

Jean-Paul Sartre's
Being and Nothingness

Course materials

Paul Vincent Spade
Indiana University

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Books You Should Know About

The following are things you should know about. I have included the call numbers in the Indiana University main library, for your convenience.

Anderson, Thomas C. *The Foundation and Structure of Sartrean Ethics*, Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979. (B2430 .S34 A75) (An outstanding book! This is one of the best things I've read so far on Sartre's ethics. Clear and cogent. Also not the end of the story.)

Barnes, Hazel Estella. *An Existentialist Ethics*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967. (B819 .B245) (Barnes is the translator of *Being and Nothingness* and of *Search for a Method*.)

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Bernard Frechtman, tr., New York: The Philosophical Library, 1949. (BJ1063 .B386) (A classic study of existentialist ethics.)

Caws, Peter. *Sartre*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. (B2430 .S34 C38) (A volume in "The Arguments of the Philosophers" series. In my opinion, it's not a very good book. But it does have a useful first chapter, "A Conspectus of Sartre's Writings.")

Cohen-Solal, Annie. *Sartre: A Life*, Anna Cancogni, tr., New York: Pantheon, 1984. (B2430 .S34 C5413 1987) A good biography of the man.

Danto, Arthur Coleman. *Jean-Paul Sartre*, New York: The Viking Press, 1975. (B2340 .S34 D19) (This is a good secondary source, in the "Modern Masters" series, although I think it makes several *fundamental* errors. At last report it is — alas — out of print.)

Detmer, David. *Freedom As A Value: A Critique of the Ethical Theory of Jean-Paul Sartre*, LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1988. (B2430 .S34 D45 1988) (As the name implies. Takes off from Anderson's book. In my opinion, the first part is excellent and the last part is not.)

Fell, Joseph P., III. *Emotion in the Thought of Sartre*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1965. (B2430 .S34 F317) (An excellent book! Very useful for far more than the title would suggest. It provides a good overview of the developments and changes in Sartre's views on things like the theory of intentionality. Unlike some of Fell's later stuff, which I think is jargony and obscure, this is plain and clear. When I was first getting in to Sartre, this was one of the most helpful books I read.)

Hartmann, Klaus. *Sartre's Ontology: A Study of Being and Nothingness in the Light of Hegel's Logic*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966. (B819 .S26 H32) (The author's own translation of his *Grundzüge der Ontologie Sartres in ihrem Verhältnis zu Hegels Logik*. As the title implies, this discusses how Sartre's ontology is based on Hegel.)

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trs., New York: Harper & Row, 1962. (BD331 .H42) (Hoo boy!)

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Howells, Christina, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992. (B2430 .S34 C19 1992). A collection of essays.

Husserl, Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, Dorion Cairns, tr., The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982. (B829.5 .H82913 1982) (A late work, after Husserl had very much made the turn to transcendental talk. For some reason, Cairns insists on referring to the transcendental ego as “he.”)

Husserl, Edmund. *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, F. Kersten, tr., The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982. (B3279 .H93 A3313 1980 v. 1) This is really the famous *Ideas*. For some reason, the library lists it under this title instead.

Husserl, Edmund. *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, Martin Heidegger, ed., James S. Churchill, tr., Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1964. (B3279 .H91 H46) (An early work. Sartre knew and was influenced by it.)

Jeanson, Francis. *Sartre and the Problem of Morality*, Robert V. Stone, tr., Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980. (B2430 .S34 J413 1980) (From the French original. Sartre was going to write a big book on ethics, but never quite got it done. In a Preface to this work, Sartre in effect says this is the book he would have written. Need I say more?)

Kaufmann, Walter Arnold, ed. *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, rev. ed., New York: New American Library, [1989?]. (B819 .E87 1989) (Sartre’s “Existentialism Is A Humanism” is contained in this volume. **Note:** The page references below are to this “revised and expanded” version.)

Miller, Izchak. *Husserl, Perception, and Temporal Awareness*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984. (B3279 .H94 M45 1984) (General background on the phenomenological tradition.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Anti-Semite and Jew*, George J. Becker, tr., New York: Schocken, 1948. (DS145 .S27) (A wonderful little essay. Completely non-technical, and yet it squarely illustrates all sorts of themes from his philosophy. It’s also interesting, of course, in purely non-philosophical terms.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*, Hazel E. Barnes, tr., New York: The Philosophical Library, 1956. (B819 .S262 1956) (Our textbook, in case you left yours at home when you go to the library. I have not checked to see how the page numbers in this hard-bound version correspond to those in the paperback version — and in my references in the outlines and in lecture. **Note:** This is the original hardback version that has recently been reprinted.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Alan Sheridan-Smith, tr., Jonathan Ree, ed., Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1976. (B809.8 .S324913)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Emotions: Outline of A Theory*, Bernard Frechtman, tr., New York: The Philosophical Library, 1947. (BF532 .S242) (Beware of some important mistranslations flagged in the outline below.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*, 2nd ed., Paris: Hermann, 1965. (BF532 .S3 1965) (The French original of our *Emotions: Outline of A Theory*. The translation is not entirely accurate, so those of you who know French might want to check a point or two. See also the corrections in the outline contained in the course-packet.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *L'être et le néant: essai d'ontologie phénoménologique*, Paris: Gallimard, 1943 [1960]. (B819 .S26) (Here it is! The original French of *Being and Nothingness*. For checking fine points of translation.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, Paris: Nagel, [1946]. (B819 .S3) (The French original of "Existentialism Is A Humanism," obviously. This was reprinted many times, so the copy on reserve may have a different date.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Imagination: A Psychological Critique*, Forrest Williams, tr., Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1962. (BF408 .S32 1962) (A translation of Sartre's first work on the imagination. Interesting stuff, even though he spends a lot of time refuting people I never heard of. There is an outline of the book in the course-packet.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Nausea*, Lloyd Alexander, tr., New York: New Directions, 1964. (PQ2637 .A82 N32 1964) (One of the weirdest novels of all time.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, Stuart Gilbert and Lionel Abel, trs., New York: Vintage, 1955. (PQ2637 .A82 H82) (Of the four, *No Exit* is by far the best. It is a quite impressive dramatic rendering of some of Sartre's views on interpersonal relations. They are not pretty. It's the only really *successful* attempt I know of to put philosophy into a play — Plato's dialogues don't count as "plays.")

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*, New York: George Braziller, 1963. (PQ2613 .E46 Z832) (There's a translator's note at the beginning of this book, but the translator is too modest to tell us who he is. This is an important work that comes between *Being and Nothingness* and *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and is interesting for tracing how his thinking went from the one to the other.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Search for a Method*, Hazel E. Barnes, tr., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963. (B809.8 .S262) (Hazel Barnes is the translator of *Being and Nothingness* too.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *La transcendance de l'égo: esquisse d'une description phénoménologique*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1966. (B819 .S25) (The French original of *Transcendence of the Ego*, for checking minute points in the translation. The French edition also has a number of very helpful notes on Sartre's sources, and so on.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Truth and Existence*, Adrian Van den Hoven, tr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. (B2430 .S33 V4713 1992) An interesting work, only recently published, written shortly after *Being and Nothingness*.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Words*, Bernard Frechtman, tr., New York: Vintage, 1981. (PQ2637 .A82 Z513 1981) (Sartre's autobiography. It was written while he still had a long time to live, so a lot of the story isn't there. Also, it's pretty short. But still, it's interesting.)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *What Is Literature?* Bernard Frechtman, tr., Guildford, Eng.: Methuen, 1967. (PN45 .S2 1965) (An interesting phenomenological study — of the differences, for instance, between prose and poetry.)

Schillp, Paul Arthur, ed. *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1981. (B2430 .S34 P47) (This is a volume in the "Library of Living Philosophers" series. It almost wasn't completed in time to count Sartre as a "living philosopher," and in fact actually appeared too late to do so. It's a collection of articles. You may find some of them helpful and interesting. I do not think it's an especially strong collection.)

Spiegelberg, Herbert. *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, 3rd rev. ed., The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982. (B829.5 .S64 1982) (This is a wonderful book for browsing, as well as for reading clear through. It's basically a history, not too technical, and full of good lore and gossip. Lots of photographs too.)

Finally, I should also mention a dissertation done in the Indiana University Philosophy Department: Christopher Vaughan, *Pure Reflection: Self-Knowledge and Moral Understanding the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1993. I was privileged to be the director of this dissertation. If yours is as good, you'll be doing just fine! As the title suggests, it's all about the problem of pure reflection.

Outline of Husserl's The Idea of Phenomenology

Please read Nakhnikian's "Introduction."

- I. **Lecture 1**, pp. 13–21. (See p. 1 of "The Train of Thought in the Lectures.") Natural vs. philosophic science.
 - A. The natural attitude (13–15).
 1. Turned toward objects and objective facts (13).
 2. Inductive inference, generalization, deduction; scientific judgments cohere (13).
 3. But they also sometimes conflict (14).
 - a) Because of logical error ("pure predicational form"); these can be corrected.
 - b) Conflicting inductive generalizations; these can be resolved by arranging priorities.
 4. Summary (14).
 5. The natural attitude applied to cognition. (Cognition is one of the "objective" facts of § I.A.1, above.) (14–15)
 - a) The science of psychology (15).
 - b) Formal science: pure grammar, pure logic. (See *Logical Investigations*.) (15)
 - B. The philosophical attitude (concerned with the possibility of cognition). (15–21)
 1. How can I be sure my cognitions correspond with reality? (15–16)
 2. Two attempted solutions: solipsism, Hume (16).
 3. Logic itself becomes suspect. Biologism. Its absurdity. (16–17)
 4. These are the problems of a *theory of knowledge*, the task of which is to solve them and thereby to be a *critique of natural cognition*. It will investigate the *essence of cognition and of being an object of cognition*. (17–18)
 5. The philosophical attitude is *phenomenology*. (18–19)
 6. Philosophical method. (19–21)
 - a) Not on a par with other sciences (19).
 - b) Needs an entirely new method, distinguishing it from natural science (19–21).
- II. **Lecture 2**, pp. 22–32. (See "The Train of Thought," pp. 2–5). The phenomenological reduction; immanence and transcendence.
 - A. The critique of cognition begins by putting in question "the entire world of nature, physical and psychological" (22).
 - B. Therefore, the starting point of the critique must be a cognition that is absolutely indubitable; every question about it must have an immediate answer (22–23).
 1. Cartesian doubt: my *cogitationes* (= thinkings; singular = *cogitatio*) at least are indubitable; these are "given" in *reflection*. (22–25)

- a) Every mental process, *while being enacted*, can be reflected on (24). (Sartre will deny the ‘while being enacted’.)
- C. Recapitulation (from beginning of Lecture 1) and amplification. (25–32)
 - 1. Recapitulation (25–26).
 - 2. Amplification (beginning “I may add...”). (26–32)
 - a) Clarification of a specious argument. (26–27)
 - b) It is the attempt to guarantee the cognition of transcendent objects that creates the difficulties. (27)
 - c) Ambiguity of ‘transcendence’ (and correspondingly, of ‘immanence’). (27–28)
 - (1) Mind-independent (vs. mind-dependent). (27–28)
 - (2) Not directly, immediately, evidently “given” (vs. being so given). (28)
 - d) The crucial mistake: to identify these two senses. (28)
 - e) *Methodological principle*: Nothing transcendent (in which sense? See Lecture 3) must be used as a presupposition. (29–31)
 - (1) Consideration of an objection. Hume’s approach (29–31).
 - f) The *epistemological* reduction (= phenomenological reduction, “epoché”) (31–32).
- III. Lecture 3, pp. 33–42. (See “The Train of Thought,” pp. 5–7). The eidetic reduction.
 - A. The existence of *cogitationes* may serve as a starting point, since they are not transcendent (33).
 - B. But not of *my* cogitationes. The personal ego falls to the epoché. (33–35)
 - C. To each psychic lived phenomenon there corresponds a pure phenomenon, and this puts us on the level of phenomenology. (35–37)
 - D. *Cogitationes* alone are not sufficient to ground objective, universal, essential science of cognition. (37–38)
 - E. Of the two senses of immanence/transcendence (See § II.C.2.c, above), it is sense (2) that is crucial here. (39–41).
 - F. The “Eidetic Reduction” (that provides us with immanent universal essences). (41–42)
- IV. Lecture 4, pp. 43–51. (See “The Train of Thought,” p. 8, first 4 paragraphs. Actually, Lecture 4 does not fit in well with “The Train of Thought.”)
 - A. How far does immanence (in the second or phenomenological sense) extend? (43–46)
 - 1. As far as intentionality. (43)
 - 2. Universals are immanent in the second sense, although transcendent in the first sense. (44–46).
 - B. The difference between phenomenology and other *a priori* sciences — e.g., mathematics. (Phenomenology *describes*, but does not *deduce*.) (46)

- C. Evidence (46–49).
 - 1. Is not a “feeling.” (47–48)
 - D. Absolute givenness is an ultimate. (49–51)
 - 1. Transition to Lecture 5. (50–51)
- V. **Lecture 5**, pp. 52–60. (See “The Train of Thought,” p. 8, 5th paragraph, to p. 12. “The Train of Thought” here does not exactly conform to the lecture.)
- A. Objects given in time. (52–53)
 - B. Perception vs. imagination: Either will ground an eidetic reduction. (53–55)
 - C. Constitution of different types of objectivity. (55–60). (Note especially p. 57 to top of p. 59.)

Note: A better idea of the notion of “constitution” may be had by looking at “The Train of Thought,” p. 8, 5th paragraph, to p. 10. (See also p. 57 to top of p. 59.)

- A. In pure givenness there is both the appearance and that which appears (the “object,” that of which the appearance is an appearance), and they are not the same. (8–9)
- B. Therefore, in pure givenness there are different kinds of mental processes, which constitute the object from the appearances. (9–10)

Outline of Sartre's "Existentialism Is A Humanism"

Note: Page references are to the version in Walter Kaufmann's *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, 2nd ("revised and expanded") edition.

Purpose of the essay: A defense of existentialism against certain objections.

- I. Objections to existentialism (pp. 345–346):
 - A. The "quietism of despair."
 - B. Too morbid and pessimistic. (This is the basic objection.)
 - C. Too subjective; treats human beings in isolation.
 - D. Too anarchistic; you can't judge others; values aren't serious.

- II. Reply: Existentialism is not pessimistic, but optimistic (p. 347). To explain this, Sartre asks "What is existentialism"? (p. 347). The rest of the essay is in effect an answer to this question.

- III. Two kinds of existentialists (pp. 347–348):
 - A. Christian (Gabriel Marcel, Carl Jaspers. Note: Despite what Sartre says here, Jaspers was not "a professed Catholic.")
 - B. Atheist (Martin Heidegger, Sartre himself. Note: Heidegger denied the charge of atheism, although there is some basis for it.): *Existence precedes essence* (pp. 348–350). Carefully study the example of the paper-knife (= letter-opener). *Man is responsible for all men* (p. 350).

- IV. Explanation of three terms:
 - A. Anguish (pp. 350–352). Roughly: You must choose. (Note the occurrence of the phrase 'self-deception' on p. 351.)
 - B. Abandonment, forlornness (pp. 352–357). Roughly: You have no guidelines, no excuse, nothing to go on to help you decide. *Man is condemned to be free*. Note the very famous example of the student. (These first two notions are very closely related and perhaps not clearly distinguished.)
 - C. Despair (pp. 357–358). Roughly: Don't count on too much.
 - D. Replies to the original objections in sequence:
 1. To objection I.A (pp. 358–359).
 2. To objection I.B (pp. 359–360).
 3. To objection I.C (pp. 360–363).
 4. To objection I.D (pp. 363–369).
 - a) Reply to the charge of anarchism (pp. 363–365).
 - b) You can judge people after all (p. 365–367).
 - c) Reply to the charge that values aren't serious (pp. 367–368).
 - E. Closing remarks: Two kinds of humanism (pp. 368–369).

Notes on Sartre's "Existentialism Is A Humanism"

Here are some notes on my reading of Sartre's 1946 essay "Existentialism Is A Humanism." They are a reworking of my lecture notes for my 100-level course on existentialism, so some of what I have to say will be pretty elementary. But that won't hurt you. Please use these notes in connection with the (rather sketchy) outline also contained in this course-packet.

At first, you may think Sartre's essay is rather loose and rambly. But actually it has a fairly tight structure. (In fact, if you want to know, it fits the classical mediaeval *quaestio*-form of objections, discussion, reply to objections.)

The main purpose of the essay is to defend Sartre's brand of existentialism against certain objections. Sartre states the objections near the beginning of the essay. He thinks he can answer every single one of them if we just get clear on what his doctrine actually is. So in the middle part of the essay, he discusses some of the main themes of his philosophy. Then, toward the end, he responds to the objections one by one. (This last part is not as explicit as one might like, but the replies are there.)

So "Existentialism Is A Humanism" is a "stock-taking" essay. In it, Sartre is stepping back and taking a broad view of his philosophy.

By the time it was written, Sartre's views were more or less well known in France. *Being and Nothingness* had been out for three years, Sartre had already written other books, essays, plays, etc. Heidegger was known in intellectual circles in France. In short, by the time of this essay, existentialism had become a relatively familiar phenomenon in France. And people began to *react* to it. They found it shocking, risqué, immoral. They wrote letters to the editor. Sartre describes a society woman who attended a soirée and happened to utter a vulgar expression. She excused herself by saying "Dear me, I must be becoming an existentialist." There is a book in our library with the title (in French) *Jean-Paul Sartre: Is He Possessed?* You can guess what the author's reply is.

It is this kind of thing Sartre wants to defend himself against in this essay. And he does this by organizing the objections to his philosophy under four main headings. Let's look at them carefully, because by examining the objections and Sartre's replies, we can get a fair picture of what this "existentialism" is that was so controversial.

First objection: (p. 345) the "quietism of despair" objection.

The point of this objection is: You existentialists — and particularly you, Sartre — make things out to be so awfully *dreary*. According to you, the human situation (a good existentialist term) is really hopeless. And you take away all our hopes of ever being able to improve it. In other words, you existentialists leave us wondering "Why bother with anything?" You leave us with no reason to try to improve our lot, no reason to labor or work for anything.

The basis for this objection is plain. It is the general question: Why bother to strive for anything if you know in advance you are doomed to frustration? What's the point of hopeless, quixotic crusades? And that's exactly what you leave us with, Sartre, nothing more. Thus, if we were to take your philosophy seriously, there would be nothing left for us to do but just sit there. There would be no basis for action. And that's "quietism." ("Quietism" was originally a Christian theological view, generally regarded as heterodox.

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Sartre is using the term metaphorically here.) On p. 358, in reply to this objection, Sartre says, “Quietism is the attitude of people who say, ‘Let others do what I cannot do.’” (Except, of course, the others aren’t going to be any more successful than I am.)

As a result, according to this objection, existentialism is a philosophy that would never lead us to *do* anything — and in fact, would *prevent* our doing anything, since we know in advance that it’s all going to be futile anyway. “One would have to regard any action in this world as entirely *ineffective*” (p. 345).

Thus, on this objection, existentialism turns out to be a philosophy that doesn’t have anything better to do but sit around and contemplate aimlessly. This is why, Sartre says, it is an objection most frequently raised by the Marxists. They think of existentialism as a bourgeois philosophy. It is Marxism, after all, that holds that the important thing is not to *understand* the world but to *change* it.

For those of you who know something about Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*, this first objection is in effect the objection people would make to Kierkegaard’s “Knight of Infinite Resignation.”

The Knight of Infinite Resignation is someone who focuses his entire life around some one special purpose or goal; it provides the whole meaning of life for that person. (It’s “infinitely” important; that’s where the ‘Infinite’ in the title comes from.) It doesn’t really matter what the goal is; all that matters is that everything else is, by comparison, of only second-rate value.

Second, the Knight of Infinite Resignation comes to recognize, for whatever reason (it doesn’t matter), that this infinitely important goal cannot be reached. Not just that it’s *unlikely*, or that it can only be achieved with much sweat and toil. No, it can’t be reached at all. It’s not a question of how hard I try; it just can’t happen.

Third — and this is the defining characteristic — the Knight of Infinite Resignation resolves in this situation just to *put up with it*. That doesn’t mean he likes it; on the contrary, he *hates* this awful situation. But what is he going to do? He’s not going to give up his highest value; no, that would be cheap, and it’s more important to him than that. On the other hand, he’s not going to engage in some kind of “power of positive thinking” silliness, and pretend that, well, maybe he really can achieve this goal after all. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, and who’s to say? No, that’s just wishful thinking, and the Knight of Infinite Resignation is not going to deceive himself into this kind of false hope; he knows better than that.

In effect, the figure of the Knight of Infinite Resignation implies a studied rejection both of wishful thinking and also of Stoicism. The Stoic is the one who would argue: Look, if you’re frustrated in life, if you’re not getting what you want, then obviously it’s because there’s some mismatch between what you want and what you get. There are two things you can do about that. The foolish person will try to change what he gets, to conform to what he wants. That’s foolish, because reality is bigger than you are, and you don’t really have much control over what happens to you. And even if you do succeed in getting what you want temporarily, there’s no guarantee you won’t lose it shortly. Life is tricky, and if you look for satisfaction this way, you’re taking a big risk and will probably end up just as frustrated as you started. (The Knight of Infinite Resignation would agree so far, except that he would state it even more strongly: for what *he’s* talking about, he’s *guaranteed* to be frustrated if he takes this foolish approach.)

The wise approach, the Stoic argues, is not to try to change what you *get* out of life, but to change what you *want* out of life. While what you get isn't always under your control, what you want is. So adjust your desires to fit whatever is coming down the road anyway, and you'll end up getting exactly what you want — so there's no complaint any more.

The Knight of Infinite Resignation rejects not only the foolish approach the Stoic rejects too, but also rejects the Stoic “wisdom.” His values are too important to give up just because he knows he isn't going to reach them.

So what does he do instead? The Knight of Infinite Resignation, with a clear head and full awareness of what he is doing, *resolves to be infinitely frustrated* in life. He doesn't fool himself into thinking he's going to win. But he doesn't stop striving for his goal, even though he knows full well he is not going to reach it.

And that, even though it isn't especially clear in *this* essay, is in effect Sartre's reply to the first objection in “Existentialism Is A Humanism.” The knowledge of the hopelessness of one's task in no way implies that one can't seriously work for it anyway. (Sartre himself did that all his life, for one cause after another.)

Now let's look at the other objections.

Second objection: (pp. 345–346) the “morbidity” objection.

The second objection says that you existentialists — and especially you, Sartre — are just too morbid. You are constantly stressing the coarse, the unpleasant side of life. Why are you so gloomy?

There is ample basis for this objection. Sartre's novels and plays are full of all sorts of disreputable people: criminals, perverts, cowards, etc. Sartre recognizes that this one is probably the most widespread objection against him: “The essential charge laid against us is, of course, that of over-emphasis upon the evil side of life” (p. 346).

If Sartre puts the first objection in the mouths of the Marxists, this second one is one that especially bothers the Catholics. (Between the Marxists and the Catholics, you've just about covered all of France.)

We'll talk about Sartre's reply to this objection in a little while. The two remaining objections are related to these first two:

Third objection: (p. 346) the “phenomenological” objection.

This one is the most theoretical of the bunch, and will take a little motivating. Sartre says that both the Marxists and the Catholics raise this objection, although (like objection 1) it is especially bothersome to the Marxists.

The objection says that existentialism ignores human solidarity. It treats human beings as though they were isolated individuals, independent of one another. In short, existentialism ignores the social order.

To a large extent, that's true. In *Being and Nothingness*, when Sartre discusses interpersonal relations, he's basically talking about *two* people only. He does bring up the possibility of a third, but plainly regards the third person as an intruder. Nowhere in the book is there any real discussion of *groups* of people, of *society*.

It is easy to see why this criticism should be particularly important to the Marxists. They were the ones, recall, who said that things can be improved if we work together in human solidarity. But working together like this is a notion foreign to Sartre's existentialism.

As I said, this is the most theoretical of the four objections Sartre raises. The real problem, the accusation says, is that existentialism starts from the point of view of the Cartesian *cogito*. What does that have to do with it? Well, the notion of the Cartesian *cogito* is a kind of code-word here. Recall what the *cogito* was: Descartes' famous phrase "I think; therefore, I am" (= *Cogito, ergo sum*).

The idea was that this, at least, was something I can be justifiably certain of. Descartes, remember, was looking for absolute certainty. And he thought that we *could* be absolutely certain as long as we confined ourselves to the contents of our minds. In short, the reference to the "*cogito*" here is simply a kind of short-hand way of saying that *existentialism is a kind of phenomenology*. (At least Sartre's brand of existentialism is.)

Now, what does the fact that Sartre's existentialism is a phenomenological enterprise have to do with the charge that he ignores human solidarity? Well, the mind is like a big movie-theater, in effect. (This is a model I'll be using a lot in this course.) The task of the philosopher, according to phenomenology, is to describe what appears on the movie screen of my mind. (It's in 3D, Dolby stereo, smell-o-vision, and so on; it's just like a real *world* out there.)

And what does appear there? *Objects* — tables, chairs, trees, etc. Other *people* appear there too, but only in a limited and peculiar sense. They appear there as *bodies*, of such and such a size and shape. They appear as *acting* in different ways. And *in a sense* they even appear there as *people* — that is, as conscious beings with minds of their own. But *only* in a very restricted sense. They appear to me as people — but only as people who are characters in *my* movie. I see them only from my own point of view, the point of view of my consciousness. I can never, so to speak, get inside *their* mental movie theaters.

This is just the classical old philosophical problem of other minds, in a phenomenological context. I have a privileged status with respect to my own mind; I have "inside information," as it were. But I do *not* have such "inside information" about other minds. In short, from a mere description of what is going on in my own mental movie, I can never be sure that there are any other theaters, that there are any other movies playing in town.

So, if you take a phenomenological approach, as Sartre wants to do, and confine yourself to the appearances (the phenomena), you're never going to get outside your own private world — as a matter of policy. You are isolated. You will never be sure of the existence of other minds, other people. And of course, if you can't even be sure other people exist, it's going to be all the harder to find room for any kind of action with them, any kind of "human solidarity."

That's why the Marxists object here.

This is a serious objection. And it is an objection phenomenologists really took seriously. Husserl, for instance, tackled this problem of other minds in his later writings — notably in his work *Cartesian Meditations*. (The results there are not altogether satisfactory.)

Sartre does not take the objection lightly either. He worried about it as early as *Transcendence of the Ego*, and came up with a kind of proposed “solution” to the problem there. But later on, in *Being and Nothingness*, he admits that what he said earlier in *Transcendence* doesn’t really solve the problem at all. He still thinks, he says, what he wrote there is true as far as it goes; but it doesn’t really answer the question. And so in *Being and Nothingness* he approaches the question again, this time at much greater length. The discussion in *Being and Nothingness* is more detailed, and in my view much more satisfactory. But in the end it is still true that Sartre by and large treats people in isolation in that book.

And Sartre realized it. In part, I think it was a genuine concern for this criticism that led him more and more to Marxism in his later writings.

Sartre’s response to this objection *here* (in “Existentialism Is A Humanism”) is not very well spelled out. (How could it be? This is a short, popular essay.) But, in a word, he thinks the objection is applicable to Husserl’s doctrine, but not to his own. In effect, his response is “Go read *Being and Nothingness*.”

So much for the third objection.

Fourth objection: (p. 346) the moral anarchy objection.

Like the second objection, this last one is an objection raised mainly by the Catholics. It’s an ethical objection.

Existentialism rejects all ethical absolutes. There are no valid ethical systems for existentialism, no codes of morals that are really binding in any ultimate, absolute way. (This is true for Sartre just as much as it was for Nietzsche.) But of course, if there are no moral absolutes, if morality is just something we make up for ourselves, then anything goes. The result is sheer moral anarchy. We are no longer able to evaluate people and actions. Approval and disapproval no longer mean anything at all. There is no right or wrong.

The reason Sartre’s existentialism seems to be open to this objection is that it, like Nietzsche’s doctrine, is atheistic. And, as for Nietzsche, this is not just some minor detail of his philosophy; it is a central point. Thus, morals lose any kind of authority they might get from divine sanction or any other absolute. In effect, what we have here is just Nietzsche’s “God is dead” all over again. Sartre’s atheism plays roughly the same role in his philosophy as Nietzsche’s atheism did in his. (It also plays other roles, as we will see.) Sartre quotes Dostoevsky (p. 353) as saying that if God doesn’t exist, then everything is possible, everything is *permitted*. And that, of course, is exactly what Nietzsche had said too.

We’ll discuss Sartre’s reply shortly.

Three Slogans

Sartre thinks all four of these preliminary objections can be answered if we just get clear on what his version of existentialism is. So, in the middle part of the essay, we get a kind of summary outline of some of the main themes of his philosophy. In the course of this discussion, Sartre comes up with several “slogans” expressing aspects of his

thought. (Sartre was very good at coining these slogans.) I want to focus on three of them, and organize my material around them. (There are others there too.)

- (1) Existence precedes essence. Or, if you will [he says], that we must begin from the subjective. It's not at all obvious at first how this amounts to the same thing.
- (2) Each man is responsible for all men. (What can *this* mean for someone who rejects all moral absolutes?)
- (3) Man is condemned to be free.

Existence Precedes Essence

Let's begin with the first slogan (pp. 348–350), “Existence precedes essence.”

Without worrying right now about what these terms mean exactly, we can say right away that this phrase reverses the usual way philosophers have thought about existence and essence. Typically, philosophers have thought that *essence precedes existence* in some way.

Sartre thinks they are right in most cases. That is, when he says “Existence precedes essence,” he doesn't mean that that's true *all the time*. He only means to say that *sometimes* that's so.

What all this means can be gathered from a kind of argument he gives here: the argument about the “paper knife” (= letter opener). In the case of a paper knife, he says, essence does precede existence. Now essence is what you express when you give a thing's definition. The essence of a thing delimits it, specifies what properties it has to have and what properties it can't have, in order to be the kind of thing it is.

In the case of the paper knife, essence precedes existence in the sense that before the knife was ever manufactured, there was a kind of plan or blueprint for it, and that plan or blueprint existed in someone's mind (the designer). That plan or blueprint is the *essence*.

In other words, when Sartre says that for the paper knife essence precedes existence, he is simply taking note of the fact that the paper knife was first designed, and *then* produced. The plan was there first, and *then* the thing itself was made in accordance with that plan.

Now of course, the paper knife is just an example. It is an example of an *artifact* — a designed, manufactured object. From this particular example, we can extract the general principle Sartre is leading up to:

- (1) For artifacts in general, essence precedes existence.

He goes on: If God exists, and if (as he is traditionally conceived) God is the creator of the whole of reality, then it follows that the whole world and everything in it is a kind of *divine artifact*. It was designed by God, and then created in accordance with that preexisting divine plan. Then, from step (1), we get:

- (2) If God exists, then essence precedes existence for everything in the world.

There is even a traditional theological term for this preexisting divine plan. It is called ‘providence’. God has this providential plan all worked out in advance, a plan for the whole of creation. But not *just* for the whole; it is not just a broad outline of a plan. He has also planned out all the details (he is omniscient, after all). So it is not just that we have, for instance, human nature in general to set limits on what human beings are and what they can do. There is also a kind of divine plan for *individuals* — Socrates, for instance, has his own individual “essence” that limits him and narrow him down further within the more general plan of human nature.

So far, all this is stage-setting. That is, steps (1) and (2) above present a kind of background picture, but they are not really the operative steps in his argument. The really operative steps are the next ones:

Certain philosophers in the eighteenth century, he goes on, thought they could keep this notion of a kind of prior human nature, a kind of cosmic blueprint, *without* also keeping God. They thought they could be atheists and still keep the notion of an ordered, tidy universe in which things happen in accordance with preestablished laws.

But, he says, they were wrong. If essences precede existence in general — that is, if the laws that delimit what things are and what they can do are established and settled before the things themselves exist — where would they exist? You don’t just have disembodied essences floating around like ghosts! You need some kind of artisan to plan it all out in advance. In short,

- (3) If essences precede existence for everything in the world, then God exists (or something just like God).

In effect, Sartre is here employing an idea that people have traditionally used as the basis for an argument for the existence of God. (Sartre isn’t going to use it quite that way, of course.) This is the “Argument from Design.” Basically, the idea is that order requires a designer. You don’t have a plan without a planner. Sartre accepts this notion. Note: (2) and (3) together mean that it goes both ways: God exists *if and only if* essences precede existence for everything in the world. But while the fact is that it goes both ways, Sartre really is going to use only the one half of this — the half expressed in (3).

Now we get the crucial step:

- (4) Of course we all know God doesn’t exist.

And that’s just about the way he puts it. Nowhere in this essay does Sartre give us any kind of argument for his atheism. He just takes it for granted. Of course, this is something he owes an explanation for, and so we should keep it in mind.

In any case, from (3) and (4) it follows that:

- (5) Conclusion: There is *at least one* being for which essence does *not* precede existence. Rather, it is the other way around: *existence precedes essence*.

Hence, his first slogan.

(Don't quibble by saying that from the fact that essence does not always precede existence, it doesn't follow that existence sometimes precedes essence. Perhaps there is something for which existence and essence are *simultaneous*. That's true, but I think it's an alternative that is suggested only by Sartre's choice of terminology. Once we see what is really going on here, we'll see that this is not a real possibility.)

What *is* this special kind of being for which existence precedes essence? It's *human being*. For *people*, existence precedes essence. This is almost a kind of definition for Sartre.

We'll spin out some of the implications of this in a moment. But it is important at the outset to see the structure of Sartre's argument. For, near the end of the essay (p. 369), he makes an astonishing remark: "Even if God existed, that would make no difference." What on earth does he mean here? I thought the non-existence of God was one of the crucial operative steps of his whole argument. And that's true, it is.

I must confess I can make no sense of this last remark of Sartre's. He cannot literally mean what he says here; it goes against not just what he said in the paper-knife argument but against his whole philosophy. In fact, Sartre himself in another passage in the essay explicitly *denies* that God's non-existence doesn't matter. On the contrary, he says, it matters very much. Here is what he says (pp. 352–353):

... The existentialist is strongly opposed to a certain type of secular moralism which seeks to suppress God at the least possible expense. Towards 1880, when the French professors endeavored to formulate a secular morality, they said something like this: — God is a useless and costly hypothesis, so we will do without it. However, if we are to have morality, a society and a law-abiding world, it is essential that certain values should be taken seriously; they must have an *a priori* existence ascribed to them. It must be considered obligatory *a priori* to be honest, not to lie, not to beat one's wife, to bring up children and so forth; so we are going to do a little work on this subject, which will enable us to show that these values exist all the same, inscribed in an intelligible heaven although, of course, there is no God. In other words — and this is, I believe, the purport of all that we in France call radicalism — nothing will be changed if God does not exist; we shall rediscover the same norms of honesty, progress and humanity, and we shall have disposed of God as an out-of-date hypothesis which will die away quietly of itself. The existentialist, on the contrary, finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there disappears with Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven....

So when Sartre says on p. 369 that even if God existed, that would make no difference, he can't mean it. What he means instead there, I don't know.

We've learned that, for Sartre, existence precedes essence in the case of human beings — and in their case only. But what does it mean to say this? What's the real point? Well, it means (notice the progression here):

1. There is no pre-established nature or essence that sets any limits on what I can be or do.

2. Thus, there are many alternatives open to me, many possibilities for me to choose among.
3. Hence, I am *free* to do whatever I will with myself.

In short, Sartre's argument amounts to saying that: Man is free *if and only if* God does not exist.

When put like this, it is easy to see that Sartre's real point with his paper-knife example is just a restatement of an old, classical philosophical puzzle: If God exists (as traditionally conceived) and knows what we are going to do before we do it, then how can human beings have free will any more? In other words, the problem of reconciling divine foreknowledge with human free will.

If Sartre is right, this problem is insoluble. The two *cannot* be reconciled, and all the ink spilled over the centuries trying to solve this problem is just a big waste.

Sartre uses this claim *not* to argue for atheism (because it would be incompatible with human freedom) but rather the other way around, to argue for *human freedom* (as a corollary of his atheism). In principle, it could have gone either way, of course. And he still has not given us any reason to accept his atheism.

God doesn't exist, then. Man isn't prefabricated. On the contrary: "Man makes himself." (Another famous slogan.)

For Sartre, this fact fundamentally alters our way of thinking about human beings. Our essences — our definitions — come at the end of our lives, not at the beginning. Only when it is all over can one say "This is who I really am, this is what it is to be me." (Of course, by then it is too late.)

Thus, for Sartre, living your life is like writing a novel, like creating a work of art. Before it's done, it doesn't make any sense to ask what it "really" is, whether it is satisfactory or not. Those questions have answers only when it is completed.

In effect, what Sartre is doing is rejecting any kind of notion of a "personality" deep down inside me, a "real me" hidden by the more or less false "public" me. (This is a theme developed at considerable length in *Transcendence of the Ego*.) It follows, of course, that Sartre would reject all the fashionable "self-help" books that tell you to get in touch with your "real self," to let it out. There *isn't* any such thing for Sartre.

There is a corollary of this: If human beings are free to choose what to make of themselves, then they are also *responsible* for what they become. This "responsibility" is not a question of having to answer to some absolute moral standards. Rather the point is that, if you don't like the outcome or your choices, if you don't like who you turn out to be, you have no one to blame but yourself. Sartre takes this *very* seriously, and is absolutely uncompromising about it.

For example, he talks a lot about being a coward. His worry sounds a little silly nowadays perhaps, but the term has a special significance for him, in the context of the Nazi occupation of France during World War II (when *Being and Nothingness* was being written). Suppose you are part of the French Resistance, and are captured by the Gestapo and tortured to reveal the names of your collaborators. If you "crack" under torture, you are a "coward" in Sartre's sense of the term. (This is just an example, but the point is that cowardice was a *real* moral issue in his day.)

For Sartre, if you turn out to be a "coward" in that situation, if you give them the information they want, then there is absolutely no way to excuse yourself. It is entirely

your own fault. (Of course, you may not think of it as a “fault.” You may be on the Nazi’s side. But the point is that, whether you regard your action favorably or unfavorably, it is entirely your own responsibility.) In such a case, you cannot excuse yourself by saying:

- (a) It’s just human nature to be afraid of pain, and they can torture me at will.

No. For Sartre, there *is* no human nature in advance. My nature is what I make it. Other people have held out and endured in similar circumstances. If I yield, if I give them the information they want, it is because I choose to — and for no other reason. And that choice is not something I can blame on anyone else.

- (b) My fears were simply too strong. I was overwhelmed by them so that I was no longer in control.

No. If my fears were too strong for me, it’s because I chose to let them take over. For Sartre (as he discusses in his book *The Emotions* and elsewhere), emotions are not things that *happen* to us passively; they are things we *do*. Emotions are things we adopt, take on.

Sartre gives an example of a patient of the French psychologist Pierre Janet. She went to Janet with some problem to discuss (we aren’t told what it was). As she talked with Janet and got closer and closer to the main point, the tension began to build — the emotional level of the conversation began to rise. Finally, just as she was about to blurt out what the real problem was, the emotional tension reached the point that she broke down in tears, and couldn’t continue.

Sartre’s response is: “Wasn’t that convenient!” It wasn’t that she couldn’t continue *because* she was all choked up and couldn’t talk. Rather, she got all choked up and unable to talk precisely *in order* not to be able to continue. (This doesn’t necessarily mean she was being devious or dishonest in a cynical way. It means she was involved in “self-deception.”) For Sartre, the emotions have purpose, design. They are not just random responses.

Another example: I am suddenly attacked by a roaring lion, and I faint from fear. Phenomenologically, my mental movie suddenly becomes unendurable, and so what do I do? *Movie’s over!* (From an outsider’s point of view, this response seems conspicuously ill-designed for the occasion. But we’re not talking about the outsider’s point of view; we’re looking at it from the *inside*.)

Neither can I excuse myself by saying:

- (c) My environment made me a coward. I didn’t have the advantages all those other, “brave” people had. I grew up on the wrong side of the tracks, etc., etc.

No. Other people grew up in similar environments and didn’t turn out cowards. Why did you? If your response to your upbringing is to be a coward, then it is because you chose to respond to it in that way.

- (d) Certain deep-seated unconscious psychological drives are responsible for my being a coward. “My Id made me do it!”

No — and this is important. For Sartre, there *is* no unconscious. In several passages, he argues against the Freudian notion of an unconscious part of the mind. (We will see one of them — the most detailed — in the section on “Bad Faith” or “self-deception” from *Being and Nothingness*.) For Sartre, the notion of an unconscious part of the mind is the notion of an *unconscious consciousness* — and is just an outright contradiction. (Historically, it is this view that is the prevailing one. The Freudian notion of an unconscious region of the mind is the historical novelty.)

The long and the short of it is that, for Sartre, if I “break” under torture and reveal the name of my collaborators in the French Resistance, I am totally and unavoidably responsible for that deed. In fact, for Sartre, I am just as responsible as if I had walked into the Gestapo headquarters and volunteered the information on my own! There are no “degrees” of responsibility.

Basically, Sartre’s reasoning is like this: You resisted your torturers for five days (let’s say), and then you “broke.” Couldn’t you have held out one more day? Couldn’t you have held out one more hour? Couldn’t you have held out one more second? If so, *why didn’t you?*

The point is, we like to think that in such a situation there comes a point where you can hold out no longer. But in fact, Sartre says, *we decide where that point is*. And so in that sense it is up to us.

Of course, the fact that you are being tortured obviously inclines you more toward giving the Gestapo what they want than you would be inclined if they weren’t torturing you, if it were just a question of volunteering the information on your own. And that inclination, that pressure on you, is what people look to when they want to say that your moral responsibility is lessened because you are being tortured.

But for Sartre, that is just wrong. It comes from thinking that we are only free, we only really have a choice, when all the alternatives are equally attractive, when we are in a strictly neutral position with respect to the various alternatives, when *there’s nothing at stake*. It comes from thinking of the paradigm of a free choice as something like “picking a card” from a deck. As if the only cases in which we really have a choice are ones where *it doesn’t matter*.

But that’s not so. In fact, if there’s nothing at stake, if all the alternatives are equally attractive, we may find ourselves paralyzed and prevented from making any choice. (There is an old story about “Buridan’s Ass,” told by the fourteenth-century philosopher Jean Buridan — so they say, although no one’s ever found it in anything Buridan wrote — an ass that was tied midway between two equally attractive bales of hay, and could reach either of them, but starved to death because he couldn’t decide between them.)

Real choices always take place in a context where we generally *are* more inclined to one alternative than to another — and sometimes even *much* more inclined. That doesn’t mean the choice isn’t ours. The question, after all, is whether we are going to *follow* our inclinations or act *against* them.

This is a pretty severe doctrine, and in his later years Sartre tempered it somewhat. In a late interview, he was once asked about this notion, and all he said was “Yes, I did think that once.”

So the long and the short of it is that we must accept responsibility for everything we do — no matter how much we would like to pass that responsibility on to someone or something else. We don’t like the notion that *we* are responsible for things. The notion of freedom is a scary thing.

In effect, this gives us Sartre’s response to Objection 2 (the “morbidity” objection). In effect, his response is that the objection is not honestly stated. What *really* bothers people about the fact that Sartre dwells so much on evil characters in his novels and plays is not that they are evil. After all, the same people who will complain about Sartre will go out and read other very popular novels in which people are just as awful as they are in anything Sartre wrote.

What bothers them is that, in *Sartre’s* novels and plays, if people are thieves or cowards or whatever, they are that way *because they choose to be*. And that’s what people don’t like to think about.

Sartre’s response to this is just: Well, I’m very sorry but that’s the way it is! Here is what he says (pp. 359–360):

... If people condemn our works of fiction, in which we describe characters that are base, weak, cowardly and sometimes even frankly evil, it is not only because those characters are base, weak, cowardly or evil. For suppose that, like Zola, we showed that the behavior of these characters was caused by their heredity, or by the action of their environment on them, or by determining factors, psychic or organic. People would be reassured, they would say, “You see, that is what we are like, no one can do anything about it.” But the existentialist, when he portrays a coward, shows him as responsible for his cowardice. He is not like that on account of a cowardly heart or lungs or cerebrum, he has not become like that through his physiological organism; he is like that because he has made himself into a coward by his actions. ... What people feel obscurely, and with horror, is that the coward as we present him is guilty of being a coward. What people would prefer would be to be born either a coward or a hero.... If you are born cowards, you can be quite content, you can do nothing about it and you will be cowards all your lives whatever you do; and if you are born heroes you can again be quite content; you will be heroes all your lives, eating and drinking heroically. Whereas the existentialist says that the coward makes himself cowardly, the hero makes himself heroic; and that there is always a possibility for the coward to give up cowardice and for the hero to stop being a hero.

Not only does Sartre think we are radically free, in the sense that everything is up to us. He also thinks *we must choose*. We don’t have the option of not playing the game. Even if we choose to commit suicide, we are responsible for that choice. (The responsibility may be easier to bear if we are dead, but that doesn’t change the point.)

So we are in a situation where we must choose, and yet have nothing at all to guide us — no imposed code of morals. If someone makes a decision on the basis of a certain ethical or religious system, say, then he is responsible for choosing that system.

Sartre gives the example of the student who came to him to ask whether he should stay with his mother or go off to join the French Resistance. (Read the passage; it's self-explanatory and striking. It's a famous passage.)

These factors give rise to what Sartre calls 'anguish' and 'forlornness', 'abandonment'. (Terms he got from Heidegger.) They are related to Kierkegaard's notion of "dread," in at least one of its senses.

Each Man is Responsible for All Men

This is the second of the three slogans around which I want to arrange my presentation. Here is the way Sartre actually puts it (p. 350): "And, when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men."

What can this possibly mean? At the most basic level, the slogan is perhaps a little misleading. What he means here could be better put by saying "Each man is responsible *to* all men." But the French says "for"; I checked it. (There is a deeper and more theoretical level in Sartre in which he means exactly what he says here: each man is responsible *for* all men. But that's a long story.)

The idea here is based on a combination of two notions:

- (1) Actions are statements. When I make a choice in a situation, no matter what my choice is, I am at least implicitly saying that this choice is the *right* choice in these circumstances. Not "right" according to some pre-established code of absolute values — that's not the point. Rather, by choosing the way I do, I am implicitly announcing to the world "These are *my* values."

It's not necessary that these choices, these values, be all sorted out in advance, so that all I have to do is consult my book of priorities to find out what the "right" course of action is in this circumstance. No — in many cases, it is only in the very process of making the decision that I decide that this is the right course of action.

So, in effect, Sartre is saying something quite commonplace so far. It doesn't really matter what we *say* our values are. Actions speak louder than words. Our actual choices are what really announce to the world what our values are.

That is the first ingredient of this second slogan: My actions are in effect statements. And, in particular, they are statements of values — they are ethical statements.

- (2) The second ingredient is a notion that should be familiar to students of ethics: the principle of generalization in ethics. The idea is that ethics is not a matter of individuals. Ethical principles are general, and of a form to apply to everyone in a particular set of circumstances.

It is important to realize that this principle in no way implies any kind of absolute notion of ethics or values. In effect, it is a claim about language. What it says is that ethics-talk is *general* talk, values-talk is always *universal* in form. It makes no difference whether this ethics-talk or values-talk is true or false. The point is rather that, whether true or false, whether they have any absolute basis or not, they are still *general* claims.

Now, put the two points together. When I choose, when I act, I am in effect making a claim about values, about ethics. And all such claims are general in form. It follows, therefore, that whenever I act, I am in effect “legislating” morality for all mankind. Other people may not obey my rules, may not agree with my values, but that’s not the point. I am still saying that my values apply to them too. “Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly. So every man ought to say, ‘Am I really a man who has the right to act in such a manner that humanity regulates itself by what I do’” (p. 352). Because we do act in that manner, like it or not.

In effect, this gives us Sartre’s answer to the fourth of the objections he raises — the objection about “moral anarchy.” That objection, recall, argued that if there are no absolute values, then we are left with a wishy-washy kind of ethical relativism.

“Relativism” is something people who teach ethics encounter all the time in students. It is a popular view: “You think such and such is right, and I think it isn’t. It’s right for you, but for me it’s not. But never mind. Let’s not argue about it.” Basically, this view is a wishy-washy kind of cowardly way of avoiding controversy; controversy is regarded as *impolite*.

Sartre thinks *that* kind of relativism simply doesn’t follow from his views. Sartre *is* a relativist in the sense that he thinks there are no moral absolutes. But it in no sense follows from this that we can’t argue about values. *Of course* we can argue about values. We can try to persuade one another. All that follows is that there are no absolutes about these things.

Arguments about morals then become like arguments about aesthetics. They are a matter of taste. Sartre himself makes this comparison on p. 364. If you don’t like Thelonious Monk and I do, I can try to get you to see it my way. I can say, “Listen to what he does to rhythms. Listen to how he uses the sustain pedal and some tricky fingering to give the effect of bent notes on a piano.” And you can say, “Yes, but those awful minor seconds that assault the ear!” And so on. There’s something to argue about here, and sometimes such arguments can be won. But not by appealing to some absolutely authoritative canons of aesthetic beauty!

I want to say some more about the first of the two ingredients above, the claim that whenever I act I am announcing a kind of value. In discussing this notion, Sartre makes a striking remark (p. 350): “To choose between this or that is at the same time to affirm the value of that which is chosen. We are unable ever to choose the worse.”

I want to focus on the claim “we are unable ever to choose the worse.” It is an odd claim, but it has a history — and a history Sartre is implicitly appealing to is this remark. It goes back at least to Socrates, and is called the “Socratic Paradox,” because it is such a striking claim. Socrates argued that *no one knowingly and deliberately chooses to do evil*. Here is his reasoning. (And now we have to stand outside the Sartrean framework for a moment.)

What is evil is in the end bad for me, in the sense that it will frustrate my ultimate desire for happiness. Evil harms the evildoer. Not just the victim (if there is one), but the doer.

If that's so, then why on earth would anyone ever choose to do evil — if he knows it's going to harm him? Whatever could prompt one to do that? So far, then, the argument is just a matter of enlightened self-interest.

Reply: He *doesn't* know it's evil. The only way anyone could ever choose to do evil is if he's confused and thinks it's good for him.

Perhaps in some long-term sense you do know that what you are doing is going to harm you. In that case, you can choose to do it anyway only by allowing yourself to be *distracted* from what you know — by allowing yourself to get momentarily confused by the attractive aspects.

Take for example, smoking. You're trying to give up smoking, and you know full well all the awful things it does to you. You've read the surgeon general's warnings, and you've seen those horrifying films they show you in high school — the ones with the gross lungs all grunged up with tar and nicotine. You know all that, but there's that luscious pack of cigarettes over there on the table — beckoning to you. And so what happens? You begin to make excuses. Well, maybe just one. After all, it's not the cigarette I smoke today that's going to give me cancer; it's all those others I smoked twenty years ago. And blah blah blah. In effect, you are *distracting* yourself from what you know full well, so that in the end you yield to temptation by momentarily forgetting what you otherwise know.

In short, according to this “Socratic” view (which many people find very plausible), evildoing arises only out of confusion and ignorance.

So the Socratic principle comes down to: No one ever chooses to do what he *thinks* is evil. No one ever *knowingly and deliberately* does evil.

Now if you hold this view, then knowledge is obviously going to be an important thing. The more you know, the less evil you'll do by mistake, and the less harm you'll do to yourself. This was the Socratic position. And, in it, we see the origin of the ethical emphasis on knowledge. Knowledge takes on a kind of moral importance. There is an urgency about education. Only by giving people knowledge can we be sure to do away with as much evil as possible.

We know what happens to this emphasis historically. It led to an overemphasis on intellect — to Rationalism and the Enlightenment. So perhaps it strikes you as odd to find Sartre, the existentialist, saying “we are unable ever to choose the worse,” thereby affirming the importance of knowledge, one of the most characteristic features of the Rationalist tradition and the Enlightenment, the confidence in reason, against which the entire existentialist movement is reacting!

But there's a difference. The Greek view said that no one *knowingly* does evil. Sartre's claim is that no one *ever* chooses evil — with no mention of knowledge.

The point is this: For Socrates, there may very well be a difference between what you *think* is evil and is going to harm you and what *really* is evil and is going to harm you. For the Greeks, there were absolutes about these things. Human nature is a certain way, and we automatically and inevitably have certain aims and goals, and the nature of reality is such that certain courses of action will further those goals and certain others will frus-

trate them — whether we realize it or not. So, for the Greeks, there is something we can be mistaken about here, and knowledge is an important factor in the picture.

For Sartre, on the contrary, there *are* no absolutes about values. There *is* no human nature in advance. And since there are no absolutes about these things, there is nothing to be mistaken about. Knowledge is simply not a factor in Sartre's set-up. His point is thus not based on an appeal to enlightened self-interest, as Socrates' point is. For Sartre, it's rather a matter of an analysis of the very process of making choices and decisions.

For him, the reason I can never choose the worse is that, *in the very process of choosing*, I set up my values in such a way that this choice *becomes* the right one.

I want to digress further a moment on this notion that no one chooses (knowingly or otherwise) to do evil. I want to talk about St. Augustine. Augustine was a fourth century Christian author. He thought — contrary to the Greeks, and for that matter contrary to Sartre — that not only do we sometimes choose evil, we sometimes even choose to do what we *know* is evil, and even what we know is evil *while we are doing it*. Sometimes we deliberately and consciously do evil.

He thought this was simply a datum of human experience. But he also thought it was *theoretically* necessary if he was going to be a Christian. Augustine couldn't agree with Socrates that we do evil only out of ignorance. We can't blame human evil on human ignorance — because whose fault is it that we are ignorant? We *start off* ignorant; we are *created that way*. And we have to work very hard to acquire what little knowledge we finally get in this life. And of course *God* is the one who set things up that way. He could have created us with more knowledge to begin with, but he didn't. He is the one who determined that we start off ignorant. Thus, if ignorance is responsible for the evil we do, then since God is responsible for our ignorance, it follows that God is in the end responsible for our evil. And that won't do.

But this wasn't just a theoretical point for Augustine. It was also just a plain fact of experience. There is a famous story in Book II of Augustine's *Confessions* that is relevant here. It is the story of the "pear tree." One day when he was fifteen year old, Augustine tells us, he and some of buddies went out for a hilarious time, and ended up stealing some pears from a neighbor's pear tree and throwing them to some hogs. Augustine goes on for several whole chapters dwelling on this sinful deed. It is a striking passage, and is often cited by people as an illustration of how Augustine (who was writing the *Confessions* at a relatively advanced age years later) was filled with morbid guilt for all these years over relatively trivial follies of his youth, and if this is what Christianity does to you, then what are we to think?

But that's completely to miss the point of the story. Augustine goes on for several chapters, yes, but he never says that what he did was any big deal. It was wrong, to be sure, but it wasn't horribly wrong. That's not what he is dwelling on. What impresses him is the fact that *he knew full well at the time that it was wrong*. He devotes considerable effort to establishing this. It's not that the pears were so delectable and attractive that he and his friends just couldn't help themselves, but snatched them off the tree in a fit of salivary passion. No, they weren't even very *good* pears. It's not that he and his friends were hungry, so that their judgment was clouded by their urgent stomachs. No, they didn't even eat the things! They threw them to the hogs. It wasn't this and it wasn't that. In the

end, Augustine's point is just that he did wrong (not a big wrong, but a wrong nonetheless) *knowingly and deliberately*.

In other words, what strikes Augustine in this discussion is that *Socrates was wrong!* People do sometimes knowingly and deliberately do evil. Augustine knows from his own experience.

For Augustine, the ability to go against our knowledge and to do what we know full well is going to harm us — the ability to act knowingly against our own self interest — is required by the notion of free will. If we couldn't do this, then our wills would be slaves to our intellects. That's a theoretical matter, but of course Augustine also had his own empirical verification of the point. (Note: Augustine thinks he can reconcile the existence of God with the existence of human free will. Sartre thinks this is impossible, as we have seen.)

Although of course Sartre doesn't agree with Augustine about the existence of God, and although he doesn't agree with Augustine about absolute values and absolute goods, he does agree with Augustine that our wills are not just the automatic followers of our intellects. We *don't* have a situation in which the intellect presents the will with various alternatives, some of them more attractive than others, and then the will just inevitably picks the most attractive one. (That *would* be a set-up in which Buridan's Ass would starve to death.) For Sartre, there's no free choice in that picture.

Rather, for him, it is only *in the very process of choosing* that certain alternatives *come* to appear more attractive than others. By the time a certain alternative comes to be viewed as the most attractive one, *the choice has already been made*.

The Human Condition

In order to lead into the third and last of the three slogans I listed earlier, I want to go back and pick up on something I said a while ago.

I said that for Sartre we *must* choose something or other. Even if we choose to commit suicide, that is a choice. We cannot avoid making choices.

Now so far, I've been stressing the fact that for Sartre our freedom is absolutely and totally unlimited. But now, when we consider this third theme, it begins to appear that perhaps it isn't so totally unlimited after all. How are we going to balance these two themes?

The point is that, although I am free to choose whatever I want, I am *not* free not to choose! For Sartre, there is *brute fact* about this. We exist, we are responsible for our choices. But we aren't responsible for the fact that we are responsible. No one asked me whether I wanted to exist.

This is the notion summed up in the third slogan: "Man is condemned to be free." As he says on p. 353: "Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does."

In "Existentialism Is A Humanism," this is what Sartre calls *the human condition*. The human condition is the realm of "brute fact" over which we have no control. In "Existentialism Is A Humanism" there is not much discussion of how this can be reconciled with his emphasis on our unconditional freedom. But he does discuss it great length in *Being and Nothingness*, where it is one of the main themes. There he uses a different

term for this notion. He calls it not ‘the human condition’ but ‘facticity’. (Actually, “facticity” is a somewhat broader notion, since I have my own personal facticity, whereas the “human condition” is the same for all of us. But the problem is identical: how to reconcile it with the absoluteness of our freedom.)

So far, we have talked as if this notion of “the human condition,” or “facticity,” were simply a kind of technicality: I’m not free not to be free, of course, but *except for that*, my freedom is totally unconditioned. But towards the end of “Existentialism Is A Humanism,” it turns out that there is much more to it than that. There are other limits too. Here is some of what he says (pp. 361–362): “Furthermore, although it is impossible to find in each and every man a universal essence that can be called human nature, there is nevertheless a human universality of *condition*...” And what is that? “... all the *limitations* which *a priori* define man’s fundamental situation in the universe.” Are what kinds of limitations are those? “... what never vary are the necessities of being in the world [I didn’t ask to be born], of having to labor there [he doesn’t mean you have to get a job, he means only that reality is a recalcitrant place, and you have to struggle your way through life] and to die there.”

The obvious question is: Where did these limitations come from? If there is no God around to impose the limitations of a human *nature*, then he’s not around to impose these limitations of the human *condition* either. So how do they get there? What’s the difference between a human nature and the human condition? We begin to suspect that Sartre is trying to slip the notion of a human nature back into the picture in disguise.

Sartre has an answer to this question. The two are *not* the same. But the answer is a long story, and the full development of it is one of the main themes of *Being and Nothingness*. How can these “limitations” of the human condition be reconciled with the radical notion of human freedom Sartre wants to maintain?

In effect, Sartre argues that in order to see what is really going on, we must renegotiate our whole concept of what freedom is. He thinks that the traditional way of casting the problem of free will vs. determinism misrepresents the real situation. So in *Being and Nothingness*, he tries to forge a whole new concept of human freedom.

Perhaps the best metaphor to use to understand his picture of human freedom is the common picture of “the fork in the road.” The fork in the road represents a choice among various alternatives. When I get to this point in the road, I can choose to go any way I want (even backwards, I suppose). The choices are limitless. *But I start from here*. I’m not free to choose to start from somewhere else.

The notion of the human “condition” or “facticity,” then, is roughly the notion of the *context* in terms of which I exercise my freedom. Freedom is never just freedom in the abstract; it is always freedom to choose in a certain context. I am free to do whatever I want in these circumstances. But I am *not* free not to start *from these circumstances*. Of course, the decisions I freely make *now* will in part determine the *circumstances* I find myself in later. So, while I am not free not to start in the circumstances I find myself in, perhaps I *was* free some time ago to do something that would have prevented my finding myself in these circumstances now. But it’s too late for that. (This connection between “facticity”/freedom and past/future is something Sartre explores at length in his sections on *time* in *Being and Nothingness*.)

Last Thoughts

Another point: Recall the argument against a human nature. The upshot of that argument was that, since there is no God to assign a nature in advance to human beings, they are free, and their existence precedes their essence.

But of course, if God does not exist, then he is not around to assign natures to anything else either. So what are we going to be say about those other things?

Either: they are free too, and their existence precedes their essence, so that they are really human beings — even though they may not *look* like what we normally think of as human beings (they may look like trees and rocks). The rock is sitting there freely and consciously choosing its lapidary existence.

Or else: if we don't want to accept that alternative (I don't, for one), then these other things must have a nature assigned to them in advance after all. And, if God is not around, there is no one else to do that assigning but human beings. But in that case, all those other things (rocks, trees, the solar system, etc.) are really *human artifacts*.

In short, it looks as if Sartre has done away with what we usually call the realm of "nature." Everything in the world is either a free agent (a human being) or else a human artifact (and so "artificial").

Which way to go? Sartre discusses this too in *Being and Nothingness*. (He adopts the second alternative, on the basis of his phenomenological method. In short, human beings project their own phenomenological movies in the theater of their minds.

This is an instance of a tendency we will see a lot in Sartre: the tendency to state things in terms of stark dichotomies. Here it is human beings/human artifacts. In *Being and Nothingness* it is being-in-itself/being-for-itself, or two and only two general patterns of interpersonal relations, and so on. In *The Emotions*, all theories of the emotions are either "intellectual" theories or "peripheric" ones. And on and on. It is worth asking whether this isn't a tendency that sometimes gets Sartre in trouble.

Notes on Sartre's *The Transcendence of the Ego*

Please read the entire volume, including the Introduction and the notes. But concentrate on Part I — i.e., up to p. 60. Here are some comments keyed to page numbers.

p. 31: “Some assert its formal presence.” Sartre is thinking of Husserl’s doctrine of the Transcendental Ego. Note: ‘transcendent’ and ‘transcendental’ do not mean the same thing. ‘Transcendent’ means basically “beyond,” and *here* it means “beyond consciousness” (what Husserl calls “genuine transcendence,” “real transcendence”). ‘Transcendental’ in Husserl’s phrase ‘transcendental ego’ (the phrase comes from Kant) implies in part “*inside* consciousness” — as Sartre says: an “inhabitant” of consciousness.

The so called “formal” notion of the ego referred to here is what Sartre will call the “I” (see the title on p. 32). By contrast, the notion of the so called “material” ego is what Sartre refers to as the “me” (see the title on p. 54). The “formal” ego is Husserl’s transcendental ego; the “material” ego is the psyche, the psychological ego. Recall Husserl’s insisting on the distinction between transcendental phenomenology and phenomenological psychology. That is *exactly* the distinction Sartre is talking about — and accepts — here. Nevertheless, Sartre does not always strictly adhere to the terminological refinements he introduces here, as you will see below.

Erlebnisse: German for “experiences.” The singular is ‘*Erlebnis*’.

“Empty principle of unification”: One of the main jobs of Husserl’s transcendental ego was to *tie my experiences together*, to unify them as all belonging to *a single ego*, not scattered all about and belonging to anyone or to no one in particular. (Yet the transcendental ego is not a *personal* ego; the “person” belongs to the realm of psychology.)

The ego is a “being in the world, like the ego of another”: This hints at Sartre’s resolution of the problem of intersubjectivity (the problem of other minds). He raises this problem in “Existentialism Is A Humanism” (but does not really do much to solve it there), and discusses it at great length in *Being and Nothingness*. The discussion here in *Transcendence of the Ego* antedates both of those others.

p. 32: “The Critical Problem”: Kant’s philosophy is sometimes called “Critical philosophy,” after Kant’s three famous “Critiques” — the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and the *Critique of Judgment*.

Validity: Here and throughout this volume, this word means roughly “possibility,” “legitimacy.” It does not mean “validity” in the logical sense. Don’t be confused.

p. 33: Transcendental consciousness: For practical purposes, read here “transcendental ego.”

“As an unconscious”: Since we are not explicitly aware of this spooky transcendental ego, with all the things it is supposed to do, Sartre describes it as like an “unconscious.” That is, it is supposed to be mental, it is supposed to be “in there,” and yet I am

not conscious of it. Sartre thinks the notion of an unconscious part of the mind is the notion of an “unconscious consciousness,” and so absurd and contradictory. This will be a big theme with him.

p. 34: The kind of transition Sartre has in mind in his second question may be illustrated thus: Suppose you are reading a good novel and are totally *absorbed* in it to the extent that you are no longer quite aware of your surroundings or even really aware of *yourself* explicitly. Now suppose you suddenly “come to yourself” and say, “I’m really enjoying this story.” Has your awareness of *the story* changed?

p. 35: Read the important notes 2 and 4.

p. 36: Me: The psychological personality, the particular human “nature,” the “psyche.”

“Only at the level of humanity”: That is, only as one ego among others. (Recall the problem of intersubjectivity.) ‘Humanity’ here means “the human race” as a collection or group, not “human nature” or “that which makes humans human.”

Sartre’s third conclusion amounts to a tentative answer to his third question on p. 34.

p. 37: For Sartre’s fourth point, see his answer on p. 91.

Read n. 7.

“Need that consciousness has for unity and individuality”: Unity and individuality are not the same thing. ‘Unity’ here means that the acts of consciousness are tied together into one continuous story, one continuous point of view (one “movie”). See my comments on p. 31, above. (But don’t be misled. To say the movie is “continuous” doesn’t necessarily mean the story makes much sense. We’ve all seen disjoint, disconnected and incoherent movies. So from the fact that consciousness has a unified “point of view” we must not infer that what consciousness *sees* from that point of view is a coherent story. Some of us are crazy, for instance.) ‘Individuality’, on the other hand, means that this unified and continuous consciousness is *distinct* and *separated* from any other mind (if any). It is this “individualizing” function of the transcendental ego that is responsible for the “*problem* of other minds,” for making one ego *exclude* others. Note: The “individualizing” function was already present in the “phenomenological ego” (as I have called it) of Husserl’s early theory, the bare “point of view with nothing back there.” Since you can’t take two points of view at once, therefore — on our analogy — each phenomenological ego excludes all others, if any. Husserl’s later notion of the transcendental ego has this much at least in common with his earlier notion of the ego.

p. 38: Inwardness: Here, roughly equivalent to the division of consciousness into separate, private, isolated egos. I am, so to speak, *inside* my mind, but forever *outside* yours. See my comment on p. 37, on “individuality.”

“Unified by escaping from itself”: Sartre is here saying that acts of consciousness do not need to be tied together at the subject end by a transcendental ego, as Husserl thought. They are *already* tied together at the object end. The unity of what you see is what makes for the unity of your point of view. And that is all the unity that is needed. (Sartre is later going to have trouble with this. See my comment above on craziness.) In short, the transcendental ego is not needed for *this* purpose at any rate.

“Precisely Husserl”: That is, Husserl when he defined consciousness by intentionality, and before he went against his own better doctrine by adopting the theory of the transcendental ego.

“Unity within duration”: This paragraph is an obscure part of Sartre’s doctrine. He is saying that acts of consciousness are not only tied together by their objects, they are also connected with one another *in time*, to account for memory and expectation. He here claims to be saying what Husserl had said earlier (before he went astray): that these acts may be linked in time like the fibers of a rope, by overlapping and intertwining, without any need to be all tied together at any one point in a kind of knot (= the transcendental ego). See Husserl’s *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, where there is no mention of a transcendental ego.

p. 39: Individuality: An answer to the second argument for the necessity of the transcendental ego on pp. 37–38. Sartre simply denies that the transcendental ego is needed for this. The basis for the denial becomes somewhat clearer in the following pages. (In a sense, we already know it, of course. If the “phenomenological ego” is already sufficient for the “individuality” of consciousness, then we certainly don’t need a *transcendental ego* to account for it.) The individuality of the ego — its “inwardness” or “interiority” (see above on p. 38) is sufficiently explained by the notion of non-positional self-consciousness developed below. Compare the definition of “interiority” on p. 83 and see p. 42 on how in this non-positional self-consciousness “to be” and “to appear” are one.

p. 40: The transcendental ego is not only not *needed*, it is *impossible*. This is an important transition in the discussion.

Opaque/opacity: One of Sartre’s key terms to describe the *in-itself*. (We’ll hear a lot about that.) The transcendental ego is a kind of fixed and determinate (and therefore *unfree*) thing stuck into consciousness. It is an in-itself in the for-itself, to use Sartre’s lingo, and therefore combines incompatible opposites. It is impossible for the same reason that God is impossible. In fact, it is *like* a miniature god living in the mind and ruling it. It would destroy the freedom and spontaneity characteristic of consciousness.

p. 41: Positional: That is, posits (= puts before itself) an object. For Sartre, **EVERY ACT OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS BOTH A POSITIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF AN OBJECT** (this is just another way of stating the claim of the theory of intentionality) **AND NON-POSITIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITSELF**. The latter, non-positional consciousness, is “inwardness,” the *inside* of consciousness. For example, when I am totally absorbed in a novel (as in my

earlier example), I am conscious of the *story* as an object. That is the *only* object for my consciousness. But I am also *in a sense* conscious of myself, of my own awareness of the story. (I am not, after all, asleep.) But I am not aware of myself as a second *object*, by hypothesis; the *story* is the *only* object for me here. (For convenience, let us rule out autobiographical stories.) For Sartre, the act by which I am conscious of the story and the act by which I am conscious of my being conscious of the story without being conscious of a *second* object are *not* two distinct acts of consciousness. Rather they are two sides of one and the same act, which is both *positional* consciousness of the story, and *non-positional* consciousness of itself. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.**

“Unreflected consciousness”: The “I” is not an object in unreflected consciousness. (Notice, incidentally, how Sartre seems to be slipping here on his nice distinction between the “I” and the “me.” Watch out for this, and don’t be fooled by it.) There are also acts of consciousness, however, in which the I *is* the object, or at least part of the object, as when I say to myself “I’m enjoying this book.” These acts are acts of *reflective* consciousness. The same law applies here as above: Reflective acts of consciousness are both positional consciousness of an object (this time a complex object including both the “I” and the story) and non-positional consciousness of itself. An *unreflected* act of consciousness and a *reflected* act are two *distinct acts*, unlike the positional and the non-positional sides of *one and the same* act of consciousness.

pp. 43 ff.: Here Sartre discusses *reflective* acts of consciousness. See above. Think hard about the example of the landscape from the train.

p. 44: “My reflecting consciousness does not take itself for an object”: This is a *general principle*. *Every* act of consciousness is *non-positional* self-consciousness (that is, consciousness of itself, but not as a new object); no act of consciousness is consciousness of *itself* as an object. When I reflect on an act of consciousness A, make it into an object for consciousness, it is always by a *different act B* that I do this. Note: Reflection does not always have to be on a *past* act. I can reflect about what I will do in the future, or about what I *might* do (but in fact never will), and so on.

p. 45: Thetic: That is, positional. A “*thesis*” in Greek is just the same as a “*positio*” in Latin; both mean “putting.”

Note how Sartre avoids the problem of infinite regress here.

p. 46: “Such an experience”: That is, an experience reverted to (gone back to). Sartre thinks that not every such experience *is* reflective in fact. It only “seems” so (see the preceding line of the text). We can go back in “non-thetic” memory.

pp. 46–47: Think carefully about the example here. What is the role of memory in the example? Sartre wants to inspect a case of unreflected consciousness. But how can he do that without *reflecting* on it and thus turning it into a *reflected* consciousness and destroying his enterprise? (It “may seem impossible,” he says. It certainly may.) As a matter of fact, it turns out that there *is* one way, he says, in which one act of consciousness can

be conscious of a second, distinct act of consciousness without being conscious of it *as an object* — i.e., non-positionally, without *reflecting* on it — namely, by *reproducing it in memory*. The remembering act is *distinct* from the remembered or reproduced act, but does not take the reproduced act *as an object* (or at least *need* not). Look back to p. 43, where Sartre distinguishes two ways of remembering the landscape from the train. In the first way, he remembers the landscape only, by reproducing the original act in memory. In the second way, he remembers *that he was seeing the landscape*. This would be a *reflective* memory, since it takes the original *act* as its object. On p. 46 Sartre is remembering in the *first* way, not the second. This is a very delicate passage, and repays close scrutiny. Notice how at the crucial point, Sartre resorts to metaphor (“enters into a conspiracy,” etc.). It is not clear that what Sartre is trying to do here will work. (In fact, I think it is fairly clear it will *not* work.) Does reproducing an act in memory suffice to allow us to *inspect* it if that act is not made an object for reflective consciousness?

pp. 47–48: Here Sartre addresses himself to a possible objection to what he has just done, an objection based on the unreliability of memory.

p. 48: Intuition of essence: Husserl’s eidetic abstraction.

p. 49: Top of page: Important passage.

“Without facets, without profile”: See p. 63.

p. 50: The “I” which appears as an object in reflective consciousness is not a fleeting, momentary I; rather, it comes on as a personality, a particular, *enduring* thing.

p. 51: Note: affirms itself as *transcendent* — not as *transcendental*.

Read n. 17.

Opaque: See p. 40 and my comment above.

p. 54: “Infinite contraction of the material *me*”: See p. 41. The *me* is the psychological personality with all its drives, desires, etc., as opposed to the relatively abstract and formal “I,” which Sartre argues is just one *aspect*, along with the *me*, of the ego. See p. 60 and p. 36, second consequence. Do not be confused here. Sartre is changing his terminology without announcing the fact. He *rejects* the transcendental ego (the “I”) entirely. When he here says that the “I” is one aspect of the “me,” he is referring only to the *active* functions of the psyche. What seems to be happening here is this: Since Sartre has made it clear that he rejects the notion of the “I” in the sense of the transcendental ego, he no longer feels it is necessary to maintain the terminological distinction and theoretical separation of the “I” and the “me.” (He never maintained it very strictly anyway.) It would have been nice if he had told us this.

p. 55: Unconscious: Recall that Sartre thinks the notion of an unconscious mind is contradictory and impossible. Note carefully the error Sartre points out on p. 55, and the absolutely brilliant discussion he gives by way of example on pp. 56–59.

p. 60: “Ideal and *indirect* unity”: Contrast ‘direct’ in the first line of section II.

Note the last paragraph of section I.

With the first sentence of section II, see the top of p. 70.

“Constituting itself as the unity of itself”: That is, by the “transversal” intentionalities of p. 39.

p. 62: line 2 from bottom: Read ‘as does’.

p. 63: Profile, projection: See p. 49.

p. 65: Symbolized interpretation: Freud. Once again, Sartre thinks the Freudian unconsciousness is impossible.

p. 66: Inert: One of the characteristic terms applied to being-in-itself.

p. 67: Spontaneity: Freedom, lack of causal determination.

Emanation: See also p. 77.

p. 68: “Magical”: In his little book on the emotions, Sartre defines the “magical” as “an irrational synthesis of spontaneity and passivity,” “an inert activity, a consciousness rendered passive” (*The Emotions: Outline of A Theory*, p. 82). In short, like God, it is a contradictory combination of the in-itself (passive, inert) and the for-itself (spontaneous, active, conscious). Man always “comes on” to himself in this magical way. He keeps trying to make himself into God. “Man is always a wizard to man.” Here we see a particular example of this in the way consciousness presents to itself the relation between the psychic *state* and the particular psychological *Erlebnis* (experience). It is a *magical* relation. Just why we constantly do this is the theme of the chapter on “Bad Faith” in *Being and Nothingness*.

p. 70: first line: See p. 60, opening of section II.

p. 74: Compromised: See p. 82.

p. 77: Emanation: See p. 67.

p. 83: “Irrational synthesis of activity and passivity”: See the definition of the “magical” quoted in my note to p. 68, above.

Compare the definition of “interiority” with the discussion of the “individuality” of consciousness on pp. 39–42.

p. 91: Non-personal spontaneity: See p. 37.

pp. 94–96: This is Sartre's answer to the problem of intersubjectivity (other minds). Read it carefully. It is not very good, and he admits as much in *Being and Nothingness*.

p. 102: Psychasthenic ailment: See p. 100.

pp. 103–104: Once again, a restatement of Sartre's answer to the problem of intersubjectivity. See pp. 94–96.

Outline of Sartre's "Introduction" to *Being and Nothingness* (pp. 3–30)

(**Note:** In some early printings of the Washington Square Press paperback edition, Sartre's "Introduction" — not to be confused with the translator's introduction — is numbered in Roman numerals, and the Arabic numeration begins with Part I, Ch. 1. In the more recent printings, the "Introduction" is numbered in Arabic numerals. The page references below are to the later version. If you have an early copy, you can find the page number in your edition by adding 50 to the number given below and then converting to Roman numerals. In the later chapters of *Being and Nothingness*, you will then have to subtract 30 from the numbers I will give in references. **Note also:** The original hardback printing of the Barnes translation, now happily available again at a very reasonable price, has an entirely different pagination. There is no easy translation algorithm from the paperback to the hardback pagination.)

- I. The Phenomenon. (pp. 3–7)
 - A. Statement of Husserl's program (pp. 3–5): to overcome embarrassing dualisms by reducing "the existent" (= real objects) to a series of appearances (= phenomena) (p. 3). (In fact, Husserl "brackets existence"; he doesn't talk about "the existent" at all. But in so "bracketing" it, Husserl doesn't think he is bracketing anything very important. The most important part of a thing for Husserl is its *essence*.)
 1. Dualisms Husserl overcomes (pp. 3–5):
 - a) The (scientific) dualism of interior/exterior. (For instance, the inner or hidden nature of electricity vs. its observed effects.) (pp. 3–4)
 - b) The (Kantian) dualism of being/appearance. (That is, the "real" being of the noumenal thing-in-itself vs. the "merely illusory," and therefore "unreal" appearances.) (p. 4)
 - c) The (psychological) dualism of potency/act. (For instance, genius, talent, ability, vs. particular acts. An act of seeing is not an exercising of a "faculty" of sight.) (pp. 4–5)
 - d) The (metaphysical) dualism of appearance vs. essence. (For instance, a particular red spot vs. the general "redness" it embodies.) (p. 5) For Husserl, essence is "the principle of the series" of appearances, and is itself an appearance. Recall "eidetic abstraction" from *The Idea of Phenomenology*.
 - B. Critique of Husserl's position (pp. 5–6): It has not done away with all dualisms, but only reduced them to the single dualism of finite/infinite (a single phenomenon vs. an infinite series of them). (p. 5)
 1. "Objectivity" requires the possibility of an infinite series of *Ab-schattungen* (= aspects, perspectives, "profiles"). Recall the passage on the cube from *The Psychology of Imagination*. (pp. 5–6)

2. Application to the dualisms under § I.A.1, above. (References given in this form are to sections of this handout.) All those dualisms reappear in the dualism finite/infinite. (p. 6)
 - a) To dualism (a), above.
 - b) To dualism (b), above.
 - c) To dualism (c), above.
 - d) To dualism (d), above.
- C. Conclusion (pp. 6–7).
 1. There is nothing “behind” the appearances. They are “supported” by no being but their own. (pp. 6–7)
 2. Transition: If appearances (phenomena) are no longer opposed to being, what about “the being of the phenomenon”? (Is it the same as the phenomenon itself?) (p. 7)

II. The Phenomenon of Being and the Being of the Phenomenon. (pp. 7–9)

Note: There are two senses of the word ‘being’ at play here, which we shall distinguish by subscripts: Being₁ is the *fact* that something is. (Compare “the-being-of-the-table” or “the-being-of-the-chair” on p. 8, and ignore the translator’s footnote there, which seems to me to be wrong.) Being₂ is the basic reality of the thing, a kind of ontological “act” that is responsible for its being₁. The title of this difficult section may be parsed as “The Phenomenon of Being₁ and the Being₂ of the Phenomenon.”

- A. We have already mentioned the being₂ of the phenomenon (in § I.C.1, above). (p. 7)
- B. Is the being₂ of the phenomenon itself a phenomenon? That is, can it be *made* one? (p. 7) (Recall § I.A.1.d, above: According to Husserl, the *essence* of a phenomenon is itself a phenomenon. The question then is: Can the same be said for the being₂ of a phenomenon?)
- C. It seems so. (But this will turn out to be wrong, as we shall see in § II.F, below.) Argument (p. 7 — Note: What are we doing with an argument? I thought we were not supposed to argue in phenomenology. Is Sartre doing anything illegitimate here?)
 1. The phenomenon is what manifests itself. (Definition)
 2. Being₁ discloses (manifests) itself to us immediately in certain privileged emotions (boredom, nausea — the sudden realization that “there is something rather than nothing”). (Note: ‘Immediately’ — that is, without theoretical bias or presuppositions. Recall, phenomenology is supposed to be a description of these presuppositionless “givens”; it will be a “presuppositionless science” (see Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations*, § 3). Ontology — see the subtitle of *Being and Nothingness* — will be the description of the phenomenon of being₁.)
 3. Therefore, there is a phenomenon of being₁. (The argument ends with the words ‘without intermediary’.)

- D. This argument proves what it is supposed to prove only if being₂ = being₁. Are they really identical? Is the being₁ that discloses itself to me (the phenomenon of being₁) the same as the being of the existents (objects) that *appear* to me (the being₂ of the phenomenon)? (p. 7)
- E. It seems so (p. 7). (But this will turn out to be wrong.) Husserl regards the passage from a phenomenon — say, the appearance of \underline{x} — to the phenomenon of being₁ as analogous to the passage from the phenomenon to its essence in *eidetic abstraction*. (Indeed, I suspect it might very well be regarded as a *special case* of eidetic abstraction.) Similarly for Heidegger.
- F. But eidetic reduction passes from (the appearance) of \underline{x} to (the appearance of) the essence of *the same* \underline{x} , and in that sense is a “homogeneous” transition. The passage from the appearance of \underline{x} to the phenomenon of being₁ is not like this — that is, it is not a passage from \underline{x} to *its* being₂. (The illusion that the passages were similar accounts for the error mentioned in § II.C, above.) (pp. 7–8)
1. The essence is the “meaning” of the object, but being₂ is not a “meaning” of the object. (Roughly, this means that the *reality* of a thing is never captured by contemplating its structure.) (p. 8) In support of this claim, see § III.B.1, below.
- G. Being₂ is the condition of all revelation (= all phenomena); *being-for-revealing* (= being₂) is not revealed-being (being₁). (p. 8)
- H. Since we cannot talk about being₂ without considering the phenomenon of being₁ (that is, every time we *try* to talk about being₂, we end up talking about being₁), what is their relation? (pp. 8–9)
1. Knowledge by itself cannot give an account of being₂. (This is what was behind § II.F.1, above.) Being₂ cannot be reduced to the phenomenon of being₁. It is “ontological” (see § V, below): The phenomenon of being₁ requires the “transphenomenality” of being₂. The being₂ of a phenomenon is not *hidden behind* the phenomenon (see p. 8) — that is, it is “coextensive” with the phenomenon — but it is not subject to the “phenomenal condition,” to exist only insofar as it reveals itself. (p. 9)
- III. The Pre-Reflective Cogito and the Being of the Percipere. (pp. 9–17)

Note: *Percipere* = to perceive. *Percipi* = to be perceived. *Esse est percipi* = to be is to be perceived (a famous slogan from the 18th century philosopher, George Berkeley).

The being₂ of a phenomenon is not itself a phenomenon. It is “transphenomenal” — see § II.H.1, above — that is, it goes beyond the phenomenon. (Is ‘transphenomenality’ here simply another term for transcendence in the sense of being not directly given? I’m not sure, but I certainly don’t see any difference between the two notions.) Sartre argues that this “transphenomenality” runs in two directions: the transphenomenality of *consciousness*, the “*percipere*” discussed here in § III, and the transphenomenality of the *object*, the “*percipi*,” discussed in § IV.

- A. General remarks. (pp. 9–10)
1. Objection: The notion of being₂ (which first emerges in § II.F, above), on the basis of which the preceding considerations were made, is incompatible with phenomenology. If there is no being *behind* the phenomenon, then why not say (with Berkeley) that its *esse est percipi*, that its being is just its appearing? (p. 9)
 - a) This is what Husserl says about the *noema* (= thought-object, phenomenon, intentional object, object of a *noesis* or act of consciousness). (Compare Husserl's *Ideas*, § 98.)
 2. We cannot accept this for two reasons: The transphenomenality of (i) consciousness (= the *percipere*) and (ii) the object (= the *percipi*). (p. 10)
- B. The nature of the *percipere* (= consciousness). (pp. 10–17)
1. Sketchy argument in support of the transphenomenality of being₂ (see § II.F.1, above) (p. 10): If being (*esse*) is perceived (any other conscious relation to the object will do just as well — see p. 10, n. 3), then *either* (i) we take the perceiving as a brute given (we “presuppose” it), *or else* (ii) if we inquire about the being of the perceiving itself, it will turn out to be *its being perceived*, and *so on to infinity*. (Sartre will not explicitly discuss alternative (ii) here, but it seems needed for his argument. See also an analogous argument on p. 12. Again, although Sartre does not explicitly say so, the argument seems to continue: Neither (i) nor (ii) is acceptable — recall, with respect to (i), that phenomenology is to be a “presuppositionless science,” see § II.C.2, above — so that *esse* is not *percipi* in general, it is transphenomenal.)
 2. One attempt to accommodate this fact (10–11): The transphenomenal being₂ that grounds the phenomenon is the being₂ of the *subject* — that is, of consciousness; the phenomena are grounded in consciousness. (Implicit here is the notion that this is the *only* ground, the *only* transphenomenality of being₂ is that of consciousness. It is the ‘only’ that Sartre will reject in § III.B.3, below.)
 - a) This is Husserl's view (p. 10). (In § III.A.1.a, it was said that for Husserl the *esse* of the *noema* (= phenomenon) was its being perceived, but not the *esse* of everything whatever, including consciousness (= *noesis*).)
 - b) This view entails that *we must abandon the primacy of knowledge if we wish to establish that knowledge* (p. 11). (Sartre will accept this consequence, but will reject the implicit claim that consciousness is the only transphenomenal being needed.)
 3. The attempt fails. (p. 11)
 - a) Husserl's notion of intentionality. (Sartre accepts this.)
 - b) But this is incompatible with his other view (see § III.B.2.a), now under consideration, which requires that the

object of consciousness (= the *noema*) originate in consciousness. This would turn consciousness into an object. (With this argument, compare the passage in the handout from *The Psychology of Imagination*.) (Note: Here we have an *argument* against Husserl.)

4. Non-positional self-consciousness. (pp. 11–17). (See *The Transcendence of the Ego*.)
 - a) It is *necessary* condition for positional consciousness of the object (p. 11). Note the appeal to the absurdity of the notion of an unconscious consciousness.
 - b) It is also a *sufficient* condition. (p. 11)
 - c) It is not *knowledge* of consciousness. (pp. 11–14)
 - (1) Knowledge requires a *duality*: knower-known (see Part II, Ch. 6), which cannot be introduced into consciousness on pain of infinite regress. (Once again, we actually have an *argument* here, rather than just bald claims.) (p. 12)
 - (2) Reflection is not primary. Non-positional, pre-reflective self-consciousness makes reflection possible. (p. 13)
 - d) Non-positional self-consciousness is not a *new* consciousness, in addition to the positional consciousness of the object. (pp. 14–15)
 - (1) It is not a “quality” added on to the positional consciousness; this would require the primacy of knowledge once again. (p. 14)
 - (2) Neither is the positional consciousness a “quality” added on to non-positional self-consciousness; this too would require the primacy of knowledge. (pp. 14–15.) (It is not altogether clear to me how this last claim works. The view Sartre has in mind here is the one treated under §§ III.B.2–III.B.3, above.)
 - e) The type of being of consciousness is the opposite of that which the ontological proof reveals to us. (p. 15.) On the “ontological” proof, see § II.H.1, above, and § V, below. The ontological proof starts from a phenomenon (as it were, an essence) and infers the being of the phenomenon. That is, for phenomena, essence implies existence. But for consciousness, existence “implies” essence. Existence is prior; there are not any essential *laws* of consciousness. (See “Existentialism Is A Humanism.”)
 - f) *Consciousness is prior to nothingness and “is derived” from being.* (p. 16)
 - (1) Prior to nothingness — see Part I, Ch. 1.

- (2) Derived from being — that is, it is the cause of its own way of being₂, although nothing is the cause of its being₁. See p. 16, n. 5.
- g) What is truly unthinkable is passive existence (pp. 16–17). (The main point of this paragraph is clear: consciousness cannot arise from what is not consciousness. But the details of the paragraph are obscure. Sartre does not in fact think that everything is “self-activated” in this way. Again, does not the proof of *a contingentia mundi* (= the proof for the existence of God from the contingency of the world) rest squarely on the notion of the world as a “passive existence,” the notion that Sartre says is “truly unthinkable”? Why then does the proof enjoy such “great fame”?)
- h) The being₂ of the knower is “absolute” — not “relative” to the thing known, as is the *knowledge* of the knower. (p. 17)
- (1) Consciousness is non-substantial, not a Cartesian thinking *substance*, not an Ego (a *res cogitans* = “thinking thing,” in Descartes’ phrase).
- (2) It exists only to the extent that it “appears.” (That is, non-positionally. This is *not* a reversion to the principle that *esse est percipi*.)

IV. The being of the Percipi. (pp. 17–21)

- A. Summary of the preceding. (pp. 17–18)
1. We have escaped idealism, which measures being by knowledge. (See § III.B.2.b, above.)
- B. Is transphenomenal consciousness the sought for being₂ of the phenomenon? Is consciousness sufficient to provide the foundation for the appearance *qua* appearance? (pp. 18–19)
1. Answer: No. (See also the argument in § III.B.3.a, above, which has already made essentially the same point.)
- C. Examination of the being of the *percipi* (pp. 19–21). Note: This section takes the phenomenon’s *being perceived* (= *percipi*) as something *distinct* from consciousness’s *perceiving* it (= *percipere*). In § III.B.3.b, these notions were implicitly identified, and although the argument there is in terms of *esse est percipi*, in fact it concerns the attempt to reduce the phenomena to consciousness’s *perceiving* them (= *percipere*).
1. *Percipi* (= to be perceived) is passive. (p. 19)
2. Therefore, *if* the being₂ of the phenomenon is its *being perceived* (rather than the *perceiving* that consciousness does — that has been ruled out in § IV.B.1 and § III.B.3.b), then the being₂ of the phenomenon is *passivity* and *relativity* (to consciousness — see p. 19). (pp. 19–21)
- a) Passivity. (pp. 19–20)
- (1) Is doubly relative: to the activity of the one who acts and to the *existence* of the one who suffers.

Therefore, the being₂ of the phenomenon cannot be passivity. (p. 19)

- (2) Application to the notion of creation. (Compare the enigmatic remark about the proof *a contingentia mundi* in § III.B.4.g, above.) (pp. 19–20)
 - (3) Passivity of the recipient demands an equal passivity on the part of the agent (p. 20). (Sartre’s example is unconvincing, but the principle is clear enough: it is the principle of *action and reaction*.)
 - (a) Consciousness can act on nothing and nothing can act on it.
 - (b) Husserl tried to avoid this with his doctrine of *hyle* (= υἡλ•, Greek for “matter”). (See *Ideas*, F. Kersten, tr., p. 281 — index under ‘h’.) This is the “neutral given” of p. 11; roughly, *sense data*, although that’s very rough indeed. They are “the matter of the passive synthesis” — that is, they are *organized* by consciousness to constitute an *object*. (On “passive synthesis,” see *Cartesian Meditations*, § 38.)
- b) Relativity. This too won’t work. (p. 21)
3. Thus, the being₂ of the phenomenon is not its being perceived. (p. 21)

V. The Ontological Proof. (pp. 21–24)

- A. All consciousness is consciousness of something. (A kind of *definition*. This is the thesis of intentionality.) (pp. 21–22)
 1. Either consciousness is *constitutive* of its objects (as for Husserl — but this has been ruled out in § III.B.3.b, § IV.B.1, and § IV.C.2) (pp. 21–22), or else
 2. it is a relation to a *transcendent being* (p. 22).
- B. As to § V.A.1, this implies that the being of the object is *non-being*; it is defined by means of an *absence* (p. 22). Recall § I.B, above.
- C. This will not work (pp. 22–23). (Note: This section marks an explicit break with the Husserlian doctrine sketched in § I, above.)
- D. Therefore, only § V.A.2 remains. *Consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself*. This is the “ontological” proof. (pp. 23–24)
- E. Definition of consciousness: Consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question (= is tentative, contingent, up for grabs) insofar as this being implies a being other than itself. (p. 24)
- F. The transphenomenal being₂ of the phenomenon is *in-itself*. (p. 24)

VI. Being-in-itself. (pp. 24–30)

- A. Primary characteristic: never to reveal itself completely to consciousness. (p. 24)

- B. Consciousness can always pass from the existent (= the phenomenal object) not toward its being (that is, not toward the being₂ of the phenomenon) but toward the *meaning of this being* (that is, toward the phenomenon of being₁). In other words, the phenomenon of being₁ is the meaning or “essence” (recall eidetic abstraction) of being₂. See § II.F, above, (p. 25 of the text).
- C. The ontological proof guarantees that the *meaning* of being₂ can be derived by a phenomenological elucidation of the phenomenon of being₁. (This is what *Being and Nothingness* will do.) (p. 25)
- D. This project is subject to two qualifications. (pp. 25–26)
1. It holds only for the being₂ of the phenomenon (= being-in-itself), not for the being₂ of consciousness (= being-for-itself, which will come later). (p. 35)
 2. The elucidation is only provisional. (pp. 25–26)
 - a) It will not be clear until we also elucidate the being of consciousness and the *relation* between the two “regions” of being. (p. 26)
 - (1) Since being-in-itself cannot act on consciousness, we avoid “realism” (for example, Locke’s?).
 - (2) Since consciousness cannot act on being-in-itself, we avoid “idealism.” (See §§ III.B.3.b, IV.B.1, IV.C.2, and V.A–V.C.)
 - (3) We must show that there is a solution other than realism and idealism.
- E. Preliminary characteristics of being-in-itself.
1. Being (= being-in-itself, the being₂ of the phenomenon) is *in-itself*. (pp. 26–28)
 - a) That is, it is uncreated (pp. 26–28). (See § IV.C.2.a.(2), above.) (Roughly, it is *metaphysically* independent, uncaused, self-contained.)
 - b) Being (-in-itself) *is what it is (and is not what it is not)*. (pp. 28–29)
 - (1) The Principle of Identity is a “regional” principle. (That is, it does not apply to all of being. Consciousness will violate it.) (p. 28)
 - (2) Being-in-itself is “opaque,” “solid,” “isolated.” Note the strong Parmenidean passage at the top of p. 29. Very important.
 - (3) Being-in-itself *is* (p. 29). (That is, it is a brute contingent fact, it *defies* the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Just as it is *metaphysically* uncaused, so too it is logically and epistemologically *unexplained*.)
 - (a) It is “superfluous” (= *de trop*).
- F. Conclusion, Summary, and Remaining Questions. (pp. 29–30)

As a kind of review, here's a summary of what you have just slogged through. Section I is an exposition of Husserl's doctrine. That doctrine reduces many philosophical dualisms to the duality of finite/infinite. Will this work? (This is answered, in the negative, only in § II.) Section II argues that the being₂ of the phenomenon is not the phenomenon of being₁, that it is rather the condition of all revelation, that knowledge is not primary, and that the phenomenon of being₁ requires the transphenomenality of being₂. Section III argues that while there is a transphenomenal being₂ of consciousness, that is not enough to ground phenomena (contrary to Husserl). Then section III goes on to examine the transphenomenal being of consciousness at some length. Section IV further elaborates the argument in section III, that the being₂ of consciousness cannot be the being₂ of the phenomenon. Section V draws the conclusion, that there is another kind of transphenomenal being₂: being-in-itself. Section VI explores this being-in-itself in a preliminary way, and sets the stage for what follows.

Outline of *Being and Nothingness*, Part I, Ch. 1: “The Origin of Negation” (pp. 35–85)

I. The Question

- A. Introductory remarks (33–34). We must not hope to explain a complex whole in terms of its parts alone. Must ask about “man-in-the-world.”
- B. This very question will be our “guiding thread.” (34)
- C. Questioning involves three kinds of non-being. (34–36)
 - 1. The non-being of knowing (that is, not knowing the answer).
 - 2. The (possibility of) non-being in transcendent being (that is, the possibility that a negative answer is the correct one).
 - 3. The non-being of limitation (that is, the answer is this and *not* that).
 - 4. Hence, we are led to the question of non-being.

II. Negations

- A. How could being-in-itself furnish negative replies to questions? That is, how could it be the basis of non-being of kind I.C.2 above? (36–37)
- B. One view: Nothingness here — that is, non-being of kind I.C.2 — is based on *negation*, which is a feature of certain judgments. (This is Bergson’s view.) The example of the 1500 francs. Is this view acceptable, or is it the other way around? (37–38)
- C. Reply to this last question (38–42):
 - 1. Negation qualifies other attitudes besides *judgments*. We question *things* (38). The notion of *destruction* parallels that of the *question* (39–40). See I.C, above.
 - a) *One* (limited) being is apprehended as destructible (39). See I.C.3, above.
 - b) Fragility (39–40). See I.C.2, above.
 - c) The possibility of determining oneself positively or negatively toward fragility (40). See I.C.1, above.
 - 2. The example of Pierre’s absence (40–42).
 - a) The notion of *ground* and of twofold nihilation:
 - (1) The ground is made *neutral* — pushed down.
 - (2) The *absent* Pierre arises on this ground. (Note: If Pierre had really been in the cafe, there would have been only the first nihilation.)
 - 3. Answer to the question: Nothingness precedes negation (42).
- D. Return briefly to the original theory (Bergson’s) and the example of the 1500 francs (42–44). See II.B, above.

III. The Dialectical Concept of Nothingness (44–49). (Hegel)

Read this section very quickly. It is basically a critique of Hegel’s notion of nothingness. Note on p. 49 the notion that non-being exists only on the surface of being (-in-itself).

IV. The Phenomenological Concept of Nothingness (49–56). (Heidegger)

This is basically a critique of Heidegger’s view, that being is surrounded on all sides by nothingness, like a ball suspended in a void. Criticism: There are also little “pockets” of nothingness *within* being (54). For example, *distance* (54–55). The term ‘négatités’ introduced (55) for these little “pools” of nothingness.

V. The Origin of Nothingness (56–85). (Note: This is the most important section of this chapter.)

- A. Summary of the preceding (56).
- B. Where does Nothingness come from? (57) Not from itself. Neither can being-in-itself be responsible for it. See II.A, above. Thus we need a being by which nothingness comes to things (57–58). (This is going to turn out to be the for-itself.)
- C. The questioner can disconnect himself from the causal series (58), and this is what freedom is. (Note: Is this the *real* reason Sartre thinks human beings are free?) (60) Freedom precedes human essence. There is no causal chain, and therefore no determinism of the passions.
- D. Anguish, distinguished from simple fear. (65–78)
- E. Psychological determinism, a flight from anguish. (78–85)

A Passage from Henri Bergson's Creative Evolution, Ch. 4

My translation from the French edition of *L'Évolution créatrice*, ("La Collection des Prix Nobel de littérature"; Paris: Rombaldi, 1971), pp. 275, 276-278. The passage illustrates the theory Sartre is rejecting in Part I, Ch. 1, § II.

So every time I attach a 'not' to an affirmation, every time I deny, I achieve two quite determinate acts: First, I take an interest in what one of my fellows affirms, or in what he was going to say, or in what another "me," whom I anticipate, could have said. Second, I proclaim that a second affirmation, the content of which I do not specify, will need to be substituted for the one I find in front of me. But in neither the one nor the other of these two acts will one find any thing else but affirmation. The *sui generis* characteristic of negation comes from the superimposing of the first [act] on the second....

One will have more difficulty perceiving this in the example we have chosen. But for that reason the example will be only the more instructive and the argument the more persuasive. If wetness is capable of coming to register itself automatically [on the mind], the same will hold — someone will say — for non-wetness, because the dry is as able as the wet [is] to give impressions to sensation, which will transmit them as more or less distinct representations to the intellect. In this sense, the negation of wetness is as objective a thing, as purely intellectual, as separated from all pedagogical purpose as affirmation [is]. — But look more closely. One will see that the negative proposition 'The ground is not wet' and the affirmative proposition 'The ground is dry' have totally different contents. The second one implies that one knows the dry, that one has had the specific sensations — for example, tactile or visual ones — that are at the basis of this representation. The first one requires nothing like that. It could just as well have been formulated by an intelligent fish that had always perceived nothing but the wet.... Adhere strictly to the terms of the proposition 'The ground is not wet'. You will find that it signifies two things. First, that one might believe that the ground is wet. Second, that the wetness is actually replaced by a certain quality *x*. This quality is left in a state of indeterminacy, either because one has no positive knowledge of it, or else because it holds no present interest for the person to whom the negation is addressed.

Outline of *Being and Nothingness*, Part I, Ch. 2, “Bad Faith” (pp. 86–116)

Note: The term ‘bad faith’ (*mauvaise foi*) is also sometimes translated (mainly by Kaufmann in his *Existentialism from Dostoevski to Sartre*) as “self-deception.” In the light of the present chapter, go back and review what Sartre says about “anguish” in “Existentialism Is A Humanism.”

- I. Bad Faith and Falsehood.
 - A. Introductory remarks: Consciousness is a “Not.” (pp. 86–87)
 - B. The structure of the Lie. (87–89)
 1. Requires an Other, a duality. (88)
 - C. Lying-to-oneself (bad faith) contrasted with the Lie as described earlier. (89–90)
 1. The deceiver is also the one deceived. Contrast (B.1) above.
 2. Bad faith is a “metastable” notion. The term is made clear by the context. (90)
 - D. The Unconscious as an escape from these difficulties: Exposition of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. (90–92)
 - E. Critique of Freud (92–96):
 1. First line of attack (92–94). The clinical phenomenon of *resistance* requires the *sensor* to be in bad faith (= to be deceiving itself). So the problem has not been avoided but only moved.
 2. Second line of attack. (94–95)
 - a) Freud has destroyed the unity of consciousness. (94)
 - b) He cannot explain the pleasures accompanying symbolic satisfaction of the id. (94–95)
 3. Third line of attack: Cases the Freudian theory simply cannot explain. (95–96)
 - a) The frigid woman. Note the use of the term ‘distraction’ on p. 95. Compare the use of this term on p. 79 at the end of the section on “The Origin of Negation.” There it led us directly into the notion of “Bad Faith.”
 4. Summary (96), beginning “Thus on the one hand”
- II. Patterns of Bad Faith.
 - A. The woman allowing herself to be seduced. (96–97)
 - B. The metastable concept of “transcendence/facticity.” (97–100)
 - C. Sincerity. (100–112)
 1. The Waiter. (101–103)
 - a) A generalization of this. (103)
 2. Sadness. (103–104)
 3. Consciousness “is not what it is.” (111–112)

- III. The “Faith” of Bad Faith.
- A. How can I be fooled in bad faith? (112)
 - B. I have *not* altogether persuaded myself. (112–113)
 - C. Bad faith and evidence. (113–114)
 - D. Belief — the ground of bad faith. The idea of good faith is an ideal of being-in-itself. (114–116)

Some Selections from Freud, Illustrating the Theory Sartre Rejects in *Being and Nothingness*, Part I, Ch. 2 (“Bad Faith”)

Note: Sartre uses the term ‘censorship’ more broadly than Freud does. Freud uses the word primarily in connection with dreams. It is “dream-censorship” that is responsible for the distortion dreams have. Freud’s more general term for the same phenomenon, in the context of dreams or elsewhere, is ‘repression’, or ‘repressive resistance’. The term ‘resistance’ is also especially used in the clinical psychoanalytic situation.

All translation below are my own, from Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, Anna Freud, *et al.*, eds., 18 vols., (London: Imago Publishing Co., 1940–1968). I have listed the works by both their German and English titles, and have given volume and page references to the *Gesammelte Werke* (= GW).

(1) (*Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse = New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Lecture XXIX = Lecture I in the *New Series*, GW 15, p. 16) The fact of dream-censorship however shows that enough repressive resistance is maintained even during sleep.

(2) (*Ibid.*, pp. 14–15) From all this we draw the conclusion that the resistance we notice in working on the interpretation of dreams must have a part in the development of the dream too.... But what produces resistance and against what [is it directed]? Now for us, resistance is the sure sign of a conflict. There must exist a power that wants to express something, and another [power] that is struggling against allowing this expression. What comes about then as the manifest dream may combine all the decisions to which this battle of two strivings has been compressed. In one case the one power may have succeeded in accomplishing what it wanted to say; in another case the opposing side is successful in completely extinguishing the intended information, or in replacing it with something that discloses no trace of it. Most common, and most characteristic of dream-building, are the cases in which the conflict has ended in a compromise, so that the communicative side can, to be sure, say what it wants, but not as it wants, rather only as toned-down, deformed and made unrecognizable. Thus, if the dream does not accurately reproduce the dream-thoughts, if a work of interpretation is needed in order to bridge the chasm between them, this is the effect of the opposing, inhibiting and restraining side that we have inferred from perceiving resistance during dream-interpretation. As long as we studied the dream as an isolated phenomenon, independent of physical organizations connected with it, we called this side the “dream-censor.”

(3) (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst = Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, published in America as *The Problem of Anxiety*, Ch. 10, GW 14, p. 185) ... This follows from the nature of repression, which is basically an effort to run away.

(4) (*Die Frage der Laienanalyse = The Question of Lay Analysis*, Ch. 3, GW 14, p. 230) Now picture to yourself what will happen if this feeble Ego experiences an instinctive demand from the Id, which it already would like to resist — because it surmises that gratifying it is dangerous, would call up a traumatic situation, a collision with the outside world — but which it is unable to gain mastery over, because it does not yet have enough power for that. In that case, the Ego treats the danger from the instinct as if it were an exterior danger, it makes an effort to run away, retreats from this part of the Id and abandons it to its fate, after having denied it all the assistance it otherwise offers to instinctual feelings. We say the Ego undertakes a “repression” of these instinctual feelings.

(5) (*Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse, = New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Lecture XXXI = Lecture III in the *New Series*, GW 15, p. 74) ... As you know, the whole psychoanalytic theory is really built on the perception of the resistance the patient produces during the attempt to make him conscious of his unconscious. The objective sign of resistance is that his associations break down or deviate far from the topic at hand. He can even subjectively recognize the resistance by the fact that he senses disturbing feelings when he gets close to the topic. But this last sign can also be omitted.

[Note the following passages in which Freud says it is the Ego (or, in text (7), a part of the Ego) that does the resisting and repressing:]

(6) (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst = Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, published in America as *The Problem of Anxiety*, Ch. 2, GW 14, p. 118) ... Repression comes from the Ego ...

(7) (*Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse, = New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Lecture XXXI = Lecture III in the *New Series*, GW 15, p. 75) ... Since we have assumed a special side of the Ego, the Superego, which acts on behalf of the demands for curtailment and refusal, we can say repression is the work of the Superego — either [the Superego] itself carries out [that work] or else the subservient Ego [does it] on [the Superego’s] order.

[Finally, note the following text on the relation of the Ego to the Id:]

(8) (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst = Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, published in America as *The Problem of Anxiety*, Ch. 3, GW 14, p. 124) ... In the case of repression, the fact that the Ego is an organization, but the Id is not, is decisive. The Ego is just the organized part of the Id. It would be completely unjustified if one were to imagine Ego and Id were like two different camps, [that when] the Ego attempted to put down a part of the Id by repression, here comes the rest of the Id to help the attacked [part] and to measure its power against the Ego’s.

Outline of *Being and Nothingness*, Part II, Ch. 1: “The Immediate Structures of the For-Itself” (pp. 119–158)

- I. Presence to Self. (pp. 119–126)
 - A. Introductory Remarks: We are going to examine non-thetic (= non-positional) self-consciousness. (119–120)
 - B. Being-in-itself contrasted with consciousness. (120–126)
 1. “Reflection alters the fact of consciousness on which it is directed.” Although non-positional self-consciousness is *not* reflected, it nevertheless is like (“homologous with”) reflection to the extent that it alters what it is conscious of. This is the “nullifying [= altering — not being, and so nullifying, what it was] characteristic of existing for a witness.” (121) (Thus, non-positional self-consciousness alters itself — and *so is not itself*.)
 2. Therefore, the law of identity does not apply. We cannot say, for example, that belief is (only) belief or that consciousness (of) belief is (only) consciousness (of) belief. (121–122)
 3. Consciousness is a dyad: “reflection-reflecting” (122–123). (Be careful. ‘Reflection’ here means the kind of thing one sees in a mirror: a reflected image. It does not here mean the “reflective” in the sense in which we talked about reflective vs. non-reflective consciousness. In the present context, ‘the reflecting’ means what does the reflecting — that is, the mirror itself. Consciousness is, as it were, a mirror that reflects itself. But don’t think of the familiar department store arrangement in which two mirrors reflect one another to infinity. Consciousness is not two, but one. As perhaps a better image, think of a hollow sphere the entire inside surface of which has been made into a mirror.)
 4. The *self* of the “for-itself.” (123–126)
 - a) The term ‘in-itself’ is strictly inaccurate, since there is no “self” involved. The “in-itself” is too solid. (123)
 - b) The “self” involves a kind of internal “distance” from itself. See the last line on p. 123, and recall the analysis of “distance” as a *néгатité*, in “The Origin of Negation” (Part I, Ch. 1).
 - c) This is what we call “presence to self.” (124)
 - d) It is not the “plenitude” of being (that is instead the in-itself) but involves a “fissure” that has slipped into being, a “fissure” that is nevertheless *nothing* at all. (124–126)
 - e) This “nothing” is the pure source of the nothingness we studied in “The Origin of Negation” (Part I, Ch. 1) — that is, of absences, lacks, etc. (125)

II. The Facticity of the For-Itself. (127–133)

A. The for-itself *is*. (127) (Recall the similar characterization of the in-itself in the “Introduction” (p. 29) — it is a *brute fact*.)

1. It *is*, in the manner of an event. (The point here is to contrast the way *events* are with the way *things* or *substances* are. Consciousness is *not* like the latter.)
2. It *is* insofar as it appears in a condition it has not chosen.
3. It *is* insofar as it is thrown into a world and abandoned in a “situation.”
4. It *is* insofar as it is not the foundation of its own *presence to the world*. (Note: Consciousness is indeed the foundation of its own nothingness — of its “presence *to self*.” See the end of p. 126 and also the middle of p. 128.)

(Note also: All these characterizations 1–4 above mean that there are things about which we have no choice. How does Sartre reconcile this with his emphasis on radical human freedom? This will be a recurring and very important theme of the later sections of *Being and Nothingness*.)

B. Since all consciousness is non-positionally conscious (of) itself, it follows from the above that all consciousness is non-positionally aware (of) its own imperfection — that is, (of) its not being its own foundation. This is the deep meaning of Descartes’ attempt to prove the existence of God in the third *Meditation* (the proof based on a concept of perfection that we could not be the basis of). (127–128) (Note: The “second proof” mentioned on p. 127 seems to refer to Kant’s discussion in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where the so called “cosmological” argument is treated second in order.)

C. How consciousness is the foundation of its own nothingness, but not the foundation of its own being. (128–133) (This is a short attempt to face the question how consciousness is *dependent* on being-in-itself. See also the “Introduction,” pp. 15–16, and n. 5 on p. 16.) *This is very confusing stuff!*)

1. The in-itself remains at the heart of the for-itself as its original contingency. (130)
2. Facticity. (131–133)
 - a) *Not* the Cartesian “thinking substance” (which would be a being-in-itself). (132–133) (This would be the Transcendental Ego all over again.)

III. The For-Itself and the Being of Value. (133–146)

A. Can we go beyond (“transcend”) the instantaneity of *present* consciousness without losing the certainty of the given (that is, without abandoning the whole phenomenological enterprise)? (133–134). (The answer will be yes.)

- B. Lack. (134–143)
1. The for-itself determines itself as a *lack of being* (134). It is, as it were, “defined” by what it is not.
 2. This relation is an “internal” negation (135). (That is, a negation that *affects*, is *constitutive* of, what it applies to.)
 3. A *lack* presupposes (135):
 - a) the “lacking” — that is, what is missing, what is not there.
 - b) the “existing” — that is, what misses it.
 - c) the “lacked” — the totality that is (or would be) the result of the existing plus the lacking. (Formula to remember: *The lacked = the existing + the lacking.*)
 4. Example of the crescent moon (= the existing), which lacks the rest of the moon (= the lacking) that would make it a full moon (= the lacked). (135–136) Compare the perception of the three sides, which *promises* three more, to constitute a whole cube. Only there the three more are *promised*, not *lacking*; the cases are similar, but not exactly alike.
 5. Human reality by which lack appears in the world (see “The Origin of Negation”) must be itself a lack. (136)
 6. This is proven by the fact that human beings have *desires*. (136–137)
 7. The structure of *lack* (as above) applied to consciousness (137–143):
 - a) The “existing” is the immediately given consciousness — e.g., the desire. (137)
 - b) What is the “lacked” here? (137–143) (Note: On p. 138, line 4, read ‘now’ for ‘not’.)
 - (1) Answer: *itself* — as a being-in-itself. (138) (What is lacked is the magical goal: a combination of the for-itself and the in-itself.)
 - (a) What is *lacked* is not the same as *facticity*. (138)
 - (b) This *lacked* is a kind of God (140). (As we shall see later, the for-itself is an *attempt to be God* — an attempt that is doomed to failure.)
 - (2) This is not merely an *abstract* notion, but quite *concrete* — “in situation.” (141–143)
- C. Value. (143–146)
1. The being of the self is *value*. (143–144) (That is, an *ideal* being.)
 2. Human reality is that by which value arrives in the world. (144)
 3. Value is the “lacked,” not the “lacking.” (144)

IV. The for-itself and the being of possibilities. (147–155) (See also p. 37)

- A. What the for-itself lacks is the for-itself (147). (In general, the (i) “existing” lacks the (ii) “lacking,” which it would need in order, together,

to be the (iii) “lacked” — see § III.B.3, above. Applied to the present case, the (i) for-itself lacks (ii) *itself*, which it would need in order to *be* (iii) it-self — in order to *be* what it is.)

- B. What the for-itself is “lacking” is its “possibility.” (147–148)
- C. Analysis of “possibility.” (148–154)
1. Possibility is prior to being (i.e., to say something is *possible* does not imply that it is *real*). Yet possibility itself must have some kind of being. (Things are “really possible,” after all.) How ought we to think of this? (148) (This is the “logical” notion of possibility.)
 2. Two frequent attitudes toward the possible. (148–149)
 - a) Spinoza — ‘possible’ means in effect “for all I know,” and so is a notion *relative to our thinking*. (148)
 - b) Leibniz — the “possibles” (= possible “worlds”) have a real ontological status. They are all surveyed by the divine thought, which then chooses one of them to *actualize* by his will. (See Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics* and *Monadology*.)
 - c) These two approaches are really not so different. In both cases the possible “is a thought *which is only thought*.” (148–149)
 3. But the possible cannot be reduced to the subjective. (149)
 4. Neither is it “prior” to the real (see § IV.C.1, above). It is a property of already existing realities. (150)
 5. But neither is it an Aristotelian “potentiality” (see section I of the “Introduction”). That would be to replace the “logical” notion of possibility by a *magical* one. (150)
 6. Possibility, like lack, comes to the world from human consciousness. (150)
 7. But possibility is not just the thought of possibility. (150–151)
 8. The for-itself must be its own possibility, but be a “right” to be what it is. (151–154)
 - a) Thirst, sexual desire. (154)
- D. The “Circuit of Selfness.” Transition to the next section (154–155). (See also p. 265.) (The notion here is that the for-itself projects itself toward itself, aims at itself on the “other side” of the world. There is no way to avoid it: this is just plain obscure.)
- V. The Self and the Circuit of Selfness. (155–158) (Much of this is a summary of material in *The Transcendence of the Ego*. The rest is a continuation of the obscure talk about the “Circuit of Selfness.”)
- A. The “personality” of the for-itself (156–157). (Note.: The for-itself is still thought of as “impersonal” in the sense that the Ego is not an inhabitant of consciousness.)
 - B. The Circuit of Selfness. (157–158)
 - C. Transition to the next chapter (the chapter on time). (158)

Outline of *Being and Nothingness*, Part III, Ch. 1: “The Existence of Others” (pp. 301–400)

- I. The Problem. (301–303)
- A. Introduction. (301)
 - B. Shame. (301–303)
 1. Shame is non-positional consciousness (of) itself as shame, and positional consciousness *of myself*. I am ashamed *of what I am*. (301)
 2. Yet it is not, at least not originally, *reflective*. (301–302)
 3. Shame presupposes the presence of *someone else*. I am ashamed of myself *as I appear to someone else*. (302)
 4. Shame is a *recognition*: I *am* as I appear to the other. (302)
 5. The for-itself refers to the for-others. (303)
- II. The Reef of Solipsism. (303–315)
- A. Realism. (The theory under discussion here is Descartes’.) (303–306)
 1. Provides no real explanation for our knowledge of “other minds.” (304)
 2. I “hypothesize” another mind to account for the behavior of another body, after an *analogy* with my own mind. (304–305)
 3. Realism fails here. It becomes “idealism” when it faces the question of the existence of others (305–306). (That is, realism, if it is to be consistent, is forced to concede that our so called “knowledge” of others is only an ideal *mental construct* we fabricate as a hypothesis to explain the behavior of bodies.)
 - B. Idealism (306–312). (The doctrine here is supposed to be Kant’s, according to whom we *constitute* objects — including other people — out of the raw data of sensation. Recall the discussion of Kant earlier in the course.)
 1. Kant in effect never raised the question. (306)
 2. The problem of the Other is not the same as Kant’s problem of knowing the *noumenon* (306–307). (That is, the problem here is not how my experience of the Other could be produced by some hidden Kantian thing-in-itself, an “Other-in-itself” lurking behind the phenomena. Rather the problem is how it comes about that the phenomenon of the Other — my awareness of another mind’s presence — is a phenomenon that *refers* to further phenomena in a special way. In perception, e.g., the three sides I see of the cube *refer to* — promise — three more that I could see if I turned the cube around. But my experience of the Other *refers* to further phenomena — the Other’s own private consciousness — **that on principle could never be my phenomena, but must remain his own**. The experience of the Other is *like* perception and unlike imagination insofar as it makes *promises* that are not guaranteed to be true. But it is *unlike* perception — and this is the crucial point

- in that these promises can never in principle be tested by me.) This is the *real* nature of the problem.)
3. The concept of the Other cannot be one of the *categories* in terms of which Kant says we organize, interpret, “constitute” our experience (307–308). (Why not? Because such concepts or categories — e.g., “causality” — serve to link some of *my* phenomena with others of *my* phenomena to form a coherent phenomenal world. But the concept of the Other links some of *my* phenomena with other phenomena that on principle can *never* be mine.)
 4. Neither can the concept of the Other be a “regulative” concept (308–310). (A “regulative” concept for Kant is not a “category” in terms of which we “constitute” our experience. It is a kind of *hypothesis* that is useful, not insofar as it is supposed to be *true*, but insofar as it serves to *guide* our investigations of phenomena. [For instance, the Principle of Sufficient Reason is a hypothesis — even one we *automatically* and *inevitably* make — that serves to motivate and guide our investigations of phenomena; it does not “constitute” our experience, and all attempts to *prove* it to be true are futile.] But all such concepts refer to *my* phenomena, *my* experiences, and serve to regulate *them*. The concept of the Other, by contrast, refers to phenomena that can never be mine.)
 5. Idealism must therefore take one of two routes: solipsism, or accepting a real but non-empirical connection (“communication” in a loose sense) between real consciousnesses (310–312).
 - a) Solipsism (310–311). (It is “opposed to our deepest inclinations,” and most Kantians would not accept it.)
 - b) But to affirm the existence of the Other anyway is to return to realism (311–312). (“Realism” in the sense that our experience of the Other is not something we *constitute*; it comes from the outside, in the same way that, for Descartes, our perceptions of things come from external objects. We have therefore come full circle. See § II.A, above.)
- C. The fundamental assumption underlying both realism and idealism (312–315).
1. I and the Other are assumed to be related by an *external* negation only (312–313). (When we say that A is not B, we have an *external* negation provided that the negation does not *originate* in either A or B, and does not *affect* either A or B. Thus, the table is *not* the ashtray. The table is what it is, and so is the ashtray. The table is just a table; its not being the ashtray is not a *constitutive ingredient* of the table. The negation does not *arise* there. Neither is its not being the ashtray something that *profoundly affects* the table. Even if the ashtray had never existed, the table would remain exactly what it is. On the other hand, *consciousness is not what it is*. This is a negation that does originate in consciousness, and *profoundly af-*

fects it, as we saw in the chapter on “Bad Faith” (= Part I, Ch. 2.)
A negation like this is an *internal* negation.)

2. An *external* negation requires a *witness* (313–315). (Recall from “The Origin of Negation” [= Part I, Ch. 1]: Consciousness is the only source of negation or nothingness, in this case of “differentiation.”)
 - a) Hence the recourse to *God* to establish the separation between consciousness (314–315). But this will not work because:
 - (1) If God is related by an *external* negation to both consciousnesses, we have gained nothing; and
 - (2) God is an Other too, and so the problem has to be faced all over again.

III. Husserl, Hegel, Heidegger. (315–319)

- A. They all accept the conclusion that the relation between myself and the Other must be an *internal* negation, but they continue to think that my basic connection with the Other is one of *knowledge* (315). (Recall from the “Introduction”: Knowledge is not primary.)
- B. Husserl (316–318). (See his *Cartesian Meditations*, Ch. 5.)
 1. Husserl requires the Other for his notion of *objectivity* (316–317). An *objective* fact is “the same for everyone” — or at least *would* be the same for everyone who was in a position to look at it. Note the ‘everyone’. The *subjective*, on the other hand, is so *for me only*. This notion of objectivity goes back to Kant. (This notion of objectivity is not *opposed* to the one we developed on the basis of the passage from *The Psychology of Imagination*; on the contrary, they are in *agreement* once we have brought the notion of the Other into the picture and are in a position to realize that agreement.)
 2. But in effect, Husserl’s theory is in the end no different from Kant’s (317–318).
 - a) It is the *empirical* (psychological) ego that is appealed to when I say “everyone.” But Husserl has the notion of the *Transcendental Ego*. Thus, the problem re-emerges: how to explain and ground the relation of one Transcendental Ego to another. (317)
 - b) One might reply that my Transcendental Ego *constitutes* the phenomenal world in such a way that the world *refers* to other Transcendental Egos in somewhat (but not exactly — see § II.B.2, above) the same way that the three perceived sides of the cube refer to three more. But this in effect makes “the Other” a Kantian category (which won’t work — see § II.B.3, above). (317)
 - c) Furthermore, Husserl defines being (= the “existent” — see the “Introduction”) in terms of an infinite series of *phenom-*

ena. (Thus measuring *being* by *knowledge*. *Knowledge* here is the relation positional consciousness has to its phenomenal objects. See Part II, Ch. 3.) So the Transcendental Ego of the Other, which on principle can never be a *phenomenon*, cannot be a being (317–318). (This problem does not arise for *my* Transcendental Ego, since Husserl thinks I can *reflect* on that, so that it *can* be a phenomenon for me. I'm not entirely sure I understand this completely.)

3. Revision of some things said in *Transcendence of the Ego* (318). **Note this well.**
 4. Husserl cannot escape solipsism any more than Kant could (318).
- C. Hegel. (318–330)
1. Hegel makes some progress. For him, the Other is needed not for the constitution of the “world,” but for the very existence of consciousness itself. (318–319)
 - a) When I am conscious of myself, I am conscious of myself as *not the other*; I am I, and *no one else*. It is only in terms of Others that I am conscious of who I am — namely, not *they*. This is an *internal* negation (319).
 2. This requires me to demand *recognition* from the Other (320–322). Don't worry about this. It is a summary of the very profound and influential “Master/Slave” section of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.)
 3. Criticism. (322–329)
 - a) The problem remains formulated in terms of knowledge (322–324). (Hegel is not talking about non-positional self-consciousness, which, as we have learned, is the *being* of consciousness. He is talking about *positional* consciousness of self, *reflective* consciousness.) It is non-positional consciousness that makes consciousness *not be what it is*. Hence, it is only by ignoring this that Hegel can start — see § III.C.1.a, above — with “I am I.” We know better: *I am not I*.
 - b) Hegel is subject to a twofold charge of optimism. (324–329)
 - (1) Epistemological optimism (324–328). (Don't worry about this. But note p. 327: I do not appear to myself as I am *for-the-Other*. That is, I never know for sure how I appear to Others. This will be important.)
 - (2) Ontological optimism. (328–329)
 4. Conclusion. (329–330)
 - a) The relation of consciousness to consciousness is one of being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge (329).
- D. Heidegger (330–337). (Don't worry about all the details.)
1. Exposition: Heidegger solves the problem and meets the requirements by means of a simple *definition*: the being of human reality is *being-with: Mitsein*. (330–333)

2. Criticism (333–337):
 - a) Heidegger only sketches a solution. He does not actually give one. (333)
 - b) It is too abstract; it will not explain the *individual* facts. (334–335)
 - c) Furthermore, as an abstract *a priori* structure of my consciousness, it would *prevent* my concrete, particular relations with the Other. (335–336)
 - d) In the end, Heidegger’s position is as idealistic as Kant’s. (336)
 3. Conclusion: The existence of the Other is a contingent and *irreducible* fact. We *encounter* the Other, we do not *constitute* him (336–337).
- E. The necessary and sufficient conditions for a valid theory of the existence of Others. (337–339)
1. I cannot *prove* the existence of Others. There *could* be consciousness without Others. But as a matter of contingent fact, they do exist and I cannot doubt it (except only verbally, not *really*) any more than I can doubt my own existence. (337–338)
 2. The only possible point of departure is the Cartesian *cogito*. (338)
 3. The Other is not (at first) an *object* — i.e., not an object of *positional* consciousness. (338–339)
 4. We must not set up our theory in terms of *external* negation. (339)
 - a) The multiplicity of Others will not be a mere *collection*, but a synthetic *totality*.
 - b) But we can never adopt the point of view of the whole.
- IV. The Look. (340–400) (**Very famous section.**)
- A. Although the Other can appear as an *object* to me (i.e., an object of positional consciousness), this is not my basic or *direct* relation to it. The Other is *directly* given to me as a *subject* (and so not as an object) and yet in connection with me. The experience of the Other as an object *refers* to that direct relation. Therefore, let us examine the Other *as object*, in order to see what it can tell us about that more direct relation to which it refers. (340–341)
- B. The man in the park. (341–346)
1. Perceived as simply a “thing,” he is only externally related to things around him. (341)
 2. Perceived as a “man,” he is the center of a “grouping.” Things are oriented to *him*, and not to *me* (342–344). (Recall the notion of perspective, or “point of view.” When I see the man *as a man*, suddenly things regroup themselves, arrange themselves according to *his* point of view, not mine. The appearance of the Other brings about a disintegration — and so a *threat* — to my world.)
 3. This Other-as-object *refers to* (see § IV.A, above) the Other-as-subject, i.e., to the permanent possibility of *my being seen*, of *my*

being an object for the Other, that the object I see may become a subject that sees me. (344–346)

- C. The Look. (346–359)
1. Comes from a “sensible form” (i.e., a perceptible object), but not necessarily a *definite* one. (346–347)
 - a) It is only probable. (346)
 - b) The sensible form represents the *eye*, the “support for the look.” (346)
 - c) When I apprehend the look, I cease to perceive the eye. (346–347)
 - d) The look is an intermediary between me and myself. (347)
 2. The man at the keyhole. (347–349)
 - a) At the unreflective level, unobserved. (347–349)
 - b) At the unreflective level, but now observed. (349)
 - (1) As long as we considered consciousness in isolation, there was no “self” (ego) *in* consciousness; the self was an object for reflective consciousness. Now, however, the “self” haunts *unreflective* consciousness too. Unreflective consciousness is consciousness *of* the world; the “self” therefore “haunts” unreflective consciousness as an object *in* the world — not as an object *for me* (that would be reflection) but as an object *for the Other*.
 - (2) But the Other is not an object for me.
 3. Shame and Pride. (350–352)
 - a) They refer me to a being that I *am* (350–351),
 - b) and that is a limit to my freedom (351),
 - c) and that (for the Other) is *in-itself* (351–352).
 4. Transcendence-transcended. (352–356)
 - a) My possibility (see Part II, Ch. 1, § 4) becomes a *probability* outside me. (354–355)
 - b) The “situation” escapes me; I am no longer master of it. (355–356)
 5. Spatializing-spatialized (356–357). (See Part II, Ch. 3, § 2.)
 6. Simultaneity (357). (See Part II, Ch. 2, § 4.)
 7. Danger: the freedom of the Other. (358)
 8. Summary (358–359):
 - a) This description remains within the *cogito*. (358)
 - b) It is not a matter of conceptual *knowledge*. (358–359)
- D. What is the Other? (359–362)
1. Not an object. (359–360)
 2. What the Other manifests as unrevealable. (360–362)
 - a) Destroys all objectivity for me. (360–361)
 - b) I cannot be an *object* except for another freedom. (361–362)

- E. The basis of the resistance to solipsism. (362–367)
1. The experience of the Other cannot be doubted in the phenomenological reduction. (362–365)
 2. Is the Other's look simply the *meaning* of my objectivity-for-myself (as the whole cube is the *meaning* of the three sides facing me)? Is solipsism possible after all? (365–367)
 - a) No, because I am not an object for myself in that way. The example of *evil*. (365–367)
 - b) Besides, the Other does not make me an object for myself, but for *him*. (367)
- F. Difficulties. (367–376)
1. The Other's look is only probable. (368–376)
 - a) The objection rests on a confusion between my certitude of the Other as subject with my perception of him as object. (368–369)
 - b) How to explain the error. (369–374)
 - (1) Analysis of *absence*. (370–374)
 - c) The Other is prenumerical. (374–376)
- G. What is the *being* of being-for-others? (376–394)
1. Being-for-others is not an *ontological* (i.e., logically necessary — contrast § IV.H, below) structure of the for-itself. (376–377)
 2. Internal negation. (377–387)
 - a) Fear. (383–384)
 - b) Shame. (384–386)
 - c) Pride. (386–387)
 3. Being in situation. (387–391)
 4. Behaviorism. (391)
- H. The *metaphysical* (i.e., logically contingent — contrast § IV.G.1, above) question: *Why* are there others? (393–400)
1. Definition of ontology and of metaphysics. (395) (**Important.**)
 2. Review (of the material since Part II, Ch. 2). (395–400)
 - a) Three ekstases:
 - (1) Temporality. (You won't recognize this, but that's what it is. See Part II, Ch. 2.) (395)
 - (2) Reflection. (See Part II, Ch. 3.) (395–396)
 - (3) Being-for-others. (397)
 - b) The multiplicity of consciousness is a synthesis (but not a collection) the totality of which is inconceivable. (400)
 3. Summary of the chapter. (400)

Outline of *Being and Nothingness*, Part IV, Ch. 2, Section 1: “Existential Psychoanalysis” (pp. 712–734)

- I. The condition of our investigation. (712–720)
 - A. The failings of “empirical” psychology. (712–716)
 1. Two errors must be avoided (712–716):
 - a) The error of thinking that desires (drives) are *in* consciousness. (That would make them an in-itself in a for-itself.) Rather they *are* consciousness.
 - b) The error of stopping at a mere *collection* of desires or drives, without explaining their unity.
 2. Critique of this. (713–716)
 - a) Both errors try to *reconstruct* the individual man as the result of *typical* and *universal* drives. This makes the abstract prior to the concrete. (713–714)
 - b) The second error leaves us with ultimately unexplained “givens.” (714–716)
 - B. We are looking for something really and self-evidently *irreducible* — a *satisfactory* explanation. (716–720)
 1. We are looking for the *original project* that makes the individual uniquely himself. (717)
 2. We must ask about the *meaning* of the empirical drives and desires. (719–720) (Recall the notion of *signification* in *The Emotions*, and the example of the “cube” from *The Psychology of Imagination*.)
- II. Statement of the Problem. (720–722)
 - A. In each empirical desire or drive, the individual “expresses” himself completely. (720) (Just as in perception the entire cube appears in each of its perspectives — some parts appear as given, some only as promised.)
 1. Each empirical attitude expresses the “choice of an intelligible character” (the original project — see § I.B.1, above).
 - a) This choice is not unconscious.
 - B. Hence we must adopt a *comparative* method, to disengage the original project from the empirical drives. (721)
 1. Not a simple *summation* of all those drives and attitudes, as in § I.A.1.b, above.
 - C. Guiding principle: Stop only at evident irreducibility. (721–722)
 1. This original project can aim only at its own being, not at life or death or any other particular.
 2. This original project *is* the individual for-itself.
- III. General abstract description of all original projects (723–724): Fundamentally a desire to be.
 - A. Because the for-itself is a *lack*. (Recall Part I, Ch. 2, on “Bad Faith.” The for-itself is riddled with negativity.)

- B. A desire to be an *in-itself* (since that is what it *lacks*, what it *is not*).
 - C. But not contingent (absurd) being-in-itself; rather a combination of the for-itself and the in-itself. The desire to be God.
- IV. If we automatically and inevitably desire to be God, what happens to freedom? (724–726)
- A. The desire to be God does not determine the *details* of the original project. (724)
 - B. At least three levels to be distinguished (724):
 - 1. Empirical desire, which “symbolizes”:
 - 2. A *fundamental concrete* desire — the person, the original project, which in turn expresses in a concrete situation:
 - 3. The abstract meaningful structure — the desire to be God.
 - a) It is this that allows us to speak of a *human* community. (Note: This is the notion of the “human condition” we saw in “Existentialism Is A Humanism.”)
 - C. Freedom occurs on level 2. Level 3 is not an obstacle to freedom. (725)
 - D. Level 3 can be established by phenomenological analysis, level 1 by empirical investigation. What about level 2? (725–726)
- V. Existential Psychoanalysis. (726–734)
- A. Principle, goal, starting-point, method. (726–727)
 - B. Comparison with Freudian analysis. (727–730)
 - 1. Both regard empirical behavior as symbolic. (727)
 - 2. Both deny imposed given dispositions. (727)
 - a) Existentialists take the original project as primary.
 - b) Freudians regard libido (the Id drives) as originally undifferentiated.
 - 3. Both take account of man’s *situation*. (727–728)
 - 4. Both search for a fundamental attitude. (728)
 - a) Freudians: the complex.
 - b) Existentialists: the original choice.
 - c) For both it is prelogical.
 - 5. Both deny that the subject is in a privileged position in this task. (728–730)
 - C. Contrast with Freudian analysis. (730–732)
 - 1. Freudians make the libido irreducible, existentialists regard this as not a self-evident stopping point. (See § I.B, above.) (730)
 - 2. The libido is *general*, the original choice *particular*. (730)
 - 3. Freudians allow for *general* principles of interpretation, existentialists do not. (731–732)
 - 4. The existentialists always acknowledge that the project can be *re-voked*. (732)
 - D. Closing remarks: Freudian analysis cannot account for the patient’s recognition of the truth. Existential theory is required in order to explain this. (732–734)

Outline of Sartre's Imagination: A Psychological Critique

Read Chapters 1–2, 7–10. Chapters 3–6 you can pass over quickly.

- I. Ch. 1: The Problem. (The object of perception vs. the object of imagination) (pp. 1–6).
- A. The object of perception (1–2)
 - 1. is present, inert, not spontaneous, a “thing” (1).
 - 2. Consciousness, on the other hand, is spontaneous, not a “thing” (2).
 - B. The object of imagination (the “image”) (2–3)
 - 1. is the *same* as the object of perception (2)
 - 2. yet it *exists* differently; it is *not present*, not a limit to my spontaneous consciousness, not inert (2–3). (Thus between the object of perception and the object of imagination there is an identity of essence but not an identity of existence.)
 - C. Images are *never* in practice confused with perceived things (3).
 - D. But they are usually confused in theory; the “naive metaphysics of the image” (3–6).
 - 1. Made into a “copy” of the perceived thing (4).
 - 2. But since it is not altogether the perceived thing (see § I.C, above), it is a “lesser thing,” maintaining “external relations” (of representation) with the thing of which it is an image (5).
 - 3. This theory underlies most work on imagination (5–6).
 - a) The classical theories (see § II, below) agree on it, and disagree only on the relation of thought to image (6).
- II. Ch. 2: The Principal Metaphysical Systems (Descartes, Leibniz, Hume). (7–18).
- A. Descartes (7–8). (Note: The term ‘species’ on p. 7 means any mental “content” — in particular, sense-data or images. The term comes from mediaeval scholasticism.)
 - 1. The image is purely physical (corporeal), imagination (that is, *knowledge* of the image) is intellectual, a mental gaze focused on the image (7).
 - 2. “Motions of the brain” (the physical images) awaken innate, but entirely dissimilar, *ideas* in the mind. The images are like *signs* of the ideas (7–8).
 - 3. On this view, one cannot *immediately* distinguish imagination from perception (veridical imagination), but rather only by the intellectual *coherence* of the latter (8). (Contrast § I.C, above.)
 - B. Spinoza (9–10). (Although Sartre discusses Spinoza separately here, he seems to view Spinozism as a transition stage, between Descartes and Leibniz (see the bottom of p. 9). He does not discuss Spinoza in detail again.)

1. Spinoza for the most part follows Descartes on imagination, but for him images are simply confused *ideas* (9). Part of Spinoza's "double-aspect" theory.
- C. Leibniz (10–12). (The discussion here is obscure.)
1. As for Descartes, images are physical, and cannot be immediately distinguished from sensations (10).
 2. The images *express* confusedly what an idea expresses clearly (10–11).

(The point of this seems to be that, for Leibniz, the intellect can *read off* the thoughts contained confusedly in the image. While maintaining that images are not mental but physical, Leibniz tries to avoid Descartes' stark dualism by allowing that the difference is one of *degree*, that there is a continuous *passage* between the physical and the mental.)

- D. Hume (12–13).
1. Reduces thought to images (12).
 2. Perception is, again, distinguishable from mere imagination only by its coherence (see § II.A.3, above) (12).
 3. This leads to "associationism." ("Images [ideas] are linked by relations of contiguity and resemblance.") (12)
 4. Presupposes the notion of an unconscious (13).
- E. Summary of the three classical solutions to the question of the relation of thought (idea) to image (13–17).
1. Descartes: Thought and image are strictly disjoint. Images are at most mere *occasions* for thought (13–15).
 - a) Pure thought entails the existence of independent "meanings" (for example, Cartesian innate ideas or Platonic forms). (Logic and epistemology are distinct from psychology.) (14–15)
 2. Hume: (15–16)
 - a) Would reject independent "meanings" (15).
 - b) Logic reduced to psychology (15).
 - c) Thoughts reduced to images (15).
 3. Leibniz: (16–17). A compromise: retains Cartesian meanings, but avoids the strict Cartesian dualism.

(Note: The phrase '*nisi ipse intellectus*' on p. 17 is mistranslated in n. 13. It should read "*except the intellect itself.*")

- F. Summary (17–18). (Basically the structure of this passage is as follows: Either ideas *are* just images (Hume) or else they are not. If not, the difference is either one of *kind* (Descartes) or *degree* (Leibniz).)

1. All three views presuppose that the image is a thing like the object of perception (see § I.D, above).

(Chapters 3–6 show how these three basic themes do not subsequently change. Ch. 3 concerns the history of “associationism,” the legacy of Hume and scientific empiricism. Note pp. 25–36: About 1880, under the influence of Kant, people began looking for the *thought* that organized the images. This led back to Leibniz’s view (pp. 28, 33).)

III. Ch. 7: The Classical Postulate. (76–83)

- A. The image viewed in all these theories as a thing subject to its own laws (76–77).
- B. Methodological presuppositions lead to the same three theories as the metaphysical theories of mind and body in Ch. 2 (77).
 1. *Analysis* is the main thing; reductionism (Hume).
 2. Analysis and synthesis both needed, and are inseparable (Leibniz).
 3. Analysis and synthesis have their respective, and mutually exclusive, realms (Descartes).
- C. The image in all these theories is viewed as a rejuvenated sensation (78). (This is really the same point as in § III.A, above.)
- D. “Synthetic” psychology, eclecticism (78–83). (Don’t worry too much about this section.)

IV. Ch. 8: The Contradictory Consequences of the Classical Postulate. (85–126)

- A. Previous theories identified image and perception, but recognized that psychologically we distinguish them (85). (See §§ III.C–III.D.)
- B. The spontaneous distinction of inner experience between perception and image became the distinction between true and false, in the “correspondence” sense of a relation to something external (86).
- C. The problem of the “characteristics of the true image,” since it does not differ in *kind* from a false one. Only three possible solutions (86–101). (Do not expect these three solutions to correspond exactly to the three classical positions of Ch. 2. There the question was the relation of image to thought; here it is the relation of image to perception.)
 1. Hume (86–89).
 - a) The difference is one of *degree* (intensity) (86).
 - b) Objections (87–89)
 - (1) The difference is exaggerated (87).
 - (2) “Threshold objection” (87)
 - (3) Errors would occur frequently, but in fact they *never* do (87–89).
 2. Taine (89–93). Theory of counteragents or reducing agents.
 - a) The discrimination is not immediate; rather the image is recognized as the result of a comparison with stronger, conflicting sensation (89).

- b) Objections (89–93)
 - (1) Where does the comparison occur, consciously or unconsciously? (89–90)
 - (2) How does the “correction” occur? (90–93). (Taine needs a *judgmental* distinction, but does not have it explicitly (91–93).)
- 3. Descartes (93–101). Discrimination by judgment.
 - a) As for Taine (see § IV.C.2.a, above), the distinction is the result of a comparison, only done now by *judgment* on the basis of *coherence* (94). (See § II.A.3, above.)
 - b) Objections (94–101):
 - (1) The correspondence theory of truth (see § IV.B, above) has been replaced by a “coherence” theory (94–95).
 - (2) The problem is no longer one of *discovery*, but of “construction,” with an appeal to the infinite. (Compare *Being and Nothingness*, “Introduction,” § 1.) The distinction is never more than *probable*. (Note especially the passage from the bottom of p. 96 to the top of p. 97.)
 - (3) I would frequently take as images what in fact I take as perceptions (98–99). Perception rules judgments, not the other way around (99).
 - (4) The incoherence of images is exaggerated (99–101). (See § IV.C.1.b.(1), above.)
- D. These attempts fail. Rather, I cannot form an image without at the same time knowing (“prepredicatively” — that is, before an explicit judgment is made) that I am forming an image (101).
- E. A half-hearted attempt to recognize this (102–103).
- F. The “matter” of imagination is not the same as that of perception. (See *The Psychology of Imagination*, and also § IV.G, below, for more on this.) (103–104)
- G. The relations between images and thoughts (104–119).
 - 1. Images are regarded as having sensory content (matter), identical with that of perception (104–105).
 - a) But of course perception is quite distinct from imagination. (See §§ I.A–I.B, above.) (104–105)
 - (1) **An image is a thought, we form it** (105).
 - b) If an image has a sensory content, perhaps one could think *on* it, but never *with* it (106).
 - 2. Two theories of sensory participation by images: Descartes and Hume (106–119).
 - a) Descartes (106–109). Both the image and the perception are physiological; the difference is one of the *kind* of cause, inner or exterior. (Note: Despite what Sartre says on p. 106,

a Cartesian image is not “an idea formed by the soul on the occasion of a modification of the body. This is a slip; an image is not an idea. See later on the same page, and also pp. 7–8.)

(1) Objection: How then could an image be an effective aid to thought? (106–109) Spinozism as a way out (108–109).

b) Hume (109). The image is a faint copy of a sensory impression (a difference of degree).

(1) But the same problems remain.

3. Elaboration on why images have no sensory basis (110–119).

a) There are only two types of existence, as things in the world and as consciousness (115–116).

b) The mode of being of an image is precisely its “appearance” (117). (Contrast this conclusion with the argument in *Being and Nothingness*, “Introduction.”)

c) Any theory of imagination must account for the spontaneous discrimination between images and perceptions, and it must explain the role of images in thought (117).

H. The theory of Alain (120–126). Denial of images. Images vs. false perceptions.

V. Ch. 9: The Phenomenology of Husserl. (127–143)

A. Sketch of Husserl’s program (127–130).

B. Husserl’s theory of images (130–136).

1. Intentionality (131–136). (Note p. 132: “No doubt there are contents of consciousness.” Sartre soon rejects this. The same also holds for the discussion of “*hyle*” on the same page.)

a) Husserl’s analysis of the Dürer engraving (135–136).

C. Sartre’s own musings on Husserl: Is the *hyle* of the mental image the same as that of the external image? (136–143). (Note especially p. 143: “Perhaps the matter of images must even be itself a spontaneity, but of a lesser type.”)

VI. Conclusion. (145–146)

Outline of Sartre's *The Emotions*

All references are to the translation by Bernard Frechtman published by Citadel Press, (New York: The Philosophical Library. 1948).

Note: There are some important mistranslations in the text. Note especially the following corrections:

- (1) p. 22 line 7: Read 'quantitative' for 'qualitative'.
- (2) p. 22 line 10: Read 'among themselves' for 'among them'.
- (3) p. 46 line 4: Read 'is established' for 'establishes itself'.
- (4) p. 46 line 7: Delete 'not' after 'does'.

I. Introduction (1–2):

A. "Empirical" psychology. (1–9)

1. Described. (1–6)
 - a) Allows two types of experience: perception, and intuitive knowledge of ourselves. (1–2)
 - b) Expects isolated, accidental *facts*. (2–6)
2. This feature applied to study of emotions. (6–9)
 - a) Emotion will be an irreducible novelty, an accident. (7)
 - b) *Experience* will establish its limits and definition. (7–8)
 - c) We can isolate three factors: bodily reactions, behavior, state of consciousness (8). Two theories relating these (8–9):
 - (1) The intellectual theory: The inner state (of consciousness) determines the physiological disturbances. (8–9)
 - (2) The *peripheric* theory: Physiology determines the inner state. (9)

B. Phenomenology as a reaction against these theories (9–15).

1. Essences and facts are incommensurable. We cannot go from facts to essences. (9)
2. We *experience* essences and values (10). (This is a *third* kind of experience, besides those mentioned in § I.A.1.a, above. Recall Husserl's eidetic abstraction.)
3. The *facts* of empirical psychology are not basic; they are man's reactions against the world. We need to go deeper, to adopt the "phenomenological reduction." (10–11)
4. *Could there be a consciousness without the possibility of emotion?* (15) (This is one of the big questions of the book. Answer: No. See § IV.D.2.b, below.)

C. The "significance" of emotion. (15–21)

1. Empirical psychology treats emotions as facts without *meaning* (= signification). Phenomenology takes account of their signification as human facts. (15–16)

2. Definition of signification (16). Recall the notion of objectivity from *The Psychology of Imagination*. Also the pair “transcendence/ facticity” in the chapter on “Bad Faith” in *Being and Nothingness*. The emotion “transcends” the immediate psychic fact, takes on a meaning or signification, just as perception transcends its immediate perspectives.
3. Emotions signify the whole of consciousness, human reality. They do not come from outside; we *assume* them, take them on. (17)

II. Chapter 1: The Classical Theories. (22–40)

- A. Three criticisms of the “peripheric” theory (see p. 9). (22–23)
 1. How to explain the “subtle” emotions — that is, emotions without (obvious) physiological correlates? (22)
 2. How could organic reactions account for psychic states? (22)
 3. How could the quantitative differences in physiological reactions account for qualitative differences among the emotions? (22–23)
- B. William James’ theory (a special kind of peripheric theory): The emotion *is* the consciousness of the physiological state. (23–24)
 1. Critique of this. (23–24)
 - a) There is *more* to the emotion than this. (23–24)
 - b) There is *something else* besides — the *signification*. (24)
(See § I.C, above.) An emotion presents an *organized* structure.
- C. The theory of “cortico-thalamic sensitivity” (24–25). This is the theory that it is not the obvious physiological disturbances that account for emotions, but rather physiological disturbances buried deep within the brain cortex. (An attempt to answer § II.A.1, above.)
 1. Critique. (24–25)
 - a) The theory is unverified. (24–25)
 - b) Even if it were verified that there *is* such a disturbance, what about the point raised in § II.B.1.b, above? (25)
- D. Janet’s theory: Emotion is a *disordered, disadaptive* behavior arising from a “setback” (25–40). This is an attempt to answer the problems in § II.B.1, above.
 1. Distinguishes the *physiological* side from the “psychic” side (= behavior). Reintroduces the *psychic* into emotions. (25–26)
 2. Critique (28–29): Janet’s theory requires a notion of “finality” (= goal-directedness) that he doesn’t want. Without it, there would be no “setback.” Also, Janet’s theory would be reduced to James’ — the “setback-behavior” would not be “behavior” at all, but a *disordered*, random discharge, an *absence* of any real “behavior.”
 3. Wallon’s revision of this theory tries to avoid both horns of the dilemma (29): emotional behavior is not totally disordered; it is a real “behavior.” It is a reversion to the primitive, inherited, adaptive behavior of the infant’s nervous system.

- a) Critique of this (29–31): This theory is just James' theory with the addition of a unified primitive behavioral level. James would be perfectly happy with this. Thus
 - (1) Wallon has failed to keep the “psychic,” which was the main virtue of Janet's theory (30);
 - (2) Wallon has failed to explain why there are *various* forms of “setback-behavior” (30–31).
- 4. An *implicit* theory in Janet: He *has* “finality” without admitting it. (31–40)
 - a) Janet's theory is ambiguous. (32)
 - (1) One side reduces to James' theory.
 - (2) The other has something radically new: Emotion is not a disorder, but a highly *ordered* system *aiming at a goal*. (Sartre will pick up on this last point.)
 - b) Lewin's and Dembo's development of this. (33–40)
 - (1) We *put ourselves* in emotive states. (37)
 - (2) Critique of Dembo: The theory is *insufficient*. “Transforming the form of the problem” requires *consciousness*. We need consciousness to account for “finality,” the emergence of the “new” form. (Compare the ambiguous figure in which we see now two faces, now a vase. *Consciousness* is responsible for the appearance of the new form.) (39–40)

III. Chapter 2: The Psychoanalytic Theory. (41–49) (See also the critique of Freud in “Bad Faith.”)

- A. Finality, form, the signification (= meaning) of emotion can be accounted for *only* by an *unconscious* or by *consciousness*. (41–42)
 - 1. The Freudian unconscious as an explanation of emotion. (43–48)
 - a) On this theory, the signification of emotive behavior would be *external* to it (hidden in the unconscious), and related to the behavior as cause to effect. Emotive behavior would be *passive* in relation to these deep, hidden causes. (44–45)
 - b) Critique of this (45–48):
 - (1) It requires that consciousness take on its signifying (= meaning-giving) role without being aware of *what* it is signifying; that the Cartesian *cogito* be rejected, and consciousness be an inert *thing*. (45–46)
 - (2) If the *cogito* is possible (Note: Sartre thinks it *must* be “the starting point” — see “Existentialism Is A Humanism”), then “consciousness is itself the *fact*, the *signification*, and the *thing signified*” (46).

- (3) Psychoanalytic theory wants to have it both ways: The signification of the emotive state is both external (hidden) and internal to consciousness. (46–48)
 - 2. Psychoanalytic *practice* does not have this contradiction (Sartre accepts it), but the *theory* does. (48)
 - a) Hence we must revert to the other alternative under § III.A, above: Consciousness *puts itself* in the emotive state. (48–49)
 - 3. Psychoanalytic objections to this last conclusion (49):
 - a) Why then are we not conscious of doing so? (See the reply in § IV.A.2, below.)
 - b) In many cases we struggle *against* our emotions.
- IV. Chapter 3: A Sketch of a Phenomenological Theory. (50–91)
- A. Emotion is (at least at first) a certain way of apprehending *the world*. (50–71)
 - 1. An emotive state of consciousness can always be *made* an object of consciousness — e.g., “I am angry.” *Reflective* consciousness. (50)
 - 2. But at first emotional consciousness is *unreflective*: positional consciousness of the world and non-positional self-consciousness. (50–51) (An implicit reply to § III.A.3.a, above.)
 - 3. Reflective and unreflective behavior. (52–58)
 - a) The example of writing. Recall the passage from *The Psychology of Imagination*. (53–57)
 - b) **Unreflective behavior is not unconscious behavior.** (This is important) (57–58)
 - 4. Emotion is a transformation *of the world*. (58–71)
 - a) By *magic*. (See the definition on p. 84.) (59)
 - b) The analogy of “looking for the gun” in the picture. (59–61)
 - c) Examples:
 - (1) Sour grapes. (61–62)
 - (2) Fear: Passive (fainting), and active (fleeing). (62–64)
 - (3) Sadness. (64–67)
 - (4) Joy. (68–70)
 - B. False emotions. (71–77)
 - 1. True emotions are accompanied by *belief*. (73)
 - 2. Physiological phenomena are the phenomena of *belief*. (74–75)
 - 3. Two aspects of the body: As an object in the world, and as something lived by consciousness. (75–77)
 - a) Emotion is a phenomenon of belief. (75)
 - C. Reply to problems left over at the end of Ch. 2 (see § III.A.3, above). (77–81)
 - 1. To the problem in § III.A.3.a, above. (See also § IV.A.2, above.) (77–78)

2. An *implicit* reply to the problem in § III.A.3.b, above: Consciousness is caught in its own trap. (78–81) (Note: Sartre never *explicitly* replies to this objection.)
 - a) The *world* of emotion. (79–81)
 - (1) The “delicate” emotions. (81)
- D. Sudden emotions. (81–91)
1. The category of the “magical”: “An irrational synthesis of spontaneity and passivity,” “a consciousness rendered passive” (82). **An important notion for Sartre.**
 2. Two ways of “being-in-the-world”: The deterministic and the magical. (89–91)
 - a) Emotion is a descent to the magical. (90)
 - b) This is one of the great attitudes *essential* to consciousness. (91) (A reply to the question in § I.B.4, above.)
 3. Conclusion: That there are such and such emotions, and not others, is a matter of *facticity*. (92–94)