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ENCOUNTERING THE BEING OF OTHER IN SARTRE

by

Leona Helen Williams  
nee Marie Leona Helen Trumble

A thesis  
Submitted to the  
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
through the Department of  
Philosophy in Partial Fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Arts at  
The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1990

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## ABSTRACT

### ENCOUNTERING THE BEING OF OTHER IN SARTRE

by

Leona Helen Williams

Jean-Paul Sartre states in Being and Nothingness that an intersubjective relationship occurs when the for-itself experiences a look, that is, experiences its being-for-other. According to Sartre, all such appearances are always experienced negatively. The aim of the thesis is to explore this Sartrean claim from two perspectives: that of consciousness and that of relation.

Chapter One, Consciousness of the Other, delimits the encounter with the Other and the influence that Husserl, Hegel, and Heidegger had on Sartre. Chapter Two, Consciousness as Relation, reveals the identity of the Other and the Sartrean assertion that one's concrete relations with the Other are governed by one's attitudes towards the object which one is for the Other.

As Sartre speaks of the Other who looks, of the Other who is looked at, and of an intersubjective relationship which in Sartre's mind can mean nothing but conflict, one naturally assumes, in response to Sartre's use of ordinary words such as lover, beloved, relationship with all the

echoes such words call up in everyday usage, that the relationship is between two individuals. However, this is not the case; the relationship in question is with one individual. In other words, the Sartrean intersubjective relationship is not external but internal. Accordingly, the for-itself experiences its being-for-other for only a certain subject, that is, only for itself. Thus, what Sartre is describing is the for-itself's self-apprehension in two modes of being (a) as a being for-itself and (b) as a being in-the-world.

Though Sartre may not have set out to suggest that all intersubjective relationships are always with oneself from a negative perspective, his premises in Being and Nothingness nevertheless imply just that. Clearly, this collides with common sense given that everyday experiences indicate that we do relate with others in person-to-person relationships and not just as a for-itself to a probable Other. Chapter Three of the thesis is an attempt to present a fair judgement of Sartre's peculiar position.

## Dedication

To all those souls  
Who never give up  
Who never give in  
And press on  
To that challenging end.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Harry A. Nielsen, who provided much insight and encouragement. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Rev. F. T. Kingston and Dr. Walter Skakoon.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Consciousness of the Other

#### Introduction

Concrete relationships in Being and Nothingness<sup>1</sup> are definitely not rewarding encounters. According to its author Jean Paul Sartre, the origin of our concrete relations with the Other is wholly governed by our attitudes. Though there is here a suggestion of choice implied by the plurality of attitudes, the Sartrean origin of concrete relations with the Other is nevertheless predetermined and antagonistic, for Sartre abstracted one of the attitudes, that of hostility, and installed it as the essence of relationships. "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others," states Sartre (BN, 364).

The aim of this thesis is to explore the above Sartrean assertion from two perspectives: from that of consciousness and that of relation. It is one thing to say that person-to-person relationships can be described as antagonistic at times, but quite another to state that the essence or original meaning of all intersubjective relationships is

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1.J.P. Sartre. Being and Nothingness. trans. H.E. Barnes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956. All references to Sartre's work will be from this edition and will be noted in the text in the following way (BN p.#)

that of conflict.

It must be said that many Sartrean problems stem from Sartre's liberal use of depersonalized terms. Terms such as consciousness, freedom, relation, nothingness, object, subject, Other, being-for-itself, being-in-itself, being-for-Other, etc., are all meant to describe a person. Nevertheless, it is a fact that non-personal terms disclose almost nothing of personhood or personality and very little of the flexibility that is associated with average people in their relationships.

The term relation is especially problematic. On the one hand, Sartre seems to mean by it that we are always a presence-to or a sort of witness-to whatever form or figure has been drawn out of the background or totality that reality is. On the other hand, an internalized negative valuation is always placed on that relation inasmuch as I am first made aware of my status of objectness and then must always assert that I am not that form or object in order to preserve my subjectivity. However, since Sartre describes person as "relation" (BN, 362), is it not the case that, as the being who is relation, I ought to be open to all possibilities equally? That is, am I not free to respond as I choose?

Human reality, although defined by the human situation ontologically, must not be thought of as a simple product of that situation, states W.A. Shearson. If "consciousness is

still free to adopt a certain number of attitudes toward that situation and its own being ... what about the possibility of a free acceptance of my being-for-others?".<sup>2</sup> Thus, the issue here is whether the prevailing Sartrean aura of hostility is but an expression of Sartre's early life experiences, and whether the phenomenon of relation is in-itself a neutral phenomenon.

In his introductory remarks to a work on French existentialism F.T. Kingston states that the common ground from which to establish a comparison between Christian and non-Christian existentialists must be from the viewpoint of attitudes. That is to say, "what we must compare are attitudes to interpretations of reality."<sup>3</sup> Clearly, Sartre's general attitude is one of hostility, and it is this attitude that is the setting for all Sartrean relations with the Other.

In a series of interviews conducted by his longtime friend Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre related that in any new situation he always felt that the others were hostile and that this feeling was linked to an image of himself. Sartre states: "I thought people did not find me physically

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<sup>2</sup>William A. Shearson. The Notion of Encounter: An Inquiry into the Nature and Structure of the Human Situation and Existential Knowledge in Existentialist Metaphysics. Ottawa: Canadian Library of Philosophy; 1980. p.250  
Subsequent references will be noted as (Shearson, p#)

<sup>3</sup>F.T. Kingston. French Existentialism A Christian Critique. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 1961. Reprinted 1968. p.xiv.

agreeable".<sup>4</sup> Also, he felt that "the others were the essential and he the secondary element" (Adieux, 288). And again, "the person who looks at me as we pass in the street is hostile" (Adieux, 288). Furthermore, when asking for help, Sartre always felt that it was an occasion in which he had to forfeit his subjectivity. "It obviously means addressing oneself to the other's subjectivity, and my action is determined by his reply" (Adieux, 286).

This lack of ease with people is rooted in Sartre's late childhood years when he experienced a female rebuke that plunged him "into anger and despair" (Adieux, 292) and in his adolescent years when he experienced two overwhelming events, one being the remarriage of his mother, which created a separation, a sort of alienation in the relationship that he felt towards her. The other was the experience of violence as he met boys of his age for the first time when his stepfather moved the family to another city. As one reads Being and Nothingness it is apparent that these early and personal experiences of anger, despair, alienation (isolation) and hostility have made their way into Sartre's phenomenological ontology along with contributions from Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger.

Generally speaking existentialism is concerned with the concrete reality of the individual, though Maurice Natanson

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<sup>4</sup> Simone de Beauvoir. Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre. trans. Patrick O'brian. New York: Pantheon Books; 1984. p.288. Subsequent references will be noted as (Adieux, p#)

states that Sartre's existentialism focuses specifically on "the concrete subjectivity of man as it defines his actual and concrete existence".<sup>5</sup> By combining Husserl's desire to clarify the content of experience with Heidegger's desire to seek out the nature of Being, Sartre created a radical new ontology, a phenomenological ontology. "He (Sartre) is attempting to determine if phenomenology is competent to resolve the problems of ontology" (Natanson, 13). In its most fundamental sense Sartrean phenomenology is a direct "looking upon" or inspection of the givens of sensory experience (Natanson, 21). Thus, in order for someone to inspect, something must have appeared, and that something is Being. This is not to say that I exist as a presence-to the essence of Being. Rather I exist as a presence-to the appearance of Being. That is to say, as a consciousness, as a for-itself, as an Other, as a relation, etc., I can either be a presence-to the appearance of a tree in the park or of a man in the park or of myself, but only from the viewpoint of an Other. And, when I am an Other for an Other, it means that I am presence-to myself through the viewpoint of the Other but only as an Other and never as a for-itself. Clearly, I am both Others and so the looker and the looked at begin and end within the same being-for-itself.

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<sup>5</sup>Maurice Natanson. A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's Ontology. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Studies, 1951. p.3. Subsequent references will be as follows (Natanson, p#).

A major part of BN and the focus of this thesis is to look at the nature of the relationship between two consciousnesses. However, one would be in error to assume that Sartre's investigation concerns the nature of the interaction at the level of externality. Though obviously all examples begin at that level, Sartre draws everything within and so is always concerned with what happens internally to an individual. What occurs when a being-for-itself becomes a being-for-another? Sartre provides two examples, one being the man in the park and the accompanying phenomenon of fear, and the other is the man at the keyhole and the phenomenon of shame.

In the first example, Sartre describes a man in the park looking at his surroundings. As the man directs his intention he becomes a presence-to various beings, such as the grass, the trees, and a man walking slowly, reading a book. These appearances of beings or objects share equally the category of being-in-itself inasmuch as the relation that exists is a unilateral one; that is, it is only he that looks and they are the looked at. Suddenly, the man reading the book raises his eyes, scans his surroundings and eventually looks at the one who was looking. According to Sartre, this action poses an enormous threat to the initiator of the Look; that is to say, since the one who was looking, as well as the one who is now looking, both initiated a Look, they are both threatened. In what way and



at what level of their being are they threatened?

The gist of Sartrean phenomenology is to directly look at the data of sensory experience. Since Sartre's early experiences revealed that intersubjective relationships were fundamentally hostile in nature, he concluded that all encounters between human beings must be hostile. Thus, it is assumed that the encounter in the park is a negative one since each being-for-itself feels itself transformed into an object by the Look of the Other. In other words, when I, a being-for-itself, am looked at by another being-for-itself, it is at that moment that I cease to be only a being-for-itself. The Other has transformed me into a being-for-him, or, a being-for-another, or, a being-for-Other and this transformation is viewed by Sartre as proof of aggression.

Once I have been looked at, I am now one of the objects or figures or forms; in other words, I am an appearance of Being in the Other's own organized world. Sartre believes that this transformation shows me my vulnerability, and therefore I experience fear. "Fear implies that I appear to myself as threatened by virtue of my being a presence in the world" but "not in my capacity as a for-itself which causes a world to exist" (BN, 288). Thus, it would appear that the experience of fear is felt only when I am aware that another sees me.

Clearly, the man in the park is presented as a stranger. However, what if the man in the park is actually

an old friend whom I have not seen for some time, and it is only when we make eye contact that his identity is known to me? An immediate smile and verbal greeting would be an extension of my intention to present my being in such a way as to encourage a similar response. Have I not in this instance accomplished what W.A. Shearson thought possible? In presenting my being as I have, have I not freely accepted my being as a being-for-Other, while simultaneously recognizing that I cannot escape being an appearance of Being and so an object for the Other?

Sartre's second example of being-for-another happens when one is moved to look through a keyhole either because of jealousy, curiosity, or vice. Suddenly someone enters and I am caught in the act. According to Sartre, the result from this sudden appearance of another consciousness is that I feel ashamed, that is, I experience shame because I am shameful. He writes: "Shame is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging" (BN, 261). Sartre is not especially concerned with the emotion of shame as such, but with the manner in which the being-for-itself is objectified through it. "Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object, but in general, of being an object" (BN, 288).

Again a transformation has occurred; a being-for-itself has been transformed into a being-for-Other, that is, a being-for-itself has been objectified. Still, could there

be another way of interpreting this situation? As Shearson queries, "what about the possibility of a free acceptance of my being-for-others?" (Shearson, 250).

In Sartre's keyhole example there is an assumption that the Other was unaware of the intended act of the being-for-itself. Suppose that two comrades enter a hallway with the intent to spy. One immediately proceeds to a door to look through the keyhole while the other moves down the corridor but rejoins his co-conspirator momentarily. In this situation, would the being-for-itself experience shame upon the return of his comrade? Would he not in fact be relieved that it was his comrade and not the enemy? Since he would not feel shame at having been caught spying, has he then freely accepted his being in the mode of being-for-Other, even though he would still be an appearance of Being for the Other?

Throughout this Introduction the underlying question has been whether Sartre can assert unequivocally that conflict is the essence of being-for-Other. In the following pages this question will be looked at from the perspective of consciousness and of relation.

#### i) Delimiting the Encounter

The key component of Sartrean encountering lies in the concept of the Look. The purpose of this section is, first, to explicate that concept and what it entails for the being-

for-itself and the being-for-Other. Secondly, it is to challenge Sartre's assertion that "conflict is the original meaning of being-for-Others" with some psychological studies that suggest that in human encounters the gaze does not, of itself, lead necessarily to aggression.

In almost all of the articles dealing with the Look, the starting point of choice has been with Sartre's two examples, the man in the park and the keyhole situation, while at the same time completely ignoring the preamble. Of those who start right at the beginning of section iv, of Chapter One of Part Three, they tend to underestimate the importance of the preamble inasmuch as they merely describe the setting without providing an accompanying analysis. That is unfortunate insofar as the preamble contains data that serves to orientate our approach and perspective towards Sartre's concept of the Look. Therefore my plan is to address Sartre's celebrated examples by including the beginning moments.

Sartre begins the preamble to the Look with an assertion that "one of the modalities of the Other's presence to me is object-ness" (BN, 253), and a second modality of Other is that of being a "presence in person" (BN, 253). Sartre writes:

it is true that at least one of the modalities of the Other's presence to me is objectness ... my apprehension of the Other as an object essentially refers me to a fundamental apprehension of the

Other in which he will not be revealed to me as an object but as "presence in person". BN, 252-3

According to Sartre, I apprehend the Other as an object. However, this apprehension of Other as an object refers me to another apprehension which reveals to me that the Other is not just an object but also a "presence in person". What if presence in person was not one of the modalities of the Other? Sartre indicates that its lack would make the relation between the Other and myself a "conjecture" (BN, 253) because the inference stemming from the relation would refer to and be founded on inconclusive evidence. Actually, since objects would constitute the ends of the relation, states Sartre, a relation would not be possible, because an object cannot found nor refer to another object. Therefore, the role of presence in person is fundamental to the being of relations.

Should presence be taken as signifying the opposite of absence? What meaning should be attached to the phrase "in person"? One might say in astonishment, "The President is here! In person!". Such an exclamation would show that the object of consciousness, the President, which is describable in a spatial-temporal category by the phrase "in person," discloses what in fact is the case. That is to say, "in person" describes a physical or bodily appearance of the object of consciousness as opposed to a non-existent object of consciousness that is posited by the imagination. Thus,

in answer to the question of whether presence is meant to describe that which is concretely present, the answer is no. That task belongs to the phrase "in person".

Further to that, care must be taken not to focus unduly on the word "person". As was shown above, "person," or rather "in person," modifies presence in that it describes the manner in which the appearance of the Other appears: that is, the appearance of the Other is an appearance of a form. Consequently, "person" in this Sartrean context transcends the traditional meaning of the word by not pointing to a being manifesting both physical and rational attributes. Rather, "in person" is simply another way of saying that the appearance of the Other is an appearance of an object. In other words, "person" for Sartre symbolizes only the fulfillment of the prerequisite for appearing. The question still remains, though, what prerequisite does "presence" fulfill in the action of appearing?

A partial answer can be garnered from the following sentence wherein Sartre states that "object-ness must of necessity refer ... to a fundamental connection" (BN, 253). In applying this directive to the modality "presence in person", it is obvious that the object-ness manifested by "in person" must of necessity refer to what Sartre called in the above quote a "fundamental connection". In other words, "presence" functions as a connector. However, it appears as though it functions as a connector outside of the spatial-

temporal category because "presence in person" is unlike the modality of object-ness. Therefore, the category in which the connector "presence" belongs is consciousness. Thus, the literal translation of "presence in person" is that it is a-connector-connecting-an-appearance-of-an-object-of-consciousness to consciousness. This connection is the manifestation of relation.

Since:

1. object-ness and presence in person are modalities of Other, and,
  2. since my apprehension of the object-ness of Other refers me to a fundamental apprehension of the Other in which he will not be revealed to me as an object but as a connector or relation, and,
  3. since I am an Other,
- can I apprehend my object-ness insofar as the apprehension of object-ness refers to the apprehension of relation which I am, and which is in relation with an object, which I am? Furthermore, can my apprehension of the object-ness of another human being, an Other like myself, refer me to his being-for-itself or consciousness or original solitude? To the first question the answer is a modified no/yes, for reasons that will be explained later, whereas, to the second question the answer is a definite no. The second question is addressed in the following way by Sartre:

if the Other is to be a probable object and not a dream of an object, then his object-ness must of necessity refer not to an original solitude beyond my reach, but to a fundamental connection in which the Other is manifested in some way other than through the knowledge which I have of him. BN, 253

A concrete example may help in understanding Sartre's proposition. Lets suppose that I glance out the window and see a man near my car. How do I know that this form near my car is a man and not an automaton? According to the preceding discussion I know that this form near my car is something special because of the effect it has on me, not in the sense of a cause but rather in what the form refers to. In the preamble, Sartre showed that the Other has two modalities of being: object-ness and presence in person or relation. Furthermore, Sartre states that the object-ness that is a part of every Other, and in my example it means the object-ness manifested by the man near my car but not my object-ness, since the focus is on the man near my car and not on me, must refer to the modality of relation. But whose relation? His or mine? According to Sartre, my apprehension of the object-ness of the Other (the form near my car) refers me to a fundamental apprehension of the Other (that is, myself - for reasons that will be evident in a moment) in which he (once again - myself as an Other though this time as a subject) will not be revealed to me as an object but as a relation. In other words, the Other near my car refers me to my being of relation and not to his being



of relation because the function of relation is to connect the object of consciousness to consciousness and clearly the object of consciousness in my consciousness must be connected to my consciousness and to no other.

As well, when Sartre states that the Other's object-ness "must of necessity refer not to an original solitude beyond my reach" he is, first of all, asserting that everyone is in possession of an original solitude, and secondly, that my apprehension of the Other's object-ness cannot itself refer to the original solitude that belongs to the Other, for the simple reason that it is beyond my reach. Since the essence of an original solitude is its inherent isolation from the outside, it is obvious that my apprehension of the object-ness of the Other must refer to my original solitude as doing the apprehending.

Can the original solitude exist separated from its manifestations? Sartre indicates that he does not know "whether or not this consciousness exists in a separate state" (BN, 253), but he does know that "the face which I see does not refer to it" (BN, 253). In other words, as was stated above, my apprehension of the object-ness of the Other, and in this example it is the face of the Other, does not refer me to the consciousness of the Other since the consciousness of the Other is eternally isolated from outside observation. Consequently, knowledge of the manner of its existence is not possible. The question of a

separate existence was raised, states Sartre, because the classical theorists accepted the Kantian theory that there exists a noumenon supporting the appearances of Being. According to Sartre, however, there simply is no evidence to support that claim.

As the Park encounter is just a few seconds away, there is one last item that Sartre discusses in this preamble. How does it happen that the Other comes to know of his own modality of object-ness? The discussion so far shows only a being-for-itself apprehending the object-ness of the Other but not how it apprehends its own. The mechanism for that apprehending rests with the category of conscious relation. Sartre states:

Whether or not this consciousness exists in a separate state, the face which I see does not refer to it; it is not this consciousness which is the truth of the probable object which I perceive.  
BN, 253

According to Sartre, the consciousness of the Other is not the truth of object-ness; that is to say, the consciousness of that Other does not reveal directly to that Other the object-ness that is part of its being and that exists for me. Proof of its modality of object-ness can only come about indirectly, that is, only when the Other is the recipient of a Look. Thus, only when a unilateral relation is transformed into a reciprocal relation does each

being-for-itself have knowledge of its own object-ness. Sartre refers to that type of relation as "being-in-a-pair-with-the-Other" (BN, 253). He states the following:

In actual fact the reference to a twin upsurge in which the Other is presence for me is to a "being-in-a-pair-with-the-Other", and this is given outside of knowledge proper even if the latter be conceived as an obscure and unexpressible form on the order of intuition. BN, 253

Clearly, unlike a unilateral relation, where the subject or agent remains the same and the object of consciousness has no awareness of its objectification, the subject of a reciprocal relation apprehends the moment when it is itself an object, that is, an Other for a particular subject.

Thus, when I am the initiator of a Look, the Other, as the object of my Look, is experienced by me as a presence to me, that is, I experience myself as a being of relation, insofar as his object-ness refers to my relation and so confirms me as the being of relation. However, when the Other is the initiator of the Look which thus makes of me an object, it means that my objectified self is experienced by me as a presence for me, that is, I experience myself as a being-for-Other. Since I am made aware of my object-ness, it means that my object-ness must refer to the Other as a being of relation which therefore confirms my modality of object-ness. Yet, since the Other's modality of relation is isolated from me, according to Sartre, it means that I can

only assume through my experience of my object-ness, of myself as a being-for-Other, that the Other is indeed a relation inasmuch as I know that I cannot be an object for an object. Furthermore, since this is my only contact with the Other, it makes his being a conjecture. Nevertheless, I am a being-for-Other in the project of experiencing my objectification.

How is it that I can experience myself as a being-for-Other when I am alone? Since Sartre believes that there are no consciousnesses situated outside of human reality, or, for that matter inside human reality, that can violate consciousnesses within human reality, and furthermore, since I am always an Other, it appears that my consciousness must take it upon itself to assume the standpoint of Other towards itself. Thus, in the project of experiencing my objectification on those occasions when I am alone, I assume the standpoint of the Other and from that perspective can, as the being of Other, direct a Look towards my self. It is at that moment that I experience myself as a being-for-Other for myself. That is to say, I am an Other for the Other.

Clearly, even if another human being is present, the fact is, that the project of objectification defaults to the above manner of being since I cannot transcend my own consciousness to relate with another consciousness because the other consciousness is beyond my reach. Consequently, even if an individual is present, my being-for-itself

reclassifies that individual by placing it "under the name of the Other" (BN, 242). Thus, the setting for the Sartrean intersubjective relationship is restricted to an original solitude.

However, this restricted relation presents a dilemma. Since my consciousness is the milieu of my self as I experience myself as a being-for-itself and my consciousness is the milieu of my self as I experience myself as a being-for-Other, and also, my consciousness is the milieu of my self as I experience myself as an Other, how can Sartre propose first of all, that the self in the being-for-itself and the self in Other are absolutely isolated from each other though they have being within the same consciousness? Secondly, how can I deny my experience of myself as knowing that I am assuming the Other's standpoint to Look at myself?

Insofar as I am a being-for-Other for myself while assuming the point of view of the Other on myself, it is evident that a relation is never established between two separate and distinctive human beings even though Sartre speaks and writes as though there is such an intersubjective relationship, a relation which he has described as hostile. Nevertheless, Sartre draws the preamble to a close with the following reflection:

the problem of Others has generally been treated as if the primary relation by which the Other is discovered is object-ness; that is, as if the Other were first revealed - directly or indirectly - to

our perception. But since this perception by its very nature refers to something other than to itself and since it can refer neither to an infinite series of appearances of the same type - as in idealism the perception of the table or of the chair does - nor to an isolated entity located on principle outside my reach, its essence must be to refer to a primary relation between my consciousness and the Other's. This relation, in which the Other must be given to me directly as a subject although in connection with me, is the fundamental relation, the very type of my being-for-others. BN, 253

Moreover, according to Sartre, this experience of being-for-Other is not in any way to be construed as connected to a religious or mystical entity. Sartre states: "there is in everyday reality an original relation to the Other which can be constantly pointed to and which consequently can be revealed to me outside all reference to a religious or mystic unknowable" (BN, 253).

#### Summary of Preamble

- 1) Other has two modalities, object-ness or being-in-itself and presence in person or being-for-itself.
- 2) Other is everyone and everyone is an Other.
- 3) A univocal relation exists when Other is presence to things.
- 4) A reciprocal relation exists when Other is presence to Other.
- 5) I experience the modality of being-for-Other when objectified.

6) I, as a being-for-itself experience myself as a being-for-Other when in a reciprocal relation with the Other which is myself as Other. It is in this way that I take the point of view of Other on myself.

The preamble shows that the ontological structure of Other is constituted by a being-for-itself (alias original solitude, consciousness, relation) and a being-in-itself manifesting the modality of object-ness. When in a reciprocal relation, the being-for-itself apprehends its modality of object-ness and is transformed into a being-for-Other. It is Sartre's claim that this transformation is the manifestation of conflict.

#### The Park: Fear

There are two forms of encountering in the park. The first one shows that our being-for-itself encounters a barrier in the world and the second one shows that the Look and what it entails - the recognition that one of our modalities of being is that of object-ness - must emanate from a being-for-itself.

In the first encounter, Sartre observes a man walking on the lawn, stopping momentarily near some benches and then leaving. Though there is no visual contact with this man, Sartre knows that this object-man is a man, a relation, because he observes that what was in his universe and in

relation with him is also in a relation with the other man. Furthermore, since both are in relation to the same things, it also indicates that each Other forms a part of the things that people the universe of the Other. Consequently, my inclusion as an object in the Other's universe and his inclusion in mine reveal that subjectivity makes a world be. Sartre states:

there is a total space which is grouped around the Other, and this space is made with my space; there is a regrouping in which I take part but which escapes me, ... This green turns toward the Other a face which escapes me. I apprehend the relation of the green to the Other as an objective relation, but I can not apprehend the green as it appears to the Other. Thus suddenly an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me. ... But the Other is still an object for me. He belongs to my distances; BN, 255

This passage presents two areas of concern. Since Sartre apprehends himself as being a passive object in the Other's universe, does it not show that his personal apprehension of his modality of object-ness, even though it is known passively through observation, is being apprehended nevertheless without confrontation? That is, can Sartre deny his experience of himself as knowing? Furthermore, although Sartre states that the Other is stealing his world, is he? Given that consciousness enjoys an exclusive relation with the object of consciousness and since this exclusive relation is held by every consciousness, how can



Sartre suggests that a crime has been committed insofar as the milieu for the crime is the conscious level of being and not the physical level of being?

In the next encountering, Sartre observes a man who is reading while he walks. This man is a probable object for Sartre as-subject. However, if this man raised his eyes from his book and saw Sartre, Sartre intuitively knows that the foundation of that Look would emanate from a subject, since he has observed that he cannot be an object for an object. He states:

For just as the Other is a probable object for me-as-subject, so I can discover myself in the process of becoming a probable object for only a certain subject. This revelation can not derive from the fact that my universe is an object for the Other-as-object, ... I have observed that I can not be an object for an object. BN, 256-7

According to Sartre's description of the manifestation of the reciprocal relation, there seems to be no hint here of the presence of hostility. That is, the phenomenon of relation, or the mechanism by which relation comes into being, seems to occur prior to any emotion. Since one of the questions in my Introduction concerned the possibility of a characteristic of neutrality for relation, a look at Sartre's description of the phenomenon of reciprocal relation is essential. Sartre states that:

if the Other-as-object is defined in connection with the world as the object which sees what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of being seen by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject. For just as the Other is a probable object for me-as-subject, so I can discover myself in the process of becoming a probable object for only a certain subject. BN, 256-7

Since this relation with the Other is a primary or primordial relation, then this places the being of this relation as prior to any experience at all and, as such, the experience of the primary relation is without an appropriate set of valuative criteria. Jacques Salvan<sup>6</sup> states somewhat the same idea when he says that Sartrean finality is causality in reverse, in that gestures receive their meaning from the future. Suppose that I initiate a relation with that person over there, states Salvan. How can I know the nature of my relation - that is - is it one of friendship, samaritan, enemy, lover? For the meaning of the relation, inasmuch as the relation is a gesture extending out from me to the Other, lacks its descriptive qualifier - hostile relation, friendly relation, loving relation. In other words the appropriate descriptive qualifier cannot be applied to my gesture until that person acknowledges my

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<sup>6</sup>Jacques Salvan. To Be and Not To Be. An Analysis of Jean-Paul Sartre's Ontology. Detroit: Wayne State University Press; 1962. p.38.

gesture and, in so doing, assigns a meaning to the gesture through the acknowledgement. Since the meaning of the relation is secondary to the being of the relation, then Sartre's dictum that "conflict is the original meaning of being-for-Others" is in question.

Furthermore, how is the emotion of fear introduced into the primary relation that exists between my consciousness and the Other's? According to Sartre, the mere fact that my being is a being that can be seen is a sufficient condition to elicit the emotion of fear. Since I can be seen I can also be harmed. In other words, my physicalness manifests my vulnerability, and my awareness of this vulnerability is the upsurge of the emotional relation of fear. Sartre explains that:

to apprehend a look ... is to be conscious of being looked at. The look which the eyes manifest, no matter what kind of eyes they are is a pure reference to myself. What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches crackling behind me is not that there is someone there; it is that I am vulnerable, that I have a body which can be hurt, that I occupy a place and that I can not in any case escape from the space in which I am without defense - in short, that I am seen. BN, 258-9

Since it was Sartre's habit to internalize that which was experienced at the level of externality, what transformation occurs when fear is made to turn on itself in order to effect an interiorization? For this answer we need to turn to the keyhole situation.

## The Keyhole: Shame

Sartre's second example of being-for-another is that of the keyhole situation. Briefly stated a person is caught spying through a keyhole. In the act of spying, the self is detached from its actions and as such is able to proceed with the action of spying free from judgement, that is, free from all previous normative experiences. This is possible, states Sartre, because I am "on the level of a non-thetic self-consciousness" which means that "there is no self to inhabit my consciousness, nothing therefore to which I can refer my acts in order to qualify them" (BN, 259).

But all of a sudden I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me! What does it mean? It means that I am suddenly affected in my being and that essential modifications appear in my structure - modifications which I can apprehend and fix conceptually by means of the reflective cogito.  
 BN, 260

The first thing that happens, states Sartre, is that the self "comes to haunt the unreflective consciousness" (BN, 260) which transforms the unreflective consciousness into a "consciousness of the world" (BN, 260). "Therefore, for the unreflective consciousness the self exists on the level of objects in the world" (BN, 260). This guarantees that the relation emanating from the Other will have an object to which to refer. That is, the self-inhabiting-the-unreflective-consciousness-representing-the-consciousness-

of-the-world becomes the object/form that the presence-in-person-of-the-Other refers to and thus our presence-in-person must transcend itself in order to refer to the object-ness which the Other sees. Sartre states:

Only the reflective consciousness has the self directly for an object. The unreflective consciousness does not apprehend the person directly or as its object; the person is presented to consciousness in so far as the person is an object for the Other. This means that all of a sudden I am conscious of myself as escaping myself, not in that I am the foundation of my own nothingness but in that I have my foundation outside myself. I am for myself only as I am a pure reference to the Other. BN, 260

Thus, according to Sartre, this is how we come to know at the unreflective level of consciousness that one of our modalities is that of object-ness. If at the reflective level of consciousness the apprehension of object-ness reveals to us our vulnerability and therefore elicits the emotion of fear, what then is the emotion that emerges when the unreflective consciousness apprehends that one of its modalities of being is that of object-ness?

Now, shame ... is shame of self; it is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging. I can be ashamed only as my freedom escapes me in order to become a given object. BN, 261

So the interiorization of the external experience of

fear turns to shame. I am shamed by the Look of the Other and I am shameful because I apprehend myself as being that which is looked at. The dreadful revelation is that I am an object and because of my object-ness I am seen by the Other. Sartre states: "Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object, but in general, of being an object" (BN, 288). And the only way that I discover what I am, an object, and what I am not at that moment, a free being, is when it is revealed to me by the Look of the Other. Thus, the Other holds the truth of my being. If there were no Other I would then be spared this truth. Sartre comments, "My original fall is the existence of the Other" (BN, 263).

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Some have argued that Sartre's phenomenological description of the look is akin to psychopathological experiences of being stared at and thus his descriptions should be categorized as describing abnormal behaviour. However, according to George J. Stack and Robert W. Plant, there seems to be little justification for such a claim. They state that though "Sartre's language is sometimes overly dramatic, his account is, nonetheless, not alien to some reported normal responses to being stared at."<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, despite its merits, messieurs Stack and Plant also state that Sartre's phenomenology:

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<sup>7</sup>George J. Stack and Robert W. Plant. "The Phenomenon of 'the Look'". Philosophy and Phenomenological Research. 42 (March 1982). p.367.

is a truncated phenomenological description of "the look" insofar as it excludes the apparent transformation of the significance of the gaze in encounters involving interest, attention, attraction, desire or sexual intentionality. p.359

Although the co-authors acknowledge that phenomenology should not be restricted nor, for that matter, affected by empirical data at all, they nevertheless maintain that "if phenomenology is to be more than a kind of subjective, introspective report, it should, ideally, take into consideration currently available empirical information pertaining to the phenomenon it purports to describe" (p.373). With this in mind, Stack and Plant observed the following interesting phenomenon in controlled experiments, "that eye contact 'per se' ... produced a nonspecific "emotional arousal" or emotional response in experimental subjects" (p.363). That is, even though there is evidence of there being an emotional arousal in relation to a look as recorded by Galvanic skin fluctuations in subjects, there is no way of immediately determining whether the emotional arousal should be characterized negatively or positively.

According to Stack and Plant, studies indicate that there are two fundamental factors that help to situate the look: the social context in which the stare or look occurs and the nature of the relationship. Only by assimilating the evidence and then interpreting the gathered material is it possible to decide what attitude is appropriate vis-à-vis

the look. Accordingly, the look might lead to either a negative fight or flight assessment or to a positive assessment wherein attention, interest, mutual attraction, or erotic desire would serve to qualify or categorize this particular emotional arousal. However, since Sartre restricts the range of social experiences, he skews the meaning of the look since only negative relationships are possible in the restricted setting.

In addition to social context, Stack and Plant indicate that the nature of the relationship between the individuals engaged in reciprocal gazing affects the interpretation of the meaning of being stared at. Two possibilities are offered in explanation. On the one hand, it may be the case that a kind of sublimation of a more primitive response to the look takes place and permissible eye contact is tacitly accepted. On the other hand, it may be that the context, circumstances, or social relations that prevail bring about a symbolic transformation of the meaning of the look. This latter possibility draws support from the two-factor theory of emotion that has been postulated in psychological theory and to which Stack and Plant refer. It states that a negative response to being stared at may be transformed cognitively and socially by virtue of a reinterpretation of the initial emotional arousal. Thus, cognitive reinterpretation would be affected by contextual cues whereas social reinterpretation would rely on social



context. Thus, "both the context and the behaviour of the individual who is staring may elicit contradictory and inhibiting factors that transform the more typical, negative responses to being the object of the gaze of others"

(p.371). This approach is similar in tone to the suggestion that was advanced by Shearson and stated in my Introduction where he wondered if it was possible for consciousness to freely accept being a being-for-Other, especially if one accepts that consciousness is free to adopt any number of attitudes. What can possibly prevent consciousness from adopting a favorable attitude towards being a being-for-Other given that consciousness is limited only by itself?

The essay by Stack and Plant also indicates that the subjective meaning of an encounter is a highly relevant factor. For instance, physiological data showed that emotional arousal and attraction led not only to increased pupil size but the larger pupils were perceived as more attractive than smaller ones. Consequently, "prolonged eye contact, intense staring and large pupil size are, under certain conditions and in certain social contexts, experienced as signs of attraction, interest, or desire".

(p.372) Messieurs Stack and Plant conclude:

It would appear that there is a cultural transformation of primitive reactions to "the look" that enables man to reinterpret its meaning in social contexts in which negative responses to being gazed at would be inhibited or inappropriate. In terms of the polarities discussed, it would seem

that the intentionality of the look is interpreted in radically different ways. ... Sartre's phenomenology of the experience of being stared at is incomplete and, in terms of current empirical knowledge, ultimately inaccurate. pp.372-3

#### Summary

The key component of Sartrean encountering lies in the concept of the Look. According to Stack and Plant, studies indicate that there are two fundamental factors that situate the look: the social context in which the stare or look occurs and the nature of the relationship. Accordingly, by processing the appropriate clues the experiencing of a look may lead to either a negative fight or flight assessment or to a positive assessment.

However, according to Sartre, experiencing a Look can never be a pleasant event. Yet, there is more to it than simply being a disagreeable experience. He posits the claim that conflict is the original meaning of the Look because it reveals to us the nature of our being, that is, we are the experience of the Look because of our modality of object-ness. Thus, on the one hand, consciousness postulates itself as manifesting being without the attribute of being, that is, consciousness is a being of nothingness. On the other hand, consciousness is made to bear the reality of its being when confronted by the Look, that is, consciousness is not a nothingness after all but a being manifesting the modality of object-ness.

Clearly, the experience of being seen is not in itself a threat. If one is pleased with one's body and/or with one's situation, then to be seen is not a problem. However, if one is displeased with one's body, as Sartre was when a child and later as an adult or if one is displeased with one's body because one is vulnerable to being harmed, as Sartre was during the war, then the Look will indeed be the upsurge of negative relations. But to elevate this experience to an absolute level, to assert that the essence of existence is the manifestation of conflict is a profound denial of human reality.

Whereas Sartre's negative attitude toward being will be the focus of further discussion in Chapter 2, the next section will concentrate on the theories that led Sartre to postulate the concept of the Look.

## ii) Concepts and Revealed Being

Inasmuch as the preceding section introduced the phenomenon of negative confirmation between beings, and inasmuch as it was executed entirely within an original solitude, the task of this section will be to show the underpinnings of this internal negative relation as outlined by Sartre in section II The Reef of Solipsism and section III Husserl, Hegel, Heidegger. Although Sartre writes as though the intersubjective relationship occurs between two distinct human beings, and since in Sartre's BN it does not,

it happens then that some of the suggested propositions are highly questionable.

#### The Reef of Solipsism

Sartre's methodology is such that it is easy to become confused as to what claims he is supporting, since his method is to present various assertions as though he supports them, only to reveal, several pages later, that the opposite is in fact the case. Thus, determining Sartre's true position on any given issue is clearly not an easy task even though his overall standpoint is firmly rooted in realism. He is quoted in Simone de Beauvoir's book as asserting that "any theory which did not state that consciousness perceived exterior objects as they were was doomed to failure" (Adieux, 157).

Thus, a fundamental tenet of realism is that everything is given. Nevertheless, Sartre did not hold to the realist claim that the Other was likewise given.

The Other is a thinking substance of the same essence as I am, a substance which will not disappear into primary and secondary qualities, and whose essential structure I find in myself. BN, 223

Clearly, since Other cannot be categorized in a spatial-temporal sense, that is, the thinking substance will not disappear into primary and secondary qualities, and since all consciousnesses have the same structure, there is

a distance that separates body from body, soul from body, and soul from soul. Nevertheless, in two of the three groupings the distance can be bridged by a relation. Whereas the relation of my body to the Other's body is "a relation of pure, indifferent exteriority" (BN, 223) and the relation between "the For-itself to the body" (BN, 223) is likewise an external though not indifferent relation, a relation that is "as yet not certain" (BN, 223) since the relation awaits the phenomenon of the Look, Sartre is nevertheless certain that there is simply no visible relation possible between souls since souls are outside of the spatial-temporal level of being.

if realism bases its certitude upon the presence "in person" of the spatial-temporal thing in my consciousness, it can not lay claim to the same evidence for the reality of the Other's soul since by this very admission, the Other's soul does not give itself "in person" to mine. It is an absence, ... the body points to it without delivering it. In short, in a philosophy based on intuition, there is provided no intuition of the soul of the Other.  
 BN, 223

Since, according to Sartre, the Other's soul does not give itself "in person" to mine, and likewise my soul is not given "in person" to the Other, then no one can possibly claim that the appearance of the spatial-temporal thing in his consciousness is the soul of the Other. In other words, the Other, that is, the soul of the Other, is not a given. It is this absence from consciousness that confirms the lack

of an empirical relation between subjectivities or souls. Consequently, the urgent question that should be troubling the realist philosophers but is not, states Sartre, is, how is knowledge of the soul of the Other acquired?

It seems that the realists have been forced to turn to the idealist position for support, states Sartre, insofar as they accept the notion of representation. Since the object-body is seen by the realists as acting on the thinking substance, the existence of the thinking substance is measured by the knowledge we have of it through the object-body. This claim is expressed by Rene Descartes' assertion, "I think therefore I am". However, states Sartre, given this formulation, the existence of the thinking substance, the soul of the Other, can only be a mere conjecture since the absence of an object-body would mean that one has to doubt the existence of a thinking substance, which is ridiculous. For instance, Pierre's absence from the cafe does not mean that he does not exist. The problem, according to Sartre, is that the realists have failed to recognize a fundamental fact: that "the Other is first perceived or he appears in experience as a particular form before all habitude" (BN, 225).

The preceding Sartrean assertion is an attempt to correct what was perceived to be a phenomenological error. Whereas the presupposition of most theories is that essence and existence constitute a oneness, Sartre believes that

"existence precedes essence". Therefore, Descartes' assertion of "I think therefore I am" is actually lacking its first term, according to Sartre, and ought to have been formulated as, "I am therefore I think and therefore I am". In a filmed interview, that was later transcribed into book form, Sartre states:

If you want to refer to some truth, if you want to undertake some task, be it that of a scholar, you first of all have to make sure that you are, that you think and that therefore you are. At that point, any truth can be established. But the initial truth, and it is an unconditional one, is established by this contact of the mind with itself. And that I have jealously refused to part with.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, there is some confusion here. On the one hand, Sartre is quite certain that the notion of distance does not belong to the mind given that the mind is in contact, that is, direct contact with what it sees, and what the mind sees is either itself as-a-being or itself as a being-in-the-world. But on the other hand, in the project of the Look, Sartre nonetheless places the self at a distance, that is, in the unreflective-consciousness-representing-the-consciousness-of-the-world, in order to accommodate the phenomenon of the Look. Clearly, Sartre does not see this as a possible contradiction in his

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<sup>2</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre by Himself. Trans. Richard Beaver. New York: Urizen Books Inc., 1978. pp. 66-7.

position. In his quest to found intentionality within human reality, it seems to me that Sartre unwittingly resorts to a mental phenomenon of distance if not to a physical phenomenon of distance.

Thus, Sartre takes the realist/idealist representation of Other and places it in the idealist setting. A basic tenet of idealism is that "the Other is a phenomenon which refers to other phenomena" (BN, 226). In this setting, Other, as a universal subject, is "the common essence" (BN, 225) of persons, whereas the object-body of Other is taken as "given in our experience; he is an object and a particular object" (BN, 225) having "teleological characteristics" (BN, 225). Armed with this data, Sartre sets himself the task of considering the idealist Other from the perspective of possibility and causality, in order to determine how knowledge of the Other is possible.

Since the object-body-with-teleological-characteristics exists at one level and the subject-body-representing-"all"-Others exists at another level, how can something "which on principle is located outside my experience" (BN, 226) be the organizing unity of my experience? Sartre believes that the idealists have failed to recognize the following fundamental fact about the condition of possibility: "the condition of possibility for all experience is that the subject organize his impressions into a connected system" (BN, 226). In other words, the soul, as the organizing force, must be in



relation with only one particular object-body. Therefore, each one must be the organizing unity of his own experiences.

Since it is the task of the subject to organize his impressions into a connected system he then must be responsible not only for his impressions but also for the connected system. If each subject has this responsibility and supposedly the freedom to accomplish such a task, then why is it, I wonder, that each subject does not also have the freedom to view intersubjective relationships other than in the mode of conflict? Is one to believe that the only impressions possible are hostile ones?

As previously stated, the idealists accept that Other, as pure subjectivity, organizes all object-bodies. Further, knowledge of the Other as an object-body is readily available since the object-body of the Other is given in our experiences. But, how is knowledge of the Other, as pure subjectivity, obtained? In other words, can the idealists apply the concept of causality to their theory and obtain knowledge of the Other, as pure subjectivity? Impossible, states Sartre. Actually, the causal link suggested by a regulative concept is an illusion inasmuch as the soul of the Other is said to reside in the noumenal sphere and therefore is clearly beyond human experiencing.

Furthermore, Sartre wonders if Kant truly appreciated the difference between a regulative concept and the concept

of the Other. That is, whereas regulative concepts in scientific hypotheses and in industrial/behavioral instrumentations are meant to measure specific data and to control, the truth is, the concept of the Other does not belong to either of these categories. It appears, states Sartre, that the idealists have failed to understand this truth: "that certain categories of phenomena seem to exist only for the concept of the Other" (BN, 228). In other words, categories such as intentionality, consciousness, thinking, etc., are mental phenomena and as such cannot be reduced without remainder into statements about physical objects and processes.

According to Sartre, the idealists have failed to give a satisfactory answer to his question: how is knowledge of the soul of the Other acquired? On the one hand, states Sartre, they suggest the use of a framework bearing a system of meanings and experiences. However, this framework is on principle external to my experience. Instead of having the Other as the organizing force in my experience, it happens then that events in my experience "serve to constitute the Other qua Other; that is, as a system of representations out of reach, as a concrete and knowable object" (BN, 228).

Moreover, states Sartre, the idealists have neglected this basic fact: "the Other is not only the one whom I see but the one who sees me" (BN, 228) and as such I aim at the Other because I exist as one of the objects in his connected

system of experiences. Nevertheless, "I exceed the lawful limits of my knowledge" (BN, 228), asserts Sartre, when I strive to determine the concrete nature of this system of representations. Therefore Sartre concludes that "Other can not be described as a regulative concept" (BN, 228).

Since the structure of the idealist's theory does not permit one to experience the subjectivity of the Other and yet since the idealists have chosen to use the concept of the Other anyway, Sartre indicates two possibilities from which the idealists can chose to address this lack of contact with the Other. The first solution is known by the name of solipsism and can be formulated in two ways: either one affirms one's ontological solitude and thereby rejects one's empirical experiences of Others or else one affirms one's empirical experiences without resorting to, but not rejecting either, the concept of the Other, that is, by resorting instead to scientific theories. The second solution, "to affirm the real existence of the Other - that is, to posit a real, extra-empirical communication between consciousnesses" (BN, 229) suggests that in order to have knowledge of the Other as a subject, the idealists have to turn to concrete reality. Thus, the idealists have been forced into the realists' domain, states Sartre. What this means for the idealists is that they will have to dispense with their notion that phenomena refer to other phenomena and accept this fundamental fact: "the criterion of truth

... is the conformity of thought to its object" (BN, 230).

The problem with the realists, the idealists and the religionist thinkers, claims Sartre, is that they all begin with the same faulty presupposition: "others are the Other, that is the self which is not myself" (BN, 230). But, as was indicated in the first section of this chapter, Other is described by Sartre as being a self-inhabiting-the-unreflective-consciousness-representing-the-consciousness-of-the-world. Nevertheless, insofar as the Other is perceived as being the self that is not myself by the uninformed realists, the idealists and the religionists, it indicates that all perceive the constitutive structure of the being-of-others as the manifestation of a spatial relation. Furthermore, since the realists believe that the Other is apprehended through his body, they then believe that the Other is separated from the Other as one body from another body. Therefore, the naive realists assume there to be an original distance between consciousnesses because bodies are naturally separated. As for the idealists, they, on the other hand, having extracted Other from the body, perceive the body as being solely an objective system of representations. However, since they posit the subjectivity of Other in its own isolated system and since each system of representations can be limited only by itself, then clearly, states Sartre, "it is still space which implicitly separates my consciousness from the Other's" (BN, 231).

However, since the beginning point of this exterior relation is oneself, the idealists along with the realists are actually resorting to a "third man" concept in order to establish "the appearance of this external negation" (BN, 231). In other words, every external relation requires a witness to posit it. Since the naive realists and the idealists accept that "the Other is revealed to us in a spatial world", this implies that "we are separated from the Other by a real or ideal space" (BN, 231).

This Sartrean statement is puzzling indeed since it reveals Sartre as both denying and accepting the reality of the Other. That is, there would seem to be no possibility whatsoever of doubting that we are separated from the Other, for how else could we maintain our identity? How could there be a plurality of beings without space? Yet, Sartre is denying that we are separated from the Other by a real or ideal space. How could he hope to support this denial of reality? By denying that the Other is revealed to us in a spatial world. In other words, according to Sartre, the Other, that is, the subjectivity of the Other, is revealed to us in our mind, our consciousness, and therefore, the phenomenon of space is not a requirement either for the Other or for the support of a plurality of beings. On the other hand, whereas the subjectivity of the Other is beyond space, the objective being of the Other is not and therefore must conform to the temporal-spatial realities of a spatial

world.

What creates a lot of confusion is Sartre's ambiguous use of the depersonalized term Other. On the one hand Sartre oscillates between an objective and a subjective standpoint in the relation with the Other whose nature on the other hand also oscillates between that of subjectivity and objectivity. Nevertheless, according to Sartre, there is no possibility that I, from my subjective standpoint, can be in relation with the Other while it is in its subjective mode of being. The relation must always be of a sort that shows one as subject while the other is object. Clearly, the ultimate confusion occurs when Sartre assumes the outsider's standpoint, for on those occasions he assumes all the roles.

Sartre's next strategy is to accept, rather than reject, the claim that there is a real or ideal space that separates one from the Other in order to determine what effect this would have on the Other. To suppose that my relation to the Other is solely an external one, states Sartre, is to acknowledge that the only information I will ever have of the Other will be as he appears, that is, as an object to my knowledge. However, the problem is not so much that he is an object but that he appears as an object and as such I am forced to respond to that appearance since I am in direct contact with my consciousness. Thus, I am the one who must constitute him because only I can organize for

myself my impressions into a connected system. However, since the Other is not known to me as he is but only the image which I construct, I am forced to rely on an external witness in order to verify the truth of my image. According to Sartre, this external witness must simultaneously engage in a negative and internal relation with the Other and with myself in order to effect a comparison, "otherwise he would know us only by images" (EN, 232).

Though there are various flaws in this strategy, the one that concerns me is the coherency of the comparison. What in fact is being compared? Is it the internal Other or the external Other and to what is it being compared? In other words, can the external image that I have of the Other be compared with the internal Other insofar as the external Other is an object-thing and the internal Other is not an object-thing?

According to Phyllis Sutton Morris,<sup>9</sup> Sartre is actually comparing consciousness to physical things instead of to physical relations. Furthermore, Morris suggests that Sartre's conception of the Other, alias consciousness, etc., shows it to be a physical relation if not a physical object and refers to this Sartrean assertion as evidence: "the For-itself makes known to itself what it is, through the in-itself; that is, from the fact that in its being it is a

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<sup>9</sup>Phyllis Sutton Morris. Sartre's Concept of a Person: An Analytic Approach. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976. pp.14-16.

relation to being" (BN, 216). However, to claim that the being-for-itself, alias consciousness, etc., is "relation", states Morris, is not to have given a complete description of the "physical being of" relation. There is a lack here. Whereas Sartre believes that incompleteness is a unique property of consciousness - in that you cannot reduce descriptions of conscious phenomena without remainder into statements about physical objects, because it is theoretically possible to give a complete description of a physical object and impossible in principle to give a complete description of an act of consciousness - Morris believes that incompleteness is rather a unique property of relations, both physical and mental. Clearly, Sartre should have focussed on physical relations rather than on physical matter, suggests Morris.

The Reef of Solipsism is brought to a close with a final look at the concept of the third from the perspective of the religionists. Whereas the realists and idealists accept that "the Other is revealed to us in a spatial world" (BN, 231) thereby affirming the spatial presupposition, the religionists affirm this presupposition by negating interiority. That is to say, by resorting to God, the religionists affirm their existence by negating their being. Sartre believes that this absurdity is concealed in the theological notion of creation whereby God "is and is not both myself and the Other since he creates us" (BN, 232).



It is apparent that the phenomenon of impartiality is possible only if the witness, that is, God, who is not only the creator of me but is me, negates His being, not in the sense that He negates His being-ness since that is absurd, but that He negates being me, in order to be an impartial witness for me, as well as being over there to be and not be the Other. What happens when God departs? According to Sartre's interpretation of Creation, there occur two creative-negations. Since God is me and I am God theoretically, Sartre suggests that God's departure not only results in His negating me in order to create Himself as a witness and as the Other, but on the other hand, it also means that since I am the experience of a creative act, I create me (my external self) by negating me (my internal self), though of course, I do not transcend my being to reach the Other over there. It is Sartre's contention that this negation of interiority occurs because the religionists presuppose space between the Other and me; this, Sartre denies.

Clearly, Sartre misuses the term God. First, by ignoring the normal denotation of the term, Sartre implies that God is restricted by the need, that is, my need, to have an impartial witness. Secondly, by assuming the standpoint of God as he employs the first person, Sartre skews the first part of the image of creation. He states:

The image of creation is the most adequate here since in the creative act I look into the very heart of what I create - for what I create is me - and yet what I create opposes itself to me by closing in on itself in an affirmation of objectivity. BN, 232

Since the sentence preceding this description of a creative act has God as subject and since Sartre indicates in the above description that he is referring to the same situation, one can conclude that the description of a creative act refers to God's creative act and as such the pronoun "I", at least in the first part of Sartre's description, needs to be replaced with the term God. When this is done, it reveals that Sartre's description of a creative act contains two independent assertions. Thus, the first section of Sartre's statement should read: in the creative act (God) looks into the very heart of what (He) creates - for what (He) creates is me. Note that the pronoun "I" should not be changed to "God" in the second portion of Sartre's statement since he writes there that the created thing is able to restrict the creator and thereby nullifies the accepted denotation of the term God as being beyond restrictions. Clearly, what we have here is a distortion.

"If God is I and if he is the Other, then what guarantees my own existence?" (BN, 232), Sartre wonders. In concluding that God is neither necessary nor sufficient as a guarantee of the Other's existence, Sartre highlights two

approaches to God. On the one hand there is the original act that binds me and the Other to God, but on the other hand there is the continuous motion of creation that suspends me and the Other between "a distinct existence and a pantheistic fusion with the Creator Being" (BN, 232). Given the presence of this continuous motion, states Sartre, God's existence shows itself not to be sufficient for my existence. Furthermore, God's existence as a witness for me clearly presupposes the presence of the Other to me in an internal connection and therefore shows God's existence as a witness to be unnecessary. In conclusion, Sartre asserts that the theories suggested by the realists, the idealists, and the religionists have not been successful in addressing the basic problem: "What do I mean when I assert that this object is a man?" (BN, 254).

#### Summary of Sartrean Approved Fundamental Facts

1. The Other is first perceived or he appears in experience as a particular form before all habitude (BN, 225).
2. The condition of possibility for all experience is that the subject organize his impressions into a connected system (BN, 226).
3. Certain categories of phenomena seem to exist only for the concept of the Other (BN, 228).
4. The Other is not only the one whom I see but the one who sees me (BN, 228).

5. The criterion of truth is the conformity of thought to its object (BN, 230).

Husserl, Hegel, Heidegger

Sartre states that Husserl tried to refute solipsism by showing that "a referral to the Other is the indispensable condition for the constitution of a world" (BN, 233). That is, whatever is known about the world is known because it refers to the Other and since the Other is the manifestation of consciousness it reveals consciousness to be the "instrumental-thing" (BN, 233) that measures and gives meaning to the world. Though Sartre admits that Husserl's thesis is an improvement over the classical position, he indicates that there is a serious flaw with it, principally with a certain presupposition of Husserl's. It seems that Husserl relies on knowledge to be the connecting link between consciousness and the object of consciousness.

According to Husserl's approach as per Sartre's interpretation, the world as it is revealed to consciousness is inter-monadic. That is, the Other is present in the world in two ways: as a "particular concrete and empirical appearance" (BN, 233) and as a "permanent condition of its unity and of its richness" (BN, 233). What Husserl is claiming is that acts of consciousness are experienced in two modes: immanently and transcendently. Immanent perceptions manifest a sort of ownership or identity with

their objects. That is, since the objects of immanent perceptions are given in their entirety, it means that there is an absence of perspectives and because of this spatial absence, these objects have being within consciousness. Further, it is from here that meanings have their upsurge. In Sartrean terminology, "the Other is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object's objectivity" (BN, 233). On the other hand, transcendent perceptions are acts of consciousness in which the objects are not considered by Husserl to be part of one's own consciousness because there is a gap between the appearance and what really is. Thus, the objects of transcendent perceptions are never given in their entirety. In other words, states Sartre, "the psychophysical self is contemporary with the world" (BN, 233). Steven J. Chasan explains Husserl's dichotomous relationship between immanent perceptions and transcendent ones in his essay, The Metaphysician in Husserl, thus:

Immanent perceptions ... are acts of consciousness in which the object of consciousness is considered part of one's own consciousness. These types of objects include feelings, thought processes, memories, or, in general, 'internal' and conscious experiences - experiences of the Ego - i.e., Erlebnisse. Thus, during self-reflective acts of consciousness (i.e., immanent perceptions) one perceives these Erlebnisse in their singularity. Transcendent perceptions are simply the opposite: acts of consciousness in which the object is not considered to be part of one's own consciousness.

It is taken to be transcendent. These include all perceptions of spatio-temporal objects. Hence, when one observes a tree or feels a cat's fur, it is a transcendent perception.<sup>10</sup>

For Husserl, there is a univalent Ego that is given in its entirety and 'absolutely'. However, states Chasan: "it is important to note that the term "absolute" simply means fully and adequately given, directly and im-mediate given, and not given through a unity of perspectives" (p.39). Chasan quotes the following Husserlian passage from section 44 of Ideas I as evidence.

The experience of a feeling has no perspectives. If I look upon it, I have before me an absolute; it has no aspects which might present themselves now in this way and now in that. ... We therefore maintain: whereas it is an essential mark of what is given through appearances that no one of these [appearances] gives the matter in question in an 'absolute' form instead of presenting just one side of it, it is an essential mark of what is immanently given precisely to give an absolute that simply cannot exhibit aspects and vary them perspectively. Chasan, 39

As for transcendent acts of consciousness, they manifest many Egos since the object of a transcendent perception is given through a unity of perspectives. In Sartrean terminology, "each object ... appears in my

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<sup>10</sup>Steven J. Chasan. "The Metaphysician in Husserl." Eidos. Guest Ed. Richard Holmes. Waterloo, Ont.: The University of Waterloo Graduate Student Association. Vol.7 No.1 June 1988. pp.37-8.

concrete experience as polyvalent" (BN, 233). In other words, states Sartre, the object of a transcendent perception

... is given originally as possessing systems of reference to an indefinite plurality of consciousnesses; it is on the table, on the wall that the Other is revealed to me as that to which the object under consideration is perpetually referred - as well as on the occasion of the concrete appearances of Pierre or Paul. BN, 233

The indefinite plurality of consciousnesses of which Sartre speaks is nevertheless grounded in a single being. That is, though Sartre may view a wall at various times throughout the day and therefore experience that wall differently each time, he is nevertheless the same being who has experienced the various perceptions insofar as only his being can have, as an object of immanent consciousness, his memory of the wall.

However, Sartre states that there is a problem with Husserl's phenomenological reduction. For, in bracketing our psycho-physical self, that is, in setting aside our mental and physical experience of the wall, for example, it means that the only thing that will be left is our objective existence and since, according to Sartre, objectness must refer to an original solitude, there must be available a subjective being to whom our objectness refers. Thus, "the Other appears as necessary to the very constitution of this

self" (BN, 233). Since this Other is not subject to Husserl's phenomenological reduction, Sartre categorizes it as a transcendent being.

Furthermore, states Sartre, if I am to doubt the existence of my friend Pierre because his existence is on principle outside of my experience, that is to say, immanent perceptions demand exclusivity, then I must also doubt my concrete existence given that "my empirical Ego and the Other's empirical Ego appear in the world at the same time" (BN, 233). Though Sartre states that he followed "the rules of chronological succession" (BN, 233), I wonder if it has not in fact weakened his proposition? Is existing at the same time, a sufficient reason to doubt? That is, does it follow that I have to doubt my concrete existence just because both empirical Egos, that is, Sartre's empirical Ego and my empirical Ego, appear in the world at the same time? For instance, let's suppose that while in the process of bracketing the transcendent perception that I have of Sartre, I experience a sting from a hornet. Though I continue the bracketing process and include as well the transcendent perception of the hornet, can I also bracket the physical/mental pain that I am now experiencing? Since I cannot bracket the pain that I am physically experiencing insofar as I am, after all, that experience of pain, and since I cannot bracket the valuation of this sensation as painful, and since an evaluation is an interpretation of



data, does this not confirm that my empirical Ego exists even though I may doubt Sartre's empirical Ego? It does not seem to me that concurrent existence of empirical Egos is a sufficient reason to doubt my empirical existence.

According to Sartre, Husserl's contribution towards solving the problem of solipsism is twofold. Husserl affirms the plurality of consciousnesses as well as stating that the meaning of the Other cannot come from experience itself. Sartre states:

It is undeniable that the instrumental-thing from the moment of its discovery refers to a plurality of For-itselfs. ... It is also certain that the meaning of "the Other" can not come from the experience nor from a reasoning by analogy effected on the occasion of the experience; on the contrary, it is in the light of the concept of the Other that the experience is interpreted. BN, 233-4

What happens if the Other attaches no meaning to the experience? Does this mean that the experience lacks being? What comes first, the painful experience and then the meaning of pain or the experience and then the meaning of pain applied to that experience? According to Sartre, the meaning of the Other, that is, the consciousness of pain, does not come from experiencing the hornet's sting but from experiencing first the immanent sensation which the Other knows as painful and then assigning this meaning to the physical experience. Husserl's insistence that experiences must receive an assessment from the Other in order to have

being leaves Chasan exclaiming:

... in a Husserlian universe, if all conscious life was to cease, the physical world would no longer exist as we know it. For, the "physical world," strictly speaking, and its "independent and self-sufficient existence" is merely the result of our reaction to our lived experiences. Chasan, 43

Though Sartre is in agreement with Husserl on this point since he states that "I am precisely the one by whom there is a world" (BN, 257), he nevertheless has his misgivings about the Husserlian lack of connection between the I and the world. That is, if my empirical Ego is bracketed, states Sartre, can the Other, who is not subject to bracketing, assign a meaning to something that it does not experience and to which it has no connection?

Thus, the problem with Husserl's thesis is that it employs a transcendental subject. And, it is this that throws doubt on the person and not the "parallelism of the empirical 'Egos'" (BN, 234). That is, the concurrent existence of the Ego (Erlebnisse) and the empirical Ego has ceased to be the focus. The question of solipsism is no longer being addressed from the realm of human reality insofar as that which is being addressed by Husserl, states Sartre, is "the transcendental subject to whom this person by nature refers" (BN, 234).

In the end, states Sartre, Husserl must rely on knowledge as the link between the transcendental subject and

the empirical Ego because interiority demands exclusivity. That is, since "the Other's being is measured in its reality by the knowledge which the Other has of himself (and) not by that which I have of him" (BN, 234), it means that the acquisition of this desired knowledge is clearly beyond my reach for I cannot know the Other as he knows himself. The fundamental fact that Husserl overlooked, even though he had an understanding of it, states Sartre, is this: "knowledge valid for interiority can be effected only in interiority which on principle excludes all knowledge of the Other as he knows himself - i.e., as he is" (BN, 234). In other words, Sartre's inner self only knows its inner self and cannot know Sartre's outer self.

According to Sartre, the function of consciousness is to refer and, in part, it is this referral to an object that distinguishes conscious phenomena from purely physical phenomena. However, Husserl's concept of the Other as manifesting meanings of the world is actually the object of empty intentions given the inaccessibility of its contents. Consequently, "the only reality which remains is therefore that of my intention", states Sartre (BN, 235).

On to Hegel. Clearly, Sartre is pleased with Hegel's efforts in addressing the problem of solipsism. Hegel's thesis not only provides the structure for the all-important connection between Others but also places the problem of

Others where it belongs, at the level of being. Whereas in Husserl's solution the appearance of the Other is indispensable to the constitution of the world and the empirical Ego, in Hegel's solution the appearance of the Other is indispensable to the very existence of my consciousness as self-consciousness. In other words, the appearance of consciousness is founded on the phenomenon of consciousness. Nevertheless, Sartre disagrees with Hegel on two fronts: he rejects Hegel's epistemological optimism which posits knowledge as the measure of being and he rejects Hegel's ontological optimism which posits a standpoint outside of consciousness itself.

Sartre begins his discussion of Hegel's thesis by noting that self-consciousness is presented as having pure self-identity. Further, Hegel states that though self-consciousness has certitude of itself, this certitude lacks truth. What is required of self-consciousness is to be able to appear to itself so that it can confirm its own existence as a being-of-self-consciousness. In order to accomplish this task, states Sartre, Hegel conceptualizes self-consciousness as a being who is "first a syncretic relation without truth between a subject and an object, an object, which is not yet objectified and which is this subject himself" (BN, 236). Then, in the second phase of this first moment, self-consciousness "makes itself valid externally by giving itself objectivity and manifest existence" (BN, 236).

In other words, the tendency toward objectification is not only present in consciousness itself, as was shown in Husserl's thesis, but is also present at the level of self-consciousness. Whereas the empirical Ego tends toward objectification and finds fulfillment in human reality, states Sartre, self-consciousness, as pure self-identity, also tends toward objectification and finds fulfillment in the self-consciousness of the empirical Ego. However, there is a problem here with identity. That is, since self-consciousness in general is not only recognized in other self-consciousnesses but is also identical with them, how can both self-consciousnesses maintain their own identities? Or, how can the various self-consciousnesses of the empirical Ego be identical with self-consciousness in general without forfeiting their identities? The problem is solved by the phenomenon of consciousness itself. Sartre states:

The mediator is the Other. The Other appears along with myself since self-consciousness is identical with itself by means of the exclusion of every Other. BN, 236

Clearly, what Hegel is suggesting as per Sartre's interpretation, is that the appearance of the Other is indispensable to the very existence of my consciousness as self-consciousness. Since the phenomenon of consciousness is identical with the appearance of consciousness, this

sameness affirms the identity of consciousness as what it is and as such excludes all other consciousnesses. That is, this form of equivalency has the effect of excluding self-consciousness from consciousness itself. For instance, in counting the cigarettes in the case, states Sartre, I am consciousness of counting but not consciousness of myself counting. In the same way is the appearance of the Other as self-consciousness possible, that is, the phenomenon of self-consciousness is identical with the appearance of self-consciousness. And, it is this sameness that excludes all other consciousnesses, that is, this form of equivalency has the effect of excluding general consciousness from self-consciousness. In other words, when someone asks Sartre what he is doing and he replies that he is counting, it is at that moment that he has turned towards himself to be self-consciousness of himself counting.

The reality of there being a plurality of consciousnesses, states Sartre, confirms the presence of "a double, reciprocal relation of exclusion" (BN, 236). Clearly, Sartre is pleased with Hegel for suggesting that consciousnesses are connected by this internal negative relation, though, as will be shown in a moment, he concludes that Hegel unfortunately relied on knowledge in order to posit this relational connection. According to Phyllis Sutton Morris:

Consciousness, for Sartre, is an internal relation, not in the sense that consciousness makes some difference to its object but in the sense that the object essentially characterizes the particular act of consciousness. Morris, 19

For instance, states Morris, in the act of thinking, the object of thought (whether the object actually exists empirically is irrelevant) serves to differentiate separate moments of thought. Consequently, the essence of the relation is that it is, first, internal and secondly, it has being because its source of existence is the subject.

Sartre indicates that Hegel's internal negative relation claims that: "consciousnesses are directly supported by one another in a reciprocal imbrication of their being" (BN, 236). Accordingly, this reciprocal overlapping affects the appearance of the Other as consciousness and as self-consciousness. For instance, when Hegel states that "he [the Other] is the one who is other than I" (BN, 236), it means that the Other as a being of consciousness is the one who is other than I, because I, in this moment, am a being of self-consciousness who knows the Other to be a being of consciousness. As well, the Other as self-consciousness is the one who is other than I, because I, in this moment, am a being of consciousness who knows the Other to be a being of self-consciousness. Yet, there is a problem with this overlapping. Whereas Hegel defines reciprocal relation as "the self-apprehension of the one in

the other" (BN, 236), Sartre suggests that:

... it is only in so far as each man is opposed to the Other that he is absolutely for himself. Opposite the Other and confronting the Other, each one asserts his right of being individual. BN, 236

Thus, from Sartre's point of view, Hegel shows himself as relying on the cogito since he posits the Other as a being of self-consciousness and/or a being of consciousness who apprehends itself as a "non-essential object with a character of negativity" (BN, 236) in the same moment that it apprehends the Other, that is, itself, as a being of self-consciousness and/or a being of consciousness. Clearly, such an appearance is conditional on one's ability to recognize that the Other, as a being of self-consciousness and/or as a being of consciousness, is a "being for the Other" (BN, 236). In other words, it is the accuracy of my recognition of the Other, as an Other for me, that determines the quality of my appearance as an individual. According to Sartre's interpretation of Hegel's work: "the value of the Other's recognition of me depends on the value of my recognition of the Other" (BN, 237).

Furthermore, states Sartre, if I seek to follow Hegel's thesis completely I must pursue the death of the Other insofar as I desire that the Other be only a being for an Other and not a being for itself. This pursuit is expressed in Hegel's Master/Slave example where "the Slave is the



Truth of the Master" (BN, 237) but "the Master is not certain of being for himself as truth" (BN, 237). However, since "I can not doubt him [the Other] without doubting myself" (BN, 237), states Sartre, it would appear as though Hegel's thesis is at least partially successful in addressing the problem of solipsism even though Hegel has recourse to the cogito. Nevertheless, it is a false solution given that: "consciousness is a concrete being sui generis" (BN, 239). In other words, it is a fundamental fact that consciousness "pre-exists its truth" (BN, 239), that is to say, pre-exists its objective appearance. Once again, Sartre is advancing the thesis that existence precedes essence.

Although Sartre rejects Hegel's assertion that "knowledge ... is ... the measure of being" (BN, 238) and posits instead the claim that "being measures truth" (BN, 239), he recognizes that this assertion is nevertheless the one claimed by "naive realism" (BN, 239) and as such does not address the problem of the Other in its entirety. The fact is, states Sartre, that the realists have not understood what objectivity demands. "Objectivity demands an explicit negation" (BN, 242). In other words, when I am an object for the Other I negate that form of being, that is, I negate that aspect of my being which has made me be an object-for-the-Other because, at the same time, I continue to be what I am, that is, I continue to be a being-for-

myself. And, apparently, when I am a being-for-myself, it means that I am unaware of my own objectness.

Furthermore, states Sartre, my self can only be for-itself by renouncing all objectivity. Thus, it is not my being-for-itself that is objectified and seen by the Other. "In short the for-itself as for-itself can not be known by the Other" (BN, 242). Consequently, "the object which I apprehend under the name of the Other appears to me in a radically other form" (BN, 242).

There is some confusion here. On the one hand, I am unaware of my objectness because I cannot appear to myself in that mode of being. However, I am aware of myself in my other mode of being. That is, even if the for-itself as for-itself can not be known by the Other, it does not mean that I am unaware of myself as a being-for-itself or as a being of nothingness. Clearly, in order for me to be aware of myself as a being-for-itself or as a being-of-nothingness I must have appeared to myself in that mode of being. Since the essence of an appearance is its manifestation of a form, then the appearance of my being, as a being-of-nothingness-for-myself, indicates that my being-of-nothingness-for-myself has being because it has been objectified, by me and for me. On the other hand, Sartre has just asserted that objectivity demands an explicit negation. In other words, when I am an objectified being-of-nothingness for myself I am forced to negate that form of being because I continue to

be what I am, that is, I continue to be a being-of-nothingness-for-myself. But, does this not mean that due to the demand of objectivity I am actually denying my own existence, which is absurd?

Nevertheless, according to Sartre, Hegel's claim that "the Other is an object, and I apprehend myself as an object in the Other" is an unfounded epistemological optimism. Actually, states Sartre, "the being of my consciousness is strictly irreducible to knowledge" (BN, 243). As for Hegel's ontological optimism it seems to claim that a relation of equivalency exists between the general self-consciousness and the plurality of self-consciousnesses. What Hegel fails to see, states Sartre, is the impossibility of removing oneself from that situation in order to judge the accuracy of that equivalency. It is the case that the problem of the Other must be posed in terms of my being, asserts Sartre, insofar as "the multiplicity of consciousnesses is on principle unsurpassable" (BN, 244). Therefore, "I must establish myself in my being and posit the problem of the Other in terms of my being" (BN, 244).

On to Heidegger. According to Sartre, it is Heidegger's thesis and not that of Hegel that correctly identifies the point of departure for a theory affirming the existence of the Other. Whereas Husserl took as his point of departure an abstracted empirical Ego, and whereas

Hegel's starting point was that of being, Heidegger, on the other hand, identifies human reality as the point of departure. And though, Heidegger is mindful of the following two requirements: "(1) the relation between 'human-realities' [the Others] must be a relation of being; (2) this relation must cause 'human-realities' to depend on one another in their essential being" (BN, 244), he nevertheless fails in his attempt to escape from solipsism, states Sartre. As regards the first necessity, instead of establishing a relation between beings, that is, between subjectivities, Heidegger's relation is with objectivities. Secondly, Heidegger redefines relation such that it ceases to be what it is - a relation of opposition - and becomes instead a co-existence of consciousnesses, that is, in the sense of experiencing sympathetically with someone, and Heidegger thereby forfeits, according to Sartre, the essential being of the Other.

In addressing the problem of the existence of Others, Sartre indicates that Heidegger's solution is "a pure and simple definition" (BN, 244). In other words, Heidegger understood that a valid definition of the Other could not leave out the involvement of the Other in his world. Thus, "being-in-the-world" is the expression of this relation wherein the first moment, the "world", is the structure "by which human reality makes known to itself what it is" (BN, 244). The second moment of the relation, "being-in"

expresses "finitude and comprehension" (BN, 244-5) and the last moment of the relation, "being", manifests "being-with" (BN, 245) and is for Heidegger the mode by which human-reality, that is, the Other, is its being-in-the-world. Further, Heidegger posits being-with as an "essential structure" (BN, 245) of the Other and as such it cannot be established from outside the Other. Even though Heidegger does not rely on the cogito, states Sartre, he nonetheless recognizes that any theory must start from one's own consciousness. Accordingly:

It is by making explicit the preontological comprehension which I have of myself that I apprehend being-with-others as an essential characteristic of my being. In short I discover the transcendental relation to the Other as constituting my own being, just as I have discovered that being-in-the-world measures my human-reality. BN, 245

Thus, according to Sartre, being-with, as an essential structure of my being, functions as a transcendental relation. Accordingly, it is not only the means by which I am in relation to the Other ontologically but also is the means by which I am in relation to the Other ontically or empirically. Further, when I am in relation with the Other, according to Sartre's interpretation of Heidegger, I discover the Other to be:

the ex-centric limit which contributes to the

constitution of my being. He is the test of my being inasmuch as he throws me outside of myself toward structures which at once both escape me and define me; it is this test which originally reveals the Other to me. BN, 245

Question: what reveals the Other to me? Answer: the test. Question: what constitutes the test? Answer: my experience of the influence of the Other on me insofar as it throws me outside of myself towards the Other. On the one hand, this Other escapes me since clearly I cannot experience the Other as he is in himself, but on the other hand, the Other defines me since he completes the relation that I am experiencing.

The last Heideggerian point that Sartre addresses concerns the type of connection with the Other, that is, Heidegger's acceptance of being-with rather than being-for as the means by which the relation in-itself has being. On the one hand, the relation "being-for" manifests "the mutual recognition of consciousnesses brought face to face" (BN, 245). On the other hand, the relation "being-with", states Sartre, "does not intend the reciprocal relation of recognition and of conflict which would result from the appearance of a human-reality other than mine in the midst of the world" (BN, 245). It actually describes an "ontological solidarity for the exploitation of this world" (BN, 245).

Insofar as "with" functions as a connector expressing

some form of relation, it is interesting to note that Sartre thought it indicated a relation of solidarity and presumably an absence of conflict at the ontological level but a relation of exploitation and thus conflict at the ontic level. In order to understand Sartre's description one has to note the symbolic division, that is, ontological solidarity is representative of essences and exploitation is representative of existence. Clearly, for Sartre, the definitive meaning of human reality is that of struggle, though, as will be shown in a moment, Heidegger saw another possibility. However, since the relation, ontologically, is amicable and since conflict is thus not an intrinsic component in the relation and since the subject/being is the same for both the ontological and ontic levels, it seems to me that the continuation of a non-violent relation is certainly a possibility at the ontic level.

According to Sartre, Heidegger is mistaken in perceiving the Other as "originally bound to me as an ontic reality appearing ... as ... a particular object" (BN, 245) for "the Other is not an object" (BN, 245). It is the function of the original relation to reveal the Other's subjectivity and not its objectivity. Sartre expresses this in his usual convoluted writing style when he states: "the being (that is, the phenomenon of the Other's subjectivity) by which he determines me in my being (that is, in my appearance as an Other) is his pure being (that is, the

Other's existence before all habitude) apprehended (by my subjectivity before all habitude) as 'being-in-the-world' (that is, his appearance as an Other)" (BN, 245).

Therefore, the original relation is that of being to being and all other relations are modes of being "which I make myself be" (BN, 246) and for which I am responsible. How can subjectivity, that is, the insubstantiality of subjectivity, be encountered as prior to substantiality? For instance, there is a person walking towards me but in the far distance. By observing the gait and such like mannerisms I identified this form as Pierre. Yet, even though I could not immediately identify the person as Pierre, I nevertheless knew from the first moment that it was a person and not a horse. Are not subjectivity and objectivity simultaneously identified in the beingness of person?

However, Sartre indicates that if one assumes the Heideggerian perspective, that is, the perspective of essence, then one cannot be responsible. For the "in" of Heidegger's being-in-the-world reveals the Other to be "ensnared" (BN, 245) in the world and as such robs him of responsibility. Clearly, states Sartre, "we know that the 'in' must be understood" (BN, 245) in a different sense. Of course, the question is, how do we know that this "in" must be understood differently? Furthermore, is it the case that the meaning actually awaits affirmation from the future?



Apparently so, since Sartre claims that "the 'in' must be understood in the sense of *colo*, *habito*, not of *insum*" (BN, 245). In other words, only as we project in the future do we know the meaning of our "to-be-in-the-world is to haunt the world" (BN, 245). Whereas to be ensnared in the world is an absence of freedom, to haunt the world is a manifestation of our freedom.

On the one hand, the relation being-with is an "essential structure of my being" (BN, 245) and as such "passively received by my being" (BN, 246), but on the other hand, Heidegger indicates that the relation being-with is also a "mode of being which I make myself be" (BN, 246). In other words, "to be is to be one's own possibilities; that is, to make oneself be" (BN, 246). However, according to Sartre, Heidegger's transcendental relation terminates with everyone losing their identity since "I realize my being-with in the anonymous form of 'they'" (BN, 246). Therefore, states Sartre: "I am not opposed to the Other, for I am not 'me'" (BN, 246).

In criticizing Heidegger's ontological standpoint Sartre rejects the notion of a transcendental connection between the ontological level of being and the empirical or ontic level of being because the essential ontological structure would supposedly be the foundation of ontic relationships. This is similar to Kant's position. Furthermore, states Sartre, the ontological and ontic Other is not identifiable,

because it lacks concreteness. Thus, there is neither a relation nor an Other since what is taken to be the Other is actually an abstract term. Sartre states: "there are two incommunicable levels and two problems which demand separate solutions" (BN, 248). The preceding Sartrean statement certainly lends support to Shearson's contention that Sartre was actually rejecting Heidegger's hypothesis that one could inquire into being. Shearson writes in an appendix to his main work on Sartre,

... if what Sartre says is correct, is it not the case that no direct inquiry into Being itself is possible, because ontology is strictly limited to the ontology of human being, i.e., the plane on which Sein und Zeit was written, and, therefore, Heidegger cannot move from that plane to the plane of Being as such? Shearson, 216

As well, Sartre claims that Heidegger's recourse to an essence, in fact, does not facilitate ontic relations insofar as an a priori relation "exhausts all possibility of relation with others" (BN, 249). That is, any ontic relations are merely variations of the ontological one. And lastly, Heidegger's definition of the self is such that the self appears to exist "outside itself" (BN, 249). That is, at the ontological level of being, the self is "outside-of-self-toward-self" (BN, 250), in other words, a gap is presupposed since the subjectivity at rest in itself contemplates "its own images" (BN, 249), and at the ontic

level of being, the self is "outside-self-in-others" (BN, 250) which is "strictly incompatible" (BN, 250), states Sartre. However, as already noted by me, is it not the case that in the project of the Look, Sartre also places the self at a distance, that is, in the unreflective-consciousness-representing-the-consciousness-of-the-world, in order to accommodate the phenomenon of the Look. Nevertheless, Sartre states:

Human-reality remains alone because the Other's existence has the nature of a contingent and irreducible fact. We encounter the Other; we do not constitute him. ... If the Other's existence is a necessity, it is a "contingent necessity;" that is, it is of the same type as the factual necessity which is imposed on the cogito. ... its indubitability. BN, 250

Thus, according to Sartre, consciousness remains alone because the phenomenon of consciousness is such that it is simply there or "is-there". As such, consciousness is encountered and not created.

#### Summary

In this section the underpinnings of Sartrean negative relationships were briefly presented. Though there have been numerous examples given in which Sartre absolutely rejects the simultaneity of essence and existence, and in fact, demotes the being of essence in such a way that it seems to loose its denotation and becomes instead synonymous

with learnt behaviour, he conveniently fuses essence to existence and restores its denotation when addressing the phenomenon of conflict.

## CHAPTER 2

### Consciousness as Relation

As with the preamble to the *Look*, Sartre's preamble to Concrete Relations With Others has two facets: that which is given explicitly and that which is merely implied. According to Rhiannon Goldthorpe, Sartre is "a master of ellipsis" and as such his [Sartre]'s recourse "to the unsaid or to the unwritten mean[s] that the task of the reader is often one of unfolding the highly implicit."<sup>11</sup> Without a doubt, this task of unfolding the highly implicit is more complex given Sartre's fondness for depersonalized terminology. At any rate, Sartre did state to Simone de Beauvoir that in writing BN he "tried to analyze ... certain symbolic aspects of things" (Adieux, 332). Even so, the question remains. Is conflict the original meaning of being-for-other?

Sartre states in his preamble to Chapter Three of Part Three that though:

the body is [not] the instrument and the cause of my relations with others ... the body constitutes their meaning and marks their limits. BN, 361

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<sup>11</sup>Rhiannon Goldthorpe. Sartre: Literature and Theory. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1984. p.1.

That is, the meaning and the limit of "my" relations with others is constituted by "my" body. However, it is not my body as such that governs my concrete relations with others, that is, though I am a certain height, weight, gender, etc., these data do not govern my concrete relations. What governs my relations with others? It is the attitude that is revealed by the presence of my body. Whose attitude? The Other's or mine? Insofar as I am both Others, that is, the one who looks and the one who is looked at, and, insofar as Sartre is focussing on what goes on in the conscious mind, then it is my attitude towards my body, my perception of my body as seen from the standpoint of the Other, that governs my concrete relations with others. This bilateral relation, according to Sartre, is manifested by the relation "for-itself-for-others" (BN, 361).

Initially, states Sartre, the question in BN concerned the relation of the soul to the body while ignoring the presence of the Other. However, it is now obvious that "there is a relation of the for-itself with the in-itself in the presence of the Other" (BN, 361), and it is this relation that requires further study.

It is not difficult to imagine Sartre asking himself, what differentiates being-in-itself, being-for-itself and the Other? Whereas being-in-itself is temporalized by spatial specifications, that is, it cannot be other than what it is, the being-for-itself and the being of Other are

not so affected. That is, since the being-for-itself and the being of Other are insubstantial beings, they can be other than what they are. Accordingly, the being-for-itself temporalizes itself by being a flight from what it is in-itself towards what it is not in-itself. It is in this way, states Sartre, that the being-for-itself "attempts to escape its factual existence (i.e., its being there, as an in-itself for which it is in no way the foundation) ... toward an impossible future ... i.e., an in-itself which would be to itself its own foundation" (BN, 362).

Sartre is concerned here that this temporalization of being-for-itself, as a flight from and as a flight toward, might be seen as existing first in a passive way and then in an active way when manifested. But this is not so. "The for-itself is this very flight. The flight is not to be distinguished from the original nihilation" (BN, 362).

According to Sartre:

The for-itself is not the in-itself and can not be it. But it is a relation to the in-itself. It is even the sole relation possible to the in-itself. Cut off on every side by the in-itself, the for-itself can not escape it because the for-itself is nothing and it is separated from the in-itself by nothing. The for-itself is the foundation of all negativity and of all relation. The for-itself is relation. BN, 362

According to the above quote, the being-for-itself is the foundation of all relations because the being-for-itself

is relation. As such, one can assume, the being-for-itself as relation would be the foundation of all negative relations as well as being the foundation of all positive relations. Further, that the being-for-itself as a being-of-relation is, in its first moment of being, a neutral relation. That is, if one follows Sartre's line of thinking, the sole requirement of being-for-itself-as-relation is that it should exist as what it is in-itself. Consequently, being-for-itself-as-relation would exist as a being-of-relation prior to the taking of a point of view just as, for instance, the chemical composition on the surface of scotch tape exists as what it is, a bonding compound, prior to the bonding process. And, just as the torn paper determines the angle at which the strip of scotch tape is to be applied, it is also in response to one's assimilation and organization of impressions in the second moment of the relation that a particular point of view is given form. In other words a positive or negative valuation manifesting a positive or negative relation depends on two sources: current impressions and past memories. However, this is not how Sartre perceives being-for-itself-as-relation.

For Sartre, the point of view is positioned such that the negative point of view exists as prior to the appearance of being. Accordingly, all intersubjective relationships begin negatively. And, though Sartre does not reject



outright the possibility of positive relations, he does not address himself to the problem that his claim presents. To postulate absolute negativity on the one hand is to deny what is, in fact, present in human reality, namely, one's experience of a caring relation in various situations, such as what is experienced by a parent for a child, or a child for a parent, or a husband for a wife, or a wife for a husband, or a friend for a friend. On the other hand, to recognize the possibility of positive relations would be to weaken the denotation of negativity as an absolute since it would cease to exert the force appropriate to its absolute category. That is, its function to disclose a universal meaning would be stripped from it given that a particular instance could override its universality. Thus, the situation would be such that a whole would receive meaning from one of its parts.

As already stated, the meaning and the limit of my relations with others are constituted by my body. According to the above discussion, the point of view from which the meaning and the limit are manifested must be from a negative standpoint. Only then, according to Sartre, do I "turn back toward it (my body) and assume attitudes with respect to it" (EN, 362). Sartre states:

Such is the origin of my concrete relations with the Other; they are wholly governed by my attitudes with respect to the object which I am for the Other. EN, 363

Given the necessity of perceiving my body from a negative standpoint it is clear that my attitudes towards my body must reflect that negativity. In other words, the entire range of any attitude vis-à-vis my body receives its meaning from this one perspective. Furthermore, in the Sartrean scheme of things, I will never experience a real dialogue with another human being precisely because my intention is directed towards me, towards my being, and it is there that the relation stops.

Inasmuch as Sartre placed an inordinate amount of stress on the attitudes that one has towards one's physical being, and since it is this perception that governs the relationship that one has with one's self, alias the Other, and since this perspective is predetermined, that is, the Other must look at the Other from a negative point of view, it would be useful to know what Sartre's view was of his own body since it is likely that his personal view influenced his philosophical presentation in BN.

Although some of Sartre's childhood perceptions have already been noted, there is a statement of his in my Introduction that is especially pertinent to this discussion since it shows Sartre's perception of his body as governing his concrete relations with other people. As a child, Sartre used to think that "people were hostile" and he felt this way because this feeling was "linked to an image" of himself; "I thought people did not find me physically

agreeable" (Adieux, 288). Furthermore, as an adult he finds "the adult male deeply disgusting" (Adieux, 285). "The body distinguishes between the sexes in an odious, comic fashion. The male is the one with a little tube between his legs - that's how I see him - and therefore there ought to be the adult female in contrast with him" (Adieux, 285).

As well, Sartre perceived his body as governing his concrete relations with others during the war. "To be a soldier at the front is really to be a victim of a society that keeps you where you do not want to be and gives you laws you don't want."<sup>12</sup> It was then that he observed that certain social changes were occurring regardless of what his attitude towards them might be. And, it was then that he recognized what life was - a conflict. Life was about opposing terms. Sartre states that:

... in a man's life consistency is desirable, but applies only to the thesis or the antithesis. The thesis is a sum of ideas, ways, and customs that should for preference be roughly consistent even if it does include some minor contradictions, and in the same way the antithesis should possess a certain coherence. Each of the two, thesis and antithesis, is explained by its opposition to the other. ... here I have laid out what may be called the thesis ... all that is left is to explain the antithesis. What I observed, though still rather vaguely, during the first part of my life, was the opposition between my freedom and the world.  
Adieux, 362-3

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<sup>12</sup>Paul A. Schilpp. The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre.  
 LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1981. p.12.

This awakening to the essence of life as conflict plus the perception of his physical being, when a child and as an adult, seems to have had a profound effect on the way Sartre conceptualized the Other.

Thus, the inner self is made aware of its outer self as a form to-be-seen when in relation to oneself and when in relation to everyone else as a being "in the midst of the world" (EN, 366) by experiencing two "fundamental attitudes (or conduct, p.364) toward the Other" (EN, 363): 1) love, language, and masochism and 2) indifference, desire, hate, and sadism.

In perceiving behaviours solely from the standpoint of attitude Sartre seeks to restrict the focus to the conscious mind; whereas behaviour describes a physical process, an attitude describes a mental position in regards to a fact or state. But why this particular selection of experiences? Since each experience depends on there being a reciprocal relation with another, it is evidence of the existence of Others. However, there is an inherent difficulty with Sartre's format of restricting his study to the conscious mind while at the same time focussing on the process of intersubjective relationships. The reaction of the Other is purely fictional insofar as we don't know how the Other would truly react given our inner exclusivity. In other words, everything that Sartre states about the Other's attitude and conduct towards oneself is conjecture since the

Other, in the sense of being another human being and not just an imagined Other, is not permitted to speak on his own behalf.

Sartre's first group of attitudes reflects the conduct of the being-for-itself-of-the-Other trying to assimilate my being-of-freedom for-himself, whereas the second group of attitudes reflect the conduct of my being-for-itself wherein I try to assimilate the freedom of the Other for-myself. Note: in an effort to avoid Sartre's repetitive style I will restrict myself to one example in each grouping, that of love in the first one and indifference in the second.

#### First Attitude Toward Others: Love, Language, Masochism

A cautionary note. As just stated, it is easy to be misled into thinking that the ensuing conflict occurs between two persons at the level of externality. However, this is not so. Inasmuch as Sartre interiorizes externality he posits consciousness as embodying two isolated beings engaged in conflict. Thus, since my consciousness is the foundation of both Others, that is, I am the one who looks and I am the one who is looked at from the standpoint of the Other, it means that I assume both roles in the conflict. It is in the preamble to Chapter Three that Sartre claims that, "conflict is the original meaning of being-for-Others" (BN, 364). He states:

Everything which may be said of me in my relations with the Other applies to him as well. While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the Other, the Other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me. We are by no means dealing with unilateral relations with an object-in-itself, but with reciprocal and moving relations. The following descriptions of concrete behavior must therefore be envisaged within the perspective of conflict. Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others. BN, 364

Concrete relations are conflicts because of the interaction between the one who looks and the one who is looked at. That is, the Other "as a look" (BN, 364) looks, and in looking possesses whatever is looked at, and whatever is looked at is looked at because of what it is, an object to be seen. This relation reveals the following fundamental fact about the Sartrean concept of responsibility.

I am responsible for my being-for-others, but I am not the foundation of it. BN, 364

How can I be a responsible being and yet not be responsible for being a responsible being, that is, not be the foundation? As will be shown in a moment, this skewed concept of responsibility is linked to Sartre's description of responsibility. It was shown in section (i) of Chapter One, how Sartre posits consciousness as a being that cannot be violated, how the project of objectification requires two beings, and how these two beings are manifested in a single

consciousness. However, this raises a question concerning the identity of the agent. Since neither being can exist without the Other nor act unless accompanied by the Other, which Other is truly responsible for the experiencing of objectification? That is, in order for the Other to be Other-as-agent it must be accompanied by the Other as-itself, otherwise the Other-as-agent cannot be. Likewise, in order for the Other to be Other-as-object it must also be accompanied by the Other as-itself, otherwise it too cannot be. Insofar as both Others are present when one is the agent, and insofar as both Others are present when one is the object, this puts into question the whole structure of objectification since both are present on either side of the relation. Further, if the Others do not act together in this way then there is no act, since Other as agent and Other as object cannot be agent and object on their own.

On the one hand since it is my consciousness that accommodates both Others how can I not be the foundation of my own objectification? How can I deny that experience since experiencing the experience is viewed by Sartre as sufficient evidence of what is? On the other hand, since it is generally accepted that Sartre upheld the belief that each being is responsible, why did he put the apprehension of responsibility in the hands of the Other? In other words, why is my self, who is the being that judges my actions, not with me as I act?

There is in Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre an explanation of Sartre's perception of responsibility. We enter the discussion just as Sartre is explaining how he reconciles his view of progress as regards the developing of skills, such as learning how to write better, with his denial of experience as regards the inability to progress, such as in knowledge. Sartre's comments here reveal the extent to which he carries the claim that the inner self and outer self are separated in the sense that they do not adhere to the same temporalization structures. Sartre is saying:

As I see it, the moment itself is already progress. It is the present and it flows on toward the future, leaving behind it the poor, disdained, despised, denied past. For this reason I've always readily admitted misdeeds or mistakes, since they were committed by someone else. Adieux, 415

According to the above quote each moment reveals a self that is unlike the self in the past or the self in the future. Thus, since I am not the same person now that I was in the past, I am not responsible "at this moment" for past actions. In other words, I absolve myself from misdeeds by the peculiar behaviour of denial/acceptance. Inwardly I know that I am not the self "at this moment" that committed those misdeeds and so deny to myself my involvement while outwardly I accept blame for them - but only when I have been confronted. What happens when the deeds are not misdeeds? That is, do I have the option of not denying my



accomplishments? If that option is not open to me what does that say about myself as freedom incarnate?

It appears that taking responsibility for the action and being aware of the meaning of the action are both dependent on external recognition, according to (a) Sartre's keyhole example, (b) Jacques Salvan's reflection on Sartre's example, and (c) the entire Sartrean project of objectification. For instance, if the self in the keyhole example had not been caught spying, then presumably the self would not and could not, of its own volition, hold itself responsible, nor for that matter could it have been aware of what it was doing, simply because its actions were outside of or beyond the bounds of self-apprehension and the assigning of a meaning. Clearly, the Sartrean message is this: the phenomenon of responsibility is manifested only when one is seen.

Furthermore, since "to be seen" is the manifestation of conflict insofar as my freedom has been taken from me, and since "to be responsible" also means that one has been seen and therefore one's freedom has been taken away, it shows that the experience of responsibility is something to be avoided at all cost insofar as it results in the subjugation of one's freedom. In other words, according to Sartre's proposition, it is to one's advantage not to be seen. Yet, there remains a question. Is it possible to be responsible without experiencing a Look? In other words, am I so

completely isolated from my prior experiences that I cannot, of my own volition, assign a meaning and value to my actions? How can I deny my experience of knowing?

How can a man deny knowing the difference between spying on the enemy and spying on his wife? As a soldier, spying affirms his devotion for his country, but as a husband, spying affirms his distrust of his wife. In the former, there is a measure of honour, but in the latter, a measure of dishonour. How can he deny his experience of knowing this difference?

Setting aside Sartre's skewed concept of responsibility to re-focus on the bilateral relation "for-itself--for-others" (BN, 361), it is evident that the Sartrean thesis remains faithful to its earlier claim in which the objectness manifested by the appearance of an object in consciousness refers "not to an original solitude beyond my reach, but to a fundamental connection in which the Other is manifested in some way other than through the knowledge which I have of him" (BN, 253). This Sartrean faithfulness to conscious experience is expressed by Hazel Barnes in the following way:

Sartre embraced in toto the phenomenological approach: to study direct conscious experience, independent of any commitment one might make as to the nature of existence as such, and to treat objects in the world solely as they reveal themselves in their appearances to consciousness. Sartre found in the work of Husserl the method he

required to support his own view of consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

Though I do not agree that Sartre's study of conscious experience was accomplished without reflecting on existence itself, it is a fact that Sartre remained sequestered within his own consciousness, as he experienced his being as a being in the midst of the world. As such, there is no external dialogue.

The flight from and the flight towards, according to Sartre, "is fundamentally a project of absorbing the Other" (BN, 364) while leaving the Other's nature intact. Two consequences follow from this project, states Sartre. I must deny that I am the Other by asserting that I am the Other, otherwise the ontological structure of being-for-others disappears. That is, if I recognize my awareness of the Other, I end up assimilating "the Other's Otherness as my own possibility" (BN, 365). Therefore, in order to affirm my being I must attempt to take the Other's point of view and direct a look towards myself. Sartre states:

I do not thereby cease to assert the Other - that is, to deny concerning myself that I am the Other. ... In fact the problem for me is to make myself be by acquiring the possibility of taking the Other's point of view on myself. BN, 365

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<sup>13</sup> Glen A. Mazis. "The Third: Development in Sartre's Characterization of the Self's Relation to Others". Philosophy Today. 24 Fall 1980. pp.280-1.

The second consequence of my project is that I must "identify myself totally with my being-looked-at" (BN, 365) in order to maintain "the Other's freedom which is looking at me" (BN, 365), that is, I have to identify myself totally with my object-state and not with my being-for-itself in order to affirm the freedom that my being-for-itself is. To do otherwise would be an attempt to reduce my consciousness in such a way that it would exist without remainder, which is an impossibility for Sartre, as noted earlier in Phyllis Sutton Morris' book. Sartre states in BN that:

... my project of incorporating the Other in no way corresponds to a recapturing of my for-itself as myself and to a surpassing of the Other's transcendence toward my own possibilities. BN, 365

If there was any doubt as to the identity of the Other then the above quote and discussion should put it to rest. Who is the Other? The Other is myself as a for-itself and the Other is myself as an object, and in this instance Sartre is focussing on the Other as-object inasmuch as I cannot recapture my for-itself as what it is in-itself. That is, I, as the being who Looks, as the being who attempts to occupy the point of view of the Other on myself, cannot recapture my being-for-itself because my being-for-itself is not subject to and, in fact, is outside of, the phenomenon of objectification because my being-for-itself is an insubstantial being. Furthermore, since I am my look, I

cannot look at my look. That is, my being-for-itself is not an object and cannot be one; thus I experience my being as-object only under the name of the Other. Sartre states:

To be other to oneself - the ideal always aimed at concretely in the form of being this Other to oneself - is the primary value of my relations with the Other. BN, 365

There is something amiss with this ideal. In the first place, Sartre distinguishes between the ideal and the striving towards the ideal by capitalizing Other. That is, the presence of the lower case in the ideal indicates the absence of a relation whereas the upper case in the striving towards indicates the presence of a relation. Secondly, the lower case shows that it is impossible to actually take an external point of view on one's self in the sense of being outside of one's body and in another form in order to look at one's original self. In other words no one can have two bodies. And, even if one could it would not be of any use because the condition of possibility for all experiences, according to Sartre and stated in section (ii) of my Chapter One, is that the subject must organize for himself his impressions. Clearly, if I had two bodies I would have two sets of impressions.

Thus, since the manifestation of the striving towards the ideal occurs within one body and therefore since we can be this Other to and for ourselves, then the word "Other" is

significant and so is capitalized to show the presence of reality, at least interiorized reality if not empirical reality. Further, since the actualization of the striving towards shows that my identity is confirmed only by being what I am not and not what I am, it indicates that my identity of being an Other for myself is dependent on the ideal being injurious to my well-being. The question is, why would I hold as an ideal something that annihilates my being? Generally, "ideal" connotes something good for one's existence rather than something detrimental.

As well, it appears that the ideal of love, like the ideal of Otherness, is injurious to one's well-being; especially so for the beloved as will be shown momentarily. According to Sartre, the striving towards the ideal of love should not be confused with the ordinary expression of love since that love is "an organic ensemble of projects toward my own possibilities" (BN, 366). In other words the organic ensemble of projects is a physical phenomenon manifesting a physical relation of a specific physical act whereas the striving towards the ideal of love is a mental phenomenon manifesting a mental relation of a specific conscious act. Thus, the purpose of the flight from and the flight towards the ideal of love, according to Sartre, is "to capture a 'consciousness'" (BN, 366) as what it is in-itself, a being-of-freedom, without destroying its freedom. Sartre states:

... the lover does not desire to possess the beloved as one possesses a thing; he demands a special type of appropriation. He wants to possess a freedom as freedom. BN, 367

Is the lover successful? It depends on from which perspective one chooses to view freedom. From one standpoint, freedom appears as a pseudo-being and as such is vulnerable, whereas from the other standpoint, freedom appears as an absolute being and therefore not vulnerable.

It is in the capacity of an end already chosen that the lover wishes to be chosen as an end. This allows us to grasp what basically the lover demands of the beloved; he does not want to act on the Other's freedom but to exist a priori as the objective limit of this freedom; that is, to be given at one stroke along with it and in its very upsurge as the limit which the freedom must accept in order to be free. BN, 368

When Sartre states that, "he does not want to act on the Other's freedom but to exist a priori as the objective limit of this freedom" he is speaking from the standpoint of "his" existence as a being of consciousness and looking at "his" freedom. Only by clarifying the function of the word "this" does one recognize that Sartre is not only affirming both the primacy of consciousness and the being-ness of freedom but also the presence of a relation. Insofar as meaning is always out-there, to act on the Other's freedom would mean the destruction of that which would reveal freedom as a meaning. That is, consciousness is aware of

freedom only as it points towards the appearance of the being-of-freedom. The second perspective sees Sartre assuming the standpoint of freedom and looking towards consciousness. From this perspective, freedom must accept consciousness as its objective limit. Actually, freedom has no say in the matter since Sartre states that the lover, alias the being of consciousness, issues a demand - Dear Beloved, since I exist a priori I demand that you perceive me as your objective limit. In other words, to be free, the beloved, alias the being-of-freedom, must recognize the lover, alias the being of consciousness, as its foundation, as its source of meaning, as its source of freedom. What happens if the beloved, alias the being-of-freedom, refuses to apprehend the lover, alias the being of consciousness, as its limiting factor? Presumably, the beloved loses its freedom.

Yet, is the beloved truly free? If in order to experience itself as freedom the beloved must acquiesce to an external limitation imposed by the lover, then it seems to me that this description of freedom actually describes an absence of freedom as regards the beloved as a being-of-freedom. The reality of the situation is that the beloved is not free and does not manifest freedom. Further, since it is the lover who is demanding to be perceived as an objective limit, in whatever form or meaning that takes, it means that the lover is the cause and not an innocent victim

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of whatever happens.

Even though the focus of the lover's intention is directed towards his beloved and even though it is this focus that governs the lover's concrete relations with the beloved, it does not mean that the lover knows that he is the lover. As indicated earlier, the lover is not cognizant of his meaning. Consequently, the lover awaits the beloved's response. It is not until the lover receives outside confirmation, not until he is acknowledged by the beloved, does he know that he is the chosen one. This is the hidden agenda of the lover's demand - to demand confirmation of his existence, not in the sense that he is unaware of his existence but in the sense that he is unaware of the meaning of his existence. However, since the lover is the source of all meanings is he not in the end free to select whichever meaning he wants? Sartre states:

Now we can grasp the meaning of this demand: the facticity which is to be a factual limit for the Other in my demand to be loved and which is to result in being his own facticity - this is my facticity. BN, 368

Only when I, from the standpoint of the Other, look, can I be "the inherent limit to ... [my] ... transcendence" (BN, 368), states Sartre. In other words since it is from the beloved's perspective that the lover looks at himself, and since his demand to the beloved was that the beloved

should posit him as its objective limit, then clearly the lover is seeing himself in the mode of being an objective limit. Thus, the lover's experiences as a "being-for-others-in-the-midst-of-the-world" (BN, 368) depends on the objective limit which he, from the standpoint of the beloved, perceives himself to be, as he looks at himself over there in the lover's standpoint. Sartre states:

... as the absolute limit of freedom - i.e., of the absolute of all values - I am protected against any eventual devalorization. I am the absolute value. To the extent that I assume my being-for-others, I assume myself as value. Thus to want to be loved is to want to be placed beyond the whole system of values posited by the Other and to be the condition of all valorization and the objective foundation of all values. BN, 369

Sartre states that since the lover is not like others, in the sense that he is protected against any eventual devalorization, yet, since the Look of the beloved would result in the objectification of the lover, it is necessary that the lover be in relation "with another structure" (BN, 369). In other words, the flight from the standpoint of the beloved towards the standpoint of the lover is the beginning of the end for the beloved. That is, the beloved is re-structured so as not to be a threat to the lover. However, since the lover and the beloved are one and the same being, Sartre's re-structuring of the beloved would seem to indicate that certain aspects of the Other are opened to

modifications.

The key to the setting aside of the beloved's capacity to harm the lover begins with the positioning of the lover vis-à-vis the beloved. Thus, a distance is brought into being. Sartre states:

I must be the one whose function is to make trees and water exist, ... in order to give them later to the Other ... BN, 369

Next, the ontological structure of the Other as a being for-itself and as a being for-other is recognized. On the one hand, the Other-as-lover experiences his being as a for-itself in the sense that he is the object through which there can be appearances. On the other hand, the Other-as-lover experiences his being as a for-other in the sense that he is the subjectivity that dispenses meanings. According to Sartre's distorted description of what it means to be loved, this duality is necessary. Sartre states:

In one sense if I am to be loved, I am the object through whose procuration the world will exist for the Other; in another sense I am the world. BN, 369

Next, since the characteristic of "finitude" (BN, 369) is lacking in the lover, it indicates that the only way that the lover can appear is by being the being-of-relation. Thus, on the one hand, without the lover the beloved would

have no experiences for its meanings, and thus theoretically chooses not to deny the lover. Also, on this occasion where the lover seeks to be loved and presumably in all other situations where the lover seeks to experience a meaning, it will be necessary for the beloved to disregard its being as a being-of-negation. Otherwise the lover will never know what he experiences insofar as he lacks the mechanism by which the meaning for his experiences appears.

On the other hand, the lover must choose not to use the conscious act of negation given its function as an instrument of objectification. The problem is, that since the lover is also the beloved, it means that when the lover objectifies the beloved he also annihilates his being as an infinite subjectivity. Thus, like the beloved, the lover's being-of-negation is rendered null and void. However, it is interesting to note that even though one of the mechanisms by which the beloved could harm the lover has been removed, its removal from the one actually results in its removal from the other. Therefore,

I possess all possibles. I am all the dead-possibilities in the world; hence I cease to be the being who is understood from the standpoint of other beings or of its acts. BN, 370

Lastly, even though the relation of negativity that bonded the beloved to the lover and the lover to the beloved has been set aside, the lover is still unable to experience

love, at least the Sartrean form of love. Sartre indicates that the problem lies with the being of freedom. On the one hand, the lover has issued a demand, that the beloved should accept him a priori as its objective limit. On the other hand, it means that the beloved is now free to objectify the lover by a look. Thus, the lover posits a plan. The lover decides that his freedom should not only be set aside but "absolutely metamorphosed" (BN, 370) so that the beloved's freedom can appear. As stated earlier, the lover "does not want to act on the Other's freedom" (BN, 368), that is, the lover does not want to act on his own freedom but "to exist a priori as the objective limit of this freedom" (BN, 368). In other words, by existing over-there in the beloved, the lover from his own standpoint can experience his meaning as a being-of-freedom. Accordingly, from the standpoint of the lover and looking towards the beloved, the lover experiences its meaning as freedom, while from the standpoint of the beloved and looking towards the lover, the lover/beloved experiences its meaning as being-loved, that is, experiences its being as an "object-as-totality" (BN, 370). Thus, from the former perspective, the lover possesses "a freedom as freedom" (BN, 367) in the sense that he is experiencing himself as the objective limit of his being as a being-of-freedom. Consequently, the lover is neither vulnerable nor devalued. Whereas from the latter perspective, the lover does not possess a freedom as freedom because he is

experiencing his being-loved which is the manifestation of his object-ness, an experience which Sartre indicates as being not what the lover desired. Thus, the lover from the standpoint of the beloved experiences his vulnerability and his devaluation. Sartre states:

... the Other's freedom must be absolutely metamorphosed in order to allow me to attain the state of being loved. BN, 370

What we have just witnessed, vis-à-vis the being-of-negation and the-being-of-freedom, is an example of Sartre's bracketing. As Hazel Barnes said, Sartre embraced in toto the phenomenological approach in order to study conscious experience. Apparently, the conscious experience is not the experience of negation nor the experience of freedom. What is the conscious experience? It is the experience of being loved, and love is the manifested experience of "object-as-totality" (BN, 370), according to Sartre. Thus, what has been experienced is our being as a being-for-other, that is, our appearance as a form to be seen, that is, our being in its modality of object-ness.

This in turn raises a serious problem. Sartre presents the Other in such a way that the Other is said to be not separable from negation nor from freedom, since the Other is negation and freedom. Yet, here we have Sartre reversing himself by suggesting that the Other is neither negation nor

freedom after all, inasmuch as they can be set aside or bracketed. Given this situation should negation and freedom be considered as attributes? If they are not attributes how can negation and freedom be set aside? If, on the other hand, they are attributes, this clearly opens the door to other points of view and to control. And, since the force of my thesis is to determine whether consciousness is free to set the tone of its relations, Sartre's recourse to this form of bracketing indicates the presence of a possibility.

That is, since I am free to set aside my freedom and my negativity for a specific experience and in this situation it is to experience myself as loved, I am also free to assume another point of view insofar as a void has been created by the conscious act of setting aside my being of negation. In other words, if I seek to experience myself as a caring wife, or a caring mother, or a caring friend, all I need do is set aside what I am, a being of negativity, in order to experience myself as a caring wife, or mother, or friend. Furthermore, insofar as the experiencing of myself as loved is sufficient evidence for what is in fact the case, at least, according to Sartre's way of thinking, then experiencing myself as a caring person will likewise be sufficient evidence of what is. That is, for Sartre, the proof of reality is the experiencing of the experience, the lived experience. Given the reality of this one positive experience, Sartre's positing of a negative universal is

untenable.

Second Attitude Toward Others: Indifference, Desire,  
Hate, Sadism

Whereas in the first attitude the lover tries to assimilate the beloved to himself, this second attitude is the lover's reaction to the failure of his attempt. The lover's intention was to experience the beloved, not as a total being deserving respect but as a detotalized being. That is, the purpose of the relation was to apprehend one of the many possible meanings present in the objective limit, a limit which the lover demands to be for the beloved. Though on this occasion the lover is seeking his meaning as a being of freedom, he experiences disappointment because he transcends the beloved's freedom and does not stop until he reaches the beloved's objectness. However, inasmuch as the lover and the beloved are one and the same being, it means that the beloved's facticity is also the lover's. Given the co-existence of the lover and the beloved in a single consciousness, is the lover's reaction logical? How does Sartre's lover react? By fixing the beloved with a Look. Sartre states:

... to look at the Other's look is to posit oneself in one's own freedom and to attempt on the ground of this freedom to confront the Other's freedom.  
EN, 379



According to Sartre's description, the lover's reaction to the beloved is punitive. That is, though it is not the beloved's fault that the lover fails in his attempt to apprehend only the meaning of freedom, given that it is the lover who is the agent of the action of transcending and not the beloved, the beloved is nonetheless victimized. Still, by virtue of being also the beloved, the lover is not only responsible for his own disappointment but also responsible for his own experiencing of the victimization of the beloved. Thus, the external reality of the lover's look is that the lover sees his own eyes, his own face, his physical being. In response to this experience the lover exerts his own subjectivity, his own freedom, by assuming an attitude towards his body. As noted earlier:

Such is the origin of my concrete relations with the Other; they are wholly governed by my attitudes with respect to the object which I am for the Other. BN, 363

What form does the lover's retaliation take? What is the lover's attitude towards the object which he is for himself? The lover assumes an attitude of indifference.

Sartre states:

... "to look at the look" is my original reaction to my being-for-others. ... I can choose myself as looking at the Other's look and can build my subjectivity upon the collapse of the subjectivity of the Other. It is this attitude which we shall

call indifference toward others. BN, 380

According to Sartre, when I am the experience of this attitude of indifference, I am blind to the Other's freedom. Whose freedom? The freedom of the beloved or the freedom of the lover. Since the beloved's freedom is a pseudo-freedom insofar as the beloved must accept the lover as its objective limit in order to be free, it appears that the lover is blind to his own freedom. However, was not that the plan? To metamorphose the Other's freedom in order to allow the Other to attain the state of being loved.

According to Sartre:

I am my own blindness with regard to others, and this blindness includes an implicit comprehension of being-for-others; that is, of the Other's transcendence as a look. This comprehension is simply what I myself determine to hide from myself. I practice then a sort of factual solipsism.  
BN, 380

Earlier in this Chapter I asked, how could Sartre deny his experience of knowing? Now I know. "I myself determine to hide from myself" (BN, 380), states Sartre. Does hiding from my self, obliterate my knowing? No. Nevertheless, hiding from my self does metamorphose my being, that is, I am now a depersonalized person. And, by depersonalizing myself I depersonalize all others. Sartre states as much:

I act as if I were alone in the world. I brush against "people" as I brush against a wall; I avoid them as I avoid obstacles. Their freedom-as-object is for me only their "coefficient of adversity." I do not even imagine that they can look at me. ... they are the effect of my action upon them. Those "people" are functions. BN, 380

#### Summary

Sartre's personal dissatisfaction with his body and of the nature of being explains his conscious acts of "hiding from his self" (BN, 380), of practicing "a sort of factual solipsism" (BN, 380) towards others and behaving as though "alone in the world" (BN, 380). For Sartre, the primary truth of the nature of being, of the nature of consciousness, is that:

Being is simply the condition of all revelation.  
It is being-for-revealing and not revealed being.  
BN, xlix

Thus, according to Sartre, the nature or essence of being, that is, the nature or essence of consciousness, is not "to be seen" but rather "to be". Therefore, being has an inherent duality: there is the phenomenon of "to be" and there is the phenomenon of "to be seen". In the former I am an insubstantial being and in the latter I experience my substantialness. It is only as I experience my substantial being that I apprehend my other self, my insubstantial self, which then becomes the apprehension of its other self, its

substantialness. For Sartre, this apprehension is the upsurge of conflict.

Clearly, Being and Nothingness is dedicated to this basic Sartrean belief. Thus, consciousness is said to have two modalities, that of presence-in-person and that of object-ness wherein the presence-in-person, alias relation, alias being-for-itself, alias the Other, alias the lover, alias absolute freedom, desires that its modality of object-ness, its being-to-be-seen, could be other than what it is in the sense of submitting its being-ness to the other mode of being. In other words, instead of being a being-to-be-seen it should be a being that is not seen; but since this is not possible there is conflict. According to Sartre, awareness of this impossibility is manifested by various attitudes towards being when it is in this modality of to-be-seen. Nevertheless, insofar as it is one's attitude towards the appearance of being that governs one's concrete relations with the Other and with others, one has to wonder whether conflict is truly inevitable. The Sartrean meaning and limit of indifference vis-à-vis the Other reveals that consciousness chooses to hide from its self and vis-à-vis others chooses to practice a sort of factual solipsism. Furthermore, since this Sartrean conflict is restricted to one's consciousness, to an original solitude, it reveals that the second term of the relation, that is, the Other who stands over-there, is nothing but a pseudo-being manifesting

a pseudo-identity, a pseudo-negativity, and a pseudo-freedom and eternally vulnerable to the creative whims of its creator, which leads to the next point.

There is a flaw in Sartre's concept of responsibility. According to Sartre, I am the agent who is responsible for doing an action in the sense that I am the object through whom an action has being and I am aware of myself as that agent when I am in my modality of "to be seen". However, why is it that I do not know myself as responsible when in my other modality of being, for I am after all the same being but only in another conscious mode of being? The problem is the lack of ownership. Since Sartre chose to hide from his self, to distance himself from his self, and since he confronts his self in only one of his modalities but not in the other, it indicates that accountability, which is the characteristic attribute of responsibility, has been set aside. This phenomenological bracketing skews the concept of responsibility and thus makes of it a pseudo-concept.

## CHAPTER 3

### Concluding Remarks

As Sartre speaks of the Other who looks, of the Other who is looked at, and of an intersubjective relationship which in Sartre's mind can mean nothing but conflict, one naturally assumes, in response to Sartre's use of ordinary words such as lover, beloved, relationship with all the echoes such words call up in everyday usage, that the relationship is between two individuals. However, this is not the case; the relationship in question is with one individual. That is to say, what Sartre is describing is the Other's self-apprehension (a) as a being for-itself and (b) as a being in-the-world. Since the Other is always in relationship with itself, its existence as a "being-to-be-seen" is continually being confirmed. However, since there are no intersubjective relationships with any others, the existence of others is only probable. It is in this way that Sartre's Other seems to exist as a solitude.

Thus, the apprehension of myself "as seen in the world and from the standpoint of the world" (BN, 263) reveals my being as a being "to be seen"; that is, one is forever vulnerable to the experience of self-apprehension. Further, this experience of self-apprehension reveals the Ego "in shame and, in other instances, in pride" (BN, 261). And

though there are an infinite number of possibilities, that is, each situation of shame or pride will include details appropriate to its revealing while excluding all others, Sartre believes that all self-apprehensions must be seen from one perspective only, that of conflict.

However, not all self-apprehensions of one's being-in-the-world or of one's being-for-oneself can be viewed from that one perspective. Some, such as the self-apprehension of oneself as "seated-on-a-chair" (BN, 263), or, the self-apprehension of oneself as a female, are neutral in character; while others, such as the self-apprehension of oneself as spying on one's spouse, or, the self-apprehension of oneself as a coward, are negative in character; and others, such as the self-apprehension of oneself rocking a child to sleep, or, the self-apprehension of oneself as faithful, are positive in character. Thus, the experience of a self-apprehension may reveal the Ego in either a morally neutral, negative, or positive tonality.

Is it possible to experience a self-apprehension of faithfulness from the perspective of conflict? No, insofar as the object of consciousness, that is, faithfulness, must refer to the consciousness who is experiencing its being as a faithful being, and insofar as this referring must coincide in every way with the experience of this self-apprehension, then a negative perspective would not permit the required degree of exactness. Sartre's claim, that

there is only one standpoint from which a look is experienced, ignores human reality in that he tries to reduce too much the various kinds and tonalities of self-apprehensions, a reduction which at some points collides with common sense.

According to Sartre, the bond that exists between my unreflective consciousness and my Ego before the experience of self-apprehension is that of "being" (BN, 261) and after self-apprehension, the bond is transformed into one of "knowing" (BN, 261). In the former, I am a being in the conscious mode of "to be," whereas in the latter I am a being in the conscious mode of "to be seen". Though Sartre asserts that nothing can be said of the conscious mode of "to be," since in the very moment that attention is directed towards it, it is transcended, we nevertheless know three facts about this modality: (a) that the conscious mode of "to be" exists, (b) that the conscious mode of "to be" is a being, (c) that the conscious mode of "to be" functions as an objective limit, that is, it is a limiting factor for the conscious mode of "to be seen". And as noted earlier, this constitutes the first moment of Sartre's cogito.

In order to posit this addition to Descartes' cogito, Sartre elicits support from a rather strange source, at least strange for him given his atheistic stance. That is, Sartre applies the concept of faith to his cogito. Thus, I believe in the existence of this "to be" being not because I



have seen it with my own eyes but because I have experienced the conscious mode of "to be seen" which, according to Sartre, points towards this unknowable being. Thus, by a leap of faith I believe that this prior moment exists, and because I believe then I have faith in the existence of this prior conscious mode. Note however, that though it is not seen it is nevertheless a being, that is, a human consciousness, and as such is a knowing being. Because of this cogito factor consciousness is able to reveal another perspective. That is, on the one hand, there is the relationship with the ontic Other in its mode of being-seen, and on the other hand, there is the relationship with the ontological Other in its mode of "to be". Whereas in the former situation a negative perspective is a requirement, it is not a requirement in the latter situation.

As stated earlier, the identity of Other can only be maintained if the Other persists in denying that it is the Other. Sartre states: "the condition on which I project the identification of myself with the Other is that I persist in denying that I am the Other" (BN, 366). Thus, the primary rule for this ontic relationship is denial, but not so when I demand to be recognized as an objective limit for myself. That is, when I demand of myself "to be" a being-of-consciousness for myself. Here, there is no question of denial being the primary rule; rather acceptance is the rule. How do I know this? By following Sartre's

game plan. Sartre states that one must look at the end in order to apprehend the preceding moments or means. If the end lacks a denial then the preceding moment must not have expressed a denial. Sartre states:

It is the end to be attained which organizes all the moments which precede it. The end justifies the means; the means do not exist for themselves and outside the end. BN, 259

What then is expressed in the ontological relation? It seems to me that there simply is no way out for Sartre. Despite his insistence that conflict is the sole meaning of relationship there is here an occasion wherein it is not the case. That is, for me to posit myself as being my own limitation, I must have first seen myself as being just that sort of being. Accordingly, the end would reveal my self-apprehension-of-myself-as-an-objective-limit-for-myself, in other words, consciousness' self-consciousness-of-itself-as-consciousness.

What then is the primary rule for this particular situation? Given the lack, and not just an absence, of denial in this end, one can infer that one has accepted that which was not denied. And, since the ontological relation is prior to the ontic relation given Sartre's cogito thesis, it seems logical to suppose that the experiencing of being-for-other would also follow this order. Moreover, since the conscious act manifested at the ontological level of being

is my acceptance of my being-of-consciousness as a limiting being for myself, then clearly the meaning of being-for-other cannot be that of conflict since that does not reflect the lived experience. In other words, because this particular experience of one's being as a limiting being for one's self is accepted, we find an indication that in this situation the original meaning of being-for-other is that of freedom.

Though Sartre has faith in the existence of the conscious mode of "to be," and its function as a limiting factor for the conscious mode of "to be seen," he clearly distorts this function. That is, normally the manifestation of freedom extends over a whole spectrum of possible responses but feeling degraded to the status of an object is hardly representative of a spectrum. Since Sartre loses sight of the freedom that human beings possess in their relationships with themselves and with others, it is inevitable that he would trap himself and in the process distort reality.

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