world that has to be surpassed toward its possibilities which, losing their individual nuances, become *general* and schematic. The drunk openly reveals his project, therefore there is a truth to drunkenness. At the same time, there is a lie because the project is not the same project it was the day before. It has lost its nuances and life. The simplification of the world at the same time frees up the great polarizing structures: death, the other, etc., which are often felt along with anxiety or pathos.

Above all, the drunk is dominated by the instruments that he serves. This indicates that rather than surpassing his body, he gets swallowed up in it. He is like the driving flywheel of a machine whose turning seems bizarre and uncontrolled, his turns bring unexpected results. He loses himself to his body. Therefore he is *dominated*. With this, the world appears, objectively, more *difficult*. The change in the body brings about the change in the world. He gets out of this by magic: the frequent passage to anger. The drunk's anger breaks what he cannot make work. The essential thing about drunkenness, in sum, is a *different presence* of the body.

In menstrual periods we often encounter the same thing. The body is present in another way, first because it bleeds and is an object of horror for others. The woman feels wounded. But her body is also differently present to existence. It is surpassed in its passivity. What happens here is analogous to *dimwittedness*. It makes consciousness clammy, it has a liking for the present. It is no longer a

simple system of instrumental relations with the world, above all it is a substantialized and savored impotence. Suddenly the relation to the world gets inverted. The world is crushing, hostile, it separates goals. Goals remain but the first thing to appear is the world's coefficient of adversity. The goal appears outside the means available for reaching it. It gets posited absolutely as inaccessible. And since the woman is passivity, the world is felt as penetrating her. She feels things on the basis of the world instead of feeling the world on the basis of herself. What she sees is *fulfilled in her*. Too quick an anger is no longer the simple motive for turning aside one's eyes but ends up in *her* through an imposed change, therefore it *compromises* her. Her connection to the world is transformed. The world magically *creates* her person by way of her body and on the basis of the aspects it presents to the world. It is no longer a question of objects or "intolerable" or "unsupportable" situations. This shows that the directing schematism of her activity and moods is just to *bear* things, to *tolerate* them, that is, merely to *assume* her passivity. Whence her anxiety, her revolt, her defiance.

Therefore, within the limits where a body is pathologically altered, it can be the occasion for appearing *stupid*. Also, within the limits where it remains rough-hewed, it simplifies the project. I may have lost the use of more precise movements, but I may never have learned them. My project is not in my brain. It is everywhere: in the zygomatic muscles of my smile, in my hands, in my body's attitude. They do not determine what it is, but they do determine its degree of complexity, of subtlety, of finesse. (This also holds for the organ of language. People who speak "stupidly" are people who do not know how to enunciate the sounds.) There are some unexpressive faces owing just to their shape, which because of this cannot express and therefore cannot experience certain delicate emotions which only appear on the face. But this is manifest only by means of a comparison. A simplified yet normal body is a coarse yet efficacious instrument for realizing its chosen project. The dumb fool in his setting with his body and his project does not feel stupid but free. His stupidity comes to him from others as a form of oppression.

This analysis demonstrates, in effect, that neither the body nor the situation can serve as a *limit* to the exercise of freedom. In every case there is or can be an exhaustive use made of the means at hand. Man is free if he can say, "I did what I could." So to treat someone as a fool is always to oppress him since it means stealing his freedom from him.

Let us move on to the second moment of the constitution of the fool. Someone intervenes and calls stupid what is ignorant freedom struggling against a simplified world with coarse instruments. In fact, we described this above in terms of ignorance. Let us say, however, that in this moment of Otherness there is a wicked pleasure. It is minor and not in danger of the same move that constitutes men in terms of races and species, with a given and fixed hierarchy for all time. It is not that one means to constitute man as a thing. One wants to make of him a limited freedom. Man is reassured if he can surround himself with a

chorus of restrained freedoms who are constrained to reflect him to himself like Leibniz's monads reflect God.²⁴⁰

This is the meaning of choosing *pets*. The pet reflects the master like a God. He loves him and fears him. And in love and fear a freedom is necessarily included, so when I claim that my pet loves me, I claim this freedom to love from him. But, at the same time, I conceive of this freedom as being given to him uniquely *so that* he loves me. It arises in him through his end which is me. It is exactly like God giving men freedom so that his merciful actions will be worth more. Seen through the eyes of freedom, my being becomes absolute to these eyes. The dog posits me absolutely as God in adoring me. Therefore I am reassured. But this freedom is not disquieting since the dog is free only to worship me. Everything else is appetite, temper, physiological mechanisms. By turning away from me, growling, he falls back into determinism or into the obscure opacity of instinct.

I constitute the dumb fool in a similar way as a pet. I recognize in him the freedom to recognize that he is stupid and that I am not. He represents a *species*. He is not alone, he is part of a brotherhood. There are *more* dumb fools with the same behavior, the same limits, who are hierarchized according to their degree of participation in the essence of stupidity. These fools, therefore, are *limited*, unlike me who am not. Therefore they exist in the element of Nature and exteriority. They are natural mirrors. Like woman, they are charged with reflecting me in terms of their natural element. They may walk a mile with me because they are free. But there is a necessary halt to their walk, an end that comes from them, which I surpass.

Hence I am doubly reassured of my freedom: insofar as it is *accompanied*, it inscribes itself in Nature, insofar as it no longer is, it surpasses Nature and reveals itself as a freedom in solitude. So the dumb fool is a mediator between Nature and freedom insofar as he is freedom and nature. Through him, Nature freely accepts the decrees of my freedom. We rediscover once again the Hegelian "master-slave" schematism. What is more, to the extent that he is limited, the dumb fool cannot comprehend me beyond some point. Therefore he can only believe. But since he is free he *must* believe me. Those truths that he cannot comprehend he has to make use of if he wants to live and act. Therefore he has to adopt them out of confidence in my freedom.

First then we have recognition of my freedom and a holocaust. The dumb fool sacrifices his reality as a man on the altar he offers me. But we also have here a transformation of the reciprocal relations of confidence of one man to another into a univocal relation of adulation. I can no longer be believed because of what I *demonstrate*, which in the end would hardly flatter me (the demonstration is universal and does not belong to me), but because I am *me*. In a word, I realize the human dream of being believed for irrational reasons. We come upon

240. See Leibniz, *The Monadology*, §48, p. 219.

the fascist attitude in a reduced form: Hitler must be believed because he cannot demonstrate anything, and cannot demonstrate it because he is too far above the ordinary.

A solitary intelligence in a community of fools will be led by existence itself to the practice of intuition and illumination since it is no longer a matter of demonstrating things. Indeed, a demonstration is a dialogue. The fool depends on bourgeois ceremonies: doing psychology, pleasing, intimidating, seducing. At the same time, the fool reflects the truths I create and uphold, which for me are subject to doubt as formulas inscribed in the heaven of ideas.

The fool, we see, necessarily has the spirit of seriousness. Since he does not comprehend, he has to believe, that is, passively to accept what comes to him from the outside. One believes in what *is*. For him, truths are no longer upheld by a freedom. They simply are and he is allowed to view them lodged in my mind like Malebranche's man inside the divine mind.²⁴¹ So the fool returns my truths to me as absolutes existing in the world. Through the fool, the mirror, I can take myself seriously. So the fool is a magically enchanted character who belongs to the chorus of human beings and whose function is to transform man into God. Naturally, he is irritating if he is obstinate and does not want to comprehend, but in fact the riposte is at hand: he is a fool. There is nothing positive in this obstinacy, nothing free. He realizes his essence as a dumb fool precisely to the extent that he does not comprehend me. Then I can ignore him, refuse to take account of him, or (symbolically or really) nihilate him. Free to believe me, not free as soon as he no longer believes me. Like the Christian who is free to carry out God's will and no longer free as soon as he turns away from it. At this level is oppression.

But at the third moment, the fool for whom stupidity comes through other people loops the loop through the choice he makes of himself in the situation of being a dumb fool. The fool always knows that he is a fool. Indeed, this quality comes to him from the outside through others. It is not a name that others give him and that they can whisper without his knowing it. It is a series of behaviors which may be courteous and discreet but which cannot be dissimulated since their very essence is to act on the fool while taking account of his stupidity, that is, in the last analysis, to confer Stupidity upon him. So the fool is *objectively* constituted as a fool. It matters little if next he gives himself the *name* fool. He is penetrated by the thing. The start is that he is conscious that others comprehend that he does not comprehend and, as a function of this comprehension, do things he cannot do. And since these acts directly or indirectly come back to him to affect him, in the end he knows *a priori* that he does not comprehend what is happening to him and that his destiny is not in his hands. Therefore, there is originally, for the stupid fool, a certain sensation of his exteriority to himself.

241. See n. 296.

But the incomprehensible that affects him is not given as something irrational. The fool is not first of all an irrationalist, even though he may choose to become one in defense, that is, to deny in principle what he does not comprehend, to posit *a priori* the incomprehensibility of the universe. Originally, the fool knows that he does not comprehend what is comprehensible and it is *for him* that the rational becomes irrational. So, for the fool, there is a hidden universe and a visible one. Things always have another meaning than the one he lends to them. He lives and knows he lives in a universe of appearances. The appearance either being immediately irrational, although for others it has an intelligible meaning that *a priori* escapes him or, on the contrary, it is spontaneously rational *for him* and he knows that *his own* evidence for his beliefs deceives him, masking from him a second-order irrationality which gets transformed for others, in the third place, into something rational. Hence he finds himself perpetually in a double contradiction, since, on the one hand, he believes in the rationality of what for him is immediately unintelligible and since, above all, on the other hand, he is in a state of perpetual skepticism about the ordinary functioning of his thinking.

Thinking goes to the truth by itself, it grasps the true in convincing intuitions, by reasoning it constructs rigorous connections among these intuitions. But the fool, who as a human being has a thinking centered like that of everyone else on the true, also has an original defiance as regards this thinking. Naturally, he may not call any evidence into question when it appears. But right afterward, when the idea is nothing more than a memory of an idea, he doubts it. Therefore he perpetually alternates between two contradictory positions: on the one hand, that of the *cogito* with its evidence, on the other, that of someone who is thoroughly convinced that an evil genie is deceiving him to the depths of his being. So the confidence he places in the thoughts of others does not come from their being thoughts but because they come from others. The guarantee of other people's thoughts comes from their practical efficacy, the social success they bring, the respect the Other inspires in him.

The fool has a tendency to be a pragmatist and at the same time to base his security on the principle of authority. And it could not be otherwise. Since one refuses him the possibility of distinguishing the true from the false and he has to receive this from the outside, he cannot elect as his advisors those who seem to him to speak the truth based on his understanding them but has to choose on some other principle. So, by a curious paradox, the fool is *respectful* of thinking and it is this respect that ruins his own thinking down to its depths, because all thinking is disrespectful and ought not to be respected.

What is more, at the same time the fool has confidence, lacking the ability to discern, he is in a perpetual state of defiance. But we must not confuse defiance with methodical doubt. Methodical doubt is power and generosity. Defiance is a feeling of someone weak, precisely the stupid fool. Stupidity is defiant by nature. Defiance is not perspicacity, it is its contrary: it does not *know* what it defies, it presupposes *a priori* a secret plan behind every gesture and word, but

it does not know the nature of this plan, or its goal, or its motives. Rather, like the paranoid, it considers all acts to be appearances with a double foundation. Except that the paranoid clearly imagines this double foundation and the fool's defiance makes it just an empty form for unifying every act. It is merely the projection beyond every act of that conviction that has been imposed upon him of always being surpassed by more intelligent people. At the same time, it is the willingness to be passive out of fear of being maneuvered.

Indeed, if every one of the other's acts has a reassuring appearance and a secret foundation that is disquieting, the acts the other provokes in the fool through his conduct also have a double foundation which only the intelligent man can perceive, not the fool. The apparent aspect of the Other's act induces the fool to do something for which he sees only the appearance but that will have for the Other a precise objective aspect that will give a result *foreseen* by the Other but not by the fool.

So the fool himself has a double foundation, he has an objective signification that escapes him. He is alienated, he loses himself. His defiance is in the first place the haunted look of someone who does not know and knows that he will never know where the blow is coming from, whose eyes want to be everywhere at once, it is also the decision to be immobile of someone who knows that every one of the acts done to him will lead him in another direction than the one he chose. The peasant's cunning smile is the fool's smile. It means, "I don't believe you." But the peasant does not know why he does not believe. He just doesn't, that's all. He smiles in order to be disarming. Other fools always have the hint of a smile out of defiance because they have the habit of seeing the other's thought abruptly change while they are talking and what was serious in appearance suddenly is revealed to be a joke and vice versa. A disarming smile, one that attempts to adapt itself in advance. For them, the world is full of snares because they play a role in it that they cannot conceive. Thus they choose a few clear and evident truths and cling to them. But they do not do so as a person sure of himself who wants to start from a solid footing, and who has no other assurance than that given to him by the evidence and exercise of thinking. This evidence is a refuge beyond which he does not wish to venture. What is seducing about it is not so much their clarity, which is their only guarantee, as the fact that he takes it from one point of view and will not risk losing it or himself; also, finally, that it is guaranteed by authorities. Thus what ensnares the fool is not some deficiency in his thinking. It is that there are others' thoughts and he has been told that he does not comprehend them.

How will he react to this situation when it is put this way? There are a variety of ways: anger, importance, frivolity, faith, and calling all thinking into doubt.

A) *Anger*: is perpetually possible. Anger is a way of simplifying too difficult tasks. By breaking them up, the stupid person destroys others' thoughts. In his

anger he wants to destroy others and their thoughts in order to get back to his own simple conception of the world. His anger leads to violence. We find ourselves perpetually led back to the case considered above of the man who knows that someone is going to persuade him of something in spite of himself, so he clams up. We have seen the passage that leads to obstinacy and to violence. But we need to note that violence comes to the fool from the outside. One does violence to him by constituting him as a stupid fool, and with this he gives himself up to violence. Naturally, there are possible complications here. For the title "fool" may ratify an original decision for violence. It may be that I call him a fool because he *originally* chose violence and obstinacy. In this case, he is violence first, I am violent back to him, and he responds with more violence.

B) *Importance*. And the spirit of seriousness. Truths comes to him from the outside. They are ready-made. He takes them as stones and mountains, not as thoughts, he does not *make* them. If he adopts them, it is as a function of the *importance* others assign to them and communicate to him. He *believes* them and refuses to doubt them. Owing to this, they are things in him and he becomes a thing, he abdicates his freedom. He is the bearer of truth just as the slave is the bearer of the master's demand and becomes sacred. He has the right to the respect he himself addresses to the truth of which he is the bearer. He has swapped freedom for security. He has conquered the contradictory and unhappy state of defiance. And since he takes these goals and truths as absolute, he does not subordinate them to the means-ends cycle, he cuts them off from their means and once again, through simplification and seriousness, he returns to violence. He is incapable of being tolerant without destroying himself. To tolerate another thought would be to admit thinking in general, that is, to admit what is refused him in principle and to stray onto pathways that are forbidden to him. The fool posits the end as justifying the means. Simply because in so doing he sees more clearly and does not need to call this end into question.

C) The other aspect of the fool is that he "doesn't count for anything," and he knows it. He can combat this "insignificance" through importance. He counts on getting important truths like a receiver of stolen goods. The other sees that it is a way of accommodating himself and making himself a happy child in the universe of men. Since only appearances are accessible to him, he will accommodate himself to them. He will babble, talk in order to say nothing, act in order to do nothing, pass along commonplaces and common actions. He will have the happiness of clinging to the surface of himself. But this attitude presupposes an underlying passion for order. And the spirit of seriousness. He has to have confidence in all the men of order who, more intelligent than he is, make order reign in the world. He has to believe that the world is good. This particular fool is necessarily on the side of the oppressors. He rejoins woman and the child. He will become violent when his order is attacked and he will transform himself into someone important.

D) Faith is the destruction of thinking. In the very situation of the fool, driven to faith, there is something like an obligation to destroy thinking. He can decide. Therefore there is a fool's irrationalism, denying the value of others' thoughts in order to take their superiority over him away from them. Thinking only leads to befuddlement and complications. The only thing that counts is force or social success. We see that these four choices are homogeneous and that it is easy to pass from one to the other. Then too most fools vacillate among these different choices.

So stupidity is originally oppression. The fool responds to this with stupidity and violence, that is, revolt and counteroppression. Therefore there is a rule of the fool that is stronger than the rule of thinking. Therefore, if we want to end the reign of stupidity, we will not be able to do so by reducing the fool to powerlessness, but by making sure that there are no more fools to become part of it. For it is intelligence that creates fools, if next fools oppress intelligence. Just as the Jewish problem is an Aryan one, just as the black problem is a white one. The problem of stupid fools is a problem for intelligent people. The stupidity that comes to fools so as to transfix them as fools has to be suppressed. In each case, the only thing that must be taken into consideration is the freedom that is total in everyone, along with the reason that is one facet of this freedom. We must affirm that good sense is the most widely shared thing in the world and sympathize with what really is good sense, that is, with the effort of the alleged fool to comprehend and surpass his *Umwelt* in making use of the means at hand.

Every distinction of fools and nonfools creates something incommunicable, an aristocracy, and consequently oppression and violence. It isolates the intelligence and sets limits to thinking; it creates the oppression of the fool and its opposite, the oppression coming from the fool, by obligating some men to choose themselves in the situation of being submen. This will have the result of either of creating intellectual slaves or, in the case of inverting the situation, fashioning the human in the image of these submen. The fool is a perpetual danger for the human. He is afraid and he causes fear. Therefore it is once again a question of liberating the freedom of others by liberating one's own freedom. Contrary to the saying and opinion of common sense that there are no wicked men but only ignorant ones and fools, we need to maintain that there are no fools but just wicked men. For the wicked man is a free being who misuses his freedom against all freedom. He is one form of freedom. Whereas the fool is shackled by mute negative powers.

The original difficulty remains, of course: I can know more than this or that person, reason faster and better, comprehend what he does not comprehend, be perpetually obligated to explain to him what he ought to think. There is already, so it seems, an objective oppression. And against it individual initiative can do much but not everything. A social transformation can do more: 1st, by diminishing or abolishing the reasons for choosing frivolity, thoughtlessness, in short,

stupidity as an evasion. 2d, by realizing *full employment*²⁴² and making full use of everyone, according to his capacities.

We can conclude from all this that the fool who is freedom provided with poor instruments is never anything other than a displaced human being, for the instruments are poor only relative to the task undertaken. Stupidity disappears if this person is set in his real place, that is, *essentially* if: a) there is not an oppressing class to which the degenerate belong through their heritage. Stupidity is most frequently found in the bourgeoisie because the son of the factory owner has the right to run the factory even though he is incapable of doing so; b) if, on the contrary, there is a professional orientation joined to a free choice.

3d, in creating a certain type of solidarity in freedom; that is, a solidarity deprived of any relationship to oppression and classes. Then there is no longer a model of oppression on which to construct that type of subtle oppression we call stupidity and, on the contrary, man gives himself first of all to others as a freedom and grasps others as free too. Then the prehistoric idea of internal negative forces curbing mental development gives way to the positive idea of the free utilization of a given material instrument. The prehistoric idea of stupidity vanishes. Hence stupidity refers us to oppression and a society divided into classes, just as the suppression of stupidity refers us to a classless society. In a team where everyone has his place, there is never a dumb fool.

Types of current oppressions

- childhood
- ignorance
- stupidity
- femininity

We now are capable of determining the existential conditions of oppression. It is not yet a question of economic and social oppression but rather of its ontological conditions. There are five of them: 1st, oppression comes from freedom. The oppressor and the oppressed must be free. 2d, oppression comes from the multiplicity of freedoms. Each freedom has to be an outside for every other freedom. The fact of oppression is grounded in the ontological relation of freedoms to one another. 3d, oppression can come to one freedom *only* through another freedom—only one freedom can limit another freedom. 4th, oppression implies that neither the slave nor the tyrant fundamentally recognizes their own freedom. One oppresses only if one oppresses himself. The oppressor is oppressed by the oppressed and by himself. If I fully recognize my freedom, I also recognize that of others. 5th, there is a complicity of the oppressor and the oppressed. Let us examine more closely these conditions to see if oppression is an ontological structure.

242. In English in the French text.

1. A rock can destroy a man. It does not oppress his freedom. It attacks his body and I have sufficiently shown that there is no freedom unless it is in danger in the world. Death is its limit but also a constitutive factor of freedom. There is freedom if there is a choice among possibles. And an irremediable choice. In other words, if it is understood that all the possibles *will not be realized*. If a being were endowed with a temporal infinity, he could realize every possible, he would therefore be nothing more than the development in an infinite and necessary series of every possible, therefore he would disappear as an individuality (the realization of these possibles to the exclusion of all the rest) and as freedom (the dangerous and irremediable choice of some possibles). But for this choice not to have the pure gratuitousness of a divine choice, it is necessary that its limitation not come from oneself. It is not a matter of choosing one's limits on the basis of an available infinity but of choosing within limits. These limits, therefore, are necessarily given.

Let us be sure to note however that they are taken up and do not really appear as given except through that surpassing that makes *there be* these limits. Freedom is internalization of exteriority (making *there be* these limits and that they be limits of a project) and externalization of interiority (realization of a project). Hence the choice of possibles implies death and death as contingency. It also implies that these possibles *may always* not be realized. For if they necessarily have to be on the basis of this choice, their relation to it would be that of a consequence to a principle and freedom would vanish. This implies the obstacle. But not as an obstacle dialectically produced for and by freedom—a given and contingent obstacle for which freedom makes its exteriority appear through a movement of internalization. So originally, the universe as the always possible crushing of man, is given in freedom itself as one of its constitutive factors. To be free is to run the perpetual risk of seeing one's enterprises fail and death cut off the project.

Also discuss the finitude of death. Freedom does not conceive of itself apart from death, failure, and the risk of absolute despair without any consolation. All optimism will slip the *already made* into freedom (values, equilibrium, necessarily reached ends) and cunningly destroys freedom by replacing it with a necessary order. For example, the all too cunning, “you would not be looking for me if you had not found me,” which thins the search down to an appearance concealing the underlying reality that is an already given relation to God, one that has always been given. This “you would not be looking for me if you had not found me,” is at the origin of all modern poetry (success in the depths of failure, etc.). In reality, seeking is seeking, that is, it implies the permanent risk of not finding, of dying without having found. To say that I have found is to make myself into God's puppet.

Similarly, those who say he has not found but the essential thing is not to find—the essential is the search. Against them we must maintain that rustic truth that one looks in order to find and that, consequently, anyone who claims

to look for the sake of looking is a case of bad faith. If I seek in order to seek, I scoff at what I find, therefore I do not seek.

Hence freedom would be tragic (because it is conceived on the basis of its perpetually being threatened with loss and on the basis of the certainty of its final annihilation) if man were mediocre. It includes within itself, in its very essence, its destruction. It is the dialectical synthesis of subjective indetermination and objective necessity. Therefore nothing *from the exterior* can oppress it since everything about the exterior is already foreseen, given in it. There can be no action without passivity, no freedom without a body, and limit-situations, where the body is completely reduced to impotence and where freedom is nothing more than the Stoic abstraction, the $\tau\alpha\ \epsilon\phi\ \upsilon\mu\iota\nu$, are already given in the very springing up of freedom as having power. So the man of Nature (if he were not a pure abstraction of the spirit) would be free against Nature, even in the midst of forest fires or floods, even in the risk of the total and immediate disappearance of the human species.

This is the meaning of the *tragic*: it is the vision that man is not necessary but that he has internalized this nonnecessity and that his freedom is something like the necessity of his contingency. The tragic is the affirmation of freedom amidst the total failure of freedom. It is the discovery of this failure as a condition of freedom. Except in everyday reality this failure is a pure permanent possibility. In tragedy, the situation envisaged is the limit-situation where the failure is total and real. This is why tragedies “end badly.” They are made to do so. It is a question of showing freedom on the basis of its failure. Its function is to reassure man by showing that the human is the dazzle of evidence in the destruction of the human. Or, to put it another way, that the world destroys itself as a world in destroying man. The only cataclysm that can touch the world is the destruction of man—or the return to Being. As I demonstrated in *Being and Nothingness*, the forces of the universe can *destroy* through man.²⁴³ Such destruction is posited in the human universe of construction and freedom.

If we pretend that man is not free, the very idea of oppression loses all meaning. In the first place, the oppressor not being free is assimilable to natural forces whose efficacy against man is borrowed from freedom itself. Next, the oppressed, not being free, can only change states. A stone does not oppress, one does not oppress a stone. Oppression can have just one signification: although it may have the same result as natural forces do, that is, to kill or mutilate, or, in a general way, to crush, it has a completely different meaning and a completely different goal: it strikes freedom directly at its heart. It impedes freedom, but it must be so if it is to be the project of doing so, that is, consciousness of the other's freedom as not yet suppressed. Therefore fundamentally it is freedom.

2. Therefore only a freedom can be oppressed. And if it is to be oppressed it

243. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 8.

has to be recognized as a freedom. If, as a part of the universe, I contribute to destroying or preventing other people's project, I am not an oppressor. I am the grain of sand in Cromwell's bladder.²⁴⁴ Oppression requires two things: to oppress a freedom you have to *recognize* it and only one freedom can recognize freedom in another. But, at the same time, it has to be treated as an object; that is, it has to be in the element of freedom but another freedom than the freedom one oppresses. We have to do here with an ambiguity of the human condition. If the intuitive encounter with the other's freedom were definable as an empirical but full recognition of that freedom, oppression would be impossible, for it would then be a question of a universalizing and unifying recognition of the element of freedom.

I can think of fleeing my freedom if I am on the terrain of bad faith. But if I once become conscious of it in anxiety, I cannot even imagine that I might suppress it, any more than the *cogito* can be accompanied by any doubt concerning my own existence. If therefore I had an intuition of the other's freedom equal to my own, I could not even begin to conceive that anyone could try to take it away. And, conversely, if I were totally blind to the freedoms of others, if I saw men as mere mechanisms, I could well dream of manhandling them. But the enterprise of oppressing them would not be possible because one cannot oppress a steam engine or a lifting jack.

Correlatively—and we shall return to this—if I grasp *my* freedom in a fulfilled intuition as both the source of all my projects and requiring universal freedom, I cannot think of destroying the freedom of others. But if I grasp myself as a pure object, I no longer even have the notion of freedom as something to destroy. However, if while grasping the other as a pure freedom, I can in the very same movement encounter or conceive of him as an object, and if even while being aware of my underlying freedom, I feel myself shackled, like an object, by bonds I wish to cast off, then the ontological conditions for the appearance of some form of oppression are realized.

Let us be clear that oppression is not some ideal. It is always some direct or indirect action that acts on the *body*, it is a constraint by means of the body. Oppression usually results in poverty, unemployment, a system of ownership, forced labor, etc. But there is no situation so miserable where the oppressed are held down that cannot also be conceived as having been chosen by a society of free men. Following a socialist revolution, the economy of a country may be ruined. Society may freely decree that its forces will be devoted to exports or to setting up heavy industry. It may decide to maintain a very low level of life while asking its members to bear a heavy burden of work. The situation of this society's members will therefore be inferior to that of workers in a capitalist nation, if one considers only the material point of view, but it will not be possible to speak of oppression. On the contrary, the example of the U.S.A. clearly shows

244. Cf. p. 53, and n. 65.

that oppression and poverty are not always linked together. In fact, oppression is an internal metamorphosis of *my* freedom, which is brought about by another's freedom. There is oppression in the following cases.

A) When a society creates a system of values, a culture, goods, and forbids certain of its members to participate in this culture, to want these values, to consume these goods. Indeed, from the fact that it was created by freedom, this cultural, practical, and vital system appears to every one as his possibilities. Every human possible, in effect, appears as possible to every human being. This does not mean that it is *his* possible or even that he is tempted by it. Simply, since it appears in the dimension of freedom, it is a proposal to my freedom. Opaque to the extent that it is posited by the *other*, translucent to the extent that I can assimilate it for myself. I am immediately *concerned* with what men do. Goethe said: I can learn of no crime without committing it.²⁴⁵ And, in another area, all men rose to the stratosphere with Picard.²⁴⁶ There is an inauthentic way of rejoicing about it: "What a gutsy guy!" And an authentic way: it is not true that I am a hero of science, a martyr, but that possibility has been uncovered for me by the other's act and now I have to take my responsibilities over against it.

If we were in a world of freedom, each act of each person would indicate a possible direction for my transcendence. I would be borne and surpassed by others' surpassing as the perpetual possibility of surpassing *myself* by surpassing *them* or rejoining *them*. My freedom, which is a perpetual invention, would not distinguish itself from the freedom of one and all. I would choose my own possibles on the basis of the concrete and finite set of possibles of my historical society. In a society of oppression, the original situation is analogous. The concrete set of possibles determines my freedom's field. Except *at the same time* this field is blocked by prohibitions. My freedom no longer finds itself in the presence of possibles belonging to it from the very fact that it makes them appear (others *not being* at all), the characteristic of solitary freedom. It is negatively determined by possibles that outline a concrete geography of freedom and that are, at the same time, not its possibles. The man who does not know how to read, for example, who sees others reading and cannot learn to do so himself (a black slave in Louisiana),²⁴⁷ is struck at the very heart of his freedom because it is a

245. "There are no crimes, however great, that on certain days I have not felt capable of committing," Goethe said. The greatest minds are also the most capable of great crimes, which they generally do not commit, because of wisdom, because of love, or because they would limit themselves by so doing." André Gide, "Literature and Ethics," in *The Journals of André Gide*, vol. 1: 1889–1913, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 71.

246. Auguste Picard (1884–1962), a Belgian physicist who explored both the stratosphere and the ocean depths in vessels of his own design. In August 1947 he was preparing tests of his bathyscaphe off the coast of Senegal. See *Le Figaro*, 23 August 1947. These trials were delayed because of mechanical difficulties. *Ibid.*, 20 November 1947.

247. Cf. Appendix 2, p. 571.

question here of an impossible possible. Directly impossible *to him*—he is intended by this possible which for him becomes a *lack* because it defines at the same time a form of human and historical freedom in general and, negatively, his own freedom as in chains. His impossible is someone else's possible. In solitude, if I decide to climb this mountain and the operation is not realizable, I give up and the possibility that glimmered for a second vanishes. There is no longer any relation between this mountain and mountain climbing.

What we have here is not impossibility but nonpossibility. As the Stoics put it, I change myself rather than the world and having done this, the world's solicitations recede. But if I give up reading because I cannot learn to read, reading still remains a possible for man and therefore, in some sense, *my* possible. So there suddenly appears within my freedom the idea of a *limit*. And this limit is exteriority. There is something that proposes itself to my freedom—books, for example—and that does so perpetually, whether I turn away or continue to confront it, and it does so as something precisely out of my reach. It is a solicitation I cannot take up. So my freedom is determined from the outside as powerless. At the same time, it loses its category of transcendence since the proposed goals are *unsurpassable*. But we need to underscore that a freedom is not a *faculty* of surpassing, it is *the* surpassing itself. If surpassing no longer occurs, freedom disappears. In fact, there is a reflective recourse: the consciousness of unsurpassability will be a decision to surpass all unsurpassability: revolt. But we have not yet reached that point.

B) There is oppression when one class or group of individuals finds itself in a situation that is materially difficult to bear and that they cannot change because of other people's will. This oppression is resented subjectively because they set the situation into relation with the others' freedom. It is not the discomfort that they suffer, it is the discomfort as willed and maintained by other people. In its relation to the universe, freedom struggles with blind forces. But these forces are forces only for and through my freedom. The taste for risk, basically, is the taste for employing one's freedom to reveal the destructive forces in a field of freedom.

In the pure interrelationship among freedoms, there is a recognition of the other's freedom as being my freedom in the other and a relation of reciprocity (if he comprehends me, I can comprehend him, if he appeals to me, I help him, if he looks at me, I can look at him). But in the case where the force that keeps me in some unbearable state takes on the face of freedom, everything changes. I can no longer affirm the superiority of man over the universe that blindly crushes him, since this force is the symbol for this other consciousness and it therefore appears as conscious. In disappearing under the weight of the universe, I had the revenge of bringing the world along with me in the catastrophe. There *would be no more* world after me. Whereas at present, if I disappear, that consciousness will survive to confirm my disappearance. My disappearance

becomes an event in another life, the realization of a project. I become a means and a thing in the moment that I nihilate myself.

In any case, my freedom is no longer superior to the force that stands over against it since the force is itself consciousness and freedom. And if instead of killing me, this force undertakes to keep me just above the vital minimum, I cannot *take it to task*. For, precisely, if I undertake to act against the resistance of the universe, I have conquered the universe by conquering myself, whereas if I undertake to act against the situation the opposing force that is oppressing me keeps me in, I work with the very intention of this force. Far from making it disappear, I reinforce it, I let it into my interiority, I am its accomplice against me. But if I *must* not take it to task, the result is that I have to acknowledge my powerlessness, for my possibility (to refuse my oppression) is no longer my possibility and no longer belongs to me. Epictetus's and Alain's "saying no" is a mere abstract game.²⁴⁸

Therefore, in fact, precisely because I am free, I become conscious of what in my freedom is a mystification. But it is an *ontological* mystification; that is, ontologically I have a choice between the resignation that is placed in me by the other's freedom, and refusal that is purely symbolic and that makes me aware of my powerlessness. And yet the choice is a free one. Freedom is free to choose the sauce with which it will be eaten. It appears in order to deny itself. The third path, revolt, presupposes favorable conditions (the possibility of an alliance, of solidarity among the oppressed, the development of techniques that can make the oppressors stop working).

So in oppression, the bit of bread that constitutes one's only food is indeed the very substance of the oppression, except it is penetrated with a peculiar meaning because it is what it is through a will to oppression. When I eat it, I commune in an inverted fashion with the oppressor. My oppression necessarily gets manifested materially since I am passive in the face of it and it attacks me in my passivity. But what I read in this material is a freedom directed against my freedom. I eat this freedom, I breathe it, and in flowing into my lungs, in sliding along my esophagus, it gets incorporated into me as oppression.

Indeed, in order to oppress, the other has to represent my freedom to himself negatively and positively: negatively because the police and armies directed against the oppressed only make sense if the oppressed is conceived of in his essence as the power to negate the situation; positively, because oppression is utilization. This brings us to:

C) *Forced labor*: one does not make use of the oppressed as a machine, contrary to what is often said, but as a limited freedom. The master demands initiative from the slave within the limits of the imposed task; that is, invention and taking some responsibility. He has need of him as a freedom acting like a

248. Cf. p. 263.

machine, which can at times surpass the stage of the machine. In forced labor, the oppressed becomes conscious of being and not being free. Hegel has shown the slave becoming conscious of his freedom in *making* things.²⁴⁹ Yet at the same time such work leads to depersonalization since, for one thing, it is forced and, for another, it ends with a doubly stolen product: stolen, first of all, because the product is *anonymous* and thus it refers to the anonymity of the one who produced it (this is not completely true for capitalist oppression); stolen, next, because the project jumps into the sphere forbidden to the worker's freedom. Thus, in producing or in helping to produce the body of a luxury automobile, he is led to apply his freedom to limiting himself in his freedom. He produces something possible for others but impossible for him. He contributes to maintaining the taboos that crisscross his field of freedom. Cf. also the discussion of the *demand* above.²⁵⁰

3. So oppression is one moment in the dialectic of freedoms. It results from the following three elements: freedom exists, it is conscious of itself and the freedom of others—there are *several* freedoms—, and it is the surpassing of a situation; that is, it implies a passivity. There is oppression when freedom turns against itself; that is, there has to be a duality at the heart of freedom. And this duality is precisely what we are calling a detotalized totality. This turning against itself implies that freedom can be circumscribed by another freedom that steals its universe, the meaning of its acts, and the unity of its life from it.

A freedom screens its universe from another freedom when it *knows more* about what it sees than the second freedom does. Ontologically, every look of a passerby at my universe steals the part looked at from me. But I grab back this fleeing something by looking at the passerby. However, if this passerby also possesses *knowledge*, there is something I will never be able to grab back. He disarms my view of the object by reducing it to an appearance. And, himself, sees the substance behind it. Without him, the distinction between substance and appearance would have no meaning. If I am alone, everything that I see is both substance and appearance. It is an absolute. The distinction between substance and appearance, which gets expressed socially—beginning with primitive secret societies—as the distinction between the initiated and the uninitiated, is already oppression. The uninitiated is already caught in a contradiction since what he sees is *absolute* for him.

The same thing applies to values. It is important to see that the action of the oppressing freedom on the oppressed freedom works here both positively and

249. "Through work, however, the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is. . . . In this way . . . consciousness, *qua* worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its *own* independence" (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 118).

250. Cf. pp. 237ff.—Ed.

negatively. But the action of the positive side is pure solicitation. Through the invention of a value or the discovery of some knowledge, one simply confronts freedom with the fact that the field of its possibles has been enlarged along with its responsibilities (if a new possible appears, freedom cannot fail to determine itself over against it). There is in this an absolute action on freedom, but of a quite peculiar type, for it is at the same time *unconditioned*. If anything whatever gets changed in the human world, the freedom of each and every man cannot fail to be confronted with its responsibilities.

From another perspective, one *does not touch* that freedom, or manhandle it, it remains a whole. It is up to this freedom on the basis of this condemnation to decide everything about what we call its abandonment, which comes in the last analysis from this change. Degraded, the comprehension of this relationship becomes magic, belief in action at a distance. Seen correctly, this is the only action possible by one freedom on another taken as freedom. *To give him his chance*, to open the field of possibilities wider and wider.

The *negative* action, on the contrary, is of a mechanical kind. As I noted above, *privation* is a kind of blind historical cause. The action, let us add, no longer acts on freedom at the start. It acts on the body as a passivity. Let us be clear that the body as a passivity only reveals itself to another freedom. In solitary freedom, we have seen, the body is the surpassed, the framework of the *Erlebnis*, the instrument of all instruments. And, since by hypothesis, there is no transcending consciousness, it is neither passive nor active for the forces of the world.

The world exists for the For-itself, the For-itself does not exist for the world. Passivity exists nevertheless, but in a dialectical synthesis with activity. Activity is exactly surpassed passivity and passivity is not at first something to be surpassed, rather it is originally surpassed passivity within the surpassing. Or, if you prefer, being-in-the-world presupposes a being-within-the-world as a surpassed structure. Yet as soon as another freedom springs up, *there is* for it a world and the Other reveals itself to this freedom as a being-within-the-world for which it itself is a being-within-the-world. Therefore the other can act on me through the intermediary of the world. He can use the adverse and destructive forces of the world to destroy me.

We have explained above how these forces were nothing other than the real and concrete expression of the chance of failure and death that defines all freedom in principle. Moreover, they belong to *my* world and in a certain sense my death is an event-within-the-world that does not concern my being-in-the-world. It is the limit-case where my world blows up and destroys itself in destroying me. Whereas for the other my death is an event in his world. So he can provoke on the basis of his world and by means of this world, the reduction to powerlessness of that-being-within-the-world I am for him. So action is passivity against passivity. If I toss a bomb into this village, it acts through inertia, and its very explosion is inertia on a body to the extent that it envelops this inertia

as one of its surpassed structures. There is no contact of freedom against freedom here.

This extreme example shows what being reduced to powerlessness signifies, it is to abstract and internalize passivity for the other. On this basis begins the negative action at a distance of the freedom of the one on the freedom of the other. As soon as the body is reduced to powerlessness, all creation of a new possible is oppression because it defines one more form of powerlessness for the oppressed. It does so without touching his freedom, simply because the new end is a real possibility for the oppressed freedom, at the same time that it is taken away from this freedom. Hence the *best* in the oppressor's world is an antivalue not solely, as so often has been said, because it was created by the oppressed, but because it is originally an element of oppression. The richer and more complete the world of the oppressor is, the more ways there will be for the oppressed to be a slave, since each value is something forbidden. Thus in a society of oppression, the painter, the scholar, the engineer, etc., are oppressors whatever their political and social attitude may be, because they make the world of the oppressed smaller and smaller to the very extent that they enrich the world of the oppressor. And this happens, we see, as a direct consequence of the freedom of the oppressed, not as a consequence of the freedom of the oppressor.

But this is not everything. The Other's freedom can reduce my freedom to being nothing more than a vain appearance, it can even reduce it to becoming an instrument for its own ends. And it can do all this *without touching* my freedom.

I am alone and running in the direction D to reach some point P, the goal of my running. It may happen that an accident of the terrain conceals a gully. I see it too late and carried along by my enthusiasm, I fall into it. I break a leg. The result of my effort is not not to have reached P but, on the contrary, never to reach it. Tomorrow someone will find me in this pit and they will carry me away. Once healed, I will leave the country, I shall never have reached P. Ought I to speak here of mystification? Have I fooled myself? Assuredly not. It is merely a matter of ignorance. But no one *knew*. Or if perhaps a guide knew, he did not know what I was trying to do. In reality, it was a question of a normal relation to the world. Not only the risk, but also the ignorance is necessary to undertake something.

To undertake to do something is to want to bring about the future. To want to do so, it has to be not made yet, therefore it has to be unknowable. The guide undoubtedly knows that there is just one way to reach P. But he has no interest in going there except for money. If I want to reach P it has to be *possible* that one may not reach it, that there is between P and me an absolutely undetermined relation that I want to determine. Ignorance, therefore, is more or less foreseen in a project, just as risk is one of its structures too. My fall into the gully was foreseen and possible therefore from the very beginning in its very unforeseenness,

it inhabited the project in a vital way. And the project itself is an attempt to light up a portion of the world at my risk and peril. So the presence of the hole in the ground does not *fool* me. My necessary ignorance is like a preview of the whole. What is more, the hole belongs to the domain of *being*, so long as a human-reality has not revealed it, not to the domain of the *there is*. It is there, but outside of the world of tools and coefficients of adversity. Undiscovered, undiscoverable except by my falling into it, it does not stamp my efforts as vain. If man is to undertake anything, it must be understood that somewhere there is a hole to fall into. In other words, human action includes accidents within itself.

Since freedom entails that success does not fall from the decision like a logical consequence, its realization may not be at any moment, for reasons independent of the project or its preciseness. These reasons make up *exteriority* in relation to any project, and freedom is the perpetual invention of means to overcome these external difficulties, but it is understood that success is merely *possible*; that is, there can be action only if the external difficulties can always be so high or so new that human invention cannot overcome them. Hence it is further understood *at the same time* that a human undertaking succeeded because of a free decision and the free inventiveness that overcame the obstacles, *also* that it succeeded because there were just these obstacles and not other larger ones imposed on it. Every human undertaking succeeds by chance and at the same time through human initiative.

If the sharpshooter did not have the sun in his eyes, he would have got me and my scouting mission would have failed. Everything depended, therefore, on a ray of sunlight, the movement of a cloud, etc. But, at the same time, my precautions were taken in order to eliminate all foreseeable dangers. In a word, possibles get realized *in terms of probability*. Freedom lives within the sphere of the probable, between total ignorance and certitude. And the probable comes into the world through man. Outside of man and his project there is only being. And the root of the probable is not knowledge, which by itself can only conceive Being or Nonbeing, but action.

Furthermore, as soon as we cast a glance at the past, we realize that we could not have avoided falling into this hole if we took this path. Irritating, of course, but the true retrospective illusion. What has changed is that the hole is now part of the world of the *there is* along with our action, and we see for certain that it existed in the sphere of the probable. This is sufficient for it to appear as something absurd. This whole description quite clearly depends on the hypothesis of a solitary freedom. If we now assume God's looking at all this, our freedom necessarily becomes absurd. Indeed, everything now takes place within the world of the "there is." From the moment that someone *knows*, the object is unveiled, for someone it has passed from the domain of probabilities to that of certitude. And probability disappears in the face of certitude. Probability was alive when

it was the instrument for conquering some absolute unknown. There is a real probability when *all men* are ignorant. But it becomes a *lack*, a pure privation, a limit to my freedom, when someone knows.

Moreover, time gets killed, since divine knowledge is *retrospective* whereas my act is progressive. For God, I am in the past.

If the oppressor is God for the oppressed, [it is] precisely because of his intellectual and cultural level, which, moreover, he owes entirely to the oppressed. But the oppressor does not confine himself to knowing. He acts. I am not talking here just of a constraint on the body but of direct action on the situation. The original condition of this fakery is his *position*. If I am *positioned* or *situated* in such a way that I partially see some whole, I cannot, in most cases, conceive the encompassing whole (this is not always true, but generally is). If I am situated in relation to an appearance, I cannot conceive the reality. Note here that the encompassing whole and reality are the *world*, that is, not something noumenal but something given to consciousnesses. However, if, on the contrary, I grasp the concrete totality and I do know the position of some individual as determined in relation to that totality, I can reconstitute the fragmentary *appearance* that this reality takes on for him.

Placed on a hill, I see the countryside, I see the runner getting ready to leap the hedge, the hedge, the pit filled with water behind it, and I can determine from the runner's position and his behavior that he can not see the pit and has not foreseen its existence. He, on the contrary, only sees the hedge. I can even know that he can easily assume that there is no pit and that it would be difficult for him to imagine, on the contrary, that there is one, owing to his structure of perception which constitutes a whole from the elements set before him, which prolong what is given beyond knowledge properly speaking. On this basis, I can imagine the pit, even if it does not exist. Placed on the hill, even if there is no pit, I can note simply from the runner's position that the hedge conceals a part of the lawn from him, one that is undetermined and that *might actually be a pit*. In other words, I surpass his ignorance toward my own ends.

But ignorance is a human affair, it does not represent an inferiority or a vice, but rather a necessary condition of the human condition and of freedom. For other points of view, I too am ignorant. But if, instead of warning him, I watch him, I have dehumanized his ignorance, I look at him from the point of view of absolute knowledge. Instead of seeing in this scene the necessity for the man progressively to make *there be* a world that is more and more distinct (ignorance is ignorance of *things in the world*. Knowledge does not enlarge the world, it deepens it), I put myself at the point of view of a fully illuminated world where I see the ignorant crawling blindly about. Assimilating knowledge and Being (not in the sense that *esse est percipi* but in the sense that Being, above the general run of the mill, is known), I steal Being from him. And in changing the situation I can constitute as the ignorance of the blind what until then had only been potential ignorance. If there is no pit, he still does not see beyond the hedge,

instead continuing his perception of the meadow, until he falls like the fool who says “things are as clear as day.”

In this agreement with the world there is *chance*, therefore a virtuality of ignorance and error. I can transform this virtuality of error into an act, and do so without touching the man, merely by modifying the setting. I need only to have the pit dug. However, I can go even further. Perhaps the signs the runner interprets make the existence of a pit improbable. Therefore if he concluded it did not exist, he was justified in doing so within the order of the probable. He was justified because he kept himself within the element of the material. There is a predictability to the material, limits to its variations. But the introduction of human freedom changes everything. It is the introduction of the unforeseeable. Here the human turns against itself. The unpredictability belonged to the man and was his means of conquering predictable things. Yet now unpredictability turns against him and, by inserting him in the domain of the material, constitutes things themselves as unpredictable and, with this, the man himself, the runner, becomes predictable like a thing.

The trick reverses the relations, therefore. If the universe is faked, the unpredictability of man (his inventiveness, his craftiness) becomes predictable. Why? Because the person playing the trick places himself in the other's place and *invents for him* the craftiness which, in making him avoid a clear obstacle, *freely and necessarily* drives him toward the hedge. Indeed, invention can be defined either by its subjective structure or its objective result. There is an invention subjectively when there is an intended surpassing of the present situation toward a new state of the world which can be traced back in terms of causality to the older one. Yet this new state must be subjectively, that is, in terms of the subjective *Umwelt*, also new as regards the intersubjective world of the human, it has to bring some enriching possibility to the totality of mankind, so that we may speak of an objective invention. When a subjective invention reproduces an old, already surpassed possibility, there is a contestation of the subjective by the objective, as is conveyed in the formula about “stating the obvious.” Freedom gets attacked at its root, which is creation.

This is the direction to look for laughter. It is addressed to a freedom that manifests itself as totally predictable and determined, at the same time it is subjectively felt as wholly free. Laughter comes from the dialectical contradiction between these two aspects and, through the particular case, is addressed to the general contradiction between objective servitude, human thinglikeness, and subjective freedom. It does not think at all of *reducing* the free to the determined, rather it grasps the contradiction and breaks it apart.

However, most of the time, one will surpass the contradiction in such a way as to lead to the reduction of one of its terms to the other. Falling into predictability, the other seems moved by necessity, hence something mechanical. His freedom is no longer the absolute grasping of his consciousness, but rather an illusion. This conception of the oppressed (which is itself bad faith—for the freedom of

the oppressed irritates the oppressor precisely because it is not an illusion, so the oppressor takes his vengeance by demonstrating its illusory character) gets reflected in the consciousness of the oppressed who, knowing himself to be doing something foreseen and as outmaneuvered, grasps himself as determined. Therefore he claims his liberation, fundamentally, in the name of freedom, but he represents himself to himself as something not free. There is an essential contradiction at the heart of the oppressed, but we shall return to this.

The following structure is precisely that of the ruse. By forcing the runner to invent what is, that is, by setting his freedom aside, I can also oblige him to invent what I want him to invent. By a system of obvious obstacles, I drive him toward the hedge that conceals the pit and finally he jumps it. Here again there is no constraint of one freedom by another, simply my higher position, which allowed me to twist the other's situation through the interplay of "reality and appearance." But, with this, not only is the other's freedom objectively a necessity, but also his free choice of an end and means is only an appearance. The *reality* of his freedom is *my* freedom. Here we can speak of alienation in the strict sense of the term. I want him to fall into the pit. Every obstacle he avoids, each of his inventions brings him closer to it. The maxim of his project is not properly speaking not to fall into the pit, since he is unaware of its existence, rather it is to avoid obstacles in general and to win the race. But I do want him to fall into one of the traps and not to win. So, by *wanting* the contrary of what I want, in the end, he *does* what I want. He only has a choice between two solutions: either obey the deliberate choice of my will (give up the race).or obey it without knowing it (to fall into the pit).

Let us consider here the myth of the Greek ἀνάγκη: Oedipus had to kill his father. Laius could have resigned himself to this death and raised his son in the palace while waiting for him to cut his throat. He preferred to have him killed. But the necessary consequence of this gesture was that Oedipus, saved, met him twenty years later and struck him down. There is fate when a man is free in a fake world; that is, when he enjoys a limited freedom *within another's project*. He is free to choose among several ways. But they are already arranged in such a way that, whatever my choice, they will realize the project. What is unforeseeable is the *choice of means*, the way. So freedom does really have an absolute density. But whatever decision gets taken, it is the result that is blocked.

So in oppression man is fate for man. And it is within the oppressive structure that the idea of fate could be born. Note that it is not just a question of the oppression of *classes*. Rather parents are fate for children, man for woman, the preceding generation for the succeeding one, the State for the citizen. Fate is the paradoxical curse on a freedom that freely prepares itself for a necessary and preestablished outcome. In current society, the child is penetrated with the idea of fate by the faked universe concocted for him by his parents. The less violent the parents, the more reasonable and reasoning they are, the more manifest the

fate. Fate is therefore the synthetic combination of the absolute consciousness of freedom with that of necessity. In fate, freedom is not an illusion—it is total, but powerless. Worse: it turns against itself. And this is indeed an intuition of the truth. The duality of freedoms means that one freedom can always turn against another, therefore that it turns against itself.

The social world is therefore a perpetual dialectic of three concepts: that of the recognition of absolute freedom (which gets manifested in most of the interindividual emotions: hate, love, recognition, admiration, mistrust, etc.); that of fatality or fate (which gets manifested as soon as man wants to try out his power or powerlessness and as soon as he thinks about his “life”); and that of determinism which, in fact, is first of all an interconnection among beings in a world illumined by freedom and for which freedom serves as a ground, but which, through the turning of one freedom against another, becomes a means of enslavement, oriented determinism, and, therefore, a free limit to the other’s freedom. It is the perpetual passage of these notions back and forth among themselves that gives the climate of human sensibility.

Naturally, necessity (in its degraded form of determinism) is the weapon utilized by the oppressor to conceal his servitude from the oppressed. If the government takes a measure that restrains me in my powers and if I can think that another measure was possible, it is the free choice of a freedom that has restrained my freedom, I am oppressed. If the government presents this measure as the *only one* possible, his freedom entirely disappears, he is only the go-between where necessity takes on a body. In this case, I rediscover that world that my freedom illumines and where I must “change myself instead of changing it” and “obey nature in order to conquer it.” But in this case, there is a science of politics, hence a rigorous determinism.

The oppressor is always playing on necessity. The boss *cannot* raise salaries, he says, without lowering the profits that allow his firm to subsist, and thus to employ the workers demanding a raise. If the worker allows himself to be persuaded by this, he finds himself in a blind and rigorous economic world where he has to use his freedom to conquer himself. So determinism becomes a weapon of oppression. In “Materialism and Revolution,” I showed how the oppressed in turn will make determinism a weapon to pursue their claims.²⁵¹

4. This interplay of concepts brings us to our fourth condition.²⁵² The freedoms we are considering are incompletely conscious of themselves. Oppression is both bad faith and mystification. The foundation of all mystification in the sense that Marx took it is the plan to make a man believe that he is not free or that I am not free. In other words, to conceal his freedom from him or, on the

251. Cf. n. 76.

252. Of oppression.—Ed.

contrary, to make him believe that he is free in a situation of being oppressed, weighed down by fate and chains. In both cases, there is a falsification of freedom. But this falsification is itself bad faith, the mystifier mystifies himself.

The initial mystification consists in presenting the historical origins of oppression as *determined*; that is, in showing humanity had to begin with oppression for economic, social, and other reasons resulting from human nature, rather than presenting oppression as a historical *fact*; that is, as an event that occurred in certain circumstances, that could have occurred (its ontological structures), that was not necessary, and that affected the course of History.

For Hegel, it *was necessary* to begin with oppression. It is one moment leading to freedom and the Spirit. We ourselves say that oppression is the historical fact that created certain interindividual constants corresponding to what we call human nature and so we pose the following question. Where did the choice to oppress (and to be oppressed) come from? The great weakness of the dialectic of the master and the slave is that the reasons given for the fact of oppression are not sufficient. Therefore we need to ask whether another relation than oppression was possible in general, was possible in the historical circumstances considered, and which one.

Engels and Dühring put this question nicely. Dühring writes: “The formation of *political* relationships is, *historically, the fact*, and the *economic* facts dependent on this are only an *effect* or a particular case, and are consequently always *facts of the second order*. . . . The *primitive* phenomenon must be sought in *direct, political force* and not in any indirect economic power.”²⁵³ Furthermore: “Equally appropriate for the representation of what is essential in the idea of distribution is the conceptual scheme of two persons, who combine their economic forces and who must evidently come to a mutual understanding in some form as to their separate shares. In fact nothing more than this simple dualism is required to enable us accurately to portray some of the most important relations of distribution and to study their laws in germ in their logical necessity. . . . Co-operative working on an equal footing is here just as conceivable as the combination of forces through the complete subjection of one party, who is then compelled to render economic service as a slave or as a mere tool and is maintained also only as a tool. . . . Between the state of equality and that of nullity on the one part and omnipotence and one-sided active participation on the other, there is a range of stages which the events of world history have filled in rich variety. A universal survey of the various historical institutions of *justice* and *injustice* is here the essential pre-supposition.”²⁵⁴

253. Eugen Dühring (1833–1921), *Cursus der National- und Sozial-ökonomie*, cited in Frederick Engels (1820–1895), *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, trans. Emile Burns (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 176. Henceforth cited as *Anti-Dühring*. Sartre returns to this text and this issue in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, pp. 142–52.

254. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 171–72.

Dühring's point of view here is purely idealistic since he deduces the situations from the will and not vice versa. What he calls *political* violence, he should have called subjective violence or simply violence. This word serves to indicate that it is a matter of direct, original, and intersubjective relations between me and the other, independently of any prior situation. This established relation is purely schematic, abstract, and logical since by beginning with the puerile story of Robinson Crusoe and Friday, one can lay out logically the whole span of possible relations. It is static and not dialectical since the generation of concepts takes place through a mere enumeration of possibilities.

However, this idealistic, psychological, logical, and static posing of the question does have the advantage of allowing the use of the terms "just" and "unjust," which have their foundation in the human will, and, consequently, it can present a comprehensible schema of *oppression*. Oppression is only allowed as a concept if there is an *act* of oppression, this is why it logically follows that the act must be decided upon or not decided upon *everything else being equal*. This signifies that for Dühring, in every given material situation, the decision for association or oppression must be possible. Clearly this can only be an abstract schema concerning some eternal man withdrawn from the world. There is an ultimate recourse to freedom. But, for another thing, where does that historical necessity charged with apportioning the different possibilities of interhuman relations come from? In sum, there is a logical ordering of the different possibilities of relations between two terms A and B. And the real is just the successive and exhaustive realization of these possibilities. What we have, in short, is Leibnizian logicism.

Engels had no difficulty in replying to this that: 1st, this schema of two men does not take into account historical reality; its man is the eternal man of the 18th century who in reality is bourgeois man elevated to eternity. 2d, violence may intervene in the course of historical processes, but it does not create anything that had not already been created, it does not appropriate for itself anything that doesn't already exist, nor does it destroy anything that wasn't previously given. Before making use of a slave, one has to possess the instruments of labor one will give him, along with the means of assuring his subsistence. Before servile work becomes possible, a certain stage in the development of production has to have been attained, as well as a certain stage of inequality in the division of things. 3d, so the dialectic of economic forces suffices to put men in a situation of oppressor and oppressed.

Dialectical law leads to the following results: at an initial stage we find the primitive community with common land. The period when the appropriation of ready-made natural products predominates. Little by little, man learns how to build upon these natural products, the beginning of industry properly speaking. In this passage, the community's products take on the form of merchandise; that is, only a small amount of them are made for the producer's own use, while most of them are meant to be exchanged. The status with respect to the wealth

of different members of the community becomes correspondingly unequal. And the community tends to divide into a village of peasants owning small parcels of land.

Even the formation of a primitive aristocracy is not initially based upon force, but rather voluntary adhesion and custom. “Everywhere where private property developed, this took place as the result of altered relations of production and exchange, in the interests of increased production and in furtherance of intercourse—that is to say, as a result of economic causes.”²⁵⁵ The organs of control and order in the undivided community, meant to assure order and to represent the common interests of the whole group in the face of other distinct communities, are not slow in becoming more independent (heredity). From being society’s servants, they become its masters because they benefit from the unequal distribution of goods founded on the appearance of merchandise.

At the same time, the natural division within the agricultural family, at a certain stage of wealth, allows for the introduction of one or more foreign sources of labor. The means are there for introducing even more labor forces. Since the community cannot provide all of them, recourse is made to prisoners of war. Until then, one had slain them, now they are allowed to live and forced to work.

4th, this brief history allows Engels to reply to Dühring: *a*) that oppression results from the interplay of economic forces (production—exchange—distribution); *b*) that History is not a curse due to original sin—as it would be if it there had been an original fault and political oppression—instead there can be oppression, class struggle, and *progress* all at the same time. Slavery is a form of economic progress: the increase in and development of production through the introduction of servile laborers. It made possible the division of labor between agriculture and industry on a large scale. Without slavery, no Greek State, no Roman Empire, no Europe—“without the slavery of antiquity, no modern socialism”;²⁵⁶ *c*) that violence is a secondary phenomenon. Most of the time, it appears when political strength, whose power initially rests on a social economic function, freeing itself, seeks to act in a sense opposed to the direction of normal economic development. But then it is, with few exceptions, defeated by economic development; *d*) that every moral judgment about a particular form of society, along with its system of production and distribution, is not just inefficacious. It occurs at some given stage of development. “So long as this mode of production remains normal for society, there is general contentment with the distribution, and if objections to it begin to be raised, these come from within the ruling class itself (Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen)²⁵⁷ and at first find no response among

255. Ibid., p. 180.

256. Ibid., p. 204.

257. Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1865), French social philosopher and economist, one of the precursors of Comte’s positivism. Charles Fourier (1772–1837), another French social philosopher and economist; influenced by both Saint-Simon and Owen, he advocated worker cooperatives. Robert Owen (1771–1858), British social reformer and utopian socialist.

exploited masses. Only when the mode of production in question has already a good part of its declining phase behind it . . . it is only at this stage that the constantly increasing inequality of distribution appears as unjust, it is only then that appeal is made from the facts which have had their day to so-called eternal justice.”²⁵⁸

Does this theory have any value? Schematically, it takes up again Hegel’s approach. There is an analogous circularity in both theses. Here is Hegel on the Ancient City: “Spirit is the *ethical life* of a *nation*, in so far as it is the *immediate truth*—the individual that is a world. It must advance to the consciousness of what it is immediately, must leave behind it the beauty of ethical life, and by passing through a series of shapes attain to a knowledge of itself” (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 265). For Engels, there is an initial form of communal life, for example that of the Iroquois *people*, and he admires it in as warm terms as those Hegel finds for the Greek city. But they already contain the seed of decomposition. Humanity will have to pass through the stage of oppression in order finally to rejoin the initial stage, but in terms of the immense enrichment brought by its power over Nature. Cf. *Anti-Dühring*, p. 201.

Initial consequence: optimism, and a philosophy of plenitude. Second consequence: belief in progress, in the form: progress in the development of order. Third consequence: the hidden presence of values. Indeed, in the circularity, each moment is one abstracted from the whole and only exists through the whole. One can evaluate it only by starting from the whole. This is why he can say that slavery is an abstract moment that realizes some progress over the prior state. Progress toward what? Toward humanity’s recovery of itself, toward the moment when immediate communism will be synthesized with technical domination over nature.

Texts such as the following have a profoundly Hegelian ring: “For it is a fact that man sprung from the beasts had consequently to use barbaric and almost bestial means to extricate himself from barbarism.”²⁵⁹ What we find here is the negation of negation. Thus slavery is a barbarous means directed against barbarism. But why does one consider it to be barbarous? This text, which could have been drawn from Hegel’s on “The Master and the Slave,” in no way coincides with the economic exposition of the appearance of slavery. What we see is that the slave appears when industry and private property are sufficiently developed, and precisely following after a communitarian state which Engels considers superior to our current state, from the point of view of the person.

He says, regarding the Iroquois *people*: “And what a wonderful constitution, in all its childlike simplicity! No soldiers, no gendarmes or police, no nobles, kings, regents, prefects, or judges, no prisons, no lawsuits—and everything takes its orderly course. . . . All are equal and free—the women included. There is

258. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 166.

259. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

no place yet for slaves, nor, as a rule, for the subjugation of other tribes. . . . And what men and women such a society breeds is proved by the admiration inspired in all white people who have come in contact with unspoiled Indians, by the personal dignity, uprightness, strength of character, and courage of these barbarians. . . . And when we compare their position with that of the overwhelming majority of civilized men today, an enormous gulf separates the present-day proletarian and small peasant from the free member of the old gentile society” (*The Origin of the Family*, pp. 86–87).²⁶⁰ Where then is the half-animality? Uniquely as part of the rudimentary means of production. Engels adds (pp. 87–88): “But we must not forget that this organization was doomed. It did not go beyond the tribe. . . . The gentile constitution in its best days . . . implied an extremely undeveloped state of production and therefore an extremely sparse population over a wide area. Man’s attitude to Nature was therefore one of almost complete subjection. . . . The power of this primitive community had to be broken, and it was broken.”

But, in the first place, it is not true that this primitive community had to break down. It preserved itself intact, even according to Engels, to the 19th century and it was the Whites who destroyed it from the outside. Therefore he should have explained in terms of dialectical materialism why the *gentes* of Europe gave way to slavery, then to capitalism, while these men, whose human qualities he admires, remained pure. But this is what Engels never dreams of doing. In a word, his only criterion for calling them *barbarians* is the rudimentary state of their production. However, he recognizes that this state of production, which “subjugates them to nature,” did not stop them from being superior to today’s small peasant or proletariat. What this conceals, therefore, is a choice of a *value*. The barbarians are barbarians because the state of their technology is rudimentary. Superiority, therefore, lies on the side of technology. Necessity hides a secret valorization—and this necessity is *false* (since in fact the *gens* did not break down by itself. It endured and endured until the arrival of the Whites).

On the other hand, when Engels tells us that slavery *realizes a form of progress*, this can only be a form of technological progress. Since he adds: “But it was broken by influences which from the very start appear as a degradation, a fall from the simple moral greatness of the older gentile society. The lowest interests—base greed, brutal appetites, sordid avarice, selfish robbery of the common wealth—inaugurate the new, civilized, class society. It is by the vilest means—thrift, violence, fraud, treason—that the old classless gentile society is undermined and overthrown” (p. 88).

This text puts Engels much closer to Dühring than do those in his *Anti-Dühring*. Note that here it is a question of violence and theft. Here, private

260. Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan* (New York: International Publishers, 1942).

property, which arose quite naturally as a useful function accepted by everyone in *Anti-Dühring*, becomes the theft of the property held in common.

Yet these books are almost contemporary with each other: the *Anti-Dühring* from [18]78 and the *Family* from [18]84. Engels's thinking was set in its way. It is not a question here of a change but of a wavering in his thought. What we have is a clash between three systems for evaluating one and the same process: 1st, a simple deterministic evaluation that excludes any ethical considerations. As when he writes in *Anti-Dühring*: "When, therefore, Herr Dühring turns up his nose at Hellenism because it was founded on slavery, he might well with equal justice reproach the Greeks with having no steam engines and electric telegraphs."²⁶¹ In this case, any current ethical evaluation, *itself*, seems to him to be determined by historical conditions, therefore relative: "It is very easy to inveigh against slavery . . . and to give vent to high moral indignation at such infamies. Unfortunately all that this conveys is only what everyone knows, namely that these institutions of antiquity are no longer in accord with our present-day condition and our sentiments, which these conditions determine."²⁶²

At this level of impassibility, every value has disappeared. Even, it should be noted, the class struggle. For the classes *do not struggle*. They are mystified by the consequences of measures that men took in common and in agreeing upon them: "even if we assume that all private property was originally based on the owner's individual labor, and that throughout the whole subsequent process there was only exchange of equal values for equal values, the progressive evolution of production and exchange nevertheless brings us with necessity to the present capitalist mode of production, to the monopolisation of the means of production and the means of subsistence in the hands of a numerically small class" (*Anti-Dühring*, p. 181).

And at this level, for long periods, there was a general acceptance of the situation brought about in this way: "So long as a mode of production is still in the rising stage of its development, it is enthusiastically welcomed even by those who come off worst from its corresponding mode of distribution. This was the case with the English workers in the beginnings of large-scale industry. So long as this mode of production remains normal for society, there is general contentment with the distribution, and if objections to it begin to be raised these come from within the ruling class itself (Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen), and at first find no response among the exploited masses" (*ibid.*, p. 165–66). But what happens then to the class *struggle*? There is universal agreement. A principle of economic disequilibrium cannot be likened to a struggle. In fact, there is a universally accepted system, but one that contains within itself the seeds of its downfall. There is no opposition between men. Man here is an epiphenomenon. For Hegel,

261. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 201.

262. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

there is a struggle because of the conflict between consciousnesses. But here consciousnesses have nothing to do. They come into play when economic evolution is pretty well complete. The human dimension is lacking.

2d, a valorizing and optimistic principle of evaluation, dialectical in origin, that gets superimposed on the preceding one and assumes that the whole (communitarian society dominating nature) is present to all the parts. In this case, the circular evolution runs toward the classless society and every moment is one of *progress*. This is why slavery can be considered as a form of progress. But we may then ask what, from the materialistic *point of view*, is the foundation of this absolute valorization of the terminal communitarian stage. Implicitly, we have the Hegelian idea of man's destination. The spirit returns to itself across all the catastrophes. We know the future. Not only do we know it, but we posit it as a value. But, in fact, we have no way of *giving it a value*. If it is necessary, it will be, that's all we can say. Hegel gets out of this objection by making the spirit a value and the source of all value. And Engels falls into the same trap. Therefore it is at the very origin of Marxism that we find that perpetual oscillation between mechanistic determinism and dialectical materialism and this oscillation stems from the absurd effort of joining together mechanism and dialectic into one synthesis.

3d, yet, as we have seen, Engels cannot justify his highest value, which is the *total* society of the future. Nor can he give a phenomenological description that will agree with the class *struggle*. Whoever says "struggle" also says "consciousness," "value," "concerted action," "freedom," "violence." Therefore he underhandedly reintroduces a system of moral evaluation grounded on freedom and drawn from the philosophy of the 18th century, the very one, in fact, he reproaches Dühring for making use of. The Iroquois are *good* savages. It is their recourse to low acts that will bring down their *people*. It is no accident that, to bring the workers to class consciousness, *Humanité* presents the bosses to them everyday as *wicked*; that is, as free wills set on doing evil.²⁶³ In short, if Engels's esoteric doctrine is amoral determinism, his exoteric doctrine like Dühring's, comes down to reducing economic oppression to political violence. As soon as we lose sight of freedom and struggle, the very idea of oppression vanishes, all that remains is a certain economic state that Engels himself tells us everyone accepts when it is in equilibrium—and that is what is, no more.

Engels's constant recourse to these three divergent notions conceals the absurdity of his theory of oppression. Indeed, if we place ourselves on the level of determinism, the only right we have is to say: slavery, by an indirect series of consequences, leads to modern society; if one posits slavery, one is brought step by step to contemporary capitalism. But this entails *neither* that slavery was the only mode of bringing about contemporary society starting from some given primitive state, *nor above all* that it had to come about necessarily starting from

263. *Humanité*: the daily newspaper published by the French Communist Party.

this point. The existence of Iroquois society demonstrates, as even Engels admits, that a society without slaves could indefinitely maintain itself as long as there was no external intervention. Therefore we are brought back to a *choice* to subjugate others or to chance as explaining the development of slavery in parasitic societies.

Except that here the second method of evaluation intervenes: dialectic. Assuming the point of view of totality—classless society—Engels transforms a hypothetical determinism into an apodictic necessity. Slavery becomes one abstract moment of the concrete totality, hence the unique necessary path to arrive at the classless society. Hegel had the right to do this, but Engels does not, for it is only the *idea* that can be an abstract moment of a broader synthesis that encompasses it. The only thing left to do is to valorize it subjectively and to show that intolerable oppression incites the oppressed to reject this oppression. But any recourse to such valorization is logically forbidden. For if man is a fact, there is never anything more than an arrangement of facts, there is no one to oppress, no one who oppresses. The cause of the proletariat is neither just nor unjust. The class struggle does not exist. There are just the sudden jolts at the moment when the economic organization collapses internally.

Therefore, if we consider Dühring and Engels, we see clearly their lacunae and what they have in common with each other. It is obvious that Dühring's Adamic conception with its Robinson Crusoe and Friday is purely abstract, it makes oppression a gratuitous decision without showing the goal of oppression or its means. If we do reflect upon the means and the goal, we rediscover the following truths, along with Engels: oppression can come about only at a certain moment of technical and economic evolution. One has to be able to feed the slaves, to make them obey, and to give them instruments of labor and work to do. Oppression does not fall from the sky. Yet, on the other hand, Dühring saw what Engels missed: oppression is a *human* fact; that is, it is capable of being evaluated in human terms, and if one does not have the theoretical instruments necessary to evaluate this fact as human, it disappears as such, all that remains are objective facts: production, distribution, exchange, which as such cannot move us any more than the distribution of molecules of gas in a piston cylinder does. It doesn't much matter whether oppression is born from violence or not.

In fact, it is quite clear that *today* it distinguishes itself from violence. A young bourgeois is an oppressor without exercising any violence on a worker. This *in no way* signifies that he is not morally responsible for the oppression in question.

Engels's little game of sleight of hand goes as follows. He refutes the theory of oppression/violence and immediately concludes that oppression lies outside of conscious responsibility. But there is a big leap here. Besides, Engels is obliged to admit that the original form of oppression which he recognizes as slavery was indeed founded on violence. But, he says, previous to this, one had already killed. War already existed. Slavery is progress for the slave. Let us concede this. (Although I do deny him the right to say that life in chains is progress over

death. He cannot do so either subjectively, since he is not the slave he is talking about, or objectively, since he has no system of *a priori* values at his disposal.) It remains true that there is a game of sleight of hand here. Even if slavery is a form of *progress* over death, it is still a product of war, therefore of violence. If I strike a blow with my fist instead of using my revolver, it is still violence. And even if war already existed, a better exploitation of its outcome does not take its violent character away from it.

Finally, the alleged rigorous necessity between economic connections conceals a clandestine relation to human subjectivity. We need to know *why* we pass necessarily from the state of community to that of individual property. This could not happen without a choice. And Engels recognizes this himself when he says: “Force was as little involved . . . the peasants find it actually to their advantage that private ownership of cultivated land should take the place of common ownership.”²⁶⁴ Here the human notion of an *interest* is reintroduced. Except this is a complex notion, one that requires the whole of psychology. What is interest? Is it a primitive concept? And then, why choose interest as the basis of historical facts? Why not pride or shame? Or the sense of human dignity? There is a choice in the selection Engels makes. To obtain a monistic historical explanation, he turns to a psychological monism, but since the psychological element remains artificially constant in his explanations, he profits from it either to eliminate it in appearance or to assimilate it, to dehumanize it. But this is still sleight of hand.

Therefore we arrive at the necessity of attempting a synthesis of Dühring and Engels. Oppression is not a gratuitous decision, however it is a human fact. It appears in a favorable economic situation, but this situation by itself is not sufficient to give birth to oppression without at the same time dehumanizing it and making it lose its meaning. The original communitarian society may or may not decide to have slavery and if it does so, this is not just an economic fact. The addition of some size of labor force to that of the tribe is a decision that implies an affirmation affecting the existence and value of man and is possible only on the basis of some prior relation of man to man. If we assume, for example, that man clearly grasps his own freedom along with that of the other, oppression would not be possible.

Engels himself recognizes this when, speaking of the Iroquois, he writes: “There is yet no place for slaves, nor, as a rule for the subjugation of other tribes. When, about the year 1651, the Iroquois had conquered the Eries and the ‘*Neutral nation*,’ they offered to accept them into the confederacy on equal terms.”²⁶⁵ Page 78: “The gens can adopt strangers and thereby admit them into the whole tribe. Thus among the Senecas the prisoners of war who were not killed become through adoption into a gens members of the tribe.” Now this

264. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 180.

265. Engels, *The Origin of the Family*, p. 87.

looks like the addition of a new labor force. Is there not here some decision affecting the relations among men? And, no doubt, it takes place in terms of a system of production, of distribution, etc., but also in terms of a conception of the world, a religion, a conception of man; that is, this act is *significant* within a universe of signification.

In the same way, how can we fail to see that the passage to private property, if it takes place in the way Engels says it does, implies the creation of a new (individualistic) conception of man? It would be absurd to say that this conception comes first or that man must first of all be an individual for himself. Yet it would be no less absurd to say that individuality comes second and is conditioned by private property. In truth, it comes about in and through the choice for private property. It is the signification of the act whereby man separates himself economically from the community. It happens and it proves itself in practice. It is the project of possessing, and this project of possession is the decision to be an individual and involves a judgment about the relations among individuals. It is the invention of a new relationship among men. For, no doubt, while I cannot be an individual without private property, reciprocally, I cannot claim and take my piece of land unless I project myself as an individual. Here again existence precedes essence.

And similarly, while I can only increase my labor power by taking that of another, I cannot dream of doing so unless I already have the project of a humanity composed of beings some of whom are destined to serve others. Let us assume that slavery is a form of *progress*. Then this is because it is *new* in relation to the previous state of affairs, that is, it is an invention. The slave is invented just as one invented a better technique, and to invent the slave is to invent a certain figure of man.

Thus Engels's answer to the question: "why does man oppress man?" (an answer we may formulate as follows: He does not choose to do so. He suddenly finds himself an oppressor owing to the interplay of economic forces. On this basis, he is led to constitute an ideology of oppression) is insufficient. In oppression there is a decision about man made in some situation. The possibility of this decision lies *both* in the economic conditions and the ontological structures, and this is what we need to examine next. Or, to put it differently, economic determinism presupposes a psychological dimension. All Engels's analyses presume a certain psychological factor which, as underlying them, is never demonstrated. It is the psychology of interest, of the useful, the fact that man is a wolf for man. This is his postulate. And it is indeed true that the human signification of oppression refers back to this psychology. But what is not settled is whether it is original or whether it represents one moment that constitutes itself in terms of the economy. There is no possibility for individual property leading to slavery (assuming the instruments, the technology, and the amassed goods allowing for slavery) unless I choose to consider my neighbor or some of my neighbors as merely a supplementary labor force. But what brings me to do this? Some

human *nature*? The economic fact itself is mute. It has to be interpreted from the perspective of interest. Therefore we need to make sense of this fact.

We need to return to the clan. The totemic bond is a nomadic one. It is essentially religious. Synthetic. The role of the economy is negative here. The characteristic features of this mode of life are, in effect, absences. One appropriates natural products. There are no tools except those that are auxiliary instruments for this appropriation. There is no work in the modern sense of the word. A primitive communism of sharing. No territorial fixation. Such is the situation. One can see the broad directions in which it would be lived out. In the first place, the relation of man to Nature is different from the one we know today. Today the very abundance of Nature is at base, passivity. It has to be fertilized, worked. Man feels himself to be a form of activity over against it. He grasps himself as a power of universality faced with a passive and amorphous matter. In this sense, work is freedom. Working consciousness, as Hegel says, finds itself in the element of Being since it *forms* the object.²⁶⁶

However, in the case of primitive nomadism, the initial relation is one of desire and enjoyment, that is, man destroys a natural product but does not harm Nature. His passing takes place, however, as a form of destruction and it is as pure destruction that he finds himself within the element of Being (where my horse has passed, the grass will not grow again). Yet, conversely, Nature is a perpetual *gift* for him that is or is not given. There are fish in the river or there are not, just as there is or is not game in the forest. Rain either falls or it doesn't. Man, therefore, in relation to Nature is a state of expectation and desire. And this desire is distinguished from the will, which is a combination of means for some end, which is above all the fact for man of being separated from his possible by the totality of the world and the path he has to take. If desire gets realized by itself, I said in *The Psychology of the Imagination*, nothing would distinguish dreaming from waking.²⁶⁷

But for the primitive, if desire does not exactly realize itself by itself, at least it is *filled* when it is satisfied. Either the object of desire *does not appear* and one suffers or it does appear and is gratifying through its destruction. But in any case, it is not a question of making it appear through work. Man is in relation

266. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 264.

267. "Just as King Midas transformed everything he touched into gold, so consciousness is itself determined to transform into the imaginary everything it gets hold of: hence the fatal nature of the dream. It is the seizure of this fatality as such which has often been confused with an apprehension of the dreamed world as reality. In fact, what constitutes the nature of the dream is that reality eludes altogether the consciousness which desires to recapture it; all the effort of consciousness turns in spite of itself to produce the imaginary. The dream is not fiction taken for reality, it is the odyssey of a consciousness dedicated by itself, and in spite of itself, to build only an unreal world. The dream is a privileged experience which can help us to conceive what a consciousness would be which would have lost its 'being-in-the-world' and which would be by the same token, deprived of the category of the real" (*The Psychology of Imagination*, p. 255).

to Nature, therefore, like the child is to his parents. His only active link to it, therefore, will be magic and in relation to Nature, like the child in relation to his parents, he tries to get things by begging for them. Begging breaks out spontaneously here due to the absence of *work*. The division among the passive, the inanimate, and formative activity is not made. In a word, transcendence has no place in the relation of man to Nature. Or rather it is a limited transcendence. Desire is indeed a surpassing of the present situation, but it is an imaginary surpassing. For there to be a real surpassing, Nature has to come to man; that is, within the hodological field maintained by desire, there must be blooming.²⁶⁸

Not that desire *makes* magic be born. For desire *is already* magic. In effect, it is the evocation and incantatory presentification of the object in an image. It already *mimics* gratification. It has often been demonstrated that hunger is the masticating and digestive automatism functioning emptily (chewing, salivation, stomach contractions), but we have to draw the proper conclusion from this. Desire is conjuration. It doesn't much matter that the digestive functions start up "out of habit," either through a series of physiological excitations or *in order to* evoke the food to be ingested. This all comes down to one and the same thing. As soon as they run along emptily, their function is incantatory. Work and the will are mediations, but desire is desire for the immediate. Essentially this comes down to the fact that when presentification occurs emptily one increases one's desire in order to fill this void. The stronger the desire, the more the object *ought to* fill it. With the result that desire constitutes itself as a *right*. The maxim of desire, its highest principle in effect, is that desire experienced in all sincerity is a right to the appearance of the object.

Note that desire is not the origin of magic, it is *one* of its origins. Magic is always and everywhere one of our possibilities. What interests us here is just to try to make more precise what the world can be for a human being limited to desire. We see that his tie to Nature is the tie of one transcendence/immanence to another transcendence/immanence. In desire, it is a question of a transcendence in any case since there is a nihilation of the situation. I am hungry and I posit the *void* of food over there where it is *full* of rocks, for example. However, this transcendence is not a surpassing of the situation through my act, but rather through an internal modification. I push myself to ever greater desire so that the object should appear, which presupposes therefore that I am mystically in accord with Nature. An internal action within me leads to an appearance in the world. And this appearance is not the result of the *act* of another transcendence, as in the case of the child, for example. Indeed, if the child pushes himself to the extreme case of desire, it is so that an adult *will go get* him some food or his

268. For Sartre's earlier use of the concept of hodological space, formulated by Gestalt psychologist Kurt Lewin, see *Psychology of the Imagination*, p. 251; *The Emotions: Outline of A Theory*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), pp. 57, 65 (French original 1939); *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 279, 308, 322.

rattle. Therefore there is a claim by desire on an already human activity of transcendence. But what desire constitutes in the case of just gathering food is a magnetic field where a fruit or a root, which is itself a pure appearance homogeneous with desire, suddenly appears—an instantaneous appearance and an immediate *discovery*.

Hence the world of desire is built on the primitive's intimate participation in Nature. Desire is the immediate presence in me of Nature and the substance of Nature is the objectification of this desire: the fruit appears *in reality* just as I make it appear *in my image* of it. In any case, desire is not *creation* but actualization. The imaginary outline of the fruit or the game intervenes to actualize the power of the fruit, the potentialities of the game that are scattered throughout Nature. In this sense, Nature is still me. Indeed, Hegel showed and I have demonstrated, following him, that the formation and production of objects is equivalent to the projection of myself into the element of Being—I will say: into the dimension of the In-itself. Except that the Me returned back to workers is the free Me who invents himself through fashioning material passivity. The Me that the fruit that appears in the magnetic field of desire returns back to me is an *alienated Me*, in the sense that it is *my* product through magic, not something fashioned and created *ex nihilo*. Me latent and actualized, that is, *Me* in the sense that I rediscover over against Me the objective figure of my desire; *not-Me*, in the sense that a both transcendent and immanent power produced this object/Me. In sum, it is *Me* produced by the other. But with this, an *enchanted Me*. In a word, magic is reciprocal. Desire is the enchanting of Nature, but with this Nature puts me face to face with an enchanted Me.

Therefore the world of desire presupposes: 1st, an *a priori* recognition of passivity that gets transformed into activity through a redoubling of passivity, an immanence that by its force of being immanence becomes transcendence; 2d, a carnal tie between man and Nature, and, equally, a magic one. But this comes down to the same thing. Nature produces in truth what man produces as an image/desire; 3d, an experienced priority of the object. For man does not create what is not yet (which becomes obvious as soon as there is a fashioning of tools), he actualizes what *is* there before him. Here we find on the magical plane the profound intuition that man is the being who makes there be being. 4th, from the fact of the priority of the world, from the fact of the reciprocal and magical action of desire on desire, man is everywhere crisscrossed by Nature. He himself is a natural being, to the extent that Nature is magic. If he is an actualization of the natural object through desire, reciprocally we can say that Nature desires itself in and through him. He is the catalyst and unveiler of Nature. He *is so that* nature reaches its maximum of fecundity.

At the same time, and through a reciprocal action, since the object of his desire returns to him a *self* brought to being by the Other, reciprocally, he grasps himself in this desire as enchanted; that is, that his desire as his own is an actualization of him and through him of the Other. Therefore he grasps himself

as *alienated*. Man discovers himself *in the first place* as alienated. *Desire is an Other.*²⁶⁹

This is what one sees today when a man who desires a woman says, “you have put me under your spell.” Furthermore, the thing gets reinforced by the fact that it is not really desire that makes it be born, whatever the primitive may believe, and that, as a result, desire is painful, expectation, hence possession by an alien force. Desire resembles childbirth at a distance. One suffers so that the object may be born over there.

5th, Hegel was correct to show that desire was destruction, since its gratification leads to the nihilation of the object. However, this destruction is not grasped at first as a pure disappearance of the object, which would then appear as something inessential in the face of the consciousness that grasps itself as essential. This is possible only when work will have given rise to the intuition of absolute constructions and absolute nihilations of objects.

In the case under consideration, there is a wholly different relationship: man having been brought to desire so that the fruit should appear is the natural place of the fruit. The image as an empty indication of the fruit gets fulfilled by its *ingestion*. The fruit rejoins its signification. It arrives at its highest moment of existence at the moment it disappears. It becomes man when man becomes the fruit. The nihilating side is, at the same time, the uncovering of something luxurious (Hegel, who was not sensual, overlooked this): the uncovering of density, weight, resistance to the tooth, taste. That is, in its process of nihilation, the fruit reaches its highest degree of existence. And the ambiguity of its taste in the mouth, for example, is that it is both man and fruit. Therefore there is an initial form of communion.

Whence the *religious* importance of the meal. In the world of desire, meals perpetuate life, pushing Nature to its highest degree of existence, bringing to an end point the magical process of development, and thus bringing man to his highest degree of achievement. At this level, man and Nature each exist through the other.

And at the same time, fundamentally, there is that structure that Hegel erred in seeing as the only one: deliverance, through man’s being given over to his desire and the fruit. Here a new dimension appears: *liberation*. So through the dialectic of desire, man is alienation from his very appearance within Nature, and the end point is a modification of desire and liberation. Human freedom points behind magical and mystical naturalism.

However, there is a production of instruments. But the instrument only serves to make it more easy to appropriate the object of desire. Therefore it is covered over by Nature. It cannot serve to surpass Nature, but, on the contrary, it subjects activity to Nature. Let us take the example of the *pole* and try to see its difference from the lever. The lever is a reversal of the natural indications—the human

269. Cf. Sartre’s invocation below of Rimbaud’s “Je est un autre,” p. 409.

movement is to push down to lift things up. This signifies that the goal is nihilated and cut off from the situation. Which signifies that one interprets the present on the basis of a precise and abstract future. This is the positing of the absolute independence of man in relation to the real. The real is seen in terms of the future; that is, *what is* illuminated on the basis of what is not and one *invents* pathways in the present on the basis of the end. With this, present matter becomes *indifferent* and passive. It does not have its own pathways toward the future and, consequently, in the nonhuman present there are not magical claims on the future. The future is not potentially in the present. It is a human fact, willed by man, the noematic correlative of an active noesis. By leaning on the lever, man suppresses magic.

However, before the invention of the lever, the tool obeyed nature; that is, perception. And perception itself had the structure given to it by desire. The structure of desire is to take up and to approach the human center. The perceived pathways are convergent and centripetal ones. Therefore the hodological space that surrounds man is a vector space. Yet these paths are conceived as *given* or, rather, they too are incitations, spells. The higher ape who lives in the world of desire has no idea of pushing something back in order to take hold of it. If, from his cage, he sees a box with three closed sides and the fourth one open but turned away from him, he does not get the idea of pushing the banana contained in the box away from him in order to then be able to pull it toward him.²⁷⁰ In other words, his transcendence is oriented. It is limited. Limited by *nothing* in one sense, by the plenitude of being in another sense.

I am well aware that the lever is also the proposal of a future. Its way of being used belongs to it. One has to push down on it. But this way of using it comes from the tool, not from the stone. If I see an invitation to push down on it in the lever's handle, the stone seems to me all the more inert. The instrument transforms the hodological space around the stone. It is not the stone that wants to be treated this or that way, it is man who turns back to the stone in the light of some end posited by him and who envisages the stone in light of this end. That is, he detaches it from the background of the world, considers it as a network of possibilities, and, finally, invents a relation that is not *given* in the world.

At this moment, what reveals the stone's possibilities is a relation created *ex nihilo*. Whereas the pole is conceived starting from the manifest possibilities of the apple that needs to be knocked down. Here, as a result, the tool is a form of submission. No doubt it is also invented. But the invention is secondary. The stick is the mere materialization of the path between the fruit and my arms, a

270. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963; French original 1942), p. 98. The example originally comes from Wolfgang Koehler's *The Mentality of Apes*, trans. E. Winters (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1925; German original 1921).

mere prolonging of my body. It is already contained in the gesture that reaches for the fruit. The invention consists just in envisaging the branch of *that* tree as a stick. That is, in breaking some natural form in order to add an element to a new synthetic structure.

It goes without saying that breaking a natural form is a kind of liberation, the start of an *antiphysis*. But this liberation stops halfway because the secondary structure is liberated only *to* enter into some new, equally natural, synthesis, because it is *demande*d by the desirable object. Within the universe of desire, the totality arm, stick, fruit forms a *natural* synthesis. The instrument is merely the negligible concretization of the relation that is immediately established between the desirable and the desired. It is not productive. It does not overturn the situation, but rather emphasizes it. If it is upheld by some negativity (after all one has *to knock down* the fruit), this negativity is concealed by the original natural connection.

We need to be clear here: there is reciprocity. Without a doubt, the invention of creative tools and techniques will change the relation of man to Nature by introducing the idea of an *antiphysis*. What is more, work is a step ahead of desire. There will be a *postponed* consumption. In this sense, Marx and Engels were correct. However, reciprocally, there is within the universe of desire a kind of equilibrium that excludes the necessity of inventing tools. This universe is stable because, for one thing, it includes within itself myths, cosmological and ethical interpretations. For another thing, forms of behavior and a way of life.

But what if the products of the earth fail to appear? This negative element does not make us leave the element of desire. One will look for them elsewhere or die on the spot. Or one develops the magical element of desire through rituals and prayers. What Lévy-Brühl calls the impermeability of the primitive's experience can be interpreted in a more ontological fashion.²⁷¹ Within the primitive's *Weltanschauung* everything that happens gets interpreted in terms of the cardinal categories of this *Weltanschauung*, a *lack* internal to this *Weltanschauung* will never lead to its abandonment. At this level, perception is *fascination*. The notion of *production* does not yet exist, all that exists are the notions of *appearance* (within the field of desire) and *actualization* (the passage from potentiality to the act). The Future, being an act, is the *meaning* of the present (as in man's authentic grasping of himself). Except that in one sense it is a question of a natural, given future. It is the future of things that encircles man's future. The *natural place* is the conception of space that fits this theory of *actualization*. Which also presup-

271. Cf. Lucien Lévy-Brühl (1857–1939), *Primitive Mentality*, trans. Lilian A. Clare (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966). "The world we see provides primitives, as it does us, with a collection of realities perceptible to sense, but in their minds others are added, or rather intermingled, with these—data arising out of mystic forces always and everywhere present, and these are by far the most important. . . . Moreover, most of the collective representations which engage [the primitive's] attention are of a markedly emotional character, and the preconnections established between them are often prelogical in nature and impervious to experience" (p. 97).

poses absolute (temporal and spatial) boundaries. In this world of *conceptualism*, man is alienated and possessed in the midst of a magical world where the appearance of objects is a fascinating actualization within transcendence/immanence, where the object is what is essential and man is inessential. The original relation of man to Nature is a carnal and organic connection. It is not that man lacks consciousness of his freedom, but rather he is conscious of it as an enchanted freedom.

Let us be clear about the type of *motivation the situation has*. In one sense, it is clear that the groups of nomads under consideration lack weapons, tools, land. But, more precisely, things exist for them only insofar as they are *lived*. This is a *situation*. And it is a situation that has to be lived out positively. They do not present themselves as being *without tools*. Instead they grasp the world by way of their immediate relation of appropriation of natural products and they surpass it ontologically in terms of a *Weltanschauung*. Therefore it is a matter of a creation and also of an unveiling. And this creation is *free*. That is, man is its origin. Not in that he has some nature from which it emanates, but in the sense that he decides about the world and about himself through his free adaptation to the situation. Furthermore, if man today tries empathetically to grasp the movement by which there is an original upsurge of man, naked and without tools, in Nature, we see that there is just one possible *Weltanschauung*, the one that illuminates the world by means of the acts of desiring and taking. Not that this is something determined, quite the contrary, and, besides, man can always choose to die. But if he wants to live and freely develop his free desire, if he freely invents a thousand tricks for seizing things, he produces the universe of desire in this free activity. This is precisely what Engels and Marx call *praxis*.

So at this level man cannot fail to choose the world of desire. Indeed, the tool, even though it changes the world of desire, presupposes desire as something not yet gratified. Desire is primitive *praxis*, the indistinction of immanence and transcendence within a being for whom transcendence *is not* but has to be, for whom his original transcendence is to create his own transcendence. However, at the same time, the universe of desire is a free choice. It is *caused* by nothing. *Nature* only exists within the framework of desire. "Human nature" will invent itself only in and through desire, it will decipher itself on a world which itself is looked at only within the light of desire. Negatively, therefore, desire is an upheaval without a cause. Positively, it is the invention of a relation between the object and the subject on the basis of which subject and object get defined in terms of each other at the same time.

These are the two aspects of *praxis*. Except there is a third one: that man alienates himself in defining himself. The movement of *praxis* does not consist in defining a world over against oneself but in plunging into a world that closes in around you. The world which is the object lays siege from all sides to the subject who unveils it and returns his image to him. The pathways of transcendence are defined. If each particular transcendence has to be invented, at least

the absolute term of all surpassing is provided. Each situation can be surpassed in several different ways, but in just one direction. Freedom takes itself captive by its free choice. In choosing the world, it chooses that the world reflect it back to itself in the element of Being; that is, it chooses to be an object for itself. And since it is pure choosing consciousness *of the* world and just a nonthetic consciousness (of) itself, the world sends back its choice to it as a claim on it. The world is that by which the choice of freedom becomes *destiny* for that freedom.

There is not a choice of a desire, rather my desire is the choice to desire. The world then gets unveiled *just* as desirable, which means with valorizing structures that give rise to a claim on man who sees himself on the basis of his image as desiring/desirable, that is, as provided with an essence and a nature. And since desire is alienation, the world closes in on an inessential and alienated man who learns of his inessentiality and his alienation through the world. On this basis, he can choose among his desires, or choose to conquer a particular desire or give in to it, or choose among the means to gratify these desires and to constitute a system of values for desires and the desirable. This is what I shall call a lateral dialectic, a horizontal dialectic that develops within the world of the desirable.

And there are no more *reasons* within this world for changing one's point of view on it than there are, in Husserlian phenomenology, within the *natürliche Einstellung* [the natural attitude] reasons for practicing the εποχή.²⁷² Every difficulty, every internal contradiction of this world presupposes and demands an explanation, but since this explanation is given in terms of the categories of desirability, far from being free, it makes just one more connection tying man to his universe.

All of this is made more complex, of course, by the fact of the plurality of consciousnesses. The existence of the other who has made the same choice as I did confers his objectivity and truth on my universe. When the desirable-for-me gets unveiled as also desirable for the other, this synthesis of subjective and objective constitutes the *absolutely desirable*. At the same time, there is a constitution of me by the other on the plane of desire-desirable (and we shall come back to this in a moment), which further subjugates things, for I am no longer just a desiring and alienated *nature* in a desirable world but a desirable and desiring object in the other's world of desire. This whole horizontal and lateral dialectic gives birth to experience and wisdom that will be *psychology* at this level.

From this moment on, in any case, we may assert that man has alienated

272. Cf. Edmund Husserl, "The Positing Which Belongs to the Natural Attitude and Its Exclusions," *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, pp. 51–62. For a discussion of the problem of what motivates such a suspension, see Eugen Fink, "The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism," in R. O. Elveton, ed., *The Phenomenology of Husserl: Selected Critical Writings* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), pp. 73–147.

himself in his choice of freedom and we can speak of a diffuse *oppression*. This oppression does not come from the objectification of freedom (which is a different structure of freedom which we shall have to speak of again and which recourse to reflexivity can correct). It comes from the fact that in the world of desire the object is posited as essential and man as inessential. And, consequently, from the fact that one freedom disarms freedom. Indeed, the free choice of desirability unveils the free desire as magically instigated in man by possession. Therefore freedom *already* appears as enchanted, instigated, the intuition of being free turns into an intuition of being possessed. In this slippery situation, the free consciousness of freedom as an illusion is properly speaking a situation of oppression. What is lacking, however, is the structure of the “oppressor.” There is a pre-oppressive situation because the decision to oppress is lacking whereas alienation and dependence are already given.

However, if the world is in equilibrium, that is, if it does not possess some *inequality* within itself, in the Hegelian sense of this word, leading to its rupture (which is not the case for every universe, in particular, as a function of their complexity. Although, from another point of view, the tendency of any universe to remain the same may indefinitely put off the rupture, as may be seen in the capitalist world whose internal contradiction is manifest and which, however, “holds together” because one can always choose to explain capitalist contradictions in capitalist terms) and if it can provide no pretext for the *εποχη*, it nonetheless remains entirely dependent upon freedom. Otherwise we would just find the dialectic formula of internal contradiction (whether Hegelian or Marxist), but this conception profoundly limits man since, to the extent he is caught in its trap, he stays caught.

In fact, there are two theories of negativity in Hegel. The purely internal one: contradiction; and the one that through presence and action hides the whole. Except, even as pure future, the whole is *given*. With the result that the dialectic has a mechanistic aspect. And the meaning of the “spirit of uneasiness” is minimized by the very way in which Hegel explains it. It is just the incompleteness of a process that, on the one hand, is on its way to fulfillment and, on the other hand, that posits itself as fulfilled (the moment of the essence posits itself as essential). So we arrive at a closed process.

In fact, if we do not want negativity to be a merely immanent contradiction absorbed by its very immanence, if we want it to be truly freedom, if, for another thing, we want the presence of the whole to be effective and yet *not given*, if we want to explain the reversal of *praxis* and the universe of *praxis* in terms of its general possibility, if we want the *natürliche Einstellung*, even while lacking any inequality, to include a means of access to the *εποχη*, if, finally, we want to give its true meaning to the “spirit is uneasiness” (I would rather say, “the spirit is anxiety”), the *εποχη* has already to be present in the *natürliche Einstellung*, or, to put another way, incarnated freedom has to be penetrated by absolute

freedom. That is, we have to recognize that man both is and is not what he is. He is what he is in the mode of not being it, of having to be it.

If the *εποχη* can always be carried out, this is because it is always happening. In the first instance, a desire is the choice to desire, but one is aware of the internal disequilibrium of the intraconscious structure. If a desire is the choice to desire (the initial inequality), the consciousness (of) a desire is consciousness (of) the choice to desire because the choice only exists as self-consciousness. Hence, at the same time that the choice makes its image in the form of fate refer back to the self, by way of the world that engulfs it, it is a contestation of itself in its essence since it is consciousness of being able to be something else by definition.

Indeed, choice can only exist in terms of the following ambivalent structure. What I choose is what (taking account of the situation, of History, of my prior choices) cannot not be chosen by me, while at the same time, this choice is an affirmation against all possibles of a certain being that will be maintained in being. Yet, on the other hand, this choice is not necessary and must be conscious of being able to be other than what it is. So desire as consciousness of the choice to desire includes within itself in a nonthetic form its possibility of *καθαρσις*, of catharsis.

And in the very moment when it is most deeply desire, most frenetically desire, the possibility of another way (however indistinct) remains open at its core. This is an uneasiness at the very heart of desire, the consciousness of being able to hold oneself back, to manifest oneself in another way, with another signification, in the face of a similarly ontic, but ontologically different world. Not beingthetic, this intraconscious world does not surpass itself toward the object and is not reflected by the object. Man remains within the dark world of desire that envelops him with its high walls, but with the intimate consciousness of being suddenly able to find himself outside these walls, without their being laid low, rather because they no longer will be *there*. As in a dream, one can dream with an obscure, nonthetic consciousness that one is dreaming.²⁷³ At every instant of the world, there is the possibility of *waking up*. This awakening, always referred to, always possible, is reflection. For reflection that is not an accomplice [to my alienation], my choice becomes the adoption of a possible and the significations of the world appear as correlative to this adoption. So reflection that is not yet another choice is at least the *choice not to choose*. It is the setting within parentheses, not of the world (for doubt is impossible given sensory intuition), but of the world's significations.

So we can distinguish between a committed freedom that exhausts itself in making a world exist that reflects back to it the austere image of its fate, and a freedom of negation that penetrates throughout the former freedom, which is

273. Cf. *The Psychology of Imagination*, pp. 233–35.

even an integral part of its structure, and which calls this world into question, which is consciousness of the obligation to choose a continuous creation by its choice, and which assures, in one sense, that the primitive does not really believe what he believes and may surprise the European with the ambiguity of his beliefs.

So the whole of man is in the primitive, not as a totality yet-to-come but as concrete negativity and the pure power of always being other than what he is, pure indetermination at the center of the determined, pure detachment at the very heart of commitment. There both is and is not a primitive thought. It exists as the choice to let oneself slip into a closed-in world, it does not exist in the sense that this choice as such includes an opening to every other world, along with the possibility, for example, of opening oneself to the white man's world or even of fully having access to it. So primitive thought, to be primitive thought, always implies being something other than primitive thought. The primitive is inside and outside at the same time. He is a fool who thinks himself primitive.

Yet, reciprocally, insofar as his reflective act will not be a moment of a true overturning of his original choice, insofar as it will be simply an abstract view of the significations of the world as noemata, insofar as he will have access to other worlds because someone will give him this access, the world of desire will remain his center of reference and his perpetual possibility, even in those moments when he will argue with the white man while borrowing his techniques. In other words, the choice of the white man's world does not make the world of desire burst apart, rather the one world gets juxtaposed to the other because it too is a *mere choice*, therefore consciousness of this choice and even consciousness of an inessential and provisory choice. So several systems of reference and several choices, not all of the same importance, some inessential, the others essential, can coexist. Thus it is absolutely impossible to *reach* the primitive at his heart because this heart does not exist, as can be seen in Leiris's *L'Afrique fantôme*.²⁷⁴

Yet the pure, permanent possibility of nonaccessory reflection is disquieting and a risk of anxiety to the very extent that choice wants *to be* choice. Here the second dimension of the primitive world appears. It is a question of currying favor with reflection. It is a question about how the possibility of reflection as a contesting of my choice is a nonpossibility for me. Especially since I cannot deny it without making it so, it is a question of whether in me it is not the possibility of an Other. In a word, not being able to deny that it is, I am tempted to deny that it is mine. I am going to make my "I" be an Other; that is, I am going to think of my freedom in terms of possession. The notion of *mana* along with its

274. Michel Leiris, *L'Afrique fantôme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1934). Leiris (1901–1990), both a writer and an ethnologist, was a member of the Dakar-Djibouti expedition of 1931–33 across Africa. *L'Afrique fantôme* consists of notes taken during that journey. For a discussion of his and other anthropologists' influence on Sartre through their contributions to *Les Temps Modernes*, cf. Howard Davies, *Sartre and "Les Temps Modernes"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

twofold derivation—soul and *zar*—will serve for this.²⁷⁵ This means that we pass from the purely unreflective relation to the world to reflection and a relationship to the Other.

Let us go back again to the clan. It is not true that the primitive is not individuated. If one shows that there is no use made of “me” or “I,” this does not prove that the only thing left to him is organic individuality. There is still the circle of ipseity between the nonthetic consciousness (of) self and individuation in terms of the “He.” Indeed, we must acknowledge that the prereflective *cogito* cannot be suppressed. Although it is true that the principles of individuation in terms of the world are reduced to a minimum in the universe of nomadism and desire. The world returns my person to me through the double effect of owned property and creative work. I grasp myself in the spatial thing that I possess and in the object I have created.

Individual ownership of a field is, in one sense, a kind of analytic operation. Projection of my synthetic transcendence into space is the projection of my indivisible synthetic unity into the world of absolute divisibility and of quantity. Men get juxtaposed like pieces of land. Comprehension of my hodological range as space is not simply given. There is a double movement of inventing a measuring rod and of appropriation that is not given at the origin. Originally, space is a qualitative and magnetic field, because it is *traversed*, because one proceeds through it, because it is there that one flees, because one is always on the plane of the synthetic development of the line, where the exterior is made explicit, where the new gets unveiled. The initial relationship to space is something like everyone unfurling a backdrop. One uncovers, puts things together, makes the objects on the horizon bigger.

On the other hand, as we have seen, productive labor does not exist, instruments are merely ways of unveiling Being submitted to the absolute *givens* of Nature. What is more, this displacement being done together, the slippery image of a traversed world sends back a *We* rather than an *I*. *We* are *this* quickness in the unveiling and the disappearing of things.

So there is still subjective individuation through reflexivity. However, we have seen that it is accompanied by a nihilation. It is, furthermore, all the more disquieting in that it does not have the means to produce an upheaval by means of which freedom would take up things anew. It is the pure “what for?” that contests every actual commitment. The primitive defends himself against this anxious disquietude by having the Other tell what he is. In the relation of the For-itself with the Other, he chooses as the original moment that of the Other. This fits perfectly with the world of desire where the object is what is essential and subjectivity is the inessential. The Other, being an object in the world of

275. *Zar* are evil spirits that cause illness and that operate through possessing their victims. Cf. Michel Leiris, “La croyance aux génies *Zar* en Ethiopie du Nord,” *Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique* 35 (1938): 108–25.

desire, is how I come to myself. The Other is what I first see, what speaks to me of myself, that for which I exist, what brings me to objectivity. Through the Other, as Hegel says, I come to the truth of myself. But the Other is the existing thing for whom I am Other. Hence I come to myself as *Other*. This means that, to the extent that I first grasp my blood ties, my totemic bonds, by way of our common wandering, I am the same as the Other, which signifies that I am the same *as Other*. So initially I am a *He*, as can be seen in the fact that primitives speak of themselves in the third person.

In this way, I am protected against reflection for: 1st, the Other looks at me exactly as reflection can (even when it is second-order reflection), I assimilate reflection in principle to the Other's look; 2d, the Other's look finds me as an object, so I find myself as an other-object. With this, I immediately move over to the inessential, since it is from Other that I get my existence. But, at the same time, I also get objective existence. The Other's mission is to actualize me through his look. With this, he creates me. To look at something is to take hold of it. The Other has the advantage over me because he cooperates in my springing forth into the world. Through that face that I present to the world, I am perpetually caught (whence magical images, or secret names which are a hidden face of objectivity. My name as a property of the object that I am is me. Therefore I secretly give myself a name that is always my me/object but hidden away: the subjective in the objective).

Yet the Other is also an Other for Others, they look at him while he is looking at me, they can take his name away from him, etc. In this moment, the magical power of the Other passes over to another Other and from there to yet another and finally to me, not as me but as other than the Other. So there is a circulation of Otherness. It is always somewhere else, it leaps from one to the Other. This is due to the fact that it is originally the *Look* that pierces through me, but that gets extinguished as soon as I look back. The result is that the look is always somewhere else than where I am looking. It is behind me, above me, has left the man I am looking at, etc. It finally becomes the pure possibility of objectification and actualization of every subject as *Other*. It becomes a magical force or *mana*. But we need to comprehend that it is not, as for French sociology, a force *immanent* in society (which would mean making society a higher form of subjectivity). On the contrary, it is the potentiality of Otherness as such, it is the power the Other has to actualize me as Other.

Indeed, society is the Other thought of as essential, not insofar as he is the same as himself but insofar precisely as he is other. (We can still see this today when someone says that *altruism* per se has a moral priority. This is absurd for there is no virtue in giving something to the Other as Other instead of as my neighbor, etc.) The primitive nomad is immanent in his group (clan, tribe, horde).

However, this immanence is made from a threefold transcendence: 1st, through my look I make a collection of Others, each of whom is for himself

subjectivity, a *collectivity*, that is, a Totality. A Totality that can only exist insofar as it is Other than me and made up of individuals considered as being Other than themselves in the eyes of Others. 2d, yet, on the other hand, any Other of this collectivity by looking at me makes me fall back into it. At that moment, the Other incarnates society as actualizing me as Other. It becomes the essential and I found myself in it inasmuch as I become Other than myself. The whole consistency of it now depends entirely on this Other's look. 3d, yet an Other looks at this Other and finds him along with me in Otherness. With this, immanence becomes this perpetual interplay of exchanges, this Alienation of everyone by everyone else, this complete reversal of the relation of freedom (which starts from the Same to seek out the Other insofar as he is the same), this exteriority of everyone in relation to the Other and of himself in relation to himself, which plays at interiority, this threefold, always withdrawing transcendence which is the figure of immanence, this perpetual "somewhere else" which is the figure of "here," this presence of absence.

It is precisely this objective figure of inwardness that we call primitive society. Quite clearly, it is total Alienation by definition since society is always somewhere other than where I am. It is always lateral, always marginal, and I never am except insofar as I escape myself and am not myself. For another thing, I am inessential insofar as I am the same. As free subjectivity, I am an epiphenomenon of what I am as absolute reality. Primitive society is pre-oppressive since it is always the oppression of freedom as subjectivity by the Other. However, it is an objectivity without an oppressor since I oppress everyone insofar as I am the Other and not insofar as I am myself. Therefore everyone is totally oppressed insofar as he is himself and totally an oppressor insofar as he is the Other. Therefore he feels power over others insofar as he is external to himself, that is, insofar as he is inhabited by an Other (that is, by himself as Other), or to put it another way, insofar as he is a bearer of *mana*.

This is what French sociologists call *diffuse sovereignty*. It is wholly in everyone and wholly outside of each of them. Wholly in me insofar as I am not myself but the Other, wholly outside of me insofar as I have nonthetic consciousness (of) myself. Diffuse sovereignty is therefore at the same time diffuse oppression. They are exactly the same thing. With this, since I am an *other* for myself, my envies, my thoughts are other than me in me. They are the objective in the subjective—or they have no existence either in terms of my recognizing or remembering them. In a word, *either* I am in a universe of prohibitions and orders where there is *no one* (as pure subjectivity) to give these orders *or* I am mere nonthetic consciousness with no right to anything. For duty is the Other in the same.

The passage to a sedentary life, the differentiation of functions, the appropriation of land may indeed break up *mana*, as purely impersonal otherness, into *souls*. But this only makes the fact of oppression more evident. For the Soul originally is me as Other oppressing me as the Same. One does not possess a

soul, one is possessed by it. Indeed, the process consists in relating subjective self-determinations to a substantial *object*. The description of the soul takes place in terms of objectivity: it *is*, it has a nature, an essence; it decides, wants, desires in me. It has *properties*. Originally, it is a *double*. But the primitive's double is nothing other than the *Other*. There is the Other in me and it can leave me behind.

And this notion of the Other also allows for mystical participation (in the totemic ancestor), the presence of the soul properly speaking, and possession by "an Other." *Mana*, soul, and possession go together in primitive sedentary societies. The study of possession by *zar* in northern Ethiopia shows that they take on functions that also belong to souls, even while also being affiliated with the *waqabi* that are related to the idea of *mana* (as well as that of a guardian angel). Quite visibly, the origin of the *zar* is a projection of the Other. Humanity existing in terms of the preceding dialectic sees itself split into two and taken as Other.

"The *zar*," writes Leiris, "constitute a population of male and female spirits organized into a hierarchical society, with kings, chiefs, servants, a society similar in every way to human society. Among them, one can distinguish Christians, Muslims, pagans. They are bound to one another by long genealogies. . . . They are also . . . distributed geographically in terms of countries, lands, water, etc."²⁷⁶ And the current (Christianized) form of their myth clearly indicates its dichotomous aspect: "Eve, having had thirty children, feared the 'evil eye' of God when God wanted to count them. So she hid the fifteen prettiest of them. To punish her, God decreed that those who had been hidden would remain hidden while those who were left in the open would be visible men. 'Brother will rule over brother,' he added, meaning thereby that men would always be secretly dominated by the *zar*, the descendants of the hidden children."²⁷⁷

In the first place, we see the importance of the *look*. In looking, God may have the *evil eye*. The eye is always evil because it fixes things. *Counting*, a religious act, is a consecration, passage to existence under a look. At the same time, the man who thereby passes over to looked-at existence is caught and defenseless. He is *other* for that Other who is God. Here is where the obvious redoubling of the society seen by the *unseen* society enters into play: 15 visible, 15 invisible. God condemns the visible ones to being possessed by the invisible ones. Possessed, that is, looked at and inhabited by those who can neither be looked at nor inhabited, but who correspond exactly to them.

Clearly, the *zar* is a complex notion. It is both the look of the Other who sees me when I do not see him and myself as I appear to the Other and as I can never appear to myself, installed in me and ruling me. It is the Other as me and me as the Other. Fragmentation of impersonal *mana* into a person. But with some hesitation over the person who is still more the Other than me. The *zar*

276. Ibid., p. 110.

277. Ibid., p. 109.

is a personality without equilibrium. In one sense, almost everyone has his *zar*, in another sense it only gets manifested concretely in those who are possessed, in crises. In one sense it seems an evil genie that one deals with through contractual terms. In another sense, it is, on the contrary, good and it is the possessed (the “horse”) who is bad or who spoils things (just as the soul is always good as created by God and bad as spoiled by sin). Sometimes it is a clearly external personality that may affect several “horses,” who invoke it and into whom it descends, and sometimes it is really a double: “The *zar* resembles the person.”²⁷⁸

There are two explanations: the *zar* possesses the person in terms of this affinity, or creates this resemblance in the person. It hardly matters. We have the magical idea that the *zar* is the person himself but in the element of the Other and as alienated. Furthermore, assimilation of the *zar* to the *waqabi* (a guardian spirit who ends up as a form of metaphysical virtue—no doubt, *mana*). One side is abstract virtue, metaphysical cause: “It is the *zar* who adorns faces.”²⁷⁹ So the action or εἶς of each person no longer is provoked by domination but is metaphysically caused, like phlogiston causes heat, by an essence that, even though it has become abstract, remains alien to the one whom it possesses. All the degrees between the Other as purely impersonal, then as an impersonal person, up to the soul as metaphysical cause, that is, as the element of Otherness grasped as a kind of virtue.

The conquest man made of his soul was certainly an important historical conquest. It was only possible through the conversion of the relationship of possession into one of property. And also by conversion of the soul, as a principle of organization that was itself organic, into a *logical* essence and a pure *objectivity* hardly different from a truth. Furthermore, the relation of man to his soul has remained ambivalent. In one sense, one says that we “have” a soul. But *who* has it? Since beyond the soul there is only the body? We must somehow have presupposed a synthetic principle that determines the soul to move the body, a tiny man behind the soul. In a word, we have to place a subjectivity that I *am* behind that objective soul that I have. But in another sense, it is my soul that possesses me. My soul is created by God, illuminated by God, that is, assimilable to the eternal truths that it contemplates (cf. Plato). Impersonal in terms of itself, it can guide the body. In this moment, subjectivity becomes the body, illusion.

The subsequent avatars of Otherness governing the Same are *grace*, the Voice of conscience, the moral law, the internal judge, human “nature,” and, finally, character. In each case, an ambivalent relation: to have/to be had. Naturally, this effort at negating subjectivity, in that subjectivity is pure negativity, partially fails owing precisely to the fact that subjectivity thus becomes negativity in relation to this effort to freeze man into an *in-itself*. The *zar* is an effort to

278. Ibid., p. 123. Sartre paraphrases: “on expliquera cette ressemblance en vertu de cette affinité, ou bien que, possédant la personne, il lui a imprimé son propre caractère.”

279. Ibid.

assimilate reflection to the Other's look and to assimilate the reflected to me within the element of the Other. But I have to *believe* in it. In other words, when primary reflection freezes the unreflected into the *Other* and constitutes an alienated "Psyche," the intraconscious structure of reflection or nonthetic consciousness (of) itself is always the possible occasion for a secondary and nonaccessory reflection. I am and I am not the Other in the Other's power. I believe and do not believe. The same act I sometimes do as possessed and sometimes quite ordinarily as myself.

But, in any case, the *climate* of oppression has been found. The nomadic community is originally oppressive and it remains oppressive when it becomes sedentary. There is a climate of oppression when my free subjectivity gives itself out as inessential, my freedom as an epiphenomenon, my initiative as subordinated and secondary, when my activity is directed by the Other and takes the Other as its end. Originally, each person is an oppressor inasmuch as he is Other, oppressed insofar as he is himself. And we see that this structure has maintained itself up through today. By demanding *to be* me for myself, I cannot even conceive of a relationship of oppression with the Other. The oppressor, even though he may have filched the element of Otherness for his own profit, conceives of himself as Other. We shall return to this.

At present, we see that there are three kinds of factors to original oppression: 1st, the technology and primitive economy, but not as constituting and determining facts. On the contrary, as pure lacks through which a positive situation and the universe of desire get constituted through this one of man's projects; 2d, the original relation for-itself-for-others; 3d, the project toward the In-itself as a flight from anxiety toward fear.

We have yet to indicate how this diffuse oppression is made use of by some for their own profit. That is, we have yet to indicate the passage to incarnate sovereignty, to hierarchicalized secret societies, to the oppression of woman by man, to private property, and to slavery.

Let us first note, however, that there is another form of alienation (and a capital one) found in every society, that of the child. What Lacan, in "Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual" (*Encyclopédie française*, vol. VIII), calls the narcissistic structure of the ego (8.40.10): "Perception of others' activity is not sufficient . . . to break through the isolation of the subject. So long as the image of the one like me only plays its primary role, and is limited to the function of expressivity, it unleashes similar emotions and postures in the subject, at least insofar as it allows the current form of the subject its apparatuses. But while he undergoes this emotional or instigating suggestion, the subject does not distinguish himself from the image per se. What is more, in the discordance characteristic of this phase, the image only brings about the temporary intrusion of an alien tendency. Let us call it the narcissistic intuition. The unity it introduces into all the tendencies will contribute, however, to the formation of the

ego. But before the ego affirms its identity, it confuses itself with this image that shapes it but also primordially alienates it.”²⁸⁰

So the Other is installed in me twice over by the primitive adult—through the alienation of reflection and through childhood. Two essential things must be grasped here: 1st, if human relations are originally conceived in terms of alienation, every individual relation has to be alienating, or, if you will: every form of behavior of one toward another is alienated behavior, even generosity, even disinterest; 2d, if I am alienated insofar as I am the Other for the Other, I am alienating insofar as the Other is Other for me. However he is Other for me insofar as I am the *Other*. Therefore there are two senses of Other: the Other as original, constituting Otherness, deprived of any priority in relation to me; the other as otherness constituted in me by the Other, which is nothing other than myself as other or *the same* inasmuch as I am alienated. Therefore “me” is an ambiguous concept, one with the two faces of Janus Bifrons; it is the other and the Other at the same time.

However, naturally constituting otherness is in fact pure, transcending freedom. Except that it is just this freedom that I want to conceal from myself. So there is a perpetual interplay of bad faith through these two concepts of the “Me.” The “Me” is two things, but presents itself as the Same, with two faces. It is insofar as I am other that I become the Other, or, to put it differently, it is insofar as I am possessed by *mana*, then by the soul that I possess. For my being-other is both pure objective otherness of myself and the dreadful presence in me of the Other. In making me other, the Other inhabits me and confers his power on me, I am both object and sacred at the same time. Struck by Medusa, enchanted, petrified.

This interlinked double aspect gives birth to all the mythical pairs that are the opposition of the same and the other. But the same is not exactly subjectivity. It is the internal essence of each person insofar as it is frozen by the other’s look, yet it is also *self* (it has inwardness and it limits subjectivity in order better to conceal it). And it is this internal essence (which possesses me and which is the figure of my being possessed by the other) that appears to me has having another face, a shadowy face that escapes me and that is *power over the other*. In this way, I am *terrible*, but terrible through that side of myself that escapes me. I am a born oppressor to the exact extent that I am someone oppressed. And, from the very first moment, I oppress because I am oppressed, I *transmit oppression*. An oppressor is someone who transmits to others the oppression that he undergoes.

The first and most striking case is that of the *sovereign*. The sovereign is the incarnation of the Other. Therefore he is: 1st, what constitutes us all as *the same*

280. This article has been reprinted as Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), *Les complexes familiaux dans la formation de l’individu* (Paris: Navarin, 1984).

and what we can never constitute as what he is (one is forbidden to look at or touch the sovereign); 2d, he is the Other in a pure state, that is, perpetually and in essence other than himself. This signifies, on the one hand, that he is “a prey to himself” and, on the other hand, that he is bound by taboos. This further signifies that he is both oppressor and oppressed. He is the condensation of a flight. He is always a pair (*Mithra-Varuna*). Both an *organizer* (not a creator) in that, in spite of everything, he possess a mission of organization and ordering and *creator* in that he is definitively *the Other* whose look makes my being be born for him, for me, and in the absolute, and he fertilizes things in touching them because in touching them he *actualizes* them (essentially, this signifies that the primitive recognizes, across his desire, human reality as unveiling/unveiled). But also at the same time *technician* (in *Mithra-Numa* there is a technique of sovereignty, the tool cuts through the rite: one conserves, organizes, transmits life, and the orders and institutions are rational) and *magician* (he represents order and what is *other* than order at the same time: the festival, magic, violence). Dumézil underscores the priority of *Varuna*.²⁸¹ This signifies the priority in the Sovereign of the Other over the same, that is, that the sovereign is *possessed by Authority* just as the primitive is possessed by his soul. Through him, the Other petrifies, actualizes, and kills. And I am the sovereign’s subject insofar as I am *already* the Other’s subject.

So we finally come to the form of exchange that corresponds in this society to the circulation of goods and that produces their accumulation in the form of private property. This is the Potlatch or subjugating gift. I indicated earlier that in an alienated society, all behavior must be alienating, even generosity. The Potlatch is alienating generosity. At the level of the Potlatch, the bond of friendship is indiscriminately that of nonfriendship, generosity is indiscriminately subjugation, the gift of entering into debt, the indemnification of interest, the rite of technology.

Let us attempt to comprehend this better. Ontologically, the gift is gratuitous, not motivated, and disinterested. If it were not gratuitous and disinterested, it would be a contract. If it were not unmotivated, it would not be, like creation, man’s jumping beyond every situation to affirm the human fact of all going-beyond. A trinity is constituted through the gift: the giver, the thing given, the man to whom it is given. To give the thing is to make a new relation spring up. It is to create, to invent. The gift is invention. It is to give the *universe*, therefore to affirm the inessentiality of the universe and the essentiality of relations between consciousnesses or, to put it another way, to affirm man as essential. At the same time, the gift is *transmission*. One passes some property to another property holder. Therefore I disengage myself from the world wherein

281. Georges Dumézil (1898–1986), *Mithra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty*, trans. Derek Coltman (New York: Zone Books, 1988); French original 1940.

my image was buried, I no longer have the same relation with Being-in-itself, I sacrifice my image and at the same time disengage myself from it. With the result that the original relation I had to this image hardly matters. It was magical or technical or artistic. It was my good or my work or some possession held by a spell. But since through the gift I annihilate my image and set myself above it, the relation I had to it is annihilated and therefore I put myself above every type of universe in a kind of absolute beyond the ages, an *ahistorical* absolute. Annihilation through the gift disengages me as a pure for-itself transcending its situation. It is Philoctetus giving his bow, in Gide.²⁸²

In giving, my freedom springs forth over the collapse of the world. At the same time, I recognize the other's freedom, for I consider the other as essential and the world as inessential. The world's finality comes from what I transmit to him. Until then, it had been a thankless substance I was working on, but if I transmit it to the other, it exists from now on *for the other*, and the relation of the thing to the other is one of subordination. To give is to make the world exist for the other to consume. It is to confer a human meaning of the world. So in disengaging itself, my freedom finds another freedom over against it.

The gift presupposes a reciprocity of recognition. But this reciprocity is not a reciprocity of gifts. Since through my gift I treat the other as freedom, it is fitting that, in return, the other recognize me recognizing him, so this recognition will occur within the dimension of truth. This recognition takes place in and through the mere acceptance of the gift. But this acceptance, if it is free and proud as it ought to be, implies quite simply that I *ought to recognize* that the gift was not provoked by some interest, that it is a pure freedom that created the world for me, thereby setting up an interhuman relation. This is the meaning of the virtue of *recognition*. People often take it this way when they say: "I ask nothing of him in return, I only ask that he recognize that I did not do it out of self-interest."

So the gift is freedom and liberation. It is not on the side of the world or our image in the world but on the side of our nonthetic consciousness (of) ourselves. It is a break, a refusal to *believe*, a refusal of being caught up in the world, a refusal of narcissism and of fascination for the world, an affirmation of negativity and of my creative power. Therefore it is, if it springs up within the universe of desire, deliverance from the universe of desire. It is, in every age and situation, an affirmation of interhuman relations (whether it be a present or some service rendered). If we consider the pure universe of desire wherein man is the inessential and the thing is what is essential, the gift appears *in its initial intention* as the reversal of this structure and, consequently, a kind of deliverance. I am no longer there just to actualize the thing through consumption. Instead, if I give,

282. André Gide, "Philoctetes; or, The Treatise on Three Ethics," in *My Theater*, trans. Jackson Mathews (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), pp. 129–60 (French original 1898).

it is the thing that is there to be transmitted to the other. The existence of the other delivers me from the thing. In refusing desire, I deliver myself from it.

Except that my intention gets vitiated and the gift, in being objectified into a universe alienated to the second degree (the human universe of the clan or the Other), inverts itself. It becomes, in turn, a means of ensnaring the other, alienation, oppression. In this way, we discover: 1st, an initiating of ahistorical human relations whose origin is that nonthetic consciousness that is never completely itself and that means exactly that the primitive is *outside* the world at the same time that he is in it; 2d, an objective reversal of this intention and those relations that abruptly bring about our finding ourselves *through our very intention* on a secondary plane of alienation. Where does this alienation come from? Precisely from the fact that the original relation of the other to me is already one of alienation. When the gift is given between equals without reciprocal alienation, its acceptance is as free, disinterested, and unmotivated as the gift itself. Like the gift, it is freeing. This is the case in an evolved civilization for the gift of the work of art to a spectator.

But one can already comprehend that the gift is subjugating when I am not free not to accept it, whether it saves me from the danger of death, or if my hunger will not allow me to refuse it; in short, when in accepting it, *myself*, I give in to the world's order, I make the figure of determinism appear in me (through miming it) and then this acceptance is a figure of nonfreedom at the same time that it is recognition of the other's freedom. At this moment, the gift is altered at its source. I give owing to *need*, I constitute a subhumanity. It is contradictory since I give to a man who is free insofar as he is not free (the gift that *anticipates*, that is, that frees one in advance from his needs, would be another thing). It is altered as regards its end, since enchained freedom refuses to recognize another freedom at the expense of its own freedom. We have *charity*. The one *can* give and the other cannot, and cannot refuse to receive. Then it becomes a case of delivering oneself from the object that becomes a synonym for the other's freedom. One has to *pay it back*. Not the object itself, for it will remain the case that it *was given*, an unerasable form of behavior, it will remain that someone made use of it. Besides, this would be to refuse the gift, which would be something else again. *To pay it back* is a counter-gift. A gift that destroys the gift. Therefore in paying something back, one gives *something else*. There is a neutralizing of the first gift by an inverted and equivalent gift. And since in the first operation I recognized the Other's freedom through the sacrifice of my own, by *paying it back* I am the occasion for the Other to recognize my freedom.

It should be noted, however, that the counter-gift undergoes a fall in potential. Indeed, it goes from below to above and the recipient does an act of good will in receiving it. He is not constrained to do so by any need. In principle, he can refuse, and if he accepts, it is so as not to humiliate me, that is, with the intention of maintaining or initiating human relations. "One cannot refuse their invitation,

it would be a blow to them.” “We are going to invite them, but they *will think themselves obligated* to reciprocate, which is boring.” Paying back appears as a duty to the one who does so because it is not a pure desire but a requirement of freedom that appears on the basis of the destruction of the present situation. Unacknowledged freedom requires to be recognized.

One tries to parry this fall in potential by raising the quality and the quantity of the gift. He will get something *better* than anyone has ever gotten, “we will entertain them no matter what the expense.” But since in one sense this gift is purely symbolic, since it is not done to satisfy the other’s need (who can eat when he’s hungry, whether or not he is invited), there is something that will never be destroyed, the fact that the first gift was *real*. So the second gift takes on in essence the autistic aspect of a destruction.

The structure *destruction* is implied, we have seen, in every gift. In every gift there is a negativity as regards the situation and the bonds of propriety in general. Except in the first gift there is a positive structure of creation. I confer a new, positive meaning on this food that I destroy as *my* property in that it is going to be unveiled and incorporated as something for the other, which is indispensable to him.

The counter-gift does not have this positive side. It is, in effect, to give the other something he has no need of. It does not reveal anything to the other that the other could not unveil by himself. The other, therefore, is a purely destructive instrument, a mere means of consuming goods, like a bonfire or any other equivalent element. The operation is liberating in the simple sense that in the counter-gift I destroy my goods in the presence of the other and by means of the other. The counter-gift is pure destruction and my freedom appears through the simple destruction of my goods, that is, of my image in the world.

But precisely to the degree that the other *can* refuse my counter-gift, I make a claim on his freedom. In the name of freedom, I demand that he recognize my freedom as I recognize his. It is a question here of the *weakest* form of demand, such as was described above. But, for all that, it still has the structure of the demand and it is addressed precisely to the other’s pure freedom that I discovered *in my recognition*.

At the limit, if I cannot give something back through the destruction of my goods, I do so by giving services, with the partial destruction of my body. And if the gift were the gift of *my* life, I pay it back through the eventual destruction of that life. We are getting close here to the feudal bond of one person to another. Right at the origin, it is the steward who requires his sovereign make use of him, that he take him into his service in exchange for his protection.

The gift can be described as follows, therefore, within the perspective of alienation: 1st, a freedom that recognizes itself and makes itself recognized through the creative destruction of the world that makes things inessential and man essential; 2d, a man (the recipient) who, in recognizing the giver’s freedom,

does not recognize his own freedom but, on the contrary, his enchainment, since he is not in the position to refuse (even while preserving the abstract freedom and the freedom in principle of such a refusal, which means that his acceptance gets unveiled as a choice for determinism at that same time that it is recognition of the other's freedom. In other words, we have the beginning of the dialectic of the master and the slave, with the man who prefers *life*, what is useful, his interest. But it is not *death* that is at issue here, but rather the gratuitous over against some interest). And since refusal is judged to be impossible, the given object remains what is essential for the recipient, whose freedom passes over to the inessential. He, the recipient, remains on the plane of the universe of desire. *For him*, the gift is actualization of the desirable through the other and, at the same time, the object that he is given is stolen by the giver because it is unveiled in its very use or consumption as an *other/object*.

3d, so in the gift there is a mortgage on the future (which is initially involuntary) since the recognition of the gift implies another liberating gift that becomes the possibility most pertaining to the recipient and that has the double (ambivalent) aspect of being a demand on his freedom that he wishes to remove and, at the same time, an objective constraint that enslaves the recipient (for example, he will have to economize in order to pay it back).

Consequently a reversal will take place if the freedom that *gives* forestalls the other from paying it back. The structures of the gift being evident because the gift implies an ontological comprehension of itself and of the counter-gift, it lies in the power of the one who gives it to make use of it in terms of either perspective. He can give it out of the pure, gratuitous decision to affirm his freedom. Or he can give it in order to commit the other's future. In this case, the affirmation of essential freedom, of the gratuitousness of human existence, and of the essentialness of the human being in the person of the giver is accompanied by the binding of the recipient, whose immediate possibility is *to pay it back*, that is, a demand that he act *for the other*. To give is to obligate the other to put himself on the plane of *need* and to be able to get off it again only by submitting his transcendence to the freedom of Others.

In this way, the gift becomes a concerted effort at alienation, not through violence, but on the contrary through generosity. It is an affirmation of *my* freedom over against the world and against the other. We find the already described structures of oppression—to constitute a future for the other. And to constitute it as *fake* since, in freely willing his own future, in fact he is acting as part of my own project and doing so as a means. It goes without saying that the other can react with anger and by destroying the situation by refusing to recognize my gift. But in this case, he refuses to recognize himself too.

It may be objected that the gift presupposes an original inequality that does not exist in totemic societies. But, first of all, this is not correct. Every interhuman relation in these societies is univocal and vectorial. They always take place on

the basis of the preeminence of the Other over the same. If I receive, it is the Other, as the one who comes first, who gives to the Other that I am, and thereby alienates me. If I give, it is the Other, as the all-powerful spell, who through me gives to the other/object. Whence the obligatory character of the gift. It is indeed my freedom that affirms itself in giving, but as the full power in me of the Other.

And, as we have noticed, obligation is the Other in the Same. Whence the ambiguity of the structures of the primitive gift. To the extent that it is linked to the Other in me, it is a ritual obligation that outruns me: “The obligation to give. This is the essence of potlatch. A chief must give a potlatch for himself, his son, his son-in-law or daughter and for the dead. He can keep his authority in his tribe, village and family, and maintain his position with the chiefs inside or outside his nation, only if he can prove that he is favorably regarded by the spirits, that he possesses fortune and that he is possessed by it. The only way to demonstrate his fortune is by expending it to the humiliation of others, by putting them ‘in the shadow of his name’ . . . for to lose one’s face is to lose one’s spirit, which is truly the ‘face,’ the dancing mask, the right to incarnate a spirit and wear an emblem or totem. It is being a veritable *persona* which is at stake, and it can be lost in the potlatch just as it can be lost in the game of gift-giving, in war, or through some error in ritual” (Mauss: “Essai sur le Don, forme archaïque de l’échange,” *Année sociologique* 1923–24, pp. 100–102).²⁸³

This important text shows how the Gift follows upon the *possession of a soul*. It is the *persona* or Other in me who gives. And if I do not give, I lose face (the chief who does not give a potlatch is called “a *sourpuss*”) and the right to wear the mask, that is, the right to hand myself over to the other’s gaze, that is, again, the narcissistic image of myself that possesses me. Reciprocally, since we are in the element of the Other, there is an obligation to receive. “One does not have the right to refuse a gift or a potlatch. To do so would show fear of having to repay, and of being abased in default. One would ‘lose the weight’ of one’s name by admitting defeat in advance” (*ibid.*, p. 106).²⁸⁴

Here the challenge appears in its original structure, which can be defined as follows. In the alienated world, whenever the Other’s freedom demonstrates its essentiality in some set of circumstances, others have to give a demonstration of their freedom and its essentiality on the threat of being taken as inessential in

283. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967), pp. 37–38. Mauss (1872–1950) was a French sociologist and anthropologist whose work influenced many subsequent social scientists, including Claude Lévi-Strauss, who published an influential introduction to a collection of Mauss’s essays in 1950. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, trans. Felicity Baker (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

284. Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 39.

relation to the first freedom. Freedom functions here like the gaze. Since we are in the world of alienation, not that of solidarity, an act that makes manifest the inessentiality of the world (for example, prowess in war or sport) is not just a possibility opened up within the field of each person's possibilities. It is a possibility that is initially withdrawn from him. It is the Other's possibility insofar as the Other is not him.

For example, in the world of sports and nationalism, the fact that an Austrian beats some record takes away the essentiality of the Frenchman who held it before. In a unified society, it would be a question of a development of the same possibility in some given sense. In a world divided into nations, the record is the Other's possibility. It has to be *taken back* from him. It makes the French record appear as inessential, as halted by the negative power of the world. The same thing applies in the world of alienation, whatever its form. Consequently, if the intention of the winner is to reduce the Other to the inessential (in this case there is a taking up of the challenge), we have the structure properly speaking of the challenge, that is, that my act takes place and is done by me as mortgaging the other's future. Abruptly, I introduce a new and objective (transcendent) possibility into the other's field of possibles. It has a subjective face in that it is *his* possibility and an objective face in that it is a possibility that has come into his field of possibilities by way of me and is upheld in existence by me. I was free. At present, I have to demonstrate that I am free. My freedom is called into question. And if I cannot demonstrate it, then automatically I fall into inessentiality, I belong to an inessential world in front of the other's freedom.

At the same time, the challenge is a risk and a game. Risk: I do not demonstrate my freedom just by the pure subordination of the external world; I also demonstrate it by accepting the contest. That is, that I am not someone who goes up in smoke as soon as someone challenges me, but rather it is I who establish the climate of freedom that is set up on the ground of Being precisely because it *calls itself in question*. Precisely because it is not part of the domain of Being, precisely because it is in essence, as we have seen, the pure possibility of losing itself, freedom affirms itself through the contestation of itself that it carries out and through the immediate unveiling of its possibility of nihilating itself. We have seen that the very notion of a risk makes sense only in and through a freedom that founds the "there is" and that is thrown into the world. Therefore freedom gives birth to the risk in order to unveil itself as freedom.

At the same time, the *challenge* is a game. It is a break with the spirit of seriousness, expenditure, nihilation, passage to the *festival*. Indeed, the festival is liberation from the spirit of seriousness, the end of economies, the overthrowing of hierarchy, and the absorption of the Other by the Same, of the objective by intersubjectivity, of order by disorder. This will turn out to be the *apocalypse* as one of the extreme types of interhuman relations. The risk and the game invite us to take a risk and to play. Therefore, in another sense—this is the very ambiguity of the gift—they *liberate* the Other by putting him on terrain where

he has to destroy himself; to free himself from the spirit of seriousness they place him on the apocalyptic terrain of the festival.

The *Potlatch* is the total prestation that takes place between moral persons (clans, tribes, and families) who come together either in groups or through the intermediary of their chiefs. We need to note that each moral unit (clan—phratry, etc.) is constituted as such by the presence of the *Other*. The subjective tie of belonging to the same group is not sufficient, it has to be given in the presence of another group for which and through which the first group is *other*. Otherwise each member is outside the unity. On the contrary, when seen by the other group, he is a member of the collective unity. So the unity is a unity through the Other. But, at the same time, it is a unity/object. The narcissistic image of a society that is captivated by itself is given by the presence of the Other.

The Potlatch is an apocalyptic effort to break the Other's objectifying framework by exploding it, by refusing the other group the possibility of being the *Truth* of the first group. It deals not with suppressing the Other but of "*abasing*" him in such a way that the "true and original" truth is the Truth of intersubjectivity. In this moment, the Other will be other without reciprocity. The image of me that he offers me will not be substantial but anecdotal. Through my abrupt and gratuitous expenditure, I fool his image of me (an economic image of rule-governed production or harvesting) so as to transform it through the completely unexpected unveiling of a pure freedom.

Mauss saw that there is something especially noteworthy about this abrupt transformation. It may be disastrous for a stranger to attend a Potlatch. But let us concentrate on the ambiguity of the gift for it is a question even in its deep structure of a generosity that makes reciprocal freedom appear through the double recognition that occurs and of the essentiality of the human over the destruction of the universe. In other words, there is a double structure: 1st, an underlying structure of solidarity; 2d, a secondary, manifest structure of reciprocal enslavement of the Other by the Other, with a challenge. The result is that the ambiguity of the Potlatch is that it leaves it undecided whether it is a proposal of friendship or a challenge—and whether the Other facing me is dealt with as a friend or as an enemy.

More precisely, the notions of friendship and enmity have the same original source, as do the notions of a challenge and a contract, and as do those of war and peace. "The people of Kiriwina said to Malinowski: 'The Dobu man is not good as we are. He is fierce, he is a man-eater. When we come to Dobu, we fear him, he might kill us! But see! I spit the charmed ginger root and their spirit turns. They lay down their spears, they receive us well.' Nothing better expresses how close together lie festival and warfare" (ibid., p. 184).²⁸⁵ The

285. Ibid., pp. 79–80.

ambiguity comes from the fact that one gives at the same time in freedom for freedom and to affirm the inessentiality of the man, and to enchain, abase, and limit the other's transcendence through a destiny. It is not a question of two different connotations that might be envisaged in succession but of two simultaneous aspects of the gift.

The structure "liberation/gratuity" is the internal core, the "nonthetic consciousness (of) the gift." Even in the element of the challenge there is the structure "contestation," that is, that the essential and initial structure of this contestation is the nonthetic consciousness of being what I am not and of not being what I am. Finally, the structure "Destruction/Creation" makes the twofold aspect of freedom appear. And these three structures—gratuity, contestation, destroy/create—are immediately comprehensible through the Other on the same plane of nonthetic consciousness.

What is more, thetic consciousness is consciousness leveled at the Other whose disquieting future I want to *stop*. The Potlatch has a structure analogous to that of Love. It does not seek to destroy the other's freedom but to enchain it or, more precisely, that it should enchain itself. Except that it was as an object (*Being and Nothingness*, pp. 363–71) that I wished to be loved. The Lover "wants to be the object in which the Other's freedom consents to lose itself, the object in which the Other consents to find his being and his *raison d'être*" [ibid., pp. 367–68]. Unless it is as freedom that I want to be the internal and subjective limit to the Other's freedom. The act of gift giving installs my giving freedom in the Other as a subjective limit to the other's freedom. This signifies that the other's freedom will henceforth exist as mortgaged to my own (until the gift-that-is-returned).

By means of the gift, my freedom is an occasion for the Other's freedom to stop its transcendence toward a future that one can dream of attaining but not of going beyond—like death, it is an absolute and unsurpassable possibility. The presence of my freedom in the Other's freedom is therefore a turning into destiny of this freedom. This is precisely the aspect of enslavement that Hegel did not see. One only enslaves a freedom, one enslaves it because it is free, one enslaves it by means of itself, and the meaning of this enslavement is not the utilization of some labor force but the lessening and the appropriation of a freedom by the other. Therefore the gift is an ambivalent structure with a perpetual instability: originally stemming perhaps from a contractual desire between two freedoms, it becomes an attempt at magical enslavement and then it again disputes itself at this level through nonthetic consciousness and through reflection.

And depending on how the gift changes the outcome, the man *facing me* changes: he is a friend, an enemy, a slave. And each one of these notions passes over into the other without any possibility of stopping. For the friend can be defined as the one from whom one expects good because one has done some

good for him, but this is exactly the definition of a client and can lead to slavery (the slave being the one who pays with his person because he cannot pay me back in another way), and the enemy is originally the one I challenge and who will lose his freedom (the disposition of his life) if he loses. But the enemy can be a friend (this is the military myth of an underlying respect, beyond the conflict and the battle, by the soldier for the soldier in the other army), and the slave also can be a friend (the devoted servant who will die for me) because there is a perpetual self-degradation of the formula “reciprocity of recognition of freedoms across forms of behavior” to “obligatory reciprocity of presents” and the second formula perpetually challenges the first one.

Let us be clear that at its original level the Potlatch is extra-economic since it takes place between different segments of a segmented society and the economy is intrasegmentary. It is the clan, the family that works and amasses things. The relationship to the other is precisely doing away with and being liberated from the economic. By providing an occasion for the Potlatch, the Other appears, on the contrary, as the liberator of animality since he is the occasion for an outpouring of gratuity, of negativity, of destruction. With the appearance of the Other springs up the human realm. It is ambivalently liberating and enslaving at the same time. In every case, it represents a surpassing of the economic toward the human.

But naturally, liberation takes place in connection with the economic. It is liberation through consumption (the privileged form of destruction) and liberation of *some kind of economy*. On the other hand, it assumes an economy without any division of labor and a segmented society; for a more unitary society founded on the division of labor institutes permanent bonds of reciprocal prestations among men, whereas the Potlatch is the original establishing of a relation between men who have no relations. It functions from one closed economy to another and between these two independent economies the only possible relation is pillage or the gift. Pillage is never excluded. But it may still be a form of animality.

What is noteworthy is that the *gift* exists in the most primitive forms of society as the institutional establishing of a relation to the stranger, that is, as establishing an extra-economic human order. We can therefore see its economic role quite clearly. Negatively, this order (communal consumption of the products harvested, hunted, or gleaned from the earth) is the only one that makes the Potlatch possible.

Conversely, the Potlatch as an institution of human-reality reacts on the economy by giving a particular aspect and meaning to property. What is my property in and through the gift is in fact much more than the presence of the giver in my house in the form of money and the manifestation of his mortgage on my future. So in one sense property is the Other in me [*chez moi*]. Mauss sees this quite clearly: “The Obligation attached to a gift is not inert. Even when aban-

done by the giver, it still forms a part of him. Through it he has a hold over the recipient, just as he had, while its owner, a hold over anyone who stole it.”²⁸⁶ In the Polynesian language, it is the *hau*, the spirit of things.

But we need to be clear that there is a substantification of the pure mortgage the initial owner puts on the second one and of the first owner’s identification with the object. So the initial form of property includes as one of its structures the possession of the owner by the possessed object.

We find this elsewhere, outside the Potlatch, in more advanced societies when we consider a patrimony. Does one *possess* the family and ancestral patrimony or is one possessed by it? The patrimony is the family considered as *other*, it is what was possessed by someone Other than me, which preserves this aspect of Otherness. And since it is also mine, my image, my person gets projected into it in the element of the Other, and the objective image that the object reflects back to me is already caught and alienated by the objective image of the family. Here too there is a temporal image of the gift (the Potlatch being the spatial image): I am *given* my patrimony, but only on the condition that I *pass it on* to my son. Beyond time, the future family gets identified with the past family to constitute one and the same entity which gives me my patrimony so that I can pass it on in an augmented form.

And without meaning to affirm that this form of passage to private property was historically the only one, it is worth noting, from Dumézil, a type of totalitarian economy found in old Germanic societies and also among the Slavs up to the current historical period: “the ideal of the early Germanic societies, as recorded by Caesar is a ‘confusionism,’ a permanent social melting pot, a ‘unanimism’ upholding a heroic and anti-capitalistic ethic. Each year, during a single doubtless brief meeting, this confusionism is given its full realization as the wealth temporarily distributed the previous year is returned to the community. That wealth is then immediately redistributed for the next period” (*Mithra-Varuna*, p. 133). It is true that Dumézil cites along with this mode of appropriation India, Iran, and Rome, “equivalent in this respect, since all have systems of divided, stable and hereditary property” [p. 132]. However the goods of each autonomous group (such as the *gens*) are no less *sacred*. With the result that property is everywhere alienation.

One is *prey to* property when, through the Potlatch, one has introduced the soul of the giver into one’s own house, or when the property belongs to the community and is thus the perpetual presence of the whole community with the owner, or when the property is familial and transmitted along with the family cult and later with the family honor, a weakened and metaphysical form of the cult of lares. So whatever form of primitive acquisition we consider in society, we see that the classic formula “property is theft” should be replaced by this one

286. Ibid., p. 9.

instead: “property is the gift.”²⁸⁷ And in the *gift* that constitutes the first property there is already a power of alienation. The whole world of property is in the dimension of alienation.

Naturally, it is also enjoyable. However, it should be noted that goods for consumption in primitive societies are not *riches*, riches are mats, tresses, rings, ribbons, masks; that is, objects that in connection with my name and in gratuity present my “face” to Other People, but which, by this very fact, alienate me or can alienate me in terms of these others, by putting me at their disposition. My riches are the face I offer to the Other, they are therefore also the Other in me.

The ambivalence of property is nowhere so obvious as in primitive relations with woman (societies with a uterine filiation). Woman is the pure Other, the Other about whom I can never say that from a certain point of view she is the same as me (same body, same activities, same amorous role, etc.). Her body is mysterious and horrifying as the same time that it is attractive. Since she is clearly necessary to the birth of a child, the recognized filiation is uterine. Communal and noncommunal property is therefore transmitted through the women, it is through her that fields and crops are given to the members of the clan, and conversely these things are designated as this or that domain through the women. We might say therefore that mysteriously the land belongs to the women.

At the same time, there is an analogy of fecundity. The earth is woman, the first goddesses of agricultural societies are all powerful. Through this analogy and because woman’s body destines her for a sedentary existence, agricultural labor is left to her (modest gardens within the confines of the village) while man makes war, hunts, and fishes. She is *possessed*, if not by her husband (even if she lives with him), at least by her brother; her condition is sometimes better than that of women in more civilized societies but often more abject. Yet this body that works and is taken and that knows oppression, perhaps before the slave does, is also the Other.

What is possessed is the Other in the clan. And the Other, possessed, alienates in turn. This other causes fear, is magic, is the same sex as the mother goddess whom one fears. Possessed, this Other possesses. She is possessed because she is Other, this is one way of reacting against Otherness. But because she is a possessed Other, she possesses in her turn. Within this oppression that at first seems unilateral, there is a reciprocal bond of alienation. In any case, what needs to be asserted here is that this alienation still has an aspect of inequality in reciprocity, for it is man who decides that he is alienated by woman.

Thus primitive society is completely alienated in terms of itself. It is totally traversed by the *Other* and each person, being Other, is *already*, even before the

287. The assertion that “property is theft” stems from Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), French libertarian socialist and journalist.

appearance of any technology, totally an oppressor and totally oppressed. The primitive relationship is already one of reciprocal alienation.

Starting from here, technical progress can allow for a more centralized oppression. The discovery of the bronze tool opens up new possibilities. Bigger fields will be cleared for tillage and heavily exploited. This relationship to the tool is partially liberating. Man discovers himself as an *agent*, a subject. He opposes himself to Nature and to the Gods. He no longer actualizes the natural object by desire but through the regularity of a technical action. He escapes the structures of perception by the invention of his own perspective and such tools as the lever. But this partial liberation takes place within alienation. It is not liberation *with* the other. It is liberation *over against* the other.

This subject who becomes conscious of himself as an agent, his freedom appears to him as a secondary phenomenon since he is always *possessed* by his soul, since he frees himself within the framework of reciprocal alienation. He remains a member of the clan or the gens. He will simply put his liberation to work on the relation of reciprocal alienation for his own profit. If he creates slaves, through the Potlatch or war, what he does is to make himself a mediation between the lares, the ancestors, the *mara*, the clan that possesses him and the Other whom he possesses. He possesses the Other in the name of the Other. He wants to free himself from the Other by enslaving him, but in fact it is the Other in him who enslaves the Other.

Simply stated, his technical freedom that appears at the moment of the act of enslavement is the means for the event "enslavement." With this, he creates a new alienation: that of the Master by the slave (the master's fear of the slave) without suppressing the older form since, on the contrary, it is the Other in him as a sacred element that confers upon him *the right* to enslave others. This is the sacred rule of the Potlatch game, which allows him to toss into slavery anyone who does not "pay him back," it is the *familia* in and through him that possesses the slave. Other people appear as there *to be enslaved* by the one who is already possessed by the diffuse magic of the Other.

In this very enslaving, he wants to deliver himself symbolically from the dictatorship of the Other. But precisely because he can enslave only because he is enslaved, he can not even *dream* of enslaving except for the fact that the categorical scheme of servitude is already given, he perpetuates servitude in himself.

Except, instead of simply falling on him again, it traverses him. He is the intermediary by means of which the dictatorship of the Other affects *another* Other. The imperative rules of the *familia* always run through him, but he transmits them to the slave. Naturally, his liberation from work always leads him to consider the universe of servitude thereby brought about *from the outside*, but then he will put himself on one of two planes depending on the case in question: if he totally escapes the category of alienation through nonaccessory

reflection, he may want, in short periods of disequilibrium, to treat the slave as a freedom with whom he is in solidarity (this often happens in the case of Whites in the South raised with black slaves), but the slave does not go along with this because the slave is an alienated freedom who thinks of the master as the *Other*, so there is no reciprocity.

So he may create the category of the *inferior* Other, a subhuman whose bound freedom is destined to free the master from the dictatorship of the Other by reflecting to him an image without any danger, precisely the one that the Master wished for. In this case, the slave's function is to reflect the Same in the other, to provide a safe place for the Same from the Other in the Other.

The other way of escaping the vicious circle of slavery is cynicism. Freed from the oppression of the Other, the master cynically considers the slave as a unit of labor that he possesses. But this state lacks equilibrium. For if he considers the slave as gratuitously oppressed, he either makes him fall to the rank of a mere thing or he will consider him in terms of the solidarity of freedom. These different states of disequilibrium have a momentary consistency only on the basis of the dictatorship of the Other. In sum, there is no *putting someone in slavery*, but rather a transmission of slavery.

We may conclude our discussion with Engels on the subject of oppression as follows. 1st, we can admit that the discovery of bronze tools, allowing for larger fields and as necessitating a larger work force, brought about the necessary conditions for the appearance of slavery. If there were not slaves before, this was because one could not see what they might be good for (since woman sufficed for cultivating the small gardens) *nor* how one could feed them. However these conditions of production have quite different functions in the two cases. *Before* the Bronze Age, technical and economic conditions were determining causes but *negative* ones. I have explained elsewhere how the only determining cause in History takes place through *absence* or negativity. As such, it cannot be seen as such until after the fact. It is a lack that does not get unveiled as such to its contemporaries. They did not feel the lack of slaves any more than the men of the 16th century felt the lack of potatoes.

During and after the Bronze Age, this impossibility of slavery disappears. The elements for a world built on slavery are given. But they are not given *manifestly*. They are not given any more than the lever is on the pretext that its elements (a stick, a stone) are always present in Nature. On the basis of what the bronze tool calls for, the slave has to be invented just as the lever does. What is more, this invention is not necessary. Other types of human relations are compatible with the bronze tool, as is demonstrated by the long-term persistence of communist societies among the Slavs, for example. Slavery can be invented only on the basis of a favorable ontological situation. In other words, oppression is an event, an act of human responsibility, a decision by man affecting humanity that can take place only if two conditions are fulfilled: a technical and economic condition,

and an ontological condition. But the former appears against the background of the latter. It is in a humanity where a certain type of relation between men has been outlined that the tool will crystalize these relations into ones of oppression.

In sum, with the appearance of bronze, there is a crystalization of diffuse relations of alienation. But this crystalization is not a physio-chemical phenomenon, it is a free and meaningful decision of man affecting man's nature. 2d, this ontological condition that makes the appearance of slavery possible (but not necessary, since there are alienated societies without oppression) is alienation. So far from alienation being one of the consequences of oppression, it is one of its factors.

By alienation, we mean a certain type of relations that man has with himself, with others, and with the world, where he posits the ontological priority of the Other. The Other is not some specific person but a category or, if you will, a dimension, an element. There is no object or privileged subject that has to be considered as Other, but *anything* can be Other and the Other can be anything. It is just one way of being. In a conception of the world based exclusively on the Other, the subject derives all his projects and everything about his existence from *what he is not* and from what does not exist as he does. He interprets each object in the universe not as it is but as being profoundly *other* than it is (the tree and the pebble are *also* bears), the *Other* being the substance and the *same* being the accident and the appearance. Finally, he makes the Other a *way of existing in otherness*, that is, in the very heart of every upsurge of being he sees a way of not being itself, of escaping itself, of signifying something other than itself, which is in no way the mode of existing of the For-itself but, if you will, its projection in the objective and reified element of the Other.

This domination of the Same by the Other is diffuse in the sense that no one is the Other and everyone is. I incarnate the Other in the eyes of others, but it is so to the extent that I myself am possessed by the Other. The Other is always marginal. At this level, man has invented diffuse oppression and alienation because he has invented himself as an alienated creature. The sovereignty incarnated in the *arunta*, or the chief of the clan, is an overturned democracy, is the democracy of the Other. The taboo is democratic rule overturned, projected into the element of the Other.

3d, slavery, like the gift, appears on this ground as a *total fact*.²⁸⁸ It is certainly the choice of a tool and an invention of a tool. One chooses to consider some men as tools. But even this is complex. First of all, it is starting from the *Other* that some men are designated as possible tools. They are the ones who have lost the protection of the Other. They are the ones, in other words, who are no

288. Mauss speaks of total social phenomena wherein "all kinds of institutions find simultaneous expression." "For, in these 'early' societies, social phenomena are not discrete; each phenomenon contains all the threads of which the social fabric is composed" (*The Gift*, p. 1).

longer the *same*. The same as me when the Other is no longer over me. The *conquered* (at the Potlatch or in war) is the one who felt fear when he was presented with the mask of the Other and who was abruptly reduced to himself. I have superiority over him only so long as I am not myself, that is, I can dream of suppressing him only so long as I feel the alienating protection of the other over me.

Furthermore, the very decision to value the tool is a choice about the nature of the tool. Therefore it goes with the appearance of private property. But we have noted that private property is both individualization and possession of me by the possessed object. At present, I am in the world according to the element of Being-in-itself. My field, my house are me within Being-in-itself. I touch myself in the furrows of my land. Besides, the field is sustenance, therefore there is the possibility of internalizing fecundity. Lévinas is completely correct to write against Heidegger that “in these matters something might have escaped Heidegger . . . that prior to being a system of tools, the world is an ensemble of nourishments. Human life in the world does not go beyond the objects that fulfill it. It is perhaps not correct to say that we live to eat, but it is no more correct to say that we eat to live. The uttermost finality of eating is contained in the food. When one smells a flower, it is the smell that limits the finality of the act. . . . These are the nourishments characteristic of our existence in the world. It is an ecstatic existence—being outside oneself—but limited by the object” (p. 155).²⁸⁹ To invent a tool is to overturn this finality and consider these nourishments as a means of maintaining my life. But this signifies a means of feeding the Other in me. I give a value to my life insofar as it is sacred.

For another thing, the field belongs to me but also to the *other* (the family, the community that lets me have it). With the result that the individualized me is still alienated to the extent that it is reflected back on itself by the In-itself. It is quite certain, moreover, that a technical relation to the earth breaks the magical one of desire. Owing to this fact, it is strictly comparable to weaning. But, at the same time, like after weaning, I am ever more rigorously held in the gaze of others, I stand at present in the solitude of a *looked-at* man. The new me that comes to me (the soul) comes exactly in the form of alienation. Under all this, of course, there is consciousness of technical freedom. But it is grasped as secondary, as epiphenomenal.

Hence, when faced with the decision to take some men as tools there is an ontological decision to liberate myself from the other by enslaving him. Oppression is an effort to shift the weight of the Other to Other People, just as an electrified object seeks to discharge itself of its electricity by contact. And this

289. Emmanuel Lévinas (b. 1906), “Le Temps et l’Autre,” in Jean Wahl et al., *Le choix, le monde, l’existence*, Cahiers du Collège Philosophique (Paris: Arthaud, 1948); *Time and the Other and additional essays*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), p. 63.

effort comes from the heart of alienated freedom, which cannot get rid of its alienation except through a concrete act. The slave is chosen to bear the whole weight of all Otherness. At the same time, he is chosen in a world where this choice is ontologically possible since it is the world where everyone is prey to the Other. The slave is the man caught without the Other. Except, with this, everything gets inverted because the slave in turn becomes the image of the Other. For it is just insofar as I myself am the Other that I have the right to possess him. Therefore he is a possession of the Other and reflects my otherness back to me. For him, I am the chief of the conquering clan, the chief of a powerful family, hence another other and not myself. And as oppressed he oscillates for me between being a mere object and the Other per se. The Other whom his oppression forever removes resembles me since this oppression sets him over against me (the class struggle in potentiality), hence mystery and flight.

These two extreme positions on the balance scale do not stop him from passing through the central position again and again, where there is the discovery that the slave is the same for me as also the same, but this position lacks equilibrium for it ought to be accompanied by manumission, otherwise my project of treating the slave as the same as me runs up against the fact that he is objectively the Other. It is at this level that I constitute his subjective oppression for him by making him a lesser Other, an inferior and subjugated Other. Through my possession of the Other, I want to disarm the Other and constitute a counter-Other that will reflect back to me in the element of the Other the image I want the Other to have of me. But at this very level there is failure (as in masochism where the Other humiliates out of respectful love) because the slave docilely reflects back to me that *factual* image that he takes me to be possessed by the Other (as the head of the family, etc.).

So, as Dühring saw, oppression has its origin in an initial fact analogous to the fall. However, this is not the fact of violence, which is quite secondary here, but rather the fact that man is first of all present to himself as other. The springing up of man in the world is a sin against freedom, through alienation. And so long as man does not get beyond this phase of alienation, every attempt to affirm his freedom will be caught from behind, alienated, and end up as oppression. This is a vicious circle that does not invite optimism since alienation perpetuates oppression and oppression perpetuates alienation.

5. This will allow us to understand better our fifth condition,²⁹⁰ the reciprocal complicity between the oppressor and the oppressed. There is, in effect, a world *to uphold* that is the world of alienation. The oppressed cooperates in this along with the oppressor. Let us begin by asserting that neither the oppressed nor the oppressor invents oppression. It is always a climate and a tradition. There was

290. The fifth condition of oppression.—Ed.

no first oppressor, rather, as we have seen, alienation precedes oppression and justifies it. When oppression does appear as an institution, it already has a long, diffuse past.

The slave is both an invention and a discovery. And in this institutional world the slave accepts slavery to some extent because slavery is a kind of relation between two groups that both practice a closed economy and both adhere to the same representations of the world. The slave thinks of himself in terms of his fault; he was caught without the *other*, he did not pay back the Potlatch, he was conquered by arms, he lost his *mana*. If he revolts, it is against the fact that *he* is a slave, not against slavery in general. If he had had more luck he would have reduced his master to the servile state. What is more, although slavery may be more harsh than life in the clan, its nature is not different—it is still a form of alienation. But rather than the Other being perpetually marginal and ungraspable, it has concentrated its power in one person: The Other is the Master. His prohibitions and orders are as categoric and as incomprehensible as taboos. As for the Master's power, it is not cynically taken as a physical force or good fortune. Force, riches, luck *signify*, they are pure *signs*. They reveal the underlying strength of the Other (the *mana*) in the Master. Therefore the Master is justified in a way in being the Master.

Furthermore, in all slavery, there is a contract. This contract is visible in the Potlatch. The slave accepts being made a slave if he does not *pay it back* and we have seen that in this acceptance there is an ontological root since the gift is already a mortgage on the other's future. But in the battle followed by enslavement there is the moment when life is spared. Symbolically, the sword does not bow before the other. The fight was accepted on both sides, therefore the future master saves the slave's life. But this *gift* of life (since according to the rules of single combat the life of the defeated man can and must be taken) is at the same time alienation of life. The slave has now *received* his life, it has been given to him, it becomes in him, like the present, the image of the Other and the presence of the Other. Something has to be *paid back*. But what can *pay back* this act except the temporal remains of this life that has been given in the instant and out of nowhere? The slave *pays back these remains*. This in no way means that he cannot hate his master, but in any case, whether he hates him or not, his slavery appears to him as contractual.

This is more accurate than what Hegel wrote, for the slave was not originally the man who preferred life, on the contrary he is the man who, like the other, took up the challenge but had back luck and was *taken*.²⁹¹ This is visible in the

291. "In fact, the slave is, properly speaking, the slave not of the master, but of life; he is a slave because he has retreated in the face of death, preferring servitude to liberty in death" (Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 173).

case of the Potlatch where there is slavery when the challenge is not followed by victory. However, it remains true that the slave has been brought to accept his life from the other, that is, to be placed on the ground where life is subject to determinism. Through this acceptance, he consents to be in the sphere of such a life.

But this only holds in the relatively exceptional case of the acquisition of slaves. Subsequently the slave is born directly into his station. At this moment, slavery appears to him an institution and a conception of the world. He learns about himself from others.

First of all, he learns that he is *limited*. He defines himself negatively by the set of values, objects, and forms of behavior that are not his. Positively, by the fixed tasks that are *his* tasks. So the world that surrounds him is a closed world. It is a world where each object reflects the Master's transcendence. The object has an intention, therefore it makes a claim on the slave. And *for the slave*, the object does not have another side, it is unsurpassable. Except at the same time it is guaranteed. For its very existence depends on the Master. Its existence and its *truth*. It exists in truth. The truth is the Master's thought projected into the element of the Other and become the *essence* of the object. Its values are also *given*. They are the Master's freedom passed over into the dimension of otherness and conferring an *a priori* structure on the object. So the world is not mysterious—it is clear.

No doubt there are undiscoverable truths for the slave, but neither do these truths exist *for others*. And since the Other (the Master) is the essential and the slave the inessential, it doesn't really matter if these truths are known by the slave if he knows that they exist for an essential being. In what concerns him, he does not make anything true, nor is it up to him to unveil truths. Those truths that he ought to know are unveiled for him.

Therefore the world is reassuring and in order. The slave grasps himself as a part of the world. Indeed, he belongs to the Master's world and learns to know himself under the Master's gaze. Therefore he covers over his being-in-the-world as anxious dereliction with a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world, as an object. Therefore with other objects in the world he stands in a harmonious relation of objectivity. Given as a thing, moved about like a thing, he likens himself to a thing by a pantheism of objectivity. Therefore he receives that being-in-itself that is precisely what *human existence a priori* is in search of. He is a for-itself that grasps itself in the first place as in-itself.

For another thing, if he takes up his appointed place in the ordered world, he too is in order. Therefore he finds peace. He also receives his *Me* from the other. He is on the plane of the autistic image of having been weaned. He is first of all "the slave," then individualized to just the degree that the Master wants to individualize him. (There is a slave's gaiety founded on irresponsibility.) Therefore he is entirely occupied by the Me/Other. But this is both a lucky and

a terrible Me/Other. Also the absolute value of the Master justifies him. He is the inessential essential to this Essential. He is *in order to* serve.

To the degree that this conception of the world conceals anxiety from the slave, he preserves it in him. But he is in bad faith and torn in two. Therefore an accomplice. He agrees with the Master about killing off his freedom. Indeed: 1st, intracconscious and reflective freedom; 2d, labor; 3d, poverty and hunger contradict this tranquil universe.

Intracconscious freedom: We are talking about that “self-”consciousness that can always be regained in and through accessory reflection. This consciousness, we have seen, is like a phenomenological reduction that holds the world of the slave suspended in itself and shows it to be a *played-at* world and its principles to be *believed-in* principles. All of this is naturally quite complex because undoubtedly the slave is someone who thinks of himself as a slave, but he is also someone who is taken for a slave and who sees others from the point of view of his slavery. His relation to other people is a contract of servitude and it does not suffice to take oneself personally for a freedom above and beyond slavery if others persist in seeing you as a slave and if your objective situation with its burdens remains one of servitude.

In the case of the universe of desire where the world reflects back the pure image of subjectivity, contestation through nonthetic consciousness was efficacious because it was just a contestation of subjectivity and its products by itself. However, in the case of the intersubjective universe, such contestation perpetually remains on the plane of the unfinished, it is contested in turn by what comes to the slave from the outside and from others. The slave's truth is constituted by the other. If therefore for an instant the slave becomes conscious that he is playing at being a slave, in the same moment he is taken by the other as a slave and as an object. There is a reciprocal contestation of his own inner consciousness and his objectivity, for while it is true that he only *believes* in this servile universe, it is also true that he is subjected by others to exhausting labors, that obvious values are forbidden to him, and that his ignorance keeps him in abjection in relation to the Master.

This intracconscious freedom can become concrete only in a concrete negating project, that is, the project to overthrow the domination of the masters, or, if you will, to want to treat the Master in turn as an object. But this project is presently completely inconceivable. It can only be dreamt of. The conditions for the liberation of the slave are not given, therefore the project remains, if it exists at all, a mere dream that occurs on the plane of the imaginary. What remains therefore is that the contestation by which the slave envelops and puts his slave's world in suspense is in turn enveloped and put in suspense by the Master's transcendence. It remains merely abstract negativity and this is what, in effect, leads to Stoicism.

Since the slave is an object for the Master and the Master cannot, in return,

be an object for the slave, in the sense that he cannot become the passive substrate of an action, the surpassed element of a transcendence, the slave constitutes the Master as a merely abstract object; that is, through a look that looks at him when his back is turned. And his negativity at the same time brings down this universe of reciprocal objectivity. It raises itself above the sphere where the slave is a concrete object for the Master and the Master a merely abstract object, that is, an empty possibility of being an object for the slave. This Negativity lets the sphere of being-in-the-world and that of being-in-the-midst-of-the-world fall into ruins. It affirms itself as an empty pure consciousness (of) self or as pure thought, by setting aside the fact that all consciousness (of) self is also consciousness of something.

But this pure kind of contestation lacks equilibrium, it is merely an attempt at evasion through accentuating one structure of the For-itself at the expense of others. It does not deliver the slave from being-in-the-midst-of-the-world; on the contrary it accentuates his aspect of being a concrete object by leaving him in his Master's hands. It does not go so far as anxiety and forlornness since he does not propose *to do* anything, and anxiety exists when a man has decided on new values in and through action. So the universe of the Master's values is untouched.

No doubt there is a claim to universality. There is a plane where the slave is a man just like the Master, but this is precisely the plane where neither *this* slave nor *this* master exist but only the purely abstract possibility of consciousness (of) self. And through affirmation of this purely abstract possibility the slave enacts a concrete adhesion to the order established by the Master. Precisely because it is indifferent whether one is a master or a slave (τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ὑμῖν), one has to accept the world of slavery out of indifference. The Stoic slave is analogous to the inauthentic Jew who evades his condition as Jewish by proclaiming a universal and abstract mankind. Flight from the historical and the concrete into the universal and the eternal is a category of evasion we find again and again. It is still a form of complicity with the Master and this is why other slaves will refuse Stoicism in the name of their concrete humanity as slaves.

Except Stoicism cannot be refused except in the name of revolt, and if the slave refuses without rebelling, he falls into the other form of complicity, the one where he allows himself to sink into the world established by the Master. In practice, masters do not pay any attention to this difference in their slaves' thinking—objectively their behavior does not differ. Whether a slave obeys out of wholehearted adhesion to the closed world one has constituted for him or in order to throw into greater relief the purely abstract freedom not to do anything and to contest everything, the servile task is carried out with the same zeal. The slave who upsets his Master is the one with express individual characteristics (laziness, anger, etc.), not the one who frees himself through the abstract.

The ambivalence of such liberation was made clear to me by an intelligent

career officer who told us, when we we doing our military training at the E.N.S.,²⁹² trying to seduce us on our own grounds, “Standing at attention is a soldier’s best defense. If the N.C.O. takes after you, insults you, even if he hits you, stay at attention, your dignity will be preserved.” Standing at attention is the Stoic’s advice. Everyone is content: your discipline even frees up your negativity, your pure consciousness. You *are not* that stiff object. But the officer is content, too. He can tranquilly insult you. So we ought not to see in the Stoic attitude, as Hegel would have it, a *moment* of servile history,²⁹³ but rather a perpetual possibility of the oppressed given from the very beginning. It is a perpetually contested contestation that is not far from any slave, that is perpetually taken up and frozen by the master, that, even in putting the servile universe in parentheses, does not really modify this world in any of its features.

Work: Hegel went on at length about the efficacy of work in his *Phenomenology*. What he says is quite correct: “Work . . . is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words, work forms and shapes the thing. The negative relation to the object becomes its *form* and something *permanent*. . . . This *negative* middle term or the formative *activity* is at the same time the individuality or pure being-for-itself of consciousness which now, in the work outside it, acquires an element of permanence. It is in this way, therefore, that consciousness, *qua* worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its *own* independence. . . . In the lord, the being-for-self is an ‘other’ . . . in fashioning the thing, he becomes aware that being-for-self belongs to *him*, that he himself exists essentially and actually in his own right” (p. 118). Except Hegel considers too made-to-order a situation: the one where the slave under consideration is precisely one who has had his life left to him (whereas it is with his son or grandson that slavery is institutional. The result of considering this is as follows: the *fear* that has to accompany the forming work to give it its depth does not increase with the generations, instead it tends to decrease).

What is more, he presupposes a master race who leave all work to their slaves and this too is wrong. The slave appears as a *supplementary* work force, not as the *only* one. The master and his sons do some things themselves. The outcome is that the slave’s work does not just reflect back to him his own image but also that of the master.

Finally, to the extent that it is his own image that work reflects back to the slave, we have to see even in this a trace of the master and his world.

In fact, it is not so much a question for the slave of *curbed* desire as of refused desire. The object is not given to him *at all*. To the extent that this desire does not confine itself to suppressing, as Hegel puts it, but *unveils* in suppressing,

292. The Ecole Normale Supérieure.

293. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pars. 197–201, pp. 119–22.

there is an unveiling at the heart of the formed object that is an unveiling through use and consumption, which is refused in principle to the slave. This tunic he is weaving will take on its meaning and value when the master wears it. So for the slave as later for the proletariat, the meaning of his work is stolen from him. Strictly speaking, he does not know what he makes. The object he works on escapes him and he works on it for the other and in the dimension of the Other. This in no way means that work is not liberating. On the contrary, in the final analysis, whether it be for the other or not, the slave shapes the matter, he disengages it from its passivity by shaping it with his tool and it reflects back to him, in spite of everything else, the image of his activity. But simply speaking there is a constant reversal and retaking of this work by the Other, and what the slave finally sees of the Same ends up in Otherness.

Besides, brought up in the house or on the property of the Master to accomplish just this work, he himself considers this work, through the mediation of the Other, as his natural function. So, to the extent that this work stamps him as a free creation, he is caught up again in the element of otherness and this work is presented to him as an organic and traditional function which he was destined for. So there is ambiguity and a perpetual concrete possibility for a game of bad faith.

Misery, dependency, hunger: These are the truly liberating elements. Without a doubt *dependency* can be interpreted by the slave in two ways, for it is most certainly, on the one hand, the true replacement for what Hegel calls fear.²⁹⁴ The slave born in the big house does not fear for his life as Hegel assumes when he refers to a prisoner of war. Yet the order of dependency (the slave has a destiny of being a thing in his master's hands) replaces this fear by the constant contradiction between a freedom that cannot prevent itself from projecting its own future and the perpetual disarming of this freedom by the interfering freedom of the Other. The consciousness of self as freedom demanding its liberation *may* spring up from this contradiction. But, on the other hand, this same dependency is irresponsibility and a flight from anxiety toward this substitute for fear. In one sense, the slave finds his justification in this.

On the contrary, hunger and cold bear within themselves a certain value of liberation and of education. In the first place, they cannot be taken up into otherness. The master is unaware of the slave's hunger and, what is more, does not wish it. It is a matter of an absolute subjectivity. Hunger also upsets the established order since it posits the slave in his own eyes as having no place other than through his work, his obedience, etc.—he has a designated place. The hungry slave contests his harmonious slavery through his hunger. But beyond this, his hunger uncovers a world of food and of values which is indeed the slave's *Umwelt*. Hunger is an unveiling of the world.

294. Ibid., par. 196, pp. 118–19; cf. Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, pp. 174–77.

Through his hunger the slave chews on the master's world and claims it as his own. Perfumes, art objects, rituals are inaccessible to him, but not so the master's food. The master's food is forbidden to him without being mysterious, it will taste no different in the master's mouth than in the slave's. It is common ground and, in a sense, hunger is the positing of equality: hunger reveals the master and the slave to be equals on the ground of assuaging one's hunger. Hunger dethrones the master by revealing him as being capable of being hungry and it makes him hated in showing him as stealing the slave's food. In effect, hunger is an unlimitable transcendence toward the food that it uncovers as forbidden and it is the refusal to be hungry, hence the refusal of the prohibition which is only maintained now by fear. It implies the project of a self freed of hunger, hence of slavery.

At the same time, it is through hunger, and through fatigue, cold, and physiological misery that the slave has a presentiment of his own death. Therefore it implies a radical contestation of the finality set up by the master's tradition, it is a calling into question of this order, and finally it leads to anxiety. Except, at this level, the conditions for a slave revolt are not given. What remains, therefore, is the pure possibility of theft, which, for the slave, is always easy. The slave "takes care of things." Except theft and getting along by hook or by crook, far from overthrowing the master's order, confirms it. To steal, while concealing the fact, is to recognize the master's property. Since one *steals* it, one recognizes that it belongs to him. Stealing is a potlatch upside down and the stolen object contains within itself like the consecrated wafer in the eucharist the presence of the Other.

"To take care of oneself" by this little thing and that, is to take the established order as a starting point and a principle. To keep an eye out for the watchman is to accept his authority. To do condemnable acts in secret and with an easy conscience is to play with the basic irresponsibility the master concedes to you. Theft has no moral importance if it is the slave who does it because nothing he can conceive of or do beyond his natural function, which is to work, has any importance or implications. The slave doesn't count—apart from his work—therefore what he does doesn't count either. He escapes all remorse through his irresponsibility. The slave can be devoted to his master; he steals things nonetheless because theft lies outside the sphere of devotion, it belongs to the side where the slave is nothingness.

And there is a complicity of the master and the slave owing to the fact that the master prefers that the slave should be immoral where he has no precise ways to behave spelled out as regards his work and his master. The morality of the slave would be an affirmation of equality. But if the slave is immoral, he is nothingness, he draws his objective existence from his functions, therefore from the order established by the master. One rediscovers this idea of Evil = Nothingness in the Christian religion. God is master in that man draws his full existence

as having value and as having being from the positive functions that he fulfills in the order established by the divinity. Evil is his shadowy face, which is not *nothing*, it is irresponsibility. So theft and getting by can close off the outcome opened up by physiological misery and hunger. This demand to be a man gets transmuted into irresponsibility. The playing field gets closed up too. Stealing represents another form of complicity of the master with the slave, another way for the slave to accept his oppression, to make this oppression into a contract and a right, not a brutal fact of violence.

Here intervenes as a kind of summary of everything that went before (which may be formulated as follows: everything turns against the slave and in every one of the structures that might lead to the affirmation of his freedom and his essentialness, he finds instruments that bring him back to an acceptance of his inessentialness: stoicism, work, theft lead to complicity) the basic, almost institutionalized, form of behavior of the oppressed: *resignation*, which is a radical form of complicity with the master.

The original structure of such resignation is the Stoic and Cartesian formula: "to conquer oneself rather than the world." And this formula as such and as applied to situations where it applies is perfectly correct. It is fundamentally a formula about biological adaptation to one's setting. If the objective situation renders a structural set of projects and undertakings impossible and anachronistic, even if this set of projects defines our personhood, we have to let it slip from our preoccupations with the threat of allowing ourselves to become frozen into a passive and schizophrenic attitude of making a demand and under the threat of seeing our undertaking turn from real to fictive, which is to say, turn into a *played at* enterprise (since we know that it is impossible, we take up the poetic and tragic attitude of preferring failure and we continue to play at what is impossible so that our very behavior will be a demand. In this way, we oppose the law of the heart to the course of the world).

So this formula is one for a supple adaptation to what is real, illustrated by the tactic of the breakthrough in contemporary military science. One sends tanks to test the enemy's line of resistance at the point where one imagines it possible to break through and suddenly one shifts the point of attack a hundred kilometers away when one sees that the resistance is too strong to overcome. This is the ethics and tactics of freedom since it implies that one ought never to allow oneself to be caught up in one's undertaking, ought never to allow oneself to fall into it like into a well but always be able to contest it, to be able reflexively to get out of it in order to be able to make it appear before oneself for examination and to be able to modify it as one wills, or according to the circumstances.

However, we must note that: 1st, this is a means of preserving the initiative by exercising a constant negativity as regards oneself; 2d, that this negativity only makes sense as a structure of inventiveness that affirms the value of some project in general by its very negation of the concrete project that one abandons,

and that prepares the way for another project; 3d, that it has to do with secondary means and ends, not at all with the principal ends. This woman, or that career, this life must be renounced, but must be so insofar as these undertakings were *concrete means* of affirming oneself as a free man among free men. This does not mean that one has to renounce the ultimate end which is always the founding of a reign of concrete freedom.

For another thing, the final goal is domination of the world by man. As a consequence, victory over oneself never has value other than as a means. It must be possible to break off a project because it is impossible, not *to conquer oneself*.

Human desire is a concrete form of transcendence, as such it makes manifest the whole of transcendence, therefore the whole of human reality. Therefore it is not something to be set aside as such, it is legitimate. And if it does become illegitimate, it is within some particular circumstances, in connection with a particular end and a unique intercalating of means. I do not overcome the desire to drink for the pleasure of overcoming this desire, but during some excursion, during some ascent, so as not prematurely to use up my ration of water, which is strictly fixed by the undertaking (by the weight of materials one can carry). Therefore, on the contrary, it is a way of affirming the legitimacy of thirst, this renunciation of this particular thirst. So renunciation is a means and not an end and it never has the value of an end. When it does become the ultimate end of the human condition, it is called resignation.

In truth, resignation is a free response of a slave to a limit situation, from which he cannot escape. It is true that it is first of all an effort to save within himself man as freedom, as the artisan of his own destiny. It is an affirmation of human dignity. Indeed, it is an attempt to assume this dignity. The slave deprived of freedom, reduced to the status of a thing through the will of the Other, inessential, receiving his existence from outside himself as a destiny, wants himself to take up this situation which is imposed upon him in order to remain human.

Resignation is the opposite of stoicism even though both of them have the same effects and even though both of them pass the ball back and forth between themselves (the slave passes over from resignation to stoicism depending on the moment, his education, his mood). Stoicism is evasion and pure negativity of the situation of the oppressed. Resignation, on the contrary, is an effort to save the situation of the oppressed by taking it up in freedom in such a way that it will not be an intolerable and inhuman fate but a human condition, one characterized by wisdom. So in the very movement that leads to resignation, the whole of freedom is involved.

And, even though resignation is really just a form of mystification, it is not the master who mystifies the slave but the slave in his freedom who mystifies himself. For if the master, subsequently, may use the ethics of resignation to keep the slave obedient, he does not do so as a master in a situation that allows

him to invent this attitude, and, what is more, at first the slave's freedom shocks the master. For him, the slave does not have to resign himself to his condition of being a slave but rather *to be* a slave as a stone is stone. Therefore resignation has its moment in the historical development of oppression: it appears when the union of slaves against the master is impossible, when the technical knowledge and education of the slave are insufficient to allow him to fight back. In short, when the master represents the slave's inexorable destiny. So resignation is the invention of a human outcome to a situation with no way out. It starts from the experience of the uselessness of sporadic and terrorist revolts (slaves who flee and die of hunger or who are caught and mutilated, acts of terrorism that have worsened the condition of all the slaves in a region).

The choice of death is still obviously there. And this choice will be made if the situation appears as if it were against nature. For example, ancient history offers examples of the collective suicide of entire populations who preferred death to slavery. But there slavery sprang up within a condition of free men and appears as the abject negation of the free human condition. Resignation appears when slavery is institutional, when it has a past, when men are born in slavery and are themselves the sons of slaves, in other words, when the slave is historical because he has a *tradition of being a slave*. Which is to say it appears when slavery, on the contrary, appears as *natural*.

For someone who is born into a stable and traditional society, each institution has the double original aspect of being social (conventional) and natural at the same time. The master finds it natural that there should be slaves because he believes that in nature there are *Untermenschen* [subhumans]—the slave finds slavery natural because it exists and he seeks, through resignation, to live as a man the condition of a subman. Resignation is the profound act by which the slave chooses himself as slave through having no power not to be one. The immediately apparent characteristic of slavery is forced labor, prohibitions, and refused desire. Its most basic characteristic is inessentiality and dependency. Resignation chooses to behave as though these limiting aspects on the slave's freedom had freedom as their origin. And they do have freedom as their origin, but it is the master's freedom and it has to be that of the slave. He has to act as though he or his freedom had established slavery for him.

Now these brakes on freedom have as their noematic correlates, values. Constraints therefore must be values, that is, they must appear as requirements correlative with the human condition. Since desire is refused (simply because the master does not have enough to feed the slave in abundance), man must be made to refuse his desires. Or, if you will, desire which includes the demand that it be gratified must be made to be refused. Since the slave lives surrounded by prohibitions and requirements, prohibition and requirement must, insofar as they cut off desire, best manifest man's freedom. Therefore the slave will manifest his freedom in obedience. And this purely subjective freedom will be defined by the slave's victory over himself. The more unwilling he is to obey the more value

there will be in obedience. Desires are there with their immediate demands only to be refused. Indeed, since the situation created for the slave is desire refused, he can not take this situation in hand except by refusing his own desires. In other words, the *self* is nothing more than the content of the victory over oneself.

In this sense, the master and his prohibitions or his orders become the occasion for a victory by the slave over himself, that is, they become the mediation between the slave's freedom (insofar as it is the negating of the slave as a self) and the slave's *self* conceived of as a set of affirmations to contest and demands to reject. And here, once again, the underlying goal of resignation is to give the master who is the slave's absolute and essential end the inessential aspect of being a *test*, a relating of one self to another. Except if he is to have this aspect of being a means, he has also to preserve that of being an absolute end. Otherwise he will be just a gratuitous means. In a word, the master will be a form of mediation if the slave accepts the master's universe for himself and with no restrictions. In this way, the master is both essential and inessential, means and end, test and outcome of the test. And the only way of rending him inessential is to freely affirm that he is essential. The only means of reducing him to the rank of a means is to employ his own freedom to posit him as an ultimate end.

By pushing things even further, the slave will freely posit his own inessentiality. He will be humble and poor in spirit, the one who wins through what he loses. He will consider himself as subordinate even in his own being, as inessential to the master's world, he will want to be a subman at least insofar as this subhumanity is his own choice since free choice characterizes *man*. He will be man in wanting to be subman. This is the meaning of humility. Prove that you are man by putting your freedom as a man toward assuming the situation of a subman which is made for you. Practically, this means the absolute refusal of the law of the heart and acceptance of the *a priori* course of the world.

Resignation is the correlate of the ethics of force. Injustice rules in this world, force and chance govern destinies. Among the destinies so put forth, there are those that are bound to the project, the undertaking, to the directing of men. And these posit values that conform to their situation and that are *good* if they conform to these values. These destinies have to be judged in light of these values and, what is more, only the ones who posit these values have the right to judge themselves in light of them. Therefore the slave does not judge the master. There are other men that the course of the world (later this will be Providence or God) has thrown into a situation where they are strictly limited and can undertake nothing. Resignation is their lot, it becomes the humanization of their situation. With this, through humility, the slave is going to rejoin the master because they are "equals amidst differences." The goal being to serve human values, each one serves them in his place and each one serves as well as he can those that concern him. The most humble, most devoted, most docile slave at the bottom of his chosen abjectness rejoins the highest master.

Yet it is on the condition of never judging his master, of always affirming his

inessentiality in relation to him, and of preferring on every occasion and in every way the master to himself. So the deep-lying claim of resignation can endure only on the condition of remaining latent and hidden. Except the effect of resignation is to maintain the order of servitude.

Without a doubt resignation has freedom as its original goal. But the means of attaining this freedom is acceptance of the inhuman order of constraints. What is essential is the goal, but we may ask: what will be essential in the man who seeks to assume his inessentiality? Clearly it will be an abstract freedom, bent on destroying the concrete outbreak of freedom in desires, work, and hopes. It will be a freedom that takes into account the master's demands and asks only to be mediating between these demands and the self that has to be brought low. The essentiality of the slave appears in the ruins of his *self*. Finally, freedom is not distinguished from its goal, nor from its means, nor from the master's demand. It is either a purely empty abstraction and a purely universal notion of freedom or it finds its flesh in the demand or concrete prohibition placed in the slave by the master.

In a word, there is a phenomenon of symbiosis more than of complicity since the slave's resignation remains the purely subjective and formal aspect of concrete obedience to the master. This is why the person who is resigned makes himself hated by others because he is purely the master in the slave.

The one who is resigned sets up the Other in himself and accepts being defined by the Other in order to save his abstract freedom. This abstract freedom differs from that of stoicism only in its direction: it does not indicate an evasion of a situation, it is internal to the situation *per se*. Thus in resignation I choose to prefer the Other rather than myself because he is the Other and I think I can be myself only through the total sacrifice and the entire subordination of my Me to that of the Other.

The ethics of resignation is to posit the ethical and ontological priority of the Other as Other. It is close to the ethics of devotion that posits my salvation in the affirmation of the essentiality of the Other as such and my inessentiality as Me myself. (I posit at the same time my essentiality for Others in that I am an Other. The other slaves.) The mystification of resignation stems from my doing what the master wants, from my taking up into myself and giving the force of law to a social order that itself is based on force. The slave's ethic is that of legitimating the master's force. So, in wanting to free myself, I bind myself even more tightly. What is more, resignation will be taken up again by the masters into an ethics of resignation that they will teach to the slave. Instead of being a freely chosen ethics, as when he grasps it from outside, it will become the ethics proper to the slave, the one that best puts him to sleep, the only one that *fits* him, the myth that perfects and completes the master's order and that allows this imposed order to be presented as a contract.

The foundation of the ethics of resignation has the effect of unveiling a certain ontological aspect of being-in-the-world, that is, the ec-static relation of man to

the world and to others—the affirmation of the human even in the inhuman or the grandeur of absolute failure.

Here lies the ambiguity of resignation: it is *objectively* pure complicity with the master in his effort to destroy the human. Subjectively it is in one sense mystification and bad faith. Yet in another sense it is an effort to once again grasp in freedom the radical negation of all freedom. Within the atmosphere of the absolute failure of humanity (for the slave sees the human enterprise as an absolute failure while the master sees it as a success), it seeks to affirm man. This is possible only by affirming the failure. Man, in effect, must want this failure not as a permanent risk that he assumes but that he wants to avoid as much as possible (the master's ethics), but as the meaning and the end of humanity in him. Failure becomes the foreseen and sought-for meaning of every undertaking as an undertaking that has its source in the slave's freedom (on the contrary, everything that comes from the Other has to succeed), failure, that is, the destruction of the undertaking by the world. And the totality of failures, in rejecting the totality of undertakings that constitute man, shows that there is no place for man in this world.

So man becomes for himself what is *impossible*. And his value stems exactly from the fact that he is a pure ideality; insofar as the world unveils him to himself as the being whose essence is to be impossible, he is a nothingness for the world, but insofar as his undertakings freely lead to failure and are affirmed in their own heart as impossible in the realm of facts, they are affirmations of a right and by this fact they contest the world or the order of facts in its entirety.

But, on the other hand, the world is not a pure chaos of facts—it is not a question of Camus's absurd²⁹⁵—it is an organization and an order that has its value. Thus it is not a pure opposition of rights to facts that we have to do with here. It is the opposition of a lower right (that of the slave) to a higher right (that of the world) and the lower right draws its superiority from its consent to being inferior. The recognition of failure is the acceptance of worldly values by the slave. Yet this very acceptance places him above the values that crush him since they are there *in order to* crush him. We saw a finality of the slave in the master's world, now there is a finality of the master's world for the slave. Hence this world presents the paradoxical contradiction of being both unlivable and made for the slave. Made for the slave inasmuch as it is unlivable.

The way is open for the Christian doctrine of the world created by God for man and, at the same time, the valley of tears and life as a period of testing. Indeed, one of the sources of Christianity is resignation pushed to its extreme and as finding its own myth: the existence in right of man-the-failure becomes

295. See Albert Camus (1913–1960), *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1955); French original 1942. Man "feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (p. 21). Cf. "Un Nouveau Mystique," pp. 139, 143–44.

existence in fact in another world. Impossibility posited as the constitutive character of man becomes the exile of man on earth. Submission becomes a merit. God reestablishes justice and failure is martyrdom, bearing witness, a time of testing. Christianity is among other things a slave's religion because it is a recovery from failure. And with this it gets its depth because it is the appearance of subjectivity in the world on top of the ruins of natural man. From this naturally follows another aspect of resignation which is the passion for failure and acting so as to fail. Later the resigned person will hate the revolutionary more than he hates the master and he will prophesy and wish for his failure.

Revolt

There remains therefore just one path for the slave, if he does not want all his efforts (which are nothing more, by the way, than internal and idealistic adjustments) to turn into complicity with the enterprise of dehumanizing man. This is the concrete rejection *in acts* of the master's power. But as we have noted, at the moment where we are now, this rejection will not be collective (the conditions for an association among slaves are not realized) nor collectively efficacious (even united the slaves cannot overthrow the rule of slavery), hence it is a matter of a concrete and individual rejection, therefore anarchistic terrorism. The slave revolts individually, attempts to kill the master or the overseer, sets fire to the barns, to the big house, and, caught, is immediately put to death. The situation would have it that true human ethics gets born in this isolated, purely individual act of purely negative violence. Let us try to understand it in its ambiguity and to legitimate this violence.

We begin from the impossibility of a man existing as a man in the condition of slavery. Yet insofar as this impossibility is experienced in terms of hunger, cold, forced labor, and beatings. The demand contained in desires and in such suffering is that one destroy the impossibility of being man. That one destroy it concretely at the cost of efforts and hard work. This is what is manifest, for example, when the slave who is hungry goes past the meat reserved for the master and forbidden to him. There is in hunger per se a negativity in relation to the prohibition that is rejected in negativity and in the inessential.

It is just that since the impossibility of being man is the result of a concrete arrangement, since it is institutional, one can exercise one's negativity against it only in attempting to destroy the established order, that is, precisely in refusing this harmonious organization based on oppression where each finds his place and his natural function. For one thing, if the slave takes the forbidden meat, he "uses force" against this order, these institutional relations, property, as when I "use force" on the scabbard in pushing the sword back into it by force; for another thing, he has neither the learning nor the ability to think of, nor the necessary preparation to conceive of another order. In truth, the other order is there, implicitly contained in his hunger, it is an order founded on a direct

relation to the universe of food, that is, an order where the freedom of the other does not slip in like an invisible barrier between the world that my freedom unveils and me, where consequently freedoms are harmonious and directed toward possession of the world. Except it is not *thematized*, it is just the implicit *thema* of all my behavior. Therefore I stay on the thematic plane of the negation of order—that is, *violence and disorder*.

Hence the demand for the simple possibility of man to be human in a human world, that is, a free transcendence in the world, can be presented only as destructive without some counterpart in the human order. This is what often explains why the violent person or arsonist, having committed his act of destruction, does not understand it. He did it against the given order and in his very act finds a comprehension of *another* order, concerning which he does not know whether it will be unveiled through the ruins of the established order or whether it has to be invented. But when the act is accomplished, he finds himself back on the side of the established order. He has produced nothing, unless it is a barn burned down or a dead man. Nothing except a small local disorder and the arsonist, caught up again by this order, permeated by the established order, respectful of the judges and gendarmes who represent it, no longer being in a state of violence but rather in one of weakness and, consequently, not even being able to suspect the unthematized order contained in this destructive violence, declares that he no longer comprehends anything: “I don’t know why I did that.”

Therefore the violence is the only result. However it has other sources and other significations in this case. If we return to the slave before the forbidden meat, he finds himself precisely in that intolerable state of tension that the gestaltists have shown as leading to anger.²⁹⁶ On the one hand, his hunger presents the meat to him and unveils it as not yet eaten. It appears as desirable. On the other hand, the master’s prohibition unveils the meat to him as not to be eaten. The contradiction appears at the very heart of the object as correlative to the contradiction at the heart of the subject. To shatter this insupportable tension the structures of the universe must be simplified, one of its structures must be suppressed.

This is what the child does who, told to pick up a handkerchief from the center of a circle without crossing its circumference, becomes angry and takes the handkerchief while refusing to pay any attention to the circle. Here the simplification takes place through the suppression of what is forbidden and through the realization of a structural state of equivalence: any orders are nihilated into what is abstract, leaving nothing but the meat to be seen against the

296. Cf. Sartre’s discussion of Paul Guillaume, *La Psychologie de la forme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1937), in Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Emotions*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948; French original 1939), pp. 33–36.

undifferentiated background of the universe. And this can be brought about only through anger.

But the signification of this anger is fundamentally suppression of the Other. There is a violence of the master that is solipsistic: he wants to suppress the Other as another consciousness. And a violence contained in the slave's anger: to suppress the Other as a power of alienation. The Other as Other. The process is a process of simplification in the majority of other cases where the master's civilization reveals to the slave the values that at the same time are forbidden to him. It is a case of values that are not revealed to the slave in his desire or even his need, but which instead are revealed/revealing to him, both creative and unveiling of a new desire which at the same time they define as prohibited and condemnable.

Every value uncovered by the masters in their world is creative of a new, almost artificial impossibility for the slave. Whence the angry project of destroying either this impossibility or these values. I break things or burn them because they are inaccessible to me—or I steal because the desire so created is too strong. But the radical depth of my anger is the reality of my project to destroy *both* these values and the prohibition that goes with them. And this is perfectly coherent since these two aspects of the Other are rigorously bound to each other. Without the Other a freedom would posit these values as mine and at the same time as universal and as pure solicitations. The pure destruction of the object so evaluated would leave the prohibition intact, and theft reinforces this prohibition since it takes it for granted. Anger intends to destroy in front of the master while challenging the prohibition. Basically, it is a negation of the master's power to set up a world of values, a symbolic reduction of this world of values to a world of facts. But this is radically possible only through destruction of the Master, that is, of the Other as Other. It is a question of killing him.

But here the ambivalence of violence breaks out for it is at the same time a feeling of guilt. Indeed, it is because the master's order is unveiled as order, because the sacred is revealed as sacred, because values appear as values that the slave thinks about and projects destroying this order, the sacred, these values. He does not resemble the anarchist of the 19th century who, by education and analysis, can realize for himself the blindness to values of the ruling class. He starts, on the contrary, from the intuition of values as absolute values for the Other, from the intuition of the sacred as such. It is not a question of devaluing a value while leaving its objective support intact but, on the contrary, of destroying the value as value *in the thing*. In the act of sacrilege there is an explicit recognition of the sacred. In the refusal of the prohibition, there is a recognition of the right to forbid, in murdering the master it is the master that one kills just as master. Deliverance is not sought for in the symbolic act of revolt—quite the contrary, this is the worst moment, that of internalizing conflict—but in its result and even in what will appear *following* this result (when the master, his values, his order, and his sacred will have disappeared). In revolt, the slave

upholds the sacred as respectable and adorable in connection with his project of destroying it.

Therefore he is on the plane of men who celebrate black masses. He hates himself, he is afraid of himself, and it is against himself that he revolts. Since there is no other Good than that of the master and since he cannot realize the factual order except through the prior destruction of this Good, he is, while he projects this, on the plane of Evil. And since—as we shall see better in a moment—the slave’s violence is the discovering of subjectivity, the slave discovers his subjectivity and has to assume it within the element of Evil. Therefore he has to choose between consciousness of self as absolute Evil, that is, as freedom choosing Evil and choosing itself within the dimension of Evil, or as the grasping of oneself beginning from the Master’s gaze. A thing or Lucifer. The myth of the revolt and fall of the Angels shows quite clearly the revolt of the slave as absolute Evil, yet it cannot be that this revolt should appear to itself as the choice of absolute Evil. It takes centuries of education for the oppressed person to be able to project the construction of a new order or to be able to consider the established order in terms of the order he wants to establish, that is, to envisage destruction as the merely necessary and prior condition for a new order.

So revolt is a *dark* feeling. The slave chooses to be wrong, to detest himself, to live with Evil and anxiety, with an internalized conflict. In this sense, since he chooses the end of this conflict and *is* himself this conflict without the power to hope to be something else, he chooses his own end along with that of the master. He does not just want to suppress one element of the pair master-slave but both of them—because the one cannot exist without the other and he cannot imagine either the master without the slave (that is, the master having become the equal of others and thereby escaping his hate), which would only be possible following a revolution he cannot imagine, or the slave without the master, for in one sense he owes everything to the master, even his food. What he wants to do is to bring down the pair whose two terms are equally hated. In a word, placed within a situation where it is impossible to be human, he assumes it and surpasses it by projecting to nihilate every situation through the radical destruction of man.

Another source of violence is the rejection of the future. For the future comes to him through an Other and as Other. His future is fashioned by the Master, it lies in mechanical *repetition*, it is limited and governed from the outside. It is dependence. The master can sell him or separate him from his family. Therefore the future is not foreseeable for the slave but is foreseen by the master, the slave like a rolling ball gets his future from the fully made world. The future is the exteriority and the negation of any project he may have. Not that negation internalized by freedom that can revoke a project but a negation from exteriority that makes his life into a destiny.

The slave can discover himself only in the instant. The very instant of the Cartesian *cogito*: everything else belongs to the evil demon who is the Other or

the Master. However, it is not through abstract doubt that the slave will set his *cogito* atop of the ruins of the future, rather it is through the concrete reduction of temporality to the instant. Not being able to claim a future that it makes for itself, revolt denies the dimension of the future. And the concrete act that reduces time to the instant is destruction. Certainly there are destructions that require time and that are operations (erosions, etc.). But the type destruction is simply the act of daring to pull out the king pin so that the whole topples—Samson pulling down the pillars of the temple.²⁹⁷ It is the simple breaking off of the continuity of the project at some point.

Thus the slave, transformed into a thing by the alienating future that the master has prepared for him, defends himself by destroying every future and by taking refuge in the absolute present that is pure subjectivity and thereby escapes the gaze of the Other. And the pure present or instant, insofar as it is claimed by a consciousness that voluntarily reduces itself to this, is itself destruction since it is the radical rejection of any construction or any project (that requires time), just as the present of the *cogito* is doubt because it is the rejection of any operation that would generate truth.

Here again there is the ambivalence of revolt since lacking the power to claim his own project, the slave wants the negation of every project, that is, of the human, in the instant of destruction and of death. For example, in resignation the slave tries to assume the impossibility of the human by freely claiming to be an impossible man and by making himself the master's accomplice in his reification of man. In his revolt, the slave lives out to the very end the impossibility of being man and assumes this impossibility by drawing out the consequence of this impossibility, which is the destruction of man through murder and suicide and the destruction of any human operation. Objectively revolt is a crime: it is defined as such by the master's order; it is felt as such by those resigned to it. Subjectively it is felt as Evil, Crime, Sacrilege, the systematic destruction of the Human, the Refusal of Time.

Except, at the same time it is a free choice and as such, if it is not yet *a Good* because the master's values block any view toward constituting another Good, it is at least the claim not to make one's own an Other's Good. It is the rejection of the spirit of seriousness. At the same time that it is *Evil*, it is a certain way of placing oneself beyond Good and Evil. Its negation of values and its affirmation of the factual universe may lead to creating the myth of a universe without value. But in reality it is the demand for a world as something over against which one can unveil values for oneself.

No doubt one does violence to the master in his very freedom. One puts him in chains, kills him. But what one aims at in the Master is the Other. The Other than me, the *Other than man*. For finally the Other in man is always the Other than man or man from the point of view of an Other than man. So the negativity

297. Judges 16:23–30. Cf. "Materialism and Revolution," p. 239.

of revolt implies unthematically the unity of a human world where Others would be the same in the other, a world of intersubjectivity where man would renounce seeing himself from the outside, that is, seeing other men as though he himself were outside humanity.

And in parallel what the slave wants to destroy in himself through suicide is once again the Other, that is, the subman constituted by the gaze of the Other than man. So by bringing to light pure subjectivity through destruction of the One and the Other, in risking his *life as an object* in order to free his freedom, in proving the superiority of the Same over the Other in oneself and in others through murder, in realizing the terroristic and negative freedom of pure consciousness of the world through the consumption of the world in the face of consciousness, the slave realizes in the instant that precedes death the self-consciousness that Stoicism, Skepticism, and Cartesian doubt attain only through withdrawal and in the abstract. In the fire the arsonist lights the world slips away and vanishes, tending toward equivalence and nothingness, and what subsists in the different moments of destruction, proving to the self its sufficiency of being, is the consciousness of being destructive.

Destruction and crime are the concrete forms of behavior correlative to methodical doubt. What I am the cause of in the world sends back to me my image in the dimension of the In-itself. But the sliding over into Nothingness of the image, which is destruction, reveals my consciousness to me as beyond every image, as capable of being incarnated in any image and as capable of surpassing any image. We rediscover again Hegel's terrorist consciousness: "Absolute freedom becomes explicitly objective to itself, and self-consciousness learns what absolute freedom in effect is. *In itself*, it is just this *abstract self-consciousness*, which effaces all distinction and all continuance of distinction within it."²⁹⁸

By this symbolic destruction of the world the slave proves to himself that nothing in the world restrains him and, by his choice to die, that his freedom, if he accepts it in the very instant of disappearing, cannot be tied down by any situation in the world. So violence ends up by positing the inessentiality of the world and the essentiality of consciousness, the inessentiality of the Other and the essentiality of oneself, the inessentiality of the Me/object and the essentiality of pure ipseity. Except this is an *idealistic* position, for the world becomes once more what is essential in the temporal perspective of the project, and it is an *abstract* position because the free consciousness so defined is consciousness of the sliding of the universe toward Nothing which transcends this movement toward the Platonic Idea of Nothing, and it is a negative position because it is based on the negation of the project, of time, and consequently of the human.

In every way the violence of the slave is both a choice of Evil for Evil and the indication beyond this Evil of a perspective where Evil will be nothing more than an external category that through the Other qualifies human behavior.

298. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 360–61.

Revolt is both the assumption of Evil and the destruction of Evil, destruction of the man/Evil in me and in the Other and a slipping over toward Nothingness of this man/Evil along with the universe. And no doubt someone may say that all revolt is a crime, objectively and subjectively. But, first of all, it must be noted that inversely every crime is always a bit of a revolt. This is what is attractive about it: there is always in it a free choice of absolute Evil, that is, the affirmation of a freedom *over against* every given value and even against the principle of having values; there is always in it the refusal of order and negativity, there is always in it that destruction by which consciousness affirms itself in its terrorist solitude. All crime is always a bit of a *cogito*. All crime is always a bit a destruction of the Other than man. This is what makes it attractive.

But above all what we have to conceive is that violence in this particular circumstance is not distinguished from freedom. It is precisely the only form freedom can take. Since slavery is the given order, freedom will be disorder, anarchy, terrorism. Since the future is alienated and freedom cannot operate within the dimension of the future, it will be the contestation of construction and an operation of pure destruction. Since the positive is obtained through oppression, freedom will be pure negativity. And this negativity is not pure, symbolic Cartesian doubt, it is a commitment to some work destructive of the world inasmuch as the world is haunted by alienating constructions. When the Good is alienated, that is, when it is in the hands of the Other, freedom has no other resources than Evil. But its unthematized goal is to nihilate Good and Evil as categories of alienation. Indeed, the only way to liberate oneself from the Good of others is to bet on Evil, for Evil destroys the Good and in destroying the Good destroys itself.

Clearly the slave (or any oppressed person) always “*starts over.*” In the long history of the revolts of the oppressed, it is always the oppressed person who started something. This is clear since his activity always sets itself beyond the given order and established values. But, what is more, if it is true that oppression is not necessarily based on violence, the revolt of the oppressed suddenly uncovers the implicit forces of violence concealed under the rule of order. For this revolt is “*put down.*” Thus the rule of oppression suddenly becomes a *world of force*.

Finally, the destruction of the Other can occur only through violence. The Other alienates everything that touches it. Every undertaking, every effort at persuasion, every attempt at friendship or a contract with the Other immediately appears in the dimension of the Other, becomes Other, and serves as an instrument of alienation. The Other can only be suppressed and suppressed through surprise, disloyalty, and force. The Same can reach itself at first only by way of its aspect of the Other, through all the forms of the Other in me and in Others.

Violence is negation of the negation. Nor does this negative give anything positive—it annuls. In a word, violence is *realized* by the slave but the possibility of violence wells up in the world through the Other since the Other creates for some men the permanent impossibility of being man. Here violence is a necessary

mediation. Since the slave is a pure object and his education internalizes this objectivity, whereas man is a free choice of some undertaking, the passage from one to the other is necessarily a process that preserves something of the two terms it unites. Insofar as man is objectivity, it is in and through objectivity that the negation of any objectivity will be realized. In other words, force (as a physical aspect of objects) is the aspect that negativity will take on. Violence therefore necessarily represents a progress toward freedom. Issuing from objectivity, it is a destructive force directed against all objectivity.

So too the slave being an object for the master cannot *initially* attempt to reveal himself to the master as a subject but only can do so by surpassing and by making use of his objectivity against the master. The master considers the slave as *labor power*. Therefore it is by turning this labor power against the master that the slave makes known to the master, in the instant of fury that precedes his death, that this labor power is something other than just labor power. How are we to qualify this violence at present? Is it an absolute Evil, as pacifists and Christians would have it, a necessary Evil as Camus says, or a Good as Sorel suggests?²⁹⁹ The answer is clear. Violence is an absolute Evil from the point of view of the Other and from the point of view of the Other in me. And it is just from this point of view, by the way, that it gets constituted as violence.

On the other hand, it cannot be judged from the point of view of the Same or of ipseity since this judgment would be a retrospective one, the Same being the outcome of this violence. But we can say that it bears within itself, in its project, the destruction of every judgment one can bring to bear on it in the name of the Other and that it is, consequently, both the project of Otherness and the surpassing of Otherness. Issuing from the impossibility of being man and therefore inhuman, it is the only possible way to the human and contains within itself the implicit comprehension of the human. Issuing from absolute objectivity and itself an object (it is a natural force, it strikes without persuading), it leads the object/man to discover himself as subject and contains in its principle a presentiment of subjectivity. Disorder in its principle, it is the destruction of the *other order* that is the projection of order on absolute disorder (the Platonic hypothesis: if the one were not-one.³⁰⁰ In the dimension of the Other, order becomes other than itself, therefore other than order and order is the worst kind of disorder, instead of disorder passing over into order) and an unthematized prescience of the order of the Same, that is, of the *Mitsein* of subjectivities. In a word, violence is *intermediary*, mediation, becoming and, as such, superior in its ambiguity to all the forms of Stoicism or resignation.

Having said this, it is evident that violence is in fact unproductive. It realizes

299. Georges Sorel (1847–1922), French social philosopher of revolutionary syndicalism. See his *Reflections on Violence*, trans. T. E. Hulme and J. Roth (New York: Collier, 1961); French original: 1906.

300. Cf. p. 36.

the liberation of abstract consciousness through the death of the individual. Issuing from desire and from need, it does not satisfy them but instead leads to the suppression of desire through the suppression of the desiring. Issuing from a challenge to the impossibility of the human, it ends up simply preferring the radical destruction of the human to the utilization of the human to construct an inhuman order. It is never more than the act of an individual which can be opposed as easily to those who have resigned themselves to their lot or to stoics as to the master, and since it leads to catastrophe, since it justifies the un pitying harshness of the master over against his slaves, since it often leads to a tightening of discipline, it cannot serve as an example.

At most, in certain cases, it can prevent resignation and therefore the complicity of the master and the slave, by rendering the master un pitying and manifestly bad (through fear and anger). Violent people disappear absolutely and do not even remain as heroes to the slaves. It is typical that Blacks in the United States have not preserved the memory of all those obscure heroes who were martyrs to violence. They make people afraid, at least they remain ambiguous insofar as they are remembered. They committed crimes, rapes, that is, acts that free Blacks disapprove of and that led to memorable repressions.

We need not see in terrorist violence, in a Hegelian manner, a passage toward liberation, but rather a dead end, the unique and individual discovery by a subject of his free subjectivity in tragedy and in death. This is an experience that can benefit no one. And since it does not suppress slavery and alienation as collective phenomena, we are describing it here as one of the structures of servitude, on the same level as resignation. It just serves us as a typical example of this moral law: in the case of *impossibility*, the choice of the Good leads to reinforcing the impossible, what we have to choose is Evil in order to discover the Good.

Placing oneself into the hands of the Other entails accepting servitude and obligates freedom to choose the path of violence, therefore to choose against itself and against the freedom of the other. This contradictory path represents the *tragic* element of History (of the type: Hegelian pantragicism). Once this effort is grasped and directed toward the element of the Other we have the second element of History: the dice are loaded. In one sense history is an unending form of dupery. The third element or *mediocrity* is the preference for means over the end, characteristic of every historical agent or every man. The fourth element is the perpetual regrasping of the self, the perpetual welling up of the Same, always repeated, always duped, always stopped at the question of means, and always reborn as the true motor [of history] (Christianity, Protestantism, the ideology of Revolution, Marxism). In this sense, *self*-consciousness neither gains nor loses. It is always present, it is always manifest, and it is always outflanked. Optimistic element: the Other cannot triumph for he is a pure *noema*. The outcome is subjected to the noema. On the contrary, at least as another rubric,

that of an ideal direction, we can conceive of an absolute conversion to intersubjectivity. This conversion is *ethical*. It presupposes a political and social conjuncture (suppression of classes and of the State) as its necessary condition, but this suppression is not sufficient by itself.

In the *universal* (concept), the Other is already subtly included when this universal is applied to human realities. Man, an ontic-ontological creature, surpasses the ontic given toward the universal essence. He surpasses this particular red, this particular stone toward the essence of red or of stone and does this in his very perception. When he applies this ontological movement to man, he carries out this application without any foundation. The universal appears *outside*. The essence is what is common to this one and to these others. It is the presence of the Other in the one (of all other stones in this one I am considering). This presupposes that I am *in front of* being-in-itself, cut off from it by my very existence and that I see it as one and as other at the same time because it is first of all *other* than me. It is the same as the others in that all the others along with it are other than me. It is an infinite yet closed collection in relation to me.

On the contrary, *in* relation to humanity as a concrete collectivity, I stand in a false exteriority and, at the same time, an insufficient interiority. If I think about man—for example: “man is good” or “man is wicked”—it is insofar as I can take a step back and consider Others. It is a matter of objective psychology, based on my experience of other men, and it is taken for granted that the experimenter is not part of the experimental system. In this way I have taken an external point of view on humanity. Humanity becomes the collection of Others.

On the eve of atomic war, the one who says “men are crazy” is withdrawing from the fray. He thinks he can contemplate men as they make their History. With this, he takes up the point of view of the Other on humanity, that is, the point of view of the Other than man or God’s point of view. The notion of *man* becomes the Other than me seen by me as Other than man. It is what man would be if I were not included. Except (detotalized totality) this exteriority is false. I am a part of humanity and I know myself through the look of Others as part of a closed totality where this time it is these Others who escape it. So I have to apply to myself the universal concept that I have forged. I know that I am human. But with this I introduce into my subjectivity, in defining it, an objective essence. And I grasp myself as Other than me and as seen by an other than man. Thus when I comprehend myself and decide to act starting from the common notion of *man*, I submit myself to a heteronomy, I am led to affirm the priority of the Other. And with this, this Otherness comes to include even my action. It is *man* (as seen by God or by the Other than myself) who acts in me. And my action itself gets alienated from me. It will be presented in the world with the characteristics of Otherness; it will be Other than itself and stamped with the aberrant stamp of universality.

“Destiny is consciousness of oneself but consciousness of oneself as an enemy” (Hegel in Nohl: *Hegel's theologische Jugendschriften*, p. 283).³⁰¹

I think of an *idea* (of the type Christianity, Platonism, socialism, etc.), a sort of key for deciphering the world, a schematism for unveiling things, an undertaking, a project of comprehension that is not clearly distinguished for me from the thing comprehended and that is in sum the monogram of my ontic-ontological surpassing of every situation in the world. Expressed—even, as the case may be, unthematically—this idea appears to the other. Since it is not *his* project, he learns it before deciphering it or, even if one first offers him uncovered realities, he separates this idea from what it unveils in order to construct an abstract schematism to use in deciphering it. For him, it is an Other's idea. It is presented initially as having a verbal body. It is bound to a word (Platonism—existentialism), that is, to an objective and passive reality that one can *encounter*—and to a linked series of words, its definition. Understood by way of this body, it is initially an idea that is not his own. The idea of an Other. That is, both, in its ambivalence, like a limit to his subjectivity and like a reality that he transcends. It is an *objective signification*. Objective means *thing*—signification means psychic, mental. It is a signifying passivity—it is an indivisible totality but in the element of divisibility (one looks for the *elements* of the idea).

Thus the idea of the Other becomes Other than an idea. It passes over into the dimension of the In-itself and of self-consistency. “Marxism” is something other than the sum of consciousnesses led to take a Marxist view of History: it is a force in the world. And this is how it gets dealt with. It thinks itself, or rather its type of welling up into being is that of a thing, all the while remaining a thought. The idea becomes *other* than an idea, it is the idea degraded to an in-itself and become nature or natural. It preserves its indivisibility by magic, but it is in the dimension of divisibility, it is interiority but on the plane of pure exteriority. It is magic and it is nature because it appears and one encounters it like a tree or a plant in the *Umwelt*. This is the objective face that it turns toward the Other.

If I am willing to consider this face as more important than even the life of the idea as my subjective enterprise (which happens most often when it is the collectivity that reflects this idea back to me), that is, if I consider that the idea is more important in this form, that the subjective aspect of the idea as my project inseparable from my ipseity, as *my* behavior, has as its underlying end the passage to what is objective through communication and that the *objective* idea is the completed form of the idea as a modulation of subjectivity, then I will receive my idea from the Other who presents it to me as he sees it, that is, as the idea of an Other and as Other than the idea. I will reinstall my idea in

301. G. W. F. Hegel, *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), p. 232. This passage is cited by Hyppolite in his *Genesis and Structure*, p. 353.

myself as the Idea of an Other. It will escape me in two ways: 1st, because what is important will be the face it turns toward the Other which escapes me in principle and because I learn it from the Other; 2d, because for the Other, it is the idea of an Other which he presents back to me as such. If now I decide to think ahead using this idea, I realize the heteronomy of my thinking. It is an object set up inside me and to which I compare my subsequent thoughts in order to align them with it, changing them more than I change it. At this moment the idea no longer belongs to anyone, it no longer is anyone. It is for each one the Other. In reaction to this manner of being prey to an idea I have to posit that my idea is me because I am nothing other than my undertakings.

Through the mediation of the Other, the idea becomes nature.

The Other in me is the In-itself-for-itself. In this sense, as long as conversion has not occurred, I am the accomplice of the Other because I am a prey to myself as Other. My Me/Other is the Moloch I feed by sacrificing my surroundings and myself to it (I do what fits this Me/Other, what it requires) because this Me/Other is precisely the In-itself-for-itself that is to be attained.³⁰²

Triple aspect of the Me/Other today: 1st, a demon that possesses me; 2d, my property; 3d, my Destiny.

As a demon that possesses me, it is behind me, it is the contraction of the series *Mana-family-honor-soul*. Being the Other in me, it appears as a demand and as sacred. It is the law. Its depth behind my back is the transformation of the Other/Me into *all the others*, or all the others into me. The magistrate, the star actor include within themselves all the others (as answerable to the law, as the public). I am *prey* to this personage. Naturally, it is not just the social function that I exercise, it is also the character that the Other recognizes in me. But each quality poured into the element of what ought-to-be is itself penetrated by right. The love of women and the sensuality of a great genius is a right, the irritability of the attorney general is a right, as is the imperious character of the head of some industry or family. They are presented as solicitations that make us dizzy. When there is occasion to be angry one *has to be* angry in order to conform to the idea of demanding justice (sacred anger) that the other has constituted us as having. This is the *I*. Here we need to introduce the idea of behind-the-back-transcendence.

There is naturally a perpetual inadequation of the living For-itself (*Erlebnis*) to the *I*. For the *I* is on the plane of Being-in-itself and the For-itself is on that of not being what it is. Moreover *I* is an other.³⁰³ So in the mode of being of

302. Moloch: an ancient Near Eastern god to whom child sacrifices were made. Cf. Leviticus 18:21; II Kings 16:3, 21:6, and 23:10.

303. Cf. Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891), letter to Georges Izambard, 13 May 1871, the so-called *lettre du voyant*, in *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans. Wallace Fowlie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 305.

the For-itself as in the structure of the Other/Me there is a positing of the perpetual Otherness of the Other and the For-itself. The Other therefore appears as the For-itself in the dimension of the Other and presents itself as possessing ontological priority over the For-itself. Thus each *Erlebnis* presents itself as both emanating from an I and as betraying it. I *am* a magistrate and I do not succeed in being one. I am it in the mode of not being it. And since the *Erlebnis* betrays the I, it presents itself as having to realize the I.

From this fact we have to understand that this existence behind-the-back is also a structure in front of me. In other words, it is the noematic correlate of the consciousness of having *a back*. It is ontologically the same thing to know oneself to be looked at from behind by someone one doesn't see or to be listened to by someone behind the door whom one neither sees or hears. In this latter case what is given to consciousness is the gaze or ear of the other, in other words, a being-in-the-world as transcendence. But precisely because this human reality presents itself as absent, it is perceived across the words I say or the gestures I make. The word I say escapes me not just forwards toward the interlocutor I see, it also has an unknown retro-dimension that makes it escape behind me through the wall. The gesture I make has a retro-dimension since someone sees it from behind my back. But this retro-dimension is not *behind* consciousness—it is in front of it.

The I is Me in the dimension of the Other and as a gaze. I am *in the situation* that surrounds me as a certain way of fleeing that situation, as though someone (who would be Me/Other), placed behind me, *looked at* the situation for me and, for example, gave value to this face, this behavior of that person as *worthy of anger, or worthy of pardon*, and I become conscious objectively of my body as perpetually looked at in a parallel manner—which is the pure addition of a dimension to an element already turned into an object (since I see my hands or my feet as Others see them). So the situation passes over to a supersaturating of objectivity. It is not just the immediate unveiling of the world to the For-itself but also the same situation seen by an Other. But since that Other is me, I have the half revelation of dimensions of flight from the situation toward this Other.

If you want to comprehend this, think of the structure of behavior where, for example, I would say, “Well, Uncle Fred would be furious if he were here. He detests Jews.” In this case the situation is presented as having another objectivity (but an empty one). It is what it is for Fred (who is absent), an object in my world and Other. And depending on how close I am to Fred's point of view, the other objectivity of the situation will be more or less perceptible to me. But in the case under consideration *I am* myself the Fred in question. Thus, in one sense, I grasp all the structures of the situation as they would appear to an anti-Semite I. But in another sense I am not him and consequently I do not *sufficiently* experience the situation as such. This Fred who *I am* is irritated to see so many Jews, whereas my me as pure ipseity may think nothing of it, being absorbed by an enterprise that excludes any consideration about Jews.

Thus the situation refers to the Other in me and appears to me as Other. Different lines of force cross through me and come together in the Other behind me. But the Other behind me is both me and not me. It is Me in the element of the Other and precisely because of this it is a Me/Object and an object for my ipseity. The result is that the situation, appearing to me as it appears to an Other, has a structure of total objectivity. To such an extent that the Other in me is the Other than man and finally God.

Thus the situation is half felt as having an absolute objectivity and insofar as the intentions that arise from it escape me, I am guilty, I am not sufficiently myself. So my behavior will try to fill the void that separates me from this Other who I am. I will become angry in order to realize that objective repugnance which I do not really feel. Or instead I will strike out or be insulting in order to realize my anger. The necessary failure of this effort to assimilate myself to the other leads me to a reflexive position. In reality, accessory reflection in all this may be an effort at pure recovery of the For-itself by itself, but it is also rigorously comparable to the look the one looked upon throws back at the one looking at him so as to transform him in turn into an object. The Me/Other looks at me from behind. This is a sufficient motive for me to look at him in turn (turning my head toward him) and this moment is the one of the passage from the unreflective to the reflective which uncovers to me either the I as Me or as *property*.

So the passage from unreflective to accessory reflection is a passage from the I who possesses me to the Me I possess. But this Me passes over into alienation. It is no longer Me/Other looking at me but the object/me stolen by the Other. In passing from the state of looking to the state of a mental object, it not only becomes an object looked at by me but an object looked at from the outside by others. If I am angry, in the case of the *I*, it is my anger that looks at me and constitutes the situation as irritable; if I turn toward this I to look at it, this “angry person” becomes a mental state. It is Others outside of me who have constituted me and who constitute me as angry. So the Me that I possess, I possess as stolen by Others. And, to escape this, I have to throw myself back onto the ground of the unreflective where I would like to regain my Me as I. The coming and going between the reflective and the unreflective can be explained in this way.

But the same Me escapes me entirely insofar as it is the starting point for the behavior of Other People and in that it is transcended by Others, that is, insofar as it is an element of the Course of the World. At this moment I find it as an enemy (“I am not flexible enough, that is why I fail”)—as a stranger to myself (what the collaborator is in relation to what he wanted to be) and as Destiny.

The unconscious as the final type of alienation. Compare it to the *zar*.

NOTEBOOK II

All of History has to be comprehended as a function of that primitive alienation that mankind cannot get out of. Alienation is not oppression. It is the predominance of the Other in the pair Other and Same, the priority of the objective, and consequently the necessity of all behavior and ideology to project itself into the element of the Other and to return to their promoters as alienated and alienating. The idea becomes social, given, enveloping (one is *in* the idea), foreign to itself, a magic thing, exteriority. The spontaneous disposition becomes constraining order and authoritarian custom.

But, on the other hand, the alienated person is also completely outside of alienation, he regains himself in his pure subjectivity. He is also alienated in the mode of having to be so. Wholly in his ideas and wholly outside of them. Therefore he is infinitely more than what he is (behaviors, myths, ideas) because he is merely this through the grace by which behaviors, myths, and ideas come to existence. And even between the oppressor and the oppressed there is an egalitarian recognition of freedoms at least implied in oppression itself (in its order, its requirement, etc.).

Thus freedom perpetually bursts apart ideology, mythology, and earlier rituals: it realizes liberation through behavior and new ideas. This is the moment of the Apocalypse (it is also the moment of the festival). Except that the Apocalypse immediately gives way to order. It projects itself from itself, in effect, into the element of Otherness. The Christian idea becomes alienated from itself and becomes *Catholicism*. It is the idea become Other. Become the idea of the Other

and Other than the idea. The Protestant idea becomes alienated from itself as Puritanism. The Marxist idea becomes alienated from itself as state socialism. And behavior follows along.

Thus we need to return to the Apocalypse which is new in that it contains both what it destroys and what it will become alienated from in turn. This is the true historical dialectic. Its three terms are: given Alienation, Apocalypse, and alienation of the Apöcalypse. One sees that the moment of human effort is the Apocalypse. The reversal of *Praxis*. The Alienation of this Apocalypse is carried out dialectically and without the concurrence of responsible free wills. So the human moment, the ethical moment is that of the Apocalypse, that is, of the liberation of oneself and of others in reciprocal recognition. It is also most often—paradoxically—the moment of violence. There is not an ethics of order but instead order is the alienation of ethics, it is ethics having passed over onto the plane of the Other. Festival, apocalypse, permanent Revolution, generosity, creation—the *moment of man*. The Everyday, Order, Repetition, Alienation—the moment of the Other than man. Freedom can only exist in liberation. An *order* of freedoms is inconceivable because it is contradictory.

The real human relation among freedoms is *always* present and always alienated. There is always *both* recognition and subjugation.

Concrete human relations are possible only through the suppression of the element of the Other. But this ungraspable element slips in everywhere in history (clans, races, nations, classes, sexes, etc.) and comes exactly from the fact that the Spirit is a detotalized totality. Insofar as some society under consideration is bound by an Other for which it is Other (for example: one nation by another nation), alienation will come to bear on every concrete relation. This society has to take them up again one by one and dissolve within itself every relation of otherness. Then social unity will be a *subjective* unity (which Marx did not see when in spite of everything he imagined an objective unity). But even then, the ungraspable other is anyone at all who freezes the rest of society into an Other.

The transcendent Ego as a structure of alienation. The *I* as overcompensation. Magical dialectic of the Ego and the I. The Ego stems from others, its origin gets confused with the narcissistic image of postserfdom. The real subjectivity and ipseity of the person is to be sought in transcendence and in the circuit of consciousness. The real *Me* in the work. To live without the Ego.

No love without that sadistic-masochistic dialectic of subjugation of freedoms that I have described.³⁰⁴ No love without deeper recognition and reciprocal comprehension of freedoms (a missing dimension in *B[eing and] N[othingness]*). However, to attempt to bring about a love that would surpass the sadistic-masochistic stage of desire and of enchantment would be to make love disappear,

304. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, "Concrete Relations with Others," pp. 361–430, esp. pp. 364–412.

that is, the sexual as a type of unveiling of the human. *Tension* is necessary to maintain the two faces of ambiguity, to hold them within the unity of one and the same project. As soon as one loosens the ambiguity, duality takes over again. There is no synthesis given as to be attained. It has to be invented. (Similarly for the challenge and for friendship. Cf. the Potlatch).

The structure of otherness in the historical fact: the flight of gold during the ministry of Léon Blum.³⁰⁵ A mass of individual facts each with its own subjective signification. It exists *objectively* for the leaders of the Popular Front and takes on its significance: the mistrust of the capitalists insofar as they are *Other*. There is *neither* a purely statistical fact *nor* a collective fact felt from within (as a subjective signification. Example: the Night of August 4th,³⁰⁶ the storming of the Bastille, etc.). It is a statistical fact whose unity of meaning is a subjectivity *coming back from, borrowed* by the adversary (the Popular Front), that is, a subjectivity that has changed its sign and that is projected into the dimension of the Other. With this, it becomes a subjectivity/object, that is, malefic. Exactly: magic (the spirit returned to and caught up in things). This becomes: a maneuver of Capitalism.

At this level, also, it is quite well understood that no individual subjectivity comes into play. There is just the *soul* of the fact. The fact in turn is experienced by the capitalist bourgeoisie as *pure necessity*. “Capital flees”—said to be an unavoidable consequence of Blum’s politics. The *subjective* element is totally suppressed, even as a kind of mediation between Blum’s politics and its outcome. Finally the more animist (and in principle truer) popular representation wants to put *persons* behind this maneuver (the banks, the 200 families).

So the fact is grasped in three different ways: from the purely economic consequence (a determinism of the type of the natural Sciences) to the cynically deliberate ruse (Machiavellianism) in passing through the maneuver of a class or group whose subjective intention is not expressed in any particular subjectivity but is rather like a noumenal reality and the intelligible choice of such subjectivities. And naturally it is not a question of three errors but of three historical categories for apprehending a fact. This naturally leads to three modes of particular actions stemming from this fact. The fall of Blum’s ministry will be interpreted both as the unavoidable consequence of an economic necessity (every socialist measure leads to ruin) and as the result of a wrong action (leading to hate). In any case, it is *demonstrative*, even though it should demonstrate two opposed truths: that one can not carry out a socialist politics, and that the possessor class will sabotage this work and any social experiments.

305. Léon Blum (1872–1950), French socialist politician who was prime minister of the Popular Front government of 1936–37.

306. During an evening meeting on 4 August 1789, the French Assembly abolished the ancient feudal rights and privileges.

“Anticipation of the future and projection of the future, sanctioned as essential to time by all theories from Bergson to Sartre, are but the present of the future and not the authentic future; the future is what is not grasped, what befalls and lays hold of us. The other is the future” (Lévinas, “Le Temps et l’autre,” in *Le Choix, le monde et l’existence*, p. 172).³⁰⁷ In reality there are a plurality of structures of the future. The Future is my freedom’s project insofar as this project sketches out a path in an already docile world. But also included in this project is the permanent possibility of my freedom being other in relation to this project (or changing). Except we need to be clear that it is first necessary to have the intentional characterization of the project if the future as the possible nihilation of this project by me is to be possible. This is me coming to myself as an other. The future therefore is both the long and foreseen suffering of a developing love and already the possibility of one day being beyond this love, of not entering into it.

But it is furthermore *my* death as the possibility of having no more possibility, the possibility of impossibility, otherness in my project at the very heart of this project, that is, the possibility that my expectation (of verifying, for example, that A is true) will be an expectation without meaning, that my present sacrifice (of a secondary end to some principal end) will be absurd because the principal end will never be attained, the secondary end becoming the principal one. But here again the relationship to death exists only as the possibility of the death of a certain existing thing, and since this existing thing defines itself through its projects, the possibility of the impossibility of certain projects. If therefore this possibility of an impossibility can be defined *a priori*, it is a concrete unveiling for man only by way of some projects. Unforeseeable freedom is me as other (mediation between me and the other) and death is the other descending into me (the perpetual possibility of the alienation of my projects—for if in fact I die tomorrow, my project today that aims at the day after tomorrow is overthrown in its center, therefore mediation between me and the other).

Finally, a fourth structure of the future: the other’s freedom in relation to me as both foreseeable and unforeseeable and as transcending my project. The decision the other will make, if I am dependent upon it, holds my future in suspense. At this moment it is the *possible* total alienation of my future. This alienation is mediated by two quasi forms of alienation (unforeseeable freedom and death); the range of alienation appears in and through the initial project. It is not death that creates the future, it is the future that unveils death. These layers of the future entail structural and dialectical relations among themselves. The depth of my future is that it is at the same time a future/object for the other, that it turns an objective face toward the other that escapes me, and it is its unforeseeability at the heart of its foreseeability. However, although it escapes me and in a way

307. Lévinas, *Time and the Other*, pp. 76–78.

is other and unknown, it can be defined as other and as unknown only if my project already indicates it.

Given an action said to be ethical and that one claims to be inspired by the highest virtues (heroism, abnegation, generosity, etc.), ask whether this inspiring virtue is unveiled in the element of the Other or in that of the Same. If it is in the element of the Other, the act is rotten—it perpetuates alienation.

A desire is always true, always pure, always ethical taken in isolation in that it contains the whole of human reality: the affirmation of transcendence, the connection to the world through the being-in-the-world of freedom, the surpassing of the situation, the *unveiling* search for truth. All desire posits truth and freedom. It is illegitimate and impure only secondarily if it is poisoned by the will *to be* (In-itself for-itself) and by the presence in it of the Other. In other words: when the conversion to nonaccessory reflection is brought about, desire becomes an unveiling through the martyrdom of the flesh and a project issuing from the flesh, an immediate relation to the world of truth/foodstuffs, an affirmation of freedom. It is what makes *there be* being.

It is not that one has to do what one is (the presence of the I) but rather to be what one does. It is necessary to compare the behavior that one wants to uphold to a certain self-image. But this image must not be *either* the I *or* the psychic me. It has to be the Ego as it disengages itself from its work. It is not a question of knowing whether the star actor or the magistrate would allow themselves to do this or that act, but whether in the enterprise undertaken this act has a place, whether it is in contradiction to this enterprise (in its immediate ends and in its long-term significance), or whether, without harming it, it is to be classified among what is indifferent.

Get rid of the I and the Me. In their place put subjectivity as a lived monadic totality that refers back to the self of consciousness by itself (laterally—cf. *The Transcendence of the Ego*)³⁰⁸ and the Ego (I reserve this name for the always open-ended Me which is referred to by the undertaking. Always open-ended, always deferred). Naturally the Me/Ego has “depth.” It also has the dimension of Alienation since it is taken up by Others. Therefore it has its face of Destiny. Destiny is the open-ended undertaking taken up into closed contingency by Others. It is the unlimited, the infinite, and the perpetual suspension of my undertaking taken up by others into a finite, cut-off form circumscribed by some contour; it is the turning around of this form transcended by the other that becomes the occasion and the starting point for free and unforeseen actions of the Other. Except there is a reversal of point of view since Alienation is post

308. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Noon Day Press, 1957). The original French version appeared in *Recherches Philosophiques* 6 (1936–37): 85–123.

hoc and secondary, and subjectivity and the Ego have ontological, moral, and temporal priority.

At this level, therefore, the Ego exists in order to lose itself, just as man for Heidegger is *frei zum Tode* [free for death].³⁰⁹ To the extent that he is asked to refuse the I and the Me as forms of the Other's ontological priority, to that extent he can and must in authenticity assume the objective transformation of himself and his metamorphosis into destiny. The ego *exists to lose itself*—it is the Gift. Reconciliation with Destiny is generosity. In a society without classes it can also be love, that is, the project undertaken confident that freedoms evaluated as such and willed as such will take up and transform my work and therefore my Ego, which will thus lose itself in the absolute dimension of freedom.

Only a freedom can be destiny for a freedom. For only a freedom can promulgate the decrees that no use of means can alter. If the master says, this slave will be sold, we have destiny because all the slave's efforts to alter the master's will are marked from the start by total vanity. Because the master's will is free. But Demosthenes' stammering is not destiny because a rational disposition of means can change it.³¹⁰ If the maxim is to find itself placed immediately beyond any disposition of a means to an end it has to belong to another domain, that is, it must not come into being through the intertwining of ends and means. Therefore it must belong to the domain of absolute willing up and of gratuity (even of absurdity—why is it that I, Oedipus, kill my father? Seen from the outside it is crazy since it is an individual story that concerns me but that I do not carry out). Yet, for another thing, it has to concern me, therefore it has to possess a certain intentionality that touches me, therefore it is a thought, a form of consciousness. Moreover, it is absurd and unjustifiable that my efforts contribute to *realizing* the proposal that does concern me.

We come to a second idea: above, one structure of destiny was that the efforts I make cannot avoid or hold back the realization of the proposal. Now we see that the most useful tricks for avoiding this make it happen. (Oedipus' father made it all the more certain that he would be killed when he gave the order that his son should be killed; in *The Trial*, K is all the more sure of losing when he increases his efforts to win.)³¹¹ Seen from the point of view of the man who has a destiny, it is absurd or we have to believe that his act itself insofar as it is most abstract, in the purely technical and deterministic fitting of means to the end, is caught in a spell, possessed by the *zar*. It is magic haunting determinism.

309. Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 308–10, 435–39.

310. Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.) was considered the greatest Athenian orator. Plutarch reports that he overcame a stammer by practicing speaking with pebbles in his mouth and by reciting verses while running or out of breath.

311. Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Knopf, 1948).

One accepts the idea of pragmatic determinism since the fitting of means to end is efficacious (the order to kill Oedipus sets off a series of practical undertakings that have a precise, predictable efficacy). But at the same time, determinism is overturned, inverted, it prepares the way for another future than the one it projects. It is absurd if we place ourselves *on the side* of the man who has a destiny. It is no longer absurd if we place ourselves on the side of the free will that prepares its future for itself and sees it. The man with a destiny is totally seen in plain sight by someone who is hidden, who is not just invisible but active and who, without its being known, turns his acts into fake ones by using *trompe l'oeil*, pitfalls, and mazes. In this way the magic is removed. If the act works to bring about the end I wanted to avoid, it is inasmuch as it is grasped subjectively by me as a free act, but objectively as a means by the other (in the cunning of war, the free invention of marching through a pass is the surest way of getting oneself crushed by boulders). So for tragedy everything is destiny and everything is free. The liberty of each one is destiny for the other.

In myths, Destiny is the decree of Fate or of Providence, etc., but it imposes itself on Fate. I mean that the oppressor who constitutes the destiny of the oppressed is himself caught up in a Destiny. Thus from a certain point of view, human history all over its surface presents the magical face of Destiny. In a society founded on classes, yet where oppression is not individualized, this Destiny is diffuse. No master precisely orders or decides upon your life, but each of the acts I do will plunge into an unknown dimension (the Other) where it can be judged, disarmed, rigged as a result of free decisions I am unaware of, and composed into a figure of me that becomes (turns back to me as) the source of all the rigging that what is outside me does to my acts. My irascibility as my free desire to intimidate, command, simplify situations becomes an element of destiny if others make use of it as a maneuver against me. In this way we have *objectively* a way of turning subjective irascibility into something fake.

Hegel saw quite clearly the impossibility of distinguishing the general interest from the particular interest in action.³¹² The particular end of the ambitious communist is to succeed but to succeed in this Party and in leading the Party to success. Conversely, S. de Beauvoir has shown that the most devoted militant wants the Cause to triumph but wants it to triumph through him.³¹³ Except one has the impression that for him there is an opposition of the subjective as particular to the objective as a general end. Two planes get confused, it seems to me. The one where the individual agent (subjectivity of intention) finds himself become objectively a historical agent (destiny)—in this case, clearly, the agent's consciousness has no connection to the objective efficacy of his work (I

312. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 250.

313. See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Blood of Others*, trans Roger Senhouse and Yvonne Moyses (New York: Knopf, 1948); French original 1945.

kill my wife's lover and find that I have deprived a Party about to take power of its leader. I write about my problems and find that the work expresses the problems of millions of young people)—and, on the other hand, the plane of subjectivity where I cannot will the singular without willing it in terms of the framework of more general, more open-ended social forms that surpass my present and my life. In the second case, my claim is perfectly and authentically conscious. In choosing myself, I choose myself as communist, in choosing myself as communist, I choose the C.P. as my order and as the open future of humanity and I choose to subordinate myself to the C.P. and its victory. But reciprocally, in choosing the C.P. I choose a certain type of men and of ideal human relations (in a classless society) in terms of which I define myself. I insert myself into History, I justify myself, and I give a meaning to my action; I save myself through the infinite Future.

Humanity, a concrete collection of men whose condition is to be born and to die, necessarily has a birth and a death. Since the condition of the For-itself is to be born from nothing, the limit condition is that there was no For-itself *before* an original upsurge of the For-itself. Which in no way signifies that there was a first For-itself. For to presuppose a first For-itself is already to presuppose another For-itself having made *there be* a world in the first place without any For-itself and that then a For-itself appeared in conformity with its already given concept. In reality this just signifies that, through the same movement by which everyone refers through his structure of being For-itself to a world that he creates as having been in advance, he refers to a world that had been without men. My condition is to be born amidst men in a world that was without men (it being understood that this “was” represents the normal extrapolation of transcendence *backwards*). And conversely my death implies the possibility of death for humanity. Not a mere abstract possibility derived from a concept but a concrete possibility that defines death.

Man is a consciousness caught up in a certain particular and contingent point of view (body and life). This consciousness is, as a point of view caught up in the universe, entirely dependent on the order of the universe wherein we have seen that its ownmost possibility is that the order of the universe no longer includes a place for it. But what is true for each man in particular is true for the concrete set of men. In a word, the universe can reveal itself in such a way that in it no place for man is any longer possible (cooling down of the Sun, etc.). We are not just mortal but mortal in a situation in a mortal humanity. We are not just finite but finite in a finite humanity.

What misleads us is that there is no outside of humanity as an end or a beginning. Rather it is its own beginning and its own end. The phenomenon of death finds its true meaning here. It is no longer this phenomenon that has an outside and an inside (because of the *other* who grasps my death from the outside) and that, as such, is unthinkable (since it is both objective and subjective at the

same time). It is entirely internalized since with the death of humanity the very witness of its death gets extinguished. *There is no longer* pure being; *there is no longer* death, nor cadavers; *nothing* as a structure of the For-itself and of Nots [*Négativités*] is replaced by the plenitude of the In-itself. There is no longer death, nor time, nor world.

The very phrase “there is no longer” is insufficient. Atemporality catches up with itself. Being-in-itself has reawakened from the nightmare of the human and forgotten it.

Time is finitude as human and comes about through the human. I mean: ontic time, as lived reality and that temporalizes itself. And it is precisely this finitude of time that creates and defines History. In other words, there is no History that does not imply the end of History, therefore the end of humanity. So History has no outside whence one could judge it or sum up what it was. History and historical events never present an absolute meaning that would be transcendent to the relative, on the contrary each historical conjuncture is relative and the absolute is immanent within the relative. The absolute is not God’s point of view on History, it is the way in which each man and each concrete collectivity *lives* its history. By renouncing the transcendent absolute, you do not fall into relativism, you render to man his absolute value. History, furthermore, is pure subjectivity and closed in on itself.

Concerning human subjectivity—as with Einstein’s world—we can say that it is finite and unlimited.³¹⁴ Because its end is still an internal event. The end of humanity is the end of the world (which is what the expression “end of the world” explicitly signifies), but the end of humanity is of interest only to itself, not being thinkable or experienceable by humanity and it disappears along with humanity. So individual death is an ambiguous phenomenon: objective and subjective at the same time. But the end of humanity only belongs to humanity. The Other steals his being-so-as-to-die from each person, but there is a being-so-as-to-die of humanity.

Moreover, History is a numerically finite undertaking. There will be a determined yet *unknown* number of men. In a word, determined and undetermined at the same time; just a certain number of human possibilities will be used up. And it is purely contingent reasons that will make it be these possibilities and not others.

So seen from one side, every enterprise, every experience, every collective organization is one and is finite; it invents itself in singular circumstances—and the History of humanity is marked by singular events just as the life of a man is marked by a love or by a death: Christianity, Marxism, etc. From this point of view, the Spenglerian position is possible: to see humanity as a life requiring a childhood, aging, and death. But this is only one of its aspects. It may also seem that humanity has no destiny and that destinies are merely intrahistorical

314. Cf. above, p. 40.

since they come to each person as to another. But my destiny is me coming to myself as an image. What is more humanity is an individual adventure that takes place in the dimension of the universal. The individual coming to himself in terms of the features of the universal, this is humanity's destiny.

Indeed, human reality being ontic-ontological, one of the structures of surpassing that it brings from its situation is the passage to the universal. It is well known that man grasps the particular in terms of the general; it is also well known that he grasps the finite in terms of the infinite. We see the cafe waiter in this individual waiter; we prolong to infinity the street we are walking along. It becomes everything: *the* street. (See below the mechanism of the ontic-ontological leap.)³¹⁵ An event is an example of a law. Hence each event is only one realization among an infinity of possible realizations.

This infinity of possibles implies an infinity of time, at least virtually. No doubt someone will say that they are outside time, but each of them implies the pure possibility of being realized in time apart from any others. And when there is a generation of the same by the same following a law, the process must repeat itself in an infinite temporality. When at present, man, in the detotalized totality, turns his look on the ensemble of Others, he grasps each generating couple and its child as the links of a chain whose action will be repeated to infinity. In other words, he extrapolates and transforms the finite series of generations into an infinite series of a purely mathematical type. With this, the series of men becomes infinite (in one direction or in both of them).

The situation takes a leap and so does History. History, in effect, cannot not be without an end. If every situation is beyond the preceding one, no goal may be attained that itself cannot be contested, no historical signification is true since it will be indefinitely interpreted, and contested in terms of its very interpretation. The mirage of infinity breaks History up into universal equivalence. The infinite becomes negative transcendence in relation to every particular effort of a historical agent. This effort will be diluted, drowned in infinity. There remains the instant of desire. In one moment the infinite, in exploding the finite structure of transcendence, refers to the instant. Furthermore, the hypothesis of an end of History that gets inserted in the development of generations is similarly absurd: either there is a succession that contests this end or there is an inhuman stagnation. The idea of the *end of prehistory* in no way changes the problem. In other words, the end of History is the end of humanity. So there is a contestation of history at the very heart of the prolonging of the passing of time to infinity.

And, what is more, since the human task requires time to be carried out and, also, because an *external* end of History is an overturning, a nihilation and not a fulfillment, it seems that to be harmonious History needs *all its time*, that is, that humanity will be removed from the end by the chance of what is external to it. So the prolonging to infinity conceals its antihistorical character and, what

315. Cf. p. 424.

is more, we here carry out a sort of passage to the limit, we vaguely envisage a horizon within the very process of what is infinite. This notion of a historical horizon, a kind of syncretism of the finite and the infinite, is a kind of ordinary (and not scientific or philosophical) category of History. It is a kind of end to History (through the total disappearance of what we can, in terms of our situation, envisage and understand) but one that remains open, however (*after* this end there will still be men, except ones so different from us, who so little touch us that we can choose not to consider them as men), but it is not a question of some precise temporal limit: this end of History is the vague condensation of the fog of several centuries.

Here intervenes the continuity that conceals the discontinuity of too abrupt a halt. One enters this end without being aware of it and one emerges from it without being aware of it. In another sense we might say that it is as objective (in that it is given to us) as subjective (it is the limit of our transcendence—it is the passage from what concerns us to what does not concern us).

The infinite prolongation of the human series turns man into an eternal setting for man. Also a *natural* setting since it is coextensive with Being. If there have always been men and there always will be, the human passes over to the rank of a dimension of Nature, of an eternal element of the universe. It is a Spinoza-like infinite mode and I am a finite mode that emerges and quietly allows itself to be diluted in the infinite. Living, at first, I die, but consciousnesses hold me in the world in the element of objectivity and pass on a life/object after my death, even while through the mediation of these consciousnesses my work continues to act. Then my life contracts bit by bit just like my work does, both becoming a point, I end up being confused with “the men of the 20th century,” maybe even with the “men of Modern Times.”

But this slow diminution to the point of imperceptibility is not frightening. I found myself in the historical and human substance, I preserve my individuality as *implicit*, and my action always remains a justified action preparing the future.

The infinity of the human is the guarantee of my eternal existence as a finite mode returned to the indistinction of the infinite mode. The end of History on the horizon is quite simply the moment of the passage from individuality (even if it is pointlike) to the indistinction of the collective. The *afterward*, the beyond of this horizon is the contraction of large sections of the collective—which no longer personally interests us.

Thus the initial type of extrapolation (transcendence) consists in surpassing ontic man toward his essence, which becomes in the heaven of meaning the atemporal archetype of which each man is an example, and in confusing the contingent and mortal succession of generations with the successive and systematic realization of every human possibility. At the limit, the infinite historical succession would coincide with the concept. The concept may be seen either as abstract as a function of the series, or as a concrete notion totalizing in itself the set of possible manifestations of the human. At this moment the human becomes

the absolute but the absolute/subject. Through the coincidence of the *notion* with reality, the essence becomes essence/thinking, destiny is recovered, the Human becomes the witness to man.

For each historical agent there is an absolute signification to his act, an objective signification that is both partially revealed to him and that surpasses him and also surpasses his contemporaries (History will judge). As we see, this signification is provided by the *Other*. It is the absolute gaze judging the act by returning from the consequences to the intention. The Human is the witness to each man; it is God internalized. Owing to this fact, the nature of the act, at the very level of commitment, is altered. For whoever believes in this synthesis of the infinite and the finite (which is Cantor's transfinite)³¹⁶ the objective takes precedence over the subjective and alienates it. Humanity is therefore a transfinite concept (the sum of an infinite series), which presupposes this curious movement of the mind: the infinite has its source in the transcendence or perpetual consciousness of our being/surpassing. Its projection in the domain of the objective gives the *infinite*.

But in turn we surpass the infinite and we totalize. This surpassing of transcendence (negation of surpassing) ends up with a *given* transcendent that is the Transfinite or Humanity or History. The perpetual *contestation* of the *before* by the *after* gets passed over in silence or transformed into a process of deeper founding [*approfondissement*]. It goes without saying that only those who, through this perpetual mirroring of the finite and the infinite, come to constitute an end of History where the spirit coincides with itself can preserve a *meaning* to history, by preserving the successive infinite series. Pascal, on the contrary, grasping History as infinite, clearly sees that the situation leaps into the point of view of the infinite and that it remains pure contingency.³¹⁷ If its signification is indefinitely contested, the only objective element that remains is the grain of sand in the gall bladder.³¹⁸

However, the ontic-ontological surpassing alters action in another way as well, by constituting an infinite-leaning conception of time and thereby of the future. Thus the future/myth becomes the infinite and the concrete present, individual life, becomes the pointlike finite. And the comparison of this finite and this infinite leads men to make a kind of Pascalian wager.³¹⁹ If through the sacrifice

316. Georg Cantor (1845–1918), German mathematician who founded modern set theory and introduced the concept of transfinite numbers, based on the possibility of establishing a one-to-one correspondance between the members of any set and the positive integers. These transfinite numbers are used to designate the order of sets of infinite sets. In *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, Sartre will introduce but not develop the notions of “serial transfinites” (p. 206), “the transfinite reality of recurrence” (p. 746), and “the transfinite Other” (p. 774).

317. Cf. Pascal, *Pensées*, pp. 149–52.

318. Cf. p. 53.

319. Cf. Notebook I, n. 151.

of one or of a finite number of generations we manage to produce a certain state of affairs that will maintain itself of its own accord and pass from generation to generation, this state of affairs considered as *better* than another one will furthermore have the advantage of being that of an infinity of individuals whereas the suffering undergone to produce it will be the suffering of just a finite number of units. Therefore we must bet on infinity.

Note that this perspective is formidable in that it entails preferring *any* improvement whatsoever, however small, and to necessarily sacrificing human lives to it since this improvement, if it is realized so that it will perpetuate itself, is in every way superior to every individual life, even a happy one, as the infinite to the finite.

Given the hypothesis of finitude, man can choose to sacrifice ten years of his life for an instant of happiness and this is the properly qualifying choice without any wager. It is even what we call *willing*, freely determining oneself, since the qualitative superiority unveils itself only to a freedom that makes a choice. The question of *quantity* does not intervene and we are on the plane of subjective freedom and actual values. If we make the hypothesis of a finite humanity, even one close to its end, where men, knowing that the society they want to bring about will not perpetuate itself and will even disappear at the end of a relatively short time, still want to sacrifice themselves to its realization simply so that, if only for an instant, humanity will have attained its highest degree of freedom or of perfection, in short, will have realized its essence, we shall be at the antipodes of the infinite-leaning theory of the wager where in the end any improvement is objective and has to be preferred by every mind simply because it will perpetuate itself to infinity.

So in action the passage to infinity through the prolonging of the idea of the series leads to the perpetual and obligatory sacrifice of everything finite to the infinite whatever it may be and leads to something transcendent in purely human temporality. To the same extent, the infinite gives a substantial character to a purely phenomenal organization. If humanity becomes an element of the world, every permanent character of that element becomes a substantial attribute. In this way, *finite* History depends on infinite motives: infinite progress, indefinite preservation of a collectivist social state, etc. The dice are loaded since humanity is mortal. It transforms itself through a virtual prolongation toward immortality. Its acts and their consequences take place in a finite universe that is the historical universe, but the maxim of these acts includes the affirmation of the infinity of History. Man makes a finite History through infinite projects; he launches himself into infinite expectations even though the outcome of these expectations will never be known since humanity must disappear.

Does he at least evaluate each singular act of the historical agent within the perspective of his finitude? No: in the first place, its meaning is decided on the basis of the absolute Future and is retrospectively oriented as we have seen. But

next it is envisaged in the present *as if* the men who will consider it, who will suffer or benefit from it, were it not a concrete and finite collectivity but an infinite one. Here again the ontic-ontological look transforms the given toward the infinite. It is precisely the introduction of the universal. When Kant formulates his categorical imperatives, he does not have in mind a concrete collectivity but *all* men.³²⁰ When he demonstrates that the lie raised to the universal self-destructs (if *all* men lie *all the time*), it is on the basis of an assumption of universality.³²¹ But if the lie is practiced by men existing on that occasion, it in no way self-destructs.

The establishment of a new regime (French Revolution, Soviets, Nazism) is never considered the concrete avatar of a particular society but as the establishment of a regime suitable to the infinity of possible men: “All men are free and equal by right.”³²² In this way, one acts not for real men but for a crowd where real men get counted along with fictitious men. The introduction of sociological causality or of Marxist interpretation contributes to such universalizing. A causal series always appears as having to reproduce itself if one of its terms is given (economy, sociology, etc.), whereas it is a matter of a unique and incomparable temporal form. Here again there is surpassing. The establishment of economic, social, or psychological laws turns our look from what really is: a singular and limited adventure where nothing is capable of being generalized. So man has secreted a virtual infinite setting that surrounds him in terms of the threefold dimensionality of the past, the present, and the future.

Naturally human action is ambiguous. There are actions whose maxim presupposes the universal and, consequently, that refer to a virtual humanity—in particular, moral action, or action whose original myth is based on the infinity of the future. But there are others whose goal is strictly finite—such as those that aim at a particular improvement of a situation: a strike by the subway workers. The effort to introduce Hebrew into Palestine. Traditionalist action (A.F., Maurras)³²³ is also of this finite type. France and the French opposed as an organic entity to the abstract universals of democracy. Except, quite often,

320. “Thus if there is to be a supreme practical principle and a categorical imperative for the human will, it must be one that forms an objective principle of the will from the conception of that which is necessarily an end for everyone because it is an end in itself.” Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 47.

321. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 48.

322. “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.” *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1791).

323. A.F.: Action Française, a right-wing, anti-Semitic, antirepublican movement that advocated the violent overthrow of the Third Republic. Charles Maurras (1868–1952) was an ardent promonarchist and one of the founders of the review that was to become the newspaper of the Action Française, to which he was a regular contributor. Following World War II, he was sentenced to life imprisonment for collaboration with the Nazis, but released on grounds of poor health in 1952.

the infinite-leaning structure penetrates the motive emphasizing finitude. France becomes “immortal.” Reynaud: France cannot perish.³²⁴ France: infinite succession of French generations. And reciprocally there is always a structure that emphasizes finitude (the occasion, the moment) in the infinite-leaning motive. This is what we shall call: concealing interests with principles (England and Ethiopia). This is a relationship analogous to what Hegel says about the Cause and individual interest.³²⁵

Infinite-leaning politics: suppress War. Create a peaceful humanity, take away the process of “war” from the infinite succession of generations. Politics that emphasize finitude: try to prevent the coming war by leaving to subsequent generations the concern for preventing their wars.

The universal as mystification (sacrifice of the real to the virtual) and as alienation.

Ethics: infinite leaning—opportunistic realism: emphasizing the finite.

Problem: what must an action be whose maxim has to be freedom and liberation and that wants to be in a finite History that will end catastrophically?

Through oppression the oppressor in breaking apart intersubjective solidarity transforms the oppressed into the *Other*, sees the oppressed as *Other*, that is, as one who, in principle, escapes his comprehension, one who is, in principle, a depth of mystery and of hate. Therefore he fears the man as man become an Other. The vague and diffuse uneasiness of the colonist faced with the colonized, of the White faced with the Black: “We shall never understand these people.” But what makes them others is that we have placed them *a priori* in a situation where they can only appear to us as Others.

And to the extent that we lend them our feelings, they are feelings that we ourselves form out of ourselves. Those who attribute to the Black the impulse to rape are those who a thousand times have wanted to commit rape. This does not seem blameworthy to them. In fact, it was not so. It is a mere desire for a passing woman that would like immediate satisfaction without having to pass through all the intermediary steps of coquetry and seduction. One resists this impulse, forgets it, but lends it to the Other and they become alienated from us, inverted into the dimension of the Other, magic since they are the mind in the object—all at once, horrifying.

324. Paul Reynaud (1878–1966), the French premier in 1940 who resigned rather than conclude an armistice with the German invaders.

325. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, par. 417, p. 250. In Hyppolite’s translation of the *Phenomenology*, which has *la chose*, not *la cause*, he notes that Josiah Royce in his *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (1913) translates “die Sache selbst” as “cause.” G. W. F. Hegel, *La Phénoménologie de l’Esprit*, trans. Jean Hyppolite (Paris: Aubier, 1947). vol. 2, p. 335. Miller’s English translation has “the matter in hand.”

In oppression I am afraid of myself as Other. And this gets doubled through the fact that I am seen by the Other and become Other for this other. Thus, in those eyes I am alienated, in that oppressed freedom I am in danger, and this time once again I am horrified of the image of myself that the Other returns to me as Other. So in oppression the oppressor oppresses himself.

A wicked person has no rest. He is totally the victim of otherness. In other people, he sees only the Other. Never a For-itself that is the Same for oneself. Or rather he is quite aware that other people are for-itself, but he sees the For-itself of others as the pure Otherness of the reflecting and the reflected. And naturally, he feels possessed. Possessed by the Other. He turns from others to himself and grasps himself through these others. It is a question therefore of by any and all means destroying other people in themselves and outside of oneself. Each consciousness pursues the death of the Other. But the Other as absolute Otherness, existing initially in itself and outside of oneself. The result is that what I am calling wicked is a man who I believe wanted me to do evil to myself insofar as I am me for myself, whereas what he wanted to destroy in me was the Other, that is the universal element of Otherness and the primacy of this element. It is when I see that it was not I who was intended that I say that wicked people are unfortunate people. "No one is really bad however much evil he does." In fact, the reality is more ambiguous: the wicked person is characterized in terms of hate. But what he hates is neither him nor me, it is the Other in him and in me. He hates it like a person. If I show him that I am *the Same*, there is an awakening: he no longer finds what he wanted to kill and to hate.

Original sin and the motor of all History: man has posited the Other as absolute and as ontologically primordial. He sees himself in terms of the Other and, therefore, as Other. He has projected all his notions (the ONE, Essence, etc.) into the element of the Other. An example: unity. He has not seen the ONE but the Other/one (not unity as the synthetic act of a subjectivity but as a given, a ONE thing, yet as having a magic power of unification). Society: conceived precisely in terms of Otherness and of Unity as Otherness, etc. He can think about the For-itself of others in two ways: 1st, as it is given to him, that is, as a signifying body (cf. B & N);³²⁶ 2d, as it is for him (by analogy, for itself). But he thinks of him as Other, that is, each of the Other's thoughts is an In-Itself-For-Itself. Exactly a mass of being internally illuminated by self-consciousness. One thinks that magic is to allow the mind to move among things. But it is also and in the first place the obscuring of the mind by thingness. And one conceives his own consciousness on the model of the Other. These contents of consciousness, this flow of consciousness which has been introduced into us, then the Freudian unconscious: this is the Other.

326. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 340, 344–47.

This error can be restated as follows: starting from the world considered as the Other in order to get to man. From this point of view, the theological conception or the materialistic conception are the same thing. The materialistic conception is, by the way, only the theological conception where God becomes the ONE. And in both of them man becomes Other than himself. I *do not recognize myself* in this product of God or of matter and the economy. And ethics (Christian humility or materialistic humility) will consist in aligning oneself with this model, in refusing to become conscious of anything that does not conform to it.

The Devil as a symbol of Otherness.

The Spirit is the Noema, the Objective. The Noesis is the subjective. The spirit is at every moment a force of disintegration and of plurality owing to the multiplicity of subjects, but it is also this same plurality unified at every moment through the surpassing of each particular subject. And this surpassing in turn is a factor for plurality as soon as it is seen by an other, but in the perspective of a new unification. Thus we are *in* the Spirit, in the sense that we are in the world, and furthermore the Spirit is a structure of the world—it is the World insofar as I well up into it along with others and at the same time as them; it is the World as already thought by Others, insofar as this thought submerges me and insofar as I surpass it. I am surrounded by the Spirit, exactly as I am surrounded by the World. The Spirit is revelation, cooled off and permanent, starting from which I constitute my own revelation for myself. In relation to the Spirit I can take up the attitude of the worker who uses a hammer to hammer without even seeing it. This is the most frequent case and also the original one. Hence I can take up in relation to the Spirit the attitude of *nur verweilen bei*. In the end, I can take the Spirit as my end. (There is another element to be added here: to do as others do.)

Progress is conceivable as soon as order is posited as there from the beginning. But, as Brunschvicg said of Hegel, we have to invent a principle that slows things down, otherwise we find ourselves with the equation “order is order.”³²⁷ Progress is therefore the passage from potential order to actual order. And we need to know why potential order is just potential. That is, why there is becoming. Thus the principle that slows things down has to be some internal or external disorder that order triumphs over in establishing itself. Disorder is therefore actual at the beginning so that it can be suppressed. It is plurality, ignorance, error, Evil. But after that it is disorder only in relation to some form of order. This is why, in progress, we affirm both the ontological priority of order over disorder, since it is through order that disorder gets constituted as

327. Brunschvicg, *Le Progrès de la conscience*, vol. 2, pp. 382–83.

such, and the ontic priority of disorder, which *is* while order is not (while it is potential). This ontic-ontological distinction necessarily refers to a for-itself. It is the very condition of human reality springing up amidst a given that gets unveiled as disorder insofar as it is a given passivity and that this human reality puts in order in terms of the unity of some project.

In other words, if one says that order is the meaning of disorder and that disorder is the initial state of order (what will lead Hegel, Comte, and Engels into circularity), one confuses the given and the projected. Order can be *given* as the secret of disorder, as its future and its meaning only through the intermediary of a human reality that projects it as such. Thus *a* consciousness projecting order as an end and as beyond some disorder can consider its operation, which consists in ordering this disorder, as a form of *progress*. In this sense, action and progress are one and the same thing. But if order is a project, *whose* project is it? The unity of a consciousness that projects this order as its own possibility, that acts, and that asserts that the result is in fact the realization of this possibility is required. This consciousness can only be God's consciousness.

If we fall back into human immanence, we have to assimilate humanity to *a* consciousness in order to conceive of progress as all one thing. This is possible logically if we conceive of *a* human nature that develops in conformity with an established plan by way of a plurality of individuals, the external universe remaining constant—or if we conceive of a series of generations whose goal and possibility are invariant and where each one takes up the work where the other has left it.

It is quite certain that everyone intends order, but it is not always the same order. Order is only the unity conferred on the given by a project and this project varies depending on the choice made and what is given. What is more, each result, instead of magically inducing the following generation to pursue the effort, falls outside the subjective into the objective Spirit and gives itself up without any defense to a new surpassing. What happens from generation to generation (and also in space) is the perpetual fall and transformation of the subject into an object. What was an end becomes a starting situation.

But with this comes: *disorder*. Instead of the intermediary result being both disorder and preparation for order in the unity of one consciousness, it is a mediation. But if everything has to be started over again, the mediation gets lost, it remains an obstacle. What was the Same becomes the Other. Christianity as a subjective operation of liberation becomes, in the following generation, a crystallized given and a principle for governing men. There is a perpetual opposition between the *given* order, which is disorder for those newly arrived on the scene (the *established* order), and a living disorder (a negation of order), which is a subjective order. Everyone uses the qualification "disorder" with reference to the other. So the situation is always the same: a disorder (which is the subjective order of some living operation transformed into an object) starting from which consciousness exercises its negativity.

From another side, however, each new project of putting things in order is constructed on top of the negation of the preceding one and ideology includes many more layers of the human order: ancient ideology—Christianity—Protestantism—the ideology of '89—Marxism. But in each case, the ideology as it closes in on itself and passes over to the other imprisons a large number of men. Thus it is the opposite of progress. There is both progress and marching in place. The progress lies in the *objective*, while the marching in place is in the relation of the subjective to the objective. And antiprogress (or involution) lies in the subjugation of the subjective to the objective, of the subject to the Spirit.

If then one still wants to conceive of progress in spite of everything, one has to make the Hegelian move, that is, to rediscover, beyond the diversity of consciousnesses, each different from the others, the unity of the object, that is, of the Spirit. The Spirit as substance is *behind* the consciousnesses and realizes itself *through them*, they are its Spinoza-like modes. Consciousness then becomes an epiphenomenon. The principle that slows things down is identical to the principle of individualization. It is the necessity of every moment positing itself for itself, that is, of affirming itself as a totality whereas it is incomplete—it is Spinoza's error but developed in terms of temporality, in the dialectical process, and at the same time it is the definition of subjective. Except, we see, one is establishing progress on the ruins of the *cogito*. We have to choose: either progress is necessary or it isn't—either one starts from the Other and progress is the Other's order to which consciousnesses have to submit, subordinating the subject to the Spirit—or progress is perpetually contested, lost, aberrant. Instead of being a myth in order to win, it becomes a myth so as not to lose.

This signifies: "We are condemned to be free."³²⁸ This has never been really understood. However it is the basis of my ethics. Let us start from the fact that man is-in-the-world. That is, *at the same time* a facticity surrounded by the world and a project that surpasses it. As project, he assumes his situation in order to surpass it. Here we come close to Hegel and Marx: *aufheben* is to preserve in surpassing. Any surpassing that does not preserve is just a flight into the abstract. I cannot get rid of my situation as bourgeois, Jew, etc. except by assuming it *in order to change it*. And conversely I can preserve in myself certain "states" or "qualities" of which I am proud only by surpassing them in order to preserve them, that is, not by preserving them as such (dead virtues) but by making of them perpetually new hypotheses aiming at a new future. I can preserve what I am only by that movement by which I invent what I am going to be, I only surpass what I am in preserving it. Perpetually, I have *to give myself* the given, that is, to take up my responsibilities as regards it.

But since I am a surrounded facticity, since I can act only by existing and by making myself the same nature as that upon which I act—since I act by means

328. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 439, 484, 525, 529.

of my surface of passivity—I am not just perpetually *exposed* in the world but perpetually modified *from the rear*. My situation being, in one of its aspects, to be totally surrounded by the world, it changes as the world changes, it is changed by the world, and insofar as I am passivity, I am affected in my very facticity by the world's order. For example, in crossing a zone of contagion, I am *affected*, that is, contaminated. So I become tubercular, for example. Misfortune (and greatness) appear in this way. This illness, which has infected me, weakens me, changes me, abruptly limits my possibilities and my horizons. I was an actor or athletic; with these lungs I no longer can be so.³²⁹ Thus *negatively*, I am discharged of all responsibilities having to do with those possibilities that the course of the world has taken from me. This is what everyday language calls “being diminished.” And this phrase seems to overlay a correct image: I was a bouquet of possibilities, someone picked a couple of the flowers, the bouquet is still in the vase, diminished, reduced to just a few elements.

But in reality this is not so. This image is too mechanical. Even though the new situation comes *from outside*, it has to be lived through, that is, assumed in some form of surpassing it. It is true to say that these possibilities have been taken away from me, but it is also true to say that I renounce them or that I try to hold on to them or that I do not want to see that they have been taken from me or that I undertake some systematic plan to get them back again. In a word, these possibilities are not suppressed but replaced through a choice of possible attitudes toward the disappearance of these possibilities.

And, what is more, new possibilities well up with my new state of being: possibilities with regard to my illness (to be a good or a poor patient), possibilities concerning my condition (still to have my life, etc.), an ill person possesses neither fewer nor more possibilities than a well one; he has his range of possibles just like the other person, and he has to decide about his situation, that is, to assume his condition as sick in order to surpass it (toward a return to health or toward a human life as an invalid with its new horizons). In other words, illness is a *condition* within which man is once again free and without any excuses. He has to take responsibility for his illness. His illness is an excuse for not realizing his possibilities as not-ill, but it is not one for his possibilities as ill, which are just as numerous. (There is, for example, a *Mitsein* of the ill person with his entourage that demands as much inventiveness, as much generosity, and as much tact on the part of the ill person as did his life when he was not ill.) It remains that he did not will this illness and that at present he has *to will* it. What does not come

329. This example may refer to Albert Camus, who was an enthusiastic soccer player and actor during his youth in Algeria and who developed tuberculosis, something that prevented him from being able to attend the university and so may have directed him toward journalism. See Herbert F. Lottman, *Albert Camus: A Biography* (New York: George Braziller, 1980).

from him (οὐκ ἐφ' ὑμῶν) is the sudden suppression of possibilities. And since it has to be assumed in order to be changed, the romantic refusal of his illness by an ill person is totally inefficacious.

So there is something true in an ethics that places the greatness of man in his acceptance of the inevitable and of destiny. But such an ethics is incomplete, for destiny has to be assumed so as to change it. It is not a question of adapting oneself to one's illness, of installing oneself in it, but of living according to norms in order to remain a man.

Thus my freedom is a form of condemnation because I am not free to be or not to be ill and illness comes to me from the outside—it does not belong to me, it does not concern me, it is not my fault. But since I am free, I am constrained by my freedom to make it mine, to make it *my* horizon, *my* perspective, *my* morality, etc. I am perpetually condemned to will what I did not will, not to will what I willed, to reconstruct myself in terms of the unity of a life in the presence of destructions that are inflicted upon me from the exterior. Illness is indeed an excuse, but just for possibilities that have been taken from me. It is an excuse for my no longer playing in a comedy (if I were an actor), but this is so just for dead possibilities, for possibilities that are no longer mine. However for my life as someone who is ill, my illness is not an excuse, it is just a condition. Thus I can never rest—always transformed, undermined, flattened out, overthrown from the outside, yet always free, always obliged to take up things again, to take responsibility for what I am not responsible for. Totally determined and totally free. Obligated to assume this determinism in order to posit beyond it the goals of my freedom, to make this determinism into one more commitment.

Strict parallelism between historical materialism and psychoanalysis.

1) In both cases the phenomenon considered appears as having a signification. It is both itself and the expression of something other than itself. Among the diverse phenomena of a society, the various behaviors of one man find a meaningful interconnection: they all express one and the same complex reality. For there is an economic complex just as there is a psychoanalytic one.

2) In both cases the immediately accessible phenomenon tends to get isolated and to be given as *selbständig*. In this, it becomes in both cases myth, fetish, mystification, symbolic satisfaction.

3) In both cases it is a matter of demonstrating the superstructure as an effect of the infrastructures. And of rediscovering in the superstructure the reflection of the infrastructures. In both cases there is a deciphering of what is *manifest*. The story told (by the individual or the collectivity) is a lie. But this lie is full of information.

4) In both cases there is a hesitation about the *reality* of the phenomenon. This is what Fabre-Luce says about Napoleon III: he served the interests of capitalism but decided to do so for other reasons and that has its own impor-

tance.³³⁰ This also applies on the psychoanalytic plane. He wants to assuage a censured desire but he decides to do so for other reasons. The appearance is *thus* absolute.

5) In both cases there is a projection, behind the contingent series of phenomena, of an underlying offensive and defensive dialectic—especially a defensive one. There are the fall backs, the tactics, the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie. There are transferences, ruses, sublimations, unconscious desires. In both cases therefore the contingency of what is conscious has to be explained by an unconscious strategy. Fabre-Luce: economics, that unconscious of the bourgeoisie.

6) In both cases, there is a reduction of the higher to the lower, the reason for the class struggle is some interest. That for individual human activity is sexuality or the will to power. In both cases the *method* is justified but the principles are based on chance. Nothing justifies what is chosen to terminate psychoanalytic regression. Nothing proves on the level of social infrastructures that production, for example, is the cause of demographic variations and not vice versa (cf. the economic revolution of the 12th century). In both cases the idea of a *total* fact (Mauss)³³¹ is replaced by a relation despite all the analysis.

7) Typical and modern idea of *hermeneutics*: the explanation must be hidden. Violence has to be done to man to find it. No doubt chasing after Pan has always presupposed a bird hidden in the bush that needs to be flushed out.³³² But it is only by analogy that one speaks of resistance. Instead the object to be found was *buried*. Whereas the modern idea (which is applicable only to the sciences of man) implies the idea of negative forces that must be conquered, intent as they are on keeping their secret.

8) In both cases, it is a question of practical methods aimed at changing the world more than at knowing about it. Analysis is a method aimed at a cure; historical materialism is just an empty word if it is not to be found in and through the class struggle.

9) In both cases these kinds of pragmatism are at the same time forms of skepticism—they fail to ground truth. Therefore to found themselves.

10) There are numerous passages from one discipline to another: Freud's collective symbols, Jung's collective unconscious.³³³ The Trotskyite attempt at

330. Alfred Fabre-Luce (1899–1983), French liberal political writer, active between World War I and World War II. He supported Pétain's Vichy regime from 1940 to 1942, then turned against it. See Klaus-Peter Sick, "Alfred Fabre-Luce et la crise du libéralisme dans l'entre-deux-guerres," *Commentaire* no. 47 (Automne 1989): 551–62.

331. Cf. p. 382.

332. "The position of anxious surmise, of attentive eagerness to catch the meaning of Nature, is indicated to us in the comprehensive idea of *Pan*." Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 234–35, quoted by Hyppolite, *Origins and Genesis*, p. 339.

333. Carl G. Jung (1875–1961), Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist who founded analytic psychology.

synthesis; violent Stalinist opposition because one of the two principles of explanation is superfluous. The Super-ego of a class in Laforgue.³³⁴

Question: what is the structure of our society that provokes the appearance of this emphasis on hermeneutics?

Failure. There is failure when there is action. Action is the setting out of means in view of some end. The end is given as the nonexistent beyond that illumines the totality of what exists. It is in light of the end that I comprehend the world. At the same time, it is a future that determines the present and it is a perpetual surpassing of what is. Man is a being who posits ends. Action is an operation and work. It consists in introducing changes in the external world in such a way that the totality of changes brought about is equivalent (a totality where some elements will cancel out one another) to the realized end. The end obtained is a new figure of the universe (a bridge, a new social regime, a work of art, etc.). There is failure when the end is not realized. Once again we need to add: if the operation is interrupted by an external event, in other words, if the interconnection of means is cut off, one will not speak of failure but only of a halt. There is failure when I have full latitude to realize my operation and when, the operation having ended, it is not transformed into an end—when the totality of means does not get transformed into an end.

One says that a play is a failure when the piece has been written, accepted, rehearsed, and the public invited to see it, when the rehearsals have taken place and when the contact public/play has not been realized, that is, the transfiguration of the public by the play and the reciprocal transfiguration of the play by the public. The expected “form,” the one counted on, didn’t *take hold*. There is a failure of an economic and fiscal policy of a government when the measures taken and realized do not assure financial equilibrium. In other words, the whole set of means is there (taxes voted on, collected, etc.), but there was no identification of the sum total of the means with their projected signification.

The failure of an operation may come about: because the sum of means was falsely considered as equivalent to the totality “end”; because this sum was thought to be complete but wasn’t (through a default of one of the means, or by the internal failure of one of them—a secondary reaction—or because the use of this or that means brought about a destructive reaction on the part of the universe into which the closed system under consideration was plunged). Thus the end is not the last link in the causal series A.B.C.D.E.F (which, in effect, would allow us to assert that the end is indifferent to the means), instead it is the organic totality of the operation. Just as a truth has come about, so too an end comes about. Having said this, when should we say there is a success and

334. Jules Laforgue (1860–87), French Symbolist poet, was one of the inventors of *vers libre*.

when should we say there is a failure? There are certain cases of flagrant failure which it is not necessary to discuss. But, symmetrically, there is no incontestable success, except in those cases where what is at stake is artificially and conventionally limited (sports, games, etc.). This is because a comparison between the projected end and the realized end is impossible.

1) It is impossible to limit the end at the beginning. Not just in the cases where it is a relative end and refers to other ends, but simply and most often because it is something complex expressing the whole of my personality. An author does not want *success* for his play, he wants *a certain kind of success*, in terms of a certain public and without misunderstandings, etc. And this kind of success fundamentally affects his whole conception of his play, as well as of himself and his world. But he is not completely aware of what he wants because he is not completely aware of himself. In fact, his success is *him* in the world.

2) The end is the whole world. There will be consequences, still others, etc. None of these can be completely foreseen. Too big. The founding of Constantinople—was that a success or a failure for Constantine?³³⁵ It depends on where one cuts off the operation. At a certain moment, furthermore, the question no longer makes any sense because the agent's successors consider the outcome with categories and principles that are not the ones he made use of.

3) Each moment of the operation being fully real brings its density with it; it transforms the edifice, but in parallel one's will also gets transformed. The surpassing of each moment preserves it and projects beyond itself an altered end. Thus the projected end at the start of the operation is not the realized end. But neither is it the end projected a few moments before the completion of the operation.

4) The type of existence of the projected end (interiority of its moments, nondifferentiation of its structures, syncretism, etc.) in no case can resemble the end actually made explicit, with its external parts, etc., etc.

5) The end is realized in the element of *Mitsein*. It is proposed to consciousness that judge it and deform it in their freedom. Consequently, one no longer *recognizes* it.

Therefore we must decide whether there is a failure or a triumph. And this very decision is a free delimiting of the human reality. I can decide there is a failure for various reasons.

1st, to remain faithful to what I was. I refuse to evolve along with the operation. Of, if you will, I do want to transform the object but without transforming myself in the process. In this case, I consider myself fixed essence, a

335. Flavius Valerius Constantinus (285–337), Constantine the Great, the Roman emperor who founded Constantinople on the site of Byzantium in 324 following his defeat of Licinius, his brother-in-law, near that city. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 433.

nature. And I am afraid to change. To recognize myself in the result would be to admit that I had changed.

2d, I may even consider that any operation that does not have as its outcome the instantaneous production of me faced with myself as a pure reflection has to change me. Apart from wishes or orders I will consider everything a failure. In a wish or an order (the child and the tyrant), it is the Other who carries it out—therefore I am only my desire and I rejoin myself without alteration through consumption.

3d, the original end was isolated by the very nature of the project. I envisaged only a limited number of consequences. It was an absolutely closed system. I wanted it precisely to be closed. Plunged into the universe, it has consequences out to infinity. I can refuse to recognize these consequences and declare that they destroy my operation per se. In a general way I can refuse the devil's share.

4th, the pure necessity of relations without matter that constituted the project cannot be compared to the contingency of the matter upon which I impose my form. Ideal experience is always parallel to real experience. The demand for an absolute necessity may lead me to consider the contingent result as a failure.

5th, with the end realized in the *Mitsein*, I am handed over to others and refracted by their freedom. I can refuse to recognize myself in them.

6th, the end does not express everything. I was mistaken about my desires. I wanted to be rich but in order to be secure—or to have women, etc. Having staked everything on riches, I discover that it was only a means which made me lose sight of my end.

7th, finally, the end that gets realized is me in the world. If I am perfectly satisfied, there is a full adequation between me as pure freedom and me as an image in the world, that is, an object. Therefore I reduce myself to this object. This reconciliation suppresses every possibility of surpassing, the situation closes in on me. Nothing more beyond this: I am caught up in the world. A humanity satisfied with its work, exactly reflected by the world (Hegel), ceases to be humanity.

8th, in the operation, consciousness is universal as negativity. The work refers it back to the particular. I shall have *just* this work. Therefore I am *no more than* this. This particularity which comes back to me is failure as such inasmuch as what I wanted to realize was the human condition, that is, myself as universal and as absolute.

Thus every triumph is a failure. I no longer recognize my end, which is to say that I no longer recognize myself, I am prey to others, obliged to assume the consequences of what I did not want, in the face of a reality that, through its matter, necessarily degrades my project; destiny for myself, enemy to myself, I have fallen into the world. If these are the reasons I may have for refusing, we also see which implicit affirmations the recognition of failure may contain:

1st, *I am what I am*, my nature cannot be altered by an operation in the world.

What I was at the start is how I rediscover myself to be when I refuse to recognize myself in my work. In a word, the world cannot change me.

2d, I am beyond everything I do, always future to myself. No one can enclose me in what I do. I am worth more than what I do. In what I do, you will never see more than a small part of me. Warning to those to whom one is about to read a manuscript: “you should know it’s not complete.” A refusal to allow oneself to be incarnated in any work or in the sum of them. Equivalent to immortality—in the eternal life of the soul, human life is one point. Similarly, whoever judges a man by his work judges him in terms of a chance concretization of certain possibilities. To say oneself that a work is incomplete is to say that one could have done something else and that it is in terms of this something else that it is legitimate to judge. But since it does not exist, one places himself in principle beyond all judgment.

3d, Recognition of failure is equivalent to the nonrecognition of oneself in one’s work, to the nonrecognition of the end as a meaningful totality. All that remains therefore is an absurd sum of materials. Therefore we have the destruction of the work. To the degree that the work is itself a *determination*, it is a question of the destruction of all determinateness. From this point of view, I affirm my infinity. I exist without being determined. Not in undifferentiation, but through failure and the disappearance bit by bit of every attempt to determine myself. Therefore I am a pure, infinite project that no incarnation can exhaust, I escape others, I set myself above the world.

The project of judging each of my operations a failure naturally becomes the project of indubitably realizing each operation as a failure. And, to end this, failure becomes *Passion*. Indeed, in the Passion of Christ the individual and particular body points toward the Universal that is in heaven and incarnated in him. Christ’s failure is the incarnation of the Universal in the Particular, destruction of the Particular, and thus pure affirmation of the Universal. Absolute failure becomes an indication of the absolute impossibility of man to be-in-the-world and in this the destruction of the world to the profit of man’s requirement. Through failure I affirm the being of man as pure ought-to-be. Failure = negation of negation, affirmation of transcendence, refusal of complicity with the world, and therefore innocence.

Brunschvicg: at the time of Epicurus, thought about atoms could only be a dream, owing to the lack of technical instruments.³³⁶ Compare Marxism: a hundred years ago, two hundred years ago socialism could only have been a dream because the economic situation was opposed to its realization. In both cases, there is an intervention of a negative cause. Yet also in both cases there remains the

336. Brunschvicg, *Le Progrès de la Conscience*, vol. 1, p. 65.

movement of thought *toward* an explanation of the universe in terms of atoms, a socialist realization in Society.

For Jaspers, failure only applies to existence.³³⁷ Therefore failure is a cipher and evidence of existence. That is, the project of existence shows itself to be something beyond *Dasein*, precisely because *Dasein* and the world negate it. If existence were to be inserted into the world without difficulty, it would be *worldly*, a thing, itself *Dasein* in its origin—compatibility of the project with the world—and in its result—an object conforming to the idea one has of it and at the same time structured by the world. The world would close in around the triumph. Da Vinci: the artist must always be unhappy with his work.³³⁸ Thus failure is the revelation of freedom and even of Transcendence. The trick: to substantialize the negative.

Religion: man projects his subjectivity outside of himself into the element of objectivity. Thus subjectivity becomes the Other's subjectivity or *other subjectivity*, and the otherness of subjectivity is objectivating. The external religious pole is objectivated subjectivity (reflected as objective by Nature) and the objective/subjective comes back to true subjectivity to dominate and perpetually motivate it. Thus in religion man chooses to sacrifice himself to himself as the objectivating of the subjective, that is, to himself in the element of Being. In the religious fact, man springs up *into situation in man*. *Another man* rules man from outside. If we reintroduce religion into the human (subjective synthesis) we then see that into historical intersubjectivity is secreted a changing objective image of this very subjectivity, which governs the historization of interhuman subjectivity. This stems from the initial necessity whereby man has *to learn about himself through the world*.

What does man *lack*? Being his own foundation. Through what and in what does this lack appear? In and through freedom. For freedom is precisely this foundation. There is a manifestation of freedom when an object is comprehended only if one assigns a project to it as its foundation. The contrary of chance is not necessity (the interaction of two causal series is perfectly necessary, and pure chance) but freedom. Thus the preontological comprehension of the foundation appears in freedom and this comprehension which illuminates the world and

337. Cf. p. 18.

338. "Although human subtlety makes a variety of inventions answering by different means to the same end, it will never devise an invention more beautiful, more simple, or more direct than does nature, because in her inventions nothing is lacking, and nothing is superfluous. . . ." *Leonardo da Vinci's Note-Books*, ed. Edward McCurdy (New York: Empire State Book Company, 1935), p. 76.

man within the world makes it apparent that man is not his own foundation. This profound contradiction is the motor for all human action.

The foundation of every foundation is not its own foundation. This puts every foundation in peril since in the last analysis they are founded foundations through an unfounded foundation. At least if *precisely* there is no reciprocity in the relation thought of until now as univocal and if the founded reality does not come back to the foundation that founds it in order to found *this foundation*. This is possible only if man is a nothingness of being to the very extent that he is a nothingness of the foundation. What is *not founded* is the escaping of all being and every foundation.

But if it is not to be a question of a purely *passive* nothingness, this unfounded nothingness must be a pure founding movement. To found *everything*, that is, to found *itself*. In other words, the pure unfounded foundation of every foundation must be-as-founding-itself in the dimension of Being. Man must come to himself out of the depths of Being. But what is the being that so comes to me? It cannot be myself as freedom and as consciousness since this would be to be unfounded-nonbeing. Hence all thinking is pure emptiness projecting to make itself appear on Being. The *formal* essence of a thought is this unfounded emptiness; its objective essence is itself in the dimension of Being. The relationship of *Truth* is: a thought being only a pure illumination of being and bringing it about *that there be* this illuminated being and an illuminated being being thought in the dimension of Being as foundation of the thought/object. This hypothesis, pure nothingness-projecting-in-order-to-found, is founded by the experience that refers it back to us as having-always-been-a-structure-of-being.

If there is a law (of physics, established by experience) it is because there is thought about a law, but reciprocally if there is thought about a law, it is because there is a law in the world. In the end, my thinking about Carnot's principle is grounded in truth by the existence of this principle.³³⁹ But this is just one example presupposing the world as already existing.

The absolute movement of founding goes as follows. The foundation, only being in order to found, has no foundation except in what it founds. Here intervenes the retrospective action of the future on the present and finality. In a word, I have to find myself faced with myself as me produced by a human freedom. But to the extent that I create myself, I escape myself, for as a created being I have to escape the unfounded nonbeing of the creator. The idea of a *cause of itself* implies a fissure: the caused self and the self/cause have to be one. From this point of view, the created self cannot be totally transparent to the creator self, unless it is this very transparency and we are on the plane of the pure For-itself. So, if the For-itself were God and could produce itself in Being (intellectual intuition) or, to put it another way, produce Being in founding itself,

339. Sadi Carnot (1796–1832), French scientist who discovered the Carnot cycle, which applies to the theory of heat transfer and work in ideal machines.

Being as founded would necessarily *be other* than its foundation. There must be precisely a resistance of the founded object to the foundation, which constitutes its possibility of being founded, its very structure of being-founded. In creating himself God must create himself as being-other.

If the structure of the foundation is to-be-in-order-to-found, the structure of the founded is to be (as founded) distinct from its foundation. But it is in no way distinct through its manner of being since I am originally the foundation insofar as it is what I make it be. It is so distinct through its *being*. Nor is it a question of a pure duality of two beings with the same nature. The For-itself cannot found a For-itself, because this would be an unfounded foundation that would found a foundation as unfounded. Creation has to take place in the dimension of being-in-itself. That is, here we have a magical dialectic. If intellectual intuition *produced* a being, the being so produced would have to have as its power of existing this same production but as become *other*, and as subsisting as the other and as *turned back* against its creator. This is why the notion of continuous creation makes no sense, for if created being has no other property than its tendency to fall into Nothingness, I find myself alone as the pure unfounded foundation. This is the deep sense of Creation in theological myths: God creates himself in the face of himself as world, that is, in the dimension of the Other, that is, in the dimension of Being. The For-itself can only create the not-for-itself. Not its appearance but its very being.

So in a certain way the underlying structure of being-in-itself is to-be-what-is-created; that is, to be a production turned back against its creator. And this is in fact what we discover in the pure in-itselfness of a stone, for example. It is both other than the For-itself and yet its cohesiveness of being appears as the magical tossing off of the pure productive force of the For-itself. It goes without saying that it is not a question here of a revelation about being but of an illumination of the In-itself from that original point of view that is the being-in-order-to-create of the For-itself. Whence comes an original *material* joy in the discovery of the density or resistance against me of myself. Note however that there is an original suffering of God (dissimulated in the myths): creation *is not* a solution.

1st, for the reasons Hegel gave, the creator escapes his creation. Having created it, he leaves it behind since it does not take into account its creator's survival. If the act is to be perfect—since the creature cannot, through the very structure of creation, found itself along with its creator—the creator founds himself in the creature, that is, he has to die in the creating act. The myth of dying in order to create (Heraclitus, etc.)³⁴⁰ clearly indicates the ontological hope that the

340. Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 540–c. 480 B.C.), pre-Socratic philosopher. “Always remember the words of Heraclitus that ‘the death of earth becomes water and the death of water becomes air, and that of air, fire, and so back again.’” Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), p. 34.

creator may have of being absorbed by his own creation. The ideal would be that in projecting this schematism into the dimension of being the schematism itself would take the form of being and that in this way God would empty himself into the world. So that there would be nothing more than the created object (Mallarmé's Ideal).³⁴¹

What is more, the creation escapes its creator. It is a me that is not me since it is another me. The ambiguity of the creature stems from the fact that in order to be created it must at the same time be me and not-me. This signifies that I recognize and do not recognize myself in it. Sometimes I recognize myself there, sometimes I do not. Sometimes I recognize myself in it without recognizing myself in it, etc. It is not me *at the same time* because it is only me and *at the same time* it is *other than me*.

Here begins the ambiguity of knowing and creating. By staying on the plane of the limit hypothesis of an intellectual intuition, the created object is created when it is conceived of. Therefore in the beginning conception and creation are one and the same. Here knowledge is transparency, it is given in creation per se. But when the object stands over against me in its alien reality, it implies that I *learn of it* since I am placed over against it in the attitude of a perceiving consciousness. I know it too well and not well enough: as Pascal says, I enter into it and no longer enter into it.³⁴² It is fully known to the extent that it is the pure and simple emanation of the For-itself and at the same time *unknowable* because its otherness is to be a purely magical cohesion of being. This tension between unknowability and being too well known gives the structure of the attitude of the Demiurge over against its work. So demiurgic creation includes originally and as part of its structure an unsurpassable failure.

We however, we "are in and belong to the world." That is, being-in-itself is *given* to us. However, our problem is the same one. It is a matter of creating the world that already exists. This signifies that the world has to appear to me as issuing up to its being from a freedom that is my freedom. A *poetic* procession: being-in-itself must be freedom magically turned into otherness. *Matter* or the thickening of being into a way of being must itself be a *project* in its doughiness. Meaning, finally, is the final goal of every edifice. Except the *disjecta membra* [leftovers] of intellectual intuition: on one side, a freedom that cannot produce being, on the other, a being that does not stem from any freedom.

Whence the two meanings of creation: the architect and the house, the painter and the house. The architect's house is and is not a house. *Mechanism*, man's creation—outside of artistic creations and social laws—is a false synthesis. There

341. "The miracle of great poetry such as this would seem to me to be the following: whenever conditions arise which permit its visible development and interpretation, it surrenders to them; and with a sort of adaptable ingenuousness it can replace all things simply because all things are absent." Stéphane Mallarmé, "Solemnity," in *Selected Prose*, p. 70.

342. "If we look at our work immediately after completing it, we are still too involved; if too long afterwards, we cannot pick up the thread again." Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 35.

ought to be a creation of being starting from being (the house's *being* on the basis of the rock's *being*) if the new being were a synthesis through and through, that is, if the matter itself that helped to make it up were modified by the organic ensemble that it enters into, at every level, and if each structure were truly governed by the whole, if a certain integrity of the whole tended to uphold it. This is not the case. There is an imitation of synthesis on the plane of mechanism, an imitation of solidarity on the plane of independence, an imitation of the tendency to persevere in its being on the plane of inertia.

Therefore it is permissible to consider the mechanical object as an assemblage and to see in it only an articulation of elements obeying laws of nature. The object then appears as a natural formation and there is no place for man. In this case, man *never* creates. It is always *possible* that nature will realize one of these combinations of man, it is just highly unlikely. Instead of being raising itself above given being into another way of being (life on the basis of nitrogen, sulfur, etc.), no chance combination on the plane of being can give it. In other words, if one wants *to create* on the basis of *given* being, the object to which matter has *lent* being must transform this being into another type of being. But it is precisely this that *mechanism* does not do.

Here is some liquid air—ambiguity. Created or not? Before man *there was* no liquid air and yet the liquidity of air can be explained in physics by means of a mere combination of pressure and cooling, that is, man can be made to be absent from his work and it can be shown that the air can be produced by a pure interplay of natural forces. The liquid air is *nature*. Therefore, on one side, Mallarmé's idea: "Nature is there, we add nothing to it."³⁴³ Considered from the point of view of Nature, the object remains natural. But, *on the other side* in the *human world* the house is a new being. Appearance of a synthetically bound series of significations, indications of forms of behavior; it reflects civilization and the whole collectivity. It explains society, it is explained by society. At this level and *for man* it is a wholly synthetic being and beyond Nature. There is newness in the human world, which itself is absolutely new in relation to Nature.

What is new? A *signification*. And what is a signification? An objectivated idea. One objectivates an idea to the extent that one makes it appear before everyone and *over against* its creator. Now, the idea being unable to create its own matter, it is to that end Nature serves as a loan of being: It allows itself to be arranged according to the idea, but with this the idea becomes aware of itself, observes itself, and suggests itself through its being. It becomes being beyond being but nevertheless it is being because everything learned from being in itself is part of being.

So through the intermediary of the In-itself, thought places itself over against itself, the In-itself is the mediation by which the idea exists over against oneself

343. "Nature exists; She will not be changed, although we may add cities, railroads, or other inventions to our material world." Mallarmé, "Music and Literature," in *Selected Prose*, p. 48.

as a rebellious creature. The In-itself as a mediator allows an *equivalent* of intellectual intuition. The idea takes on being, closes itself off over against me, escapes me, becomes public. The In-itself communicates its inertia, its independence to it, the isolation of every “in itself,” separates out the idea, halting the dialectical movement. Then I can *see* it. This magical and necessary turning of the creature against its creator takes place through the loan of being that the In-itself makes to the idea, but with this loan of being every idea is *altered* by Being; it becomes being in itself.

This implies, beyond the inertia and the halting of movement, an infinite depth and an infinity of relations with the rest of the world. Let us be clear about these two points. The idea is transparent when it is an idea because it is an indivisible totality. It has no internal *plurality*. When it becomes an idea within the In-itself, it becomes a pseudo-unity or, if you want to put it that way, a pseudo-plurality. This is the eighth hypotheses of the *Parmenides*: “To a dim and distant view such a thing must appear one, but to closer and keener inspection each must appear without limit or multitude, being destitute of that one which does not exist.”³⁴⁴ What this means, in effect, is that the unity of the subjective idea is that of an act in the element of the Other (of Being in itself). It is the unity of a being. It is an inert unity that does not refer to the multiplicity that it unites in order to enfold this multiplicity within itself.

Therefore there is an independence and a dependence of the parts. Each one concretely tends to become isolated (walls crumble, floors warp, etc.), however it does so while remaining within the unity—it is the *planks* that warp. Note that the hypothesis of Parmenides that “the one is not” is the same in its consequences as “the one is”—because if *the one is not one* it is the same thing to say “the one is” or “the one is not.” Thus the infinite depth of the objective idea stems from the fact that its unity has become pure being that tends to persevere in its being.

In the second place, it gets inserted into *the world*. But the world is already a correlative of the upsurge of the human. It already refers to this unity as correlative to a universal project of unification. It is the spelling out of the relations of what has no relations. Already the significations are infinite and magical. The world is man’s initial creation. The object plunged into the world therefore finds itself inserted into this infinity of relationships and is related to everything. But these relations are not dialectical. They are pseudo-dialectical since their internal basis is inertia.

Thus man only creates for man and yet his creation is absolute. The being that he creates has a being that can be described *in the human world* and that is intermediary between the mineral and what is truly alive. This is why it is true that houses are haunted. Man creates precisely that combination of mind and thing that is no longer matter and not yet life, he creates this flickering of being

344. Plato, *Parmenides*, 165b–c, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, p. 955.

between the mechanistic and the mental, which becomes his *set of objects*. Through them he regrasps himself and thinks of himself as a thing haunted by man. Here we have analytic and materialist psychology. This is the psychology of the engineer and the worker, of the Marxist revolutionary. But this psychology, which turns unity into a being and unification into an obsession (associationism, etc.), necessarily is just an allegedly scientific psychology, in fact it is magical. For every tool is a thing that drags mind along with it, and man is a thing haunted by man.

This is the first type of creation: that of a *real* object where just the signification is created. The second type of creation: the house in a picture. Here form and matter are created at the same time, its being is truly an idea, and the idea is a being, but the creation as a whole lies entirely within the *imaginary*. The real matter serving as a pure analogon does not have its power of division.³⁴⁵ A perceived nose is divisible to infinity, after a certain degree of division it is not a nose. The nose grasped by way of the analogon is entirely a nose, it is either a nose or it disappears. The possible divisions of this canvas do not affect the nose—the nose is an act. And this act is the idea of the nose taking on a body. In other words, the nose is freedom. It is a nose without any depth, being the pure equivalent of a unitary act of thought that refers to a certain nose or rather to a certain specific impression provided by just this nose. Therefore it is a question of a nose that possesses in itself Spinoza's intellectual comprehension which has no parts. There is truly no divisibility of this matter. This does not mean, as in *life*, that no living organ is divisible *as* a living organ, it does mean that no division of this nose can be carried out, even mentally. So this nose is in space, since it is not a question of the pure idea of a nose, but here the distinction between form and matter does not exist: the form is not something other than the matter. Which is to say that this nose is given as the product of an intellectual intuition or, if you prefer, it is such as it would be if it were its own cause.

And no doubt the picture as a whole does possess a certain multiplicity: the hat, the face, the topcoat, the arm chair, etc. But this multiplicity is *cut off*, that is, the movement of my mind cannot go further than the author's decision without losing the picture as the picture it is. (We shall see below that this is true only at first.) Thus the unity of the picture appears as an abruptly cut off divisibility through the pure impossibility of further carrying out the division. This impossibility comes from the creator's decision. But this decision, being productive of the object, becomes imperative for the spectator. Therefore it presents itself to this spectator as the *law* of the picture (that is, as *being*) and also as an appeal from one freedom to another.

In sum, the very being of the picture, that is, its predetermined type of

345. The "subordination of the material structures to the ideal structures is possible only if the material structures are grasped as not exhausting the ideal structures, as if a relative independence were posited between the two" (*Psychology of Imagination*, p. 166).

divisibility, presents itself as freedom descended into being, as being/freedom. But the creator's will is not external to the object. It is the object itself that is this cut-off division. The difference with an *act*: an act also presents itself with an indecomposable unity, but since it is in the world it can always be transcended. The artist's freedom being an appeal to freedom is unsurpassable. To pose the question of the value of art in general and of the artist's talent is to fall back once again to the plane of the world and to escape the question/demand of the picture.

At the same time, the separated existences in the picture have a *finality*. But this finality is both transcendent and immanent. Depending on whether one considers each object in relation to the whole picture (transcendent finality)—the house is there *to* counterbalance the tree—or the picture as presenting the parts (immanent finality). Which is to say it is a question of a pure, indecomposable synthesis, but, depending on the direction of the look, of a multiplicity that arranges itself into a unity in its very appearing, or of a unity bursting out of its multiplicity. Breton's expression "*explosante-fixe*" is a good one.³⁴⁶ It signifies that the plurality and the unity of the world are perpetually justified. At the same time, the causal order is also signified: it is that *this lamp* illuminates *this face* (example: La Tour), but the causality itself is haunted.³⁴⁷ The beauty of the lighting *produces* its own causality. Finality being the action of the future on the present and the causality of the past on the present, we can say both that these times cancel each other out through interference and we have the eternal, and that the totality of time is given all at the same time.—This is what gives every gesture its magical grace: it is both a succession of positions and an indissolvable unity preceding its movements.

This is what ties together Tintoretto's human figures: their independence as *persons* itself appears to be present *to the whole*, to reflect itself upon the other.³⁴⁸ The total absence of any bond becomes a bond. It is the meditative solitude of this donor that determines the meditative solitude of his wife.³⁴⁹ The exteriority of indifference becomes interiority. At the same time, the object being imaginary does not have infinite relationships to the infinity of the real universe; but, from

346. André Breton (1896–1966), *L'Amour fou* (Paris: Gallimard, 1937), p. 26. "Convulsive beauty will be veiled-erotic, fixed-explosive, magic-circumstantial, or it will not be." *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 19.

347. Maurice-Quentin de La Tour (1704–1788), French portrait painter.

348. Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto (1518–1594), Mannerist painter of the Venetian school. Cf. "The Prisoner of Venice," in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations*, trans. Benita Eisler (New York: George Braziller, 1965), pp. 1–60 (French original 1957); "Tintoretto: St. George and the Dragon," in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, trans. John Mathews (New York: Pantheon, 1974), pp. 179–96 (French original 1966); Contat and Rybalka, *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, vol. 1, pp. 343–44.

349. Sartre may be referring to Tintoretto's "Doge Alvise Mocenigo and Family before the Madonna and Child" (c. 1573) in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

another side, the universe conceived of as a totality of being is entirely present in the mode of the imaginary in the picture: the picture stands out against the background of this imaginary world. At this level it gets confused with the artist's absolute freedom. Thus:

1) The world as inexhaustible productivity is the background of the object and produces it.

2) The intentionality that holds together the creation at the end of a thought disappears, absorbed by the object. Being and self-creation are one and the same. Being-in-itself is an opaque solidification of *self-creation*. The object is entirely in itself (within the imaginary), but it is entirely a creation. The act is matter.

3) Artistic creation is therefore a perpetual presentation of the whole world as wholly grounded in freedom. In this sense, knowledge and creation are inseparable. The artist *knows* the world and bears it as he knows it onto the canvas. But from the sheer fact of bringing it to canvas he creates it as imaginary. If God exists, creation itself is knowledge, for the picture in manifesting itself as creation manifests the divine creation. This is the primitive meaning of images in a temple: they are not confined to showing created objects; they signify the divine creation itself. One comes to contemplate the absolute phenomenon of creation by way of the created object. The work of art is a *symbol* of creation. But if God is dead, what was a symbol of creation becomes *both* pure creation and a sign that this creation *could have* existed. It is creation to the extent that the object did not exist previously and has come to exist through the artist's will. It is not creation (we shall come back to this) to the extent that the house precisely *is not* created, *does not exist*. I see the statue through the collapse of the real world. The stone falls away, it is not seen. Yet the forms given to the stone are real modifications, brought about by, created by the artist. As for the image, it does not exist. At least, someone will say, it exists as an image? No. For the image is not a reality. What is real is the mental act, the analogon, and the image is just the way an absent or nonexistent object presents itself. Thus the work of art has no existence except as correlative with a mental act.

4) Hence the analogon (stone, canvas covered with spots of color, etc.) is for the spectator a perpetual invitation to nihilate the world, that is, to refuse to perceive it and to consider it as submerged in Nothingness, so as to make an unreal, nonexistent world appear before himself, which is the same inasmuch as it is a product of the mind. The imaginary act is to pretend to nihilate the being of the totality of Being and to posit Being as not being as an imaginary world. But the result seems to be that the work of art gets realized as pure creation—if one emphasizes the fact that the nihilated world, which cannot serve as a motive, is entirely retained and recreated by way of the analogon through an act that is most typical of freedom—and as well—if one draws attention to the fact that the act of purely recreating the world can *a priori* yield only an imaginary world, that is, a nothingness—as proof of the *a priori* impossibility of any absolute creation.

There is no use in saying that at least one thing exists in the *image*, which is the essence (common, for example, to the real miser and to Molière's Miser),³⁵⁰ because the function of the essence is different in the two cases: it is grasped in the real thing as beyond the real yet upheld by the real itself, whereas in art it is given in an imaginary mode as producing what is real. An essence producing itself and offering its exemplifications in terms of the imaginary is the aesthetic type of essence. This essence undergoes the same radical change the individual does, it is transported into the imaginary as an absolute cause on the basis of being ruined as a real essence.

This impossibility of *creating*, so forcefully felt by Mallarmé, is at the origin of what poets in the 19th century called the "dream." "Nothing is beautiful except what does not exist," because, literally, *beauty* (the world as recreated by a freedom) does not exist. Also the origin of the Baudelairean and Mallarméan sense of *powerlessness* (which follows the death of God). At the origin, finally, of the efforts of Duchamp,³⁵¹ etc. to create a real/imaginary (*ready-made*).³⁵² The perpetual ambiguity of the work of art: it is *relative* to the world, that is, the world is the essential and the work of art the inessential (as concerns its being, since it is being/reflection)—on the contrary, it is the type, the idea (unity on the basis of freedom, intelligible space, causality submitted to finality) for which the world is the lesser form as exteriority (Nature imitates art).

As soon as a goal is assigned to the human species and this goal is finite, as soon as one pictures it as reality, everything falls into darkness, the human species become ants. The given closes in on itself. The goal has to be infinite. But if it is beyond attaining for each generation, this is discouraging. Therefore it has to be finite. This signifies that each person has to realize it and yet it is still to be realized. A *finite* enterprise for each person within humanity's infinite enterprise. On the contrary, it matters little if an external accident suppresses the human species.

Mediocrity: to lose sight of the goal for the means. Alienation and mediocrity are the major vices. Therefore authentic man never loses sight of the absolute goals of the human condition. He is the pure choice of his absolute goals. These goals are: to save the world (in making being be), to make freedom the ground of the world, to take up creation for his own use, and to make the origin of the world absolute through freedom taking hold of itself. And these goals are not inscribed in the nature of things or of Being, instead they are called into question by the very existence of being. As soon as existence wells up, Being is called into

350. Jean-Baptiste Molière (1622–1673), *The Miser*, in *The Actor's Molière*, vol. 1, trans. Albert Bermel (New York: Theater Book Publishers, 1987), pp. 45–124.

351. Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), French artist who broke down the boundaries between works of art and everyday objects.

352. "Ready-made" is in English in the French text.

question, perhaps lost, and has to be saved. Thus man attains himself in accepting losing himself in order to save Being.

Ethics' dilemma: if the goal is *already* given, it becomes a fact and being, not a value. If the goal *is not* given, then it is gratuitous, it is the object of a whim. What is misunderstood is that the goal has to be willed in order to be, this is its first characteristic. There is no goal except for a freedom that wills to be free. But, on the other hand, the very existence of man as a free and transcending project necessarily poses the question of the goal in the sense that it calls the universe in its being into question. Freedom, on the other hand, calls itself into question by its very upsurge or rather it is "called into question." Therefore there is an original upsurge not of goals but of questions. The answers are not given. There is no answer. The answers are not to be *found* but to be invented and chosen.

Man is the being who has to be to give a meaning to Being. He does not give this meaning to a witness; he does not manifest Being to any God—he manifests it to himself. But he is—without willing to be so or choosing to be so—through his mere willing up, the being that brings it about that Being may not have a meaning. In other words, his existence establishes an undetermined relation of *being to meaning* (ontic-ontological) and, henceforth, it is for man that this relation exists, therefore for man that Being may not have any meaning. But it is in his original ontological structure and through a pure confrontation that he is so. Man therefore is the being who, in placing himself into question in his own being, calls into question the meaning of Being for him. And without a doubt this adventure comes to being in another thing than it.

Yet, on the other hand, what is an ec-static adventure for Being is an internal structure for man. It is not as a whim that he interrogates himself about the meaning of Being: he is nothing else but this adventure of Being. Everything occurs as if Being, not being able to call itself into question in immanence, called itself into question outside of itself and as if this ec-centric calling into question were man. Hence we might say—in denaturing the terms somewhat—that the question is *given* (since man discovers it as his own contingency) and the answer is invented and chosen. In other words, as in Hegel, the absolute is subject. Except the recuperation of the universe by the subject does not take place in immanence but in transcendence (dualism). So we should have said: the absolute is *subjects*. What misleads us here is that, since the question is half given, one presumes that the answer is also given. Being is not reinvaginated by *an* absolute consciousness—absolute consciousnesses decide that it has a meaning *for them* (that is, in the absolute).

Value: my goal for the other. It is what my freedom wants, become a fact for the Other. If my transcendence is transcended, it is a *fact* that I want justice.

But this fact is still structured as something that ought-to-be since this ought-to-be appears to me as a fact. This being-that-ought-to-be is what value is. Or rather I learn from the Other what *my* fact is for the Other and I look at my project with another's eyes: a value. Or it is the Other (lord, prince, father) who makes me adopt his project, so this project of a freedom, becoming a constraining fact for me, takes on the structure of a value. A value is therefore necessarily an alienated project.

For Hegel the dialectic has no need of any proofs, apart from his system *per se*. But it still requires that History end. If every determination is a limitation and if the negation of a negation is a creation, it is through the virtual presence of the Concept in its moments. If History does not end, that is, if we cannot rediscover the moments within the Concept, which has become and which totalizes everything, the dialectic cannot confirm itself. Marxism puts man at the heart of the dialectic: the dialectic has no end. Therefore it is just the object of a hypothesis. The existence of the dialectic is no more provable to the man who is at the heart of the dialectic than the existence of God is provable from a consideration of the world when man sees just a part of the world. Hegel's dialectic is the law of being that is above all being; the Marxist dialectic is at most the supposedly empirical assertion of a fact. But in this case it would be necessary:

1st, to show that there are dialectical processes to the becoming of the world;

2d, to attempt to tie them to what one knows *a priori* about Nature or about man.

The former inquiry can only lead to the following result: in certain regions of being certain temporal forms develop dialectically. That is, they seek to form a relatively autonomous whole within Being and this whole is already present in its *moments*. But this in no way implies the possibility of affirming that *everything* is dialectical. However, experience can show how interferences with nondialectical series or even with other dialectical series can conceal or derail the original process.

For example, if Scientific Nature does not develop following a dialectical process but rather according to exteriority and if human history is *a priori* partially or totally dialectical, the fact that this history is centered in the inanimate world by technology would introduce an antidialectical factor into the dialectic itself. But even if Nature were itself dialectical, it would have to be one with human history if there were to be no interference between them. If by chance we have really to do with two orders of dialectical development, each one would hinder the other.

Finally, no assertion about what is said to be a fact can prove that the dialectic is a universal law. For example, the fact that the region of aesthetic being might be a dialectical development does not prove that the military or economic or religious development of the same society is also of a dialectical type. Or, on the

contrary, it might be that there is a dialectical moment to every human process, but this is just one transitory moment, a temporal structure that gets eliminated as time goes on.

So experimental inquiry may lead us to the discovery of dialectical orders and we can attempt to classify them. But the same inquiry can also allow us to grasp nondialectical orders which also have to be classified. Once these facts are grasped and determined, it is necessary to attempt to explain *why* certain interconnections are dialectical and others are not. For example, an ontological inquiry into Being-in-itself starting from the ontological argument as well as an inquiry into phenomena starting from Science will demonstrate to us that the phenomenon of being along with Being-in-itself are *a priori* nondialectical because they necessarily eliminate *relationships*, due to their being in the exteriority of indifference. If men were related to one another as things are, even the very appearance of a dialectic would be impossible. But is this the way things are for them? In fact there are three aspects of human historialization through which a certain dialecticalization of History may be introduced:

1st, the ambiguity of the For-itself, the tension between contraries;

2d, the subjective process (grasped in the *cogito*) of comprehension as surpassing (therefore as negativity—creation).

3d, the relations among For-itselfs or detotalized totality.

But at the same time that these aspects demonstrate to us the possibility of a dialectic, they also show us its limits. To begin, let us just consider number 3.

A) To the extent that the dialectic is a *dialogue*, the existence of Me and of the Other opens the door to a dialectic. I am (in the unreflective) or, if you will, I am in immediacy. What I am, I am *for the Other*. And since the Other is for me, I am for me through the mediation of the Other.

[B)] But I immediately realize that this knowledge through mediation applies only in those limit cases where the concept is a concept that I cannot form about myself without the Other. For example: “witty, vulgar, miserly,” etc. Yet there is knowledge that I can form about myself without *mediation*, which however is not immediate. For example: reflection teaches me that I take pleasure in something, for example, even though the other may not be aware of it.

It is not true therefore that I learn about myself through the other, only that I learn about my being-for-the-other through the other, which is a truism. So here I am with two types of consciousness: the one mediated which comes to me by way of other people, the other coming to me by way of myself. No synthesis is possible between these kinds of knowledge since the one resides in the Other and the one resides in me. A third term that is neither one nor the other would be necessary. For the synthesis that I do make *in myself* is a joke since the thought the Other has of me remains unchanged in the Other. I am constituted by the Other as Other than myself and I grasp myself as Other than the Other sees me as being. If I try to give the Other an image of me that conforms to what I am for myself and if I succeed in doing so or if I fit myself

to the view the Other has of me, it would turn out that I would be in the dimension of the For-me something similar to what I am in the dimension of Being-for-Others, but since this latter presupposes the absolute and unsurpassable existence of the Other, there would be an alignment of one of these modes of being, in its specificity, in terms of the other but not a *synthesis*. No more than one can synthesize height and depth in space. There can be reciprocity of action or a succession of reciprocal actions, but nothing more.

There could be a dialectic here only if we could consider the absolute lived experience that is the Other and the lived experience that I am as incomplete truths that a larger truth might subsume. But as we see: (α) there is no third term or totalization of these two terms. (β) Each one is an unsurpassable absolute.

Example: master and slave. The master as master has his truth in the slave—yes. But he also has his truth in himself as a man who desires, who fears, etc. Dialectically: the master finds his truth in the slave who recognizes him as essential, but since the slave is inessential, the essentiality of the master is inessential. But this only affects the essentiality of the master in his being-for-others, not in his being-for-oneself. Let us immediately add that there is a recognition among masters which Hegel does not discuss. And there they recognize each other in terms of a reciprocal essentialness. And if the society of masters has its own cohesion, it maintains itself by itself as a constant force, therefore as static. Thus the slave, in his efforts to uproot himself from slavery (Stoicism, Skepticism, Christianity), runs into a static wall that allows him to develop his dialectic only “when all other things are equal,” that is, in terms of the antidialectical persistence of an absolute situation. In other words, the slave’s dialectic can develop only under the condition of a nondialectical permanence that favors it.

But this permanence is not, as Kojève suggests, a death. There is a history of masters. They are those free Greek men who created religion, philosophy, and the Greek art forms, they are those free Roman men who conquered the Mediterranean world and conceived the Roman code or law. What is necessary to the slave’s development is the permanence of the master as master. Beyond this, the master’s development can be dialectical or not dialectical.

Thus, in assuming the most favorable instance, that [is] that the relation of one master to another is dialectical, we have two dialectical processes whose condition is the fixed constancy of a bond of reciprocal dependence. And if some factors shift over from the master to the slave (military defeat leading to a revolution), since the history of the master/history of the slave relation is nondialectical, this defeat is *chance* for the slave. Reciprocally, if the slave’s skeptical philosophy inserts him into the master’s history, this too must be *by chance*. Moreover, there are slaves who are neither Stoics nor Skeptics—the *masses*. And the attitude of the masses remains constant.

Finally, when in the second part of his *Phenomenology* Hegel presents the dialectical evolution of the immediate Spirit of the Greek city-state, it is the history of free men, of the masters that he retraces. How is the dialectic of

the slave to be inserted in it? Whatever its relation to the dialectic of the city-state, it *is not* itself dialectical since the slave is not part of the city. For example, it is established that the slave has no precise familial structure, therefore the structure of the patriarchal family cannot *encompass* the family structure of the slaves. Once and for all the ongoing action of servitude prevents any slave family from being constituted.

Yet it remains that the relation of the totality of masters to the totality of slaves can be defined [as] *a struggle*. But, in the first place, this struggle is just one aspect of their relationships. For we have to see that the other aspect is the complicity of the oppressed with the oppressor (resignation, the search for some form of justification). Next, we would need to know whether this struggle is *lived out*. The slave's resistance does not go so far as the most acute *prise de conscience* of oneself, it leads to indifference, to passivity, the slave is not *interested* in his work. The slave was certainly one of the causes for the fall of the Roman Empire. But in the sense that the productivity of slave labor is quite low. Why? Because the slave is uneducated and "lazy" (the inertia of a lack of interest).

What is true is that the *interests* of the slave and of the master are opposed to one another (but not as much as one says. The master's unhappiness affects the slave. The slave does have an interest in the *status quo* if the master is not too inhumane. Once a bond of dependency is established by force, it creates a kind of solidarity). But if these interests are logically and noematically opposed to one another—that is, for the historian who *observes* History—this does not necessarily signify that they are "lived out" as opposed and therefore that this opposition gets embodied and becomes a force. The slave in the Roman community is often devoted to his master and if he desires manumission, it is through the normal ways. Naturally there are sporadic revolts. But there was never a class coming to consciousness of itself.

What is more, by even admitting that the relation of the slave to the master is one of *opposition*, this determines an ongoing tension rather than a struggle with its phases and metamorphoses. The master always acts *in the presence of* the slave (he has to fear revolt, assassination, etc.) and the slave cannot forget the master's presence. But this force acts like a constant force, or if you will like a catalyst. Each of the master's behaviors is taken up *into the slave's consciousness of his existence*. But if this tension is not taken up in turn and modified, it is an independent variable.

And the class "struggle" determines none of the important phenomena in ancient history: neither the struggle for the Mediterranean, nor the constitution of Empires. Nor the appearance of Christianity. α) It was proclaimed by a man of low estate, but a free man, to the free men of Judea; β) transplanted into the Greek milieu of gnosticisms and mysteries, it was worked over and opened outward by cultivated men; γ) spread among the masses, it really had no effect until it won over the middle classes and the aristocracy. . . . Nor did the fall of the empire, since the principal agent—the barbarian invasions—had its origin

in the impossibility of Rome preserving such a broad empire with the means of transport and communication available. The feudal class is the advent of newly rich men, of new lords but not of a new class. It continues the work of the aristocratic class.

Thus slavery and later serfdom have acted as *an almost constant factor* in our historical evolution but without being deeply affected by this evolution and without acting upon or transforming it through some synthesis. The revolution of '89 was carried out *by the bourgeoisie* and the city workers. Not by the peasants who still contained servile elements. Colonial slavery was suppressed by the deputies in the mother country; American slavery by a war between rulers. So the servile masses appear as an element of inertia, which likens them to a *causal factor*.

It is no less certain the servile form of labor is an essential factor in the ideologies and customs of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages. But these ideologies were produced *by the masters* to justify the constant regime of exploitation of man by man. On this plane, in effect, we have a trinity: the Same (consciousness of oneself and that the Other is the same), the Other (consciousness that the Other is Other and that I am Other than myself and Other than the Other), and the effort at a synthesis: to justify my ipseity as master and the otherness of the slave—or that other effort: dissolve the Other into the Same. But this really exists only for the masters.

Everything occurs as though the dialectical principle that implies a constant interaction among factors were cut off in certain cases by the principle of *thresholds*, that is: a historical group can only act given a certain degree of concentration, of integration, and of self-consciousness; if this threshold has not been crossed, one acts on it but it doesn't act. It is present, therefore, in a collectivity as an inert element that gets fashioned and also as a representation in terms of which the acting groups determine themselves. But this passivity being an element of *exteriority*, the notion of struggle needs to be replaced by that of a *break*. There are breaks in collectivities which mean that these collectivities cannot have the internal unity that is necessary to the dialectic. These breaks are presented in terms of certain dimensions and not in terms of others. For example, a parasitic collectivity that arms its slaves against an enemy is in fact a military unit, but from the social point of view such serfdom represents a *break*.

This brings us to the notion of a detotalized totality. We saw earlier that Hegel's error stemmed from the fact that there are masters and not *one* master. He makes the error Dühring will make with his Robinson Crusoe and his Friday. Therefore there is recognition among masters of one another. If the master were the only one, he would indeed be obliged to consider his slave as a man since he would have his truth only through the slave. But since there are many masters, they find their truth in one another. There remains, however, the uneasy feeling that alien eyes may alter this truth. Whence the contrary invention (the tendency opposed to that of the single master): destroy the slave

as a man, make a thing of him. The theory of the subman in terms of different aspects (especially race). A limitation on the master clearly follows, from the very concept of a superior race, in relation to the totalizing concept of *man*. And this totalizing concept does seem to be *potentially* there like the Hegelian Spirit. It is the slavery of the master (a dialectical but internal element—it is the master who, in subjecting the slave, determines himself as considering himself as a master, hence as limiting himself).

But, above all else, this brings us back to the concept of man *who cannot close himself off*. Let there be three people, A, B, C. Let us assume that by themselves they constitute a certain social class. This class needs to define itself, I agree, to determine itself in relation to the objective situation common to the three people. But this is not everything. A class is a relationship. I am in class C only because other people belong to class C. Therefore the objective determination takes place in relation to the situation of other people. But this is not all. There would be no class unity if it were not brought about *from the outside*. The social attitude of the people in class C is necessary for constituting the class unity of A, B, and C. For class means being for the other. My class is the Other in me. The objectivity of my situation is my situation for the Other. Therefore I do not become aware of my class as the objectivity of my existence except through the mediation of the Other.

But, as I have shown, the Other is not changed by this mediation, he is not surpassed by the third moment of the progression. He remains outside of the dialectical progression. No doubt one can say that the constitution of A, B, and C as a class has the effect that through the class outlook of A, B, and C, a, b, and c constitute themselves as a class in turn. Then there is a return of mediation. But this takes place *in a, b, and c* on the occasion of their becoming aware of A, B, and C, and this subjective phenomenon in a, b, and c is only an action in turning back on itself. A reciprocity of actions, if it does not lead to a higher unity, is not dialectical. A, B, and C grasp themselves therefore as being part of a class insofar as they are seen by a. In other words, from the beginning, the concept requires the exteriority of one of the terms. But insofar as they are thought of as a unity by a, A, B, and C are *Others* who do not reach each other as himself. Their unity is external to them, in a freedom. Therefore it escapes them, they have a centrifugal unity; their class (or their race for Blacks) is a form of alienation. If they want to unify themselves, they must recapture this centrifugal unity and internalize it.

Therefore they lay claim to a unity that flees from them; they want to think it in their turn. This is to install *the other* in themselves. But to be precise they can grasp the Other only through the intermediary of the other. Hence the step by which A grasps himself as belonging to the same class as B and C consists in embracing B and C, others, within the unity of the class and uniting to them the fictive projection of an Ego, a schematism void of ipseity. At the same time, his own ipseity is experienced in a nonthetic consciousness. And in this way the

living unity of the For-itself falls outside the class unity. The For-itself is outside the class because it is constituting with respect to this class.

Or instead, in liaison with the first operation, it grasps itself as Ego in an accompanying reflection and confers on this reflectively perceived Ego the class structure. But in this case B and C fall outside the living synthesis and are abstractly present, as the Me was present in the first case. In the judgments “they’re my class” or “I belong to their class,” the terms “they” and “I” are not homologous. The Ego always lies outside the class totality inasmuch as it reaches itself without any mediation. The structure “nonthetic consciousness” implies that the operator who brings about the synthesis always stays outside of the synthesis he brings about. The class is others and myself as other. But, what is more, B and C look at me. B, for example, constitutes me as belonging to *his* class along with C. Under his gaze, I sense that I am united with C. But in what I will call the otherness of immanence. In the sense that my class escapes me in B, just as before with a. Except I can recapture B since he is in fact of my class, either by tying him to C (but I stay outside), or in making myself be tied to him through C, who remains outside.

In none of these operations does absolute inwardness get realized. In none of these relations are the terms homogeneous, there is always one that is external to the synthesis and that only figures in it virtually, as an empty intention. Therefore I am in-my-class in the mode of not being so: I throw myself into it. I hypostasize myself in it and at the same time I surpass it in the unity of my project (which is, for example, revolution).

So the concept of class is henceforth an endless round where each member successively falls outside of the round as the one who makes it be unified, in surpassing it toward his own ends. The concept of class is therefore perfectly thinkable if I totalize all its members minus one (me) and if I put myself outside of it. But it is *unrealizable* as a subjective unity. This indicates that class as a synthetic unity can be present to all its internal phenomena as a synthesis determining the structures of its parts only because it is not a unity but a quasi unity, an aberrant unity. It cannot be like the Hegelian Spirit the meaning of the dialectical interconnection of its moments because there is always a flight outside of it. In a word: to the extent it aims at being a totality, its internal structures do have dialectical relations; to the extent that it is a quasi totality, its internal structures are just quasi-dialectical or a dialectic cut off by exteriority. First, the dialectic will be noematic and not noetic, that is, it will be in *the noema* class as constituted and this in no way implies that the moments of the noesis are dialectical. In the second place, each secondary temporal structure (a strike, for example, a shift in opinion) will be affected in its character of a totality relative to the sign “quasi totality,” which defines the former. And the relation of two partial quasi totalities is no longer a dialectical phenomenon.

What indeed is the dialectic? It is the synthetic unity of a totality spread out over time. In an atemporal totality, in effect, since the whole governs the second-

ary structures, no secondary structure is intelligible without its complementary structure. The sole fact, therefore, of positing (determining) one of these structures calls for the other and the total intelligibility turns out to be the whole. Spread out over time, this conception means that every form that appears necessitates, if it is to be intelligible or if it is to be, the complementary form and that these two, once they appear, unite in the totality that they *were*.

But in the case that concerns us the complementary notions cannot unite into a whole (the strike and the coming to class consciousness) except in expelling one of their elements: the striking worker. The strike is a process, a nonfinite or indefinite object because it does not accomplish itself (I am and I am not in it), class too. These two *open* notions no longer have a rigor that can be called on. The strike is a subjective/objective phenomenon. Subjective insofar as it is *my* strike, the strike I make be, which depends on *my* action; objective insofar as it is the strike of others, seen by others, and within which I am in a situation. It is both an *existential* (the correlate of an existential attitude) and a transcendent object. I am inside like an objective unity *made* by the strike (therefore like a dependent structure of the whole particular synthesis: the strike), I apprehend myself as *Other* in terms of this strike—and, at the same time, I make it exist through my project, my comprehension, my judgments.

In whatever way I take myself in terms of the strike, I can never close the circle. If I consider the strike as the existential correlate of my attitude and my project, I find myself in it for I am put there by the united action of other absolute existents who are carrying it out with me, I am put back in it once again therefore in order to complete the notion on another plane of being: being-for-others. But if I pass over to being-for-others, I am obliged to refer myself to some unifying subjectivity transcendent to the process (my own or that of a *Look*) which, as a result, leaves the process open-ended.

Now, if the thesis is to call forth an antithesis, it must be incomplete as a structure of the whole but complete as a relative totality. For Stoicism to pass over into Skepticism, the phenomenon of Stoicism must as Stoicism be all that it can be.³⁵³ In a word, the Stoic consciousness must be the exact noetic correspondent of Stoicism as a *noema*. However if negativity is given in Stoicism itself or in the strike through the plurality of consciousnesses, if, perpetually, realism refers to nominalism and nominalism refers back again to realism, then the dialectic is perpetually broken off. For there can be a nominalist dialectic.

If I say, “there is no strike, there are only strikers,” I can imagine that the interconnection among the facts of the consciousness of each striker does operate dialectically. And if I say “only the strike exists, the strikers are just its *modes*,” there can again be a dialectic. But, if, in order to explain the transformations the strike undergoes, I am obliged to pass through the strikers’ consciousness, that is, if, after having grasped the strike as a collective reality, I am obliged to

353. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, par. 202, p. 123.

see it as the noema of a free individual consciousness and if I am once again obliged to go beyond this consciousness in order to reenter the collective aspect, in both cases the dialectic is *broken off*. There is a dialectic up to a certain point, a break, an irrational leap into another dimension of being, a new dialectic, and a new leap.

For example, if I say that a strike that began spontaneously (salaries were too low, the cost of living too high) was made use of by political elements in the unions for political ends, I am giving an antidialectic description. Indeed, to the extent that I say that the strike arose spontaneously from the situation, there is a homogeneity between the situation (objective yet lived-through conditions) and the strike (a collective reaction), there is a embryonic dialectic for the situation did not *cause* the strike. This situation had to be experienced and it is the way in which it was experienced that will be the surpassing of this situation through refusing it (negativity) in favor of a better situation.

There is a close kinship between freedom and the dialectic. But as soon as we arrive at the idea of “making use of something for political ends,” this assumes that the strike has become an *object* for certain consciousnesses in the union, which with this transcend the strike. For if the strike itself through reflecting upon itself is transformed into a political strike, we will not speak of *making use* of it. So the strike that is lived as a diffuse spontaneity and that dialectically organizes itself is at the same time, for some strikers, an object that one can govern and manipulate.

Usually the bourgeois will speak of a strike provoked by outsiders (individualism, nominalism), whereas the communists will speak of a strike that develops spontaneously, we have only to support it. In both cases, there is not just bad faith, there is the impossibility of grasping the phenomenon in its totality. The bourgeois explanation is purely subjective (the evil instincts of the leaders, private interests—bought off by Russia—mystification, the worker’s naiveté, etc.), the C.P.’s purely objective. In both cases one rejects the open, untotalizable system, one passes over to the pure object or to the pure subject. But in reality, the representation of the strike is a factor in the strike and since this representation of the strike is for those particular consciousnesses that are the consciousnesses of the strikers, abruptly the strike as the totality that *encompasses them* (insofar as they are looked at by all the other strikers) becomes the object that they are acting upon.

Therefore for a striker the strike he is involved in gets experienced on one of the following planes: (α) As an objective representation. They have decided to strike. Therefore I must do so. The strike as an *object*. Decided upon by others. He is outside of it. (β) The strike as a situation *to be surpassed*: “the strike is dragging on, how am I to feed my kids, I’ll have to borrow from X,” etc. Its development is dialectical: it will last at least as long as, etc. (γ) The strike as seen by the bosses: will they give in? The unity of the strikers, but with a centrifugal pole. (δ) The strike seen by the union leaders. The worker is still an

object but seen in the exteriority of immanence. Only the leader *directs the strike*. The worker stops seeing the collective dialectical development of the strike. A situation, he becomes an object along with the others for the transcendent freedom of a consciousness. The strike as an organic, *selbständig* phenomenon becomes a controlled phenomenon within the field of a free consciousness. (€) In turn, he decides to obey or to resist (worker's Power), which presupposes that he represents the strike to himself as an object and as an object for the Other. A new break.

So the strike is a *true object*, except that insofar as it is constituted by several consciousnesses, it always has one dimension or a plurality of dimensions that gets away from each particular consciousness, it is a prismatic object that tends to develop dialectically (insofar as *for me* the other consciousnesses as transcended transcendences do so) but whose dialectic is broken off by the leap into the consciousness of another or into my own. Therefore it is neither a dialectical object nor a counterdialectical object, it is a dialectic with holes in it.

And even if its planners do not exploit the strike but help it to develop in its own sense, the representation of the strike as dialectical is not itself a dialectical phenomenon. If, for example, the planners, understanding that the bosses are going to give in but that the workers are about to give up, tighten discipline in order to avoid a return to work, this action is counterdialectical because it is the action of a part on the whole (without reciprocity) whereas the dialectic is the hidden and permanent action of the whole on the parts.

In other words, the historical event presupposes something immediate that can be dialectical and a partial reflection whereby it passes over to the status of being an object. This means that History presupposes (in assuming the most favorable case) a double action: that of the organic and dialectical development of the process and that of the representation of this dialectical development. Since there is a plurality of consciousnesses, this representation of the dialectic is not itself dialectical. History is dialectical, the surpassing of the dialectic, and the interference between the dialectic and its surpassing. Or if you prefer: the dialectic is plunged into History. The dialectic shows that each notion passes over into the *Other*. But History is a superdialectic in that it is always Other than what it is. It is *other* than the dialectic in that it is dialectical and it is dialectical if one considers it as a purely causal development.

Another consideration: Stoicism passes over into Skepticism.³⁵⁴ Perfect. But there are still Stoics. And in remaining they act on the synthesis that surpasses them. Let A be the thesis, B the negative moment, C the synthesis. The interplay among these concepts runs as follows. For example, Christianity leads to Reformation. But there are still Catholics. So: 1st, an action by the Reformation on the Catholics, which is not a surpassing but a contracting inward. Catholicism

354. "Scepticism is the realization of that of which Stoicism was only the Notion, and is the actual experience of what the freedom of thought is" (ibid., p. 123).

is not just *erholen* [left as it was] by the Reformation, it reacts against the Reformation and encompasses it in turn in order to surpass it. 2d, an action of this new Christianity on the Reformation, etc.

Hence thesis—antithesis—synthesis. But since the thesis and the antithesis remain: action of the synthesis on the thesis and on the antithesis, action of the antithesis on the thesis, action of the thesis and the antithesis on the synthesis. (Neostoicism, Neoskepticism, etc. Catholic forms still to be found in Sweden, etc., etc.). Therefore there is an inverted dialectic where the thesis becomes the synthesis of the antithesis and the synthesis, to cite just one example. This is due to the plurality of consciousnesses. For example, an ideology A is negated by the ideology B (progressive), whence the synthesis AB. But the social groups that uphold A remain. And there comes a moment when they rejuvenate their theory by introducing into it something that will surpass A, B, and the synthesis AB. So the surpassing comes about simply because surpassed social groups surpass others in turn, rather than being dead or liquidated in the first surpassing.

Dialectic: we have to start from the idea of totality. But already there is a shift. From the fact that there is a Whole (a summation of everything) one concludes that the Whole is one. Refusal of the Parmenidian hypothesis. If the one is and is not. But in this totality, thought necessarily carves out just a fragment because it is partial. Now this fragment is precisely something abstract for it cannot exist by itself. To determine something is therefore necessarily to limit it if we assume a finite thought confronted with the Whole. So each abstract whatever, through its very insufficiency of being, by its call for a complement of meaning and being, invites thought to surpass it, hence to negate its finitude. All positing necessarily implies a complement. Negation, it implies in itself the negation of negation. Thus with regard to the Whole, even were it to be given outside of time, thinking about it needs some temporalization in order to come to this thought about the Whole. There is a dialectic if one posits that there is *one* Truth, that is, there is no other truth than the whole truth.

Beginning from the moment when the movement of thinking takes place as a negation of negation, we have the following dialectical schematism. Thought *determines* what are limits, therefore it negates, surrounds A with a lacuna that allows it to be considered by itself. But A presents itself as insufficient in its lacuniary status, so the movement of thought is to surpass A on the basis of A's own exigencies, that is, on the basis of the exigencies of the Whole present in A as its underlying meaning and the unintelligibility of its very determination. Therefore negation of negation. But consciousness being in movement, this new negation will be given to us as a broader determination but still a negation. Thus originally the dialectic is the temporalization of a finite thought confronted with an infinite totality.

Second hypostasis: This infinite movement of thought is what one turns into the infinite movement by which the Whole constitutes itself.

In effect, if the noema is a progression through a negation of negation, the

noesis is similarly a negation of negation. In determining A as only being A, my thought determines itself as being *only* thought about A. So the movement of thought becomes the movement of Being because the Whole cannot comprehend within itself the thought of the Whole. The result is that if the Truth is a totality, there is no other truth than this truth thinking itself in the Absolute Subject. And consequently each *determination* owes its exteriority just to its negative limitation. In limiting its object, thought sets up a world in front of itself. Insofar as it suppresses this limitation, it rediscovers it and swallows it up into itself. The same idea in Kant and Husserl: an object is transcendent in that it refers to infinite operations *which have not been carried out* at present. Let us try to conceive of an instant when all these operations have been carried out and the object evaporates into *thought*.

What remains of all this if we assume in effect:

1st, that there is neither absolute nor total truth but that totality can be total within the world. There are *totalities*, not *one* totality. A man is a totality and an absolute subject. But he is not totalizable with *another* man. What is more, the *human condition* is a totality but it cannot be totalized along with the In-itself. This does not signify that there is another kind of truth, rather that there is a truth based on external relations. Three external relations: among men, between man and Nature, among natural phenomena. 1st, the exteriority in immanence of the For-itself in relation to the For-others (that is, A and B are persons. $A \rightarrow B$ is a totality, a form. $B \rightarrow A$ a totality, another form. But the relation $A \rightarrow B \leftrightarrow B \rightarrow A$ is a relationship of exteriority since there is no support between them. There is only a *void*, cf. *Being and Nothingness*.³⁵⁵ Therefore there is a possible AB dialectic and a possible BA one but the ensemble of the phenomenon or pseudo unity, pseudo totality is *both* a possible object of thought, since there is an action of $B \rightarrow A$ on $A \rightarrow B$ and vice versa, and a relationship of exteriority. At the heart of this twofold dialectic we have therefore an unsurpassable relationship of exteriority. Use the example of a *struggle* that I shall look at later).

Because of this we can conceive of *statistical laws* for certain anthropological regions, which are in essence summations of exteriority. For example, a demographic law: the connection between the cost of living and the birth rate. This connection is one of *exteriority*, its basis is the nihilation of being and of the relationship that *separates* men who by themselves are in relation to one another. There are dialectical relations of unity between couples (discussing birth), in each For-itself (making up his own mind in light of the situation). But the whole is based on the exteriority of couples. Therefore one can do the sum of births on the one hand and consider *as external* to it the relationship of the cost of living to the number of births; that is, an external connection of the type where

355. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 185: "precisely because [the external negation] is exteriority, it cannot be by itself; it refuses all supports, it is by nature *unselbständig*, and yet it can not be referred to any substance. It is a *nothing*."

A is a causal factor of B. 2d, the exteriority/interiority of man in relation to Nature. Depends on 3 (which I will not work out: the exteriority of Nature).

Complex: the movement of thought may be dialectical but the discovery of the object is based on exteriority: connections based on factors. Archimedes's thinking could be synthetic, Archimedes's principle is analytic.³⁵⁶ The surpassing of a situation can be synthetic and dialectical—but *Homo faber* as a technician organizes (cf. above) pseudosyntheses on the basis of a relationship of exteriority, which will give back his image on the plane of exteriority to him.

2d, however, there are *dialectics*. This is what I wanted to get to. But oddly the dialectic, which has a meaning only within the perspective of some totality, resolves itself into a plurality of dialectics. And this pluralism is not a plurality of independent substances, rather different substances are bound together by the relation of exteriority. Truth lies in the synthesis of neorealism and Hegelianism.

What does it mean then that there should be a dialectic in the For-itself considered in terms of its pure immanence? First of all, the fact that each particular decision that it makes gets related to the totality of its choices as its determination and, then, as its limitation. With the result that one cannot understand this totality except by referring to these choices. And since the choice is experienced but not thematized, this thematization takes place through a negation of negation, that is, in bringing together different determinations that one negates by founding them on the original choice and that are *abstract* without it. But this is a really a more supple dialectic.

What is more, in the original choice there is the sketch of some future. It is the abstract totality of the choice to be a writer, for example. There will be a Hegelian circle once life will have come into conformity with this choice, that is, once one can rediscover the writer/choice in the writer/act. The result is that each particular action is both a determination of a choice and the progressive constitution of everything real. At the end of a life the original choice has inscribed itself in reality, the whole has been realized.

But we need to add that the realization of the whole is, at the same time, its suppression. The writer has become what he was when he is dead. To such an extent that in the end eternity turns him into himself.

For another thing, death maintains a double relation of immanence and of exteriority with man. It is his exteriority since it is the outside that decides that life is done. So chance decides the completion of the dialectic, life fulfills itself in death. And death is the negation of the meaning of this life. So the dialectic

356. Archimedes (c. 287–212 B.C.), Greek mathematician and inventor who discovered the principle of specific gravity or, more generally speaking, of buoyancy. Sartre had already referred to this example in "Materialism and Revolution" (p. 242) and he returns to it in *Vérité et Existence*, ed. Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), pp. 35, 40, 58, 114, which was written in 1948. Cf. also *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, p. 532.

exists to the extent that existence is itself a totality. But it is not so to the extent that the totality in question has no *being*, to the extent that it is in the mode of not being.

There is a dialectic, finally, on the plane of surpassing the situation (a negation that surpasses while conserving). This dialectic goes as follows: the original project illuminates the surroundings of the situation. But already the surroundings lay siege to and color the original project. What is more, the situation defines itself insofar as it is surpassed by the project and the project has no signification except as the project of changing *this* disposition of the world; therefore it gets defined by the situation. Situation and project are inseparable, each is abstract without the other and it is the totality “project and situation” that defines the person. But the totality of an act is defined by its end, and its end is the situation today but modified in some of its elements in such a way as to constitute a human whole. In this modification the situation as *given* remains, but it is deformed—the marble remains in the statue. Furthermore, there is a negation of the situation as determination (negation of the form of the marble).

Where are the differences with classical dialectic?

1st, in the contingency of the whole. There is no Whole, only *a* whole.

2d, in the freedom that projects this whole. The Spirit is freedom for Hegel only in relation to the *determined*, which it gnaws away at. But it is not a project. The transcendence of the Spirit in relation to some determination is just that of a whole in relation to its parts. The Spirit is both the beginning and the end (the project is the development of order). It is its own project. That is, transcendence is never more than a moment of immanence and from there it returns to itself. On the contrary, the relation of the totality to some determination, which it surpasses while carrying it along *aufgehoben* [sublated] into itself, is in reality a relation of creation. The For-itself is a project but it is not its own project in Hegel’s sense. It is the project of becoming itself in the dimension of Being, or of the Other, that is, in a dimension that is irreducibly other. And the totality held before itself by the For-itself is enriched by the surpassed reality (the statue as enriched by the accidents of the marble). Thus the totality *is not* in the beginning; it is only in the future.

One can, if one wishes, dialectically oppose the *choice* (which is abstract in relation to the final totality) to the *given* or the situation (which includes within itself its own negation) to the totality, and create a dialectical order: *given* (abstract in the choice that illuminates it), *choice* (abstract in its final realization. Choice in the presence of the given, colored by the given and surpassing the given—the moment of negativity), *situation* (the given surpassed and preserved in the movement toward totality), *goal* (including in its totality, which is *me*, different moments since it is the shaping of the given, the realization of my choice, the unveiling of me, the situation’s signification). But we need to add: the *whole* is a meaning transcending each moment but there is an independence

of these moments in relation to the whole which does not absorb them. Example: if the situation has a coefficient of adversity such that the project is not realized, it nonetheless has its real existence. It does not found itself in the whole.

The whole is not *potentially* there at the beginning, it is at the end as a possibility. Its action on the present in terms of the future is real but it must be ec-statically kept up. In other words, the present only surpasses itself through the positing of a future that comes back to color it, assuming that it is kept in being. In a word, the whole, if it is not immanent as potential in the parts, is transcendent as possible. The actual totalization will be the one that *really* synthesizes the given, the choice, the situation, the goal, but this totalization is impossible because there is no homogeneity of elements (For-itself, In-itself, present/future, real/possible). With the result that, the whole being only a *projected whole*, each structural element is not abstract in relation to the whole except noematically. With the result that the negation is not pure destruction of some determination but a moment subordinated to the free production of a new *whole*. It is not the pure destruction of the marble through negation of its given form that will yield the statue. It is its destruction in conformity with a projected statue, its destruction in order *to form* this statue, but the marble is not completed *in the statue*, it had no need of the statue to find its meaning through fusion with the totality.

The essential moment therefore is that of *creation*, that is, the moment of the imaginary, of invention. For it is not a matter of lifting its limitation from the marble but of giving it *another* limitation. Therefore we have to invent something. And naturally the negative moment is essentially bound to the imaginary since man chooses to illuminate what is, in the light of what is not.

Dialectic and freedom. Each moment of the concept, says Hegel, tends to posit itself for itself as essential. But at the same time it is *unselbständig* and this *Unselbständigkeit* is negativity. Negativity and freedom only making one thing, freedom finally is in each thing as the presence of the whole in the part. My freedom, to me a slave, to *become* a Stoic, is *in effect* a freedom inasmuch as *nothing* in the essence slave *causes* this negativity. To put it another way, if the understanding *cuts off* the concept "slave" at its determination, it will find no structure that could be the logical principle of Stoicism, it will find no intelligible trace of Stoicism. Thus Stoicism is a free invention and creation in relation to the state being a slave. But if we consider the immanent presence of the *whole* as *what is limited*, the concept "slave" has to be destroyed. Negativity is nothing more than the negation *through the whole* of the limitation imposed on the mode; it is the destruction of the mode as mode by the whole. In this case, freedom is nothing other than the determination of the mode by the whole. To be free is to be prey to the whole. As for the whole itself, it is not free. Its freedom is Spinoza's necessity transferred to the temporal succession.

But in reality all the moments of being and of existence are *selbständig*. Every social situation, for example, tends to preserve itself in its being, as can be seen

in the history of Byzantium and in primitive societies that have endured until today, as well as in the tendency of each society toward a minimum of change. From this, perhaps someone will say that Hegel does account for the fact that each moment posits itself as essential. But in fact we need to explain how “the tendency of being to preserve itself in its being” has become “the tendency of each moment to posit itself as essential.” And this tendency is comprehensible only if precisely each moment sees itself as a complete and absolute whole.

For example, the slave who makes himself and who wills to be a slave is absolutely a slave, and if he modifies the situations around him through his labor, it is in complete acceptance of his servitude. Hegel will say that his very work and fear transform him,³⁵⁷ but the slave’s work is one of repetition, he is not a shaper, and the slave born in the master’s house knows no fear. On the contrary, what he must fear is that his work will make him all the more a slave and that his defensive reactions (lying, stealing, dissimulating) will enmesh him all the more in servitude, as can be seen in the fact that the American master encouraged theft in some ways precisely in order to make the slave fall into the indignity of being the underling.

Parallel to all this is *resignation*. To be brief, if the slave and the master decide out of complicity that slavery is a human fact and that societies are founded on this fact, there is no internal reason why society should change. Similarly the “lovely work of art” that was ancient society or the Spirit of immediacy has no reason not to continue on indefinitely. No doubt it will experience misfortunes, wars, and inauthenticity, that is, concealed freedom—but inauthenticity is also an absolute state and the state of misfortune can be considered as normal. Changes in production or military disasters that lead to changes in government are themselves lateral forces. Similarly, the regime may bring about consequences that lead to its death (over-extension of the Roman empire, poor means of communication, insufficient servile labor). But these consequences, which are like a toxic substance produced by the regime itself, have nothing to do with its insufficiency of being, but rather start as waste products of its functioning.

In fact, what remains a permanent source of ferment in these societies is that there are some people who may possibly posit freedom as a goal. Unmasked freedom, calling for an era of freedom, is the *totality* in whose name one denies contemporary society. But this society that will integrate everyone, if it does represent a more integrated totality than contemporary society, does not stand in relation to today’s society as a whole in relation to its parts. It is another, future form constituted on the basis of the absolute fact of the destruction of today’s society, along with other men of another generation. In other words, today’s society is not totalizable, it will live and die according to its degree of integration, it will not be salvaged. So the future totality is only relatively a totality since it will not salvage past, absolute societies that will fall outside it,

357. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, par. 196, p. 118.

even though it may conserve and integrate some of their significations (which, by the way, are changed when they enter into a new Whole).

If, therefore, this future society is the project of a freedom, it is not as a whole that it will break through the unjustified limit of the present moment, but rather as *another* whole which can *act* on the present situation only because it is, on the contrary, conceived starting from it and as *surpassing* it. In this sense, we may even say that those regions of a society that surpass it (its technical and scientific perspectives *and* its revolutionary projects) are part of the society they surpass. A society is defined by its future but this future is defined by that society. And it is true that the future so perceived will itself be one *moment*. For example, the Jews under Augustus thought of freedom not in terms of its formal purity but in terms of the Judaic form we call messianism. So we do get the impression that the projected form is like a broader synthesis organizing the society it stems from.

But this is more grist for my mill. For it is quite clearly a question of a kind of centrifugal surpassing of this society, which is born within it, not of some partial whole being attracted by the all-encompassing whole. This ferment is indeed a kind of totality. But it is the totality of one person coming to terms with himself in intuition as a free totality to be realized and not as the ubiquitous totality of the *Spirit*. Here is the explanation for the fact that all surpassing of a situation toward freedom is *alienated* freedom (Christianity, etc.). Because it retains in its surpassing its society, such as it is, as its *situation*. It is a concrete surpassing. And at the same time we see that in every society there is both the necessity that such a surpassing be always conceivable and the contingency of the fact that it *is* actually and efficaciously so conceived.

We have followed the dialecticians so closely because the dialectic is until now the only method available for making sense of freedom, for rendering it intelligible, and for at the same time preserving its creative aspect. Through the introduction of the notion of negativity the end term is and is not contained in the initial term. It cannot be discovered there and owing to this fact its production is the production of something new. And yet its absence penetrates all of this initial determination, and once the end term has been constituted, it turns back on the original one that it encompasses in order to make it explicit. In this sense, Bergson is a dialectician without knowing it when he explains why the free act is not predictable before it happens, but seems necessary once it has occurred. This has to be understood as follows: a free act is the only explanation for its motives just as the whole is the only explanation of its parts. In this way the dialectic accounts for: 1st, unpredictability; 2d, the perpetual action of the future on the present; and 3d, the retrospective illusion.

Hegel found his solution in that he started from the idea that the Spirit regains itself and that History is finite. But *what if* it is not finite? First of all, the dialectic will be just a hypothesis; next, the existence of man becomes an absolute. His is a retrospective philosophy, a philosophy of death, that works

dialectically because every human enterprise is *past* and consequently reduced for it to the status of a concept. The past is necessarily the surpassed. Therefore in taking the present moment as absolute Hegel can consider each past as surpassed and see a movement of perpetual surpassing in History. But if the dialectic is not finite, the current moment is no longer absolute because it is everything. It is, from this point of view, *to be surpassed* like all the others. It has no superiority by its nature over the others and its judgment on them is no longer the truth. It is just partially true.

At the same time, the current moment becomes an *absolute to be lived through*, for the whole can judge and found the parts in itself, but the part cannot decide what the whole will be. Neither the Stoics nor the men of the Enlightenment could conceive the whole; they could only determine a more comprehensive part than their predecessors by delimiting it. If we assume that a man can conceive of the whole (the final state of humanity), we must also assume that this whole is now and always given. This is what I believe. It is always given as the whole of freedom (freedom as comprehension of the human condition and as implying the freedom of everyone). Except there is no longer a dialectic. To put it another way: either History is finite or we can grasp its dialectic only partially, in the past and by extending it (a bit) through extrapolation. But our limitation forbids us from prolonging it further than the next term. And if the dialectic is not a closed system, then we have to live with the incertitude of the present moment. And this life of incertitude becomes an absolute. But it is no longer the Hegelian absolute, it is the absolute of actual experience.

That is, this incertitude gives our time span its reality. We can expect that things will fall apart. And this Expectation as conscious of itself is an absolute. No subsequent synthesis will make sense of it. They will take up the object of this expectation, not the expectation itself. This expectation, decisions made in uncertainty, weighing things, choices, which are the characteristics of the human condition, cannot be integrated into any synthesis because they are precisely what is eliminated from any synthesis. One can integrate Stoicism but not the choice to be a Stoic made without the certainty of being right. One can integrate the noema of the Revolution of 89, not the expectations of the deputies of the third estate in the hall of the Jeu de Paume.

And if the present moment is a lived absolute, and has no special privilege over other moments, it becomes clear that past moments were also such lived absolutes and that *this* is not recoverable. So Hegel's philosophy is a History in the sense that History is a discipline turned toward the past. Not a *historialization* in the sense that it really unveils the future dimension. For the future dimension is ignorance, risk, uncertainty, a wager. If each human being is a risk, humanity as a whole is a risk. The risk of no longer existing, the risk of indefinitely stagnating in one aspect of its history. This is why Marx is correct over against Hegel: "History is not finite, we can predict and prepare only for its next determination, we do not know what will happen beyond that. This determina-

tion itself will not bring an end to History but only to prehistory. There is the risk of remaining forever in barbarism.”

The ambiguity of the human condition: a synthesis that cannot take place. The For-itself is in the mode of not being, not in the mode of being, it is what it is not and is not what it is. Thus the first encounter with human reality sketches out one moment of the dialectic by presenting it as a blossoming of oppositions, of contradictions. To live, does this mean perpetually bringing about syntheses? Yes, if we can suppress the contradiction in and through its work (the objective point of view) or (the subjective point of view) its existential attitude. But this does not happen. A work may suppress a contradiction (Gide's work)³⁵⁸ on the aesthetic or imaginary plane—or even suppress it on the plane of the real, made object—but it remains true nonetheless that this contradiction still remains within it. And the attitude of inwardness cannot, for example, synthesize the dimension of the For-itself and that of the For-others, which are existential categories, incommunicable dimensions. What it can do, on the other hand, is to project itself *while taking into account* this double contradiction or, if you will, it can set up a bridge between these two, it can realize through a perpetual tension an attitude that takes account of both terms. But this attitude does not encompass both of them in itself. It only makes sense as a lived through solution, that is, on the plane of actual experience, of consciousness. For example, the perpetual temptation to be for other people what I am for myself and vice versa creates a subjective tension that gets determined *starting from* this double dimension of existence, but which remains a concrete existential project, marked by both dimensions, but unable to suppress them or to found them on some single dimension.

Section 1. Plan for an Ontological Ethics

1) Existence as a choice of being and a lack of being. Being as the perspective of Transcendence. “The In-itself-For-itself.” *Reification* as an initial ontological phenomenon. Is inauthenticity a *nature*? Not in the first instance (we have to pass through alienation). Inauthenticity = to comprehend oneself in terms of the world. *Natural* because the world sends my image back to me. But I set out my image before the project that projects it. I comprehend myself in terms of my goods and my works and I give myself the type of being of the object. I want to be *justified*.

2) In particular, that *alienation* that is the social aspect of reification. I see the Other who sees me. I affirm that I exist as the Other does and as I am for the Other. But the Other exists for me as Other and I am the Other to him. That is, the transcended object. Therefore, starting from here, I am the Other for

358. Cf. p. 501.

myself. The world of alienation is the one in which one thinks of the Self starting from the Other. Critique of Marxism: alienation precedes oppression. Alienation through the Mystery—through Grace.

3) Freedom as alienated.

First type of alienation: through human *nature* (one must become what he is—Aristotle). (Description.)

2d type: through *duty*—through *right* (a right is the master's demand that deprives the slave of his right).

3d type: through *values*: description of the *being* of a value. How it can only be upheld by freedom. Intervention of the Other: values are *my goal for the other*.

The Me conceived of as alien: I am like that. One can expect anything from me, etc.

However, each case, nature, duty, and value, implies the freedom that it alienates. This freedom is always negativity. Freedom destroys one form of alienation with another form. In the very idea of *race* (nature) there is an ought-to-be. One has to construct one's race, realize it in oneself. To disengage this ought-to-be is to set it up as a *duty* (Kant). But it is still a *thing*. Duty is the Other at the heart of my Will. It is the project of my will conceived of as the project of an Other. Its origin: the master-slave relation. A value is the negation of duty but a structure of the being of the universe. As in history where each ideology is a refusal of some form of alienation and a new form of alienation, each moment of this progression includes within itself freedom as a refusal and also the representation of this freedom as a thing. "Je est un autre."³⁵⁹ I and He.

4) The category of all forms of Alienation.

The *Ego* as the subjective type of alienation: the Ego or the Other in me.

God as the absolute *Other* or principle of the system that affirms the priority of the Other.

Ecstasy, possession, prayer, the look as categories of alienation.

The mystic as alienated.

Eidetic description of God.

5) Description of the world of alienation:

prayer, demands, etc. Justification. Violence.

6) Freedom in alienation.

This freedom returned to itself includes despite everything the structure of freedom.

Freedom in the relation of the saint to God, for example.

Freedom at the moment of the Apocalypse and its disappearance in the

359. See n. 303.

institutional moment when the Other reigns. An institution is what you wanted become a will turned back on itself and imposing itself upon you. The institution is your *destiny*.

Hierarchy of values showing that they converge, like an asymptote approaches a line, on freedom.

The lowest values crush freedom under *Being*:

purity, innocence, race, sincerity.

Intermediary values: the notion of life as an objectification of transcendence: nobility, virility, sexual values, and once again *race*.

Social values:

The Other as a product of some project and as an external solicitation of this project. The idea of creation already intervenes.

Nation, society, etc., *SACRIFICE*.

The values of *subjectivity*:

passion

pleasure and the instant

criticism and the demand for evidence

responsibility

creation

generosity.

This hierarchy leads us to see like a light above the plane of generosity, freedom properly speaking.

7) Conversion: nonaccessory reflection. Its motive: the impossibility of recovering oneself. The meaning of conversion: rejection of alienation.

Its nonjustification or *gratuity*—its ambiguity—its *tension*—its failure.

The original relation to oneself: adequation within inadequation, the modification of one's project: creation. To give a foundation to one's being by creating something outside oneself. The absolute goal: to give human freedom as the foundation of the world's being. But this goal is not given, it is *willed*. The difference between duty and willing. Outside and inside. And the revelation of Being: joy.

8) The appeal to others. How to *think about others*: "that one is a pederast." (The same problem as being sincere about oneself.)

To renounce having a direct relationship with others.

The true relation to others is never direct—through the intermediary of the work. My freedom implying mutual recognition.

Yet one loses oneself in giving oneself. Generosity. Love.

New relation between my For-itself and my For-others: through the work. I define myself by giving myself to others as an object that I create so that it will provide me with this objectivity.

9) Signification of the realm of ethics.

Humanity conceived of as a quasi subjectivity.

As a creative will.

Ethics of finitude.

Humanity as finite, absolute History. Only has the meaning it gives itself.

Recovery of the absolute. The Apocalypse.

Section 2

1) Alienation as original sin. Gives the meaning of History: alienation—negation of alienation—new Alienation. Because conversions take place *in a situation*. The Reformation, as the negation of Catholicism, contains within itself the seed of its own alienation owing to the fact that it cannot suppress God but merely tries to make his image clearer to itself. One can conceive of the realm of ends formally but not materially in terms of the given situation. It is always composite.

Furthermore, the suppression of alienation has to be universal. Impossibility of being ethical *alone*.

Whence the problem: History \longleftrightarrow ethics. History implies ethics (without universal conversion, no sense or meaning to evolution or to revolutions). Ethics implies history (no morality is possible without systematic action in some situation).

2) Nature of History.

Hegelian dialectic.

Marxist dialectic.

The notion of a quasi totality.

3) Man's role in History.

Real (concrete) ethics: to prepare the realm of ends through a revolutionary, finite, creative politics.

Conversely: that the realm of ends lies precisely in the preparation for the realm of ends.

Here I will discuss number 7 of Section I.

Conversion

α) Its motives.

1) That it is virtually possible among all the oppressed.

In the first place, because they are immediately aware of themselves through a nonthetic consciousness (of) themselves that encompasses an ontological com-

prehension of existence as absolute as subjectivity. It is for lack of having recognized this dimension that Hegel and Marx were able to construct their system where the absolute is always external to and transcendent to particular subjects. Thus every *alienated* person, in the moment in which he grasps himself as Other starting from the Other, which confers upon him the slight advantage of seeing himself in terms of the features of a Being along with the terrible handicap of submitting his will to some heteronomy, grasps himself as the foundation of every system of alienation. It is neither fear nor his labor that makes the slave self-consciously aware of himself. This is already there. And it is not there virtually but as his very mode of existing and as the original condition in which there can be others and some form of alienation.

What is more, the immediate needs of the oppressed—and even of man in general—already encompass transcendence in its entirety as well as freedom. The slightest gesture arising out of hunger surpasses its situation, and illuminates what is on the basis of what is not, negativity, invention, demands. Unlike the case of those animals for whom hunger is merely a *conatus* [an impulse or inclination] toward the continuation of life, hunger for man may become the demand for a reason for living or, if you will, man can place the whole of humanity (in seeking justice, freedom, etc.) as transcendence and the realm of ends into his effort to assuage his hunger. Therefore in all human activity there is an understanding of the human condition and of freedom.

2) That conversion may arise from the perpetual failure of every one of the For-itself's attempts to be. Every attempt of the For-itself to be In-itself is by definition doomed to fail. From this we can fully account for the existence of Hell; that is, that region of existence where existing means using every trick in order to be, and to fail at all these tricks, and to be conscious of this failure.³⁶⁰ It is the world of madness that Spinoza and the Stoics talk about. Even though this failure may be indefinitely covered over, made up for, by itself it tends to reveal the world as a world of failure and it can push the For-itself to ask itself the pre-judicial question of the meaning of its acts and the reason for its failure. Then the problem gets posed as follows: Why is the human world inevitably a world of failure, what is there in the essence of human effort such that it seems doomed in principle to failure? This question is a solicitation for us to place ourselves on the plane of reflection and to envisage human action reflectively in terms of its maxims, its means, and its goals.

3) That conversion comes even from the failure of accessory reflection.

Reflection is born as an effort by consciousness to regain itself. The dyad

360. Cf. Sartre's play about three people together in hell, "No Exit," in *No Exit and Other Plays*, pp. 1–47.

reflected/reflecting never reaches absolute unity, reflection springs up as a third term meant to unify the other two. But in turn it too is separated by a *nothingness* from the preceding terms and only brings about a noematic unification of the dyad under consideration. This noematic unification is by nature an in-itself-for-itself since the feeling or aspect under consideration has a *being* as its psychic element at the same time it possesses consciousness. Because of this, it is the ground of alienation since it can also be at the same time the product of a unification of my objective behavior brought about by others. So its existence will be two-faced, and because the two unifications are homogeneous with each other, they are interchangeable; that is, I can take the unification brought about by others (if I have grasped its intentional signification) as the theme of my subjective unification.

However, the failure of accessory reflection is indicated particularly by the fact that the noematic object is in principle transcendent. I am not this feeling I have, I am separated from it by my nonthetic consciousness. I exhaust myself in nourishing it and alienate myself in it, without in return being able to find it in myself. So psychic life is a life outside itself and lacking reciprocity. I am (reflexively) conscious of hating, I am not this hate. There is a radical and constant failure in my psychological life. I do not *touch* my character, it is a specter, an object in the world. This failure of accessory reflective recuperation can serve as a motivation for turning to nonaccessory reflection which, at least, is-and-is-not at the same time the reflected, whereas accessory reflection is *not in any way* the constituted noema.

In a word, the very structure of alienation (which I have to uphold through the bad faith of my complicity), the failure of the For-itself's attempt to be in-itself-for-itself, and the failure of accessory reflection make up a bundle of solicitations that may lead to pure reflection.

[β)] The appearance of pure reflection constitutes another type of existence in which the project as pure existence, whose dimension is nonthetic consciousness (of) self, is at the same time thematized and called into question within the detotalized reflected/reflecting unity. In other words, the project is not absolutely suppressed by pure reflection, any more than the natural attitude is suppressed in the phenomenological *εποχή*. It fully remains as deeply rooted in my original choice. But at the same time it is thematized and becomes for itself the object of a question. Man is the being whose existence is in question in his being and since the being of man is action, this means that his choice of being is at the same time in question in his being.

The modifications brought about by nonaccessory reflection (which is not a form of contemplation but is itself a project) are the following:

A new, “*authentic*,” way of being oneself and for oneself, which transcends the dialectic of sincerity and bad faith. This way of being has four terms this time: reflected (reflection/reflecting), reflective (reflected/reflecting).

A thematic grasping of freedom, of gratuity, of unjustifiability.

A new relation of man to his project: he is both inside and outside.

I am going to examine these three characteristics in succession. We shall see that they entail a modification of my project.

1) Concerning the new way that man has of existing his existence. In truth, the answer can already be found underlying the dialectic of bad faith.³⁶¹ Since sincerity and bad faith were set side-by-side in order to examine being and nonbeing, it goes without saying that authenticity lies in unveiling being through the mode of nonbeing. If it is false that I am courageous and false that I am not so, we have to make our concepts more subtle to the point that I can grasp myself in terms of my original tension: I *am not* courageous since I project being so; in other words, since my project gets carried out as a kind of negativity in relation to a sort of original cowardice. But neither am I a coward for this quality would imply some thesis about being. Rather it is a question of a sort of original dispersion, a kind of waxlike flexibility depending on circumstances, a docile imitation of others, in such a way as to prolong almost hypothetically those forms of behavior sketched out by the situation: these skis start off, I follow behind, etc. In this sense, courage is a substituting of a spirit of experimentation for a spirit of observation. Courage is leaning forward and going along with his skis, cowardice is the form of behavior appropriate to the spirit of observation. So it is false to see some given quality here, since it has to be continually modified. In this sense, *no one* is courageous, but it is equally false to see here the product of some contingency: Koestler showing the torture victim who keeps silent because the water makes him choke just at the moment he was going to talk.³⁶² This contingency can aid him only given the project of being courageous. Except that the project of *being* courageous is itself formal and abstract since it does not take into consideration any particular circumstances. What is more, it is itself a kind of mystification since the *quality* of being courageous can be conferred upon one only by others in light of certain forms of behavior; in the end, it is a project of bad faith since one acts in this way in order to confer on oneself the being or quality of an in-itself-for-itself. In a word, it is a matter of acting in such and such a way, in circumstances that cannot be defined in advance, so that Others will hang an *objective* label on you that you will then internalize in the form of an element of your psyche or as an in-itself-for-itself.

Therefore there is an original form of alienation in the effort to be courageous,

361. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, Part I, chap. 3.—Ed.

362. Arthur Koestler, *Arrival and Departure* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 100. The French translation of this novel, *Croisade sans croix*, appeared in 1947 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy).

just as in the “sincere” confession “I am not courageous.” In reality I fled, in certain circumstances, I did not talk despite the torture, but in fleeing it seemed to me that, in other almost similar circumstances, I would not have fled and that those who were able to keep silent say that in slightly different circumstances they would have talked.

In other words, in authenticity, not only do I reduce the internalized objective quality to a sequence of behavior, I also discover that I *am not* any one of these behaviors, or rather that I am and am not. Lord Jim does not recognize himself in his act and yet he limits himself by this very act.³⁶³ It would be absurd to limit him to this act, yet he is nothing other than this act of flight at the moment when he flees. What we call sincerity consists in taking up this act and in judging it as an other would judge it: I am a coward. But in fact this sincerity is a kind of lying for it surpasses the true which is the pure and simple assumption of one’s act. I must, if I take flight, assume my flight and also at the same time accept that characteristic of “cowardliness” that comes to me from the other, almost like a destiny. This cowardliness is a situation that besieges me. However there is also a bad faith resignation, and, fundamentally, a search for an excuse to put behind my act as though it were a quality.

Authenticity therefore leads to renouncing every project of being courageous (cowardly), noble (vile), etc. Because they are not realizable and because they all lead in any case to alienation. Authenticity reveals that the only meaningful project is that of *doing* (not that of being) and that the project to do something cannot itself be universal without falling into what is abstract (for example, the project to *do good*, always to tell the truth, etc., etc.). The one meaningful project is that of acting on a concrete situation and modifying it in some way. This project implies secondary forms of behavior: it may imply not fleeing, or cutting one’s wrists and not talking. Yet if the goal sought is *to be* courageous, the apparent and concrete end becomes a pretext for mystification.

In reality, what is necessary has *to be done*. Hence one has to choose, from two equally efficacious ways, the easiest one, the one that allows you to conserve your strength. If one does choose the more difficult path, it is because, in a roundabout way, he wants to be. So, originally, authenticity consists in refusing any quest for being, because I am always *nothing*.

The same thing applies to feelings and to beliefs. Elsewhere I have noted that I *believe* means both: I am persuaded of it—and—I simply believe it. I believe in Pierre’s friendship. This means, at the same time, that “I would rather be cut to pieces than to think that he is not my friend” and that “I am not certain of his friendship.” Hence if I solemnly tell him, “I believe in your friendship,” I immediately give rise to the counterposition in myself, “I am not sure.” Here sincerity turns into bad faith because it is going to neglect that quiet voice that says: “I really only believe it,” just as the physicist neglects what comes after the

363. Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim* (New York: Random House, 1931).

decimal point, because I like Pierre and I want him to confer my belief on me in return as a Being. I want to become in his eyes (to reassure him if he is upset, to regain his friendship if he is disloyal) the-one-who-believes-in-his-friendship.

Yet authenticity would be to maintain the tension by positing that to believe is to believe that one believes and that this is only belief, it is also not to believe. Then faith becomes an act of willing and acting at the same time that it is aware of its limits. Believing becomes choosing to believe and knowing that this believing is limited, that is, that Pierre's friendship is a matter of probability. With this, *believing* it ceases to be a right (you misled me, me who *believed* in your friendship) and becomes an undertaking.

As in every other instance, this undertaking presupposes *time*, that is, it clearly surpasses my obvious current possibilities, therefore I put off until that time when my life will be over the final decision on this point. In other words, I know that to believe is also not to believe; what is more, I do not know whether I believe in the limited sense that I have just defined, yet I do want to believe. Better yet—authenticity would be complete—I do not want to believe: I want to build this friendship in a movement of temporalization wherein each of my acts will model itself on one of Pierre's acts and vice versa, where an intuitive certitude will correspond to each particular time of this undertaking. This is not nominalism. It is not at all a question of reducing our friendship to a succession of instants, but rather of considering its unifying theme as an intentional choice *to do something* (to make a friendship) and, from this perspective, to allow each moment its concrete development.

The same thing applies to feelings. Thus we see the psyche dissolve: it will remain, on the one hand, the transparent world of *Erlebnisse* and, on the other, the set of information (to be taken up) about the nature of my being-for-others. Thus, even while taking up my cowardice as my destiny in the world, I merely would like to be the one who realizes this particular work. As regards feelings, as we have seen, they reduce to undertakings; hate and love are oaths. But because I grasp myself in freedom, they will always preserve a problematic aspect. Therefore the nature of any feeling changes absolutely. It is not some reality underlying my being, nor is it merely something *experienced*. Even to experience it is to call it into question. It is part of its nature to be called into question in that very consciousness that experiences it, to be affirmed within this interrogation.

It is not a question simply of having an experience at each instant like the woman who says, "today I love you less than I did yesterday." On the contrary, this type of examination presupposes that one believes in the being of the feeling, and to decide to experience it in each instant through some alleged sincerity is to decide to not love without reservation, it is to decide to decide at every instant whether one loves, which is already not to love, not to see that to love and to will to love are one and the same. Yet if on the other hand one is persuaded that to love and to will to love are one and the same, then along with this the

feeling is problematic in its very nature. For if to will to love were the whole of this feeling, it would be a matter of a purely abstract decision, whereas if loving were everything, it would be an unnamed purely passive experience. But through this twofold characteristic of love there is a reciprocal contestation: to love is never just to love since it is also to will to love, and willing to love is never pure willing to love since it is to love in spite of oneself, to allow oneself to be overcome by one's love.

And since the feeling is upheld in its being by choice, the oath that structures it stops short of the future and has to be renewed. (Proust has well described the horror felt by those who while in love do not want to think that this love might end.) So in love itself, at its heart, there will be, if it is authentic, this being or not being, and thus a fundamental anxiety that this love might not be. And just as love is willed at the same time that it is felt, this anxiety too must be willed in authenticity as our only defense against the future. Not that our future freedom comes to us like a thief who will destroy everything, but rather that we shall be for this freedom whatever form the past will take, whose meaning it will decide upon. So we discover a new tension at the heart of our authenticity: that of being a living absolute that nothing can change during the time that we live and that of being irremediably and necessarily a future past about which a freedom that will be both new and yet me will decide.

Thus the past is a future state defenseless against the decrees of a freedom that slips into the heart of the absolute present. And authenticity must precisely lay claim to live this very situation: this will be love as *tension*. There will no longer be love/psyche but just this lived calling into question of self by self in an undertaking centered on the external. There still remain intentions as such taken as choices (whether original or not): *am* I at least this: a man who *wants* to resist torture to save his comrades, who *wants* to believe in Pierre's friendship, who *wants* to love Anny.³⁶⁴

But first of all wanting is not being. And precisely if I want being it is because I am not it. Therefore *to want* to be is both, in one way, to be (to will to the point of not talking, is not to talk) and, in another way, not to be (I will against the continual solicitations that risk making me a man who does talk). To want to be, to will to be is precisely to be in question in his being, to be clear what I am (in the mode of not being it) by means of what I am not (in the mode of having to be it). So authenticity would rather see the will as a calling into question at the heart of the existing being than as that rigid blade one would like to define it as being.

Moreover, an intention does not decipher itself when it occurs. Not that it is incapable of being translucent to reflection, but because it is abstract. Originally, the intention to realize a work is the scantiest kind. It lacks any common measure

364. See Sartre's discussion of the affective aspects of the imaginary life in terms of "my love for Annie or my indignation against Peter," in *The Psychology of Imagination*, p. 202.

with the realized work (which presupposes a perpetual problem of means and a perpetual enriching by way of the world).

Finally, the original intention does not include the decision to *refuse* these or those means, to prefer failure to using those means, for the excellent reason that the historical context has not yet been given and does not include these means; nor does it include that difficult invention that will give rise to this or that difficulty, because the difficulty is not even there. Thus the total intention coincides absolutely with the total work and it is the total work that reveals the total intention. As a result, authenticity will grasp the intention as an open-ended project, a certain shifting relation to the world, in which only the scantiest and most abstract structures can stay unchanged.

This does not indicate, on the contrary, that the For-itself has to choose to define itself through the caprice of the instant (for the caprice of the instant is a caprice only in appearance; it gets its capricious form from a background of some constant choice), but only that the For-itself must itself describe itself in terms of perspective, and as a direction, and even more so by what it *does* than by what it wills. What allows it to be unveiled is the factory that it builds or the hospital that it founds, not its will to do the good or to take care of its neighbors. What will define its love is the concrete sacrifice that it makes today, not what it thinks or feels. Hence the authentic For-itself, refusing being and the Psyche, unveils itself to itself both in the immediacy of its perpetual calling into question (*Erlebnis*) and in the reflective description of its concrete undertaking, insofar as it unveils itself to this For-itself in the world. At this level its future is the future of this factory, this hospital, the future of its political program. The *Me* is an abusive intermediary: the εἶδος my work refers to, whose future prefigures my future, and the ipseity of calling things into question must take its place.

However, this shifting ensemble of perpetually calling things into question and of perpetually surpassing them can be revealed only to a reflection that *does not will* Being but rather existence, for reflection is not contemplative: it is either accessory or purifying reflection. In either case it is a project. What therefore can the project of a reflection that refuses to look for Being be? It can only be a question of a radical decision for autonomy. The whole system for recovering accessory reflection has appeared, in effect, as a noematic projection of the self as the Other and finally as a form of heteronomy. The decision of pure reflection is both negative and positive at the same time: as negative, it renounces the attempt at a synthetic unification of the self by the self, which leads necessarily to realizing this unification outside itself and to sacrificing lived consciousness to the noema; as positive, it understands that the unity of existence cannot be of the same type as that synthetic unification that crushes the reflected into the reflecting, but rather must be of a new type which is an *accord with oneself*.

If, indeed, the passage to reflection does not realize a unity of being of the For-itself and instead opens a new abyss within consciousness, it does realize

another kind of unity: for through reflection existence appears to itself in the form of a theme and a question. It does not identify itself with itself, but it maintains itself since immediately the problem arises of knowing whether it will continue or stop (both in terms of its modalities—will I give up this project—and as a nonsubstantial absolute—suicide).

Reflection therefore is in no way contemplative, it is itself a project. It is a project issuing from a nonreflective project and a decision to suspend or to pursue this project. With this, the existent in effect renounces being as in-itself-for-itself, that is, as the cause of itself (given the hypothesis that the cause would come before the self, that is, that it will maintain itself *a priori*), yet it does maintain itself by itself *a posteriori* insofar as it has accepted calling itself into question as existing and has *replied* to this question by the decision to go on. But precisely to acquire this autonomy and this regaining of contingency, the existent must first accept and take up its mode of being, which is precisely the mode of diasporic being.³⁶⁵ More exactly, the assumption of this mode of being is, radically, one with the regaining of the self on the basis of contingency.

In sum, the existent is a project, and reflection is the project of taking up this project. Naturally, it is in the mode of being and not being that the process unfolds, for reflection is and is not the reflected upon. But what really matters is that reflection is not contemplation. It is a form of willing. If the project is not recaptured contemplatively, at least it is recaptured *practically*. Reflection makes this project one's *own*, not through identification or appropriation but by consent and forming a covenant. In other words, conversion consists in renouncing the category of *appropriation*, which can govern only those relations of the For-itself with things, in order to introduce into the internal relation of the Person the relation of *solidarity*, which will subsequently be modified into solidarity with others. By refusing to possess the reflected, conversion unveils the unappropriable aspect of the reflected-upon *Erlebnis*. But at the same time it realizes a type of unity peculiar to the existent, which is an *ethical* unity brought about by calling things into question and a contractual agreement with oneself.

In other words, unity is never given, it is never an aspect of *being*. Unity is willed. Sincerity is excluded therefore because it bears on what I *am*. Authenticity has to do with what I will. Sincerity presents itself as contemplation and an announcement of what I am. Pure, authentic reflection is a willing of what I will. It is the refusal to define myself by what I am (Ego) but instead by what I will (that is, by my very undertaking, not insofar as it appears to others—objective—but insofar as it turns its subjective face toward me). Is this what differentiates engineers and other “serious” types, who consider their undertaking directly with the eyes of others, that is, in terms of objectivity? That one ought *also* to take up the objectivity of the work is what we shall see later.

So the grasping of the authentic self is not based on being, it is a willing

365. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 136, 201.

directed to a willing: it is a project that loses itself in order to save itself, that takes a reflective distance on itself as a quasi object in order *also* to be able to will itself in terms of quasi objectivity. And the will centered on the reflected upon will does not dwell upon this fact (which would be to cut it off and fix it as an εἶς). As we have noted to the contrary, an intention properly surpasses itself and enriches itself through an act: reflective willing *wills* what is reflected upon. But it does not will it as accessory reflection does, which *does not* call into question the reflected-upon project. It calls the project into question before willing it. It examines this project in order to decide whether it may not destroy itself in becoming an object for itself. With this, we shall see below, it radically changes its relation to Being, for it does not originally grasp this relation as inspired by transcendent values (the spirit of seriousness) or by the Ego (alienation), but precisely it is present to itself as a free project upon which depend all values as well as the Ego. This is why it wills being without complicity inasmuch as it is a free, autonomous choice, for it is as such that it will also be able to challenge Being.

We must not, however, imagine reflection as operating on the reflected like seeing operates on what is seen. Reflection *does not see* what is reflected upon and does not will to see it. Yet since it issues from the reflected-upon, it is the reflected-upon itself that decomposes and sets itself at a distance from itself, and by this very fact modifies itself, since there it is, not just a *choice* of some maxim but a choice of itself inasmuch as it is a choice of A. (It can also be a rejection of itself, otherwise it would not be a choice, but we shall discuss below the reasons that may lead reflection to make a rejection.) Therefore it is not a matter of introducing some “impartial spectator” that would once again alienate the project. It is the project as project that agrees to lose itself in order to appear as summoned before itself. It is a project that wills to exist as a calling into question of itself by itself. And with this it becomes for itself a totality. The project conscious *of* itself as project, that is, wanting itself, represents a whole that recaptures itself in the existential dimension of a *choice*.

I noted at the beginning that every project summoned to appear before reflection is changed because one would like to do it for the Me. Thus the Me appears as a bloody idol that feeds on all its projects. But this is because we were on the ground of accessory reflection. The Me being suppressed by pure reflection, the project stops being related to anything other than its goal. Therefore it preserves that immediacy that it has in the unreflected, because it itself mediates itself. In this immediacy I see that poor fellow who is thirsty, I give him water because water immediately appears as desirable for him. In accessory reflection, I give him water because my Me is one that does good. However in pure reflection the project of giving water is limited to discovering itself as itself in its ipseity, that is, the consciousness of water as desirable thematizes itself. In this sense, the water does not pass over to the inessential, rather the project of giving water calls itself into question before itself. The water remains the essential, but instead

of being the immediately essential—that is, unveiling itself as desirable to a project that forgets itself—it remains the essential as the meaning and the qualification of my project.

In a word: the immediate is contingent, mediation by the Me leads to alienation; the mediation of the project by itself leaves its autonomy to the project and its essentialness to the sought-for goal. The For-itself always wills the end for itself, but it is conscious of itself as willing this end. There is a double dimension: 1st, the water is desirable (it continues to affirm the reflected by its initial, unaltered intention). 2d, The For-itself is through its project an unveiling of the water as desirable. Subjectivity appears as an unveiling act. Existential vertigo: the project appears to reflection in its absolute gratuity. But since reflection *wills* it, it is recaptured. Except it is recaptured as absolute and a totality without ceasing to be gratuitous.

It is this double simultaneous aspect of the human project, gratuitous at its core and consecrated by a reflective reprise, that makes it into *authentic existence*. The active discovery (unveiling/assumption, discovery/founding) of the pure field of existence has indeed initially to grasp its perfect *gratuity*. The contingency of its upsurge prevents us from reattaching it to some necessity, and the disappearance of the Me (the pure subject of rights because it is pure alienation. The Me is homogeneous with the He: Gide's unjustified astonishment at the native speaking about him in the third person.³⁶⁶ Koestler and Uncle Arthur. A Right is the other's demand internalized into the Me) entails the disappearance of Right. Hence the For-itself appears in its absolute unjustifiability and its relationship to the universe is altered. It has no right, even mystical, that its project must succeed, it is *de trop* in relation to the social world and to the world in general, the universe can get along without it. Its success or absolute failure is within the order of probability. It can demand nothing of others nor of the world, not even respect for its freedom.

Yet at the same time it does not take refuge as the Stoic does in the $\tau\alpha\ \epsilon\phi\ \upsilon\mu\iota\nu$, in pure, formal freedom. Its existence does try to define itself by definition as an $\omicron\upsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\phi\ \upsilon\mu\iota\nu$, since it is fixed on an undertaking that it has no right to demand the success of, nor any guarantee concerning it, and which makes it depend on the world as whole. Therefore it inserts itself into an undertaking that to succeed presupposes some favorable aspect or at least some constant aspect of the universe, which is not given absolutely. There is a consent to chance. The For-itself wagers, takes a risk, it assumes its possible loss in its very act.

But, at the same time, it is gratuitous, it is assumed gratuitousness. But

366. In "Youth," a *feuilleton* first published in 1931 in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and reprinted in *Autumn Leaves*, trans. Elsi Pell (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), pp. 12–31, Gide recounts his encounter with a local laborer and exconvict, Mulot, during the period when Gide, as the major local land owner, was mayor of the commune of La Roque in Calvados. "Of all the people in my commune, Mulot was the only one who did not speak to me in the third person" (p. 26).

assumed *by itself alone*. This reflective doubling assumes this gratuitousness. Through this reflexivity, I consent to be a man, that is, in order to commit myself to an adventure has that as much chance of finishing badly, I transform my contingency into a *Passion*.

As for my undertaking, I justify it for myself by the single fact that I call it into question. I grasp it in its contingency but also as an unsurpassable, insurmountable absolute, which draws its absolute character from its being willed as it wills itself.

Thus, I can as well say no one will ever bear witness for me and that I am my own witness. It is me, which nothing justifies, who justifies myself inwardly. Subjective absolute as justification, pure contingency viewed from the outside. I can never persuade Others of my objective necessity, and suddenly it will no longer have any place whatsoever; but, caught up in pure gratuitousness, my accord with myself confers subjective necessity on me.

Therefore we arrive at the type of intuition that will unveil authentic existence: an absolute contingency that has only itself to justify itself by assuming itself and that can assume itself only within itself without the project justified inwardly ever being able on this basis to justify itself to others in its subjectivity (we shall see that there can be a justification by others of my undertaking as an object if they take it up) and that justifies itself only by risking losing itself. But that all at once constitutes itself in a risk and in anxiety (who am I to justify myself) as *pure autonomy*. I have no right whatsoever to will what I will, and what I will confers no right upon me, yet I am justified in willing it because I will to will what I will.

Someone may object that reflection is not the final instance, that it implies a reflection upon this reflection, at least as a possibility. This is true, but this possibility, even though it always exists, takes nothing from reflection's aspect of being a final instance, for if all impure reflection can be challenged in its very being—because it can be the object of a pure reflection—pure reflection can be the object only of a pure reflection (for an accessory reflection cannot stem from a nonaccessory reflection—otherwise what would it be accessory to?). So (pure) reflection on (pure) reflection is just a doublet that adds nothing to the primitive phenomenon.

2) At this level the radical transformation of the reflected-upon project takes place. For reflection being an unveiling of freedom, the project is always to *will being*, but to will it not as upholding the For-itself, but as upheld by it. There is a conversion from the project to-be-for-itself-in-itself and appropriation or identification to a project of unveiling and creation.

To compare unveiling and the project of being *Causa Sui*. In the *Causa Sui* the for-itself as nihilation gives itself being, that is, transforms itself into an In-itself-For-itself. What lies *behind* the *Causa Sui* (in the psychoanalytic sense) is the project of the For-itself that feels itself to be *Nothing* and wills to give itself

Being. But Being can not come from Existence, that is excluded. In unveiling, on the contrary, Being and the For-itself are already given and Being as a whole is given to the For-itself as *world*. Yet certain regions of Being are given (implicitly) in a confused manner. What *there is* behind these trees, I do not know. Therefore I intend it through an empty intention that will seek it out in its indifference of exteriority, that is, in the state as close as possible to the pure In-itself. Thus the world is crisscrossed with regions of Being that do exist for me but merely in terms of their pure, abstract exteriority as In-itself.

If I unveil Being, this operation is like the symbol and the indication of two impossible operations: the first one would be the opposite of the *Causa Sui*: the In-itself giving itself the For-itself in order to recapture itself rather than lose itself. For this is the incurable deficiency of Being of the In-itself seen by the For-itself. If it does not regain itself, Being just has Being *for nothing*. The contingency that defines pure Being has its roots in the fact of being for Nothing and for No One. Even were it to be the necessary product of Being, we could say nothing other than it *Is*³⁶⁷ and that, in being for nothing, its Being is fulfilled in Non-Being. All the categories of unveiling being that we know, in effect, disappear: the relation to self and to others, unifiability, coefficient of adversity, instrumentality, signifiability. Being is in no way more graspable *for the Other* than we are. Yet, on the other hand, not belonging to itself or being for itself, it escapes itself by dint of *being itself*; its existence is a lost generosity by dint of not being anyone. This is why Heidegger is correct to use Night as the symbol of pure Being.³⁶⁸ All of Being is there but enmeshed in a total undifferentiatedness. So Being is at the same time *not being*, which is to say, being-in-order-to-be-lost-in-nothingness.

The For-itself, on the contrary, in nihilating itself regains itself; because it makes a dimension of Nothingness appear in itself, it can be For-itself. If we accept the *myth* of a *conatus* of Being toward its fulfillment—that is, for Being to be to itself—we will say that it wins the For-itself, even in losing its Being. Whence the opposite myth of the *Causa Sui*: it is not the For-itself that gives rise to Being, it is Being that, in wanting to recapture itself, loses its Being. Hence in a world where *there is* Being, its undifferentiated regions make an appeal to the For-itself. In the world, Being is an appeal.

Naturally, it is the For-itself that constitutes itself for itself as an appeal of Being. But this appeal is no less the expression of the structural relation of the For-itself to the In-itself. In a world *where there is* Being, some regions of Being are such that there is and there is not Being in these regions, so that *what there is* is always conditioned, surrounded, visited, supported by a *there is not* that tends to fall back into *Nothingness* (into that particular nothingness that is what

367. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. lxxv–lxxvii.

368. Does Sartre mean Hegel's reference in the Preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* to the night "in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black" (p. 9)? Cf. above p. 107.

pure Being opens upon). The For-itself as pure presence to itself of *Nothing* (Nothing so long as there is not consciousness *of* the transcendent One) does not justify itself and exists only inasmuch as it reveals itself to itself as consciousness *of* this or that. Hence the hidden, the undifferentiated, the distant *intended* by its pure, empty intention appears to it as its future as existing. It is the appeal of Being (that the For-itself should become more and more conscious of Being).

At the same time, the For-itself becomes conscious of itself as destined to bring it about *that there be* more and more Being, that is, as destined to *manifest* Being. From the fact that the For-itself exists only as unveiling Being and that Being cannot Be without some nothingness that it *is for*, the Existence of the For-itself gives Being a meaning, which is To-Be-in-order-to-manifest-itself.

If the For-itself really does will to lose itself, that is, not be tempted to recapture itself as Being, not consider itself as its own end in the form of the Me/thing, then its task appears to it: through it Being is saved from Nothingness, Being manifests itself: the For-itself springs up so that Being may become Truth. In this way, the For-itself has a task of quasi creation since it extirpates from the shadows of undifferentiatedness what in essence always falls back into them. The For-itself is the pure clarity of Being. It saves Being, which, in effect, will never be For-itself but rather *for* an existent that is for-itself. In any case, recovery takes place, since the For-itself is for-itself in recovering Being. In other words, the relation: there is Being for a For-itself, is an absolute. The For-itself is not Being, Being is not the For-itself, but Being is for—the For-itself that is—for-itself.

This relation, if it is grasped in its purity following conversion, is neither appropriation nor identification. Being is other than the For-itself and unveils itself as irreducibly other. And the For-itself grasps itself in this unveiling as irreducibly *in exile* in relation to Being. This is a relation for which there are no terms but which is originally *ecstatic*. The For-itself loses itself as self in order to cooperate with what Being should be; it intends to be nothing other than that across which Being manifests itself; and at the same time, it is the foundation and has consciousness of being, either nonthetically or reflectively, in that by it Being comes into the world.

Hence freedom is founding; through it, the world exists; if it nihilates itself, Being is opened to Nothingness. And every possibility of freedom (technological, artistic, etc.) being *at the same time* an unveiling of Being, the For-itself reaches itself as the infinite possibility of infinitely manifesting Being. For it is not in passive contemplation that the For-itself makes the most being appear, but on the contrary through the multiple facets of action (Saint-Exupéry). Here *joy* comes from this curious reality: in creating (governing) the airplane one unveils an aspect of Being that was but was not (since it was for no one, it was in absolute undifferentiation).

To unveil is *to create what is*. These are the limits of Man: the God that he conceives would create what is not. But then it is impossible that he should be

able to project his creation outside his subjectivity. Man in creating what is preserves all Being's transcendence, but at the same time he makes it *appear* upon the foundation of freedom. However the relation is not of Being to an absolute and universal consciousness that would be coextensive with it by the contemporaneous infinity of its points of view.

Here there is a tendency we must be careful about: the illusion of being everything. I am inclined, seeing the sea from the shore, to believe that I unveil the *whole* sea. I thereby cover over my anxiety about being just one point of view. I take what I pull from the shadows as a symbol of what remains there in the shadows and, denying my historicity, each time that I unveil *a* being, I pretend that it counts for the *whole* of being. But this is wrong. I unveil *a* being against the background of undifferentiation. And this unveiling does not keep it from falling back into the shadows. I have not assimilated this reef to some great universal consciousness in seeing it; I have manifested it for a historical, mortal, forgetful subjectivity. I move on, the reef will remain there.

So the world as universe has the derisory fate of manifesting itself *by way of* a particular consciousness and above all *to* a particular consciousness. All its "there is"-ness hangs on my finitude. Therefore there is a perpetual temptation to consider this unveiling activity as a form of *vanity* because it is contingent, finite, ephemeral, and subjective. To which we must respond that, in the first place, the For-itself is led in this way to unveil for others, with others, in the service of others. We shall come back to this. But at this moment we are considering the For-itself in its solitude. We said that this regret at not being a universal consciousness is derisory. For precisely it is not the absence of a point of view that will make this unveiling absolute but the reflective reprise at the very heart of the subject. I said above: I have no right to will what I will, but I am justified in willing it because I will to will what I will. This is what has to be applied here. An absolute contingency has only itself to justify itself, but with this it confers absolute justification on itself within its contingency. So when by my reflective look I approve of myself for unveiling this being and I will myself in unveiling it, then because I do unveil this being I reach myself as an absolute and in attaining myself as absolute I confer on this unveiling here and now an absolute character.

So the rock or the sea is *from this point of view* for an Absolute; its being is justified by the single fact that I justify my own, it passes over to the absolute by my free acceptance of contingency and finitude, and joy comes from the fact that I reach myself in the depths of myself as ipseity assuming its finitude in the very moment when I confer its Being-for on Being, that is, its absolute Being. I shall say later how this creative assumption of Being and of myself must necessarily be fulfilled in a relation to Others.

The For-itself is God in that if it decides that Being has a meaning, Being will have a meaning *for the For-itself*. But since the For-itself is an absolute/subject, it is absolutely certain that Being will have a meaning. Principle: the

absolute is subject because only (thetic or nonthetic) recovery prevents Being from opening itself to Nothingness. In other words, either Nothingness is *in* Being (existence—absolute/subject) or Being collapses into an external Nothingness (In-itself). Being nihilates itself in itself or outside itself. Consequence: the modes of existence of the absolute/subject are themselves absolutes because the absolute/subject is entirely in its modes. Conclusion: if the In-itself has a meaning for the Absolute/subject, this meaning, absolutely experienced, is absolute. Ethics, in liberating the For-itself from alienation (which makes it something *inessential*), renders its *absolute* existence to consciousness.

What prevents us from grasping the clarity of this argument is that God has not gone away. He is always in consciousnesses—it is God's point of view that one envisages when one thinks that our grasping of Being remains relative to our finitude. If God does not exist, we have to decide by ourselves on the meaning of Being.

But precisely because “making there be Being” and “giving a meaning to Being” are one and the same thing, it is not in contemplation that Being will be unveiled as having a meaning: it is in effort so that man has a meaning, that is, in action.

To act is to posit that the goal is realizable, that is, that it will be inscribed in the world. Therefore upheld by Being. To act is to posit that Being has a meaning: through the instrumentality of action, Being unveils itself as endowed with meaning. If action is successful, the meaning is inscribed. And fundamentally one acts *so that* Being has a meaning. This is the goal of every goal. To act and to succeed at one's act would be to prove both that Being has a meaning and that man has a meaning. To act and to fail is to prove that the meaning of Being is to make human life impossible. Here the poet intervenes.³⁶⁹ So to make there be Being is to integrate the maximum of being in an attempt to make the meaning of human life appear. Action is revealing/unifying. But precisely because consciousness is from some point of view, because there is a necessity that it be a contingent point of view, Being has to be unveiled from *my* point of view. This indicates that I must renounce that perpetual tendency to slide back and forth between my point of view and the reality of universal eyeglasses, or rather the absence of any point of view.

That Arab who is passing along the road is half concealed from me by the iron bar of my balcony.³⁷⁰ One will easily recognize in himself the tendency I am describing and which I say we have to divest ourselves of: to set aside the bars by thinking them gone and to attempt to see the Arab as he is: that is, to constitute an abstraction which, by the way, is not well founded since fundamentally it is to replace a point of view that is mine with one that is more *convenient*

369. Cf. p. 37 concerning poetry as the love of failure.—Ed.

370. Sartre traveled in Algeria with Simone de Beauvoir during August 1948 (*Oeuvres romanesques*, p. lxvii).

that I do not have. This is the purpose of classical art (I have shown elsewhere how sculpture falls into this illusion).³⁷¹

Another type of abstraction (Barrès)³⁷² will be to perceive things in terms of values and to leave aside everything in one's perception that does not correspond to these values (dirtiness, disorder, ignoble objects, etc.). Culture appears here as a perpetual effort to redress perception on the basis of nobility. Which is necessarily to constitute a *lesser* perception. If cooking odors or worse float around a monument, this humiliated beauty is precisely the unveiled meaning of Being, and it would not be fitting to impoverish it. This unveiling has to occur through an assumption of oneself as a point of view, which implies an unveiling of the *totality of being*. There is no poor perception, there are only impoverished perceptions. This unveiling is the unveiling of the *concrete*, it occurs by staking a claim to itself as a point of view. This unveiling takes place in terms of the single purpose of unveiling the *maximum of being* by being oneself as much as possible (not as Me but in terms of ipseity). And since this unveiling is articulated in terms of that action that is creation, one sees that it occurs as *surpassing toward*. Contemplation limits its goal to this unveiling, it suppresses transcendence. But concrete unveiling takes place marginally in and through such surpassing. The creation of what is is variable, dependent even within this creation on what is not. $y(\text{unveiling}) = f(\text{of its})(\text{creation})$.

If Saint-Exupéry sees the mountains from his airplane as he does, it is *first of all* because he is piloting the plane and these mountains appear to him as means and as danger in that surpassing them brings him toward his goal (to land in Morocco).³⁷³ *Next*, he does not seek to substitute for these mountains as he sees them the mountains as they are (that is, as they are from a more familiar point of view, whether more convenient or deliberately chosen). Therefore he resolutely claims his point of view in his contingency as creator of what is. This is what the mountains *are*. Undoubtedly they are other things as well (for the shepherd, for the mountain climber, etc.), but these points of view cannot be rendered equivalent to one another in terms of some abstract logic.

In reality as lived, my action suddenly makes the being of the mountains unfold, like a flower that blossoms, and I want this being with the very movement that brings it about that I choose myself. In the same way, it undoubtedly

371. Cf. "N-Dimensional Sculpture," in *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, volume 2: *Selected Prose*, ed. Michel Contat and Michel Ryblaka, trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), pp. 165–71. This essay first appeared in the catalog for a 1947 exhibition of sculptures by David Hare at the Maeght Gallery.

372. Maurice Barrès (1862–1923), an antirepublican and strongly nationalistic French writer, elected to the Académie Française in 1906. He was elected deputy from Nancy in 1889 and then from Paris (1906–23).

373. "There is a peak ahead, still distant. The pilot will not reach it before another hour of flight in the night. . . ." Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Wind, Sand, and Stars*, trans. Lewis Galantière (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939), p. 33.

makes sense that I struggle, in the name of my concrete project, against anxiety, dejection, laziness, despair, depersonalization, psychasthenia, etc. Yet I must not, for all that, refuse them as themselves unveiling. Being-in-the-world-with-others has as one of its consequences that each immanent determination is an absolute unveiling of the transcendent. Laziness just like depersonalization reveals useful information to me about man's condition in the world among men, and I have to take account of these unveilings when I organize (see below) the total unveiling of the world.

Ethical rationalism is correct to reject internal dispositions when they are pitfalls for action; it is wrong to consider them as moods, that is, as purely subjective agitations that procure only illusions about Being. Everything is *true*. An upset woman doubts her husband's love—because to the extent that love is doubtful, her husband *does not love her* in those moments when he most loves her, because to believe is to believe and not to believe, etc. Another person, dejected and despairing, feels crushed by the world. Because Being is *crushing* for the For-itself, even when the For-itself seems to succeed in its project; a person who cannot make up his mind no longer knows what it means to want something—because a human goal, however absolute it may be when it is willed, is absurd *before* and *after*.

So it makes sense both to will and not to will one's moods. To repress them is not to take account of them all the while giving them the most extreme importance. To assume them as an unveiling of Being and surpass them toward a concrete chosen goal. That upset woman who doubts her husband is authentic if she refuses to "take account" of this doubt in the sense that doing so might lead to irretrievable acts or words and if, at the same time, she discovers in and through her mood an aspect of love that she will integrate into her total experience. Man, existent, "revealed/revealing," is a perpetual revelation.

And if one assumes the gratuity and the contingency of one's point of view, this comes down to assuming one's historicity. I am within "the course of the world" and I contribute to its happening. I may practically do everything I can so that this war can be avoided, but if it does break out I *have to live it through*. I do not change my point of view concerning it, I persist in condemning it, perhaps I even decide in the midst of this war to carry on an antimilitaristic propaganda campaign; but, even so, I have to live it out as if it were me who had decided it should happen. I reject it and assume it exactly as in the case of my moods. It is an opportunity for unveiling the world. At the very moment that I condemn it, or repress it, I have to allow it its maximum unveiling of being. My refusal must not be a *flight*, I must not refuse to live it, to try not to take account of it, to repress its joys, its experiences. Rather, on the contrary, push them to the absolute. From this point of view, the man who has chosen to unveil things, considers everything that happens to him *as an opportunity*, in that what happens to him permits him to unveil even more (even the risk of death). And with this, assuming even his *date* in its contingency, he considers as *his own*

the historical perspective in which he is placed. This is what I need now to make sense of.

Whatever I do, in effect, my historical presence calls into question the “course of the world” and a refusal to call it into question is still a calling into question and an invented answer. My concrete situation is defined as a particular point of view on my historical situation. “I-am-in” History and every one of my acts will provoke a modification of the course of the world or on the contrary will express this course. In this sense, everything I do from dawn to dusk (from my manner of washing myself to my way of reading or of looking at things) will be significant for a future historian, even if I should be lost in the mass of humanity and my memories preserved only by accident.

From this fact, my future outlines itself in terms of the society that surrounds me and reciprocally the future of this society is what makes it my future. I share the ignorance of my era and I struggle against its superstitions. But the most solidly established ones are precisely those I do not fight against. I may well struggle today against a half-dead Christianity, but not on the contrary against some sociological or biological assumption upon which I base my struggle. To want to reach the eternal by passing over this ignorance, these superstitions, these complicities, this social structure that makes me a member of one class or another, and these events that my inertia gambles on or that my action brings about, is to deny that consciousness has a point of view, to deny that contingency is an ontological necessity.

Ordinarily we are well aware of our biological contingency. We rebel, on the contrary, against our historical contingency. We are quite willing to be astonished that we have *just* five senses; we do not reflect enough on the fact that Pascal was unaware of Carnot’s principle,³⁷⁴ Marxism, or psychoanalysis, and that he thought *with the means at hand*, and above all that *we* think with the means at hand. What we have here is the same abstraction as when we suppress the bars of the balcony in order to see the Arab better. We try to place ourselves within universality, that is, within the total absence of a point of view or within God’s point of view.

And no doubt a universal does exist. But it itself is lived out historically: in principle and in terms of abstraction, all Mathematical possibilities are given at once and to infinity. In fact, in each era they pose concrete problems. We can not see how non-Euclidean mathematics could have been conceived in the 17th century. Hegel resolved the difficulty by placing himself at the end of History. But History not being finished, I can assume my contingency and make it the absolute that I defined above only by assuming it within History. And this is precisely what is called *historizing oneself*.³⁷⁵

374. Cf. p. 440.

375. In their translation of *Being and Time*, Macquarrie and Robinson create the verb “to historize” to translate Heidegger’s use of the German verb *geschehen*, in order to mark its kinship

So I historize myself in laying claim to myself as the free consciousness of an epoch in a situation within that epoch, having its future in the future of this epoch, and being able to manifest *just* this epoch, not being able to surpass it except by assuming it, and knowing that even this surpassing of my epoch belongs to this epoch and contributes to its taking place. Hence my epoch is mine—in assuming it, I assume myself; I see no task for myself except *in* this epoch and in relation to it. This does not mean that I can have nothing to do with the great transcendent things that surpass it (a party, a political end, the conservation of an institution, of a culture), but it is a question of conserving or developing them *with the means at hand* and of assuring their passage from one epoch to another.

So, before manifesting my epoch to itself, before changing it into itself and for itself, I am nothing other than its pure mediation. Except this mediation being consciousness (of) self and assuming itself saves the epoch and makes it pass over to the absolute. This is what allows us to resolve the following antinomy: it is said that great men express their epoch and that they surpass it. The truth is: I can *express* my epoch only in surpassing it (to express is already to surpass the given—and furthermore expression is marginal. One expresses in a surpassing meant to change) but this surpassing is itself part of this epoch—through me my epoch surpasses itself and contains its own surpassing. For my epoch, being a detotalized totality of transcendences, is itself a transcendence.

It is because the individual genius has been seen as a kind of transcendence by considering his epoch as given and as immanence that it has been believed that they *surpassed* it. In reality, they do surpass a given, but wherever they surpass something they bring their epoch along with them like a banner. An epoch is neither finite nor infinite, it is indefinite, or, if one prefers, it is finite but not limited. Therefore, to will myself is to will *my* epoch. I cannot will to suppress War. The conditions for such a thing are not given and, moreover, the freedom of my descendants may bring it back again. But I can will to suppress *this* war. And I can will it in the name of the same principles that make pacifists want to suppress war in general. I can want *my time* to be one where a certain imminent war was avoided.

So [I] must in no way reject anything that happens (even if I have tried with all my might to avoid it), instead I have to claim it as my own and make it pass over to the absolute. Marx saw this well: a war is neither praiseworthy nor condemnable in itself, we have to see whether, in the historical circumstances, it serves the interests of the proletariat.

This means that there is no *a priori* principle of ethical universality in whose

with the noun *Geschichte*, i.e., history as it actually happens, not as it is recounted by historians, which is *Historie*. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 30 n. 1 and 41 n. 1. Henri Corbin did the same for his 1937 French translation of Heidegger's "What is Metaphysics," reprinted in Martin Heidegger, *Questions I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968). Cf. *ibid.*, p. 18.

name we can judge any event of an epoch (which would be to introduce the judgment of the past or of the future), rather I am here so my epoch may judge itself through me in terms of its own principles and so that it may determine itself to exist according to them. For an epoch *is nothing if no one thinks about it*, it is at the heart of every thought that it attains itself. So it has a thousand absolute facets but is never the *unity* (detotalized totality) of these facets, even though in each of them it is unified. And each of them, as thinking and changing this epoch, is *outside of it* as what upholds it within the absolute—and when thought and unified as one epoch by another they are *within it*.

Each facet, therefore, will attain absolute authenticity if it realizes the tension of thinking its epoch as the absolute that attains itself can think it and itself think itself (the passage to the objective) in that epoch as others think it. Two distinct operations but ones that we must always have simultaneously present in our minds (we shall return to this, it is the problem of the passage from the act to the objective).

In sum, my epoch is me. I am that being immanent to it by which it transcends itself toward its salvation. I have to assume it as I assume myself and make it pass over to the absolute in attaining myself as absolute. In this way I manifest Being by way of my moods and my epoch in and through a project that saves and founds this epoch. It is in historizing myself that I assume myself as absolute (in taking up my gratuitousness for my own account) and it is in historizing myself that I manifest and unveil the concrete maximum of being (the being already revealed by my epoch and the revealing/revealed being of this epoch *on Being*).

3) Authenticity at this level is a double source of joy: through the transformation of gratuity into absolute freedom—through the contact with the being of the phenomenon.

α) Gratuitousness and joy. Consciousness is gratuitous because it is not its own foundation and because it is contingent (a point of view) by necessity. There is a contradiction in a consciousness without a point of view because the infinity of points of view exclude each other and cannot be all supported at once within one and the same consciousness. And if we admit that this consciousness grasps Being and not appearances, it is at least excluded from these appearances and realizes in turn a point of view. Hegel's self-conscious spirit may be able to integrate Stoicism but not the Stoic. Thus consciousness, if it stops deploring its underlying structure, will be able to attain its necessity within its gratuitousness. It is not necessary that it should exist, but it is necessary that this not be necessary; it is not necessary that it should have just this point of view, but it is necessary that it have some point of view and that this point of view not be necessary. So the consciousness of its gratuitousness will encompass any consciousness of the necessity of this gratuitousness.

Consciousness that is able to grasp the necessity of this gratuitousness can and

must love this gratuitousness as an *a priori* condition of its existence and of the salvation of being. A consciousness without a point of view, not being able to be anything other than every realized possible-point-of-view, would therefore be *without possibles*. Being without possibles, it would be pure necessity and consequently without freedom. No action would be *possible* for it, since it would be consciousness of everything. Hence the contingency of consciousness thrown into the midst of Being is a condition of its freedom.

In a word, a consciousness is necessarily finite and free; free because it is finite. In its contingent finitude, therefore, consciousness is able to grasp the necessary condition of its freedom and its existence; it cannot refuse it without refusing itself. But since in assuming its contingency, consciousness, on the contrary, alleges its faith in this contingency and upholds it with its freedom, free consciousness that assumes itself attains—and produces by attaining—the point of view where freedom, contingency, and necessity intersect. My contingency is necessary to my freedom, but my freedom assumes my contingency. In a word, my freedom takes into itself and founds the necessary condition of its existence. My freedom gives the dimension of freedom to what was necessity, and contingency gives the dimension of necessity to what was undetermined freedom. I assume these eyes, these senses, this head, this body because through them I am free, I assume my liberating ignorance.

At the same time, this body and this ignorance and this perpetual risk of death *are for* my freedom. My freedom is their end. But, with this, my freedom also has a face: it is this outline of action in the universe, therefore this body, this ignorance, this risk. But at the same time my contingency existing for itself in the transparency of an absolute reflexive choice shifts to the absolute. Contingency is transformed into autonomy. I was contingent because I could not derive any necessity from myself. But, if, precisely, I were to derive from some necessity, I could not assume myself for I would be rigorously defined by this very necessity. My being would therefore be relative to this necessity (even if it were “internal,” which in fact means nothing). However, precisely because I am gratuitous, I can assume myself, that is, not *found* this gratuity which will always remain what it is, but rather *to take it up* as mine. That is, consider myself perpetually for myself *as an accident*.

Children do this more or less spontaneously when, for example, they suddenly rejoice in thinking: what good luck I have to be French, to be a boy, to belong to this family. However this assumption remains caught up in inauthenticity, because it is subsequent to *a posteriori* motives: the family is prosperous, united, indulgent, France had won the war of '14–'18, etc.

For it is the very contingency of our appearing in the world that we have to consider as an accident. Bataille says: the craziest of accidents.³⁷⁶ But it is inau-

376. Georges Bataille's *Sur Nietzsche* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), reprinted in volume 4 of his *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), is subtitled: “Volonté de chance.” It includes an appen-

thentic as well because this *is not* an *a priori* and so to speak mathematical accident. An accident for whom? Stemming from what? Rather it is *a posteriori* through my assuming it, and my coming back from my free project to my contingency alone is what makes possible my having to consider my contingency as an accident. An accident because my project illuminates it and gives it value as what has allowed this project. We have to love having been able not to be; being *de trop*, etc. Only in this way can the *new* come into the world. Better: only in this way can there be a world.

So what Pascal calls the misery and greatness of man appears as more closely bound together than the Christian may think and in an opposite sense as well.³⁷⁷ For Pascal, greatness is given first, which is participation in God or the point of view without a point of view. Then comes the fall which is a fall into a body and the contingent limitation of having a point of view, and this fall is historization (sin). As for the greatness of man, it stems from the fact that he still possesses within himself traces of his participation in the divine omniscience and because it has been promised that he can return to it.

For the authentic man, on the contrary, man's greatness (I am using Pascal's terms but giving them a purely subjective sense. Man is neither great nor miserable since he is not so for any witness. Yet within the concrete whole that makes up a society and in relation to certain norms, *a* man is great or miserable) derives necessarily from his misery or contingency. Because he is a point of view, finitude, contingency, ignorance, he makes there be a world, that is, he can take on all at once the responsibility for himself and for the universe. And the universal itself or essence, as I have shown (B & N)³⁷⁸ can appear only by starting from the limitation of some point of view. The universal or the possibility of perpetually surpassing my finitude.

Thus the authentic man perpetually surpasses the temptation Bataille has described for us: *to be* everything.³⁷⁹ Within the world of alienation, the fact of *having* a me entails, in effect, the desire that this Me should be everything. However, the relation of the For-itself to everything is different if the Me falls away. Henceforth it is: to exist as someone for whom *there is* everything. Instead of there being a fall, there is a surpassing. And the relation to contingency is similarly inverted: in being taken up it becomes *gratuitousness*, that is, the perpetual outbreak of the free decision *that there is* a world.

β) This consciousness of gratuitousness (or of generosity as the original struc-

dix entitled "Réponse à Jean-Paul Sartre" (ibid., pp. 195–202) directed against Sartre's critique of *Inner Experience*. Cf. also "Un Nouveau Mystique," pp. 146, 148, 155.

377. "Man's greatness comes from knowing he is wretched" (Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 59).

378. "But human reality can make being appear as an organized totality in the world only by surpassing being. All determination for Heidegger is surpassing since it supposes a withdrawal from a particular point of view" (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 17).

379. Cf. p. 96.

ture of authentic existence) is indissolvably linked to the consciousness of Being as a fixed explosion. The myth of God was tranquilizing. The whole world was *seen*. We have all, at first, defended this mythic tranquilizing, whose original necessity is obvious: someone took it upon himself to draw the world out of blind Being; so long as I look at this sea, I make it be that *there is* this sea. But subsequently there continues *to be* this sea, that is, its cold, obscure Being is reheated and upheld within the world by God's looking at it. So I have no more to do than to make there be a "let there be" within a world that is already a "there is." My look looks within God's look, I never see anything more than the *already seen*. In this way, I am, on the one hand, tranquilized, but, on the other hand, I fall into the inessential. God's look falls on the flowers like that of the master in Mallarmé's *Toast funèbre*.³⁸⁰ And the best I can do is to see a part of what God sees *for his glory*.

The presupposition of realism is that God exists and sees. But if God disappears, the *things seen* disappear along with him (I am not yet taking up what is seen by the Other). Being remains. However its tendency to persevere in its Being turns into a tendency to open itself to Nothingness. Being remains what it *is*, that is, compact cohesion, total adhesion to itself, absolute contingency. But at the same time, since it *no longer is for*, at the same time that it is, it is not. (The myth of Jupiter as the arranger of *chaos*. This chaos is Being without any *there is*.) In this way, man finds himself the heir of the mission of the dead God: to draw Being from its perpetual collapse into the absolute indistinctness of night. An infinite mission.

When Pascal writes: the eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me, he speaks as an unbeliever, not as a believer.³⁸¹ For if God exists, there is no silence, there is a harmony of the spheres. But if God does not exist, then, yes, this silence is terrifying, for it is neither the nothingness of being nor Being illuminated by a look. It is the appeal of Being to man; and already Pascal takes himself to be a passion caught up *alone* into these spaces in order to integrate them into the world.

Consequently *to see* is to pull Being back from its collapsing. And as soon as it is revealed, Being springs into this unveiling with all the reaffirmation of its Being. Perception is the upsurge of Being, the fixed, dizzying explosion of Being into the "there is," and this is originally for the For-itself *enjoyment*. Indeed, it is in *its* perception that Being perpetually blossoms forth, it is to *its* look that this dizzying and unmoving setting up of the Whole takes place.

And no doubt the For-itself only grasps phenomena, but the being of these

380. "The Master, with his eyes profound bent low, / appeased, as he went, the troubled marvel of eden / whose final shudder, in his voice only, wakens / for the Rose and the Lily the mystery of a name." Stéphane Mallarmé, *Toast funèbre*, in *Selected Poems*, trans. C. F. MacIntyre (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 61.

381. "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces fills me with dread" (Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 95).

phenomena are entirely given to it (at the same time as this being is entirely transcendent). Its presence to Being unveils Being to the For-itself as a gift rigorously correlative with Being's generosity to it. Being is not in-itself and for-itself as in the Hegelian consciousness—it is in-itself and for the For-itself. This means that it is totally *itself*, without any parts, any facets, separated from me only by what Mallarmé calls the *lacuna*.³⁸²

However this lacuna is once again the For-itself. Being is separated from the For-itself only by the For-itself and the For-itself is itself its own separation from Being, and through the assumption of this separation it draws Being from the night and makes it *appear* within the Absolute. It accepts not being the In-itself so that the in-itself should appear in its total majesty. Thus its passion is enjoyment since by its renouncement of Being, Being is entirely *for it*, totally given within its perceptual field, making its absolute objectivity explode into the region of its subjectivity. The enjoyment here is to be Being by going to the farthest point of “not being it.” That *is*—there *is nothing but* Being since outside of Being I am nothing but an absolute consent that Being be. That is and that is (in the mode of the “there is”) *through me*. I give way so that that *should be*, I am an exile so that Being which is *to be for*, so that the movement of this foliage should be saved, exists absolutely. From this moment on, making there be Being becomes the mission, the passion of the For-itself, it perpetually turns around in order to avoid the collapse of Being behind its back, it continually goes on, it is *called* everywhere, Being appears to it as to Ponge, as to Gide, a perpetual effort at expression that can only exist through its mediation.³⁸³

Gide, *Journal* [volume 1: 1889–1913], 299: “Before the expectant beauty of crude nature, my liberated brain became more excited than before the work of art.”

Through me, Being exists for the absolute and this absolute is me. Through me permanence, eternity (atemporality), right fit, absolute immanence, purity (to be what one is) enter into the absolute and this absolute is me.

Here for the first time intervenes the true relation between things and the authentic man (which we shall rediscover in his relation to his work and to Others), which is neither identification nor appropriation: to lose oneself so that some reality may be. Mallarmé well understood this: to take part overlooked, unknown in the crowd, at some anonymous performance of his work. There is a *taste* for Being.

We also need to comprehend clearly what is meant by “making it be that there be being.” This is not just to manifest pure Being, it is to make pure Being

382. “They [the Mob] play the game without rules and for useless stakes; they force Our Lady and Patron Saint to reveal Her dehiscence, Her lacuna, Her misunderstanding of special dreams which contribute to the common measure of all things.” Mallarmé, “Mystery in Literature,” in *Selected Prose*, p. 30.

383. Francis Ponge, (1899–1988), French poet. Cf. “L’Homme et les choses,” in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations, I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), pp. 226–70.

appear within a world, to *put it into relation*. I have already discussed this topic, I showed that the For-itself *adds* nothing, it limits itself to perceiving within the unity of a world that which by itself tends to fall back into to the exteriority of indifference.³⁸⁴ So through the For-itself Being comes to the world. The For-itself *is Relatedness*.³⁸⁵ There is a relation [only] because the For-itself is a relation to itself and relates to Being through its ontological structure.³⁸⁶

There are therefore two ways of losing myself: one is to want to grasp myself in the manner of realism (which is the ontology of the spirit of seriousness) as being aware of and thereby confirming this relation, which is given in the nature of things. Then consciousness becomes the inessential. What is more, it is nothing more than a passive luminosity. Inessential passivity relative to absolute Being, submitting to the relation without being it, the For-itself is no longer that by which Being comes to the world, since the world is given without it. Therefore it is unable to assume itself as absolute since the absolute lies outside it.

The other way of losing myself is to conceive of myself as creating the relation without myself being this relation (Kant).³⁸⁷ In this case, the relation is not the For-itself itself, it emanates from the For-itself and falls outside it. The For-itself remains a Being, one that produces relations. What it lacks is being a relation to itself within the absolute. No doubt it does constitute itself as a set of relations in unifying itself as the world, but then it appears to itself as an already constituted relation or nature (which is what I call the region of the Psyche) and as purely relative, not as being its own relation to itself and to the world.

At the same time, it is the world that becomes the inessential, since it is no longer anything more than the noematic correlate of a unifying operation. We lose the joy of unveiling *what is*. A joy that cannot subsist unless *what is* is in the absolute and unless its discovery is absolutely valid. Thus, in realism, consciousness loses all joy by becoming pure contemplative passivity, epiphenomenal—in idealism, it loses all joy because it and the world appear as pure relativity. The element common to both of them is that the relation affirmed by consciousness is given outside it (either by God, or by a transcendental activity that makes consciousness possible, but which is not it).

Led on by the notion of *relation* connoted by the idea of relativity, they have

384. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, Part II, chap. 3.—Ed.

385. “A Human Being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation’s relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation’s relating itself to itself.” Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 13.

386. “The ‘I’ is the *content* of the connection and the connecting itself. Opposed to an other, the ‘I’ is its own self, and at the same time it overarches this other which, for the ‘I,’ is equally only the ‘I’ itself” (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 104, quoted by Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 158).

387. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 216–18.

seen that without a doubt there are two terms relative to each other united by a relation at the heart of this relation—because this relation comes from the outside, but not that *the Relation* inasmuch as it springs forth from itself toward the world is necessarily an Absolute; that is, the For-itself itself. For the relation is precisely the unity of this duality, something that cannot come to the world except through a being that is for itself a duality in this unity (which presupposes an intimate negation of each term by the other, a repulsion in the attraction).

So the unveiling of Being is a contact of two absolutes where each one is centered on the other. Consciousness could not exist without Being and it is immediately a double relation: it makes itself into a relation to itself as itself being the not-being of *this* being and it is a relation of internal negation (as not-being-this-being) with Being. So it is through an internal negation of Being that consciousness wells up as absolute, and reciprocally Being is absolutely in the world because consciousness being the absolute as a relation, all relations set up are relations within the absolute. In this way, the world that appears to me is the source of my joy in that I discover myself as absolute in discovering it as absolute. It is a system of relations because I am the relation and these relations come absolutely to Being through my absolute upsurge.

However, at the same time that I add nothing and Being appears to me as it *is*, I discover myself as absolute in and through the unveiling of the absoluteness of Being. I have the *absolute existence* of being the authentic discovery of an absoluteness of Being: this absoluteness comes toward me from Being. And Being has an absolute *truth* because I am the absoluteness of the relation. Thus when the form of Being symbolizes pure Being apart from any relations (the sand, the sea, the night), I particularly grasp myself as drawing my absoluteness from it (at the limit we have realism). In the face of pure, eternal, undifferentiated Being, I grasp myself as a pure, almost inessential unveiling, subordinated to Being, and my consciousness is essential only to the extent that the inessential is essential to the essential. The pure joy of the passion and the gratuitousness and the radical placing into question of the For-itself in the face of Being.

And since Being is only Being and I am nothing other than not-being-Being, Being and Nothingness pass back and forth into one another and Absoluteness is Nothingness passing into Being or Being passing into Nothingness, pure temporalization as temporalization of the consciousness of the Eternal. Either the passage of the Eternal to the purely temporal (it is the Eternal grasped in terms of pure succession), or the passage of pure Time to the Eternal (temporalization is a pure successive grasping of the Eternal).

On the other hand, when the object through its variety necessitates a continuous deepening of relationships (a complex yet harmonious landscape), I grasp myself as that through which the relation comes to Being, without this relation thereby ceasing to be an absolute structure of worldly Being (since I am myself absolute), and without this relation ceasing to be a pure revelation of *what is* (since I add nothing to Being).

Thus Being becomes what it is through being placed absolutely in relation with what already was. And this placing into relation is not my whim or an activity analogous to that of Stoic causality which does not implicate the agent. This relation is *me*, it is my type of existence. I am not first and then subsequently placed in relation, rather I well up as a being placed in relation to Being. So this unveiling is neither subjective nor objective. It is an absolute upsurge of absolute Being into the absoluteness of subjectivity. I can never find this subjectivity if I look for it, for it is *nothing*. Everything I can see and touch is Being in its absolute transcendence—and I can nowhere grasp Being as it is since *there is* being *only* through being set into a relation, I am everywhere as a relation. And Being returns back to me what I am, for, since I am the Relation, the more the world is multiple the more the me who loses myself so that this multiplicity exists, I am rich.

Thereby we rediscover, although in terms of the humility of finitude, the ecstasis of divine Creation. The hitch in the idea of divine creation is that the *perfect* God, creating the best of all *possible* worlds and peopling it with imperfect creatures in his image, creates something *beneath himself*. Valéry saw this clearly: creation, taken in this sense (A creates B, $B < A$), has to be a *defect*.³⁸⁸ And indeed this is how we do understand it psychologically when we reproach an artist for creating something beneath his ability (facility). At the same time, the antinomy of divine Creation is: if Being is given, there is no creation, and if it emanates from God, we shall never get beyond subjectivity. Instead man creates the World (an infinitely complex reality) above-himself or rather—since this notion of superiority makes little sense here—he *surpasses himself* through this creation and he is this very surpassing, he is nothing other than this absolute nihilating of himself so that the world may exist. He has the joy of being consciousness of being and, at the same time, of not being his creation. It is the fact that *Being already is* that confers its transcendence upon it, it is the fact that for man there is Being that makes the world a creation. As pure subjectivity creation would not lead to joy, nor would it do so as pure objectivity. This joy comes from finding oneself on the outside when one has lost oneself on the inside. The world is me in the dimension of the Not-me.

However negativity cannot be overcome and it is not a question here of dreaming about assimilating this Not-me as in Hegel or Fichte.³⁸⁹ No digestion:³⁹⁰ it is me but always in another dimension of Being, always *other than myself*. We thereby rediscover the characteristics of the work of Art since in this *too* there must be some “matter to shape” that lends its Being (otherwise it would remain subjective and a dream); therefore the transcendent is *given* and,

388. Paul Valéry (1871–1945), French poet, essayist, and critic. See n. 406.

389. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), German Idealist philosopher.

390. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl’s Intentionality,” trans. Joseph P. Fell, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 1:2 (May 197): 4–5. Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 187.

consequently, if the work appears outside of me once made, it is because I have worked on Being.

So originally man is generosity, his springing up is the creation of the world. He is not initially in order next to create (as God currently is represented), rather in his very being he is the world's creation. And when he assumes himself through reflection, he makes this very creation a required and an accepted absolute. Everything takes place as though he had said: "I choose to lose myself so that the world can exist, I chose to be nothing more than the absolute meaning of Being, I choose to be *nothing* so that the world can be everything, and in this way, since I am the Relation and the Creation in my being, I choose to be what I am. I do not have to give myself the mission of bringing it about that there be Being—I am that mission. Simply stated, this mission can turn back on itself and give itself its being within the absolute—in this way it upholds itself by itself and the pure gratuitousness of its mission and its creation are transformed into absolute freedom."

4) However, within the world there are men and other living beings. I do not wish to demonstrate yet how I can organize *my* creation in theirs and *give* it to them. We shall come back to this later. But before even considering them as revealing looks, I want to show them as revealed creatures. For one of the structures of *Mitsein* is to reveal the Other in the world. In the Hell of passions (described in B & N), this revelation of the other is conceived of as a pure surpassing.³⁹¹ And the other thereby grasped as transcended transcendence, as a fragile body in the universe is immediately disarmed. I surpass his ends with my own, therefore they are nothing other than givens, I transform his freedom into a given quality, I can do violence to him.

We shall see below how all this may be transformed through conversion. But what I want to note here is that within this hell there is already generosity and creation. For in springing up within the world I give other For-itself a new dimension of being. Being is within the world. The existent is-in-the-world. But this being-in-the-world is a surpassed being-within-the-world. Except this surpassed being-within-the-world is *for me* only as being-in-the-world, I grasp my body as a taste of my *Erlebnisse*, I do not grasp my being laid siege to by objects except as a situation to surpass. Being alone can reveal to me that dimension of Being that is my surpassed Being, but Being is not consciousness, it is the pure indifference of Being, it crushes me with no consciousness of my fragility. Thus through the Other I am enriched in a new dimension of Being: through the Other I come to exist in the dimension of Being, through the Other I become an object.

391. Sartre's examples in *Being and Nothingness* include indifference, desire, hate, sadism, and masochism. "Thus the masochist ultimately treats the Other as an object and transcends him toward his own objectivity" (ibid., p. 379).

And this is in no way a fall or a threat *in itself*.³⁹² This comes about only if the Other refuses to see a freedom in me *too*. But if, on the contrary, he makes me exist as an existing freedom as well as a *Being/object*, if he makes this autonomous moment exist and thematizes this contingency that I perpetually surpass, he enriches the world and me, he *gives a meaning* to my existence *in addition* to the subjective meaning I myself give it, he brings to light the *pathetic* aspect of the human condition, a pathos I cannot grasp myself, since I am perpetually the negation through my action of this pathos.

In other words, the other makes *there be* a within-the-worldness to being-in-the-world. He does not invent this “within-the-worldness”; were I alone in the world, an avalanche of boulders could crush me (except that I would only grasp this avalanche as an *accident to be avoided*); he unveils it, he thematizes my fragility. If therefore I am conscious of this, a new category of the unveiling of being intervenes: in authenticity I choose to unveil the Other. I *too* am going to create men in the world.

Let us be careful to grasp just what this means. Note, first of all, that this cannot be (although we shall discuss this further below) except on the foundation of the recognition of the Other as absolute freedom. But how can one unveil the Other as freedom? One can no doubt—and this comes first—grasp the Other as a look. But this disquieting, undifferentiated, and intermittent freedom is not the freedom of *this* Other; it is the intuition of *another* freedom in general. In fact, freedom that is nothing other than the free project of some undertaking does not unveil itself *to itself* except in and through this undertaking. If therefore its structure implies that it is always *concrete* and defined by its goal, we do not grasp the freedom of others except through its goal. But there are different ways of grasping the goal: if I simply transcend it on the way toward my own goal, it becomes a *thing*. It is absurd and contingent. But the contemplation of the work of art allows us to grasp how I can apprehend the Other’s goal: the work of art presents itself to me as an absolute end, a demand, a call. It addresses itself to my pure freedom and in this way reveals to me the pure freedom of the Other.

If therefore I grasp the work of the other (it doesn’t really matter whether it is a work of art) as an absolute demand requiring my approbation and my agreement, I grasp the man in the process of making it as freedom. Naturally, this freedom in the Other *must* not deny itself (which is most often the case), but we do not have to deal here yet with the way in which we have to grasp the freedom of someone who denies his freedom. We will assume—since we are within the city of ends—that the Other has chosen a goal that confirms his freedom. In this case, therefore, we grasp the man in terms of his future (commencing with the perception “it is like this”) and this future appears to our own freedom as an unconditional end *for it*. On the basis of this organized grasping

392. Cp. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 263: “My original fall is the existence of the other.”

of an activity and an end that illuminates it (I look at the speaker, he belongs to my party, I approve of what he is saying), I come back to the man in the process of acting and I grasp him as *within the world*: which is to say that all at once on the basis of an absolute goal (an absolute relation to *subjectivity*), I suddenly discover the total contingency, the absolute fragility, the finitude, and the mortality of the one who is proposing this goal to himself. With this I unveil the being-within-the-world of the one who through his freedom is surpassing the world and demanding that I surpass it.

This finitude must not incite me to *contest* this goal since, 1st, this goal imposes itself *unconditionally* and as coming first (the personality of the artist must not incite me to contest the work. If Gide is *miserly*, this is not a reason for contesting the calls for generosity that his work may contain). It is the goal that defines the man, not the man who defines the goal. 2d, it is finitude (which I know through my own conversion and through everything that precedes it) that is a necessary condition for the inventing of an unconditional goal. In quite the opposite sense, therefore, I must unconditionally accept this finitude, this contingency, and this fragility.

Yet it is no less true that I *reveal* it. Here we are able to understand what *loving* signifies in its authentic sense. I love if I *create* the contingent finitude of the Other as being-within-the-world in assuming my own subjective finitude and in *willing* this subjective finitude, and if through the same movement that makes me assume my finitude/subject, I assume his finitude/object as being the necessary condition for the free goal that it projects and that it presents to me as an unconditional end. Through me *there is* a vulnerability of the Other, but I will this vulnerability since he surpasses it and it has to be there so that he can surpass it. Thus one will love the gauntness, the nervousness of this politician or that doctor, who pushes aside and overcomes this thin, nervous body and *forgets* it. For it is made to be forgotten by him (and for rediscovering itself transposed into his work) yet, on the contrary, to be thematized or objectified by me. This vulnerability, this finitude *is the body*. The body for others. To unveil the other in his being-within-the-world is to love him in his body.

What does this mean? By illuminating the world from my point of view, which is finite, I illuminate a related set of objects some of which stand in an internal relation to the Other whom I see, whereas the remainder are merely externally and indifferently related to him (owing to the fact that he is finite). These latter objects do not exist for him, since he is unaware of them, but from the very fact that he exists for me at the same time they do, I constitute a supplementary layer of existence for the For-itself: that of existing in relation to certain objects in terms of the *nur verweilen bei*, being-alongside-of, contiguity. And from this point of view, he is constituted for me in the mode of the *being* of *Being*, for, in effect, this road he turns his back to, or those scientific laws he is unaware of, are things he has a certain way of not being without thereby *having* not to be them. He *is* not, he is never just being when I consider him in

himself, but he has a “not being” that is precisely the not being of Being (when it reveals itself in the *there is*).

In this sense, he is determined in his being by the set of negative relations I establish between him and the world. Without me the unperceived, the unmodified would collapse into pure exteriority *for him*. The unperceived cannot determine his finitude, which would be pure *existence*, that is, freely assumed by him. His limits would be internal ones, in the sense that it would never be possible to say whether his finitude was something chosen or submitted to. But through my presence his finitude receives a *being*.

For example: to see a man *from the rear* is to see him in terms of what he does not see, it is to constitute him on the basis of what he is unaware of, to foresee what he cannot foresee, and to foresee him in terms of what he cannot foresee about himself. To see the rock that he does not see rolling toward him is precisely to unveil his being-within-the-world in terms of this rock as a permanent, given, and *received* possibility of no longer being there. It is to grasp this man as dependent in his being on the whole order of the universe.

This man whom I see, on the other hand, is not merely some pure relation of contiguity. In other words, if he has the not-being of the being of the *there is*, it is no longer so easy to grasp him in his *being*. For as soon as I try to know what this object *is* that is not the rock or the surrounding sands, his being escapes me. I grasp him at present in terms of his relation to the world he is illuminating: he fishes, swims, dances, hikes. And I am obliged to grasp him in terms of his undertaking, that is, in terms of what is not, in terms of that whose virtual existence exists as a virtuality only through him. Hence I find myself in the following odd situation. Each one of his gestures is a surpassing of his being and he never hands over his being to me except by way of this double malady of Being: his movement and his project. Yet at each moment *I catch a glimpse* of the *being* of this existent *underlying* its very existence, like a town shimmering in the rain. I catch sight of the perpetual relation of the soles of his feet to the ground, of his body to his weight, I catch sight of the *features of his look across* his physiognomy and his look, I grasp the spot on his shoulder.

Consider this dancer, at first she is the *dance*, yet the trembling of her breasts is not the dance, it is a kind of inertia. This runner *is sweating*. Beneath her project I catch sight of an order of life and beneath this order of life I catch a glimpse of the order of Being, without ever *reaching* it. In this way, then, I reveal a quite unusual type of object: the pink of these cheeks, the shine in these eyes, the curve of this nose which are part of the *there is* only by way of me. Yes, they do represent quite well the *being of* that woman as a taken for granted determination. But I never see them except in relation to what she *makes of them*.

And in the end this only appears to me as a limit. A limit that the other cannot surpass but which I cannot really *grasp*. The being of this mouth or nose for me is that the other *could not have any other*, even though she surpasses them

by the interplay of her physiognomy; that is, they are in relation to her temporality in the relation of the exteriority of indifference: within the perpetually changing unity of a man I see unchanging elements or ones that change independently (a cold. He is talking politics, telling about his projects, and his nose is running) or, if you will, in relation to the end projected by the man and grasped by me, there are structures of his being which are in a state of indifference. And these structures are not yet *pure Being* for they can be *lived* (illness, etc.: the typical example, cancer), but their relation to his project is one of *external* negation, which means that they are *something like pure being* in relation to his project and, consequently, to his body inasmuch as his body is *man*.

In this way we bring to light the one relation of pure Being to man in the *there is: destruction*. The relation for which man is the origin is surpassing his own being and Being in general insofar as his being is amidst Being. However with man's worlding project, a change in Being introduces a relation whose fundamental origin is man, but that, on the basis of the absolute Relation, stems from Being. The one relation that can come from Being is the introduction of a mass of exteriority of indifference into a project, which breaks apart its unity. This is what, according to human nomenclature, is called destruction. The basis of this destruction is the impenetrability of Being. The one relation possible between two impenetrable things is contiguity, and if two impenetrable things clash into each other, one of them has to disappear (in fact there are combinations of impenetrability, grasped on the human scale, that clash into each other). Therefore I grasp and unveil the destructibility of the Other by unveiling that beyond the relation of unveiling and surpassing, which is the human relation of man to things, there is a permanent relation of the exteriority of indifference of Being to man and even within man. But this relation has to unveil itself through the being for which and by which the relation exists. Therefore it is me who unveils/creates the *fragility* of the other.

So the finitude that comes from me to the other is that he is, in relation to what is not illuminated by his project, like the being that *is not* another being (he has the not-being of being), and his fragility is that in surpassing the being that he has to be, he does not surpass *all* the being he is. There is within him being in relation to which he stands in the exteriority of indifference—within the being he is as having to be it, *there is* being that he is without having to be it (he *is* dolichocephalic).

But, what is more, without for all that ceasing to affirm totally his fundamental project, my place in the world can reveal to me that by this or that secondary project that man is in the process of destroying this project and perhaps every possibility of a project. I affirm that comrade in the battle whom I see from afar crawl toward the enemy, I fight as he does, his project is mine. But I *see* that he is going to fall right into a trap. The origin of his behavior is his ignorance and I am similarly ignorant about what concerns me. But this ignorance, which *is* nothing when I am caught up in my action, I unveil in terms of the other.

Result: I reveal his project as self-destructing. His goal: to get close to the enemy without getting killed is contested by the means he is using: crawling across this field which I know is mined. He will be killed before he gets anywhere near the enemy. It is not *chance* that will kill him but his own combination of means. In order to avoid the enemy's fire (and save his life) he is going right at that boulder, behind which, I know, there is a mine. So his act is constituted with a signification that he *gives it*, on the basis of one that I give it in terms of the world. And since the result—death—comes at the end of a long intelligible accumulation of ends and means: he *hits* the mine, he tries to conceal himself in order to get there safely, he is being careful in order to avoid the bullet that might only have wounded him, and thereby saved his life—the final end, his death, is given as the outcome of a *project*. And this project (which is an odd combination of human finality and the disposition of Being) comes down to the *true* future prepared in ignorance at every moment of the action, this project has the outward aspect of finality but within the externality of indifference, since it is the disposition of Being that articulates it. It is like an illusion of a project within the dimension of Being, a stonelike finality (likes those faces we think we see in the rocks).

We give it the name *fatum*, adversity, etc: evil power. In fact it comes from the man himself. But in unveiling it (I alone can unveil it. He, if he should escape, will only see an *accident*, and his point of view is just as correct as mine, and just as incomplete), I consider it as a counterproject neutralizing the Other's project. With this, the Other's project becomes epiphenomenal; a recoil of transcendence having transcended and neutralized it, it hardly differs from the movement of a rolling stone except through a vain claim which will be that unhappy fellow's loss. This project thereby becomes *being* to the very extent that Being in-itself (the mine) reveals itself as a project. At the limit we have Laius and Oedipus: a negation of every project since any means will lead to the same result.

At this moment the project appears as determined in man by Being. The project is constituted in terms of Being. The bottom of the whole affair is that the man is indeed the artisan responsible for his death in acting *against* his ignorance. He can not do otherwise. From the inside, it is a risk, it is the very heart of his project and his freedom. From the outside, if his ignorance is not what it seems, it is *madness*. That is, every project is revealed to the Other in terms of its perpetual possibility of becoming a thing/project, provoking totally undetermined events in relation to the conscious undertaking, which lies, *at least*, in the externality of indifference in relation to its consequences.

Or, to put it differently, my act gets detached from my will and my choice. Cutting down this side street so as to avoid Z, I run into him. The explanation of this fact will not take account of my will. I ran into Z because I took this street and Z was out walking along it this morning (which I did not know). My

act becomes purely blind behavior; it has become Being and my consciousness and will are like epiphenomena.

Our earlier example was a case of extremes. The Other was ignorant of what was happening as he ran to his end and I knew that he was unaware of what was happening. But all behavior involves risks, it always has an aspect of *thingness* for me, even when it is lived out with the greatest freedom (the acceptance of this risk).

So, beyond finitude and fragility, I unveil *ignorance*, that is, the aspect by which any project to surpass the universe is negated in its surpassing and falls back into absurd immanence, imitating blind instinct (a necessary structure of *every* project or the permanent possibility of failure). But this ignorance not being lived in the first place, it comes to the man through me. Contingency, finitude, fragility, ignorance are all ways of being its being that I unveil in the existent as such.

An existent is perpetually threatened by Being; his ambiguity comes from the fact that he *is* the being he has to be. If I surpass his fundamental project with my own, nothing more is required to oppress him. But if his fundamental project is an absolute and unconditioned demand on me, then, coming back to these characteristics, I grasp them in their concrete unveiling as indispensable conditions of this project. The other is pure surpassing *for himself*, the world is the surpassed; through me, as the witness who creates and witnesses the Other, there are surpassings of the world within the world; the world recaptures these surpassings in the form of the future that comes to it: *there is* a future of the world—and this future is the one by whose perspective I order my projects.

So in unveiling men, I unveil the future of Being. An absolute future which is not for all that the one I give it. What is more, originally Being has *futures* (a plurality). So the unveiling of others is the unveiling of the adventure of Being as objective temporalization. (Each concrete time is a temporalization that temporalizes itself. The *given* temporality is just the noematic unification of many temporalities. It is *no one's* temporality. It becomes *alienation* because *my* temporality becomes, *in* the given temporality, social and alienated by it; I perceive my own time on the basis of others' times. Belongs above.)³⁹³

I am the one through whom the being of the existent is revealed. And since this *being* is the express condition for the surpassing that I affirm, I come back to this being in order to assume it. To the degree that I throw myself into the surpassing of Being by the Other, as *also* being my future, I initially find it somewhat difficult to come back to this Being of the Other which seems to me, at first glance, more like a contingent hindrance to the realization of the affirmed project.

For example, the Other's state of health, if it is unstable, has to appear to me

393. Cf. section I, No. 2, p. 468.—Ed.

initially as a coefficient of adversity. And it is precisely (except in the case in point) pure contingency for me, since it is a determination of revealed being about which I can do nothing. Hence the unveiling of the health of a doctor, a political leader, an artist who has undertaken a long-term work is immediately grasped as fragility and making a difference to the project. The stone in Cromwell's bladder appears to his partisans as an external condition imposed on a project which he affirms.³⁹⁴ The Puritan accepts with one and the same movement the project and the resistances in the world illuminated by his project. He accepts as a chosen adversity which *must be conquered* the resistance of the barely converted population, the political programs of other countries, etc. But he is not *at first* able to accept that adversity that seizes man from behind, which can be illuminated by no look but his own. Yet if he has made the conversion to authenticity and if he does not have the spirit of seriousness, he conceives that the value of his goal stems precisely from the fact that it is posited through the surpassing of *this* body and that it was just this body that was required so that freedom could consume it and surpass it toward a project that is both the assuming of *this* body and its negation.

Thus, through me, the project itself comes to have an outside; it is limited like a *being*; it is both the effort to suppress contingency in one region of the world (illumination, organization of this world) and caught up again by contingency, forsaken, lost. Exposed to a double failure: the one that comes to it *head on* from the world and the one that grabs it from *behind* through the fragility of the body.

And since I grasp it in terms of my own temporality, it appears as *a struggle against the clock*. Within my own temporality I make there be an objective signifying temporality of the Other and this temporality is pathetic because it is a struggle against *fragility*. In other words, there is an inside and an outside to this temporality. Its inside is the signifying calculation of time by the Other: he takes everything into account—the time that a law allows for itself to be accepted, the concomitant actions of foreign governments, etc. Yet this temporality also has an outside: the time, for example, that brings (within the perspective of my own temporality) the leprosy that sets the leprous king outside the battle.

But if I have comprehended what a man is and brought about my conversion, I do not just wish that my project should be realized, I wish that it be so by way of this man, that is, through contingency and fragility. My task *for me* therefore is, since I unveil the being of the project and of the existent, to take this being for an end and to surpass this being of the project by taking it up and surpassing it to the very extent that there is a being. So the being of the Other is *my affair*.

But, furthermore, if I want the project to be realized by a man, this is because I want it to be a victory over fragility. So I assume this fragility. It becomes

394. Cf. p. 53.

precious. In the terms of classical ethics, I will say that it has a value. It is both the original tool and the necessary obstacle. And it is in terms of this double point of view that I value it. What is more, it is what makes the project something finite. Precisely to the extent that I have, in attaining myself through conversion, refused the abstract in order to will the concrete, that is, the maximum of being, I value it in that it makes this project a concrete and particular existence, much richer than any merely abstract dogma. This project that the authentic man of action pursues is never “the good of humanity,” but rather in such and such particular circumstances, with such and such means, at such and such historical conjuncture, the liberation or the development of such and such concrete group.

And for *me* who is a witness of the Other, the maximum of concreteness is given by the fact that it is just this particular man, with just this past and just this body, who undertakes this liberation, with the knowledge that it is through the surpassing of this body alone that this project can be. So this body, this face, this finitude come to be for me, who grasps them in terms of this project, like the replica of this project in Being; I rediscover in them the project as finitude and fragility, as the pure possibility of failure, and as the inexhaustible infinitude of being, I grasp the infinity of freedom (which is its unpredictability) in the infinity of their being. The infinity of points of view that I can assume on this body, on this face are the symbol of the fact that the Other’s freedom is always beyond what he is, or, to put it another way, my perpetual possibility of deepening this Being that allows itself to be glimpsed under this freedom symbolizes with [*sic*] the perpetual possibility of freedom to deepen the given and to surpass it.³⁹⁵

Freedom per se is not lovable for it is nothing more than negation and productivity. Nor is pure Being any more *lovable* in its total exteriority of indifference. But the Other’s body is lovable insofar as it is freedom in the dimension of Being. And loving here signifies something wholly other than the desire to appropriate. It is first of all an unveiling/creator: here too, in pure generosity, I assume myself as losing myself so that the fragility and finitude of the Other exist absolutely as revealed within the world. Through me, the Other’s *qualities* appear, which can only exist *for me* and through my own upsurge. For example, the other *becomes* witty if I exist. He cannot be witty for himself. To be witty is to reveal a certain new, unexpected, humorous aspect of the world, filled with insight. But the one who *reveals* this aspect grasps only the *aspect*, he makes fun of the world. It is the world that suddenly turns toward him with this humorous depth. If I intervene, he is the one who will reveal this aspect of the world to me; he will become *for me* the subjectivity who guided my apprehension of the world, etc. In this way I am conscious of being at the same time a creator and an unveiling of pure Being.

And as with regard to pure Being, I rejoice that the Other should become

395. In the French text the editor suggests dropping the “with” in this sentence.

what he is through my passion. Yet I do not limit myself to conferring another dimension of being on him. I also make myself the guardian of his finitude. In my freedom his finitude finds safety: I am the one who watches his back and who deflects from his back the danger he cannot see (without my turning away from my own ends—otherwise we would have a sacrifice and negation of man in me). He exists for me in secret, hidden from himself, since he will never fully reach himself; yet I never want this existence except to protect its finitude and so that it may all the more surely surpass itself.

At the same time, I *marvel*, coming back from the goal to the fragile being, that this could have come from that and it is the project that I admire in its finitude. I am in on the secret of the secret weakness and contingency of the project that I approve, and I support this weakness against the world; I assume it, I take it up in approving of it; I do not stop defending it and deepening it; I reintegrate it into the human by surpassing it in turn toward the same end. Thanks to me, the exploitation of that instrument that is the Other's body is carried on even further. Indeed, through me this surpassing gets partly fixed in Being and I resurpass this fixed surpassing toward the same goal.

Here is an original structure of authentic love (we shall have to describe many other such structures): to unveil the Other's being-within-the-world, to take up this unveiling, and to set this Being within the absolute; to *rejoice* in it without appropriating it; to give it safety in terms of my freedom, and to surpass it only in the direction of the Other's ends.

5) However the unveiling of Being is, as I have said, a dependent structure. I unveil Being in and through my project of *creating* Being. For every project of an action is a project of creation. Through conversion we grasp ourselves and accept ourselves as unjustifiable. At the same time, we grasp the freedom in us and we establish a new relation of the For-itself to its project (outside/inside).

Indeed, reflection (whether accessory or nonaccessory) grasps man at the heart of his project and as a project. It grasps man *in action*. And action is originally *creation*. The three directions in which man manifests himself in his humanity: affirmation, action, creation, are really one. Man is/creator. Alienation conceals his character of being a creator from him. Which is easy to understand.

In a wholly superficial fashion we can distinguish the following types of action: the action of producing and distributing goods, political action, religious action, social action, ethical action, aesthetic action. In all these domains alienation has played itself out in such a way that most of the time the action appears as *inessential*. It is repetition, or a fully determined phenomenon, or the mere accomplishing of an already existing task, at least as required, or conservation. What is more, the action effaces itself in favor of its goal. If, indeed, the goal is given as *already given*, the action becomes totally inessential. It is demanded by the end. And if, for another thing, freedom is marked by determinism, the action is squeezed between an already given goal and a succession of being that

constitutes it itself as a being. Finally, if one has defined creation as the production of being-in-itself, following the model of divine creation, it becomes clear that man does not create: he discovers or rediscovers.

Marx has written concerning the work of production: “The worker puts his life into the object; then it no longer belongs to him but to the object. The greater this activity, the poorer the worker. What the product of his work is, he is not. The greater this product is, the smaller he is himself. The *externalization* of the worker in his product means not only that his work becomes an object, an *external* existence, but also that it exists *outside him* independently, alien, an autonomous power, opposed to him. The life he has given to the object confronts him as hostile and alien.”³⁹⁶

The product of repetition *already exists*. It is a matter of indefinitely reproducing it. And to the extent that the machine is interposed between the worker and the object, the work appears as some pure functioning of an already existing machine that need only be set in motion. On the other hand, machines, products, shifts, pay scales, etc. being *already arranged* when the worker is old enough to join the factory, the *work* appears as a concrete and essential reality, while each worker is inessential and replaceable. The work becomes a world (the “world of work”) with its laws and its own ways of doing things where the worker comes in as a purely inessential means.

The *reality* of work implies the nonreality of the worker; the reality of *production* implies the unreality of the producer. This is how the worker grasps himself and is grasped by other classes, as just contributing to *maintaining* this already existing dynamic form called work, where the object is mechanically produced like a physical effect by a physical agent. The action, moreover, being collective (work on an assembly line, for example), the worker never rediscovers his part in the creation of the object produced. It always seems to him that object is already given to him and that he is limited to finishing it, to polishing it up—which is easily likened to *returning it to its original status*. The object appears as having an essence that precedes its existence and the worker is limited on his part to making it conform just a bit more to this essence.

In this sense creation can hardly be distinguished from *repair* work. In both cases, an object conceived of as already existing is given as having to be made more in conformity with its essence. And it hardly matters then whether the essence might have been perfectly represented by *another* object fabricated earlier or by *this very object* at some earlier time. The object itself appears, moreover, as already represented by the requirement of some *need*. And since this need is given as natural (hunger, for example, as an expression of our *nature* as a species), the object itself (food production, for example) appears as natural.

396. Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts (1844),” in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, p. 290.

For the worker there is a way of representing himself as a mediation between Nature and Nature. Those middle classes for whom work is essentially *repair* work have no sense of the creative value of their activity. They are intermediaries. And the product, being already finished, has only to be *distributed*.

It has been said (Burckhardt) that the Arabs (*The Thousand and One Nights*) have no sense of play, the Koran having pointed them toward the discovery of hidden treasures.³⁹⁷ But it is not the Koran that is responsible. This is simply the mythical expression of a society of merchants. The merchant *finds* in some distant land an already manufactured object. The inhabitants of this land are unaware of the value that this product might have in another land. They let him have it for a song. If we carry the ignorance of the owner and the value of the object which he is unaware of to the extreme, we have the cave (the image of the home of this blind man) and its hidden treasure.

To bring back the manufactured object is then just a work of defense against its being worn out and against whatever dangers are involved. Space appears here as a homogeneous and neutral setting and, just as movement conceived of as the relocating of this object in this space is forgotten, so the work of the merchant is forgotten. He has created nothing; he merely transported something and relocation amounts to nothing. The most one might conceive of here is a magical theory of the natural place. The object will be in its “right place,” there where it will be most appreciated (that is, bring the most money).³⁹⁸

The storekeeper today participates in the same myths. If he considers himself to be indispensable to society, it is insofar as he appears as a switching yard in the circulation of merchandise or, to put it differently, as the traffic cop who directs this circulation. He exchanges already manufactured products for already minted pieces of gold. He stands on the level of pure quantity, which is a *nothing* (a relation without any relations). As for his goal, it is just accumulation (getting rich). As for his relation to others, it is governed by destruction rather than by construction. He perpetually provides goods to be destroyed. Around this society are its *defenders*, whose primary role is to *preserve* it: the military who *destroy* in order to preserve; the medical doctor who returns to good form the woman who returns her home to good form, the government that *administers* things.

All these individuals as consumers carry out a destructive activity on given objects as already existing and as capable of being replaced at will (one goes to the merchant who keeps them *in stock*). A meal and pleasure are given as

397. Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897), art and cultural historian best known for his *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1878). “It is certain that the Mohammedan peoples would have preceded it in that path if, at the very beginning, the Koran had not protected Islamism by forbidding gaming, and if it had not directed the imagination of Muslims toward the *discovery of hidden treasures* (Burckhardt: *The Renaissance*, Vol. II, pp. 193–4).” Quoted in *The Journals of André Gide*, volume 1, pp. 308–9, and again in volume 2: 1914–1927, trans. Justin O’Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 375.

398. “Right place” is in English in the French text.

destructive activities. A holiday is a collective destruction of goods. They are replaced, without a doubt, but it is always *others* that replace them. The peasant, being close to life, is conscious of soliciting and protecting a natural development, whence the sexual myths of fertility. So production is not aware of itself, it is destruction and conservation that are conscious.

Mental activities are equally alienated. Religion is prayer, sacrifice, and giving (of existing objects); it is also contemplation, that is, passivity, which may extend as far as quietism; it is purification (that is, preservation, conservation, and destruction); it is a struggle against Evil, that is, once again destruction; and, finally, it proclaims that all Being comes from God. Man by himself and without grace is nothingness, only capable of error and wrongdoing. His freedom is to adhere to what is. The ethical life is ruled by the spirit of seriousness: values exist. There is an ethical order to be realized, but this order is already given; ethics is a form of Manicheanism: Good (God) already exists, but passions and failings conceal it. The ethical life is therefore a struggle against Evil that is constantly being reborn. The Good is the partial destruction of Evil. It suffices to *do* what one *sees* (*meliora video proboque, deteriora sequor*).³⁹⁹ Here again man is a kind of mediation. He is just the go-between between Good and the world.

Then there is art. But precisely in a society of this kind, art grasps itself as a form of imitation. The picture imitates a model. Therefore it has an inessential existence in relation to created being. It merely sets forth what *is*. It is contemplative. And at this level of art we can make sense of Pascal's saying: "Why pay attention to an object one is not concerned about in its reality?"⁴⁰⁰

Thus *creation* is strictly limited in everyday life to certain activities: the engineer, the artisan, the artist (despite the reservations given above). Furthermore, *theory* will limit practice. The engineer "obeying Nature" does not have an ideology likely to make him realize his creative power. Liquid air *was already there* latently in nature. He awakens things rather than creating them. And an architect, at least so long as he does not impose his style, indefinitely recommences the existing model by repeating it. Society as a whole is suspicious about *creation*. For it quickly appears as an overturning and negation of what is. The new is not *requested*; needs are defined within the framework of the society that satisfies them. To refuse the Apocalypse and the will to remain *in equilibrium* within some institutional framework are one and the same thing. And analytical reason, considering the *new* as scandalous, undertakes (Bergson) to reduce it to what is old. Science *discovers* and reduces what it discovers to what has been already discovered. Every ideology (the homogeneity of space and time, the reducibility of phenomena, determinism) undertakes to destroy the very idea of creation. Current forms of psychology (behaviorism, psychoanalysis) have no way of ex-

399. "I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worse." Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vii, 20.

400. "How vain painting is, exciting admiration by its resemblance to things of which we do not admire the originals!" (Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 38).

plaining or describing inventiveness. They have even gotten rid of the idea. Bourgeois wisdom has invented *experience*, which allows it to control the new with the old. Cf. Gide and the lessons of History—*Journal*, p. 284.⁴⁰¹

As a result, man's consciousness of himself is alienated, it is the consciousness of an existent who springs up in a world that is to be preserved, cleansed, contemplated. Action slides over the surface of things. At most it can come close to something that had not existed until that moment. It *combines* things, but the elements so joined together preserve their independence. Thanks to all this man justifies himself through the world. He is inessential and the world is essential. Man is essential only in that he is indispensable, in his very inessentialness, to the universe. He is its gardener. With this we have the Greek distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis*. A nonaccessory reflection will quickly demonstrate the fundamental identity of action and creation and, with this, manifest its freedom to the For-itself.

In alienated action one acts in order to be or one acts in order to have. In other words, doing something is a means and is wiped out at the end of the operation since it is *pure existence*. I act in order *to be*—I do this act in order to be courageous. Not, by the way, in order *to create* myself as courageous but rather to make manifest that I am so. Indeed, since the *quality* of being courageous comes to me through the Other and is *affirmed* by the Other and is conferred on me by the Other as retrospectively temporally permanent—“Peter is courageous”—through the Other my act of courage is destined to confer on me in being the quality of being courageous. Then I internalize this quality and allow it to affect my “me” which appears to me as *always-already-having-been-courageous*, and the act itself, on the one hand, is cut off from any concrete project, and, on the other hand, appears as the manifestation of an essence. Thus it loses all its novelty. It is just the consequence or manifestation of an essence. But, what is more, this way of taking the act removes every possibility for man to satisfy himself because he can never *play out* his courage, exist his courage. Having been unveiled *by the Other*, this courage is an object of enjoyment only

401. “Thinking over the weak arguments that Madeline opposes to Valéry, I have come to believe that nothing so confirmed Valéry's opinion as the comparative study he was led to make, for his speech welcoming Marshal Pétain into the Academy, of the contrasting strategy of Foch and Pétain: the former relying precisely on the teaching of history, the other refusing to take account of earlier experience and judging, with superior wisdom, that it can be of no value in the face of necessarily new conditions. It is to that consideration of the past that we owe our most ruinous errors in the ‘last war’; it was that clinging to the so-called lessons of history that made the machine-guns be set up to the rear, which monstrously sacrificed our infantry by hurling it forward in the conviction, ‘based on experience,’ that the dash of the first offensive belonged to the infantry alone, etc. The best lesson that Madeline might have gathered from history is just that the past cannot throw light on the future and that, in order to face up to new events, it is better to have a mind blind to tradition than dazzled by its false brilliance.” *The Journals of André Gide*, volume 3: 1928–1939, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949).

through the Other. For the For-itself, it is a purely formal and transcendent quality that will never *be given as his own to his consciousness*. So the state of someone who relates his acts to his Me is one of perpetual dissatisfaction.

When I act in order *to have*, there is not much difference. Here again the operation is inessential. The goal is appropriation, that is, the assimilation to Me of objects that will thereby become visible qualities. These objects are ready-made. They conform to a fixed essence within the tranquillity of the In-itself, but at the same time they are identified with Me; they are the Me in the dimension of Being, but, here again, there is dissatisfaction since consciousness will be consciousness *of* these objects and not consciousness/object. The In-itself-for-itself is lacking. Or rather one relates together the Me (which is a noema) and the object, but their relation falls outside of consciousness, it is magical and mysterious, it alienates consciousness. Consciousness looks for its Me among things without finding it there, it seeks to grasp the contribution of these things to its Me (the point of view of property) without being able to discover it there, and it is constantly referred from one term to the other.

The disappearance of the Me leads to the vanishing of the illusion that one can exist in oneself in repose. One grasps the pure field of existence as a finite movement of escape outward and one then sees that the movement of the For-itself is to announce what is through what is not yet and to modify the aspect of the world as a function of what is not. So whatever the For-itself may do, whatever action it may undertake, it produces modifications in the world in terms of a future that is *something other* than given Being.

But, what is more, these modifications must necessarily be grasped *from the point of view of the concrete or the maximum of being* as an appearance of a new *being*. If I pick up and transport an object from one room to another, the abstract and analytic point of view that overlooks the change will reduce this action to one of pure relocation, everything else remaining the same; that is, it will assimilate the *Umwelt* to a homogeneous and unvarying space and the moved object will appear as identical with itself. Action so conceived by a witness will therefore not be considered *productive*. But it is precisely because one began by totally denying *the concrete*; one set oneself outside the world, considered as the unity of the infinity of relations of Being, in order to consider abstract beings that have the variety and plurality of things in the world and the exteriority of indifference of Being *outside* of any relationship.

However if we return to the concrete world and the decision to unveil Being in terms of the concreteness of our point of view—that is, in terms of its maximum of being—it is self-evident that the organization of the human world is changed just as much by a mere relocating as by any rearrangement, as is well known to housewives who move a cabinet to different corners of a room in order to see “where it fits best.” The idea that moving something is not productive holds only if we dehumanize the world (which will only have the result of producing in the realm of the imaginary another equally human world).

Still in a world provided with meanings and where every object is what it is in relation to everything else, moving something will be a *qualitative* change. In the hodological space that is our space, whether we wish it or not, an object's place is a *potentiality*: through its place it receives the force of the poles of this hodological space (an object from Swann's side is not the same if it is shifted over to the Guermantes')⁴⁰² and it will alter the human meaning of the objects around it. It will not stand out against the same background, therefore it will not have *the same nature*; it will not be lighted in the same way, etc.

We must presuppose a substantial and unchanging *quid* [something] *underlying* its appearance if we are to consider these modifications in potentiality as unstable accidents. But even if we do adopt this idea, these accidents at least will have an absolute being *as accidents*. Consider a cabinet totally unchanged in its *essence as a cabinet*, we still have to admit that the reflection of the carpet in its glass doors has a being as a reflection and that it is *new*. And it would serve no purpose to reduce this reflection to a set of physical phenomena, for it is true that physics has an absolute truth for the consciousness that unveils the world of science from a certain attitude, but this absolute world in no way changes that other absolute that is the world of perception and of *praxis*. And if one does abstract from the being of the reflection, one does so precisely by placing oneself in that inauthentic and serious point of view we condemned above (which classifies things as different kinds of being according to a system of *a priori* values and which overlooks some of them as a result of these values).

What is more, this being/reflection or any other "accident" does not just appear fortuitously; on the contrary, it was precisely the object of some project. It was to obtain this red reflection, not yet existing, that one moved the cabinet to that place, this is what is drawn from Nothingness to Being, this is what was the end, the theme, and the unity of the action of moving it. The classic contestation of appropriation by appropriation (I liked this object before I acquired it, I don't like it any more) unveils the creation underlying acquisition: by acquiring the object, by bringing it home, I change it and I change its surroundings. The relations it has to its new setting are new. By claiming to possess what already is, I create what is not.

The illusion of possessive consciousness (which would change one into King Midas) is that it would like to assimilate Being without changing it, whereas it transforms everything it touches. A property owner, therefore, has an internal contradiction within himself: he creates in order to possess, but to possess is to possess what *is*, so he denies his creation in affirming his possessing. He has to blind himself to his creative power and not take into account the external changes he produces. Authentic consciousness, on the contrary, grasps itself in its deepest

402. Sartre is referring to two major sections of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, which in French are "Du Côté de chez Swann" and "Le Côté de Guermantes." Cf. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 279.

structure as creative. It makes there be a world in its very springing forth, it cannot see without unveiling, and, as we have seen, to unveil is to create what is.

The very structure of the most conservative project is creation—for to conserve is to prolong in existence an institution or an object in conditions that are not easily compatible with the project, the institution, or the object. Therefore it means giving a new meaning to the institution that one preserves, perpetually modifying it and perpetually reinventing it, so as to adapt it to the flow of the world, inventing ever new justifications for it against ever new attacks, etc. Even my body, in the contingency of its motoricity, is a creator or at least it throws us into creation since it perpetually modifies our relation to the world that we have to unveil.

Thus authenticity will unveil to us that we are condemned to create and that at the same time we have to be this creation to which we are condemned. The very structure of freedom imposes this upon us: if freedom is defined in an act as its aspect of being a *first beginning*, it goes without saying that the free act is creation since through it something *begins* which was not.

It remains to show the meaning of this creation, for since we *have to be it*, it has to have a signification. This meaning is twofold: there is indeed a great myth about creation that confuses everything for we willingly grasp our creation in terms of absolute creation, and our creation appears as its inessential imitation. In other words, accessory reflection has found a new way of concealing creative activity: it makes man a part of the *already created*. It assimilates *being* and *being created* (by God). Man (created being) lives in the world (created being) and his personal creation can be only inessential and local within this great overall creation. Pure reflection therefore has a threefold task:

1st, to unveil the creation underlying the activities of appropriation and identification;

2d, to distinguish the metaphysical myth of Creation from creation as an ontological structure;

3d, to take the latter as its guideline for unveiling the meaning of the former. In a word: what did man project *for himself* in inventing the myth of the creator God?

We have first to notice that created being is nothing more than a given if it is created by a being who is himself created. Created being depends on the *uncreated*. But the uncreated cannot be pure, eternally *given* existence. It can only be its own creation. Thus the myth of divine creation has this primary meaning: creation can come to being only through a being that is its own creation for itself. And the next meaning (which we shall have to unveil later) is that being can be its own creation only in and through the project of creating *being outside of itself*. Thus the ontological argument (all consciousness is consciousness *of* something if it is to exist as consciousness [of] itself) is valid on the plane of action. Therefore we are going to examine the two essential structures of the

absolute idea of creation: creation of oneself—creation of the Other, but recognizing that they are inseparable. And we shall examine them in terms of the following perspective. They are projected into transcendence, into Being, and there is a passage over to the absolute from the inauthentic reaction of man to his own creative reality. They contain both an *alienated* representation and actual structures of human creation.

A) The creation of Being outside of oneself implies that the creator must be his own creator. The *Ens causa sui* of theology. Let us first observe that the *Ens causa sui* is its own creator, not his own *creature*. The accent is on the original activity and not on its product. For the God-creature (the Christ) is as *created* inferior to the creating God. He is a part, in a certain sense, of Nature. Therefore we find in the original idea a certain superiority of an activity over Being, which will be considered as a *product* of this activity and at the heart of which will be housed a sort of nothingness, passivity, collapse. Being has to be upheld in being. This absolute God is the mediator between Nothingness and Being, without him Nothingness and Being are nothing more than one and the same kind of absence. Yet because Being is not at first, it can only be an *activity turned back on itself*. Its passivity becomes the obverse noematic side of this activity or, to put it another way, pure activity in transcending itself turns back on itself as a passive indication of its activity. And Being is nothing more than the passive, turned back upon itself indication of some activity.

Below we shall have to inquire how transcendence is possible if there is nothing to transcend and how an activity can turn back on itself as a passive indication of activity if *Being is not already* in being. Let us simply note for the moment this first characteristic. Immediately there is *another side*: for if Being as self-caused is a pure activity that gives itself being on the basis of no preexisting model, this original choice is pure gratuitousness. Thus we rediscover the *contingentia mundi* we wished to avoid by the cosmological recourse to the *Ens increatum* [uncreated being].

Of course, someone will say that the *Causa sui* is the being whose essence implies its existence. But here we run into insurmountable difficulties. Yes, we have conferred necessity on God. But in so doing we have in no way demonstrated that his existence was necessary as the *creator of a world*, nor particularly as the creator of *this* world. Indeed, this world, being contingent by nature, has to be the object of a contingent decision. Yet will someone say that God is necessary *as the creator of this world*? Then *he is in order to create*. This world becomes the goal, the end, what is essential; God is the mediation. The world calls itself into being by way of God. There is a primacy of Being as an opaque passivity over any activity.

What is more, if it is part of God's essence to exist, there is at least one being that has an ontological preeminence over existence in general, the being of essence. Thus everything hangs on Being. And if it *gave* itself essence, then we

have pure gratuitousness. And if one wants possibles to exist in the divine mind, at least they *exist* there as possibles, that is, as essences. The Good, the One, Identity are necessities for God, therefore for Being *before* creation (before in the sense of logical priority). God is the mediation between the being of essence and the being of the existent. At the limit, as we see in Leibniz, it suffices if the possibles are given in the divine mind for them to become organized on the basis of their own weightiness and for the whole mass to pass into existence by a sort of call for being.⁴⁰³

We will not get out of this by making God some kind of absolute and unconditioned freedom, as Descartes does.⁴⁰⁴ For this is pure gratuitousness and man has to consider the world as the pure trace of a freedom he cannot comprehend. Which comes down to saying: that's how it is. And if—like Descartes—one adds that God is perfect, one contradicts oneself to no good end. For perfection (as the word indicates) presupposes the strict adequation of a product to its essence. What is perfect is what is *made*. Strictly speaking, God as *creature* may be perfect (although to what essence does he conform, on the basis of what archetype was he made?) but not God the creator. A free activity can be called *perfect* only through an unjustified extending of the term, and by returning from the result to the act (she is a *perfect* dancer because her dances are perfect). But it is precisely a question of conferring necessity and value on a universe that lacks them, at least insofar as we can grasp it in our experience, and divine perfection has to be *a priori*. But even allowing that God might be *perfect* is a way of dealing with him as though he were *being*, not freedom. If, however free he may be, he can change only in that he can fall away from perfection, his perfection is a law of his activity, and a law that is imposed from the outside on an activity is a *being*.

And if we mean by God a wanting-to-be perfect, then we must say what archetype he intends to realize and through what consequence named by what essence he will be called perfect. If it is the Good, the Cartesian point of view becomes that of Leibniz. If it is an essence freely conceived by God (in the sense in which for Descartes it might be possible that two plus two not equal four),⁴⁰⁵ then once again the world, eternal truths, *and* perfection fall into gratuitousness.

It is not a question for us, by way of this discussion, of refuting the myth of

403. Cf. Leibniz, *The Monadology*, §§53–54, p. 220.

404. “The God of Descartes is the freest of the gods that have been forged by human thought. He is the only creative God. He is subject neither to principles—not even to that of identity—nor to a sovereign Good of which He is only the executor. He had not only created existents in conformity with rules which have imposed themselves upon His will, but He has created both beings and their essences, the world and the laws of the world, individuals and first principles.” Jean-Paul Sartre, “Cartesian Freedom,” in *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, p. 194; French original 1945.

405. Cf. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 2, pp. 14, 25.

absolute creation, but rather of showing the following noteworthy consequence from the point of view of the signification *for us* of the idea of creation: *Being*, if it is to be founded in its being, demands a creator who creates himself, that is, an activity giving Being and logically prior to Being as its condition. But this activity itself, if it is not to be a pure caprice, a pure contingency, an arbitrary choice, must proceed from a being logically prior to it. In other words, Being (in-itself) cannot create Being, yet the For-itself creator has to be a mediation between Being (essence, perfection, Good, possibles) and (existing) being. Creation is ontological/ontic. It moves from the Being of essence to the being of existing, and existing that is its own creation is subordinate to Being at the same time that it draws itself from Nothingness.

Let us move on to the internal structure of the *Ens causa sui*. Originally “self-caused” does not get us outside of being. It is a being that, as being, is its own cause. Whether we envisage it in terms of its aspect as a cause or as an effect, it is the *plenitude of being*, or rather it is an effect to the very extent that it is a cause. If I look for it as an effect, I find it as a cause, for there can be no radical distinction here between the creation and the creature, otherwise the creature taking itself as a transcendence standing opposed to the creator could be nothing other than the World or Nature as made nature. So it is at the heart of Being that this reciprocal relation of cause and effect is established. However the distinction, even if is merely a rational one, between cause and effect introduces a moment of shrinking back (as atemporal as one wishes to make it) between these two aspects of the *Causa sui*. Yes, the effect is a cause and the cause is an effect. But if the cause is an effect, this is because it appears as the cause of an effect that is fulfilled as a cause. There is necessarily here a shrinking back as regards itself, a nothingness.

The being that is its own cause is not a being that *is*, it is a being that has to be what it is. It, indeed, has to be something intentionally produced. It is its own project. But this implies that the being that it has to be has to appear before the being that it is and at the same time that the being that it is, is nothing more than this appearing. It is in order to appear before itself. It is nothing more than this appearing and it has to be this appearing. It is thus quite clear that the model for this mythical hypostasis is the “reflected/reflecting” that is its existence for the For-itself. It is just this structure that determines that I must become conscious of what I am and that I am only that of which I become conscious, it is this the crisscrossing of being and nothingness that is projected into the absolute.

But, furthermore, the myth reveals the *a priori* ideal of all consciousness, for this crisscrossing of being and nothingness is projected into the calmness of Being. There where consciousness makes itself exist through the consciousness it comes to of itself, Being makes itself being in being in its being the cause of being. This is the initial transposition. We can clearly see that it does not cover

over the necessary *fissure*, for the being that creates itself must itself be in question for itself.

But naturally one makes the secret assumption that at infinity the negative becomes positive, that at the infinity of Being, what for the existent is a lack of being becomes a positivity, a force. Thus the ontological argument (Gilson-Descartes) can be thought of as though perfection were a *force of being*. Yet the notion of force is in no way included in that of being. Either Being has a force as a kind of addition, but then it already is and this force being one of its attributes cannot turn back on it to create it, or it is this force that produces Being, but then it itself *is not Being* (if it were, Being would be already given, hence contingent) but just what, not being, *has to* produce Being; that is, a nonbeing determined by Being; that is, in the last analysis, the absence of being posited both as being and as nonbeing.

This alleged force of being, is the fissure turned upside down. To get away from it, one tries to transform this dynamic notion into a logical sequence. The self-caused In-itself becomes the being whose essence implies existence. But what is the *being* of this essence? If someone tells me that God upholds his own essence because he thinks it, then on the contrary it is the existence of God that upholds his essence and we fall back from the logical to the dramatic. Even keeping the terms in this form, a relation of essence to existence must be a synthetic one since, however strictly conditioned it may be by any essence, existence is precisely given as distinct from essence. So the necessity of the self-caused In-itself is by definition synthetic, which implies within Being-in-itself a shrinking back in relation to itself, a perpetual otherness in relation to itself, therefore the existence in principle of a negation.

But we need to go even further. Self-caused Being is represented as not being able not to be. Except this necessity cannot be *external* to it. Otherwise it would refer us to another being, this is necessary as a logical consequence. And even given the unimaginable apodicticity of a principle, this necessity would be *subordinate to it*, so we would have a negation of Being's omnipotence. This necessity has to be internalized and has to be for it its own necessity. Therefore it passes from the logical to the dramatic—it is our own necessity to attain the rank of absolute necessity. It is our *dream* (included within every moment of consciousness) that this irritating factual necessity, which has the ambiguity of being both fact (since I am originally contingency) and necessity (since I am my own motivation and since I make myself exist through the consciousness I come to of existing), might be purged of its factual aspect, which slips into everything and which I can grab hold of nowhere.

What is more, we end up with a double impossibility: we are unable to conceive of the *Ens causa sui drawing itself out of Nothingness* (however atemporally this may occur). In other words, it cannot be through its relation to its Not-being in some relation of exteriority of indifference, as though this Not-

being were simply asserted by some witness. Which would furthermore be to give Nothingness a Being.

But if, on the other hand, we suppress the very possibility of there being Nothingness, Being and the Necessary would be one and the same, which, for one thing, does violence to our categories, and also implies that *all* Being is necessary. Spinozism. But then the notion of self-caused Cause disappears and God is subject to his own necessity. And then the self-caused Cause has to exist eternally as its own nothingness *in order to draw itself out of itself*. In a word, it *must be* Nothingness that gives itself Being. Thus the absence of Being that lies at the bottom of the ontological proof, even as a possibility that is negated *a priori*, is a not-being haunted by Being and defined by it. It is the not-being of this Being and it exists for this Being as the negated nothingness of its being. God is in question in his being as the eternal negation that He has to be of the possibility that He might not be. But this pure possibility that he might not be is precisely *contingency*. So it is not from Nothingness that God draws himself—it is from contingency. God belongs to himself before being necessary.

This may also be expressed as follows. The slight fissure that we say exists in the *Ens causa sui* is a nothingness of being. But this nothingness of being must *be in the mode of having been*, that is, it has to flare up on the ground of being. Thus Being is everywhere: at the extreme of nihilation and beyond as necessary being and this side of nihilation as the contingent being that supports it. The self-caused Cause has to exist its own nothingness *in order to* draw itself from it. It *has to be* its own nothingness in order to draw itself from it. In other words, if we naively conceive of an infinity of Nothingness whence the infinity of Being draws itself, if this Nothingness is, in relation to the infinity of Being, in an exteriority of indifference, then it is identical with Being and it is from Being that the infinity of Being draws itself, but this Being is contingent.

If we set aside this naive conception, therefore, it is because self-caused Being draws itself from Being, for then Being is everywhere as pure contingency. This signifies that the essence of Being is to be—contingency—and that the essence of Nothingness is to be in the mode of having been as an internal negation or nihilation supported by Being. As soon as Nothingness *is* without having been, its concept becomes identical with that of Being.

So the *Ens causa sui* is its own nothingness. But nothingness *of what?* The nothingness of a foundation. It has the responsibility of having to be its being without being the foundation of this being. Thus in the self-caused Cause we ultimately find a being that grasps itself as lacking a foundation and that founds itself *a posteriori* through the very unveiling of its lack of a foundation. That is, its retrospective, retroactive activity consists of assuming itself. But this assumption, as we have seen with regard to man, is a passage over to the absolute through the acceptance of contingency and not by its negation and suppression.

So God is an inauthentic man, thrown into the vain task of founding himself, who can not *create himself* because he already is. The absolute creation of oneself

by oneself is a dream that is not even conceivable. To create oneself, one has to be. It is the *a posteriori* dream of an existent who already is and who would like to have created himself so that he might be able to found himself. For if he founds himself, he will be in his being adequate to what he is. This is the pure In-itself represented by consciousness; the dream of consciousness: to be prior to Being as a nothingness that flows into Being in producing it, to be a mediating nothingness between the Nothingness In-itself and Being-in-itself.

If it is true that the absolute type of Creation is self-caused-being, a projection of the absolute dream of consciousness, we can grasp at the same time the underlying motivation of all the creations that an inauthentic consciousness will realize in Being, *a posteriori*: they are all symbolic gratifications of the original and inauthentic project of consciousness to create itself. This is why they will always bear a double stamp of inauthenticity.

First, because every archetypical creation will be given as a *creation of being*, even though, as we have just seen, Being has to be given if there is to be any creation, something that must clearly radically modify creation in its nature. (If creation works on Being and with Being-already-being, it is, in principle, radically different from the dreamed-of creation that is a production of being.) It is Being that supports creation.

Second, the man who wants to create *himself*, meaning to found his being, wants to be the origin of his *Me*, for this is where he concentrates his Being. Therefore he believes that creation will consist of projecting his Me into the dimension of created Being; of imprinting his Me on things and in the World so as to be able then to say that he produced it. But creation so conceived loses its characteristic of *novelty*. If my work is the Me I was, transported into the element of Being, one can restore my work to me, nothing or almost nothing having been produced (it is just externalization). What we have is Hegel's I = I. What is more, Hegel committed just this error. We shall come back to this. From this erroneous conception of the archetype *creation* will follow an erroneous conception of secondary creation or the creation of the World, for the *Ens causa sui* is *also* the Being that creates the World.

B) The creation of the World. God creates the world. But God is not in order *to* create the world. God is first of all as substance and he then creates the world (the "then" indicates logical subsequentness). In other words, theologians have emphasized that the world would not exist without God, but just a few mystics have glimpsed that God would not be without the world. There is a rational connection—which we will lay out in a minute—between the act by which the *Ens causa sui* exists its own nothingness as the absence of any foundation and as the lack of a foundation and the act by which it creates Being outside of itself. But precisely the silence of every believer concerning this comprehensible inter-connection is instructive.

Creation is like "realism" as a doctrine of knowledge: If we start by making

God an independent and infinite substance, the world and God fall outside of each other. Indeed, what is striking in the very idea of creation is its concealed *negativity*. God being, in effect, all Being, infinite Being and perfect Being sufficient unto himself, the act by which he creates the world is pure exuberance, pure generosity. Or at least it would be generosity *if* the world were not a *lesser being*, an almost phantomlike existence that must perpetually be maintained in being and that therefore has only a borrowed being, and if the world were not by definition imperfect. It is, at best, the best of all *possible* worlds, which implies that the Evil in it is like the shadow that makes the light stand out or that the least evil is a means to attaining a greater good, etc. It contains negativity, privation, nothingness. Man himself is just dust and we are told again and again that he exists only through divine goodness. So the creator creates *beneath himself*.

The theologian's fuzzy idea is that it is better that there should be Being and that thus God creates by an exuberant generosity, aware of that necessary and infinite richness that must be made to appear (and one might ask whether *creation* is not in the end *unveiling* for the mind of the believer. God would be pardonable for having drawn Being from the shadows if Being already was; to make *there be* Being would be the deep meaning of creating Being). Except that if God is *all of Being* and if the world draws a reflected existence from His will, there is *no more* being following creation than before it. We see this in Spinoza: the unsolvable difficulty is to pass from Being to its modes. Without negativity it cannot be done; and the universe of modes as a perpetual agitation of appearances is clearly a derived and secondary reality in relation to Substance. And we see the world adding so little, that Wisdom and Salvation for the finite world is to grasp itself insofar as it is the pure determination of Substance, that is, to come back again to Substance. Absolute creation has to be by *privation* since self-caused Being produces something *less than* itself—Valéry called it a glaring error.⁴⁰⁶

Another route, almost parallel, leads us to other, nearby, highly important meanings. God, it is said, creates the world for man (Stoicism, popular Christianity). But why does he create man? For *himself*. That is, to reflect His glory and to obey His commands. We are to contemplate the world and adore God. We are to give thanks to God for having created it. We are to do so because God demands it. Here once again there is a slight hesitation: it seems as though He demands it through a purely gratuitous decision, yet on the other hand there are plenty of texts that seem to indicate that He has *need* of man singing His praise. Leibniz has spoken of this multiplication to infinity of points of view on the universe.⁴⁰⁷ The mystification comes from the fact that God, being the univer-

406. "Sun! . . . Oh Sun, you glaring error!" Paul Valéry, "Silhouette of a Serpent," trans. David Paul, *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, vol. 1: *Poems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 185. Sartre gives a longer citation of this poem in *The Family Idiot*, vol. 1, p. 567.

407. Cf. Leibniz, *The Monadology*, §57, p. 220.

sal in the unity of one person, the foundation of the fulfillment of the universal, remains a demand or a *personal* need. Kantian ethics has behind it feudal vassalage.

Yet if God has need of a free consciousness to reflect his work, this is because that work would not be sufficient unto itself without consciousness. In other words, man exists to confer objectivity on Creation. For the individual's mind, and for the individual's mind alone, Creation is *first* revealed in its being, as what is *there* as the richness of the In-itself, whereas for God it is only manifest in its nothingness. Man is God's *Mitsein*. (Silesius Angelus: God needs me).⁴⁰⁸

Except that the idea here is necessarily incomplete. Behind it lies the necessity of giving his creation to the Other—the internal structure of human creation. Except, if this essential relation of creation is to exist, the Other must really be Other, other in his being, other in his freedom, and my equal. Divine creation can be rendered objective only by another God, it would have to be the dialogue of two Gods, which, by definition, is impossible. Thus God's witness is not worthy of him. No doubt, he created this witness as free and freedom is infinite. Even the idea of a risk is contained here. God's risk is man's freedom, a projection into the absolute of the human creator's risk, who does not create the Other's freedom but who does create in the dimension of the Other's freedom.

Except the risk has been so carefully limited that in the end it is not really a risk. First, because human understanding is finite. It is therefore always surpassed by the whole. Therefore it has to be supported by revelation, signs, and grace. Next, in a more general way, because man *in himself* is nothing but nothingness. It is inasmuch as he *belongs to God* that he exists. So Creation requires, if it is really to be, the absolute independence of a freedom that recognizes and acknowledges it. But since this freedom has being only through God, it is freedom only if it worships, reflects in conformity to the divine will, obeys. Therefore it becomes inessential. But here we rediscover an element of the dialectic of the Master and the Slave: if man's freedom is inessential, then the truth of the world is inessential, everything falls into the inessential. And if man is upheld in being by God (grace and continual creation), then man is a specter of being and creation will not through him get beyond subjectivity. God creating the world and man is Nero presenting his songs and poems to unworthy, terrorized witnesses.⁴⁰⁹

Here we grasp at its source the Christian's game of bad faith, which shifts from one point of view to the other. When he reaches and takes hold of himself in his subjectivity, he has, just like authentic man, a clear consciousness of being the indispensable unveiling through which Being becomes part of the *there is*; but when he alienates himself through the representation that he is a *creature*,

408. Silesius Angelus (1624–1677), German mystic.—Ed.

409. Nero Claudius Caesar (37–68), Roman emperor who had a passion for art and horsemanship mixed with an extreme sense of vanity and of his own power.

he becomes inessential. This interplay of concepts is the perpetual passage from the essential to the inessential. The Christian escapes anxiety and contingency by accepting the inessentialness of the creature, but he arranges to preserve at the bottom of his inessentialness the absolute and self-evident consciousness that he is essential to the world and consequently to God.

But let us look at the basic structure of the act of the divine creator. God being all of Being, it is a question of creating being outside of all Being. God being the being that is because he makes himself being (passage to the absolute of subjectivity), he has to make the being that is appear because it is supported in being. But if created being is only insofar as it is upheld in being by God, it is not differentiated from the determinations God gives himself, for God exists insofar as he upholds himself in being. To be really a *creature*, there has to be some resistance to God—it *must not be* God. What then is creation?

1) Created being is a wholly new appearance. Therefore, here, new in relation to God.

2) This appearance is not sufficient, creation has to proceed from an intention, otherwise it will be pure exteriority of indifference in relation to the creator.

3) However, this intention cannot be *either* the creation itself (otherwise we remain within subjectivity) *or* causality in the usual sense of the term since the effect contains nothing more than its cause—if the creature contains nothing *other* than its cause, it is not new. If it is other, it cannot reduce to a pure relation of effect to cause.

In fact, the essential difficulty of the idea of creation is here, for, in a sense, as creation it must be covered in all its being by the productive intention, yet in another sense the created being has to escape this intention in all its being, otherwise it would remain a subjective affection. In a word, the intention has to give the being as precisely external in its being to this intention. *Give* is the right word. For if we assume that being springs up within the network of intentions without being given by them, it is new in relation to them but in the exteriority of indifference.

Thus creation is originally a relation to the Other at the same time that it is one of Identity. This created being is necessarily the Other. It clings to me in the relation to the Other. But what is more, if it is absolutely other, it is not my creation. It is my creation insofar as in its *way of being* it is entirely attributable to me and insofar as *in its being* it resists me. It is me confronted with myself in the dimension of the In-itself.

Yet how can a subjectivity like that of the *Ens causa sui*, which upholds itself in existence, produce a being that is not it? In the first place, if we were to admit with Leibniz the existence of a divine understanding,⁴¹⁰ from where does this understanding get the concept of a being that *would not be* itself? We rediscover

410. See Leibniz, *The Monadology*, §43, p. 218.

here purely and simply the ontological argument of *Being and Nothingness*.⁴¹¹ To create being intentionally, one has to have the intention to create being, therefore, in some way, to conceive of being. But the being so conceived is radically different from the For-itself that creates it since it has no being for itself. And insofar as it is not traceable back to the For-itself, it has *being*. The For-itself can therefore conceive of being (which still is not) inasmuch as this being is totally dependent on it, that is, inasmuch as it is a pure subjectivity of the For-itself, but not inasmuch as this being *is not* the For-itself. Subjectivity as existence, that is, as consciousness aware of itself through itself, has no means of creating the concept of a being it is not, unless this being is originally given to it in some way; that is, unless this being already is.

We might even go further and show that a *Causa sui* can only be subjectivity and that a subjectivity can spring up only *in the presence of being* (all consciousness is consciousness *of* something).

Another way of demonstrating what we showed earlier is that *being* is necessary to creation. One does not create oneself, one creates only within the limits of an already given In-itself. Indeed, if someone tells me that the *Causa sui* draws the notion of Being from itself, I will reply that it draws from itself just the notion of subjective and personal existence. As for the Kantian hypothesis of an intellectual intuition,⁴¹² it is particularly absurd since it would be necessary to presuppose a consciousness producing itself as not itself. For this *giving*, intention has the characteristic of subjectivity (if it is an intention, it is consciousness [of] being). So it is consciousness of itself through and through; the giving intention is therefore itself pure subjectivity.

But even assuming that having an intention is sufficient for its object to appear outside of consciousness (which really is limited to establishing a pure relation of causal and intelligible succession between these two moments like Hume⁴¹³ — and here there is not even a third term like the Kantian category to introduce their unity), we must also presuppose that the creative intention itself is traversed by a wave of clammy stuff that suddenly makes the being-in-itself pop out of it. If the intention is productive, there must be at least one moment when it petrifies into the In-itself. Then it becomes opaque to itself and stops being *causa sui* or simply For-itself.

In a word, if Being is not somehow given, the *Causa sui* cannot have even the intention of creating it. For this intention presupposes a concept of *being* that it cannot form without there being Being.

No doubt, *dialectically* the objective can arise from the subjective. But, in the first place, this production is no longer one of creation. It is a matter of a

411. See *Being and Nothingness*, pp. lx–lxii.

412. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 34 n. a (B xl).

413. Cf. p. 97, n. 106.

necessary process. Next, it is in terms of *incompleteness* that one differs from the other. In other words, the condition of the objective appearing is that the subjective *not be everything*, that the subjective contain within itself negation as determination and negativity as the negation of negation, that is, that the subjective, rather than being the totality of Being, be just one moment that abusively posits itself as an essence. But in this case, the objective *extricates itself* from the subjective, or rather both are incomplete in relation to a totality which, as I have shown elsewhere, already *is* in some way (in the sense that progress is the development of the Other).

I will add that even in this form the argument in question is not acceptable. If it puts the subjective on the same plane as the objective, it is because, fundamentally, it accords the same type of *being* to both of them. For there can be a dialectic only if there is a homogeneity of being. Fundamentally, objective and subjective are two faces of Being and their underlying unity is such that the subjective can reincorporate the objective into itself at the end of a dialectical evolution (the absolute is the subject). The result is that we may say that the objective has never been far from the subjective, nor the subjective from the objective. We have to presuppose the underlying unity of these forms of being and not their duality.

Let us allow, however, that the world is created. It must then at the same time belong entirely *to God* and yet stand entirely *over against* God. But if God is the whole of being, whence comes the world's resistance to God? It cannot be from Being, since Being is God. If transcendent Being upholds itself over against God as a substance (this is the problem formulated by 17th century Cartesianism and Spinozism), then there is a Being outside of Being. Therefore it can only be through Nothingness that Being resists God. Which is just how Descartes understood things. There must be a continual creation, otherwise the Being of the world would collapse into Nothingness.⁴¹⁴ Nothingness, therefore, is the guarantee of transcendence.

But this is playing with words. Either Being distinguishes itself only through the Nothingness (through *nothing*) of divine subjectivity, in which case there is no distinction, for Nothingness is not nothing unless it is *in the mode of having been*—or Nothingness is taken in the sense of negativity, that is, the creature has not to be God who has not to be the creature, but in this case the created existent is in relation to God in terms of the *total* independence of a freedom—or Nothingness is really a force of inertia *in itself* over against God and in this case it is simply Being-in-itself as already given, which means that God creates the world by being the Being through which the In-itself becomes a world. And in this last case Creation is a purely mythical description of unveiling: God is nothing other than man.

414. Cf. n. 71.

The conclusions we can draw from this inquiry are as follows:

1st, in projecting his power as a creator outside of himself in a mythical and absolute form, man has produced a contradictory concept. Following from this he has thoroughly confused the problem of creation and divested himself of his absolute power as a creator to the benefit of a being that destroys itself in the process of destroying human creation along with itself. For if the essential type of creation is creation *ex nihilo*, then man does not create. And if man is created and upheld in being in the midst of a world created and upheld in being, then he does not create but is the instrument by which God preserves or improves His creation.

2d, the being that allegedly creates itself, being in question for itself, has to be what it is and, consequently, the idea of a *Causa sui* is a pure hypostasis of subjectivity. The *Causa sui* simply expresses man's project of being his own foundation.

3d, it is impossible to separate the *Causa sui* from the *Causa mundi*. A Being that would initially repose in itself, like Aristotle's God, would not be able to find in itself a motivation to create anything outside of itself.⁴¹⁵ These two processes must be strictly dependent on each other. A *Causa sui* can be a *Causa sui* only in order to be *Causa mundi* and reciprocally can be *Causa mundi* only in order to be *Causa sui*. In a word, the For-itself can be its own foundation only in terms of the project to create the World and can conceive of creating the World only in order to found itself in the dimension of Being-in-itself.

4th, the Being of the In-itself doubly supports the complex operation of creation because this operation includes a structure of negativity. Being lies at the origin of the creator, the creator is a being that questions itself in its Being, a being that nihilates itself to found itself. Being is at the origin of the very intention to create. The concept of Being can be gotten only from the comprehension of Being and the comprehension of Being is what we might call an *a priori experience*; that is, it stems from the fact that the For-itself, in its original upsurge, is *born bearing* upon Being, it constitutes itself as an experience of Being. The negative structure of creation comes from the fact that the For-itself surpasses the Being that is toward the Being that is not yet (which implies that creation is by necessity temporalization); but for there to be a surpassing, there has to be a *quid* to surpass and this is the In-itself, and the surpassed In-itself remains in this surpassing as that which communicates to the "Being-that-is-not-yet" its internal structure of future Being and its Being as merely projected Being.

From this we can draw new conclusions more directly of interest to ethics:

1st, Being being everywhere, to infinity, before as well as after creation and upholding all creation in being, man can create only insofar as he is his own nihilation of being (imagination) and all his creations are upheld in Being by Being.

415. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book Λ, chap. 9, 1074b15.

2d, thus he creates only significations or *ways of being*.

3d, but these significations or ways of being themselves have a being, as significations. Hence, it follows, man is a creator of being.

4th, these significations can only appear in the human world insofar as they are objectively acknowledged and affirmed by *Others*.

5th, however, since the human world is a world of absolute consciousnesses assuming themselves in their absoluteness, man's creations are absolute. The more man hallucinates about a background world, the more he will misunderstand the absolute character of his own creation. The more he chooses to take up the human world as absolute, the more his creation will appear to him as absolute.

6th, in creating, man creates himself. Yet this in no way means that he imprints on the dimension of being an already existing Me; on the contrary, it is from what he creates that he learns who he is. These are the various consequences we are now going to develop.

Being-in-itself cannot create being since it is not ec-static; it is not a relation to anything other than itself. It can nihilate itself and that is all. Another being can appear in its place but without any internal tie to it. Yet, on the other hand, Nothingness too cannot be a creator. Man is the being through whose mediation Being can create being. This is so because he is both being and nothingness at the same time; because he is nothingness that nihilates itself or Being in a state of decompression. It is insofar as it is Being that the For-itself has a *comprehension of being* and can project, can make itself a project of being. It is insofar as it is nihilation that it can make itself a mediating relation between given Being and created being.

In effect, creation presupposes an *intention*. If this intention were merely "giving," I have shown, it would be a fact of consciousness—there would be an appearance of Being, not creation. Therefore it is an empty intention, an empty giving of Being. In this empty giving of Being or transcendent conception of a Being that is not, it is the Being of the For-itself that "gives" the general category of Being and it is the For-itself as a lack that "gives" the Not-being of Being.

Creation is possible only through a being that is the articulation of Being and Nothingness—one that uproots itself from what is in order to conceive what is not (a Being that is not) and one that preserves Being in its very surpassing so as to give Being as a requirement to this Being that is not. For there can be no creation without consciousness of creating. Yet the consciousness of creating implies that one creates what *was* not. And what *was* not can be conceived as such only if originally consciousness makes itself be a *lack* of this Being. Originally, therefore, we have three terms: Being-in-itself—the lack—the *ens creandum*. And since Nothingness is upheld in Being by Being, it is therefore Being-in-itself that makes itself a lack in its being as *ens creandum*. And the *positivity* of the *ens creandum* (its being as a being that is not yet) comes to it from Being.

But what can Being make itself as lacking? We have seen it is necessary to distinguish the lacking, the lacked, and the Being that lacks. Being that lacks lacks . . . so as to be. The *Lacked* (the totality to be attained) is Being that is its own foundation. What is lacking is what would allow Being to remove this lack. What is lacking is secondary creation or originally a *means*. It is the For-itself's *possible*. The Lacking is originally the foundation of all creation as new Being conceived of as *not yet existing* but which the For-itself has to be. But this lacked Being is nothing other than given Being itself which would be its own product, its own foundation. It is, we saw in *B & N, value*.⁴¹⁶ With the appearance of nihilation (temporalization), it is *already too late* for the In-itself to be its own foundation. It is the contingency of the For-itself, its body, its necessity of *having been born* or, if you will, its *past*. Yet with the appearance of the For-itself as presence to itself appears the possibility of founding *a posteriori* the contingent and surpassed In-itself. Since the past as being-in-itself cannot be directly founded by the nothingness that is in the mode of having been, this nothingness makes itself the project of a being to come that will be the past in-itself but as realized by this project and hence *causa sui*. If this projected Being could be produced, it would be the justification of the past and its foundation by way of retroaction—here appears for the first time the notion of *for*, the origin of finality. Contingent or given being is there only *for*, only so that a necessary Being, that is, one that would be its own foundation, should be produced beginning from it. Contingent being would be the basis of freedom (or nihilation), but this, in turn, would be the basis of Being. And this produced being would be *the same* as the contingent being, but it would have freedom at its base. However since being is already given at the start, it can *produce itself* only in another dimension of being, that is, *in already existing being*.

In other words, contingent being through the welling up of the For-itself *becomes* contingent. It is a lack of *that* Being that is itself (itself but as founded by itself: In-itself-for-itself). But at the same time it is *being* that is lacking. In upholding this lack of being, the For-itself *qualifies* this lack of being with its being, colors it, and confers upon it a kind of taste for being. Beginning from being, the lack cannot be *just any lack whatsoever*. As a relation between the contingent *ens*, which is this lack and the total Being, which is what is lacked, the For-itself is defined both by the lack that confronts it and noematically as the correlative of its project, and qualified by the Being that makes itself a lack. The For-itself makes itself a relation between being and value, on the one hand, and between the contingent and the necessary, on the other. The relative necessity of the consequence (A implies B) or the means (M necessary to N) appears, in effect, against the background of absolute necessity. But the absolute necessity of a principle can only be *encountered*, it is either what one cannot doubt (Cartesian self-evidentness) or what is given as an *a priori* condition of experience

416. See *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 92–95.

and thinking (Kant). Therefore it is always a question of a *factual necessity*. And this is clearly guaranteed by an absolute necessity. Which means that the principle or absolutely necessary being must in the last analysis be a being whose essence precedes its existence.

Yet since essence cannot be defined as except as that which presents itself to thinking and since, moreover, it cannot be given prior to thinking without the problem of its being and consequently of its contingency arising, essence appears here as the presence of thinking to itself insofar as this thinking produces Being. The presence of Being to itself as a nihilating negativity is sufficient to produce Being as in itself founded by an intention of being, which finally is what necessity is. Negatively necessary in that nothing other than its own project determines it to be; positively necessary in that it is a call for absolute being and in that it makes itself be projected by the For-itself as that to which the For-itself is relative in its very existence. So through the appearance of the For-itself, the In-itself is unveiled in its contingency because the For-itself is placed in relation with a contingent being from which it proceeds with the absolutely necessary Being it has to be.

In this three-termed relation the myth of the *Causa sui* neglects the first term. It only presents absolute Being drawing itself out of Nothingness. Yet even this is instructive, for this forgetfulness, this initial neglect, is already within the original project of the For-itself which neglects and surpasses its contingent being in order to grasp itself as the pure producer of Being on the basis of Nothingness. In other words, the ontological dream of the For-itself is the exact inversion of the original process: the For-itself is a freedom that is upheld in existence by the absolute contingency of being; it projects a being behind the contingency of being in order to found and uphold it in being.

Yet negativity not being able to be productive by itself, whence comes its creative power? In other words, how does it come to be that it is *giving*? (In truth, it in no way as yet gives being, it gives the *meaning of being*, since through it appears the being to be created as a demand). The answer is in no way doubtful: from the contingent being that upholds it in being. The For-itself is and is not; it is not what it is, it is what it is not. It is insofar as it is not that it is able to detach itself from Being so as to conceive of the Other (that which *is not yet*)—it is insofar as it is that it conceives and projects “what *is not*” into Being. The Being of the projected *Ens creatum* comes to it from Being, its “Not-Being” comes to it from nihilation. Only a Being that is its own Being in the form of Not-Being can create.

This brings us to having to determine the original relation of Being in itself as the contingent foundation of the For-itself to the For-itself as nihilation. The For-itself *is* the In-itself as turned into a “lack.” It is upheld in Being by this Being and it *is nothing* if it is not this Being. But, at the same time, the For-itself is its own motivation to create Being. Indeed, the Lack, as soon as it appears redoubles itself to infinity through an internal relation to itself that uproots it

from Being to posit it in existing. The Lack, in fact, cannot appear as a pure Lack in itself unless there is a witness who acknowledges and affirms it.

For example, this well lacks water in an already unveiled world and on the foundation of a project. But the lack that is its own lack to itself can be a lack only as consciousness of being a lack, that is, it has being as a lack only as presence to itself and this presence to itself is in the mode of *refusal*. A lack makes sense only if it is present to itself as a refusal to be a lack. That is, if it is lived as a redoubling of negativity. If I lack bread or water (thirst, hunger) I do not *acknowledge* this lack in terms of pure indifference—I reject it (I *want* bread). I can grasp the lack as a lack only *through* this refusal. The more I refuse it the more I constitute it as a deep lack and reciprocally the more it is revealed as a vital lack the more I refuse it.

Thus the lack (as with belief, pleasure, etc.) is that type of existential that has existence only through a perpetual destruction of itself. And this destruction of itself as a foundation of existence, although upheld in existence by Being, cannot proceed from Being: it has its origin in Nothingness, that is, in what has to be Being and which Being is not.

It is therefore a *first beginning* in relation to Being. This first beginning is the presence to self of Being experienced as a lack of being, which leads to the positing of the *Ens creandum* as itself being a first beginning. For in the idea of creation there is the idea of a first beginning that, as a break with prior being, has a structure of negativity. And this negativity is the noematic correlate of the existent that makes itself its own break with Being. The New, being new in relation to what is, can appear as new only if its is produced by a being that consummates in its being its own break with what *is*. But, what is more, this presence to itself is not a presence of *nothing to itself*. It is self-presence to Being. And this in two ways: 1st, as being what it is; 2d, as not being the rest of the World. We must examine these two structures in order.

1) The Lack is not a purely undetermined lack and it cannot be a lack of just anything whatsoever. It is *this* being as lacking. However it is this lack that defines being as *this* being. For the In-itself is in no way capable of designating itself as *this*. We shall come back to this again in number 2. Given this important reservation, what makes itself a lack is Being, although Being cannot make itself into a lack unless this lack becomes a first beginning in relation to Being. Thus Being is everywhere in the For-itself and in one sense we never will find anything in it other than Being. But at the same time, this Being is ungraspable for the For-itself, which is originally a lack of Being *creandum* and which, by implication, is the *positing*, the *thesis* of creating Being as absent Being. Yet the Being to create as absent Being gets its singular characteristics from the Being-in-itself that is lacking. In other words, Being-in-itself is not thematized for itself, in the unreflective, except over there in the form of the absolute Being that it lacks.

In terms of egological anthropology this means that I am for myself initially only as a projected Me, I become conscious of what I am only in and through

what I will to be: I am aware of what I am only in the project of becoming what I am. Hence the For-itself is a surpassing of what it is toward what it has to be. Its transcendental illusion is that if it rejoins what it has to be, what it is will be founded within the unity of a totalization.

Yet, at the same time, as a nonthetic consciousness (of) itself, the For-itself is Being. It is Being that is self-present. Except this self-presence is precisely the interplay of the Reflected/Reflecting and Being is always *elsewhere* than where it unveils itself as being. When, in effect, I look for it in the reflected, it has passed over into the reflecting since it is the being of the reflecting that upholds the reflected/reflecting in being. Yet, reciprocally, since nothing is For-itself except as self-presence, the reflecting in turn exists only as consciousness (of) reflecting, and in this sense it is only insofar as it is reflected as reflecting. And if one were to look in the reflecting of the reflected for the source of Being, one would once again find the interplay of “reflected/reflecting,” just as the consciousness (of) itself as reflected appears in the reflected.

Of course, it is not a question of a regression to infinity, but rather merely of an undecomposable phenomenon where Being is everywhere, yet ungraspable and perpetually veiled by the absoluteness of the negativity that it upholds. It remains nonetheless that it is this Being as *pure savor of being* that unthematically qualifies this lack and that the coloration of the *Ens creandum*, its *figure*, is the noematic correlate of this savor of being, since, precisely, it is inasmuch as it has *this savor* that Being is a lack of an absolute foundation. Everything takes place, therefore, as if, on the unreflective plane, Being could have thetic consciousness of itself only as the qualified and transcendent Being that it has *to be* and that is in the Future as *to be realized*.

So the For-itself is like the atom and its train of waves in microphysics: it is both surpassing of being toward the *Ens creandum* to come and presence to itself of surpassed Being. And since the surpassed is the Past, we see that my Past has a threefold dimension of being. It is the being that I have to be behind me, the coloration of my “presence to myself,” and the contents of the *Ens creandum* that defines my future.

The love that Eupalinos had for a young woman is what is past, that is, what Eupalinos has to be and what will always be behind him in the total contingency of his being (the accident of a meeting, of moods, presided over its birth, it was affected by the contingency of being—misunderstandings, moods, etc.—throughout its course). But it is also what Eupalinos wants to found in the world by the construction of just *this* temple. It is this temple as recovered loved, founded in harmony, and existing as a result of his project (we shall see in a moment what this signifies, since a new dimension appears here: the world with the temple in it).⁴¹⁷ But if it is this future temple as the justification of a

417. Cf. Paul Valéry, “Eupalinos, or the Architect,” in *Dialogues*, The Collected Works, vol. 4, trans. William McCausland Stewart (New York: Pantheon, 1956), pp. 65–182. “Listen Phae-

past love, it is also in the nonthetic presence to self as a pure lack of foundation. At this level, infinitely contracted into the pure nonthetic consciousness of a refused lack, it is no longer the infinite display of memories but the pure and undecomposable savor of a *history* that is to be founded within Being. And this pure and undecomposable savor both gives and unfolds itself. Its meaning is over there in the future, in the object it is necessary *to create*, and it is nonthetically lived as an ungraspable presence that untiringly refers to this *Ens creandum*. It is a demand/quality obscurely lived as an indefinable lack and clearly grasped outside as a figure of the Being to come.

2) It is in the world that I grasp my contingent being; therefore it is in the world that I am future to myself. Indeed, the For-itself is an intention and its initial intention is to give itself a foundation. But since it can not turn back on being to found it, it has to create that being over there. It is at the far end of its own intentionality. But it is at the same time in-the-world. Which is to say that it cannot be its relation to itself except in existing its relation of being an internal negation to the whole of Being. The reason why we say every determination is a negation is that we see this determination as imposed from the outside (Hegel's sophism). For Hegel, consciousness is for itself, but it always gets its status from the outside. Whereas in truth the For-itself is the internalization of its own finitude. Its limits are existed in the deep freedom of its being. And to exist its own finitude is to make itself as *not being* the Whole of Being.

Thus the For-itself is a finitude that constitutes itself in two different and complementary languages: on the one hand, it is the indefinable presence to itself of a taste of being and, on the other hand, it determines itself in denying itself the attributes of the Whole of Being. Simultaneously the For-itself grasps itself as that vanishing contexture that *is not* the Totality of being or exists as denying to itself that it is this totality. The For-itself denies to itself that it is the Whole and this negation is its relation to itself. But since the Whole is the whole of Being and since the For-itself is a lack of being, it is in the dimension of this Whole which it is not that it has to produce its being. It is not able to find this in itself, since it is not Being but just existing upheld in existence by Being.

Better: if the For-itself takes from the contingent being that is its support in existence an original comprehension of being, this comprehension will remain an empty intention if it is not accompanied by the intuitive and immediate grasping of the being of the World or the Whole of Being. And if consciousness

drus," he went on to say, "that little temple, which I built for Hermes, a few steps from here, if you could know what it means to me!—there where the passer-by sees but an elegant chapel—'t is but a trifle: four columns, a very simple style—there I have enshrined the memory of a bright day in my life. O sweet metamorphosis! This delicate temple, none knows it, is the mathematical image of a girl of Corinth, whom I happily loved. It reproduces faithfully the proportions that were peculiarly hers. It lives for me! It gives me back what I have given it." (ibid., p. 82).

is indeed the call of being as the presence to itself of a contingent being, it is not able to presentify itself even in noematic form the being it calls upon and wants to found unless through its upsurge at the heart of Being it becomes conscious of Being as what it is not.

In a word, consciousness cannot draw from itself alone either the concept or the project of being. It draws it from its comprehension of a being borne upon the Being of the world or the Whole of Being. So consciousness must not draw its being from Nothingness, for there is no other nothingness than it. Rather it has to draw it from Being. From the Being that gives itself to consciousness as *being already there*. It is its being besieged by Being that allows it to be conscious of the Being that it has to be or, if you will, conscious that *it is a Being* that it has to be. The Being that it has to be comes to it from the ground of Being, as having already been there in Being waiting for it; and its appearance in Being will add nothing to Being since this latter is already the Totality of Being.

Yet, on the other hand, if consciousness is a lack of the Being of the world, the World or Totality of Being unveils itself to consciousness as lacking it, in some way. For at the same time it is the Whole less itself (since it is just this Whole that is closed in on itself apart from it) and it is pure contingency since the essential structure of Being is that it *is* without being necessary. As a contingency that *is not* consciousness and does not emanate from consciousness, Being unveils itself therefore as calling to a foundation, that is, as asking to proceed from an intention. So the For-itself as the lack of a being to found is consciousness *of* the world as the lack of a founding intention. Therefore its project will be to found this ungraspable being that traverses it from the rear and lays claim to proceeding from it—but to found it in terms of the species of the world.

So the Being that it has to be comes to it from the depth of the world. And at the same time, into the Being that is already everything it can be, consciousness has to imprint its meaning of being, its taste of being. This taste of being will be the newness of Being that cannot be new. For the consciousness that is nonbeing upheld in being within Being, the not-yet-being comes to being *within* Being: everything is fullness and yet something is lacking, which cannot appear except *amidst what is fullness*. What is lacking appears at the same time as excessive in relation to Being (because Being is everything and everywhere), as having no place in Being, and yet as demanded by Being (because Being unveils itself as contingent).

In truth, it would be sufficient if the consciousness that wells up on the foundation of a being without foundation were to project to found *this* singular being within the world, through a finite undertaking just as it itself is finite. But a necessary being within a contingent world loses its necessity since it can have only contingent relations with contingent beings. Therefore the whole world has to be founded. But it is also true that consciousness, having the finitude of a contingent point of view and surpassing *a* singular being, can found only

particular beings within the world. Except the being that it is going to found must hand over to necessity both the contingency of the being/foundation of the For-itself and the place in the world of this being/foundation. And since the place in the world of this being is an amidst-the-world that upholds in being a being-of-the-world, consciousness projects to make appear in the world a being that would have the dual relation to the world of being-amidst and being-in.

In other words, this being, *also* including within its being the relation of consciousness to the world that is to-be-conscious-of-the-world, and doing so within the dimension of being, has to be like a mirror of the world, that is, a singular object but one such that consciousness in producing it produces in being both its own being (its meaning of being) and the world inasmuch as it unveils itself to this consciousness. So consciousness founds its being in terms of the world in a singular being that unveils itself as having already been there.

But what does it mean to found something in a being that is already there? It is to borrow from a being its force of being in order to produce a being in and through it. But then we find ourselves in the presence of this double impossibility: nothing can *happen to* Being through Being (the exteriority of indifference) and nothing can happen to Being *except* through Being (Nothingness cannot produce Being). Yet the For-itself, being *the relation*, transcends this double impossibility. For it is the relating of its being (the unfounded being that upholds it in being, or body) to Being. Through the welling up of the For-itself, a being is put in relation to the whole of Being, and through it a relation comes into being from the whole of Being to the whole of Being.

The For-itself *acts*; that is: (1) it produces modifications of Being insofar as it *is* and insofar as Being is, and (2) these modifications are intentional insofar as it is not. As for those modifications that the body as In-itself produces in Being, they are always governed by the category of the exteriority of indifference: to transfer, assemble, disassemble, mix together, etc. But consciousness grasps these modifications in terms of the unity of *forms*. An assembly, as a unity of beings with a different *quid*, unveils itself as a different form. And as appearance has an absolute being as appearance (and there is no other being than the being of appearances or appearing), this being comes into being in the world as supported by Being. In one sense, if an engineer builds a bridge over a river, there is *nothing extra* in the world since the whole of Being was already there, yet in another sense, the bridge as a new appearance of a set of parts is a being that was not. Which is precisely what we call the *new*. We will come back to this. But what we have to develop here is the ontological mystification of subjective consciousness or the passage from the subjective to the objective.

In *action* the body proceeds to new assemblages of being, but the law of being being that everything unveils itself as a being to a being, there is a being of these assemblages, or a form. Thus modeling wax is nothing more than a redistribution of its elements, but this redistribution unveils itself as a being that is the figure

assumed by the wax.⁴¹⁸ Now these forms are born beneath the fingers of the worker in conformity with some intention, that is, as the realization of a being it has to be. And these different modifications appear to consciousness in the unity of its temporalization. Consciousness makes temporality well up within Being. However, action is an event *for the body* since it moves and changes, and the For-itself exists this event; it is conscious of changing. And as this change is directed toward the Being it has to be, it is conscious (of) itself as the origin or first beginning of this change.

Some have sought to describe this consciousness as a sensation of (centrifugal) *effort*, but the retort has been that it is a matter of a centripetal sensation of resistance. However the problem is badly stated. The truth is that these (effectively centripetal) sensations are lived in terms of the unity of one and the same intentional determination and apprehended in terms of this unity as guides and signals. Through these sensations consciousness is conscious of itself as productive. But concurrently the event of Being is in evolution. The wax takes on different forms. What consciousness would like to grasp is the unity of the subjective and the objective, that is, it wants to grasp the internal event as the origin of the event in Being. In other words, it projects being the undifferentiated unity of its own event lived as subjectivity and of the appearance of Being in Being. It is this desideratum that it projects into the myth of the creator God who, in effect, upholds Being in Being through his subjectivity, all the while conferring on Being an independence of being. We have seen that the myth destroys itself of its own accord, everything collapsing into subjectivity. Yet it is significant as an attempt to think of creation as man desires it to be.

In reality, it is the opposite that takes place, this consciousness that wants Being to come out of it all the while remaining bound to it by some kind of umbilical cord, this consciousness loses on both sides. All of Being is *already there* at the outset in its plenitude and its contingency, and as for the being that is born correlatively with the event of consciousness, it is *born from Being and in Being*, it comes to being through Being and as soon as it appears, even in and through its welling up, it opposes itself to consciousness in all of its transcendence and its exteriority. It has not therefore ever *sprung from consciousness* (as in intellectual intuition).⁴¹⁹

Furthermore, consciousness projects being absorbed into Being by the very movement that creates it, but it remains transcendent to Being since Being is transcendent to it. Not even for an instant was the being of this redistribution immanent, then to become transcendent. As Being that consciousness had to be, this being comes to consciousness from the depths of Being as *to be created*; as really produced in Being, it surges from Being in the face of consciousness and in its very welling up sets itself *over against* consciousness in the dimension of

418. Cf. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, pp. 21–23.

419. Cf. p. 525.

the Other (which indicates, 1st, that it participates in the contingency of the world, far from founding the world in its necessity; 2d, that it remains in the exteriority of indifference in relation to other beings and that consciousness becomes conscious of it as soon as it appears as what consciousness is not in the mode of having not to be it; 3d, that it inserts itself into an infinity of relations with Being—relations that come into being through consciousness but which overflow it and which consciousness has to apprehend; 4th, that it is stolen from consciousness by other consciousnesses).

The being that appears in this way upholds itself in being by itself (contrary to the myth of continued creation). So consciousness produces its being in the element of the Other. It has its hostile, transcendent, and contingent being confronting it as the result of its creation. This result belongs to the world, not to consciousness. It is an object within the world. It is *new in relation to the world* insofar as it has the origin of its way of being in a consciousness, and it is *new in relation to consciousness* insofar as it is a being whose being is a pure contingency. It is necessary insofar as its contents, its way of being, is entirely covered by an intention, and it is contingent insofar as its being does not emanate from this intention but from Being. However, to better grasp this mystification of creation, we must first grasp in their essence the two directions in which it may take place. No doubt every human action is creation, but we can consider most of them as secondary and as being reducible to two particular types: the engineer and the artist.

The origin of the mode of creation proper to the engineer is a need (to eat, to drink, to sleep, cold, heat, etc.). A need is one of the many expressions of a *lack* and is itself a lack. It can only be produced, as I showed in *B & N*, by a being that is its own lack.⁴²⁰ Which in no way is to say that one cannot see inanimate objects as having needs. For example, I can consider that an auto whose radiator is overheating has *need* of cold water. This indicates that if the object I am considering is not fed, modified, upheld in being by the concurrence of other beings, it will break down and disappear, other combinations then appearing in its place, and the new appearance being another being within Being.

But it is just a being that is its own lack that can consider that there is a lack in a tool on the point of breaking. Within being itself there are appearances and disappearances, nothing more. But if the in-itself that proceeds toward its breaking point lives or exists as its own lack (as happens with the For-itself and, to a lesser degree, in the immanence of life), then it exists its being as fragility, destructibility, and since it exists the being that it has to found in Being, it makes itself be this destructibility in the form of presence to itself. In this form, it becomes a lack.

For example, desiccation, a pure modification of being if we do not take

420. "Human reality by which lack appears in the world must be itself a lack. For lack can come into being only through a lack" (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 87).

account of the For-itself, is grasped from the outside by a physician as a lack of water. It is lived from the inside and inwardly as this same lack present to itself in the refusal of itself. This lack is not necessarily grasped as a lack of *this* or *that*; it may require experience for the lack to produce the concept or image of the object that is lacking. But, in any case, it is originally grasped as the lack of something or the lack of *being*. This is natural because the lacking For-itself has the original experience of Being in its welling up (cf. above).

It is worth noting right away, however, that a lack really appears only in organized beings (that is, plants, animals, and, in another sense, machines). A pebble, a drop of water, a gas lack nothing. Organized Being is an assemblage that is the unity proper to its multiplicity. Which means that, as a multiplicity plunged into the world, it is perpetually disarranged by the action of the world, and as the unity of its multiplicity, it remakes its unity with the world's elements. It is at the same time indivisible and perpetually renewing itself and there is within it something like a rough draft of temporalization. But precisely as a synthesis thrown into the world and condemned to be its own synthesis, this being *is* because it preserves itself by a perpetual exchange and it preserves itself because it is. It is therefore the very image of contingency for it is not just its (ontic) being that is contingent and given (in the same sense as that of a stone), but also its (ontological) way of being, that is, its aspect as the internalized unity of a multiplicity.

It is in this sense that life in its various forms is more nauseating than the pure being of the desert. In the first place, it *is* (in some form *x*, an insect or a fish); next it is *in this form* (for no reason); finally, it preserves itself in being for no other reason than already being, and it is condemned to preserve itself in being, even though this condemnation can come only from itself. The rock in the desert is just a contingency that *is*, the ant in search of food is a contingency that preserves itself.

Thus the internalization of an *exchange* in need is without a doubt the absolute form in which the For-itself becomes conscious of its contingency. It *is* in effect this need that appears in pure contingency and that *is* without having been founded in being by an intention and, at the same time, as soon as it *is* this need, it is so in the form of having to be it (that is, in the form of a lived/refused lack). It is compromised by contingency because it is contingency's accomplice. Not to found its being, but just to preserve in being this unjustifiable contingency, it makes itself a need, an appeal. Gratifying the need is a mere renewing of gratuity.

At this level, the For-itself is a species in all the contingency of a species. It is self-evident that it will not get beyond the species or its specific contingency except in gratifying its need solely within the framework of a project. In this way, it preserves the contingency of its being solely because this contingency upholds it in being as a lack and because it has to exist as this lack in order to found itself.

Except that this is just *one* of two aspects of gratifying a need. The other is just the opposite: in effect, if I intentionally satisfy my need, my intention upholds my being in being. It returns to the being that grounds it in order to confer upon it continuation in being and thus contributes, if not to its creation, at least to an analogue of continuous creation. In other words, the need being an appeal and a lack, and consciousness being reflection, consciousness can break away from its need (suicide) or *decide* to satisfy it. In the second case, it assumes its contingency. But not in the abstract, by a purely formal decision—in the concrete, by the act that preserves the contingency in being. Thus we may describe the whole series of behavior of the athlete, of the teacher of gymnastics, etc. who through hygiene, diet, exercise, etc. set out to remake their body, that is, to assume their being without an intermediary and by simply returning to themselves instead of seeking to found their being in Being by a centrifugal movement.

At the same time, the world, which *made a contribution* in a contingent way to my contingent being (the exchanges of gases, equilibrium of forces, ingestion, digestion, etc.), passes to the rank of a necessary *means* for the intentional preservation of my being. The invention of *an instrument* (to gratify my need) is prolonged by the infinite project of transforming the world into a purely instrumental being, that is, into a necessary means for the intentional preservation of my being. In constructing the instrument, I do nothing other than make be born in Being the ontic correlate of my need. But if I consider the world as a purely instrumental reservoir, it becomes a pure mediation between me and myself, that is, between the being without a foundation and the lack that is intentionally creative of being. I am then the essential, as purely *projected* by my project to be my being, and the world is the means, essential in its inessentialness, for preserving me in being. And naturally, it is not a question here of purely and simply considering the world as such but of transforming it by action.

Thus, at the far end of the infinite series of my efforts, the world will be necessary through me and for me and I will have created myself by means of the world, therefore I will have given myself a necessary existence. This infinite project excludes therefore the repetition that pure contingency, on the contrary, accepts. It is a matter of creating the always more intensive instrumental field, it is a matter of lifting from the universe the least remaining bit of inutility because there is still an earthly bit of contingent indifference. Yet however much it may turn a contingent face toward my being, my being is contingent in relation to it. The eternal silence of infinite space will frighten or bore us so long as these infinite spaces are not infinite sources of energy.⁴²¹ Then interstellar space *will be for man*.

Now, as soon as repetition is excluded, as soon as it is a question of inscribing some better way of gratifying needs on Being, creation is no longer merely a

421. Cf. p. 494.

means but a means to attain a means, etc. And as so as soon this is so, creation takes on once again its characteristic of gratuity, it escapes its original contingency (the cycle need/gratification), we have to deal with pure transcendence: the Stakhanovite who exhausts himself in order to contribute to the increase in production of machines/tools is caught up in the pure and simple surpassing of his contingency.⁴²² He loses himself so that the world will appear as necessary, that is, created for the preservation of man and by man. With this, what he projects is being the foundation of a machine/tool in the universe; that is, that the machine/tool should be his individual part in the transformation of the world into essential inessentialness. The machine/tool becomes itself in the dimension of Being, the being that it has to be, or, to put it another way, itself for itself as an unconditioned end, even though it feeds, on the contrary, on contingency and repetition.

What has happened then? This: the original project is a vicious circle. If the world has shifted over to the essential as necessary to man and if man has become his own foundation inasmuch as he assumes his contingency and becomes necessary to the world, the combination man/world falls back into absolute contingency. It may be that A implies B and that B reciprocally implies A. But the combination $A \leftrightarrow B$ is not any more necessary for all that, for it is necessary that A or B be given in the contingency of appearing if the pair is to exist.

Here is where *Mitsein* intervenes. Later we shall work out the essential relation of creation to *Mitsein*, here we shall merely point out this structure and its influence on the original project. The relation of *one* consciousness to the world founders in immanence and contingency. But as soon as there is a plurality of consciousnesses the accent shifts. If my project of rendering the world necessary to the For-itself becomes the project of rendering the world necessary to the Other's For-itself, then I save my contingency, for it becomes a pure means of rendering the world necessary for the Other. I gratify my needs only so as to be able to continue to create the necessity of the world for the Other. The Other, through his active recognition of the instrumentality of the world (that is, in making use of it), breaks the cycle of immanence. I am necessary as the foundation of the instrumentality of the world that is necessary to the Other. And more exactly I become the instrumentality of the world. I am a foundation in my being in the world insofar as the Other grasps it as being-for-him.

Except the Other in turn can make use of the world's instrumentality only to gratify his own needs, that is, to perpetuate his contingency. The illusion of necessity stems from the fact that, on the one hand, there is a real transcendence and not a turning back into oneself, and from the fact that, on the other hand, there is a practical recognition of my necessity by a freedom.

If the plurality of consciousnesses were a *totality*, the perpetuating of contin-

422. A. Stakanhov was a legendary Soviet model worker who was said to have made numerous innovations and to have worked extra hours to improve production.

gency and of immanence would be manifest. The collectivity as a totality would perpetuate the instrumentality of the world as a means of perpetuating itself as a species. But since the plurality of consciousnesses is a detotalized totality, immanence is not immediately something that can be revealed. It is always to others that I am necessary (in constructing a bridge, a house, an electric plant), and each one is necessary to all the others. But he is necessary *to their contingency* and if each one, through the division of labor, is necessary to the perpetuating of the other's contingency, this just conceals that contingency a bit more without removing it. If I am to be necessary to the Other in perpetuating his contingency, the Other must gratify his needs as a pure means of raising himself to necessity; that is, it is not necessary that I should produce foodstuffs so that the other can produce coal for heating. I can be necessary only if, beyond the realm of contingency, the other to whom I am necessary is the necessary foundation of his being.

It remains that I created a *machine*, that is, an organized combination of means where some of these means govern others in light of some end. What then is the *type of being* of this being that is within the world in that it has been created? The first thing to emphasize is that it is a matter of a *real* being, produced in the real world, and which has real connections with the infinity of the world's beings. Indeed, although desire may be the origin of invention, it does not involve the imaginary world—or not necessarily. It does confer, as a lack, a certain negative quality on the objects it lacks, which is desirability. But this quality or lack turned back on itself through which the lack is thematically grasped is upheld in being by Being and, as a quality, is itself part of being. And since this quality is the demand for a series of operations that temporalize the For-itself and the world, it comes to the For-itself from the depths of Being's future. But this future depth is already a kind of being.

The desirability of food is the promise of some savor that *is* already in the instrument. Ripe, out-of-reach fruits are both my future (if I can reach them) and a present of being since their savor, which will fill my mouth is in them, in repose. My future is often the present of Being. I do not imagine any further than the cup, I emptily intend it as the present complement of my perception and the future correlate of a series of temporalizing operations. Thus although I confer temporality on Being through my springing into being, the present of Being unveils itself everywhere as the foundation of my future.

A machine as the indication of operations founded on the present of Being is both a present and a future. It is a replacement for some mode of behavior and, consequently, is itself a mode of behavior set down in Being (and I would say the same thing about the tool that is the chair, which is the other side of the action of sitting down, as about the machine/tool). Therefore it presents itself as having a future. We find in it, in effect, an organization such that, for example, if we refer from the result to the complex set of operations, we will see that the connecting rod or shaft *had to pass* through this position *so that*. . . . Yet we read

off the same object that it assumes that position *because* it just took that other one. Thus temporalizing finality perpetually is turning into causality; the future into the present, the yet to come as a sufficient reason yields its place to the past as an explanation. However, the decomposition of temporality that we first read off the machine as a succession of instants is not satisfying, for this decomposition into instants is going to refer us immediately to constituting temporality.

Without an end and a way of doing what it is meant to do, the machine is unintelligible. It is a way of doing something but fixed in Being and it demands of us in turn a way of doing something. And as a means that tends to become isolated (the moment of essence that posits itself as essential), it itself becomes, in its desirability and immobility, a present founding our future. There it is, immobile, but it conceals within itself the bound series of its operations as a present potentiality. It indicates the outcome not as imaginary but as a real future at the end of a real, present potentiality. In other words, we can clearly say that the machine is a synthetic being and also that it is a form of behavior fallen into the exteriority of indifference. We shall have given absolute being to this externalized behavior were it to remain a thoroughgoing synthesis in exteriority; that is, if the very matter that helps to make it up has been modified by the organizing assembly, if a certain integrity of the whole has tended to maintain itself and impose itself on the partial structures.

But this really doesn't matter. What upholds the unity of the whole is the inertia and exteriority of indifference. There is an imitation of a synthesis on the plane of mechanism—hence a synthesis caught up in a steady collapse into the exteriority of mere summation—, an imitation of solidarity on the plane of independence—that organic solidarity that first appears is in fact the solidarity of two animals whose feet are tied so that the one cannot take a step without pulling the other down as it itself falls—, the imitation of a kind of tendency to persevere in its being (which is nothing other than the synthetic unification of consciousness grasped in its filled-out noematic correlate—for example: consciousness “draws” a line and the line is given as having the virtue of retaining within itself its parts, in conformity with its essence—) through pure inertia in exteriority, which makes the ensemble maintain itself as a *pure juxtaposition* inasmuch as an external fold does not change it; an imitation, we have seen, of finality by causality.

The result is that it would be perfectly allowable to say that through the creation of the machine in Being *absolutely nothing* happens to Being. Not one “this” in the world has gotten beyond its indifference of exteriority; and consciousness by losing itself so that the relation exists in Being has only made false internal relations appear that are in reality external relations, that is, relations established from the outside, which in no way modify their terms.

If we pursue this, we can say, like the Christian, that man creates nothing. And we can go still further and show that it is always possible that Nature might realize the combination that man has brought about. Always possible—simply

improbable. Or, as Valéry puts it, it will take *more time* for it to get there. Instead of the being that raises itself above given being or another plane of being (for example, living being), no chance combination can yield it.

In other words, creation in Being and starting from Being seems at least to require that the creature be a transformation of being, in other words that the produced object transform the being from which it is produced. But this is not the way things are. Consider the example of liquid air. What is it? It is not in Nature and yet it results from a simple interplay of natural forces. One can therefore amuse oneself skeptically in showing man everywhere as absent from his work—Mallarmé's phrase: "Nature has taken place, one will add nothing to it."⁴²³

What has happened, though, is that one has misunderstood the question. For, considered from the point of view of Being, *nothing indeed has happened*. But considered from the point of view of man, what has happened is as follows. Being has lent its being to a project. Consider a *house*, for example. Considered from the point of view of Being, there is nothing new. But in fact there is no point of view of Being. There is, for example, the point of view of the physicist who will discover beneath the form "house" a pure inhuman assemblage of atoms, which bears not the slightest *trace* of a human intention since their positions and movements depend on other positions and other movements impressed on other atoms by other atoms. But the physicist's point of view is a human unveiling of Being as inhuman.

What we must consider, on the contrary, is that in the human world a new being has appeared. Yet it is not that the *project* has created a new type of being. On the contrary, Being has lent its being to the project. It is not Being that has become being/project (which would be, in effect, the creation of an in-itself-for-itself), rather it is the project, the way in which the existent exists, that has become *project/being*. The House in the human world is the appearance of a series of synthetically connected indications. It indicates behavior to be undertaken, operations to carry out; it reflects the entire collectivity; it is explained by the existential ideal of this society and of this man, at the same time as by the degree of industrialization of this society, and it makes explicit and symbolizes this society. It is the architect and the society projected into the dimension of Being-in-itself. At this level and for man, inasmuch as he makes use of it, it is entirely synthetic and outside of Nature. The stairway perpetually collapses into the exteriority of indifference, but the act of climbing it is perpetually a unification of the steps into one synthetic whole.

What is new? A *signification*. And what is a signification? An idea realized in being. And an idea (or project or action, which here are equivalent) is by itself a surpassing of being toward a future, a dialectical movement in which the moments explain themselves and determine themselves in terms of the projected

423. See p. 443.

whole. So the signification is a surpassing of being become being. The stairway is a surpassing of its being since it presents itself as there to be climbed. But this surpassing of being is itself inscribed in Being.

The idea not being able to create its matter or give itself being, the world or Nature or the In-itself lend it being by allowing themselves to be assembled according to the idea. But with this the idea is apprehended, observed, suggested in and through Being. It becomes the being beyond Being, but the being beyond Being is still being because it is apprehended in terms of Being. The arrow on a sign post is more than this simple splash of white paint on a black board. It *points* beyond itself to the town 20 kilometers distant. But this pointing, an image of man's surpassing of his own being, is *in Being*, it is part of being. It is not at all the same thing as when my finger points something out within the unity of an existential attitude that confers meaning on the universe. For my pointing finger exists as its own surpassing. Whereas the surpassing of the arrow by itself *is* like a given unity of the arrow with the town, it *is* there once and for always in the inertia of indifference—meaningful solely for men and in the world of men, but, in the world, existing absolutely like an objective, given being.

So through the intermediary of the In-itself the For-itself is confronted with itself; the In-itself becomes the mediation through which the For-itself appears to itself as a rebellious independence. My idea takes on being, closes in on me, escapes me, becomes public. The In-itself in upholding this idea through its being communicates its inertia, its independence to this idea, the isolation of every "in-itself." It separates my idea from me, cuts off the dialectical movement. In this way I can see it. But precisely, I see it because it is no longer me.

The principle of the idea being synthetic, in its appearing in Being it obeys the principle of all or nothing. So long as the assemblage has not reached a certain threshold, the idea remains the existed surpassing that thematizes and unifies my behavior. When this threshold is reached, the assemblage springs up before my eyes in Being through an instantaneous appearing (this artist, he is drawing features which seem senseless, then he draws a new one and all of them instantaneously organize themselves into a nose or a mouth). In other words, I do not produce an idea in the sense that it takes on a body starting from me—it remains subjective and me myself until suddenly it exists over against me in Being. With this, Being, which lends this idea its being over against me, appears to me as a turned-back freedom. My freedom congeals in front of me in a movement productive of being. I exist in front of myself, over against myself in Being, and I have to apprehend myself in this Being.

Creation is not the creation of Being by me but of me in Being. But in becoming congealed in Being, every idea is altered by Being. It becomes for us without ceasing to be an idea—or an idea/thing. It first appears as a congealed outburst—an outburst because it is an idea, congealed because it is being. Being an idea, I have to grasp it all at once or not at all, and it encompasses its own being known. Being being, I have to apprehend it little by little. The connection

comes about through the idea of a *threshold*. Bit by bit I bring together the elements of the tool into the synthetic unity of a comprehending perception and, finally, its idea—that is, the essence of the tool—appears, but all at once, and it imposes itself as the objective and transcendent meaning of the whole combination. In this way it can gush forth, both emanate from my observation and transcend this observation in terms of its fixed meaning. For its being is its use. Thus its transparency splits off from infinite depths.

In effect, the idea as subjectivity is a transparent unity, without parts. It has no internal plurality. But as soon as it imprints itself in the element of Being, it becomes the unity of a plurality, since, in fact, it is the unity of an assemblage. Therefore it can be envisaged at will by an observer as a pseudounity or a pseudoplurality. Pseudounity if I take the point of view of the *nur verweilen bei*, and pseudoplurality if, for example, I notice that *the* ceiling or *the* floor make sense only in relation to each other and dissolve into the unity of the room. But this very unity has to do with being, that is, it is *given*. The unity is real only as an operation (just like the infinity). There is no unity, there is unification through a synthetic and temporalizing act. Every given unity comes apart like a bundle of sheaves, for it is an inert unity that does not keep returning to the multiplicity it unites so as to perpetually unify it.

Therefore there is at the same time independence and dependence of the parts—each one tends to become isolated, the floor boards warp, the walls buckle. But at the same time it is the *floor boards* that warp, the *walls* that buckle, which is to say that they appear as isolated *within the unity* of the room, and that we grasp their attempt at independence only within their original dependence on one another. They appear as animated by evil powers and seem inhabited, within the congealed unity, by a congealed revolt. At this moment, the joints, the nails, the fasteners, etc. appear as having within themselves a force for good that subdues them—they are the servants of unity; that is, the congealed unity of the room, as *given*, appears at their level like a unification projected into Being. So this unity appears and disappears, contests itself and reestablishes itself in a sort of petrified movement at different levels of being, always within Being. A gesture that makes use of them (closing the door, opening the closet, lying down on the bed) suffices to make the room surge up around us as a unity. But at the same time a plurality unveils itself (the window is out of alignment, the lamp doesn't give much light—or just enough—etc.).

It is this infinite plurality within the unity, this necessity of observing on the basis of an intuitive grasping of the whole, that communicates its infinite depth to the idea inscribed in Being, which means that, at the same time, that I make the room one through the single gesture of slipping into the bed and that for this room given in and through my gesture, which gives itself as having no parts, I will never have finished taking its inventory.

Yet, on the other hand, the objectified idea or thing inserts itself into the world and, more particularly, into a world one wants to make technological,

that is, into a world of congealed projects or objectified ideas. And it is true that the relationship among these ideas is dialectical on the plane of pure subjectivity because they belong to one another as the secondary structures of a synthetic totality. But since this relationship is given and given in Being, it is perpetually underlaid by a structure of the exteriority of indifference. It is a pseudodialectic.

The relation of the hammer to the nail, when it is simply *projected* into the unity of an existence, is a dialectical relation in that we have two sides of one and the same gesture and the gesture is itself one moment of one act of behavior. In this sense, the hammer cannot exist without the nail and the nail without the hammer. But the *real* hammer can exist without the nail and vice versa, for it is nothing more, at this level, than a being in the world, independent of every other being, and I may well have nails but not have a hammer.⁴²⁴

So the dialectical relation is underlaid by a perpetual risk or relation of exteriority. The internal relation is traversed by a purely external one. What is more, the action grasped on the subjective plane is a living organization of significations; whereas, when it is realized, it is something that comes about through movement, force, and inertia, in short, within the setting of pure natural exteriority. Thus nail and hammer, appearing in their contiguity, are an ambivalent reality, an ambiguous and vanishing syncretism of exteriority and interiority.

Man only creates for man, we have seen, and we shall come back to this again. All the more reason why his creation, in addressing beings that exist absolutely and that are perpetually being renewed in their unity by gestures, is an absolute. Which is why the being that he creates has a being to be described within the human world and this being is an intermediary between that of the mineral and the living.

This is why it is true that houses are haunted. They are both a project become Being and thereby enchanted, perpetually subject to evil powers within and without—and a being become a project, that is, a kind of grotesque imitation of subjectivity that temporalizes itself through the exteriority of an instantaneous present. This is why the ordinary person's economic theory of religion is insufficient if it is not capped off with an existential structure of the object (of the house). The ancestor is completely within the house that he built, and if he is there like a ghost it is not because he is there as being dead but because his way of being there is by definition magical.

In wanting to found things through freedom, one only succeeds in making freedom a thing, in finding freedom reflected off of things, as by a deforming mirror. For if, in fact, Being appears as haunted, in the tool, for another thing the producer is himself realized in Being, and thereby grasps himself as externalized, that is, both as a unity (projected immanence) and as exteriority (the dimension of Being). Therefore he thinks about himself on the basis of the face

424. Cf. Heidegger's discussion of the equipment-structure of a hammer in *Being and Time*, p. 98.

that comes back to him from the world, not as man but as a thing haunted by man. Whence the psychology of the engineer, the worker, and the Marxist, which is a magical materialism.

So in the initial direction in which he makes use of his activity, man creates in the universe of man that aberrant synthesis of mind and matter, which is not yet a thing and which is not existence, that fluttering of being between the mechanistic and the spiritual, between the objective and the subjective, unity and plurality, immanence and transcendence, between the dialectical and the causal, between action and inertia. And in each of those objects belonging to what we shall call his *set of objects*, he alienates himself.

As regards the engineer, we have to speak of the effort to transform need, which is pure contingency, into a determination that man gives himself. "Industry creates needs in order to satisfy them." Here the circle gets closed (but we shall have a vicious circle). In fact, the dominant tendency has always been to make need sacred (in primitive communities) or to transform it into freedom (*delux* food, the aesthetics of food and drink; Americans and food).

The second type of creation: art. Technical creation guided by need does not exhaust the fundamental project of creating in order to justify oneself for being. The absolute creation that makes Being spring forth from Nothingness with its way of being remains the ideal of justification and gets hypostasized in terms of the creator God.

The foundation of the project of creating what is not quite clearly has to be sought in the possibility of *conceiving* what is not. This is a new process in relation to technical activity. We have seen, in fact, that technical activity inscribes itself in the *plenum* [fullness] of being revealed by perception and that the not given is beyond the given, yet within this *plenum* of being as the arrangement of significations complementary to the given (empty intentions), hence it is experienced in and through the unveiling/transforming perception of the world. For example, the tool is perceived *upon* these elements. The tree branch that will be a walking stick is grasped as a possible walking stick and the grasping takes place *on* this branch.

Illumination is the discovery of a meaning in objects (higher monkeys)⁴²⁵, the synthetic bringing of them together is the appearance of a new relation between distant regions of perception. But the For-itself makes itself a relation in the world among the elements of the world. In this way it thrusts itself into Being and from the ground of Being without there ever being any anteriority to its Nothingness. On the contrary, the prototype of creation presupposes an anteriority of Nothingness.

The foundation of creation as a pure justifying schematism must therefore be the possibility of thinking about Nothingness as what Being proceeds from. But since being that is its own nothingness is surrounded by Being, Nothingness can

425. See the works referred to above in n. 270.

appear as the theme of its possibilities only when Being collapses *for it*. In other words, the For-itself that is presence to Being must also be able to make itself absence from Being. This presupposes, therefore, an always possible detachment in relation to Being, a consciousness (of) self as not being, never being Being, which is precisely the fundamental structure of the For-itself in freedom.

Creation is wholly based on the innermost consciousness of being free. However the schematic and empty outline of creation is produced only on the occasion of the thematization of a needed object. Need—and every form of affective lack—seeks what it lacks in Being and implicitly grasps it in Being as the meaningful background of Being.

If it looks for food, the For-itself grasps the whole perceived world as upholding food in being. This food is hidden in the world, but it *is there*, it is implicitly contained in perception as the backside of the cup is implicitly contained in the front. Yet at this moment the For-itself is entirely besieged by Being. Contingency has penetrated it in the form of desire or need, it lives its unjustifiability in the form of existing the contingency of its being as an unjustifiable need; it grasps the unjustifiable plenum of being in and through its need. The needed object is a confused virtuality within Being (the For-itself does not thematize what it is looking for, but everything that appears appears in terms of the form of the needed object and collapses as such until an object appears that *is* the sought for one), and like its object and the instrument for obtaining it, The For-itself is in Being, it *is already* contained in Being as a virtuality, it roots in Being like a pig rooting for truffles and it creates itself in unveiling itself and unveils itself in creating itself.

If the For-itself were *only* this, it would remain a kind of higher insect, for it would be merely fascinated by Being and, although distinct from Being, its ineluctable presence to Being would make it a kind of inessential servant of Being. But, *even* within purely technical inquiry, the For-itself is presence to itself and a problem for itself, it is the being that is in question in its being. It is always possible that it will ask itself the question: “*What am I doing?*” That is, that it will thematize its operation. But it cannot thematize its operation unless at the same time it thematizes the object of this operation. Which means that it is present to itself (in the reflective act) as *seeking this being*. In this way the being that was a pure signification of Being and contained in Being (my friend Peter is somewhere *in the world* and it is always *the world* that I perceive) suddenly posits itself in itself and for itself as a separated entity, but this is possible only through a double operation: on the one hand, my perception founds itself within a unitary indifferentiation as *not being* the being I am seeking (it draws itself together and condenses exactly as when it serves as the *ground* of the differentiated appearance of a *this*; except it is the ground of *nothing* since the *this* is not. The world passes into the marginal inessentialness of the ground without which there would be nothing for it to ground, and this withdrawal into the indifferentiation of Being corresponds noematically to a noetic detaching

of consciousness in relation to Being. There is a nihilation of the world, which becomes pure, marginal, inessential, undifferentiated being).

On the other hand, the being I am seeking manifests itself thematically by way of an analogon as the object of my desire and my knowledge. But it manifests itself as *not yet being, no longer being, or not able to be*. It is absent in its presence. In this way desire defines itself in terms of its object. However, let us immediately note that it is being (the fundamental contingency of the For-itself present to itself in the form of desire) that calls being (the object of the world capable of supporting this contingency) by way of being (the movements of the body, in other words, the very contingency of the For-itself but surpassed and serving as *flesh* for the phantom object that comes to be incarnate there as absent or—in more exact cases: reflections, figures in the fire, in the coffee grounds, doodles, drawings, etc.—contingent external being).

Hence freedom can spring up (as a calling into question of the very process of inquiry) only in and through the thematization of the object. I can give up my search or, on the contrary, assume it only if I know *what* I am looking for, and as what I am seeking is absent from the concrete givens of my perception, this whatever that I am seeking will appear to me *in its absence*. Imagination is freedom. Yet at the same time, since the object manifests itself as a certain presence in its absence against the background of the nihilation of the world and since this object is not given in pure indifference but always as the noematic correlative of a desire, the desire that *makes* the object *spring up* as a being beyond being, magically and in terms of immediacy, finds itself at the opposite end from technical activity: it engenders for the For-itself the illusion that if it were stronger, more powerful, it could confer total presence on this presence/absence.

In fact, the imagination in its ontological structure is not so distant from technical invention, for it is in terms of an already existing being (an analogon) that it grasps the absent being. It is just that technical invention loses itself in the setting into relation of this being and the world. Imagination, on the contrary, is the moment of recovery and subjectivity: there is a break in contact, the analogon is apprehended as the object to obtain above the collapse of the world and as not in contact with it.

Thus the object in an image is an object isolated from the world and magically present to subjectivity as such. The moment of imagination is the moment of subjectivity. It is also the moment when desire recovers itself and when, as a result, it is the most conscious, when it most *exists*. It is finally the moment of calling things into question. The thematic appearance of the object bound to the existence of desire as conscious of itself is characterized by the fact that this desire conceives of itself and is lived *as productive* (of a presence/absence, but one which *at least* has being as presence/absence. Being that it draws from the analogon) and at the limit *as productive of being*. With this, desire, at the moment when it is most laid bare, indicates what its absolute justification would be: if it were to make *appear* in flesh and blood the being of desire.

So the ideal schematism of absolute creation is born from the production by the For-itself of imaginary things. It is no longer a matter here of coming to oneself out of the depths of Nothingness in the dimension of Being and hence of being one's own foundation. The imaginary object of desire is upheld in being (as absence) by a freedom that exhausts itself in giving this object being (the fatiguing aspect of imagination). If it were held in being as presence by this same freedom, we would finally have a being whose foundation of being would be freedom and a freedom whose justification would be that it upholds Being in its being.

It is clear that the moment of the imagination appears frequently as one moment among others of some technical operation (the moment when the technician becomes conscious of what he wants so as to be able to do it); but as a secondary moment it is absorbed into the unity of the whole. Except it can also pose itself for itself as the project of making new being well up from Nothingness and as such it will be the origin *both* of the myth of the creator God and of the artistic operation.

As for the imaginary object, we should note right away that it does not give itself in the same way as the object of perception does. Apart from the many differences that I listed in my *Psychology of Imagination*,⁴²⁶ there is one that must especially hold our attention here: the perceived being hands over its qualities on the basis of its being and on the basis of man's situation in relation to it. For example, a piece of fruit is not first given as eatable but as the terminus of an experience. The imaginary being is produced by a desire penetrated by knowledge but controlling this knowledge. Hence it gives itself as the noematic correlate of desire. This means that its fundamental quality or its *substance* will be the one that is called for by the desire: a sugary taste, the liquidity of the orange juice, and all the other qualities will appear as *the same* quality extending itself into different attributes or as arranging themselves as the background against which this quality will stand out, or will constitute the matter, the contexture of this quality. In other words, the object of the imagination is the object of perception but reproduced in its absence as the synthetic and unitary organization of all its moments on the basis of one principal moment that is a call to being by Desire, which comes to desire in order to fulfill it.

To sum up, the imagination makes its object appear as if its being were produced in the dimension of finality, as if its being in itself were a being-for in its being.

At the same time, on the side of the desire (as productive), there is a desire *to be fulfilled*, that is, a desire to assimilate the being of the orange (nourishment), to *become* desire/orange, and at the same time to lose oneself in the being of the orange. Thirst wants to be *fulfilled thirst*, that is, thirst passing over to being in becoming its own object. In this way, the schizophrenic who wants to escape

426. The French title of this work is *L'Imaginaire*, the imaginary.

ends up saying: I *am* the key. The ideal of the imagination is therefore a desire producing itself as being on the basis of Nothingness and moving toward an encounter with itself so as to found itself in being “in-itself-for-itself.” The desire and the orange are then two complementary aspects of one and the same existential-ontic unity, which turns on itself in its perfection.

This creation *ab nihilo* [moving away from nothingness] of the universe of desire will become the art object. And if, in its magical origins, art is really a magical attempt to satisfy desire—if, therefore, at the beginning it proposes the same end to itself as does the engineer—very quickly the success of its techniques will turn it away from this goal and it will become interested in the creative power of desire more than in the means for satisfying it. Its problem is: how to push to its extreme the power of desire in such a way that the imaginary that wells up in front of it will have a *real* presence. Real—here is the origin of the transcendental illusion of artists—that is, accessible to everyone and always graspable and unveilable, and at the same time objective. Yet at the same time remaining stamped by its imaginary origin, that is, appearing within the unity of some goal-oriented production, where the substance governs its attributes as the end does its means. At the limit, art will be the production *of the world* as the world of desire; that is, that the world as contingent being will be nihilated so as to reappear as the world produced by a freedom, as a world whose *very being* is finality, as a *created world*.

The mystification that lies at the base of aesthetic activity is, in effect, as follows: what the appearance of the image as the noematic correlative of desire/knowledge has taught the For-itself is the possibility that desire has of making well up before it its object as a carnal absence. If it has had to renounce seeing an absolute creation in this upheaval, it attributed this to the fact that the operation remained purely subjective and that it took as its analogon its own being in its own contingency. In other words, the image has appeared to it as merely subjective because its operation cannot be said to be objective and imprints itself on transcendent being. The *mistake* is to believe that in conferring objectivity on the analogon, one confers at same time being on the image, whereas one only confers objectivity on its absence of being. The image will remain the indication of a creation to carry out, but this will be an indication *for everyone*.

This is something we can grasp most easily in the case of a drawing made from memory. The mistake here would be to believe that I copy the image that I have “in mind,” as the painter copies his model. In fact, as I have explained, there is a basis of movements that serve as an analogon for the subjective image.⁴²⁷ What is called “seeing” an image is in great part tracing it out by remembered movements and surpassing these movements toward the (absent) presence of the object. I do not invent these movements when I realize them as an analogon.

427. Cf. *Psychology of the Imagination*, pp. 104–19.

They were already in my perception as means of describing and deciphering it. Nor do I invent the movements that allow me to copy an image. *From where* would I invent them if they were not initially given?

Next, an image does not copy itself. They are *the same ones* (those of perception become an analogon) that I make efficacious, that I inscribe in Being. In fact, what I inscribe in Being (stone, wood, paper) are just traces of movement in the indifference of exteriority. And they will stay this, simple traces, if no consciousness comes to surpass them toward the object in image of which they are the analogon. But, since for the moment, I am this consciousness (since I consider my drawing at the same time that I am making it), an odd transference comes about: to the extent that I realize the analogon through my movements, a substitution of the objective analogon for the subjective analogon takes place, and from the beginning of the operation, then increasingly, the object in image moves *behind* the objective analogon, to the point that it is what now *from over there* demands the features that my hand is tracing, rather than it being “in my mind,” as at the start. It is the resemblance indicated by the first few lines that demands being completed and it does so in front of me on the paper.

In this way I get the meaning of artistic creation. It is a real operation on a real being at the end of which a new being wells up. But this new being is not itself in Being. What gives the illusion is the reality of the operation, the reality of analogon, and the objectivity of the desideratum as a lack and an appeal.

Yet we have to see that if there is indeed the appearance of something new in the world, this appearance in Being is in the mode of *technical* production. It is from Being and within Being that the new mode of being of the marble, for example, springs up. And Aristotle completely confused things, for the marble is not the matter for which Venus would be the form.⁴²⁸ The form of the marble is a certain contour that the sculptor imposes on it technically, and form and matter are grasped as the analogon upon which the work appears. In this way we can explain the aesthetic paradox that the work is the instantaneous appearance of an organic unity and that it is progressively and technically produced by a succession of real operations. In fact, it is never the object of the work that is produced, it is the analogon.

For, art being the (imaginary) production of the world of desire, each object produced presents itself in the form of something desirable, which gets its being from its desirability. Thus the essence of the woman or the fruit is given in the picture or in the sculpture as producing existence. But it is an essence that is not experimentally affirmed and given as the hypothetical unity of certain aspects, it is a desired and experienced essence that rightly reveals itself in and through desire. And this essence, rather than being a pure juxtaposition or combination of apprehended external relations, is an organization where the desired aspect finds in itself the contiguous aspects; with the result that the art object is a

428. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book B, chap. 5, 1002a22.

desirable synthetic essence that gives itself existence in order to satisfy the desire; better still, it is the desire taken as an act that produces before itself the desirable in the unity of its freedom.

So art wants to produce the world of desire. But, we have seen, it mystifies itself; it comes to be just an indicator. It indicates what the world would have to be if it were to be created by a free desire. Art's claim is to present the world we see as the product of a freedom. It is in this sense that in its beginnings art is theological. At this stage, by the way, it suffers from no internal contradiction. For in presenting the orange as created it bears witness to God.

We need to be clear about understanding the artistic process. We saw above how we have to understand imitation of the image we carry in our mind. But we need to go even further, to consider a painter who "copies" a tree set in front of him in Nature and to ask ourselves what he is doing. We know in the first place that on his canvas he reverses the natural relation of creation. Indeed, if we place ourselves in the theological perspective, it is clear that God produces the tree *at the tip* of all Being and with being. It is through the action of Being on Being that the vegetable organism will take on this or that form. This form will be the result of a tension between the external forces and the internal organizing forces, it will appear at the end of a vegetable quasi history and, furthermore, will depend in its final aspect on the whole world (sun, light, etc.). And if God is not negativity, he will be unable to produce the tree as a mode, rather he will have to create it as an undissolvable unified structure, which is substance or the whole of Being. But the artist, being negativity, makes a "lacuna" spring up around the tree, beginning with perception (the term is Mallarmé's).⁴²⁹

Here determination is negation, carried out by a being that is its own negation. This being makes the tree stand out for perception against the background of the world. And when he transfers the tree to the canvas, instead of creating the tree starting from the world, by a negative determination, he creates the world starting from the tree. The order, in fact, will be to create the world as the background appropriate for the tree to stand out. This background of the picture will necessarily count as the world. Thus the picture tells of the welling up of each being with its world out of Nothingness. This aid, which man lends to God who cannot, being absolute Being, create anything other than Being, is that he can shape the production of the mode (negativity, being limited) starting from Nothingness.

Yet this operation takes place, we said, as a *copy*. What are we to understand by this? Recall that I see the tree where it is, that is, *over there* by the roadside. Where then do I copy it? On the canvas? But we have seen that the canvas is only the object of technical operations. In fact the *copy* being a prolonging of perception, I copy it *where it is*, that is, over there by the roadside. And to begin,

429. Cf. p. 495.

my decision to copy it makes it appear as a form. The *form* of the tree that was, in divine creation, the result of an operation to infinity by Being on Being, I make, on the contrary, through my lacunary power, spring up in the immediate and the atemporal. And my power as an artist being to produce it without mediation on the canvas, I make it therefore the outcome of another mode of production or an immediate production through freedom.

But this is possible—what the artist *does not say*—only because this production *is just something imaginary*, that is, because I produce it as a nothingness of being and at the heart of Nothingness. Thus, as soon as I have the idea of surpassing the given form toward the reproduced form, I transform one mode of production into another. But as soon as I begin to paint, I make be born and I invent *over there* the relationships I put on my canvas, and each one of them becomes a final cause of the whole. So to paint the tree is to remake it as the outcome of a double operation: I carry out a *real* operation ending with a imaginary object on the canvas, at the same time that I make an unreal creation on a real outer object.

And, finally, since the canvas is only an analogon and the object is present on it only imaginarily, it is the *object* I perceive that is, as created by me, imaginarily present on the canvas. Thus in the comparison of a portrait to its model, I seek to know whether the model has really taken possession of the portrait. There are not two symmetric poles, but only one: the model. It is just that, when I consider him by way of the canvas, there takes place a mystifying exchange of realities: the real object-pole confers its *reality* on the canvas and the painted work confers on the former its being-created.

So to paint is to create the object that I paint over there, where it is, in Being. It in no way is a matter of imitating, but rather of grasping creation at its sources in creating oneself what is created. And man—in the theological stage—aids the divine creation and becomes indispensable to God himself, for the omnipotence of a God can only create substance, whereas man's nothingness serves him in creating the mode. Thus the artist is, on the one hand, the man who chooses really to create imaginary objects, but he is also and above all (if we place ourselves in the ontological point of view) the man who chooses to create imaginarily the real world; he is the one for whom perception is already unreal creation.

APPENDIX I

16 December 45¹

The Good and Subjectivity

The Good has to be done. This signifies that it is the end of an act, without a doubt. But also that it does not exist apart from the act that does it. A Platonic Good that would exist in and by itself makes no sense. One would like to say that it is beyond Being, in fact it would be *a* Being and, as such, in the first place it would leave us completely indifferent, we would slide by it without knowing what to make of it; for another thing it would be contradictory as an aberrant synthesis of being and ought-to-be. And in parallel to the Christian Good, which has over the former the superiority of emanating from a subjectivity, if it does perhaps escape contradiction, it would still not be able to move us, for God does not do the Good: he *is* it. Otherwise would we have to refuse to attribute perfection to the divine essence?

What we can take from the examination of this idea that “the Good has to be done” is that the agent of Good *is not* the Good. Nor is he Evil, which will lead us back in an indirect way to posing the problem of the being of the Good. He is poor over against the Good, he is its disgraced creator, for his act does not turn back on him to qualify him. No doubt, if he does it often, it will be said that he is good or just. But “good”

1. Sartre left for his second trip to the United States on 12 December 1945 (*The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, p. 13). He traveled across the Atlantic by Liberty ship, a voyage that took eighteen days; hence this document, the second part of which is dated 17 December, must have been written during that voyage.

does not mean: one who possesses the Good, but: one who does it. Just does not mean: who possesses justice, but: who renders it. So the original relation of man to the Good is the same type as transcendence, that is, the Good presents itself as what has to be posited as an objective reality through the effort of a subjectivity. The Good is necessarily that toward which we transcend ourselves, it is the noema of that particular noesis that is an act. The relation between acting subjectivity and the Good is as tight as the intentional relation that links consciousness to its object, or the one that binds man to the world in being-in-the-world.

The Good cannot be conceived apart from an acting subjectivity, and yet it is beyond this subjectivity. Subjective in that it must always emanate from a subjectivity and never impose itself on this subjectivity from the outside, it is objective in that it is, in its universal essence, strictly independent of this subjectivity. And, reciprocally, any act whatsoever originally presupposes a choice of the Good. Every act, in effect, presupposes a separation and a withdrawal of the agent in relation to the real and an evaluating appraisal of what is in the name of what should be. So man has to be considered as the being through which the Good comes into the world. Not inasmuch as consciousness can be contemplative but inasmuch as the human reality is a project.

This explains why many people are tempted to confuse the Good with what takes the most effort. An ethics of effort would be absurd. In what way would effort be a sign of the Good? It would cost me more in effort to strangle my son than to live with him on good terms. Is this why I should strangle him? And if between equally certain paths that both lead to virtue I choose the more difficult, have I not confused means and ends? For what is important is to act, not to act with difficulty. And if I consider effort as a kind of ascetic exercise, I am yielding first to a naturalistic ethics of exercise, of the gymnastics of the soul. I have the *thinglike* [*choisiste*] idea of profiting from an acquisition, like the gymnast who does fifteen repetitions today so as to be able to do twenty the day after tomorrow. But in ethics there is neither trampoline nor acquisition. Everything is always new. Hero today, coward tomorrow if he is not careful. It is just that, if effort has this price in the eyes of so many (aside from an old Christian aroma of mortification), it is because in forcing myself I experience my act to a greater degree in its relation to the Good. The less I make an effort, the more the Good toward which I strive seems to me given, to exist in the manner of a thing. The more I make an effort, the more this Good that oscillates and fades and bumps along from obstacle to obstacle is something I feel myself to be making. It is in effort that the relation of subjectivity to the Good gets uncovered for me. By escaping destruction, I sense that the Good runs the risk of being destroyed along with me; each time one of my attempts miscarries, I sense that the Good is not done, that it is called into question. Effort reveals the essential fragility of the Good and the primordial importance of subjectivity.

Thus it matters little whether the Good *is*. What is necessary is that it *be through us*. Not that there is here some turning back of subjectivity on itself or that it wants to participate in the Good it posits. Reflective reversals take place after the fact and manifest nothing other than a kind of flight, a preference for oneself. Rather, simply, subjectivity finds its meaning outside of itself in this Good that never *is* and that it perpetually realizes. It chooses itself in choosing the Good and it cannot be that in choosing itself it does not choose the Good that defines it. For it is always through the transcendent that I define myself.

Thus, when someone accuses us of favoring whims, they are following the prejudice that would have it that man is initially fully armed, fully ready, and that thus he chooses his Good afterwards, which would leave him a freedom of indifference faced with contrary possibilities. But if man qualifies himself by his choice, caprice no longer has a meaning for, insofar as it is produced by an already constituted personality that is “in the world,” it gets inserted within an already existing choice of oneself and the Good. It is an instantaneous attention to the instant. But for there to be attention to the instant, there must be a duration that temporalizes itself, that is, an original choice of the Good and of myself in the face of the Good.

This is what allows us to comprehend that so many people devoted to the Good of a cause do not willingly accept that this Good should be realized apart from them and by ways that they have not thought of. I will go so far as to sacrifice myself entirely so that the person I love finds happiness, but I do not wish that it come to him by chance and, so to speak, apart from me.

In truth, there is incertitude about subjectivity. What is certain is that the Good must be done by some human reality. But is it a question of my individual reality, of that of my party, or of that of concrete humanity? In truth, the Good being universal, if I could melt into the human totality as into an indissoluble synthesis, the ideal would be that the Good was the result of the *doing* of this totality. But, on the one hand, this concrete humanity is in reality a detotalized totality, that is, it will never exist as a synthesis—it is stopped along the way. With the result that the very ideal of a humanity doing the Good is impossible. But, what is more, the quality of universality of the Good necessarily implies the positing of the Other. If the Other and I were to melt into a single human reality, humanity conscious of being a unique and individual historical adventure could no longer posit the Good except as the object of *its* own will. Or to rediscover the universal structure of the Good, it will have to postulate other human realities, on the Moon or on the planet Mars and therefore, once again, Another person.

Note that the universal structure of the Good is necessary as that which gives it its transcendence and its objectivity. To posit the Good in doing it is to posit Others as having to do it. We cannot escape this. Thus, to conclude, it is concrete subjectivity (the isolated subject or the group, the party) that has to do the Good in the face of others, for others, and in demanding from the diversity of others that they do it too. The notion of Good demands the plurality of consciousnesses and even the plurality of commitments.

If indeed, without going so far as to presuppose the synthetic totalization of consciousnesses and the end of History, we simply imagine a unanimous accord occurring about the nature of the Good to be done and furthermore an identity of actions, the Good preserves its universality, but it loses its reality of “having-to-be-done,” for it has at present, for each concrete subjectivity, an *outside*. It is always for me what I have to do, but it is also what everyone else *does*. Which is to say that it appears as natural and as supernatural at the same time. This is, in one sense, the ambiguous reality of what are called *customs*. So the Good is necessarily the quest of concrete subjectivities existing in the world amidst other hostile or merely diversely oriented subjectivities. Not only is it my ideal, it is also my ideal that it become the ideal of others. Its universality is not de facto, it is de jure like its other characteristics.

Monday 17 December

It follows

1st, that no man wants the Good for the sake of the Good;

2d, no man wants to do the Good so as to profit from it egoistically (*amour-propre*).

In both cases it is wrong to assume that man is initially fully made and that afterward he enters into a centripetal or centrifugal relation with the Good. Instead, since it is from this relation (which is the original choice) that both man and the Good are born, we can set aside both hypotheses. The interested man of the ethics of interest, for example, chooses, due to motivating factors that have to do with existential psychoanalysis, both to be interested and that the Good be his interest. He defines himself by this interest in the very moment that he defines the world and ethics by this interest. For me, he will never be an *interested man*, but rather a man who chooses to be interested. And we shall truly know what this interest is when we have made explicit the metaphysical reasons one might have for reducing the human condition to interest. At the level of his choice, the interested man is disinterested; that is, he does not explain himself in terms of an interest.

Analyze (existential psychoanalysis):

Ethics of	{	pleasure
		interest
		will to power
		virtue
		duty
		love

Study a few types of value:

values of life	{	nobility
		grace
values of action	{	generosity
		devotion
		frankness—purity—innocence

From this it also necessarily follows that the person is inseparable from the Good he has chosen. The person is the agent of this Good. Take this Good away from him, he is nothing at all, just as if you were to take the world away from consciousness, it would no longer be consciousness of anything, therefore no longer consciousness at all. But the person does not cling to his Good to preserve himself. Instead it is in projecting himself toward his Good that he makes and preserves himself. Thus the person is the bridge between being and the ought-to-be. But as such, he is necessarily unjustifiable. This is why he chooses to hypostasize the essential characteristics of his Good in order to give this Good an ontological priority over himself. Then, existing as the servant of this *a priori* Good, man exists by right. He is in some way raised up by the Good to serve it. We see this clearly in religion—for God has raised up man to reflect his glory.

Paulhan speaks of the illusion of totality that makes us believe in the presence of the armadillo when we see *the* armadillo.² But this illusion of totality is not just a fact of

2. Jean Paulhan, *Entretien sur des faits Divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), pp. 24–25.

knowing something. We find it in every domain. Everything we experience, we experience as though it were our whole life and this is why across our experiences we grasp a meaning of the human condition. This sad street, with its large barracklike buildings, which I am walking along, extends out of sight for me, it is my life, it is life. And my solitude at Bordeaux was *solitude*, the forlornness of man.

Difficulty: there are two orders. The man in hell and the saved man. Once we allow that freedom is built up on the ground of the passions, this difficulty no longer exists: there is natural man with his determinism, and freedom appears when he escapes the infernal circle. But if you are not a Stoic, if you think that man is free even in hell, how then can you explain that there is a hell?

To put it another way, why does man almost always *first* choose hell, inauthenticity? Why is salvation the fruit of a new beginning neutralizing the first one? Let us consider this. What we are here calling inauthenticity is in fact the initial project or original choice man makes of himself in choosing his Good. His project is inauthentic when man's project is to rejoin an In-itself-for-itself and to identify it with himself; in short, to be God and his own foundation, and when at the same time he posits the Good as preestablished. This project is first in the sense that it is the very structure of my existence. I exist as a choice. But as this choice is precisely the positing of a transcendent, it takes place on the unreflective plane. I cannot appear at first on the reflective plane since reflection presupposes the appearance of the reflected upon, that is, of an *Erlebnis* that is given always as having been there before and on the unreflective plane. Thus I am free and responsible for my project with the reservation that it is precisely as having been there first.

In fact, it is not a question of a restriction on freedom since, in reality, it is just the form in which it is freedom that is the object of this reservation. Being unreflective, this freedom does not posit itself as freedom. It posits its object (the act, the end of the act) and it is haunted by its value. At this level it realizes itself therefore as a choice of being. And it is in its very existence that it is such. Nor is it a question of a determinism or of an obligation, but rather that freedom realizes itself in the first place on the unreflective plane. And there is no sense in asking if it might first realize itself on the reflective plane since this by definition implies the unreflective. It would be equally useless to speak of a constraint on the mind of a mathematician because he, being able to conceive of a circle or a square, cannot conceive of a square circle. It is not a question of a limit which freedom trips over, but rather, in freely making itself, it does so unreflectively, and as it is a nihilating escape from being toward the In-itself-for-itself and a perpetual nihilation, it cannot do anything unless it posits the In-itself-for-itself as the Good existing as *selbständig*.

Whence the real problem: "can one escape from hell?" cannot be posed on any other level than the reflective level. But since reflection emanates from an already constituted freedom, there is already a question of salvation, depending on whether reflection will take up for its own account the initial project of freedom or not take it up, whether it will be a purifying reflection refusing to "go along with" this project. It is obvious that we are here in the presence of a free choice among alternatives of the type that classical psychology has habituated us to consider. "*Mitmachen oder nicht mitmachen*" [to take or not to take part]. Except the two terms here do not exist before the decision. And as they take their source from the nonthetic consciousness that freedom has of itself, it is

clear that accessory reflection is just the prolongation of the bad faith found nonthetically within the primitive project, whereas pure reflection is a break with this projection and the constitution of a freedom that takes itself as its end. This is why, although it would be much more advantageous to live on the plane of freedom that takes itself for its end, most people have a difficulty. . . .

APPENDIX II

REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE

1. Oppression

We shall examine in succession the oppression of Blacks in slavery in the U.S.A. and the oppression of workers in the capitalist period. The difference that interests us from the point of view of a phenomenology of the oppressor is that the former is institutional—in other words, guaranteed by institutions—and the latter para-institutional—that is, it is neither guaranteed nor defended.

The first characteristic that strikes anyone who considers the oppression of “slavery” is that one must not confuse oppression and violence. Violence, we have seen, cannot be defined apart from some relation to the laws that it violates (human or natural laws). It represents a suspending of these laws, a “vacation from legality.” Oppression, on the contrary, can be institutional. It suffices that the oppressing class legitimate its oppression by law and that the oppressed class, out of weakness, complicity, ignorance, or any other reason, obeys these laws and implicitly or explicitly recognizes them through its behavior.

Oppression based on slavery was not at first recognized by the law, but it soon becomes institutional. Thus a son of a slaveholder, born amidst a regime based on oppression, not only considers the fact of possessing slaves as *natural* but also as *legitimate* since this fact is one part of the institutions of his homeland. And the more he is raised to respect the authority of the State and to recognize his duties toward it, the more the right of possessing slaves appears sacred to him and the more it will remain beyond discussion. There is an underlying tie between the way of accepting and assuming different legal prescriptions (matrimonial, civic, military duties, etc.) and the way of accepting and assuming the right to possess slaves. It is *the ensemble* that is respected and recognized.

So it doesn't mean much to say that the oppressor may have a good conscience, it would be better to say that the prime characteristic of legal oppression is to confer a good conscience on him and even that he cannot have such a good conscience without it. Indeed, as soon as he begins to question himself about the well-foundedness of slavery, he is questioning himself about the well-foundedness of the law in general, and the spirit of seriousness begins to fall apart, leaving room for one of the particular forms of the bad conscience. He must not just decide for or against slavery, but for or against *the law*.

In particular, he is quickly going to encounter the stumbling block of the *law of the heart*. He will decide there is an unwritten law that the written law can reflect more or less well. But someone will immediately oppose the way of the world to him—and it is true that the way of the world triumphs over the abstract law of the heart—or he will consider every law as a technical creation, but this understanding of the law will bring him closer and closer to realism. And why not accept slavery as a factual reality?

Furthermore, the primary characteristic of morality is the bad conscience. So the structure of the original spirit of the oppressor, which does not belong to the first generation, is the spirit of seriousness and of a good conscience. Except we need to know whether this good conscience belongs to good or to bad faith. Oppression, which is naturally defined as the exploitation of man by man and which is characterized by the fact that one class deprives the members of another class of their freedom, can therefore be *legitimate*, if by legitimate we mean what is recognized by a constitution or a juridical system.

On the other hand, oppression based on slavery conceals its abject character, in its origin, because it turns out:

1st, that in many cases (most of them) it was the Blacks themselves who sold their fellow Blacks to the captains of the slave ships;

2d, the Blacks are not Christians. Not to be Christian is clearly not to be a man. Many of the planters refused to instruct the Blacks in Christianity because they would then have to deal with beings who might have a soul and who might have the right not to be slaves. It was only at the beginning of the 18th century that some began to instruct them about religion, after pastors and scholars had demonstrated that one could be both a slave and a Christian at the same time. Noah, according to Genesis, condemned all the Blacks, the sons of Ham, to perpetual slavery. Here there is certainly an underlying bad faith that tries to base itself on a sleight of hand carried out on the concepts of transcendence and facticity. When one is not yet certain about being in accord with the Bible, one says that the Black can be a slave since he *is not* Christian. Here there is a game with the notion of *being*. If not *being* Christian means definitely being refractory to Christianity, to be *by nature* not Christian, slavery, from this point of view, may receive its justification. But since, at the same time, they were prevented from becoming Christians, they knew quite well that Christian faith lay within their possibilities. In other words, that the Blacks are something other and more than what they are. And finally they made use of their discretionary power over them to put them in such a state that they justified this discretionary power. Their servitude is what justifies their servitude;

3d, their mental state is quite clearly low. Not only are they from an extremely primitive civilization, but even more they have lost their adaptation to this civilization,

as to the original situation wherein they found themselves, an adaptation that concrete men in a situation rightly make. Plunged into a world they were unaware of, they originally count *less* than they did even in Africa. They are submen. Here again there is an original bad faith since at the same time the laws prevented their being taught anything. In the southern states it was forbidden to teach black slaves to read, and even freedmen. Here again we have the schematism transcendence/facticity. *In fact* “they do not know how to read” is equivalent to “they are creatures whose absolute character is to be unable to read.”

But it should be noted that if in fact there is bad faith in 2 and 3, there is also ambiguity. For if it is true that they could after much effort participate in some elements of white civilization, it is also true that they did not know how to read and they were not Christians. These bewildered creatures spoke no comprehensible language, believed in superstitions, and in no way could be taken for men, for the equals of the white slaveholder. And this substantialization was not uniquely a matter of bad faith.

It is also true that there is an initial attitude of the For-itself that freezes the other into an object. With the outcome that the Negro who can read is that Negro over there that I see at this moment, that inferior and half-damned nature, come into possession of a stolen, almost external power that he only knows how to make use of for evil. The idea that *it is no longer the same* is difficult to acquire when faced with the object itself. What is more, where did they get the right to learn to read—it is not inscribed in the law code and, furthermore, it cannot emanate from the law of the heart in the case of creatures entirely alien to our civilization. The answer is clearly that *today* they have neither the right nor the desire to read, that they *are* not “worthy” of reading if we take them as being what they are, but that, on the contrary, if we do take them as projects, they entirely have an advantage over us and one has the strict obligation to instruct them; still more that, the future of their freedom having precisely the characteristic of *not existing*, there is no legitimation and no aid to be found in their factual existence. But such an obligation is difficult to conceive of and even runs the risk of falling into paternalism. Above all, it is not legitimated because here I have to treat as a freedom a being that does not treat himself as free and in a certain sense I, therefore, am alone in wanting his freedom. The same thing holds for:

4th, in a certain sense one can say that the situation of these Blacks was an improvement in their lot. Here again it is necessary to distinguish: many of them were taken in raids carried out by the slave ship crews. These were the object of violence carried out by the Whites. In this violence the buyer is clearly directly implicated since, without him the operation loses its meaning. But most were sold for rum by their fellow Blacks. If they had not been purchased, no doubt they would have been massacred by the victorious tribes. And we can say here that these Blacks were fundamentally the victims of their own violence. In any case, it is better to be slaves for the Whites than prisoners of their black brothers.

What I want to indicate here is that if, naturally, the situation did not remain entirely concealed by bad faith, at least the third or the fourth generation of oppressors did not have behind it any truly painful memory of violence. It appeared, in short, in a world with an institutional character in which a certain *operation* had been practiced for a long time. And if we consider a young slaveholder reaching maturity after 1808, the situation is still more obscure for him.

1st) The federal law of 1808 had forbidden the importation of Blacks. Therefore the traditional character of slavery was all the more manifest. The only Blacks one had anything to do with were born in slavery. Even those one purchased, one purchased from other planters who possessed their parents and, if they were not born under the roof of the buyer, at least they were born slaves under that of the seller. The slave was born as the White's *property* and the right of possession was not just recognized by the law, it was moreover a secondary right of the right of property, which everyone accepted at that time. Born of slaves, themselves the children of slaves, he *was born into* slavery. It doesn't matter on this point if he was born through the will of a master who had practiced a sort of crude eugenics. In this case the master would have decided before his very birth on his bodily structure.

2d) He has remained inferior. Even more, since it was necessary that he adapt to the conditions that been prepared for him in order to live, he had in a way chosen to suffer from them as little as possible, hence he justified them. For example, it often happened that a master did not want slave families because they were too difficult to sell, or that the master separated the closest kin. The reaction of the Blacks was naturally a loosening of family ties. How could one be attached to children when one knew that they did not belong to you and that they did not even belong to themselves? One could not love them either for oneself or for themselves. But this loosening of family ties, the result of a hundred years of slavery, was quickly taken by the descendants of the first slaveholders as a justification for what had happened. Clearly it would not suffice to stop selling children and their mothers separately, one would have to react positively and attempt to create family ties that did not exist, since, almost a hundred years after emancipation, the black family remains quite lax, at least in the poorest circles. An Englishman traveling in the South writes: "Even though the separate sale of the young is a barbarous proceeding, the family relations are so weak that those people do not suffer from it as we would." In the same way, until 1860, 5 per cent of the Blacks knew how to read and write, a minority of them were Christian. One sees how the best choice was transformed into a character trait once one transformed this adaptation into "the Black is carefree and easygoing," or "he is happy." It goes without saying as well that the fact of whip lashings is justified by creating a certain attitude in the Black. Because he is whipped, he does not work except under the whip.

So the White of 1808 was born into a world based on slavery where *in fact* he found two unequal races, the one superior and the other illiterate, nonbelieving, lazy, and slow going, without real family ties, which is really and authentically *made* to obey because two hundred years of slavery have made it precisely for this.

At the same time, he found that the two races were united by concrete ties. Later he would emphasize the fact that the North's law, by treating the Black as an abstract, isolated person, cut him off from his real ties to the Whites, handing him over with no countervailing force to the abstract exploitation of capitalism, and consequently this law mystified him. He would also emphasize how concrete his *knowledge* of the Black was, a practical knowledge that came from a hundred years of rule, in opposition to that purely abstract and puritan idea of human nature that one found in men of the North.

Fundamentally, he was both right and wrong. Perfectly wrong because he did not know the Black, he made him. Right because the abject institution of slavery, lived through, reworked, and rearranged, here and there did transform itself into a concrete

relation, a type of existence, a social architecture, into feudal bonds, and another type of concrete relation was quite clearly needed to replace it, whereas the northern Puritan was proposing an abstract society that, from the South's point of view, was a mystification. What good was there in extending the right to vote and freedom to a Black who did not know how to read or write and who owned nothing? He did not know that the situation could be surpassed only by a destructive negativity that is necessarily abstract. The analytic freedom of Puritanism clearly represents the conversion of one type of oppression into another more cunning and disguised type. But it was necessary that this happen.

An ambiguity remains, since certain planters could boast that the condition of the Blacks, on their land, was superior to the condition of the workers in the North. Thus, for them, it was a question of a *regression*.

These concrete ties between the master and the slave were clearly limited to the slave in the mansion or in the city. The domestic slave, born in the mansion, is the property of his master, his thing. And the master loves him as such as a prolongation of himself. He loves him and takes care of him inasmuch as he acknowledges being *made for the master*. Inasmuch also as, as I showed above, he rediscovers his own will in the slave as an objective reality, and inasmuch as, finally, he is the bearer of the right that the master has of possessing things. All this gets incarnated in *this* particular reality, which has *this* past, and the relation is idiosyncratic. An idiosyncratic relation between the old master and the freed slave, who remains his "client," has continued even up to today. One lynches another's negroes, one defends one's own. Furthermore, the Black is loved as reflecting the master's qualities. He is made so as to admire. He is nature and a reflecting monad. He inscribes in nature the goodness and force of the master; the slave gives the master the right to exist.

Naturally, this understanding is contradicted by three orders of facts: 1st, the caprice of the master as regards the domestic slaves; 2d, the condition of the slaves on plantations which, being governed collectively, were under a heartless law analogous to that of the proletariat, and worse; 3d, the slave revolts, which proved that they were not docile and happy by nature.

But these are of course signs *to be interpreted*. The master's caprice will be condemned by the virtuous slaveholder. It will be said that it is necessary to extend to the slave rights drawn from slavery itself, that is, his duties. In this moral hierarchy, perfection is to know one's place. The moral perfection of the slave is his devotion and obedience. Devotion and obedience are themselves something like a claim on the master's good will. What the slave indirectly claims when he acknowledges and worships his master's omnipotence is the goodness that is necessarily the corollary of omnipotence. The ground of this ethics is that one advises the slave to let the master fall into his own trap: worship him, obey him, and you will make him good despite himself.

The condition of the slaves on the plantations condemns slavery if we consider it as a necessary consequence of slavery. On the contrary, it strengthens slavery if the generous master thinks that this condition can be improved. In this case, it testifies that slavery is a living situation that can evolve, progress. It furnishes a future for the master's good will, a possibility of being loved even more, and in this way it conceals, on the contrary, the profound conservatism of the slaveholders.

Finally, one will interpret the revolts as sporadic phenomena due to the character of

a few slaves. They are aberrant cases. What they demonstrate, on the contrary, is that one must never overly relax in the presence of a slave. The whip is necessary, even though one ought not to make use of it. The revolts can be explained by the fact that men have a need for discipline. Is not the master's own child lazy, does he not rebel? The slave is a child; has to be treated as such. Paternalism. Henry Grady, in *The New South* (1890), writes: "how the negro stood in slavery days, open-hearted and sympathetic, full of gossip and comaradeship, the companion of the hunt, frolic, furrow and home, contented in the kindly dependence that has been a habit of his blood, and never lifting his eyes beyond the narrow horizon that shut him in with his neighbors and friends. . . . It was the rule of that regime. It has survived war, and strife, and political campaigns. . . . It is the glory of our past in the South. . . . It is the hope of our future."¹ In the Black's presence, the master feels only *half alone*. The Black's consciousness is a limited spontaneity. The master talks and the slave, who has no personal opinion, confines himself to reflecting this talk in the dimension of the objective. By means of the slave, the master recaptures his being-for-others. A consciousness made for him reflects him. He thinks by way of the intermediary of the slave. Therefore he is *for himself* both for himself and for others.

Conversely, it is true that the slave gets some benefit from his resignation. He lives without anxiety in the universe of a child. He can be *carefree and easygoing* because his values are sure. He is on this side of anxiety and the spirit of seriousness in the serious universe of others where he has no responsibility. Harper writes in *Memoirs on Slavery*: "the slave, it is true, has no hope of improving his lot, but, in return, not possessing anything, he has nothing to lose. A white woman is dishonored by misconduct; a black one not at all. . . . Lewdness among slaves merits no harsher judgment than that of a weakness."² Blacks' easygoing ways and smiles stem from this.

Naturally it is this smile that the slave shows the master. And the master brings this about: naiveté makes one smile, and the slave and the child act naive to make one smile. When a master wants to divert his guests, he calls in the minstrels: The Master says, "Thief, you've eaten my turkey," and the Black answers, "Yes, Massa, but if you have a little less turkey, you have a bit more nigger." The slave will eat other turkeys and the master will have another tale to tell.

Weatherford and Johnson (*Race Relations*, 1934) note: "Since the native African is not a very humorous person, it seems most likely that this quality of humor was developed in slavery."³

In reality, Hegel saw just one side of the slave: his labor. And his whole theory is wrong, or rather it applies to the proletarian, not to the slave. The proletarian does not

1. Henry Grady, *The New South* (New York: Robert Bonner's Sons, 1890), pp. 152–53, quoted in Gunnar Myrdal, with Richard Steiner and Arnold Rose, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), p. 1357, n. 45. Deidre Bair reports that Simone de Beauvoir had received a copy of this latter text from Nelson Algren in 1947. Deidre Bair, *Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography* (New York: Summit Books, 1990), p. 364.

2. Chancellor William Harper, *Memoirs on Slavery* (Charleston: James S. Burges, 1838).

3. Willis D. Weatherford and Charles S. Johnson, *Race Relations: Adjustment of Whites and Negroes in the United States* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1934), p. 284, quoted in Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, p. 960, n. a.

have to please, he has relations only with things. The slave (at least the domestic and urban slave) has relations with things and with masters. And he has to please, he acts to please. For doing so he is repaid, he avoids punishment. Thus his smile is both real and willed. He is protected in that he does not have to do anything so that a world exists, he does not have to emerge into Nothingness through his transcendence. And he has to put on this lightheartedness to cheer up his master.

For another thing, the virtue that the master asks of him and that often enough the slave does give, is a type of virtue without anxiety. It is devotion. In other words, the slave is in the position of justifying his existence through the existence of another. This justification is in vain, quite obviously, in a democratic world because it also requires that I decide that the other is worth more than I am. On the contrary, it is obviously true in the slave's world, the slave who is taught that God created two races, the one to serve the other.

Thus the slave is offered a limited transcendence. Limited by the Other's freedom. The slave is a slave by right. If he has a good master and he takes up this inauthentic ethics he is happy, or he can be so. Nor does it matter that he often was so, let us say rather that it was woman and the slave who invented the search for a form of happiness that is the peaceful enjoyment of a justification within a closed universe.

And the master is aware, something like Claudel, of providing the slave a perpetual occasion for transcendence, in being the perpetual goal of his surpassing. He *tempts* the slave, as Claudel would put it, he tests him just as God tests man. There is a homogeneity between the Christian religion, where God, in testing us, provides us with an occasion for a limited transcendence that surpasses itself toward him, and the ethics of the Master (also that of Mari, cf. *Grisélidis*).⁴ A slave's ethics and religion.

Certainly the slave's situation is filled with suffering. But this is man's condition, and humility, resignation, devotion are rightly means of surpassing this misfortune. Thus misfortune and evil for the slave, as for the Christian, are an *occasion*. This is why Myrdal can say that the Masters, after having refused to give their religion to the slaves, did give it to them around 1700 in order to inculcate in them humility, devotion, and resignation.⁵ The virtues of a slave vis-à-vis the master, but which are not scandalous since they are homogeneous with those of the master vis-à-vis God.

Similarly, the slave's rich imagination and tales do not all have an African origin. Alain has shown convincingly that fairy tales are childish myths that describe action in terms of politeness, authority, seduction.⁶ The same thing holds for the Blacks. Thus the master has a magical universe under his control. The Black is a magician, believes in magic. At the same time, the master too is a magician. The Whites of the South are superstitious.

4. Mari was the usual name for a shepherdess in medieval pastoral plays. The story of the faithful Griselda first appears in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the tenth day, the tenth story. There is a French dramatization, *L'Estoire de Griseldis*, which is the first serious French drama with a nonreligious subject matter.

5. See Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, p. 859.

6. Cf. Alain [Emile Chartier], *Préliminaires à la mythologie*, in *Les Dieux* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), pp. 217–316. This text, the first chapter of which is entitled "Les Sources de la mythologie enfantine," was written in 1932–33.

Finally the relation of the master and the slave is founded on a *common interest*. This argument is used by every oppressor: the worker has the same interests as the boss, etc. And however specious this may be, *it is true*. It is just that, as always, it is also totally false. *If* you admit that slavery is a natural and a necessary institution, then it is true that the slave has the same interests as the master. If I force you to give me ninety percent of the product of your labor, then you and I both have an interest in your working as hard as possible so as to have the greatest possible amount of consumable goods. Your ten percent will be biggest when my ninety percent is as large as possible. Except the error is that I have forced you to do this and your deepest interest is to take back from me the other ninety percent.

Thus in a given social order, there is the terrible permanent ambiguity that if one accepts the order as inevitable, everyone is solidary with everyone else, but if one does not accept it there is a class struggle. The class in power always talks about solidarity and to the extent that it exists, this class is right. Ex: As long as the workers have not overthrown and liquidated the oppressive class, they ruin themselves in ruining the bosses (ex: the strikes of '47, terribly lowering the production of coal, condemned the workers to be cold).⁷ And the oppressed class, even when it does put the opposition of interests at the forefront, cannot avoid implicitly recognizing this solidarity of interests.

So the master is persuaded that the solidarity of the master and the slave renders the master better over against the slave and the slave better over against the master by establishing the bases of a natural hierarchy. But, furthermore, he is persuaded that the slave makes the masters better over against other masters.

Governor Hammond of South Carolina writes: "In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have or you would not have that other class which leads to progress, civilization, refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build either the one or the other, except on this mud-sill. Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to the purpose of her hand. . . . We use them for our purpose and call them slaves."⁸ Myrdal writes, "the principle of rational cooperation was therefore realized; some authors even talked about 'socialism' in a purified and dignified meaning."⁹ "By making the labor itself capital, the conflict of interest, so evident in other labor systems, lost its foundation."¹⁰ And again: "Equality begets universal envy, meanness and uncharitableness—slavery elevates and purifies the sentiments of master and slave."¹¹

7. During the week of 16–22 December 1947, production of coal dropped to 494,000 tons in comparison to 904,000 tons the preceding week of five rather than six working days. *L'Année politique* (Paris: Ed. du Grand Siècle, 1948), p. 231.

8. Quoted in Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, p. 443.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

10. *Ibid.*, quoting William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 1935), p. 295.

11. *Ibid.*, quoting George Fitzhugh, *Sociology of the South: Failure of Free Society* (Richmond: A Morris Publisher, 1854), p. 289.

“We are better husbands, better brothers, better friends, and better neighbors than our Northern brethren,” writes Fitzhugh (*Sociology of the South* [1854]).¹²

And, as always, this is true in one sense, Let us consider, as an example, the assertion: “better husbands.” Whites lose their virginity with Blacks or Mulattoes, continue, after their marriage, sexual relations with slaves. But since it is a matter of lower beings with a limited freedom, the fault itself is lessened. It loses all substantiality. It is a matter of an intermediary phenomenon between masturbation and frequenting a bordello. The white remains in a semisolitude in making love, just as when he goes hunting with his black companion. What is more, he takes, he inflicts coitus but he is not taken. Consequently, he is freed from all suspicious desire for southern white women. On the contrary, he has respect for them. He will never make his wife a mistress since he can exercise his sadism and vices on the black women. She will be the true mother of his children. Whence the South’s “woman on a pedestal,” compensation for the fact that she is deceived in secret. Whence also the South’s “Virtue,” which comes to the woman from the outside owing to the fact that she is not desired and from the inside owing to her puritanism. That this conceals many complexes in her is not to be doubted, but the man, in a sense, has fewer of them than does the northern Puritan who, lacking slaves, remains chaste and represses his desires.

There is a kind of innocence and grace in their social relations, a chivalrous element that has its roots in slavery. More generally, the myth of the equality of the higher classes is maintained to the point that poor Whites do not perceive the exploitation of which they are the victims, fully occupied as they are in thinking that they belong to the higher class. Parasitic existence has its virtues: it *frees* man from his body and the world. It makes him more like an angel, since all the dirty work is done by others. Man is neither an angel nor a beast. But if some men are completely beasts, there will be others to be the angels.

A type of relation between men gets established among the Whites, which is the recognition of one master by another. Each greeting indicates that one is a man by divine right and that one belongs to the privileged race. And we must recognize that in this reciprocal recognition is implied as a secondary structure the reciprocal recognition of freedoms. But this takes place in the form of respect (not generosity or love) because each master recognizes the other’s freedom as a master’s freedom. And does so *against* the slave. Each White, therefore, has a *value* for the other White since he is a man by right. Get rid of the slaves and there would no longer be anything but factual men. (Just as the value of being White comes precisely from the fact that he is not treated as a Black.) What is more, each White is in himself the concretization of this right. The world is made for him since the slave is made for him. In each Other, I recognize the one for whom the world is made. The world appears to me within a *finalistic* setting, and I have much less trouble believing in God since I am a God for my slaves. Thus the parasitic society is a society of Gods, a polytheism.

Thus oppression does not reveal itself at first to the oppressor. It is covered over. He does not envisage it cynically as a factual state of affairs, rather fact and right are inextricably intermingled. The oppression is *in Nature* since it is a natural fact that the

12. Ibid., again quoting Fitzhugh, p. 248.

Black is inferior to the White. It is *by divine right* since Nature in a created world is ordered according to the will of God. Thomas Dew writes: “It is the natural and divine order that those beings endowed with superior faculties . . . make use of and control the inferior beings.”¹³

Finally, the oppression is *institutional*, since the planter born about 1800 encounters slavery as an institution and a *rule*. What must be understood is that it is not a matter here of a conception but of a certain way of living out a relation with the other.

Almost a century after the War of Secession, Rollin Chambliss still writes (West [sic—What] Negro Newspapers of Georgia Say about Some Social Problems, 1933): “I was in college before I read a book written by a Negro. I had been to Negro churches and heard their preachers. Probably the first singing I ever heard was that of negroes. But I never associated them with writing, or very much with reading. There were things, like our Boy Scout troop and school picnics, in which they had no part. I remember the surprise I felt at finding Dubois’ *Soul of Blackfolk*, my first contact with Negro writing, not different in outward respects from other books I had read. I don’t know what I expected Negro writing to look like; certainly I knew that it would not be white ink on black paper. But I did feel that there would be something physical to show that this was done by a Negro.”¹⁴

We see here how Chambliss’s belief in the inferiority and alienness of the Negro is manifested even in his perception of everyday objects. Such a sharp distinction quite evidently has to lead to an implicit philosophy of the concept and of participation. There are white objects and there are black objects.

Nothing is more striking in this regard than the reasoning given by W. T. Couch’s “Publisher’s Introduction” to *What the Negro Wants* in April 1944.¹⁵ Couch is a professor at the university at Chapel Hill and a sociologist. He is hostile to Myrdal and argues as follows: either you deny the existence of certain universal values, and then become a relativist and no longer have any criterion that allows you to judge one civilization superior to another, you explain everything by the environment—or you recognize certain universal values, but then you must judge civilizations, peoples, and races on the basis of these values and you must recognize that certain groups of humans are superior to others. One can see the underlying motive for this dilemma. It is hidden, but Couch does not see his own postulate. Indeed there are two premises: there are universal values—Whites serve these values better than Blacks do. Even if we grant them, they do not suffice to assure the conclusion: therefore Whites are superior to Blacks.

Indeed, if we do posit these values as transcendent and as the pure goal of our efforts, they never will allow us to classify our persons but just the outcomes of our acts. And above all, they will be beyond a substantial classification because they are just the external

13. Thomas Dew, *An Essay on Slavery* (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1849). Dew (1802–1846), was first a professor and later president of the College of William and Mary.

14. Rollin Chambliss, *What Negro Newspapers of Georgia Say about Some Social Problems, 1933* (Master’s thesis, University of Georgia, 1934), quoted by Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, p. 1193, n. 44.

15. Rayford W. Logan, ed., *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp. ix–xxiii. This was another book that Simone de Beauvoir had received from Nelson Algren (Bair, *Simone de Beauvoir*, p. 368).

term of our projects and not the stuff from which they are made. If the final end of an operation has a greater value, this indicates that the object created has a greater value, but this does not allow the operation nor more particularly the agent who carries out the operation to participate in this value. And, no doubt, as man *is* nothing other than his acts, we are justified in considering that he is the synthetic totality of his works *in the past*. But we have to add: *taking account of his situation*. It is more extraordinary that Richard Wright wrote *Black Boy* starting from where he did than that Malraux wrote *Man's Fate* from his particular situation.¹⁶

Above all, the past cannot determine the future. *Wesen ist was gewesen ist*. The past does not decide what future possibilities there are, otherwise they would not be possibilities. In fact, this was how the first planters argued. It is *true* that the Blacks of the 17th century *are not* Christians. This does not mean that they cannot be so but just that they are not so.

Yet Couch rightly takes the values of *right and good*¹⁷ in a participatory sense. If Blacks have invented less than Whites, it is that they are less inventive; and if invention is a good, we have the proof that they are less good. In this way, concepts and values are a fixed and hierarchical series, and objects, just like men, participate in these concepts and values, just as Aristotelian matter participates in the substantial forms. It is evident that conservative thought, when it is not realistic and cynical—something that can never be the case except for a small number of enlightened individuals—has to be conceptual, participatory, and finalistic.

And to see clearly in an unjustifiable situation, it is not sufficient that the oppressor look at it openly and honestly, he must also change the structure of his eyes. As long as he looks at it with a conceptualist apparatus, he will judge it to be acceptable and just. But he has breathed in conceptualism with the air of his time, for conceptualism is the philosophy of observation. If I observe that a balloon rises, I say that it rises because it is light. If I observe, as a child, that Blacks do not behave as we do, I say that is because they are Black. A changed point of view is required to be able to comprehend that the air carries the balloon up and that we require the Blacks to act as they do, because in both cases the determining factor is hidden.¹⁸

However, the worm is in the apple. Because one cannot limit man. The contradiction lies in the fact that a man of whom it is affirmed that he cannot go beyond some limit is no longer a man but an object. The analysis of acting like a beast holds here. But, furthermore, he must nevertheless be treated as a man. Even if only to give him orders, even if only to maintain concrete relations with him. So he has to be treated like a human being. And the best of the planters will recognize this duty. Some women teach the Blacks to read. Thomas Babney gave his slaves Saturday afternoon off. Others made up rules for the overseers of their plantations: whippings must never be cruel or abu-

16. Richard Wright, *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945). As an expatriate African-American writer living in Paris, Wright had become acquainted with Sartre and de Beauvoir. André Malraux, *Man's Fate*, trans. Haakon M. Chevalier (New York: Modern Library, 1936).

17. In English in the French text.

18. Sartre was a meteorologist during his military service. His job was to launch and track balloons in order to determine the wind direction and measure its velocity for the artillery corps.

sive. . . . I desire that the Gospel be preached to the Negroes. It is my duty to assure the salvation of souls that depend on me. Another: "sick Negroes must be given special attention."

But if you treat them like human beings, it is that you recognize them as men and they themselves become more like men and they become more conscious of their status. Thus they become claimants by the very effect of your gentleness toward them. The better they are treated, the more dangerous they become, the more they awake, the more they will hate you and the more conscious they will be of their oppression. Then they will not pay you the tribute of recognition that you think they owe you. You demand of them that they should recognize your pure freedom in the form of generosity, whereas that freedom itself is a limited transcendence. You are generous within the limits of the institution and the rule.

And, what is more, if their recognition is to be real, it would have to be based on reciprocity, that is, your generosity would have been precisely to recognize their freedom. But, to the extent that their revelation of their freedom surpasses your limited recognition of this freedom, they necessarily transcend you and it is you who becomes limited in their eyes. In reality your generosity is vitiated, you are, if not subjectively, at least objectively in bad faith. You intended to uphold the regime by humanizing it and in humanizing it you render it more unacceptable.

By teaching Christianity to the Blacks to make their lives easier and to give them a useful sense of humility and resignation, you give them a soul equal to your own in the eyes of God and, consequently, you make them see, despite all the preaching, the injustice of their condition. By teaching them to read, you make it possible for them to read Jefferson's books on the equality of all men and to think about this for themselves. By giving them leisure, you allow them to teach one another and to think. By authorizing the slaves' religious gatherings, you give them a means of sharing opinions among themselves. In a word, by bringing them little by little closer to a man's condition, you make it easier for them to aware of their lot and of yourself as inhuman. Gentleness is necessarily repaid with injustice, generosity with revolt and hate. And the more humane you are, the more you will discover that you appear as an oppressor in their eyes.

Thus the oppression comes to you from the outside. You are constituted as an oppressor by the oppressed and this happens just at the moment when you are most at home with your conscience. And you will experience this oppression that you exercise as a curse since it comes to you through itself and through the other. Your best intentions get vitiated and turn into catastrophe. You will appear in your own eyes as "no longer knowing how to understand the Blacks." Exercising generosity will make it impossible for you to treat Blacks as you did previously (or if you do so, it will be out of rage and with a bad conscience) and, furthermore, you yourself will come to understand that this generosity is catastrophic.

You will return to your fathers, you will recall the happy times when one could have a pure heart, you will think the slaves have changed, without understanding that it is you who have changed them. What is more, you will feel the unjust victim of this fatality which means that, the first in your family, you will be hated even though you are the first to have improved the slave's condition. (We find this argument again in capitalist oppression where the workers of today are reproached for complaining a

hundred times more than those of 1830 did even though their condition is a hundred times better.)

At the same time, however, a group of men constitutes itself that condemns this oppression even though it does not suffer from it (the northern liberal Puritans). These, who are your equals, will confer the same aspect of being an oppressor on you. However, you cannot find within yourself the *intention* of oppression. In other words, you do not recognize yourself in the portrait they make of you, in the essence that comes to you like a misfortune. This is all the more true in that you agree on at least one point with your adversaries. They think an oppressor is evil and calculating and you think the same thing. And as they go so far as to see you as a cynic, you do not recognize yourself at all.

At the same time, you have several weapons with which to defend yourself.

1st, You interpret History in terms of men's will and not in terms of social laws. You refuse to see a necessity in the Black's revolts. There are agitators, evil wills. You slide necessarily (along with the conceptualism that goes along with it) into Manicheanism. You refuse therefore to see the collective, except in the form of traditional, coercive institutions.

2d, You are very conscious of representing the *concrete*. Owing to the fact that older forms of oppression (feudalism, absolute monarchy, slavery) do represent a concrete type of human relation. If the oppressed really does want to abdicate his transcendence and consider himself as inessential, he will have concrete and immediate relations with his master. He will serve him, he may love him and be loved in return. The White represents the individual face of destiny for the Black, as well as his concrete obligations. For the Puritan, this duty will be servile obligation but emptied of its contents and precisely because of this it will not be an object of love, even though obeying the young master is obeying a flexible, capricious, and perhaps even adorable life (at least in the master's opinion).

At the same time, the right that one wants to confer on the slave—freedom of thought when he does not know how to read or write, freedom of possession when one is going to be thrown completely naked into independence, freedom to vote when he will be made a fool of by the first person to come along—can only make him the victim of a mystification. More precisely, the victim of abstract capitalism. The South is filled with stories in which we see the Black escape from slavery only to fall beneath the blow, which is a hundred times worse, of an entrepreneur who will keep him just as closely bound thanks to easily established credit, and which will be *inhuman* because he is unaware of it. Instead of the master, who, knowing the slave, has an interest in seeing that he is fed (just like the king, in the theory of the A.F.,¹⁹ in possessing France is concerned for its greatness). Watching over him, visiting him, the master is incapable of being inhuman. The slave is integrated into that vast organic body that will be *man* or the mansion or property. There he will find the meaning of his life, just as the master does.

So the oppressor senses more or less clearly that he is the champion of a certain form of social organization where human relations are concrete, as is society itself. In this

19. L'Action française.—Ed. Cf. Notebook 2, n. 323.

dialectical progression where the first term is the concrete relation of the oppression of man by man, the second term the abstract positing of the rights of man (with all its abstract forms: capitalism, internationalism, bureaucracy, abstract juridical systems), and the third term (still ultimate and imaginary) the concrete freedom of the worker, the oppressor feels that he is defending a certain general good (thesis) against something bad (antithesis). It seems to him that he makes himself the defender of a cause that surpasses him, that of a hierarchical and traditional society founded upon a religion accessible to the imagination and the heart and instituting concrete relations among men and concrete goals for each one of them.

Quite naturally this will be linked to a mode of rudimentary production using barely developed machines and will oppose the North's emphasis on machinery. Machinery, capitalism, anonymity, an abstract conception of duty, the universalism of obligations and rights, which excludes from itself the oppression that occurs in the world of tools, a puritan, emaciated religion where love gives way to interest and abstract respect, the individualism of the person in law are opposed here to the richness of the agricultural land owner who can know his goods, who also knows his workers, who regulates oppression, and in this way even limits it, makes an institution of it, and therefore assumes it, whose religion like his human relations is concrete, who loves God and claims to have the right to the love of the oppressed, just as the philosophy of judgment is opposed to that of the concept.

However, at the same time that he finds a philosophy, a logic, a religion, a sociology, and a political program, the oppressor cannot deny within himself that he is an oppressor. Thus this aspect of being an oppressor which has come to him from the outside finds an echo in him.²⁰

20. The text breaks off here.—Ed.

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J e a n - P a u l **S A R T R E** NOTEBOOKS FOR AN ETHICS

In the famous conclusion to *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre announced that he would devote his next philosophical work to moral problems. Although he worked on this project in the late 1940s, Sartre never completed it to his satisfaction, and it remained unpublished until after his death in 1980. Presented here for the first time in English, *Notebooks for an Ethics* is Sartre's attempt to articulate a moral philosophy. In the *Notebooks*, he addresses any number of themes and topics relevant to an effort to formulate a concrete and revolutionary socialist ethics, among them the differences between force and violence, the relationship of means and ends, and the relationship of oppression and alienation. Most important, he tries to show that there can be an authentic mutual recognition among free individuals where no one steals another's freedom.

While remaining committed to the basic principles of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre here seeks to locate the foundation for action in history and society. The *Notebooks* thus form an important bridge between the early existentialist Sartre and the later Marxist social thinker of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Sartre grapples anew with such central

issues as "authenticity" and the relation of alienation and freedom to moral values. In dealing with fundamental modes of relating to the Other, among them violence, entreaty, demand, appeal, refusal, and revolt, he highlights the notions of conversion and creation as they figure in the necessary transition from individualism to historical consciousness. The *Notebooks* themselves are complemented here by two appendixes, one on "the good and subjectivity," the other on the problem of blacks in the United States as a case study of oppression.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1906–1980) was offered, but declined, the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1964. His many works of fiction, drama, and philosophy include the monumental study of Flaubert, *The Family Idiot*, and *The Freud Scenario*, both published in translation by the University of Chicago Press.

David Pellauer is associate professor of philosophy at DePaul University and co-translator of *Time and Narrative* by Paul Ricoeur.

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