JEAN－PAUL SARTRE

BEING AND NOTHINGNESS

AN ESSAY ON PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

TRANSLATED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
HAZEL E. BARNES

CHINA SOCIAL SCIENCES PUBLISHING HOUSE
CHENGCHENG BOOKS LTD.

总 策 划　严　平　野　夫
项目策划　张自文　任建成

西学基本经典工作委员会

※　※　※　※　※

西学基本经典专家委员会

Translator's Preface

This is a translation of all of Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'Être et le Néant*. It includes those selections which in 1953 were published in a volume entitled *Existential Psychoanalysis*, but I have revised my earlier translation of these and made a number of small changes in technical terminology.

I should like to thank Mr. Forrest Williams, my colleague at the University of Colorado, who has helped me greatly in preparing this translation. Mr. Williams' excellent understanding of both Sartre's philosophy and the French language, and his generous willingness to give his time and effort have been invaluable to me.

I want also to express my appreciation to my friend, Mr. Robert O. Lehnert, who has read large sections of the book and offered many helpful suggestions and who has rendered the task more pleasant by means of stimulating discussions which we have enjoyed together.

Finally I am indebted to the University of Colorado, which through the Council on Research and Creative Work has provided funds for use in the preparation of the typescript.

In a work as long as this there are certain to be mistakes. Since I am the only one who has checked the translation in its entirety, I alone am responsible for whatever errors there may be. I hope that these may be few enough so that the work may be of benefit to those readers who prefer the ease of their own language to the accuracy of the original.

Hazel E. Barnes
University of Colorado

Translator's Introduction

It has been interesting to watch existentialism run through what William James called "the classic stages of a theory's career." Any new theory, said James, first "is attacked as absurd; then it is admitted to be true, but obvious and insignificant; finally it is seen to be so important that its adversaries claim that they themselves discovered it."[1] Certainly existentialism is way beyond the first stage. As regards Jean-Paul Sartre specifically it is a long time since serious philosophers have had to waste time and energy in showing that his philosophy is more than the unhappy reactions of France to the Occupation and post-war distress. And there are signs that even the third stage has been approached. Stern, for example, while never claiming that he himself has anticipated Sartre's views, does attempt to show for each of Sartre's main ideas a source in the work of another philosopher.[2]

Yet critics of Sartre's works still tend to deal with them piecemeal, to limit themselves to worrying about the originality of each separate position, to weighing two isolated ideas against each other and testing them for consistency without relating them to the basic framework.[3] But one can no more understand Sartre's view of freedom, for instance, without considering his peculiar description of consciousness than one can judge Plato's doctrine that knowledge is recollection without relating it to

[1] James, William. *Pragmatism. A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking.* New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1949. p. 198.

[2] Stern, Alfred. *Sartre. His Philosophy and Psychoanalysis.* New York: Liberal Arts Press. 1953. This list includes Nietzsche, Kafka, Salacrou, Heidegger, Croce, Marx, Hegel, Caldwell, Faulkner, Adler, Schnitzler, Malraux, Bachelard. At times Stern seems almost to imply that Sartre is guilty of wilfully concealing his source. On page 212 he says that Sartre is not eclectic. On page 166 he declares that Sartre's creative talent is feminine and needs to be inseminated and stimulated by other people!

[3] The most notable exception to this statement is Francis Jeanson, who likewise deplores this tendency on the part of most of Sartre's critics. *Le problème moral et la pensée de Sartre.* Paris: Editions du Myrte. 1947.

the theory of the Ideas. What critics usually fail to see is that Sartre is one of the very few twentieth century philosophers to present us with a total system. One may at will accept or reject this system, but one is not justified in considering any of its parts in isolation from the whole. The new insights which Sartre offers us are sufficiently basic to put all of the familiar concepts in a wholly different light.

In a brief introduction I can not hope to deal with the mass of detailed evidence needed to show the full scope of Sartre's thought, but I should like to do two things: first, I think it would be profitable to consider briefly earlier works of Sartre's which serve as a kind of foundation for the fuller discussion in *Being and Nothingness;* second, I should like to discuss a few of the crucial problems presented in the latter work. In connection with the earlier writing, I shall be concerned only with those aspects which seem to me to be significantly connected with fundamental positions in *Being and Nothingness;* in the second part I am making no claim to presenting a full analysis or exposition of the book but merely offering some general comments as to a possible interpretation of certain central positions.

In an article called "La Transcendance de l'Ego. Esquisse d'une description phénoménologique"[4] (1936) Sartre, while keeping within the general province of phenomenology, challenged Husserl's concept of the transcendental Ego. The article does more than to suggest some of the principal ideas of *Being and Nothingness.* It analyzes in detail certain fundamental positions which though basic in the later work are there hurriedly sketched in or even presupposed. Most important is Sartre's rejection of the primacy of the Cartesian cogito. He objects that in Descartes' formula—"I think; therefore I am"—the consciousness which says, "I am," is not actually the consciousness which thinks. (p. 92) Instead we are dealing with a secondary activity. Similarly, says Sartre, Descartes has confused spontaneous doubt, which is a consciousness, with methodical doubt, which is an act. (p. 104) When we catch a glimpse of an object, there may be a doubting consciousness of the object as uncertain. But Descartes' cogito has posited this consciousness itself as an object; the Cartesian cogito is not one with the doubting consciousness but has reflected upon it. In other words this cogito is not Descartes doubting; it is Descartes reflecting upon the doubting. "I doubt; therefore I am" is really "I am aware that I doubt; therefore I am." The Cartesian cogito is reflective, and its object is not itself but the original consciousness of doubting. The consciousness which doubted is now reflected on by the cogito but was never itself reflective; its only object is the object which it is conscious of as doubtful. These conclusions lead Sartre to establish the *pre-reflective cogito* as the primary consciousness, and in all of his later work he makes this his original point of departure.

Now it might seem at first thought that this position would involve an

[4] In *Recherches philosophiques.* Vol. VI, 1936–1937. pp. 85–123.

infinite regress. For if the Cartesian cogito reflects not on itself but on the pre-reflective consciousness, then in order for there to be self-consciousness, it might seem that we should need a cogito for the Cartesian cogito, another for this cogito and so on *ad infinitum*. But this would be the case only if self-consciousness required that the self be posited as an object, and Sartre denies that this is so. The very nature of consciousness is such, he says, that for it, to be and to know itself are one and the same. (p. 112) Consciousness of an object is consciousness of being consciousness of an object. Thus by nature all consciousness is self-consciousness, but by this Sartre does not mean that the self is necessarily posited as an object. When I am aware of a chair, I am non-reflectively conscious of my awareness. But when I deliberately think of my awareness, this is a totally new act of consciousness; and here only am I explicitly positing my awareness or myself as an object of reflection. The pre-reflective cogito is a non-positional self-consciousness. Sartre uses the words *conscience non-positionelle (de) soi* and puts the *de* in parentheses to show that there is no separation, no positing of the self as an object of consciousness. Similarly he speaks of it as a non-thetic self-consciousness. Thetic or positional self-consciousness is *conscience de soi* in which consciousness deliberately reflects upon its own acts and states and in so far as is possible posits itself as an object. The Cartesian cogito, of course, belongs to the second order.

In this same article Sartre lays down two fundamental principles concerning the pre-reflective consciousness which are basic in his later work. First, he follows Husserl in holding that all consciousness is consciousness *of* something; that is, consciousness is intentional and directive, pointing to a transcendent object other than itself. Here is the germ for Sartre's later view of man's being-in-the-world, for his "ontological proof" of the existence of a Being-in-itself which is external to consciousness. Secondly, the pre-reflective cogito is non-personal. It is not true that we can start with some such statement as "I am conscious of the chair." All that we can truthfully say at this beginning stage is that "there is (*il y a*) consciousness of the chair." The Ego (including both the "I" and the "Me") does not come into existence until the original consciousness has been made the object of reflection. Thus there is never an Ego-consciousness but only consciousness of the Ego. This is, of course, another reason for Sartre's objecting to the primacy of the Cartesian cogito, for Descartes was actually trying to prove the existence of the "I."

According to Sartre, the Ego is not in consciousness, which is utterly translucent, but in the world; and like the world it is the object of consciousness. This is not, of course, to say that the Ego is material but only that it is not a subject which in some sense manipulates or directs consciousness. Strictly speaking, we should never say "my consciousness" but rather "consciousness of me." This startling view is less extreme than

it at first appears. It does not mean that consciousness is general, a universal pan-psyche. A consciousness is even at the start particular, for the objects of which it is conscious are particular objects and not the whole universe. Thus the consciousnesses of two persons are always individual and always self-consciousnesses, but to be individual and to be self-conscious does not mean to be personal. Another way of putting it is to say that the Ego is "on the side of the psychic." (p. 106) Sartre makes a sharp distinction between the individual consciousness in its purity and psychic qualities, by which he means what is ordinarily thought of as the personality. What he calls the popular view holds that the Ego is responsible for psychic states (e.g., love, hate) and that these in turn determine our consciousness. The reality, he claims, is exactly the reverse. Consciousness determines the state, and the states constitute the Ego. For example, my immediate reaction of repulsion or attraction to someone is a consciousness. The unity which the reflective consciousness establishes between this reaction and earlier similar ones constitutes my state of love or hate. My Ego stands as the ideal unity of all of my states, qualities, and actions, but as such it is an object-pole, not a subject. It is the "flux of Consciousness constituting itself as the unity of itself." (p. 100) Thus the Ego is a "synthesis of interiority and transcendence." (p. 111) The interiority of the pre-reflective consciousness consists in the fact that for it, to know itself and to be are the same; but this pure interiority can only be lived, not contemplated. By definition pure interiority can not have an "outside." When consciousness tries to turn back upon itself and contemplate itself, it can reflect on this interiority but only by making it an object. The Ego is the interiority of consciousness when reflected upon by itself. Although it stands as an object-pole of the unreflective attitude, it appears only in the world of reflection.

Less technically we may note that the Ego stands in the same relation to all the psychic objects of consciousness as the unity called "the world" stands in relation to the physical objects of consciousness. If consciousness directs itself upon any one of its own acts or states, upon any psychic object, this points to the Ego in exactly the same way that any physical object points to "the world." Both "world" and "Ego" are transcendent objects—in reality, ideal unities. They differ however in that the psychic is dependent on consciousness and in one sense has been constituted by it whereas objects in the world are not created by consciousness. As for the "I" and the "Me," these are but two aspects of the Ego, distinguished according to their function. The "I" is the ideal unity of actions, and the "Me" that of states and qualities.

Three consequences of this position should perhaps be noted in particular, one because it is a view which Sartre later explicitly abandoned, the other two because, although merely suggested in this article, they form the basis for some of the most significant sections of *Being*

and Nothingness.

First, Sartre claims that once we put the "I" out of consciousness and into the world (in the sense that it is now the object and not the subject of consciousness) we have defeated any argument for solipsism. For while we can still say that only absolute consciousness exists as absolute, the same is not true for the personal "I." My "I" is no more certain than the "I" of other people. Later, as we shall see, Sartre rejected this as a refutation of solipsism and declared that neither my own existence nor that of the Other can be "proved" but that both are "factual necessities" which we can doubt only abstractly.

Second, Sartre believes that by taking the "I" and the "Me" out of consciousness and by viewing consciousness as absolute and non-personal, and as responsible for the constitution of Being "as a world" and of its own activities as an Ego, he has defended phenomenology against any charge that it has taken refuge from the real world in an idealism. If the Ego and the world are both objects of consciousness, if neither has created the other, then consciousness by establishing their relations to each other insures the active participation of the person in the world.

Most important of all, there are in Sartre's claim that consciousness infinitely overflows the "I" which ordinarily serves to unify it, the foundation for his view of anguish, the germ of his doctrine of "bad faith," and a basis for his belief in the absolute freedom of consciousness. "Consciousness is afraid of its own spontaneity because it feels itself to be beyond freedom." (p. 120) In other words we feel vertigo or anguish before our recognition that nothing in our own pasts or discernible personality insures our following any of our usual patterns of conduct. There is nothing to prevent consciousness from making a wholly new choice of its way of being. By means of the Ego, consciousness can partially protect itself from this freedom so limitless that it threatens the very bounds of personality. "Everything happens as if consciousness constituted the Ego as a false image of itself, as if consciousness were hypnotized by this Ego which it has established and were absorbed in it." Here undeveloped is the origin of bad faith, the possibility which consciousness possesses of wavering back and forth, demanding the privileges of a free consciousness, yet seeking refuge from the responsibilities of freedom by pretending to be concealed and confined in an already established Ego.

In *The Psychology of the Imagination,*[5] a treatise on phenomenological psychology which was published in 1940, we find the basis for Sartre's later presentation of Nothingness. The main text of the book is concerned with the difference between imagination and perception. Sartre rejects the opinion commonly held that imagination is a vague or faded

[5] *L'imaginaire, psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination.* Paris: Gallimard. 1940. Quotations are from the English translation: *The Psychology of the Imagination.* New York: Philosophical Library. 1948.

perception. He points out that frequently the objects of both are the same but that what distinguishes the two is the conscious attitude toward the object. In the conclusion he raises a question of much broader significance than the problem of effecting a phenomenological description of imagination. He asks two questions: (1) "Is the imaginary function a contingent and metaphysical specification of the essence 'consciousness,' or should it rather be described as a constitutive structure of that essence?" (2) Are the necessary conditions for realizing an imaginative consciousness "the same or different from the conditions of possibility of a consciousness in general?"

Throughout the book Sartre has been stressing the fact that in imagination the object is posited either as absent, as non-existent, as existing elsewhere, or as neutralized (*i.e.*, not posited as existing). Now in order to effect such a positing, consciousness must exercise its peculiar power of nihilation (*néantisation*). If an object is to be posited as absent or not existing, then there must be involved the ability to constitute an emptiness or nothingness with respect to it. Sartre goes further than this and says that in every act of imagination there is really a double nihilation. In this connection he makes an important distinction between being-in-the-world and being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. To be in-the-midst-of-the-world is to be one with the world as in the case of objects. But consciousness is not in-the-midst-of-the-world; it is in-the-world. This means that consciousness is inevitably involved with the world (both because we have bodies and because by definition consciousness is consciousness of a transcendent object) but that there is a separation between consciousness and the things in the world. For consciousness in its primary form, as we saw earlier, is a non-positional self-consciousness; hence if consciousness is consciousness of an object, it is consciousness of not being the object. There is, in short, a power of withdrawal in consciousness such that it can nihilate (encase with a region of non-being) the objects of which it is conscious. Imagination requires two of these nihilating acts. When we imagine, we posit a world in which an object is not present in order that we may imagine a world in which our imagined object *is* present. I do not imagine a tree so long as I am actually looking at one. To accomplish this imagining act, we must first be able to posit the world as a synthetic totality. This is possible only for a consciousness capable of effecting a nihilating withdrawal from the world. Then we posit the imagined object as existing somehow apart from the world, thus denying it as being part of the existing world.

Hence the imaginative act is constituting, isolating, and nihilating. It constitutes the world *as a world*, for before consciousness there was no "world" but only full, undifferentiated being. It then nihilates the world from a particular point of view and by a second act of nihilation isolates

the object from the world—as out-of-reach.

Once we accept this view of imagination, the answer to Sartre's two questions is clear. Obviously the conditions of possibility for an imagining consciousness are the same as for consciousness in general. Clearly the imaginary function is constitutive of the essence of consciousness. To conceive of a non-imagining consciousness is impossible. For if consciousness could not imagine, this could only be because it lacked the power of negating withdrawal which Sartre calls nihilation; and this would result in so submerging consciousness in the world that it could no longer distinguish itself from the world. "If it were possible to conceive for a moment a consciousness which does not imagine, it would have to be conceived as completely engulfed in the existent and without the possibility of grasping anything but the existent." (p. 271).

In this early book Sartre had already linked the ideas of Nothingness and freedom. "In order to imagine, consciousness must be free from all specific reality and this freedom must be able to define itself by a "being-in-the-world which is at once the constitution and the negation of the world." (p. 269) This means that consciousness must be able to effect the emergence of the "unreal." "The unreal is produced outside of the world by a consciousness which *stays in the world*, and it is because he is transcendentally free that man can imagine." (p. 271)

In *The Emotions*[6] (1939) Sartre again discusses consciousness' constitution and organization of the world and from a different point of view, but the underlying ideas of the total involvement of consciousness in any of its acts and its possibility of choosing freely the way in which it will relate itself to the world remain the same. As we should expect, he completely rejects the idea that emotions are forces which can sweep over one and determine consciousness and its actions. Emotion is simply a way by which consciousness chooses to live its relationship to the world. On what we might call the everyday pragmatic level of existence, our perception constitutes the world in terms of demands. We form a sort of "hodological" map of it in which pathways are traced to and among objects in accordance with the potentialities and resistances of objects in the world. Thus if I want to go out into the street, I must count on so many steps to be taken, furniture to be avoided, a door to be opened, etc. Or to put it on a non-material level, if I want to persuade someone of a course of action, I must not only plan to use language which means more or less the same to him as to me but must observe certain "rules" of intersubjective relations if I am to appeal to his reason rather than to his

[6] *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*. Paris: Hermann. 1939. Quotations are from the English translation by Bernard Frechtman: *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*. New York: Philosophical Library. 1939. I have discussed this after *The Psychology of the Imagination*, even though the latter was published a year later, because the order seemed a more natural one in terms of the material which I have chosen for consideration.

prejudice; I must approach him in terms of his experience instead of referring to what he does not know, etc. In short, the objects which I want to realize appear to me as "having to be realized" in certain ways. "The world of our desires, our needs, and our acts, appears as if it were furrowed with strict and narrow paths which lead to one or the other determined end, that is, to the appearance of a created object." (p. 57) It might be compared to a pin-ball machine in which the ball which one wants to end up at a certain defined spot must arrive there by following one of several possible paths filled with pits and barriers. All of this is an anticipation of the hierarchy of "instrumental complexes" which Sartre describes in detail in *Being and Nothingness* and which is vital to his discussion of the body, our situation—in general what he calls our "facticity" or our "being there in the world."

It is important to note that although this hodological map depends to an extent on external brute matter and is hence to a significant degree the same for all people, still it is in part dependent on a constituting consciousness. This is true first because without any consciousness there could be no such meaningful organization. But it varies in meaning also according to the object aimed at and the attitude of the consciousness regarding the object. Thus the door may be a means of access to the outside or (if locked) a protection against unwanted guests. The appearance of the environment and its organization vary according to whether I walk or drive. Finally, Sartre claims, I may choose to ignore or neglect this instrumental organization altogether, and it is here that emotion enters in. I may in a fit of temper, so to speak, refuse to pull the handle of the pin-ball machine or say that the ball reached its destination even when it went into the wrong hole or (to put an extreme case) break the glass and put the ball where I want it or state that I had never intended really to pull the handle anyway. This world with its hodological markings is difficult; and if the situation becomes too difficult, if my plans meet with utter frustration, I may seek to transform the whole character of the world which blocks me. Since I can not do so in actuality, I accomplish a parallel result by a sort of magical transformation. Emotion "is a transformation of the world. When the paths traced out become too difficult, or when we see no path, we can no longer live in so urgent and difficult a world. All the ways are barred. However, we must act. So we try to change the world, that is, to live as if the connection between things and their potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by magic." (p. 58) We construct new ways and relationships; but since we can not do this by changing the world, we change ourselves. In certain cases we may even faint, thus magically and temporarily annihilating the world by nullifying our connection with it. Even joyous emotions fall into this same pattern since in joy we try to possess all at

once and as a whole a desirable situation which if it is to be "really" experienced must be achieved slowly and in terms of instrumental organizations. In summary, emotion is a consciousness' *personal* relation to the world and as such can be temporarily satisfying, but it is fundamentally ineffective and transient with no *direct* power to affect the environment.

In the three works just considered Sartre shows clearly that he is not following very closely the line of thought laid down by Husserl and his followers although in all three, as well as in the case of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre calls his approach phenomenological. In these examples, however, we find very little of what we have become accustomed to think of as inseparably connected with existentialism—namely, a concern with the living person and his concrete emotions of anguish, despair, nausea, and the like. Actually, until the publication of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre's concern with men's happiness and unhappiness, their ethical problems, purposes, and conduct was expressed largely in his purely literary works. Of these the novel, *Nausea*[7] (1937), is richest in philosophical content. In fact one might truthfully say that the only full exposition of its meaning would be the total volume of *Being and Nothingness*. But amidst the wealth of material which might serve as a sort of book of illustrations for existentialist motifs there are two things of particular significance. First there is the realization on the part of the hero, Roquentin, that Being in general and he himself in particular are *de trop;* that is, existence itself is contingent, gratuitous, unjustifiable. It is *absurd* in the sense that there is no reason for it, no outside purpose to give it meaning, no direction. Being *is there*, and outside of it—Nothing. In the passage in which this thought is especially developed we find Roquentin struggling with the idea that things overflow all the relationships and designations which he can attach to them, a view which Sartre developed later in the form of a theory of the "transphenomenality of Being." Furthermore Roquentin realizes that since he is an existent he can not escape this original contingency, this "obscene superfluity."

> "We were a heap of living creatures, irritated, embarrassed at ourselves, we hadn't the slightest reason to be there, none of us; each one, confused, vaguely alarmed, felt *de trop* in relation to the others. *De trop:* it was the only relationship I could establish between these trees, these gates, these stones. In vain I tried to *count* the chestnut trees, to *locate* them by their relationship to the Velleda, to compare their height with the height of the plane trees: each of them escaped the relationship in

[7] *La Nausée*. Paris: Gallimard. 1938. I have used with some changes the English translation by Lloyd Alexander: *Nausea*. London: New Directions. 1949.

> which I tried to enclose it, isolated itself and overflowed. . . . And I—soft, weak, obscene, digesting, juggling with dismal thoughts—I, too, was *de trop*. . . . Even my death would have been *de trop*. *De trop*, my corpse, my blood on these stones, between these plants, at the back of the smiling garden. And the decomposed flesh would have been *de trop* in the earth which would receive my bones, at last; cleaned, stripped, peeled, proper and clean as teeth, it would have been *de trop*: I was *de trop* for eternity." (pp. 172–173)

This passage is echoed in *Being and Nothingness* where Sartre uses almost the same words to describe Being-in-itself.

> "Being-in-itself is never either possible or impossible. It *is*. This is what consciousness expresses in anthropomorphic terms by saying that being is *de trop*—that is, that consciousness absolutely can not derive being from *anything*, either from another being, or from a possibility, or from a necessary law. Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, being-in-itself is *de trop* for eternity." (p. lxviii)

In the later work Sartre sharply contrasts this unconscious being with Being-for-itself or consciousness. But the contingency which Roquentin expresses still remains in the fact that while the For-itself is free to choose its way of being, it was never able either to choose not to be, or to choose not to be free. Nor is there any meaning for its being, other than what it makes for itself.

A second important theme in the novel is the concept of nausea itself. Nausea is the "taste of my facticity," the revelation of my body to me and of the fact of my inescapable connection with Being-in-itself. In the novel Sartre is concerned primarily with the sensations accompanying Roquentin's perception that through possessing a body he partakes of the existence of things.

> "The thing which was waiting was on the alert, it has pounced on me, it flows through me, I am filled with it. It's nothing: I am the Thing. Existence, liberated, detached, floods over me. I exist.
>
> "I exist. It's sweet, so sweet, so slow. And light: you'd think it floated all by itself. It stirs. It brushes by me, melts and vanishes. Gently, gently. There is bubbling water in my mouth. I swallow. It slides down my throat, it caresses me—and now it comes up again into my mouth. For ever I shall have a little pool of whitish water in my mouth—lying low— grazing my tongue. And this pool is still me. And the tongue. And the throat is me." (p. 134)

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre, probably fortunately, is not so much

concerned with the sensations by which our facticity is revealed to us. But the concept underlies his discussion of the body. Furthermore it is in connection with the study of facticity that he presents the most detailed analysis of the problem of freedom, for it is the limitations offered by man's connections with external being which offer the most serious threat to Sartre's view that the For-itself is absolutely free.

In *Being and Nothingness*, which as *L'Être et le Néant*[8] appeared in France in 1943, Sartre has incorporated the views which I have mentioned here as well as a number of less important themes found in scattered short stories and essays. The basic positions have not been really changed, but they have been enriched and elaborated and worked into a systematic philosophy. The subject matter of this philosophy is as all inclusive as the title indicates, and throughout a large part of the book the treatment is fully as abstract. Yet we might also say that it is a study of the human condition; for since "man is the being by whom Nothingness comes into the world," this means that man himself is Being and Nothingness. And before he has finished, Sartre has not only considered such concrete problems as love, hate, sex, the crises of anguish, the trap of bad faith, but he has sketched in outline an approach by which we may hope to ascertain the original choice of Being by which real individuals have made themselves what they are.

The underlying plan of this comprehensive description is comparatively simple. In the *Introduction*, which is by far the most difficult part of the book, Sartre explains why we must begin with the pre-reflective consciousness, contrasts his position with that of realism and of idealism, rejects any idea of a noumenal world behind the phenomenon, and explains his own idea of the "transphenomenality of Being." He then proceeds to present his distinction between unconscious Being (Being-in-itself) and conscious Being (Being-for-itself).[9] Obviously certain difficulties arise. In particular, since the two types are radically different and separated from another, how can they both be part of one Being?

In search of an answer Sartre in Part One focuses on the question itself—as a question—and reveals the fact that man (or the For-itself) can ask questions and can be in question for himself in his very being because of the presence in him of a Nothingness. Further examination of this Nothingness shows that Non-being is the condition of any transcendence toward Being. But *how* can man be his own Nothingness and be responsible for the upsurge of Nothingness into the world? We learn that Nothingness is revealed to us most fully in anguish and that man generally tries to flee this anguish, this Nothingness which he is, by means of "bad faith." The study of "bad faith" reveals to us that whereas Being-

[8] Paris: Gallimard.

[9] Sartre evidently got these terms from Hegel's *an-sich* and *für-sich*.

in-itself simply *is*, man is the being "who is what he is not and who is not what he is." In other words man continually makes himself. Instead of being, he "has to be"; his present being has meaning only in the light of the future toward which he projects himself. Thus he *is not* what at any instant we might want to say that he is, and he *is* that toward which he projects himself but which he is not yet.[10] This ambiguity provides the possibility for bad faith since man may try to interpret this evanescent "is" of his as though it were the "is" of Being-in-itself, or he may fluctuate between the two.

In Part Two Sartre, using this view of the For-itself as a Nothingness and as an always future project, discusses the For-itself as a pursuit of Being in the form of selfness. This involves the questions of possibility, of value, and of temporality, all of which prove to be integrally related to the basic concept of the For-itself as an internal negation of Being-in-itself. But if the For-itself is a relation to the In-itself, even by way of negation, then we must find some sort of bridge. This bridge is knowledge, the discussion of which concludes Part Two.

Since no full presentation of knowledge is possible without consideration of the senses, we are referred to the body. Part Three begins with a discussion of the body, and we soon perceive that one of the principal characteristics of a body is that it causes me to be seen by the Other. Hence Part Three is largely devoted to the study of Being-for-others, including descriptions of concrete personal relations. Finally our discovery of our relations with others shows us that the For-itself has an outside, that while never able to coincide with the In-itself, the For-itself is nevertheless in the midst of it. And so at last in Part Four we return to the In-itself.

We are concerned with the In-itself from two fundamental points of view. First, how can we be in the midst of the In-itself without losing our freedom. Here we find the fullest exposition of Sartre's ideas on freedom and facticity. Second, we discover that our fundamental relation to *Being* is such that we desire to appropriate it through either action, possession, or the attempt to become one with it. Analysis of these reactions leads us to the question of our original choice of Being, and it is here that Sartre outlines for us his existential psychoanalysis. This completes the book save for the Conclusion, in which Sartre suggests various metaphysical and ethical implications which may emerge as the result of his long "pursuit of Being" and also promises us another work in which he will further develop the ethical possibilities.

Obviously the most strikingly original idea here presented, as well as the unifying motif of the entire work, is the position that consciousness

[10] The general psychological consequences of this distinction between Being-for-itself and Being-in-itself I have discussed in some detail in my introduction to Jean-Paul's Sartre's *Existential Psychoanalysis*. New York: Philosophical Library. 1953.