CHAPTER -V

THE IMAGE OF MAN IN SARTRE’S PHILOSOPHY

(i) **Being, Existence and Essence**

Man has been the central concern of Sartre throughout his life and philosophical career. The starting-point of his philosophy is the analysis of Being and its application to the understanding of Man. In his philosophical analysis of the Concept of Being, he rejects the doctrine of potentiality in the old Aristotelian metaphysics; that is to say, the old Aristotelian doctrine of the potentiality of Being is rejected by him. He says that ‘what truly is, is,’ and there is no question of any hidden potential nature of a thing, gradually manifesting itself and making it to be what it is now.

In his epoche-making work *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, he shows his deep interest in studying the ontological problem of Being from the phenomenological-existentialist point of view. Moreover, the ontology he deals with is an ontology of existent human being, not of some ultimate Being. He aims at the analysis of human life or reality in all its aspects, such as, man’s experience, perception, emotion and all other varieties of mental life. His earlier works, viz., *The Transcendence of the Ego, Imagination, The Psychology of Imagination, Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, etc. and his first novel, viz., *Nausea* are examples of his exploration into the various aspects of human existence, which prepared him to reach his fundamental ontological conclusions.
Sartre came to the realization that ontological theories are to be established on the basis of a philosophical method, and in his case, he made the phenomenological method the basis of his ontology. But his phenomenological method is different from the method of Husserl and Heidegger, and has a uniqueness of its own. His phenomenological method can be understood with reference to his analysis of human experience; but his analysis of imagination and emotion gives a better understanding of it.

Sartre’s phenomenology may be characterised as dynamic phenomenology, in so far in his account of the relation between consciousness and the world, he shows how the authentic project of human life and its development can be understood in terms of man’s relation with the world and with other human beings. Although the world is independent of consciousness, the world as such has no meaning for the individual; it is the purpose of the individual which creates the world for him. In spite of the facticity of the world of objects, man is capable of constructing a situation out of the objective factors in which he lives. His freedom empowers him to re-organise the situation. The phenomena experienced by us lead us to understand the situation, but the situation can be grasped fully only in terms of our project. Thus Sartre’s concern is with the phenomenology of the existential man in so far as he tries to establish the relation of man to the world. In this way, Sartre applies phenomenology to the sphere of the dynamic activities of human life.

The idea of a dynamic phenomenology is best illustrated in Sartre’s conception of Existential Psycho-Analysis. The individual for-itself is always moving and changing, and as such, it does not have the totality for peace and tranquility, it always feels a lack. It longs for becoming united with the world, but cannot. Sartre’s phenomenological analysis is dynamic in the sense that it tries to understand the nature of human life in its development with a view to realizing the ultimate project of human life.
The object of Sartre’s philosophical enquiry has throughout been the real nature of human being as an existent individual, i.e., being as existence, as distinguished from all other kinds of being. That is why, in his phenomenological ontology, he makes an analysis of the concept of being and shows that, of all kinds of being the existent individual alone is the authentic being or being proper, and for him, ‘existence’ is an equivalent for ‘being proper’, which should be distinguished strictly from all other kinds of being, beings improperly so called. However, once he takes up the expression ‘existence’ for ‘being proper’, he regards all other beings as simply ‘beings’, and makes a distinction between ‘existence’ and ‘being’. For him, existence is ‘for-itself’, and being is ‘in-itself’. Thus the distinction between ‘existence’ and ‘being’ reduces itself to the distinction between ‘for-itself’ and ‘in-itself’. A for-itself is a self-conscious and self-determined individual being, while an in-itself has no self-consciousness and self-determination, which are the essential characteristics of existence. Thus the distinction between existence and being consists in the possession and the non-possession of self-consciousness and self-determination or freedom of the will. Existence is, of course, being; but being is not necessarily existence; Authentic being alone is existence. According to Sartre, ‘being-in-itself’ includes all beings other than ‘existence’, such as, all inanimate or material objects, all sub-human beings, as well as, super-human beings (if there be any), and even all those human beings who are not self-conscious and self-determined.

‘Being’ means the being of anything that is; whereas ‘existence’ means the being of being-for-itself only, as distinguished from being-in-itself. Man, as self-conscious being, is distinguished as a ‘being-for-itself’ from unconscious objects which are beings-in-themselves. The most important feature that distinguishes conscious being from other beings is their ability to consider the world they find themselves in, and their
ability to think of themselves as separate from other things. So, their consciousness is regarded as the gap or the emptiness which divides them from beings-in-themselves. It is the possession of this emptiness in himself which makes it possible for a being-for-itself to perceive the world and also to act in it, by determining his own course of action. Man as being-for-itself, is a possible being, while a being-in-itself is solid (*massif*), entirely actual. A being-for-itself has no essence, so he is not wholly determined, he is free to fill up the gap between his present and future in any way he likes; but a being-in-itself has no future. It has no potentiality to be actualized, no future to be transformed into the present.

Incompleteness or imperfectness is the very nature of man as an existent being. However much he may try to remove his imperfection, he can never be successful in his attempt. A man may be less and less imperfect, but never entirely perfect. Still his life is a mission for the attainment of perfection to the maximum possible extent. However, consciousness, according to Sartre, is a necessary, but not sufficient condition of a creature’s being a for-itself. It is for this reason that animals, in spite of their manifest consciousness, are very much like beings-in-themselves.

According to Sartre, being-in-itself is the being of the phenomenon, not the being of consciousness. The being of consciousness is radically different, its meaning requires a particular elucidation in terms of the revealed-revelation of another type of being, namely, being-in-itself of the phenomenon.

Sartre mentions three characteristics of the being of the phenomenon—(1) It is, (2) It is in itself, and (3) It is what it is.

(1) The being of the phenomenon *is*, that is to say, it is not something created. Some people suppose that God has given being to the world, and so being always appears tainted with
a creation passivity. But a creation out of nothing can not explain the coming to pass of being; because, a conceived subjectivity, even a divine subjectivity cannot have the representation of an objectivity. Nor can it be said that being creates itself, because, in that case, we will have to suppose that being is prior to itself. Thus being is itself, that is, is neither passivity nor activity. It is also beyond negation and affirmation.

(2) The being of the phenomenon is in itself. This means that it does not refer to itself as self-consciousness does. It overflows the knowledge which we have of it. It is a plenitude, it is itself so complete that the perpetual reflection constituting the self is dissolved in an identity. The being-in-itself is a being that is complete in itself, it has no future of its own, because it is a non-conscious being. It never goes out of itself, because it cannot do so, as it is inert and unconscious. It remains in itself, it is confined within itself, it is in-itself.

(3) "The being is in itself" - this means that it does not refer to itself as self-consciousness does, it is itself complete, it is at bottom beyond the self, it is opaque to itself, because it is filled with itself. It can be better expressed by saying that being is what it is, that which designates the being of consciousness. The fact of being is no longer a purely axiomatic characteristic, it is a contingent principle of being-in-itself. The principle of identity, the principle of analytical judgments designates the opacity of being-in-itself. The result is evidently that being is isolated in its being. For being is the becoming and due to this fact, it is beyond becoming. It is what it is. This means that being can neither be derived from the possible nor reduced to the necessary. Being-in-itself is never either possible or impossible. It is, that is to say, being is superfluous (absurd), consciousness absolutely can not derive being from anything, either from another being, or from a possibility, or from a necessary law. Thus being-in-itself is superfluous (absurd, *de trop*) for eternity.
Hence, Sartre concludes, "Being is. Being is in itself. Being is what it is. These are the three characteristics which the preliminary examination of the phenomenon of being allows us to assign to the being of phenomena". (1)

Thus in Sartre's philosophy, a sharp distinction is drawn between being and existence. He calls the being of a self-conscious and self-determined individual man 'existence', and the being of all other things, simply 'being'. In his existentialist terminology, 'existence' is the 'for-itself', while 'being' is the 'in-itself'. In this connection, it may be mentioned that the for-itself as existence is prior to essence, i.e., being-in-general. As he says, "There are, on the one hand, the Christians, amongst whom I shall name Jaspers and Marcel, both professed Catholics; and on the other, the existential atheists, amongst whom we must place Heidegger as well as French existentialists and myself. What they have in common is simply the fact that they believe that existence comes before the essence - or if you will, that we must begin from the subjective." (2) The implication of this statement is that 'existence' as the existence of an individual man comes before the 'essence', i.e., class-concept of man. Man exists first, and next arises the question regarding the essential characteristics possessed by him, on the basis of which the concept of man as a class of human beings is formed. He establishes his thesis by concrete illustrations.

First, he explains the theory of the essentialists by an example of productions of an artisan, and then refutes it. An article of manufacture, say a paper-knife, has been made by an artisan who had a conception of it, and who had also paid attention to the pre-existent technique of production as a part of that conception, and also to the purpose that will be served by it after its production. Thus the essence of the paper-knife is the sum of the formula and the qualities which made its production and its definition possible precedes its essence. When the theists think of God as the creator, they think of him
worstly as a super-natural artisan. When God creates, he has precise knowledge of what he is creating. Thus the conception of man in God's mind can be compared with that of the paper-knife in the mind of the artisan. Just as the artisan manufactures a paper-knife, following a definition and a formula, so God makes man according to a procedure and a conception. Thus each individual man is the realization of a certain conception being present in the mind of God.

But Sartre, as the representative of atheistic existentialism, holds that, because God does not exist, there arises no question of believing in the conception of man pre-existing in God's mind before the creation of individual human beings, and so man's essence does not precede his existence. In the words of Sartre, "Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares with greater consistency that if God does not exist, there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man, or as Heidegger has it, the human reality". (3) To the question, "what is exactly meant by saying that existence precedes essence?" Sartre replies: "we mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is." (4) It thus becomes clear that according to Sartre, the individual man is prior to the conception of man, in contrast to the view of the essentialists that the conception of man is prior to the individual man.

In Sartre's philosophy, the word 'existence' seems to have been used in two different senses—one in the prevalent sense of being, and the other in the technical existentialist sense of existence. When he says that existence precedes essence, he
uses the word 'existence' in the first sense, that is, in the sense of being in general. It becomes clear when he says that "man primarily exists - that man is, before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so." (5) Again he uses the word 'existence' in the second sense when he says that existence is something that is to be attained by a man by his authentic choice and self-conscious efforts. As he says, "Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower. Before that projection of the self nothing exists; not even in the heaven of intelligence; man will only attain existence when he is what he purposes to be." (6) Moreover, although it may seem that Sartre is not consistent in his use of the word 'existence', because he uses it in two different senses, he is not actually guilty of the charge, because according to him, 'existence precedes essence' means that the individual man is prior to the concept of man, and the individual man at first 'is', i.e., 'potentially exists' and afterwards attains real existence, that is to say, becomes actually existent, still there being no God, there is nobody to form a concept of man and create man, according to the concept, it is man who after existing first both potentially and actually comes to formulate a real conception of man. Thus the conception of man is not a priori but a a posteriori.

In this connection it may be stated that although Sartre's slogan 'existence precedes essence' was anticipated by Kierkegaard and Heidegger, the unique language in which it is expressed was stated by Sartre for the first time. Kierkegaard, criticising Hegel, said that the individual man is more important than the conception of man, and thus prepared the ground for Sartre's statement 'existence precedes essence'. Heidegger considered existence to be prior to essence (Being) in an epistemological sense, that is to say, according to him, we must know about human being (existence) before we can
know about Being (essence). Solomon says, 'The famous slogan of Sartre 'Existence precedes essence' is taken from Heidegger's insistence that "the essence of Dasein" is its existence'. (7)

Sartre's statement 'existence precedes essence' implies that man is responsible for what he is, he is responsible not only for his own individuality, but for all men. [According to Sartre, man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity, and in this sense existentialism is a kind of subjectivism, not in the sense that the individual subject is absolutely free.] When the existentialists say that man chooses himself, they mean that every man must choose himself, and that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men. Says Sartre, "What we choose is always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all. If, moreover, existence precedes essence and we will to exist at the same time as we fashion our image, that image is valid for all and for the entire epoch in which we find ourselves. Our responsibility is thus much greater than we had supposed, for it concerns mankind as a whole". (8) Here also we notice that according to Sartre, the ideal concept of man is posterior to the existing individual man, because the individual man already existing forms the ideal image of man, that is, the idea of what a man should be. The ideal man is one who chooses himself and in choosing for himself, also chooses for mankind as a whole. Thus the existing individual is prior to the concept of man, that is, ideal man. This has been expressed by Sartre in the following words: "I am thus responsible for myself and for all men, and I am creating certain image of man as I would have him to be. In fashioning myself I fashion man." (9)

(ii) Being and Consciousness ; Man as Being-for-Itself

To have a better understanding of Sartre's concept of being and his concept of man as being-for-itself, a discussion of his theory of consciousness is of vital importance. Like Edmund Husserl, the phenomenologist, he holds that consciousness is
intentional by nature; because of its intentional activity, it always directs itself towards some object, and as such, it is always objective. However, he rejects Husserl's concept of the transcendental ego or self as something hidden behind consciousness, because nothing other than consciousness can be the foundation of consciousness. Thus Sartre's theory of consciousness has come to be designated as the non-egological theory of consciousness, in which the concept of the transcendental ego has been left out. In his essay, The Transcendence of the Ego, Sartre argues that the ego or self has no primitive status, either as discovered in the Cartesian cogito or as disclosed in Husserl's phenomenological analysis. Neither of the two prevalent concepts of the ego or self,—the formal and the material, is acceptable to him. As he says, "...the ego is neither formally nor materially in consciousness, it is outside in the world, it is a being of the world like the ego of another." (10) According to the formal concept, the ego is a formal principle of unification, while according to the material concept, it is the material centre of desires and acts at every moment of our psychic life. But against the formal conception of the ego, Sartre argues that there is no reason for thinking that an 'I' gives unity to consciousness; even the Cartesian Cogito can not establish it, it proves only that "the representation of a consciousness must be united and articulated in such a way that it is always possible in their regard to note an 'I think' ". (11) The fact that consciousness is unified is not sufficient to prove that this unification is effected by the 'I'. He says further that Kant's argument in his 'Transcendental Deduction' establishes only that, 'I can always regard my perception as mine'; he has not been able to prove that 'I' actually accompanies every experience, and some substantial or transcendental 'I' is responsible for this possibility. And against the material conception of the ego, Sartre argues that the 'I' is not material 'I' inhabiting every conscious act. He rejects Husserl's claim that the cogito is an absolute fact.
Sartre makes a distinction between 'I' and the 'Me', i.e., the empirical ego. According to him, the only ego is the empirical ego, which is referred to as the 'me'; the transcendental 'I' of *cogito* is neither the name of an underlying mental substance, a unifying principle, nor consciousness itself. It is, of course, undeniable that 'I' does refer to myself, but Sartre says that this 'I' is only an expression of incommunicability and inwardness of consciousness. According to him, "the phenomenological conception of consciousness renders the unifying and individualizing role of the 'I' totally useless. It is consciousness, on the contrary, which makes possible the unity and the personality of my 'I'. The transcendental 'I', therefore, has no *raison d'être*." (12)

Sartre makes a clear distinction between reflective consciousness and pre-reflective consciousness. According to him, in pre-reflective consciousness, there is no 'I', no experience of 'myself'. It is false to think that every act or state of consciousness is inhabited by an 'I'. As he says, "When I run after a street-car....... there is no 'I'. There is consciousness of the street-car-having-to-be-overtaken". (13) The *cogito*, i.e., the 'I', emerges only with reflective consciousness and does not then refer to or indicate an underlying *self* which was hidden in the pre-reflective stage. The 'I' expresses only the unity of pre-reflective consciousness itself. The *cogito* is the reflection of consciousness on consciousness. According to Sartre, pre-reflective consciousness is *reflected* consciousness, while reflective consciousness is *reflecting* consciousness, and neither of these is the 'I', or the container of the 'I' of Descartes. The 'I' of the reflecting consciousness is not an object discovered in the reflected consciousness, nor is it consciousness itself. There is only one 'I', which is neither a transcendental ego nor an empirical ego, neither the reflected consciousness nor any other 'I'. Pre-reflective consciousness is impersonal without an 'I' and reflective consciousness is public (with an 'I'). There is no 'I'
as distinct from 'me', the 'I' is only one aspect of the 'me', the acting aspect. Thus the conception of the ego-subject is destroyed, consequently leading to the destruction of all traditional dualisms between subject and object.

According to Sartre, there being no subject-object dualism; the so-called subjectivity is nothing but consciousness without a subject. He gives a description of non-thetic self-consciousness (i.e., pre-reflective cogito); examines its results and explains the meaning of the statement that consciousness must necessarily be what is not, it must not be what it is.

This idea of presence to self through which an existent human being affirms his existential being is inseparably connected with the 'facticity' of existence. As the material being, that is, being-in-itself, is contingent, so from the point of view of its facticity, the human being is comparable to the being-in-itself; it is as good as the being-in-itself. But it is different from the being-in-itself in this sense that it has the capacity to become being-for-itself by its nihilation, that is, by creating a distance between consciousness and its objects, but being-in-itself has no such capacity. The human reality clearly understands that it is not its own basis, it is not created by itself, it is just given and therefore contingent. Of course, it is true that the self, through nihilation, forms its own basis, but it can not be the absolute basis of its own factual existence. In other words, it is as if the in-itself aspect of man, that is, the aspect of his facticity which tries to remove the contingency of its own being by this act of nihilation, the act that transforms man's being-in-itself into being-for-itself. The for-itself can be the basis of its own nihilation, but not its own factual existence—this contingency is, as it were, carried over from the in-itself into the for-itself and survives as a reminder of its origin, giving a kind of factual necessity to the for-itself. It may be said that human being has two levels of being, namely, being-in-itself and being-for-itself, unlike the material being which has only
one level of being, the being-in-itself. The being-for-itself was involved in man's being-in-itself, that is why, it could have been evolved out of that.

Human reality is paradoxical by nature in the sense that man aspires to become what he can never become, because of his essential nature which consists in a lack or an emptiness. Man is by nature an incomplete being, it is never possible for him to attain completeness or perfection. Man is being-for-itself, an existent being, because he is not a complete being like the being-in-itself. He has always a sense of nothingness, a feeling of wants, which he wants to remove, but is never capable of removing. Human existence 'is constantly going beyond itself towards a coincidence with itself which is never given'. Evidently this coincidence for which it is always striving is being-in-itself that lies in the heart of its own factual existence—not an absolute, transcendent being like God outside the for-itself. Such a coincidence can never be attained, because if it were attained, the for-itself would no longer exist. It is rather an 'abortine in-itself' (un en-soi manque) that is permanently present in the centre of human being, for coincidence with which man strives hopelessly. Thus human consciousness is an unhappy consciousness, without any possibility of getting rid of its unhappy state. Human reality is 'sick in its being', because it is always haunted by a totality which, 'in a sense', belongs to it, but which it can never attain without giving up its nature as a 'being-for-itself'.

The third aspect of the basic structure of the being-for-itself is "value", which arises as a results of the for-itself's attempt to fill up the gap created by its yearning to be an in-itself. But as we can not attain absolute fullness of being without losing ourselves as human beings, that is, as beings for-themselves, this aspiration is clearly a hopeless one. Thus value is the being of the self from a fundamental and yet contradictory point of view. As project (nihilation) it is 'tearing
from towards....', and this projection involves a movement towards a not-self, an in-itself that is other than the for-itself, and thus it helps to constitute the value of the projection of the for-itself. Value, as the expression of the for-itself's striving towards the unattainable in-itself, emerges as a kind of permanent 'lack', that is un-surpassable.

According to Sartre, "Value is affected with the double character, ......of both being unconditionally and not being. Qua value indeed, value has being, but this normative existent does not have to be precisely as reality. Its being is to be value; that is, not-to-be being. Thus the being of value qua value is the being of what does not have being." (14) Here Sartre means to say that value is not something real as a fact among other facts, it is rather something ideal. As the supreme value, value is the beyond and the for of transcendence; it is the beyond which surpasses and which provides the foundation for all human surpassings, but towards which man can never surpass himself, because it is presupposed by all human surpassings.

The fourth aspect of the basic structure of the for-itself is 'possibility'. According to Sartre, the 'possible' is the element which is lacking to human existence and which prevents it from being a complete self, at the same time constituting the goal of its endeavours. It is what for-itself lacks in order to be a complete self. It is what the for-itself ideally is, but factually lacks. Thus possibility is an integral part of human existence, because it expresses the projective character of a self which is constantly moving towards what is not yet. "The possible rises on the ground of the nihilation of the for-itself. It is not conceived thematically afterwards as a means of re-uniting the self. Rather the upsurge of for-itself as the nihilation of the in-itself and the decompression of being causes possibility to arise as one of the aspects of this decompression of being; that is, as a way of being what one is—at a distance from the self." (15)
Sartre says that his view of possibility must not be associated with Aristotle's concept of potentiality, because it is neither a logical nor a magical concept. In order to avoid the purely logical conception of possibility, Aristotle has formed only a magical concept of potentiality. Sartre gives us rather an existentialist concept of possibilities. According to him, a human being cannot have possibilities, because it has objects, because it can never be completely separated from the possibilities which constitute the meaning of its existence. Again, a human being cannot be regarded as possibility, that is to say, we cannot say that a human being is possibility, because the possibility always remains, in a sense, unfulfilled, as it is tied to the radical impossibility of self-coincidence. Just as it is said that the for-itself nihilates (projects) itself, so it may be said that the possible possibilates itself.

"Every consciousness lacks something for something. But it must be understood that the lack does not come to it from without as in the case of the crescent moon as related to the full moon. The lack of the for-itself is a lack which it is. The outline of a presence-to-itself is what constitutes the being of the for-itself as the foundation of its own nothingness". (16) This nothingness separating human reality from itself leads to the origin of time or temporality. There are innumerable horizons of possibilities. As soon as one horizon of possibilities is realized, another horizon of possibilities crops up, and we are constantly engaged in trying to reach one or the other horizon of possibilities. Thus we have the sense of time.

According to Sartre, there is a circuit of selfness or selfhood. The nihilating movement of the for-itself towards its own possibilities involving it in a relationship with what is not it-self, because it moves towards and beyond a totality of existents which forms its world. Thus the world and selfhood are distinct, yet inseparable. There is no selfhood, no person
without the world; and there is no world without selfhood, without the person.

Sartre considers temporality to be a dimension of human consciousness, i.e., the for-itself. The being of human reality is, for him, itself time. Temporality refers to the structural moments of an original synthesis. The past cannot be possessed by a being in the present which remains external to it. The past is possible only for a present which cannot exist without its being past. A man is responsible for his past, because as his past, he enters into the world, but the past has no possibility of any kind. A man has to be the past with no possibility of not being it. The past is the in-itself which one is, but one has to go beyond it. The present, unlike the past, is the for-itself in its actual emergence as presence. The for-itself is present to the not-self constituted by the surrounding objects; and it is also present to itself as witness to its own being. Hence, its internal structure is revealed as a perpetual 'flight from being', because as present, it must express itself as other than its past and future. According to Sartre, "The present is not only the for-itself's non-being making itself present. As for-itself it has its being outside of it, before and behind. Behind, it was its past; before, it will be its future. It is flight outside of co-present being and from the being which it was toward the being which it will be. At present it is not what it is (past) and it is what it is not (future)." (17)

According to Sartre, the same temporality may be viewed from two different standpoints. When the past, the present and the future are not taken as distinct and separate from one another, temporality can be felt as dynamic. The future becomes present, and the present becomes past - thus there is a dynamic continuity of flow of inexhaustible time, that is, an unending process of temporality. The present that was, has become the past, and the future that was, has become the present. Thus what is past now is nothing but the old present, and what is
present now is nothing but the old future. But what is future now was also future before; however, it may be a near future in contrast with a remote future. The new present is the past immediate future; but the future that is mediate, that is far removed from the new present, is lacked in by the new present, and that is why, the far removed future is characterized as possibility. Had it not been so, that is to say, if the new present were also the past remote future, then that future could not be regarded as a possibility. In so far as the present of a man is concerned, he is a for-itself. So says Sartre, "the making-past of the ex-present is a passage to the in-itself while the appearance of a new present is the nihilation of that in-itself."

(18) Although it may be supposed that during the for-itself's present being past, there has occurred no change to the external world, it must be admitted that there has been an internal change in the consciousness of the for-itself. Thus the for-itself has two aspects inseparably related—the static and the dynamic. When the present becomes the past, the for-itself becomes the in-itself; and when the future becomes the present, the in-itself is negated and there is the emergence of the for-itself. In the words of Sartre, "the For-itself falling into the past as an ex-presence-to-being becomes in-itself, becomes a being "in-the-midst-of-the-world", and the world is retained in the past dimension as that in the midst of which the past For-itself is in-itself. Like the mermaid whose human body is completed in the tail of a fish, the extramundane For-itself is completed behind itself as a thing in the world."

(19)

This dynamic character of the temporality can be explained by the concept of spontaneity, change being natural to the For-itself, because the For-itself is spontaneity, of which we can say, it is. This spontaneity is the foundation not only of the For-itself's nothingness of being, but also of its being, and it is recaptured by being at the same time for fixing it in the given.

Leaving aside the concept of spontaneity, the dynamic character of temporality can be explained in the perspective of
the for-itself and in the existentialist terms. Human reality temporalizes itself as the totality which is to itself its own incompletion. "This totality which runs after itself can refuse itself at the same time, which can find in-itself no limit to its surpassing because it is its own surpassing and because it surpasses itself toward itself, can under no circumstance exist within the limits of an instant. There is never an instant at which we can assert that for-itself is, precisely because the for-itself never is. Temporality, on the contrary, temporalizes itself entirely as the refusal of the instant." (20)

However, Sartre does not admit any ontological priority of for-itself over temporality, because temporality is possible only by the self-temporalization of the for-itself by existing. Temporality is the infrastructure of the being which is its own nihilation, that is the mode of being peculiar to being-for-itself.

(iii) Being and Nothingness

According to Sartre, negation is expressed not only in judgments, but also in prejudgmental experiences; negation originates from some negative experience. Suppose, I have the experience of the non-being of my friend Pierre in a particular cafe at a particular time, where and when he was expected to be present as usual. Looking inside the room at that particular time, I say, 'He is not here now'. I witness the successive disappearance of all the objects looked at by me, as they are not Pierre's face. In fact, he is absent from the cafe as a whole. The cafe at the time becomes the ground as an undifferentiated totality to my marginal attention; and slips into background. Thus negation has its origin from negative experience—in this case, the experience of Pierre's absence in the cafe then and there.

Sartre holds that, negation or nothingness appears within the limits of one's expectation. Non-being does not come to
things by negative judgments; on the contrary, negative judgments are conditioned and supported by non-beings. So says Sartre, "Negation is an abrupt break in continuity which cannot in any case result from prior affirmation; it is an original and irreducible event." (21) Negation can be produced by consciousness only in the form of consciousness of the negation. Negation can never be derived from being. In the words of Sartre, "the necessary condition for our saying not is that non-being be a perpetual presence in us and outside of us, that nothingness haunt being." (22)

In dealing with the relation of human being to nothingness, the relation between being and non-being, Sartre first undertakes a scrutiny of Hegel's dialectical concept of Nothingness. According to Hegel, there is a parallelism between the types of conduct adopted by man in the face of being and those maintained by man in the face of Nothingness, and as such, Being and Non-being may appear to be two complementary components of the red light and darkness. Thus pure being and pure non-being would be two abstractions whose re-union is possible only on the basis of the same concrete reality, of which Being and Nothingness are two distinguishable, but inseparable aspects. Hegel says that 'there is nothing in heaven or earth which does not contain in itself being and nothingness'. But Sartre argues that, to oppose being to nothingness as thesis and antithesis, as Hegel does, is to suppose that they are logically contemporary; but non-being is not the opposite of being, it is the contradiction of being, and as such, it is logically implied that nothingness is subsequent to being, because it is being first posited and then denied. So, 'being' and 'non-being' cannot be concepts having the same content, because on the contrary, non-being supposes a mental act which cannot be reduced to anything else. As he says, "Whatever may be the original undifferentiation of being, non-being is that same undifferentiation denied. This permits
Hegel to make being pass into nothingness. This is what by implication has introduced negation into his very definition of being." (23)

Hegel forgets that emptiness is the emptiness of something. Being is empty of all other determinations than self-identity, but non-being is empty of being; being is, and nothingness is not. While Spinoza says that 'every determination is negation', Sartre says that 'every negation is determination', that is to say, being is prior to nothingness and establishes the ground for it, being has logical precedence over nothingness and nothingness derives concretely its efficacy from being. "This is what we mean when we say that nothingness haunts being. That means that being has no need of nothingness in order to be conceived and that we can examine the idea of it exhaustively without finding there the least trace of nothingness. But on the other hand, nothingness, which is not, can have only a borrowed existence, and it gets its being from being. Its nothingness of being is encountered only within the limits of being, and the total disappearance of being would not be the advent of the reign of non-being, but on the contrary the concomitant disappearance of nothingness. Non-being exists only on the surface of being." (24)

Next, Sartre considers Heidegger's phenomenological concept of nothingness, in which reciprocal repulsive forces of being and non-being are emphasized. According to Heidegger, the being of human reality is 'being-in-the-world'. The world is a synthetic complex of instrumental realities which point to an ever-widening circle and man makes himself known in terms of this complex. Thus 'human reality' springs out, invested with being and finds itself in being; it also causes being that surrounds it in the form of the world. Of course, human reality can make being appear as an organised totality in the world only by supassing being. Man is always separated from what he is by all breadth of being which is not. He makes
himself known to himself from the other side of the world, and looks from the horizon towards himself for recovering his inner being. The appearance of self beyond the world, i.e., the totality of the real is a phenomenon of the emergence of the 'human reality' in nothingness, in which alone being can be surpassed. Again, it is from the point of view of the world that being is organised into the world. That is to say, the human reality is an emergence of being in non-being, and the world is suspended in nothingness. Da-sein can realize the contingency of the world only in terms of the surpassing of the world. Nothingness is given as that by which the world gets outlines as the world.

But Sartre, critical of the Heideggerian concept of nothingness, says that it is undeniable, no doubt, that the apprehension of the world is nihilation, but it is not intelligible how 'human reality' can arise in non-being or nothingness, wherefrom does it get its power of emerging out of non-being or nothingness, which is supported by being, and which can be nihilitated only on the foundation of being. According to Sartre, "Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being like a worm". (25)

There must be a being which has the property of nihilating nothingness. It is only by such a being that nothingness comes to things. Says Sartre, 'Nothingness is not, Nothingness "is nihilated". It follows therefore that there must exist a Being (this can not be the in-itself) of which the property is to nihilate Nothingness, to support it in its being, to sustain it perpetually in its very existence, a being by which nothingness comes to things. (26) Again, he says, "the being by which Nothingness comes to the world must be its own Nothingness". (27)

Here, by 'nothingness', Sartre means not a nihilating act, but an ontological characteristic of the being which brings nothingness to the world; because, nothingness as nihilating

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act has its foundation in being, and as such, it belongs to being, not to nothingness. Being can generate only being.

According to Sartre, the being of man in so far as he conditions the appearance of Nothingness is freedom, which is not an essential property of man. Man's freedom is prior to his essence and it makes his essence possible. In his own words, 'What we call freedom is impossible to distinguish from the being of “human reality”. Man does not exist first in order to be free subsequently, there is no difference between the being of man and his being-free'. (28).

Freedom conditions the appearance of nothingness. Human reality can detach itself from the world only if it has, by nature, the possibility of self-detachment. Every nihilating process must derive its source only from itself, and therefore the succession of one's states of consciousness is a perpetual separation of effect from cause in so far as one continually uses negativity to isolate and determine one's existence. As Sartre says, "Every psychic process of nihilation implies then a cleavage between the immediate psychic past and the present. This cleavage is precisely nothingness." (29) The condition on which man can deny the world wholly or partially is that man carries nothingness within himself as the nothing that separates its present from all its past. But this is not all, because, the nothing thus envisaged would not yet have the sense of nothingness, which is the ground of the negation, in so far as it conceals the negation within itself, as it is the negation as being. So, it is necessary that conscious being constitutes itself in relation to its past as separated from this past by a nothingness. "Freedom is the human being putting his past out of play by secreting his own nothingness". (30) Says Sartre, "it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or .....anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself." (31) Anguish is a specific
consciousness of freedom. The freedom which reveals itself to man in anguish can be characterized by existence of nothing placed between motive and act. Man’s freedom is not subject to the determination of motives. ‘Nothing’ separates a motive from consciousness. Nothingness is the condition of all transcendent negation. It can be elucidated with reference to two other original nihilations—(a) consciousness is not its own motive, because, it is contentless; and (b) consciousness confronts its past and future as if it were facing a self in the mode of not-being. Freedom is anguished before itself, as it is instigated and bound by nothing. However, anguish is not a permanent state of affectivity, it is the recognition of a possibility as one’s possibility; that is to say, it is constituted as and when consciousness sees itself cut from its essence by nothingness, or separated from the future by its own freedom.

According to Sartre, anguish is ‘the reflective apprehension of freedom by itself’. It appears at the moment when one disengages oneself from the world where one had been engaged. It is opposed to the mind of the serious man who apprehends values in terms of the world. In anguish, one apprehends oneself at once as totally free, as unable to derive the meaning of the world except as coming from one’s own self.

Man tries to flee from anguish by trying to apprehend himself from without as an other or as a thing. Anguish cannot be concealed or avoided, but if one is one’s own anguish in order not to flee it, one can be anguished in the form of ‘not-being’ it. Such attitude is called by Sartre ‘bad faith’, by which one becomes to oneself one’s own nothingness.

Bad faith refers to some fact or phenomenon of human experience, in which, man is anguish in order to flee anguish within the unity of a single consciousness. As for instance, the fact of telling a lie. In the case of lying, three elements are involved: (a) one must believe something to be true; (b) one
must express to another just the opposite of what one believes to be true; and (c) that another person must believe in the statement expressed by one. But lying must be not mistaken as an instance of bad faith, although it has some elements common with bad faith; bad faith is essentially different from lying. One cannot be conscious of one's lies and also believe them to be true at one and the same time. Bad faith, unlike lying, consists in seeing what one is and denying it; in asserting that one is what one is not; or in holding two contradictory beliefs at one and the same time, or in believing and not believing the same thing at the same time. Says Sartre, "To be sure, the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth. Thus the duality of the deceiver and the deceived does not exist here. Bad faith on the contrary implies in essence the unity of a single consciousness. This does not mean that it cannot be conditioned by the mit-sein like all other phenomena of human reality, but the mit-sein can call forth bad faith only by presenting itself as a situation which bad faith permits surpassing; bad faith does not come from outside to human reality. One does not undergo his bad faith; one is not infected with it; it is not a state. But consciousness affects itself with bad faith. There must be an original intention and a project of bad faith; this project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such and a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness as affecting itself with bad faith. It follows first that the one to whom the lie is told and the one who lies are one and the same person, which means that I must know in my capacity as deceiver the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as one of the deceived. Better yet I must know the truth very exactly in order to conceal it more carefully—and this not at two different moments, which at a pinch would allow us to re-establish a semblance of duality—but in the
unitarity structure of a single project.” (32)

As to the characteristic nature of Bad Faith, Sartre says, “It is a certain art of forming contradictory concepts which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea. The basic concept which is thus engendered utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a facticity and a transcendence. These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of valid co-ordination. But bad faith does not wish either to co-ordinate them or to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences. It must affirm facticity as being transcendence and transcendence as being facticity, in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends the one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other.” (33)

According to Sartre, bad faith is a risk built into the nature of consciousness. As he says, “If Bad Faith is possible, it is because it is an immediate, permanent threat to every project of the human being; it is because consciousness conceals in its being a permanent risk of bad faith. The origin of the risk is the fact that the nature of consciousness simultaneously is to be what it is not and not to be what it is.” (34)

However, he does not say that we are all necessarily in bad faith all the time; on the other hand, he says that good faith or sincerity is also usually only another form of bad faith, a different method of anguish of freedom by avowing one’s faults, as resulting from some unavoidable circumstances of the world. Regarding the sincere man, Sartre says, ‘Who cannot see that the sincere man constitutes himself as a thing in order to escape the condition of a thing by the same act of sincerity? The man who confesses that he is evil, has exchanged his disturbing “freedom-for-evil” for an inanimate character of evil; he is evil, he clings to himself, he is what he is. But by the same stroke, he escapes from that thing, since it is he who...
contemplates it, since it depends on him to maintain it under his glance or to let it collapse in an infinity of particular acts. He derives a *merit* from his sincerity, and the deserving man is not evil man as he is evil but as he is beyond his evilness. At the same time the evil is disarmed since it is nothing, save on the place of determinism, and since in confessing it, I posit my freedom in respect to it; my future is virgin; everything is allowed to me.” (35) Hence, bad faith and so-called good faith or sincerity are really two different forms of the same flight from reality. In Sartre’s own words, “Thus the essential structure of sincerity does not differ from that of bad faith since the sincere man constitutes himself as what he is in *order not to be it*. This explains the truth recognized by all that one can fall into bad faith through being sincere.” (36).

In Sartre’s philosophy, ‘Nothingness’ has been taken in three senses, viz., external or spatial, internal or temporal, and nothingness as non-existence. The most important feature which marks off beings-for-themselves from other beings is their ability to think of themselves as separate from other things. Hence, their consciousness is referred to as the gap of space, the emptiness or void that divides them from beings-in-themselves. In this aspect, nothingness is like space, it is outside the conscious being and it is the distance that divides him from his world. In the other aspect, nothingness is internal to the being-for-itself, it is the emptiness *within* him which he wants to fill by his own actions, thoughts and perceptions. This emptiness in himself makes it possible for him to perceive the world and to act in it, determining his own course of action by reference to an imagined future. A human being has unrealized potential, whereas a being-in-itself is entirely actual, whose future is completely determined by the fact that it is, as for instance, an ink-well or a ball. A human being has no essence, his existence precedes his essence, so he is not only determined, but is free to fill up the internal gap in his nature, as he likes.
In this sense, nothingness of human nature is its most important feature.

In both aspects of nothingness, the external and the internal, a conscious being is aware, through nothingness, of the difference between himself and his world. Thus a percipient human being will be always aware of himself as perceiving, whether the object of his perception is the external world or some aspects of himself.

In still another sense, nothingness, according to Sartre, is negation or non-existence, i.e., the perceived absence or non-existence of something somewhere at some particular point of time, where and when it was expected to be present. Sartre describes a situation in which he goes into a cafe, expecting to see his friend Pierre, and discovers immediately by perception that he is not there. The cafe and all the other people fall immediately into the background against which he expected to see Pierre stand out, but he does not. In Sartre’s own words, “To be sure Pierre’s absence supposes an original relation between me and this cafe, there is an infinity of people who are without any relation with this cafe for the want of real expectation which establishes their absence. But, to be exact, I myself expected to see Pierre, and my expectation has caused the absence of Pierre to happen as a real event concerning this cafe. It is an objective fact at the present that I have discovered this absence, and it presents itself as a synthetic relation between Pierre and the setting in which I am looking for him. Pierre absent haunts this cafe and is the condition of its self-nihilating organization as ground.” (37) Thus Sartre shows that negation is a fact and it can and does enter our perceptual experience of the world.

(iv) Existence and Freedom

According to Sartre, man exists as a self-conscious being
and is condemned to be free. That is to say, man exists as an essentially free being. There is no existence without freedom. Says Sartre, "Man does not exist first in order to be free subsequently; there is no difference between the being of man and his being-free." (38) Freedom of man is the reason why there is nothingness in the world. The being that conditions the appearance of nothingness is freedom. "Freedom is the human being putting his past out of play by secreting his own nothingness." (39) "Consciousness continually experiences itself as the nihilation of its past being." (40) Human reality, unlike in-itself, is incomplete, and therefore, he has a possibility and the power to choose. As Sartre says, "Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all." (41)

Freedom, for Sartre, is the freedom of choosing—even not to choose is to choose not to choose. Hence, so far as choosing is concerned, man is absolutely free, and his freedom is an essential characteristic of his existence. No man without having the freedom of choice can be regarded as 'existent' in the true sense of the word, because, man alone is a being-for-itself, is conscious of the future possibility of his own, chosen by himself, out of a host of possibilities and his life is a project towards the actualization of the possibility.

Sartre is an advocate of absolute freedom. But according to him, absolute freedom is not the exaggerated popular claim that 'a man can do whatever he likes', it is rather that man is always free within his situation to confer significance upon that situation. Thus absolute freedom is freedom of intention. Freedom is limited by one's situation and it is absolute only within limits. As Merleau-Ponty says, "Our freedom does not destroy our situation, but gears itself to it." (42) The situation is the basis for one's choice, but it is never a sufficient condition for one's choice, it cannot compel one to do anything against one's choice. The choice that one makes within the
situation depends on how one sees that situation, how one interprets it, what significance one places on it. Our situation is interpreted in terms of the goals, demands for action imposed on it by us. The interpreted situation is found by us as a complex of facticity and imposed possibilities. Thus, according to Sartre, absolute freedom means that human beings are absolutely free to choose their own projects and impose their own interpretations on the situation in which they find themselves. Absolute freedom is freedom of choice, freedom of intention, freedom of signification, not freedom of success in action. So says Sartre, 'the formula "to be free" does not mean "to obtain what one has wished", but rather "by oneself to determine oneself to wish (in the broad sense of choosing). In other words, success is not important to freedom'. (43) It is not denied that external circumstances may thwart, but according to Sartre, all such external circumstances are such only in view of the goals one seeks to attain. Says Sartre, "Human-reality every-where encounters resistance and obstacles which it has not created, but these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in and through the free choice which human-reality is." (44) Still it is true, according to Sartre, that "I am absolutely free and absolutely responsible for my situation. But I am never free except in situation." (45)

Sartre holds that freedom is, on the one hand, freedom from causal determination of choice, and on the other, freedom from rational, moral, divine or naturalistic coercion to accept any particular project or any particular interpretation of the world.

According to Sartre, freedom, in this sense, is freedom of pre-reflective consciousness; consciousness is freedom even before it has been made reflectively aware of its freedom; it is in anguish that man becomes conscious of his freedom. As he says, "it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousnes of being, it is in anguish that freedom
is, in its being, in question for itself.” (46) Anguish presupposes freedom, and is not a proof of freedom, it is the mode of being of freedom.

For Sartre, freedom is an essential characteristic of human existence, and as such, of human nature, because, man is condemned to be free. Says Sartre, “I am condemned to exist for ever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free. This means that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself, or if you prefer, that we are not free to cease being free. To the extent that the for-itself wishes to hide its own nothingness from itself and to incorporate the in-itself as its true mode of being, it is trying also to hide its freedom from itself.” (47)

(v) Man and ‘No God’ : Atheistic Humanism

Nietzsche declared that ‘God is dead’; and we find an echo of it in Sartre’s statement ‘God does not exist’. It directly contradicts the Christian postulation of the existence of God. According to Sartre, the idea of God is self-contradictory, and therefore, an impossibility; it is also meaningless in a world where every existent being is born without reason, and dies by chance. Thus Sartre is an atheist out and out.

Sartre argues that if man in his inner being is not dependent on God, then he has no need for a creation. As he says, “If Creation is an original act and if I am shut up against God, then nothing any longer guarantees my existence to God; he is now united to me only by a relation of exteriority, as the sculptor is related to the finished statue…”(48) It does not help us to solve the problem simply by saying that God has bestowed upon man an essence, and freedom to act accordingly. According to Sartre, God cannot be considered to choose our essence, while leaving us free by determining the time of our death and thus depriving us of any further opportunity. The experience of ‘Nausea’ is the experience of the world when
objects have no role or function, but exist by themselves in a meaningless plenitude.

Sartre denies that he has developed a doctrine of human nature. Unlike the Catholic Christians, according to whom, the individual has ready-made tendencies to realize, Sartre sees the individual man as a problem. As he says, "Atheistic existentialism... states that if God does not exist there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, and that this being is man...there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it." (49) He regards the statement of value as meaningful only in terms of a subjective commitment. He avoids embarrassing question about the existence of God by relegating metaphysics, in which only a causal explanation of the world is given. According to James Collins, Sartre's argument against the existence of God are"... just as strong and as weak as Sartre's general ontology.... He denies being-in-itself in a univocal and material way and then shows that being, as so defined, excludes consciousness and the other attributes usually applied to God. Clearly enough, the trouble lies in the doctrine of the in-itself...." (50) Man has to choose and make himself whatever he becomes. He is constantly missing away from the meaningless absurdity of the in-itself. He wants to become God, but he cannot, because, becoming God is like becoming as in-itself, that is something complete and finished. Hence, Sartre does not believe in the existence of God, because believing in it takes away the entire freedom and existence of man. Sartre says that if we are to believe in God at all, it must be taken as the unrealized and unrealizable highest ideal of human life, that recedes far and far away from us like the horizon, as we proceed towards it more and more. Thus if we are to justify human freedom, we must reject the idea of God.

Therefore man, according to Sartre, is related to God only in a negative way. He must create his own values by his own authentic choice, because his existence consists essentially in
his freedom. Freedom is integral to human nature. So says Sartre, “Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain; man is a useless passion.” (51)

Sartre is a pilgrin1 of the absolute, who never reaches the absolute. He is afflicted with the presence of his terribly lonely for-itself, that wanders all over the world without knowing where to anchor. More than any other philosopher, he emphasizes the extreme need of the absolute without conceding the existence of an ablsolute Being as a remedy to this obsession. In one of his later publications, we find an expression of this unrest of Sartre’s mind. As he says, “God is dead... Hegel tried to replace him with a system and the system founded, by Comte, by a religion of humanity, and the positivism founded... Everything in myself calls for God and that I cannot forget... As a matter of fact, this experience can be found in one form or another in most contemporary authors: it is the ferment in Jaspers, death in Malraux, destruction in Heidegger, the reprieved being in Kafka, the insane and futile labour of Sisyphus in Camus”. (52) As a remedy to this mental unrest, Sartre takes the idea of God as the unrealized and unrealizable highest ideal of human life towards which our life proceeds with all its projects, but the execution of which is an unending journey till death. In this sense, according to Sartre, every man is a potential God, but his potentiality can never be fully actualized; so becoming God for man remains forever an impossible possibility.

(vi) Man and Man : Inter-Personal Relationship

According to Sartre, the inter-personal relationship between man and man is effectuated by the body which is “lived and not known.” (53) ‘We must distinguish between viewing a person (“through his body”) and simply viewing a (physical) body; we can view a body of a person as a mere physical body;
but this is a highly peculiar situation, and certainly not the way we usually view others. It is virtually never the way we usually view others. It is virtually never the way we view our own bodies.' (54) The body of a for-itself is not simply another object in the world to which it (i.e., consciousness) is mysteriously attached; it is indistinguishable from its body. "I for-myself am both consciousness and body inseparably, as I for-others and others for-me are consciousness and body inseparably." (55)

Sartre's concept of for-itself as a body-consciousness-continuum together with his concept of freedom leads to his peculiar view of the inter-personal relationship of man and man. My relation with others is always a struggle to preserve my freedom, particularly to preserve it from the objectifying looks of others. To preserve my freedom, I try to change the other into an object-for-me, and impossibly to change him into an object even for-himself. The more physical the other becomes, the more free from him, I become. "The means of creating such a focus of attention is sex; sex is not 'accidental' to human relationships, but is at the very core of our struggle with others. The brutal life-death struggle of Hegel's master-slave relationship is replaced in Sartre by the sophisticated bodily clashes of the sexual encounter, for it is here that our attempts to objectify the other achieve their greatest success." (55)

According to Sartre, the key to sex is the notion of flesh. Flesh is not mere material substance but the living substance of the other. Like our perception of the other, our perception of flesh is essentially different from our perception of all other things. Sex always involves the whole body, i.e., the whole person; it is not mere genital contact. It is primarily a desire for power over the other, the master-slave relationship in the bedroom. Says Merleau-Ponty, "What we try to possess, then, is not just a body, but a body brought to life by consciousness." (57).
However, this purely sexual overpowering is only one aspect of the complex struggles with others. Philosophically, it is a more important aspect than usually believed; but it is one of the less sophisticated aspect of human relationships.

My relations with things in the world are not a threat to my freedom, but my relations with other people are a threat to my freedom, because, the other has the ability to reduce me to an object, as I have the ability to turn him into an object. Sex is a mechanism for reducing the other to flesh and escaping his look. Likewise, human relationships in general consist of the same sort of confrontation and struggle between two subjects each wishing to escape the other’s look. Here Sartre’s view is quite different from Heidegger’s concept of “being-with” or “being-together” (Mit-sein). Sartre says, “the essence of the relation between consciousness is not the Mit-sein, it is conflict.” (58)

Sartre passes on at ease from his weaker view that human relations are centrally sexual to the stronger view that sex is the basic or primitive form of every human relationship. In his own words, “My original attempt to get hold of the other’s free subjectivity through his objectivity-for-me is sexual desire.” (59) Like Freud, Sartre views sexuality as a general personal characteristic pervading all human endeavours. However, unlike Freud, according to whom, sex is connected with the unconscious libido, Sartre holds that sex is a conscious project, that it is a consciously attained power. Sexual desire aims at turning one’s partner into a pure body, not a pleasurable activity. Pleasure is not even a desirable accompaniment to sexual intercourse. As Sartre says, “pleasure is the death and failure of (sexual) desire.” (60) Not pleasure, but power over the other, is the main purpose of the sexual encounter.

One may have two primitive attitudes towards the other: (i) Love, which is masochistic, and (ii) Hate and Indifference,
which are sadistic. According to Sartre, love of an other is the possession of that other and being possessed by that other; but only objects, not free subjects, can be possessed; therefore, love is an impossibility. In frustration love turns to masochism which is not the perversion of love, but its essential consequence. Masochism is a glaring instance of the bad faith of looking at oneself as an object for the other. As Love may lead to Masochism, so Hate and Indifference may lead to Sadism, when one tries to have full control over the other by reducing the other to an object. Hate is the urge to destroy the other, and Indifference is the urge to deny the other. In Sadism, sex becomes basic, as in sex, one tries to trap the other in the other's own flesh. Sadistic sex is meant for power, not for pleasure. In sadistic sex, one has the experience of obscenity, of the ungraceful body of the suppressed other which is seen as an object, as de trop. But the sadistic attempt to reduce the other to a mere body, a mere object, a mere obscenity, becomes a failure, as soon as the other looks at the one and re-establishes itself as the other. In such a situation, the only way of eliminating the threat of the other is to kill the other. But even by the killing of the other, one cannot kill the fact that one had been looked at by the other in the past and thus defined as an object. Thus there is a transition from love to masochism, from masochism to hate and indifference, leading to sadism, and from sadism to attempted murder. So, Sartre concludes that human relationships are essentially unhappy.

(vii) Man and the World

(a) Man and Morality

It is essential to Sartre's theory of the place of man in the universe that any description of the world must be a description of the world as seen by somebody. In his Being and Nothingness, he attempts to expound nothing less than this. He argues
that our awareness of the world is always accompanied by a kind of vestigial awareness of ourselves, and that therefore consciousness of any kind is essentially a personal matter. I am conscious of my world and of myself; you are conscious of your world and of yourself. The whole structure of Being and Nothingness is based upon the distinction between beings-in-themselves and beings-for-themselves. Beings-in-themselves are essentially what they are. Their behaviour is invariable, and can, in principle, be predicted. We can frame general laws or principles that govern their behaviour. But this is not true of beings-for-themselves, which have no essential nature, and whose behaviour is variable. Material objects are without aspirations. They cannot try, or hope, or wish, or long to be other than what they are. That is why, they are said to be what they are completely, something solid (Massif). On the other hand, consciousness consists in the power to be aware not only how things are, but also how they are not. “The possibility of conceiving a situation negatively, either as not what it was, or as not what one would like, or as not what one would make it, is of the utmost importance in Sartre’s account of human consciousness, and thus of the human position in the world as a whole.” (61) When a man thinks about something, or is simply aware of it, he makes a distinction between that something and his own self. Such self-awareness or self-consciousness entails the drawing of a distinction between the thinker and the object of his thought, between the observer and the object of his observation; and to draw such a distinction is thought of as separating the observer and the thing observed by a space. This space or gap is created by putting the world at a distance from oneself, and it is an essential characteristic of consciousness. It is sometimes referred to by Sartre as an emptiness or nothingness within the observer himself.

“It is through the existence of this emptiness, separating a person from the world of things about him, that the
possibility arises of thinking or acting as one chooses. There is necessarily, in a conscious being, an area of free play, as it were, between himself and the world. The emptiness within him has to be filled, and is filled by whatever he plans to do, or to think, or to be. Consciousness, Sartre says, knowingly places itself at a distance from its objects, and the gap between itself and its objects is identical with the power to confirm or deny what it chooses. Freedom and consciousness thus turns out to be the very same thing. They are both identified with the power to consider things either as they are or as they are not, to imagine situations which are different from the actual situations obtaining in the world; and therefore to form plans to change what there is.” (62).

Sartre derives the fundamental relation between conscious beings and the world from the power of negation which is connected strongly with freedom and can be identified with freedom as the ability to see things as possible other than what they are. This connection between freedom and negation leads Sartre to concentrate upon the individual and to become necessarily concerned with human action. It is impossible to act without motive, and to have a motive is to conceive a project for the future, which in turn entails the power to conceive the future negatively. Thus consciousness is necessarily consciousness of the world from the point of view of a potential agent. My acts are necessarily my own, if I am free. Herein Sartre’s approach to ethics becomes subjectivist.

According to Sartre, one has to devise his own morality and make his own choices without the help of rules or principles. As a conscious being one is also free, and one must fill one’s life by freely choosing not only what to do, but also what to feel and think, what to believe and how to describe things. One has to make one’s choices all for oneself. According to Sartre, there are two principal relations in which a man manifests his freedom to choose—the first is his relation with
himself, and the second is his relation with other people.

A man, in his relation with himself, makes choices and acts from his own subjective point of view; and in this case, his choice may be consistent with the universal objective principle of morality or not, it may be good to himself, as well as, to others, or good to himself, but detrimental to the interests of others. All choices are made by the exercise of freedom, and moral choices are not exceptions to it. A man, under consideration of his relation with himself alone, may take resort to bad faith to get rid of the burden of his infinite freedom, when the thought of it becomes unbearable to him. But when he considers his relation to others as well, he cannot exercise his freedom in such a way so as to violate the right of freedom of others living in the society, of which he is a member. Man’s free commitment to a course of action has two aspects—subjective and objective. While the subjective aspect of commitment is substantially the requirement of authenticity, its objective aspect is derived from the fact that an act is essentially a relation between the actor and the world. “A man cannot become the person who wants to be merely thinking about himself, but only by doing something with himself. This requires involving himself in the affairs of others, in adapting himself to social pressures, in transforming his environment”. (63) James Collins states Sartre’s position in the following words: “....Sartre gives a quite special meaning to his dictum that, in authentic choice, the individual is also choosing for other people. It is not merely a reformation of the ethical commonplace that man is a political animal. Its primary basis is ontological. If the fundamental project of the self is to constitute its world, then it cannot choose for itself without determining the relative position of ourselves within its own world. Having care for other man is the same as having care for....one’s perspective, in so far as it involves other selves as constituent factors. They must be ordered as objects gathered
about the primary subject or free self.” (64) It is a fact that rights imply duties; therefore, while exercising one’s freedom, one must have respect for the other’s right to freedom, so that there is harmony in the exercise of freedom by all members of society. That is why, one cannot freely choose as one likes, but has to choose freely that alone which is permitted in the given situation, without obliterating the freedom of others. Thus Sartre’s approach to ethics is not merely subjectivist, but also inter-subjectivist, every subject is dependent on others for the realization of his project for himself. In Sartre’s own words. “I can take freedom as my goal only if I take that of others as a goal as well.” (65) His contention is that authenticity requires that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

According to Norman N. Greene, “Sartre’s ethics may be summarized as the obligatory pursuit of chosen end, accompanied by a constant awareness that they are freely chosen and that a new choice is possible.” (66)

(b) Man and Society

Sartre’s contribution to social and political philosophy has been immense. His concerns after 1946 can be described by saying that his writings show a shift from the question ‘what shall I do?’ to the question ‘what shall we do?’ His experience not only of the resistance, but also of the post-war years convinced him of the necessity for joint action. He was gradually moving towards a theory of social change. His Critique of Dialectical Reason brings together his ethical insights over a period of decades and marks his adoption of a truly social philosophy. According to him, bad faith is caused not by personal inauthenticity but by the social situation. Hence, a universal morality can come about only when men are able to change the conditions of their existence. Moreover, Sartre’s coming to Marxism seems to have been prompted by
ethical considerations, not by orthodox Marxist economic considerations. Sartre's concern with history is with the future, not with the questions wherewith we have come and what we may hope for, but with what we have to do. He has tried to graft on to a Marxist frame-work a fragment of liberal ideology, the belief in the efficacy of individual initiative, through his attempt to combine Marxism and Existentialism, as we find in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. He introduces the thesis thus: “We are at the same time deeply convinced that historical materialism provides the only valid interpretation of human history and that Existentialism constitutes the only concrete approach to reality.” (67) He tries to give an *a priori* foundation for dialectical thoughts about man, his history and his future; and brings about a shift from individual ontology to sociology and social psychology. Moreover, by ‘dialectic’ he means “not blind law but a *lived reality* resulting from the multitude of men acting within themselves and with one another dialectically.” (68) He rejects the material dialectic and moves towards social dialectic, that is, the activity of man in the social world. Society is characterized by its ‘seriality’, which means side-by-sideness without community, the mere juxtaposition of individuals. Society includes all kinds of series all of which constitute the milieu in which an individual lives. Moreover, each seriality is provisional. It is the very fluidity and temporality of each series that makes man's belonging to series compatible with his freedom, which consists in his ability to grasp the meaning of things and to execute the commands implied by them.

Sartre's thinking moves from an individually based 'project', through a semi-Kantian, but de-rationalized universality-principle, to the concept of *praxis*. *Praxis* is a word familiar in Hegelian and Marxist-Leninist writings. The concept of *praxis* is designed to combat the idealist view that ideas *make* reality. According to his concept, objective reality is founded
through human activity, specially man's productive activity or practice of skill (praxis). Productive activity takes the place of theoretical knowing, the economic class takes the place of the subject. The whole point of contemporary philosophy of praxis in Marxist writings is that material production has the key-role in life-process. However, Sartre never seems to go the whole way with Marxists in this. His experiences during the thirties and forties have not convinced him that the political is entirely a function of the economic. Moreover, the industrial proletariat is not the most explicated class in every country; and the oppression suffered by the proletarian is not only economic deprivation but also the experience of being a mere object, or means, in the world of another. The bourgeoisie lacks consciousness of itself as a class, because its members are not objects in relation to the proletariat, but rather subjects. Sartre does not share Marx's view of the capitalist class as dedicated to the defence of class interests in so far as such interests amount to more than the sum of the interests of the individual members of the class. "Marx's analysis of the behavior of social classes would be least true of the bourgeoisie, and most true of the proletariat, although primarily for reasons of social status rather than as a simple consequence of the economic structure. Race, rationality, and bureaucratic organizations, as well as, social classes, can serve as the basis for the creation of Us-objects. Unities established on one of these bases may cross line of conflict resulting from other divisions." (69)

Next, Sartre shifts his emphasis from the Us-object as a source of class unity to what might be called 'the class as a moral community'. The proletarian who accepts himself as an object is in bad faith, because although the experience of being an object for another has primary importance, one can never be an object for oneself. The authentic proletarian will reject his being-as-object and actively follow the goals of his own subjectivity. Thus he surpasses the passive, the suffering
characteristic of Us-object towards an ideal society in which he would be a free subject, a society ordered around his own values.

According to Sartre, authentic class-consciousness, in a revolutionary situation, is revolutionary class-consciousness. The individual projects of the members of an oppressed class converge in a rejection of the social structure, as presently constituted, in the name of future liberation. The unity of the class, or its consciousness of itself as a class is identical with the actions of the class, which are directed towards the realization of its social goals. The demand of revolutionary is essentially a moral demand, made as a claim to free life for the oppressed. Therefore, the proletarian view of society retains its subjective element, and cannot be taken as entirely objective as Marx tended to assume.

Sartre's most serious disagreement with Marx is on the subject of the classless society, which does not represent for him a definitive solution of all social problems, but simply a state of society which will give rise to further projects of reform. While Marx describes man as alienated by the economic system, Sartre says that man is alienated by being placed in a world where he is not free to pursue the realization only of his own ends.

According to Sartre, an essentially free man is a moral being who creates values, and so, he is a political being who realizes Utopias. A corollary of human freedom is the moral dignity of the individual, because of his moral creativity and personal responsibility. That is why, he must make his contribution to the achievement of a just society and for this, he must be in opposition to any ideology which subjects human freedom to the realization of any particular social or political order. No particular form of Government or particular policy can be regarded always and everywhere as the best, because
different forms of Government may be suitable to the advancement of freedom under different circumstances.

As to Sartre's view about the relationship between the individual and the state, Norman N. Greene writes, "...he relies upon the concept of freedom as a standard for political organization. Since all individuals are, in fact, free, they are all in fact, equal. This equality is moral, and has as its chief effect the requirement that the freedom of all be equally respected. The authentic individual seeks the liberation of all men, not of a particular group." (70) Sartre's political doctrine "is a call to political action, a justification for social change, a demand for tolerance of individual non-conformity, and an assertion of the primacy of the moral purposes of the community over its institutional structure." (71) However, the nature of the political action, the particular social changes to be effected, the limits of non-conformity, and the values capable of providing unity—all are determined by the spontaneous activity of individuals within a given social situation. Sartre describes society as a product of freely chosen individual attitude in the face of responsibilities, and he accepted communism 'in principle' on the ground that its declared intention is the construction of democratic socialism.

Sartre tried to give a new orientation to Marxism by attuning it to his existentialist ideology, to his concept of man and his place in society, as well as, in politics. He took up the thread of Marx's intention in developing his theory of dialectical materialism and scientific realism, which could not be fulfilled strictly within the orbit of his own system; and gave it a new turn in the existentialist line of thought, by leaving the scope for human freedom with its implication for the moral dignity of the individuals in the society, which has to be changed for better living towards a more and more progressive and perfect living condition. Whatever has to be done and can be done towards this future project of man as a being-for-itself, depends
upon the self-consciousness and self-determined activity of the individual man himself. Each and every man has to become an ideal man or real man by authentic choice and doing accordingly, keeping always in view the moral and social implications of human freedom. There is no other way for liberation of man as an existent being, that is his true image. Self-effort and inter-personal co-operation can alone lead to an ever progressive social reformation and change. Sartre's philosophy does not end in a pessimistic overtone, but rather in an optimistic music of the existent individual, who believes that 'if winter comes, the spring cannot be too far!'. There is no everlasting night, the dawn is sure to come. As he said in his _Last Interview_,

"The earth seems nasty, bad and hopeless. That, that is the quiet despair of an old man. But justly I resist and I know that I shall die with hope. But this hope one must establish it.

"One must try to explain why today's world, which is horrible, is just a moment in the long historical development, that hope has always been one of the dominating forces of revolutions and insurrections, and how hope figures as my conception of the future." (72)
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