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A CRITIQUE OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S THEORY OF THE EGO

by

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PREFACE

The purpose of the present essay is twofold. In the first place, our purpose will be to examine Sartre's theory of consciousness as it is presented in The Transcendence of the Ego. For the most part, we shall limit our discussion to this one work in order to show how Sartre's non-egological theory of consciousness emerges from various theories of consciousness in Modern Philosophy. As such, our inquiry will be historical. In the second place, we shall develop the basic problems with which any theory of consciousness must deal, and, in that connection, indicate the adequacy of various modern theories of consciousness for resolving those problems. In this way we shall point to several alternative solutions to problems that Sartre has neither considered nor adequately answered. As such, our inquiry will also be critical.

In the Introduction we shall begin with some brief accounts of theories of consciousness in Modern Philosophy, thus providing a concrete, historical background for our inquiry. In Chapter One we shall elucidate the problems that have arisen concerning these theories of consciousness. These problems will be seen to fall into several general categories with which any theory of consciousness must concern itself. Any solution to these problems offered by Sartre, or anyone else, can be called into question in the light of previously developed theories of consciousness in which these problems were of primary im-

portance. In Chapter Two we shall develop an immanent critique of Sartre's theory of consciousness. As developed in The Transcendence of the Ego, Sartre's inquiry is concerned with consciousness purely as phenomenon in the Husserlian sense. Sartre's theory will be examined in Chapter Three in relation to the problems developed in Chapter One. Although Sartre does not always deal explicitly with the problems we have set up as arising from the theories of consciousness in Modern Philosophy, we believe he does offer an answer that can be judged as to its adequacy.

It will be our task in Chapter Four to consider the adequacy of Sartre's theory for answering the problems found in the first chapter. We shall then offer some alternative approaches to a theory of consciousness that concern themselves with Sartre's theory and the particular problems that it raises. The conclusions reached here can only be considered as pointers towards a revised theory of consciousness.

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INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF PRINCIPAL THEORIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

The background of our inquiry can best be established by treating several accounts of consciousness that have arisen in Modern Philosophy. In relation to each other they can be seen to follow several trends which we can later develop, along with the particular problems that each encounters. These accounts are representative not only of historical theories of consciousness in general, but of the type with which Sartre, and any discussion of his theory, must be concerned. In spite of comments to the contrary,¹ Sartre does not philosophize in a vacuum, and our explication of his theory of consciousness does need a background.

Descartes searched for the foundation of the highest and most absolute certainty on which he could base the explanation of the whole of experience. To arrive at such a ground, he discards any conception, idea, or experience that might be subject to the least doubt. He methodically questions everything in his experiencing and thinking life and excludes anything which could be conceivably doubted:

What of thinking? I find here that thought is an attribute that

¹Stuart Hampshire, "Sartre's Cage," New York Review of Books, June 3, 1965, pp. 6-7.

belongs to me; it alone cannot be separated from me. I am, I exist, that is certain. . . . I know that I exist, and I inquire what I am, I whom I know to exist. . . . But what then am I? A thing which thinks. What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, [conceives], affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines, and feels.¹

I know that I exist because I doubt; thus the existence of consciousness is the one fundamental principle of certainty that I cannot doubt. I cannot doubt that I exist, for to do so would be to doubt that I doubt, and this doubting is given as issuing from a self which cannot be doubted—the necessary condition for there to be doubting going on. It is intuitively certain that I exist as consciousness. It is this indubitable consciousness that forms the ground of a rationally deducible body of knowledge about the world which is universally valid. Finally, for Descartes, I am that which thinks, doubts, and so forth, and that whose existence does not depend on anything except itself.

Leibniz's theory of consciousness arises out of one trend that can be found in Descartes, namely, that there is an underlying ego which is actively involved in unifying individual conscious acts into an identical self. Leibniz thinks of substance as force, which is essentially immaterial. The spatial forms of substances are effects of this force. He calls these substances monads; each is an independent being, different from every other one, whose changes proceed from an internal principle. "The passing condition, which in-

¹Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Haldane and Ross (2 Vols.; Cambridge: University Press, 1911), Vol. 1 pp. 151, 152, 153.

volves and represents a multiplicity in the unit or in the simple substance, is nothing but what is called Perception."¹ There is in each monad the same content; each is a mirror of the universe. The difference between them is their mode of representing this content. All monads have representations; and these infinitely small parts of the representative life of the monad are called "petites perceptions." What distinguishes the monads is the clarity and distinctness with which they represent their inherent content to themselves. "Thus it is well to make distinction between perception, which is the inner state of the Monad representing outer things, and apperception, which is consciousness or the reflective knowledge of this inner state."² It is in apperception that the souls, those monads which have some degree of distinctness in their perception, are aware of the representations as belonging to themselves. Apperception is a taking up of the "petites perceptions" into self-consciousness. This self-consciousness culminates in God, who is pure self-consciousness. There is universal harmony among the monads because each one has the same content which it realizes in varying degrees of self-consciousness. Thus, only in so far as I am actively apperceiving the inherent representations am I conscious of myself as existing. As a soul, I am continually having perceptions; yet, it is only as they become clear and distinct, and as I become aware of them as mine, that I can be

¹Leibniz, *The Monadology and other Philosophical Writings*, trans. Latta (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 224.

²Leibniz, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

said to apperceive them.

Descartes would not agree with Leibniz concerning the notion that animals and other lower forms of life can perceive ideas. For Descartes, to be conscious of an idea also includes the possibility of becoming aware of it, that is, to view it as belonging to the self. Leibniz holds that souls can be ascribed to animals, and that there is no necessity for an idea which is only perceived, as in the case of an animal, to be possibly raised to self-consciousness. Hence, animals do not apperceive their perceptions, whereas man can. Man can make his ideas the object of a further act, apperception, and in this way organize them and develop the rational sciences.

This difference between Descartes and Leibniz can be seen again in their views concerning the "innateness" of ideas. Although they both held that man had innate ideas, Leibniz also ascribed this to animals and any other monad that had a soul. Locke challenged Leibniz and Descartes in respect to this, as we shall see,¹ by denying that we have any innate ideas at all. Leibniz answered him in the New Essays on the Understanding² by explaining that each monad has all its ideas, properties, and so forth within it, although they are not always explicit. It is only in apperception that the ideas are brought to self-consciousness; they may seem to come from without, although they really are only made more clear and distinct.

In contrast to Leibniz, Locke held that the mind is a blank

¹Below, p.5.

²Leibniz, op. cit., pp. 337ff.

tablet, that it has no innate ideas, and that all of our ideas arise from experience. Our ideas have two sources: sensation and reflection. From sensation we get ideas of the corporeal world through the bodily senses. From reflection we get consciousness of the operations of the mind in regard to the content presented in sensation. Thus reflection depends on sensation for its content, and our knowledge depends on the simple ideas of sensation and reflection. Locke then goes on to define "knowledge": "Knowledge, then, seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas."¹ The knowledge that we have of our mind's activities is intuitive and through it we are perfectly and undoubtedly sure of our own existence. It is only an intuition of the mind's activities, and not the mind itself, that makes us believe without doubt that we are. Thus, we cannot know what we are, only that we are. We cannot know the substance of the soul, that is, that which supports the qualities of it, yet:

From our not having any notion of the substance of spirit, we can no more conclude its non-existence, than we can, for the same reason, deny the existence of body; it being as rational to affirm there is no body, because we have no clear and distinct idea of the substance of matter, as to say there is no spirit, because we have no clear and distinct idea of the substance of a spirit.²

Thus, the relation of our intellectual activities to our soul, or self, cannot be known. We only know that these activities exist, and we assume the existence of a supporting soul to which they belong.

¹ John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. J. A. St. John (2 Vols.; London: George Bell and Sons, 1901), II, p. 129.

² *Ibid.*, I, p. 426.

There is an ambiguity in Locke about the question of our knowledge of the self. On the one hand he seems to feel that we are aware of our self. "In every act of sensation, reasoning, or thinking, we are conscious to ourselves of our own being; and, in this matter, come not short of the highest degree of certainty."¹ This affirmation also includes the conclusion that these activities of the mind necessitate an ego. On the other hand, Locke also asserts that we have no notion of the substance of the spirit, or soul, whether we wish to believe in its existence or not. This ambiguity is taken over by Hume and made into a non-egological conception of consciousness. This trend as it comes from Descartes through Locke is made explicit in the philosophy of David Hume.

Hume declared that all the perceptions of the human mind are either impressions or ideas. For every simple idea there is a simple impression which it resembles, and for every simple impression there is a corresponding idea. The ideas are copies of the impressions, and are less lively and distinct. We have no idea of a self as remaining identical throughout the course of our lives:

If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is suppos'd to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable.²

Whenever we try to reflect on ourselves, we can only find a bundle of

¹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 229.

² David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), p. 251.

different perceptions in a perpetual flux and movement, with no simplicity or identity to be found. "Identity is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together; but is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination, when we reflect upon them."¹ It is only in reflection and memory that any identical self can be discovered. Through memory we can see the resemblances of the previous distinct perceptions and draw them together; their resemblance is not a relation that can be observed by the understanding. "As memory alone acquaints us with the continuance and extent of this succession of perceptions, 'tis to be considered, upon that account chiefly, as the source of personal identity. . . . Memory does not so much produce as discover personal identity."² From the immediate relating done through the memory we can extend our notion of an identical self to past and future times of our duration that we have forgotten or do not anticipate explicitly. The only connection we can discover between the separate impressions is a feeling that they are united, but on the level of philosophical inquiry no personal self is discovered. There are only distinct perceptions, with distinct existences, which have no real connection.

As can be seen, Hume went to the extreme opposite view, with respect to consciousness, by holding that there is no personal self. This position arose from the considerations of Locke's discussion of

¹Ibid., p. 260.

²Ibid., pp. 261-262.

substance. Lock was quite willing to allow that there is no material substance in which the observed qualities inhere, but he was not willing to assert that mental substances does not exist. It is this latter view that Hume came down so hard on: "This [A Treatise of Human Nature] must pave the way for a like principle with regard to the mind, that we have no notion of it, distinct from the particular perceptions."¹ This absolute, non-egological conception of consciousness is answered by Hume's contemporary, Thomas Reid, in such a way that he can be seen as the revindication of the egological line of thought that begins with Descartes and, through Kant, reaches its climax in Fichte. Reid asks: "But who is the I that has this memory and consciousness of a succession of ideas and impressions?"²

Reid starts his account of consciousness with a discussion of the nature of memory. The object of memory is always something that is past, and any memory is accompanied by the belief that what is remembered did actually occur. This holds in all cases; even when I remember a past imagining or disbelief, I still believe that it did occur. Thus, "Memory implies a conception and belief of past duration; for it is impossible that a man should remember a thing distinctly without believing some interval of duration, more or less, to have passed between the time it happened and the present moment."³ We

¹ Ibid., p. 635.

² Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, ed. Woosley (London: Macmillan and Co., 1941), p. 378.

Ibid., p. 196.

cannot have any necessary knowledge that anything exists, for we cannot have any perception of the necessary agreement between existence and the thing that exists. We believe in a thing having occurred only if we have a distinct remembrance of it. "How then do I come to believe it? I remember it distinctly."¹ Thus, in memory we come to believe in a past duration and in the event remembered as having occurred.

Also, "There can be no memory of what is past without the conviction that we existed at the time remembered."² This conviction is as strong as the memory itself, and it produces the conviction that we have had a continued existence and identity from then until now. We believe in our own personal identity as extending throughout the mental operations that we can remember, and, moreover, as necessarily having a continued uninterrupted existence. "Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks, and deliberates, and resolves, and acts, and suffers. I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling; I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers."³ This permanent self is evidenced by memory; through memory we believe that the self doing the remembering is identical with the self remembered. Although we may doubt that such a thing was thought or done by us, we never doubt that there is a thinking being that has a continued existence throughout the successions of operations of our minds, which enables us to establish our invincible belief in our personal identity.

¹ibid., p. 197.

²ibid., p. 201.

³ibid., p. 203.

With Hume, Reid believes that memory does not produce a permanent self; however, Reid does not believe that the self which is discovered does not exist. Rather, he believes that the memory that finds the self simultaneously provides evidence for its existence. We are as certain that it was our own self that was engaged in the remembered event as we are that the event took place. Otherwise we would be left with Hume's implied position "that this succession of ideas and impressions not only remembers and is conscious, but that it judges, reasons, affirms, denies--nay, that it eats and drinks and is sometimes merry and sometimes sad."¹ Reid finds that a permanent self is a necessary condition for there to be a succession of mental activities going on; it is needed for there to be remembering, and more importantly, for there to be consciousness of the activities as belonging to a self. In this way Reid implicitly anticipates Kant's conclusions. It is Kant who carries out Reid's insights and radically answers Hume's extreme conclusion, stemming from Locke and Descartes. Kant does this by showing the necessity for conceiving a self which is identical throughout a multiplicity of mental acts.

According to Kant, the manifold presented to the senses is experienced as ordered in space and time due to the a priori forms of perception. These perceptions are unified through the a priori categories of the understanding. There are a priori conditions for all experience which are synthesized with the material of perception, a synthesis

¹ Ibid., p. 378.

that yields knowledge of the world as it appears to us.

The self, as it appears in the individual acts of consciousness is diverse and is not seen as related to a self-identical subject. This self is called by Kant the empirical self. Kant believes that there is given a self which has these consciousnesses as its own. This self is necessary for there to be any unity of experience. "Only in so far, therefore, as I can unite a manifold of given representations in one consciousness, is it possible for me to represent to myself the identity of the consciousness in [i.e. throughout] these representations."¹ In reflection we find a transcendental unity of apperception, in which all the diverse consciousnesses are synthesized: "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me."² This "I think" is the consciousness of the manifold of representations as being synthesized and the consciousness of a self as existing throughout the multiplicity of representations. Because there is a unity of consciousness throughout the representations, they belong to the same or different objects. The transcendental unity of apperception is the necessary condition for there to be objective knowledge of either the external world or myself.

¹ Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., 1956), p. 153.

² ibid., pp. 152-3.

However, this structure of the a priori organizing of the external world must have its origin outside the spatiotemporal world, since the origin cannot itself be subject to space and time. If this origin was itself in space and time, then it could be made an object and would require a cause. The origin of the appearances, including the unity of apperception, must then be outside of time; it is the noumenal self. We only have access to the accomplishments of the noumenal self as they are in time, yet this self is the necessary condition for there to be a transcendental unity of apperception, or even the world as we know it.

We can now see how Kant follows the trend coming out of Descartes, through Leibniz. However, Kant's position that there is an ego is a logical necessity and not a discovered reality. This ego, or noumenal self, is not in time, as opposed to earlier conceptions of consciousness; and its non-temporality is an aspect taken over by Fichte and carried to an extreme. Just as we took Hume to be an extreme case of Locke's position coming out of Descartes, so we can take Fichte as extreme case of a different trend coming out of Descartes, through Leibniz and Kant.

The system of ideas which emerge with the feeling of necessity Fichte calls "experience." It is the task of philosophy to establish the ground of experience. Since experience is the activity of consciousness directed toward objects, and since we are free to act, consciousness yields the sole ground of experience so far as it is a self-conscious activity.

The pure activity of the Ego is, therefore, now as was required, the cause of the objective activity of the Ego, since no object can be posited without it. But in so far as this pure activity originally is directed upon no object—both, therefore, being mutually independent of the other—it is not its cause, but related to it by an absolute act of the Ego.¹

It is this self-consciousness, or consciousness which knows that it is itself acting, that is the basis for all consciousness; in fact, all Being exists only for consciousness which is self-consciousness.

There is an original act of consciousness in which the Ego² is posited by being distinguished from the non-Ego. The Ego and the non-Ego reciprocally determine each other. "Both the Ego and Non-Ego are products of original acts of the Ego, and consciousness itself is such a product of the first original act of the Ego; of the positing of the Ego through itself."³ Knowledge, on the side of the non-Ego is a process of reflection of consciousness on its own previously determined action, beginning with the groundless free activity of sensation, which determines all knowledge as regards content. Sensation can be comprehended only through its end, that is, in an investigation on the side of the Ego. Here we find that it is the nature of the Ego to be always active and to set objects for itself. "The pure, self-returning activity of the Ego is, in its relation to a possible object, a tendency; and, according to the above, an infinite

¹Fichte, Science of Knowledge, p. 270

²Because of the homophony of "I" and "eye," wherever possible we shall use the word "ego" instead of the word "I." Wherever "I" and "ego" are to be distinguished, we shall, of course, use the word "I."

³Fichte, op. cit., p. 80.

tendency. This tendency is the condition of the possibility of all object; no tendency, no object."¹ The world is posited in order that the autonomous self can be active in it. It is the essence of the self to be active, and therefore, Being is posited only for the end that consciousness can act. The Ego is through and through "ethical" (that is, "infinite tendency"), all that is, is explained by what ought to be. It is because consciousness is necessarily self-consciousness and ethical that a world is posited.

It is, then Fichte who provides the apogee of the egological theory of consciousness by ascribing to consciousness a necessary self-consciousness as the ground for all Being. Thus, we have two conflicting trends in Modern Philosophy--the one ending up in Hume, the other in Fichte, which, respectively, lead to non-egological and egological theories of consciousness.

Let us now consider a contemporary theory of consciousness in which these two trends come together: that of William James. James' theory will give us the starting point for developing the problems that face any theory of consciousness in Modern Philosophy; problems with which Sartre's theory must deal.

In the chapter on "The Consciousness of Self"² of his Psychology, William James develops the pure principle of personal identity. We are conscious of a sense of personal sameness as well as of sameness

¹ibid., p. 270.

²We shall limit ourselves in this inquiry to James' early position as developed in the Psychology.

in other phenomena as "a conclusion grounded either on the resemblance in a fundamental respect, or on the continuity before the mind, of the phenomena compared."¹ This line of inquiry leads James to a description of personal identity similar to Hume, even though such an account leaves out many of the more subtle aspects of consciousness. Common sense requires that there must be more of a unity of various selves than just an appearance of continuity or resemblance, that only becomes apparent upon reflection on the past:

All the incomprehensibilities which in Chapter VI we saw to attach to the idea of things fusing without a medium apply to the empiricist description of personal identity.

But in our own account the medium is fully assigned, the herdsman is there, in the shape of something not among the things collected, but superior to them all, namely, the real, present onlooking, remembering, 'judging thought' or identifying 'section' of the stream.²

James distinguishes the need for two types of collecting thoughts: 1 that which collects at every phase of consciousness that which belongs to it, and 2 that which collects these various collectings into a unity that is identical throughout the entire stream of thought. He wants to show that there is no need for the latter type of collecting thought in a descriptive account of consciousness since the present judging Thought³ could be said to pass its Thoughts on to the next

¹William James, The Principles of Psychology (2 Vols.; New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1904), I, p. 334.

²ibid., p. 338.

³We will, with James, refer to the present mental state which does the collecting as the Thought, with a capital T, particularly when speaking of James' theory of consciousness.

pulse of cognitive consciousness. "Each later Thought, knowing and including thus the Thoughts which went before, is the final receptacle --and appropriating them is the final owner--of all that they contain and own."¹ In this way each Thought is the representative of all Thoughts that went on before, and a personal identity is established. Since each passing Thought cannot collect itself as a member of the group of known objects, it cannot be known until it passes to the past and is appropriated itself as an object by the following pulse of consciousness. The present pulse may be able to feel itself, but it can only know the previous pulses; it can know them as its own and thereby allow for a consciousness of personal identity throughout a series of passing Thoughts:

The consciousness of Self involves a stream of thought, each part of which as "I" can 1) remember those which went before, and know the things they knew; and 2) emphasize and care paramountly for certain ones among them as "me", and appropriate to these the rest.²

¹ibid., p. 339.

²ibid., p. 400.

CHAPTER ONE

SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS OF THE EGO IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

We can now sketch some of the problems that form a historical background to Sartre's theory of consciousness. There appears a spectrum in which two contrasting trends stand out. On the one hand, we find a non-egological theory of consciousness which culminates in Hume. On the other hand, we find an egological theory of consciousness which is best seen in William James. By an egological theory we understand a theory which holds that an ego is actively involved in the formation of a self which is constituted as identical throughout a multiplicity of mental acts. By a non-egological theory we understand a theory which holds that mental acts are not unified by an ego, although an identical self may be felt to unify these separate acts, or at least be the basis of them. We shall readily acknowledge that most theories fall somewhere in between these extremes, but they can be best seen in light of these end points.

In his examination of mental life, Hume found that since we have no one impression of a self which remains identical throughout all of our mental acts, we cannot have any legitimate idea of such an ego. If we inquire, as philosophers, into the nature of our idea of a self we find that it arises in memory as we conjoin the various individual perceptions that resemble each other, with respect to the perceiver.

Memory functions to bring together those perceptions on the basis of which we extend our notion of ourself to the past and future. What is important for us is Hume's self-acknowledged predicament of accounting for this notion in an empirical way. As I type I examine my experience to see what impressions I have of myself. According to Hume, all that I can find are the individual perceptions of typing, reading, correcting, thinking about something, and so forth. "When I turn my reflexion on myself, I never can perceive this self without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive any thing but the perceptions. 'Tis the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self."¹ All that can be found is a self which is composed of distinct perceptions that resemble each other; no real connection is found between the distinct perceptions.

The basic problem in Hume's theory is how to answer the objection of Reid: "But who is the I that has this memory and consciousness of a succession of ideas and impressions?"² There is in the Treatise an ambiguity as to who or what is doing the remembering of the previous perceptions that are conjoined to form our notion of the self. There is that which does the perceiving, in the Humean sense which includes both sensuous and non-sensuous perceivings, in each distinct case, and that which conjoins these perceivings in memory. If Hume did not want to admit of this latter type of consciousness that transcends the individual ones, then there would be in each dis-

¹Hume, op. cit., p. 634.

²Reid, op. cit., p. 378.

tinct perception a taking over of all that had gone on before. There would be a simultaneous remembering and perceiving at each moment of consciousness. However, Hume would probably not want to say this since he thinks of memory as discovering identity and not producing it. Hume does say that "The memory not only discovers the identity, but also contributes to its production, by producing the relation of resemblance among the perceptions."¹ However, this is not to say that memory produces in the sense that it continually gathers the past perceptions together to form a self; rather it is because of memory that we can hold onto the distinct perceptions and discover the resemblances between them that give rise to our notion² of an identical self that is present throughout the perceivings. Thus, memory produces personal identity in the sense of putting forth the perceptions that can be seen as related. Hume argues that memory discovers personal identity because if it produced it then we could not extend our notion of personal identity beyond our memory, as we do through the notion of causation.

But having once acquir'd this notion of causation from the memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons beyond our memory, and can comprehend times, and circumstances, and actions, which we have entirely forgot, but suppose in general to have existed.³

The self that is discovered is not a legitimate self apart from the

¹Hume, op. cit., p. 261.

²A "notion;" as opposed to an impression, is not a perception of the human mind; it is produced by the imagination.

³Ibid., p. 262.

perceivings which can be discovered, at least not in philosophical inquiry; rather memory serves to discover the relation between the various perceptions. This relation is itself not an impression, but a notion.

In any case, there remains the problem of explaining "what" reflectively inquires into the perceivings in searching for a self. As I type all that can be said is that there is typing going on; it is only upon further reflection that I can say that it is the same self that is now typing as it was yesterday. In fact, there must be a reflective synthesis to conjoin the perceivings of individual key-tappings to see that a "self" typed the word "self". Our problem, as was Hume's, is to account for this synthesizing activity. Perhaps this can be best illustrated by James' characterization of what he calls "the Psychologist's Fallacy":

The psychologist, as we remarked above, stands outside of the mental he speaks of. Both itself and its object are objects for him. Now when it is a cognitive state (percept, thought, concept, etc), he ordinarily has no other way of naming it than as the thought, percept, etc., of that object. He himself, meanwhile, knowing the self-same object in his way, gets easily led to suppose that the thought, which is of it, knows it in the same way in which he knows it, although this is often very far from being the case.

It is in this way that James goes on to speak of writers such as Hume smuggling in a "we" or a "mind" that does this collecting, but which does not come under the scrutiny of philosophical inquiry. Hume does not find a self in the distinct perceptions that he is considering

¹James, Psychology, I, p. 196.

and, therefore, concludes that there is no self. But he does speak of the "we" that does the reflecting.

Reid saw this problem and tried to show how memory implies a personal identity with undoubted certainty:

I see evidently that identity supposes an uninterrupted continuance of existence. That which hath ceased to exist cannot be the same with that which afterwards begins to exist, for this would be to suppose a being to exist after it ceased to exist, and to have had existence before it was produced, which are manifest contradictions.¹

As we have seen,² to remember something distinctly is to believe in it as having taken place, and, moreover, as happening to, or as an activity of, the person doing the remembering. Memory, thus, gives evidence of a permanent self: "My thoughts, and actions, and feelings change every moment—they have no continued, but a successive existence; but that self or I to which they belong is permanent."³ Reid is answering Hume by saying that it is absurd to think of a self remembering something that did not occur in his mental processes. Not only did it occur as his, but it occurred to a self which had a continued existence from then until now. In contrast to Hume, Reid believes that the self which memory gives evidence of is a real self; it is the self searching for the self as well as the one found. As I am engaged in typing I can reflectively consider myself as the one who typed yesterday and who then reflectively considered himself as going to be typing tomorrow. Thus the self who is now reflecting can see

¹Reid, op. cit., p. 202.

²Above, pp. 8-9.

³Reid, op. cit., p. 203.

that he is identical throughout the various mental acts which are seen as his.

Yet, is it not only a seeing of a previous identity supposed to be identical with the one who is reflecting? For Reid it is a matter of the evidence of memory, however it may be that there is a difference between the self which does the remembering and the subsequently remembered self seen as identical with the previously remembered self. There can be no way of checking whether or not the attribute of self is added in the reflection upon the remembering process itself, since each process itself becomes an object of memory. If I think of my act of typing, it is seen as I who was typing, yet at the time the act occurred I was conscious only of typing going on. Does it not require a further act in reflection to see this as my act of typing? Is not this further act itself without an ego? Perhaps we must revert back to the Humean theory where the relation is only found after the deed, and is then attributed to the whole of mental life.

If the objection holds that we only find an ego after the distinct processes are reflected upon, then we must explain how the mental process not reflected upon is joined to the ones reflected upon in which an ego appears. In other words, it may be the case that an ego can only be found if the mental process in which it appears is reflected upon, but our problem is what happens in reflection that allows an ego to arise where there was not one before. There are many times that I have been typing during which, or even after which, I was not conscious of an ego engaged in typing. To be sure, I can now say

that it was I who was typing, but what is the relation between the processes which did not have an ego given and the same ones which were subsequently found to have an ego? Does this imply that every mental act has an implicit ego that only requires a further act to articulate the first act as having an ego? It may be that there is a pre-reflective part of consciousness that is continually engaged in holding together all the mental acts that can be seen, in reflection, as being my acts. The distinction that would be required in this case is one that both Hume and Reid did not see, but which they felt to be there: each mental act is not always given in its entirety; it contains a quality of belonging to an ego that is only available when it is made into an object. I may type for hours without thinking of this typing as belonging to an ego, yet, these distinct acts of typing are continually, and automatically, binding themselves together in such a way that I can look at them and say that they are mine.

William James approaches the problem of accounting for the relation between the distinct mental acts and the self which unites them by distinguishing two types of collecting thought. There is the type of thought that collects at every moment of thought all that belongs to it, and that which collects these various collections into a unity that is identical throughout the entire stream of thought. James wants to dispense with this latter type of collecting thought as being superfluous and unnecessary to any account of consciousness. As we have seen,¹

¹Above, pp. 15-16.

he does this by considering the present judging Thought to be appropriative of all Thoughts that have gone on before it, and as it recedes into the past the new judging Thought takes over all that the past one knew. In this way we have a unity throughout the individual Thoughts because "The Thought does not capture them, but as soon as it comes into existence it finds them already its own. How is this possible unless the Thought have a substantial identity with a former owner,—not a mere continuity or a resemblance, as in our account, but a real unity?"¹ James does not want to complicate the explanation of what is given in consciousness and does this by allowing the passing Thoughts the ability to recollect and to know. Thus he can explain what Reid called the permanent self, and what Hume called the notion of personal identity.

James goes on to admit that each passing Thought, although appropriative of all that has gone on before it, is not itself known. It only becomes an object for knowledge after it is itself appropriated. The ego to which the Thought attaches the past is, for James, the bodily life that it momentarily feels. It is the body that forms the real nucleus of our personal identity and is the physical counterpart of our judging Thought. However, is not this ego, either psychical or physical, only an empty concept that requires a subsequent act to fill it out as the real ego? This subsequent act is required for the non-reflective ego to be seen as belonging to the self which thought

¹James, op. cit., p. 338.

about it. As I type, the present Thought appropriates all that has gone on before to my present bodily existence, yet this body is only felt to be the same body that is apprehended by thought as belonging to the previous moments of thought. It is, as is the case with present moment of consciousness, only in an explicit act of looking that the present bodily existence can be seen as mine, though such an act is not always performed, nor need it be always done.

Several problems arise from James theory about the present judging Thought. When the present Thought is appropriated by the following one, is the resulting transition from one to another made possible by an ego which unites all Thoughts? This can be made clearer by considering James' own theory of the "transitive" and substantive" parts of consciousness. By substantive parts, James means the kind of resting places in which consciousness is occupied with something that can be held onto for an indefinite length of time. The transitive parts "are filled with thoughts of relations, static or dynamic, that for the most part obtain between the matters contemplated in the periods of comparative rest."¹ James goes on to say that we cannot grasp the transitive parts without destroying their essential nature of being transitive. It may be that most of the present judging Thoughts are of a transitive nature, while retaining the character of appropriation that James ascribes to them. If we disregard the Thoughts, that James talks of, as always substantive, we

¹ibid., p. 243.

can see that the transition does not need an all-embracing ego to make the change possible. The ego cannot be observed in the transitive parts of consciousness, but it is there; there is only required a grasping of consciousness as substantive to see the ego.

What may be necessary, instead of a permanent ego, is an explanation about the way each Thought can both retain all that has gone on before, and still be able to select from the past specific parts of it that can be remembered. In other words, if there is no permanent ego which unifies all the individual Thoughts, there must be some part of each Thought that retains all previous Thoughts, so that James can speak of the present Thought as selecting or rejecting material from what has gone on before:

The Thought which, whilst it knows another Thought and the Object of that Other, appropriates the Other and the Object which the Other appropriated, is still a perfectly distinct phenomenon from that Other; it may hardly resemble it; it may be far removed from it in space and time.¹

It may be that James would want to employ his doctrine of fringes to explain what we have called the two parts of consciousness, or of the Thought that seems to be required. The doctrine of fringes is, for James, the theory that every thing has a fringe of relations about it. These felt fringes make us aware, somewhat dimly, of relations between the fringed thing and other things: a "Relation, then to our topic or interest is constantly felt in the fringe, and particularly the relation of harmony and discord, of furtherance or hindrance of the topic."²

¹ Ibid., p. 540.

² Ibid., p. 259.

In this way, James may try to say that each object as it is appropriated or rejected is retained in the fringes; and that these fringes may be brought out at any time for inspection. This still leaves us with the question concerning the nature of the Thought that is able to hold onto the fringe of relations, on the one hand, and be explicitly involved with certain parts of things and their relations, on the other hand.

There seems to an implicit need in James' theory for something which remains throughout all of the Thoughts; something that automatically retains all that has gone on before and is aware, not explicitly, of itself as unified. Otherwise, we may be able to say as Hume does that the ego is only added after each Thought itself is appropriated and looked at. If we draw the distinction, as we did with Hume and Reid,¹ between that part of a moment of consciousness that does not appear, the automatic unification, and that which does appear, as explicitly appropriated or on the fringes, we can see how James was trying to draw together the two trends that we found in our Introduction. That is, James' theory of consciousness is egological in the way that the present judging Thought unifies the previous Thoughts into a personal unity. His theory is non-egological since he does not want to affirm the existence of a permanent ego apart from the individual Thoughts. This dilemma of trying to be both egological and non-egological at the same time gives James the unique position of

¹Above, p. 25.

having to deal with the problems that are found in both trends, while having to contend with some unique problems of his own. We can, then use James' critique of egological and non-egological theories of consciousness to help us establish a sounder basis from which we can deal with Sartre's theory and its problems, since Sartre also is trying to resolve the two trends. James lists three types of theories: 1) The Spiritualist 2) the Associationist 3) The Transcendentalist. We shall deal with only the first and the third as we have already considered the second in connection with Hume.

The Soul is a simple immaterial substance in which the various operations of the psychic are grounded.¹ It is an Arch-Ego of whose existence self-consciousness makes us aware, and whose existence is the ground of possibility of thought. In this respect, it is easy to see how Descartes, Leibniz, Fichte and, to some extent, Locke and Kant go along with this necessity for an Arch-Ego. James thinks that this extra Soul is unnecessary for explaining the phenomena of consciousness, and that all functions ascribed to it can be seen to be performed by the present judging Thought. The Soul is seen as non-phenomenal in nature, yet it can be only made intelligible by borrowing the form of the phenomena.²

One interesting function of the Soul is to guarantee the closed individuality of each personal consciousness. James denies this, and

¹cf. James, op. cit., pp. 342-350.

²ibid., p. 347.

holds that we do not have a closed personal consciousness as a consequence of any elementary force or fact; rather, "The definitively closed nature of our personal consciousness is probably an average statistical resultant of many conditions,"¹ James believes in the public availability of the self, which he thinks is evidenced by the phenomena of thought-transference, mesmeric influence, and spirit control. He thus differs from the more traditional views in which every person is an individual, even if all persons are known by a God. It is doubtful that James would want to go so far as to say that each person's thoughts are available to anyone else, but this implication would solve the problem of intersubjectivity without appealing to a God as Leibniz does. In any case, many problems concerning the nature of the communication arise in this connection, such as whether the entire self was available, which "part" of the self does the communicating, which "part" is communicated, and so forth.

Although James has demonstrated that the Soul is superfluous to an account of consciousness, we can still take the "soul theories" more seriously than James does. If we do that, then we encounter still another principal problem. This problem is first found in Descartes' theory in which he passes from the recognition that there is doubting going on to a belief in an ego which doubts. This ego, res cogitans, is conceived as the necessary condition for there to be mental life. Locke, too, started in the same direction, but he soon

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

recognized that the Cartesian ego could not be found in experience, even though he still retained the supposition that a "something, I know not what", supports individual acts of consciousness. It seems to us that the motives for postulating a Soul in the first place is related to the confusion encountered in deciding whether the individual acts of consciousness require a self in which they must be necessarily grounded, or whether the self requires the individual acts in which it must be grounded. This problem comes up as a result of considering, as James does not, the origin of the self. It would seem that the origin of the self that we feel ourselves to have is a basic consideration for any theory of consciousness, yet it has led to the above mentioned confusion. Indeed, it is very hard to consider the self apart from the acts of consciousness.

Leibniz is much clearer on the relation between the individual acts and the "soul" or self than Descartes or Locke. His theory allows us to make a sharp distinction between perceiving and apperceiving, as we have seen earlier.¹ He distinguishes those mental states in which the monad perceives all that of which we are not conscious, from that apperception in which it becomes conscious of certain representations as belonging to itself. There is clearly a "Soul" to which all the representations belong, although "it represents more distinctly the body which is particularly attached to it."² As we go from "unconscious" perceptions to conscious apperception the problem again

¹Above, p. 3.

²Leibniz, The Monadology, 62.

arises concerning the nature of this change. Although the monad is psychical in nature, we must still distinguish between the petites perceptions, that is, "the infinitely small constituent parts of the representative life of the monad,"¹ and the self which is conscious of them. In being conscious of them and retaining them in memory, the monad seems to be split into two parts, into that which "knows" and that which does not "know." Thus we can see that it may be possible that the self which we come to be aware of may be constructed from the petites perceptions as they come to be distinctly represented. Or it may also be possible that the self which comes to be self-conscious is already aware of itself prior to apperception, in fact it may be necessary or else we would have to account for the addition of something not in the individual perceptions, that is, the self which is common to all these perceivings.

Let us turn to James' third classification, the Transcendentalists. From our previous account of Kant's theory we found that "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all of my representations."² The "I think" is the transcendental ego whose work can be seen in time as the transcendental unity of apperception. It is conceived as the necessary condition for there to be an empirical ego in time, although we can have no knowledge of the transcendental ego outside of time. The first problem confronting this theory is the way

¹Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, trans. Tufts (2 Vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, II, p. 424.

²Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 152. Above, p. 11.

in which the transcendental ego can be outside of time, and yet be in time as empirical. The origin of the spatiotemporal world is in the transcendental ego, which is outside of time.

The 'I think' expresses the act of determining my existence. Existence is already given thereby, but the mode in which I am to determine this existence, that is, the manifold belonging to it, is not thereby given. In order that it be given, self-intuition is required; and such intuition is conditioned by a given a priori form, namely, time, which is sensible and belongs to the receptivity of the determinable [in me].¹

The self is both outside of time as the necessary condition for my existence in time, and is in time as it appears to itself. Time is the limiting factor in our knowledge of ourselves; time limits us to the knowledge that we are and the way in which we appear. There are two alternative ways of considering this problem of the relation between the transcendental ego and the empirical ego.

On the one hand, if we take the phrase, "must be able to accompany," as meaning that the "I think" accompanies prior to and apart from reflection, then it is a reality which subsequent reflection only reveals instead of constructs, although what is revealed is only the spontaneity of my thought: "I cannot determine my existence as that of a self-active being; all that I can do is to represent to myself the spontaneity of my thought, that is, of the determination."² As a reality, the transcendental ego is an agent that performs the act of determining my existence. As an agent, the transcendental ego becomes somewhat similar to the "Soul" James describes as superfluous to

¹ibid., p. 169.

²ibid.

any account of consciousness. In this case we are led back to the problem we encountered in the theories of Descartes and Leibniz, namely, whether the transcendental ego is required by the individual acts of consciousness or whether the self requires the individual acts in which it can be grounded. As an agent outside of time and space and inaccessible to us as an object of knowledge, the transcendental ego cannot be seen in its relation to our spatiotemporal world.

On the other hand, if we take the "I think" as only the necessary condition for there to be the world and myself as I know them, we must answer why we need this in an explanation of how consciousness is in fact constituted. By considering only what is presented to ourselves in time we would want to know what takes over the duties of unification of the separate acts of consciousness so that we can be said to be conscious of ourselves. By resorting to the transcendental ego, which is essentially unavailable to us, to explain our self-activeness and our ability to be conscious of ourselves as spontaneity, we must, as Kant tried to do, provide a method that would make this transcendental realm available to us. This method would have to be apart from just logical considerations, if we are to answer the question of how consciousness is in fact to be explained. In any case, what remains constant in our consideration of these alternative views of Kant's theory is the problem of how the manifold given to consciousnesses is related to consciousness as my consciousness and how I myself and my world are related to an origin outside of the world and consciousness.

We can follow the development of transcendentalism from Kant to

Fichte, who gives the transcendental ego a primacy. For Fichte, it is the essence of the Ego to be active in such a way that it posits an external world in which to be active. The Non-Ego is posited by the Ego as a realm in which it can act. The Ego in its activity is self-returning, that is, self-conscious, in fact, "The Ego is only, insofar as it is conscious of itself."¹ The subsequent actions, after the original act of positing the Non-Ego, of the Ego are directed toward the comprehension of all which is not the Ego. Fichte conceives that it is the essence of the Ego to be active and since it requires an object on which to act it posits the Non-Ego, the external world, in which to be active, and in this way he gives Being a secondary place to the Ego. This Ego is itself outside of the spatiotemporal that it posits itself as acting in. Thus, Fichte carries Kant's conception of the logical necessity of a transcendental ego to the point where it is primary to all being, not just the logical necessity for there to be being. The movement of the Ego in its positing activity is a logical movement, and Fichte finds this out not by searching for the conditions necessary for experience, as does Kant, but by examining the movement of the Ego, not as it is in time, rather, in terms of the logical implications of the empirical facts of consciousness. James' criticism that Fichte comes under the objections to the "soul theory" becomes relevant, as it was in Kant. Even more important is the need to justify the necessity of an ego which posits the external world and,

¹Fichte, The Science of Knowledge, p. 270.

it must be assumed, an ego which acts in this world. There is in both Kant and Fichte the desire to explain the fundamental conditions for us to have the self and its world as we know them, but does this lead us to affirm the existence of an origin that is beyond our grasp as temporal beings? In fact, must we with Fichte say that all that appears to us owes its being to something, the absolute Ego, that required us and our world to satisfy its tendency? We still must concern ourselves with the nature of the self, and more particularly with what we can know of its origin, but Fichte seems to complicate this inquiry by searching for the teleological origin and purpose of our world. In any case, we are still left with the problem that we faced with respect to Kant's theory, namely the way in which the absolute Ego and the empirical Ego are related, and, moreover, how they can be seen to be "parts" of this one person that I call "myself."

We shall refer again to each theory we have discussed in light of Sartre's non-egological theory of consciousness. At the present, it is worth while to make some general observations about the nature of the problems of egological and non-egological theories.

We find at least seven basic problems that a theory of the ego will have to consider:

1. In connection with a non-egological theory, particularly Hume's, we must inquire into the nature of the collecting of the individual perceptions. The ego which does the collecting and searching must be accounted for if we are to have such a non-egological theory; the collecting activity, even apart from the consideration of the ego, must

be explained.

2. This most important problem arises from what James called "the Psychologist's Fallacy," though it may also be applied to James himself. It is a question of whether something extraneous to the present flow of consciousness is added when we reflect on the acts of consciousness. For our purposes it becomes relevant when we check to see whether the concept of the self has a pre-reflective basis, or whether it arises only upon reflection.¹ At each point in the reflecting process there is always the reflection itself which is not reflected on. If we consider the reflection itself, is it necessary there be an ego present, or an infinite regress of reflection on reflection?

3. Do the individual mental processes require, or have, a self which is their basis and instigator, or is the self made up of the individual acts? Is a more basic ground for both the individual acts and the self required?

4. If there is a pre-reflective self that believes in itself as existent, does this self in fact appear in every individual mental act? If not, in what way is it possible for me to maintain a continuous belief in myself as existent, and maintain a fixed policy of doubting, like Descartes, or fixed policy of neither believing or disbelieving in the existence of myself and my world, as in the phenomenological reduction of Husserl?

¹Above, pp. 22-23.

5. In the theories of Kant and Fichte in particular we find the transcendental ego conceived as outside of time. This raises the problem of the necessity of an atemporal origin of our self and our world. If such an ego is found to be necessary then we must account for the relation of the temporal to the non-temporal, and the manner in which the ego can be both the origin of and actor in the world.

6. The problem of accounting for not only memory, but the fact that we forget certain things which we can subsequently remember comes up in all of the theories we have considered. We can be said to retain everything and yet we utilize and remember only parts of this totality—parts which change or are replaced by previously unrecollected ones. This would seem to require a self which is present throughout our mental life with the ability to remember all that goes on. This can be seen particularly with respect to James, and as we shall see, Sartre.

7. There is finally a basic consideration as to whether it is necessary to view the world as a product of the self, as that which the self finds itself in, or perhaps as only co-original with the self. In some manner or other this problem must be solved, or at least put in its correct light, if we are to see what exactly the ego, and consciousness, is.

In the next chapter we shall develop an immanent critique of Sartre's theory of consciousness. This will form the basis for working out and answering in terms of Sartre's theory (Chapter Three) the problems we have raised in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

AN IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF SARTRE'S THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We shall limit ourselves in this critique to Sartre's theory of consciousness as he presents it in his essay The Transcendence of the Ego. We are not disregarding his other studies¹ of consciousness because they are unimportant, rather we are excluding them in order to concentrate fully on this theory, which best shows the development of a non-egological theory of consciousness as coming out of Modern Philosophy.

In The Transcendence of the Ego, Sartre makes the following distinction: "The I is the ego as the unity of actions. The me is the ego as the unity of states and of qualities."² Holding this distinction in mind we shall sketch out his theory of consciousness. With Kant, Sartre says "that the I Think must be able to accompany all our representations." However, this does not signify that each consciousness is accompanied by an "I Think;" instead, it signifies the "I Think" can only be seen in a further act of consciousness in which the ego is constituted in an act of reflection. To go from what Kant regarded

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Imaginaire (Paris, 1940); L'Être et le Néant (Paris, 1943).

² Jean-Paul Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, trans. Williams and Kirkpatrick (New York: Noonday Press, 1957), p. 60.

as a formal condition for there to be experience at all to an existent would be to falsify Kant, adding at the same time an unjustifiable character to his concept. The problem becomes whether this ego that must accompany all our representations is made possible by the synthetic unity of our representations, or whether it is the ego that must accompany all our representations.¹ If we accept Husserl's discovery that transcendental consciousness is not just a logical condition, but a real consciousness, then we find that transcendental consciousness constitutes our empirical self and our world. However, Sartre's problem is whether this transcendental consciousness is necessary for an account of consciousness: "Is not this psychic and psycho-physical me enough? Need one double it with a transcendental I, a structure of absolute consciousness?"²

The question becomes: do we need a transcendental ego to unify and individualize all my perceptions (in the Humean sense)? Phenomenology, the method that Sartre says he is employing, does not need such a transcendental ego because:

it is consciousness which unifies itself, concretely, by a play of "transversal" intentionalities which are concrete and real retentions of past consciousnesses. Thus consciousness refers perpetually to itself. Whoever says "a consciousness" says "the whole of consciousness," and this singular property belongs to consciousness itself, aside from whatever relations it may have to the I.³

Consciousness can unify itself by perpetually referring to itself in a synthesis of past and present acts of consciousness. In this way, con-

¹ ibid., p. 34.

² ibid., p. 36.

³ ibid., p. 39.

scious is a synthetic and individual totality, that is separated from other totalities of the same type.¹ There can be no room for a transcendental ego in consciousness because consciousness is consciousness of itself while it is consciousness of a transcendent object (for example, a physical thing). That is to say that "consciousness is purely and simply consciousness of being consciousness of that object."² This is what Sartre calls "consciousness (of) consciousness." We shall hereafter refer to consciousness which is consciousness of itself as "consciousness (of)" to distinguish it from consciousness of an object other than consciousness. Consciousness (of) is non-positional with respect to itself, which is to say that it is not an object for itself, nor does it take any position with regard to itself concerning its own existence (at least this is Sartre's meaning of non-positionality). Consciousness (of) is unreflected consciousness; it knows itself only as absolute inwardness, a concept that is to be clarified later.³

When Sartre says that consciousness is not an object for itself he is referring to its nature of being spontaneous in its intentionality, that is, it is directed entirely towards the object of which it is conscious. Consciousness is non-substantial for the same reason; it has no substance and "It remains therefore a 'phenomenon' in the very special sense in which 'to be' and 'to appear' are one. It is all

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 40.

³Below, pp. 53-55.

cannot have any necessary knowledge that anything exists, for we cannot have any perception of the necessary agreement between existence and the thing that exists. We believe in a thing having occurred only if we have a distinct remembrance of it. "How then do I come to believe it? I remember it distinctly."¹ Thus, in memory we come to believe in a past duration and in the event remembered as having occurred.

Also, "There can be no memory of what is past without the conviction that we existed at the time remembered."² This conviction is as strong as the memory itself, and it produces the conviction that we have had a continued existence and identity from then until now. We believe in our own personal identity as extending throughout the mental operations that we can remember, and, moreover, as necessarily having a continued uninterrupted existence. "Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks, and deliberates, and resolves, and acts, and suffers. I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling; I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers."³ This permanent self is evidenced by memory; through memory we believe that the self doing the remembering is identical with the self remembered. Although we may doubt that such a thing was thought or done by us, we never doubt that there is a thinking being that has a continued existence throughout the successions of operations of our minds, which enables us to establish our invincible belief in our personal identity.

¹ibid., p. 197.

²ibid., p. 201.

³ibid., p. 203.

that yields knowledge of the world as it appears to us.

The self, as it appears in the individual acts of consciousness is diverse and is not seen as related to a self-identical subject. This self is called by Kant the empirical self. Kant believes that there is given a self which has these consciousnesses as its own. This self is necessary for there to be any unity of experience. "Only in so far, therefore, as I can unite a manifold of given representations in one consciousness, is it possible for me to represent to myself the identity of the consciousness in [i.e. throughout] these representations."¹ In reflection we find a transcendental unity of apperception, in which all the diverse consciousnesses are synthesized: "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me."² This "I think" is the consciousness of the manifold of representations as being synthesized and the consciousness of a self as existing throughout the multiplicity of representations. Because there is a unity of consciousness throughout the representations, they belong to the same or different objects. The transcendental unity of apperception is the necessary condition for there to be objective knowledge of either the external world or myself.

¹ Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., 1956), p. 153.

² ibid., pp. 152-3.

However, this structure of the a priori organizing of the external world must have its origin outside the spatiotemporal world, since the origin cannot itself be subject to space and time. If this origin was itself in space and time, then it could be made an object and would require a cause. The origin of the appearances, including the unity of apperception, must then be outside of time; it is the noumenal self. We only have access to the accomplishments of the noumenal self as they are in time, yet this self is the necessary condition for there to be a transcendental unity of apperception, or even the world as we know it.

We can now see how Kant follows the trend coming out of Descartes, through Leibniz. However, Kant's position that there is an ego is a logical necessity and not a discovered reality. This ego, or noumenal self, is not in time, as opposed to earlier conceptions of consciousness; and its non-temporality is an aspect taken over by Fichte and carried to an extreme. Just as we took Hume to be an extreme case of Locke's position coming out of Descartes, so we can take Fichte as extreme case of a different trend coming out of Descartes, through Leibniz and Kant.

The system of ideas which emerge with the feeling of necessity Fichte calls "experience." It is the task of philosophy to establish the ground of experience. Since experience is the activity of consciousness directed toward objects, and since we are free to act, consciousness yields the sole ground of experience so far as it is a self-conscious activity.

tendency. This tendency is the condition of the possibility of all object; no tendency, no object."¹ The world is posited in order that the autonomous self can be active in it. It is the essence of the self to be active, and therefore, Being is posited only for the end that consciousness can act. The Ego is through and through "ethical" (that is, "infinite tendency"), all that is, is explained by what ought to be. It is because consciousness is necessarily self-consciousness and ethical that a world is posited.

It is, then Fichte who provides the apogee of the egological theory of consciousness by ascribing to consciousness a necessary self-consciousness as the ground for all Being. Thus, we have two conflicting trends in Modern Philosophy--the one ending up in Hume, the other in Fichte, which, respectively, lead to non-egological and egological theories of consciousness.

Let us now consider a contemporary theory of consciousness in which these two trends come together: that of William James. James' theory will give us the starting point for developing the problems that face any theory of consciousness in Modern Philosophy; problems with which Sartre's theory must deal.

In the chapter on "The Consciousness of Self"² of his Psychology, William James develops the pure principle of personal identity. We are conscious of a sense of personal sameness as well as of sameness

¹ibid., p. 270.

²We shall limit ourselves in this inquiry to James' early position as developed in the Psychology.

scious is a synthetic and individual totality, that is separated from other totalities of the same type.¹ There can be no room for a transcendental ego in consciousness because consciousness is consciousness of itself while it is consciousness of a transcendent object (for example, a physical thing). That is to say that "consciousness is purely and simply consciousness of being consciousness of that object."² This is what Sartre calls "consciousness (of) consciousness." We shall hereafter refer to consciousness which is consciousness of itself as "consciousness (of)" to distinguish it from consciousness of an object other than consciousness. Consciousness (of) is non-positional with respect to itself, which is to say that it is not an object for itself, nor does it take any position with regard to itself concerning its own existence (at least this is Sartre's meaning of non-positionality). Consciousness (of) is unreflected consciousness; it knows itself only as absolute inwardness, a concept that is to be clarified later.³

When Sartre says that consciousness is not an object for itself he is referring to its nature of being spontaneous in its intentionality, that is, it is directed entirely towards the object of which it is conscious. Consciousness is non-substantial for the same reason; it has no substance and "it remains therefore a 'phenomenon' in the very special sense in which 'to be' and 'to appear' are one. It is all

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 40.

³Below, pp. 53-55.

lightness, all translucence."¹ Thus, there is no room for the transcendental ego in consciousness because such an ego would introduce some opacity into consciousness, which would destroy the essential spontaneity of consciousness.

We can now go on to develop in more detail what is implied in Sartre's theory, when he says that the ego must be a "relative" existent, like the world, that is, an object for consciousness. We know that every time we reflect on our thoughts an ego appears as the one who was doing the thinking. This ego appears, however, only in a reflective operation wherein consciousness looks upon itself as an object. In other words, the reflecting consciousness directs itself to the reflected consciousness, which did not reflect on itself previously but was, instead, a straightforward consciousness of an object. We can see this if we consult the memory of an unreflected consciousness, such as consciousness of this typewriter. I find that there was only consciousness of this typewriter, a consciousness that was consciousness (of) consciousness of the typewriter; it was non-positional with respect to itself, the only object toward which it was explicitly and believably directed was the typewriter. In a further act of consciousness I can take this consciousness-of the typewriter as the object of my reflecting consciousness. It is in this further act, reflection upon the consciousness of the typewriter, that an ego appears. The ego appears in the consciousness reflected upon, and only

¹ ibid., p. 42.

in the consciousness reflected upon. It is in reflection that consciousness (of) consciousness is made an object in such a way that an ego appears.

We can distinguish two kinds of consciousness, although this distinction does not mean that they can be separated from each other except for analysis; the first type is not always given with the second, but the second is always given with the first. They are: 1) the unreflected consciousness, consciousness (of) consciousness of an object; 2) the reflecting consciousness which is directed to a reflected consciousness, the reflecting consciousness is 1) in that it is non-positional consciousness, while the reflected consciousness is an object for the reflecting consciousness and an ego appears through it. At the unreflected level of consciousness no ego appears, nor does the reflecting consciousness itself have an ego: "When I run after a streetcar, when I look at the time, when I am absorbed in contemplating a portrait, there is no I. There is consciousness of the streetcar-having-to-be-overtaken, etc., and non-positional consciousness of consciousness."¹

The ego observed at the reflected level is given as transcendent and permanent apart from the individual consciousness through which it is presented. "The I is not given as a concrete moment, a perishable structure of my actual consciousness. On the contrary, it affirms its permanence beyond this consciousness and all conscious-

¹ Ibid., pp. 48-49.

nesses."¹ The ego, as the unity of actions,² does not appear as the reflected consciousness but is seen as apart from the particular consciousness through which the ego appears.

Sartre draws four conclusions from his analysis which we can clarify: 1) The ego is an existent of a unique type which offers itself as transcendent; 2) The ego offers itself to an intuition of a special kind; 3) The ego never appears except to an act of reflection, and is the transcendent object of that act; 4) The transcendent ego must fall before the phenomenological reduction.³

As I am absorbed in typing I do not find this activity as belonging to an ego. When I do turn my attention upon the activity itself in a reflecting act, I find that an ego appears as behind the reflected consciousness, that is, the ego is seen as having a real existence, although different than that of a spatiotemporal being, that is transcendent to the object being confronted, the activity of typing. The intuition,⁴ or confrontation, of the ego takes place on a level that is transcendent to both the reflecting and the reflected consciousness, that is, the ego is a transcendent object apprehended apart from the activity of typing which has its own object of a different kind, a spatiotemporal one, the typewriter. Thus, in pure con-

¹ *ibid.*, p. 50.

² Above, p. 58.

³ Sartre, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

⁴ cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas* trans. Boyce Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1931); Secs. 1-4, 7, and 18-24 for a fuller account of the term "intuition."

sciousness, consciousness (of) consciousness, there is no ego, and, therefore, in the phenomenological reduction, which is an apprehension of pure consciousness, no transcendent ego appears.

Gurwitsch expresses what Sartre is saying by the following:

When a grasped act appears as connected with the ego, the latter presents itself as exceeding this act. In fact the ego is connected not only with the act experienced and grasped at the time being, but also with other acts, even with an infinite number of them, and it is this way that the ego appears. It offers itself as a permanent entity, as continuing existing, beyond the grasped act which, like all mental states, substantially perishing. The ego thus appears through rather than in the grasped act.¹

We can also use some further explanations of Gurwitsch to help us understand what exactly Sartre is talking about.²

There are two kinds of unity in conscious life. The one is a unity of mental states in which the same object presents itself. But this unity of separated mental states is only a unity with respect to the object; for example, each time I remember a certain word. There is no ego required for there to be these separated consciousnesses of this object. There is another type of unity, namely the unification of acts in their duration. It is a unification accomplished, as we have seen,³ by a synthesis of past and present acts so that conscious life becomes endowed with a stream character. This unity does not depend on an ego, rather the ego depends upon the unity of consciousness.

Upon reflection we might find an ego, but during the unreflected

¹Aron Gurwitsch, "A Non-egological Conception of Consciousness," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, I (1940), p. 333.

²Ibid., pp. 326-330.

³Above, pp. 39-40.

consciousness of an object there is only consciousness of the object and awareness that there is consciousness. This awareness is not like reflection, and it is non-positional. When reflection is directed upon the act and its object a new object arises, the ego. This ego appears as belonging to the reflected upon act, not the reflecting act. "Thus the consciousness which says I Think is precisely not the consciousness which thinks."¹

At the beginning of this chapter we distinguished between the I and the me as functionally different aspects of the same reality, the ego. Later we shall spell out this distinction more explicitly.² For the present we can speak of them as the ego. If we consider the psychological theory that the ego acts as it does because of its love for itself, then the ego's acts are only performed to satisfy its desires. This theory comes about as a result of confusing the reflected and unreflected levels of consciousness, and in fact, purports that the reflected level precedes the unreflected level. The psychologists in this case have the reflected consciousness in which an ego appears as original and ontologically prior to the unreflected one, since they affirm that all acts are performed in relation to an ego which is always present, although implicitly or unconsciously, prior to reflection. This, Sartre says would be absurd because it would involve saying that consciousness is not essentially consciousness of itself, and that consciousness is not spontaneous. This psychological theory

¹Sartre, op. cit., p. 45.

²Below, pp. 55-56.

commits what James called "the Psychologist's Fallacy" by attributing to the unreflected consciousness of an object that is desired what reflection reveals about the reflected upon desiring, namely that there is an ego which is seen as doing the desiring.

Instead of this psychological theory, Sartre says that "it is on the reflected level that the ego-life has its place, and on the unreflected level that the impersonal life has its place."¹

I pity Peter, and I go to his assistance. For my consciousness only one thing exists at that moment: Peter having-to-be-helped. This quality of "having-to-be-helped" lies in Peter. It acts on me like a force. . . . I am in the presence of Peter's suffering just as I am in the presence of the color of this inkstand; there is an objective world of things and actions, done or to be done, and the actions come to adhere as qualities to the things which call for them.²

Sartre calls unreflected consciousness, spontaneous consciousness, "impersonal" because of its essential nature to be wholly directed towards its object, whether it is an inkstand or Peter having-to-be-helped. The unreflected consciousness is, to be sure, consciousness (of) consciousness, but this awareness is not the reflective awareness in which an object appears; there is no ego at the unreflected level. There is only a personal ego-life at the reflected level. On the reflected level "it is my helpful consciousness which appears to me as having to be perpetuated."³

With Sartre, we can now inquire into the constitution of the ego. The ego is a transcendent unity of the transcendent unities,

¹ ibid., p. 58.

² ibid., p. 56.

³ ibid., p. 59.

states, actions, and qualities, and it is these latter unities that we must now examine in order to understand what the ego is. "The state appears to reflective consciousness. The state is given to it, and is the object of a concrete intuition. If I hate Peter, my hatred of Peter is a state that I can apprehend by reflection."¹ This state appears as beyond any particular manifestation of it, in the same way that we found that the ego was behind the reflected consciousness. That is, the hatred appears through a particular experience of repugnance and as transcendent to this consciousness of Peter-as-repugnant. The hatred is given as a permanent transcendent unity of consciousnesses of repugnance. This state of hatred towards Peter exists even when I am not considering Peter, or the state itself. It does not appear in its entirety each time it is manifested in a particular consciousness, nor can we be certain that we do hate Peter. "It is certain that Peter is repugnant to me. But it is and always will remain doubtful that I hate him. . . . This can be seen when someone, after having said in anger, 'I detest you,' catches himself and says, 'It is not true, I do not detest you, I said that in anger.'² This points out that the particular consciousness does not implicate anything beyond the moment and could not be a state; as soon as a state is affirmed it has meaning now and for the future. The meaning for the future that a state, such as hatred, affirms is always of a doubtable nature, since it affirms more than it knows. My hatred for Peter is a transcendent unity of an infinity of consciousnesses of repugnance that

¹Ibid., p. 61.

²Ibid., p. 64.

have been in the past and will be in the future. Yet this state of hatred can never be a certainty of hatred, for at any moment I might stop hating Peter. It is a hatred "until further notice."

A state such as hatred is passive in the sense that it receives all of its existence from the reflective consciousness. "Hatred is inert, since it is existence relative to reflective consciousness."¹ The state does not itself act, but it may be seen as acting after the unreflected consciousness of repugnance is reflected upon. As soon as the state is constituted in a reflective act, as when I say "I hate you," then my action of revulsion may be seen as coming from the state of hatred. The state is really only passive since it is constituted out of the consciousnesses reflected upon, and is in fact relative to the particular consciousnesses. What this relation between the state and the consciousnesses is will be examined in more detail after we see what actions and qualities are, and how the ego is constituted from them.

An action is a transcendent unity whose existence is similar to a state. It has individual moments corresponding to concrete, active consciousnesses. My action of driving a car is composed of a multitude of individual consciousnesses of steering, braking, clutching, and so forth, and it is only in a reflective apprehension that the concerted action of driving is seen. Thus, we must distinguish between the action, driving, which is a transcendent object of reflective con-

¹ Ibid., p. 66.

consciousness, and the spontaneous act of consciousness. The spontaneous acts of consciousness cannot be grasped without making them into an object which would destroy their spontaneity. It is much the same, as we have seen,¹ with what James calls the transitive parts of consciousness, which cannot be grasped without destroying their nature to be transitive. The action of driving a car, like the action of doubting, has a temporal duration and is both the unity of the stream of active consciousnesses of driving, or doubting, and the overall concrete realization of them.² Both of these unities are transcendent to the consciousnesses out of which they are constituted in reflection, and are subject to the limitations that such a relative existent has; that is, they are doubtable, passive, and do not appear at the level of unreflected consciousness.

The quality, or psychic disposition, comes into existence when a certain disposition is seen as belonging to an ego:

When we have experienced hatred several times toward different persons, or tenacious resentments, or protracted angers, we unify these diverse manifestations by intending a psychic disposition for producing them. . . . The quality is given as a potentiality, a virtuality, which, under the influence of diverse factors, can pass into actuality. Its actuality is precisely the state (or action).³

Since I exhibit over and over a repugnance for most people, I have the quality of being a hater of people. This quality is a potentiality that becomes actualized in a particular state of hatred, say for Peter. This quality is essentially different from the state of ha-

¹Above, pp. 25-26.

²Sartre, op. cit., p. 69.

³Ibid., p. 70.

tred or the action of kicking Peter by being the unity of the passive states or actions, instead of a unity of spontaneities as are states and actions. The mode of existence of this quality is potency. Qualities are unifications of the actions and states, but they are not indispensable, " because states and actions can find directly in the ego the unity that they demand."¹

We can now examine the ego as the unity of states and actions--and optionally, of qualities. The ego appears to reflection as the transcendent object that effects the permanent synthesis of the psychic phenomena (psychic phenomena for Sartre are distinguished from consciousness, they are the reflected upon acts of consciousness).² This means that the ego appears as the unity of all of the conscious acts which I call mine. The ego is the concrete totality of states and actions, yet we are not to consider it as distinct from the states or actions, even in an abstract way that makes it only the formal unification of the states and actions. The ego is totally involved in the states and actions that it supports, and is nothing outside of them. "It is the infinite totality of states and actions which is never reducible to an action or a state."³ My ego is seen as nothing more than my states and actions, yet it is transcendent to them. My state of hatred of Peter is given as a state of my ego, yet this ego does not appear except on the horizon. This horizontal appearance of

¹ibid., p. 71.

²ibid., pp. 71-72.

³ibid., p. 74.

the ego cannot be grasped except through a state or action. Any attempt to apprehend the ego directly will meet with failure because it is nothing more than the states or actions that it supports. The ego appears on the horizon of the states and actions somewhat similar to the way that James would say the ego is on the "fringe" of the states and actions. The ego is felt on the fringe of states and actions as that which unifies them as the relation that holds between them. The ego that does appear on the horizon of my state of hating Peter is only given as the ego which has that state incorporated into it, and is not given in its entirety except as emptily indicating that there is more.

Because there is always more to the ego than appears the ego is open to doubt, as are all transcendent unities, such as states, actions and qualities. What this means can be seen more clearly if we accept what Gurwitsch says about the doubtability of the ego:

This does not mean that we may be in doubt if we have an ego, or that the ego may possibly turn out to be a mere hypothesis. It simply means that whatever we know or believe to know about the ego--our own or that of other persons--and be this knowledge grounded upon a single apprehension or upon a certain number of apprehensions, however great, this knowledge is permanently in need of being confirmed by further apprehensions.¹

Thus, the ego that is in doubt does not have a "real ego" that it is compared with; rather the ego is by nature a relative existent that owes its being to the reflective consciousness.

The relation between the individual consciousnesses, the states

¹Gurwitsch, op. cit., pp. 337-338.

and actions, and the ego can be best explained by starting with an example of how they appear to be related in reflection. When I have an experience of pleasure while eating peanut butter, I say "I like peanut butter." This liking for peanut butter is seen as produced by my ego. Thus, in this reflection, it may appear that my ego spontaneously produced my liking for peanut butter which in turn produced my experience of pleasure while eating peanut butter. This view of the ego as spontaneous is a result of making conscious life into an object. Actually the ego is constituted through the states of liking peanut butter, and these states are themselves constituted from the spontaneous consciousnesses of pleasure giving peanut butter. It is only in reflection that consciousness projects its own spontaneity into the ego so that it appears that "The ego is the creator of its states and sustains its qualities in existence by a sort of preserving spontaneity."¹ But this ego is passive, receiving all that it is from the reflective act, so that the spontaneity that appears is not that of consciousness, which is wholly directed to its object. Rather, "this spontaneity, represented and hyostatized in an object, becomes a degraded and bastard spontaneity, which magically preserves its creative power even while becoming passive. Whence the profound irrationality of the notion of the ego."²

The notion of the ego is irrational because it is seen as both actively producing my liking for peanut butter while it is seen as

¹Sartre, op. cit., p. 78.

²ibid., p. 81.

passively composed up of various states and actions. The ego seems to produce a state of liking of peanut butter, while correlatively being passively modified by what it produces. "So that the ego is always surpassed by what it produces, although, from another point of view, it is what it produces."¹ Only if we apprehend consciousness as it is unreflected upon do we see that it is consciousness that is spontaneous, and is not affected by the so-called "acts of the ego." It is only if we view things as they really are² that the ego is seen as the passive transcendent object that is affected by all the states and actions that it is seen through.

The ego also appears as an irrational synthesis of transcendence and interiority to the reflective consciousness. Interiority signifies that the existence of consciousness and its awareness of itself is one and the same thing: "Therein consists the proper mode of consciousness' existence for which appearing is altogether the same as being, and on this account consciousness is endowed with absoluteness."³ This interiority cannot be grasped any more than spontaneity can be grasped. To grasp it would be to give it the character of an object and make it something other than interiority, which cannot by nature have an outside that can be grasped. Although the ego may appear to be an interiority, it is a degraded interiority that is closed upon itself. If the ego were absolute interiority it could be conceived

¹Ibid., p. 80.

²That is, phenomenologically viewed.

³Gurwitsch, op. cit., p. 330.

only by itself, but as we have seen, the ego can only be conceived from outside of itself. The ego is apprehended by consciousness as being intimate with consciousness and as being indistinct. The ego is seen as intimate because it appears to be the origin of the present consciousness of peanut butter as pleasurable, and, thus, in the relation to both this reflective consciousness that views the ego and to the consciousness of peanut butter the ego appears as intimately connected to them. However, the ego does not appear in its full blown entirety, as we have seen,¹ rather it appears as indistinct. The ego is seen as the origin of my consciousness of peanut butter, but apart from the ego's character of liking peanut butter at this time, there is no distinct apprehension of the ego as it really is. The ego appears as having characteristics that can never be apprehended all at once, by any reflective consciousness, as when you say "I am not sure what I would do if you kicked me." In fact, all that does appear whenever we try to view the ego is an indistinct framework that the particular state or action that it is viewed through is inserted into.

The contradictions that arise when we try to see the ego as intimate and as indistinct come from the way that consciousness tries to bestow on the ego characteristics that belong to it. Thus, the ego is seen as interiority, viewed from outside of itself, which is a direct contradiction of Sartre's conception of interiority, that it exists only for itself and can be conceived only by itself. Also, part of the indistinctness comes as a result of trying to place the spontaneity that belongs to the consciousness in the ego, while at the same

¹Above, p. 51.

time trying to understand how the ego can be said to produce something which can in turn modify what has produced it. We can clear up this confusion by viewing the ego as it is constituted which shows that the ego is not spontaneous and not interiority, the ego is only seen as having these characteristics; this seeing can be called an impure reflection as opposed to pure reflection or the pure reflective act which delivers consciousness to itself, a phenomenological viewing.

We can now see what Sartre means by saying that "The I is the ego as the unity of actions. The me is the ego as the unity of states and qualities."¹ The I is the ego as it appears through the an action, as when I am driving a car, or I am thinking. The I is the ego seen as an actor, as the producer of the action that is called "the eating of peanut butter." The me is the ego seen through states of which it is composed. It is me that likes peanut butter, that hates Peter, that is insensitive, and so forth. Although the ego is an object, one that is transcendent to consciousness, we cannot know our ego as we can come to know an object.

The me is given as an object. Therefore, the only method for knowing it is observation, approximation, anticipation, experience. But these procedures, which may be perfectly suited to any non-intimate transcendent, are not suitable here, because of the very intimacy of the me. It is too much present for one to succeed in taking a truly external viewpoint on it. If we step back for vantage, the me accompanies us in this withdrawal. It is infinitely near, and I cannot circle around it.²

By accompanying us at all times, the me makes it necessary for us to look at it from the viewpoint of others, which does not yield any-

¹Sartre, op. cit., p. 60, above p. 36.

²Ibid., p. 86.

thing except a picture of bits and pieces of the me. The ego is an ideal unity of all the states and actions; the "all" signifies an infinity of which only those of our present state can be seen, the rest are emptily pointed at as either in the past or the future. As ideal, the unity of the ego includes an infinity of states and actions, an infinite number of states and actions of which only the present ones through which the ego is seen can be apprehended. Thus any viewing of the ego, by ourself or by another, does not reveal anything of the ego as it is, only as it is in relation to the particular state or action through which it is viewed. As I look at my liking of peanut butter, the ego that appears is only my ego as a liker of peanut butter.

This trouble that we have in viewing the ego is primarily due to its nature of appearing only on the horizon of the states and actions through which it is seen.¹ "This is because in trying to apprehend the ego for itself and as a direct object of my consciousness, I fall back onto the unreflected level, and the ego disappears along with the reflective act."² An ego can and does appear at the unreflected level, as when someone asks me "What are you doing?" and I reply, "I am typing." This "I" is an empty concept that does not have the ego to fill it out, except after it is reflected upon. Until then this unreflected "I" has no intimacy with the ego that is found in reflection; this "I" is a transcendent that is the support of actions that

¹Above, pp. 50-51.

²Sartre, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

are demanded, as it were, by the world, that is, they are qualities of the world. At the unreflected level the action of kicking is not seen as I am kicking, rather that there is an object that requires kicking and the "I" that is said to be doing the kicking is an empty concept of the ego that cannot be seen as the ego until this unreflected level becomes the object for a reflective act. In a similar way, the body that is said to be doing the kicking is a visible symbol for the ego, but it requires a reflective act separate from the one which sees that it is I who am kicking. This means that in a reflective act that is different from that which sees the action of kicking as belonging to this ego, the body may become the object that is seen to be related to the kicking action. Thus, the body is seen as the physical manifestation of the ego, but it is an illusory relationship that can be established only in reflection.

The spontaneity of pure consciousness is impersonal because it is consciousness that directed wholly at its object and is only non-positionally aware of itself. At this unreflected level no person appears, there is only consciousnesses of something, consciousnesses that impersonally unite themselves. "It is consciousness which unifies itself, concretely, by a play of "transversal" intentionalities which are concrete and real retentions of past consciousnesses. Thus consciousness refers perpetually to itself."¹ Any personal ego that is seen is not a part of consciousness, rather "Consciousness produces

¹ Ibid., p. 39, above, p. 38.

itself facing the I and goes toward it, goes to rejoin it. That is all one can say."¹

As a result of the states and actions being transcendent objects to consciousness they lose whatever privateness we may think that they have in relation to our consciousness:

Consequently, if Paul and Peter both speak of Peter's love, for example, it is no longer true that the one speaks blindly and by analogy of that which the other apprehends in full. They speak of the same thing. Doubtless they apprehend it by different procedures, but these procedures may be equally intuitional.

The only thing that differentiates between the way that Peter and Paul apprehend Peter's state of love is that to Peter this state is given as more intimate than it is to Paul, but they both view it as an object, whose mode of existence is passive and relative. It is only possible for Peter and Paul to see this state as an object because the ego to which it belongs is also an object for Peter and Paul. This means that for neither Peter nor Paul does Peter's love or the ego to which it is seen as belonging have a certain existence, and that Paul can know Peter's love and ego as well as Peter can know it.

The only part of Peter, which is not really a part of Peter, that cannot be viewed by Paul is Peter's consciousness. However, this consciousness is not available to Peter either. In fact, we cannot say that it is Peter's consciousness, rather that the ego that is designated by the name Peter is an object for consciousness. Consciousness is essentially impersonal and spontaneous and can only be conceived by itself in a non-positional awareness. If in reflection I

¹Ibid. pp. 92-93.

²Ibid., p. 95.

try to conceive of consciousness I make an object out of it, and consciousness is no longer spontaneous or interiority. The ego cannot have any influence on this impersonal consciousness, since the ego owes what it is to consciousness. Similarly, consciousness is not limited by the ego and may surpass it at any time. Because consciousness is spontaneous, the ego which is seen as hating Peter may suddenly love Peter, and at the reflective level no explanation of this sudden love can be found; it is found only when this love is seen as constituted from the spontaneous acts of consciousness which are directed towards Peter as a lovable person.

Without the ego there could be no distinction between the possible and the real or between appearance and being because in the impersonal consciousness these distinctions are not presented. It is only because the ego is doubtful that there can be any question as to what is possible or real and what is appearance or being. At the level of consciousness all is absolute and appearance is being.¹ The ego serves as a practical manifestation of consciousness, a unity that can be seen to act and live in the world. Sartre speculates that consciousness may even produce the ego to mask the spontaneity of consciousness from itself:

But it can happen that consciousness suddenly produces itself on the pure reflective level. Perhaps not without the ego, yet as escaping from the ego on all sides, as dominating the ego and maintaining the ego outside the consciousness by a continued creation. . . . Then consciousness, noting what could be called the fatality of its spontaneity, is suddenly anguished: it is this

¹cf. Gurwitsch, op. cit., p. 330, also above, p. 53.

dread, absolute and without remedy, this fear of itself, which seems to us constitutive of pure consciousness.¹

This does not happen as a normal circumstance of our lives, but it can. Sartre calls this "anxiety" when we are unexpectedly put at the level where we can see pure consciousness as spontaneous; and he identifies this same state of affairs as the phenomenological reduction to the level of pure consciousness.

Sartre says that with his theory of the ego there is no longer the problem of solipsism. Solipsism for Sartre is the metaphysical position that the ego is the absolute to which all other persons and the world owe their existence. With Sartre's theory the ego becomes a transcendent object whose existence is like that of other people and the world, and the ego is not an absolute. However, this does avoid solipsism with respect to consciousness, even as it is impersonal, a view that Sartre does not deal with in this essay.

With Sartre's theory of the ego the question of whether it is an idealism or realism has no meaning with respect to the ego and its world, or the world, because they are co-original and objects for absolute, impersonal consciousness. But this is not a subject-object dualism because "This absolute consciousness, when it is purified of the I, no longer has anything of the subject. It is no longer a collection of representations. It is quite simply a first condition and an absolute source of existence."²

¹Sartre, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

²Ibid., p. 106.

CHAPTER THREE

SARTRE'S ANSWER TO THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS OF THE EGO IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

In light of Sartre's theory of consciousness, we shall now answer the questions and problems concerning the ego and the self which we raised in Chapter One. In doing this we shall also bring into relief problems in Sartre's theory itself which we shall examine critically in the next chapter.

Sartre criticizes Descartes by saying that "It is obvious that Descartes passed from the Cogito to the idea of a thinking substance because he believed that I and think are on the same level."¹ In Sartre's terms, Descartes does not distinguish between the unreflected consciousness, in which an ego does not appear, and the reflected consciousness, in which an ego does appear. It is in this reflected consciousness that the ego that appears is seen as the ground for the acts of consciousness, in Descartes' case the acts of doubting.

In the essay "Cartesian Freedom", Sartre praises Descartes for seeing that it is in doubting that man best shows his freedom. "Through doubt, man has a permanent possibility of disentangling himself from the existing universe and of suddenly contemplating it from above as a pure succession of phantasms. In this sense, it is the most magnificent

¹Sartre, op. cit., p. 50.

affirmation of the reign of the human."¹ This freedom to doubt the existence of everything leaves us, if we exercise this power to its fullest extent, at the level where we are a nothingness. "He can even withdraw from everything within himself which is nature, from his memory, his imagination, his body. He can withdraw even from time and take refuge in the eternity of the moment."² We could say that we are at the level of pure consciousness where all there is is consciousness of everything that we have doubted. However, the ego that Descartes finally affirms as the ground for these doubting consciousnesses is not found at this level. There is required a reflective act that is directed to the doubting consciousnesses to see an ego which appears as performing the doubting actions:

When Descartes performs the Cogito, he performs it in conjunction with methodological doubt, with the ambition of 'advancing science', etc., which are actions and states. Thus the Cartesian method, doubt, etc., are by nature given as undertakings of an I.³

If we exercise our freedom to doubt until we reach the level where we are a nothingness, then no ego will appear as it does to Descartes when he moves from this level to a reflective act that tries to grasp the spontaneous act of doubting. It is when the doubting is seen as an action, a transcendent unity,⁴ that an ego appears. Thus, there is the distinction between the acts of consciousness at the unreflected

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, "Cartesian Freedom," Literary and Philosophical Essays, trans. Michelson (London: Rider and Company, 1955, p. 178.

² Ibid., p. 178. ³ Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 92

⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

level that are consciousnesses of things as doubtful, and the methodological doubting which is an action in Sartre's sense of the word. In the latter reflected consciousness an ego appears as the producer of the doubting action, and in the former no ego appears since these are spontaneous consciousnesses. It is this distinction that Descartes did not make, thereby allowing an ego to be found at the level where there is none.

As we have seen,¹ a basic problem for Leibniz concerns the origin of the self of which we become conscious in apperception. Although Sartre would reject any talk of "unconscious" perceptions of mental acts, he would be quite sympathetic to many of Leibniz's formulations. If we consider the petites perceptions as somehow related to the individual non-personal consciousness, we can see how both thinkers find that a consciousness of self arises only upon reflection. At the unreflected level there are only the consciousnesses, or perceptions, which are related to an ego only in reflection, or apperception. The problem for Sartre and Leibniz is: "How does an ego arise from the impersonal, or unconscious, consciousnesses?" It seems that an extraneous concept appears in reflection upon the consciousness; an ego appears where there was none before and consciousness becomes self-consciousness. Sartre at least allows a unity to be present in unreflected consciousness by saying that consciousness continually refers to itself. Leibniz does not allow for any synthesizing to take place

¹Above, pp. 30-31.

at the level of perception, and thereby does not provide for any unity which reflection, or apperception, can reveal. It is this problem that we will use as the basis for an approach to a theory of consciousness in Chapter Four.

Regarding Leibniz's statement concerning the body,¹ we can see a point where Sartre would seem to disagree with him. Sartre conceives the body as an illusory fulfillment of the ego. It is illusory because in this instance the ego has lost its intimacy in becoming mundanized. For Leibniz, the body is an intimate part of the soul to which it is attached. It is the spatiotemporal manifestation of the force of the governing soul. However, both Leibniz and Sartre would regard any theory which treated the body as the primary source of our belief in ourselves as existent as a radical misunderstanding of the relation between the ego and the body. Both would consider the acts of consciousness as fundamental to the physical manifestation of consciousness. In other words, Sartre and Leibniz would say that the psychical is primary to the physical.

Sartre could say that Locke was headed in the right direction, as was Descartes, but they disregarded the evidence of mental activity in assuming that there is a self which originates these actions. Locke should have remained at the level of what is experiencable, as indeed he said he was going to. What was given to him were the "operations of the mind" or mental processes and the objects present to

¹Above, p. 50.

them (ideas); the ego only appeared after the mental process itself was made an object for a subsequent mental process. The intuition confirming our existence is a reflective one which objectifies the mental process intuited. That intuiting itself does not have an ego as its basis; it is purely spontaneous, lacking the permanency or opacity required by an ego.

Notwithstanding, Locke still looked for that mental substance underlying all the mental processes which we experience. He was, as was Descartes, already predisposed toward an egology by assuming a self to be present throughout the investigations. Thus, it was the self which performed the various inquiries and believed in them as being his that attributed to the inquiring processes themselves a self which united them. In other words, Locke committed "the Psychologist's Fallacy" by taking what he found to be true of the reflected mental processes and applying it to the whole of mental life. He did not realize that it was a producing intuition, rather than a discovering one. Although he started in the right direction, Locke did not carry his conclusions over to the side of mental substances and came up with the ambiguity that we mentioned earlier.¹

There is a basic difference between Locke on the one hand, and Sartre and Leibniz, on the other hand. Locke held that there is nothing in the mind that does not depend on sensation for its content, thereby giving the evidence of the senses a primary status. Sartre

¹Above, p. 6.

and, particularly, Leibniz gave the evidence of the mind a primary status. Sartre says that the spontaneous consciousness is the first condition and absolute source of existence. Leibniz says that there is nothing but the mind itself which is force, and all that is spatio-temporal is a manifestation of that force.

Hume's non-egological theory has more affinities with Sartre's than Locke's, although the refinements that Sartre offers go beyond Hume. Hume was overwhelmed by his discovery that we apparently have no direct experience of a permanent self lasting throughout the individual acts of consciousness. The problems implied in this discovery¹ are dealt with by Sartre. We find only separate mental acts in our experience. However, it is only in memory and reflection that they are joined to one self. There is a synthesis of these acts even as I reflectively examine my experience. According to Sartre, if we consider this synthesis itself we will find that it is an active consciousness that constitutes the ego from the states and actions, which are objects constituted by active consciousness also, an ego. Even though Hume conceived consciousness as active, he did not conceive it as the source of the self. Thus, what, for Sartre, we find in reflection is an ego that appears as the source of the acts of consciousness. Hume also finds an ego that appears in reflection as the source of the acts of consciousness, but he cannot account for this since it cannot be found in the individual acts themselves. According to Sartre, what

¹Above, pp. 17-21.

Hume did not realize was that the ego appeared in reflection because it was constituted by the reflective act. Hume's basic difficulty was that he did not draw the distinction between the unreflected consciousness and the reflective consciousness. Hume found nothing in experience except the individual perceptions themselves. "All of these are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other, and may be separately consider'd, and may exist separately, and have no need of any thing to support their existence."¹ They were not given with any sort of a self; they were impersonal. Yet, in reflection a self could be found that is the source and unifier of these separate perceptions. In the first place, Sartre would say that the separate perceptions were non-positionally and "passively" synthesized as a unity, although they were impersonal. The self that is found in reflection is, as Hume said, only found in reflection, but the relations between the separate perceptions are already there before they are reflected upon. In the second place, Sartre would say that Hume did not realize that although an ego could be found in reflection this did not mean that our consciousness is personal, it only meant that the ego can be found as the object of a reflective act; the reflective act itself is not personal.

Hume saw that memory played an important role in discovering, as a producer of the perceptions which can be related, a personal identity. What he did not see was that the relations among the separate perceptions that memory discovered were already unreflectively there

¹Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, p. 252.

due to the nature of consciousness which continually refers to itself. Reid held that memory revealed a permanent self that was existent throughout all of the perceptions. He did not believe that a reflective memory of a previous mental process adds anything to it, such as an ego, as Sartre would contend. Sartre would say that Reid did not see that the synthesis of consciousness that a reflective memory reveals was unreflectively an impersonal synthesis of past, present, and future acts of consciousness. This impersonal consciousness is non-positional, that is, it neither believes nor disbelieves in itself as existent, nor is it an object for itself. Sartre would say that Reid mistakenly assumed that the ego that he found to be present in the reflective memory was unreflectively aware of itself as existent and as a person, and that Reid then attributed this ego to all of mental life.

In other words, Sartre would say that Reid failed to distinguish between reflective memory and unreflective unification of past and present in consciousness. In the former case there can be found a belief in the act as having been done by myself who was existent at that time, who has existed from then until now, and who is now existing. In the latter case there is only the consciousness (of) consciousness, which is not positional with respect to itself, and whose syntheses of past and present consciousnesses do not constitute an ego or belief in itself as existent. Thus, even though Reid was on the right track, he confused what he found to be true in reflection as being true of the unreflected impersonal consciousness.

Sartre's basic objection to Kant's theory is that it appears as

if the transcendental ego, the "I Think," does accompany all of our representations, whereas Sartre believes that the ego, a transcendent, can accompany, but does not necessarily do so. Sartre points out that,

The preoccupation of Kant was never with the way in which empirical consciousness is in fact constituted. . . . For Kant, transcendental consciousness is nothing but the set of conditions which are necessary for the existence of an empirical consciousness.¹

Since Sartre is dealing with consciousness as it is in fact, the way to consider Kant's conclusions is to treat them as realities so that Sartre can have something to say to them.

For Sartre, consciousness is temporal and an absolute because it can act. For Kant, the acting of consciousness is non-temporal in origin and temporal as it is carried out in the world. Sartre would say that the transcendental ego, either in time or not, is a transcendent that has a relative existence depending on absolute consciousness. The transcendental ego of Kant is transcendent to the acts of consciousness which it is purported to be the source of, and, in fact, the acts of consciousness are the source of the transcendental ego.

Kant's problem of the relation between the temporal and non-temporal aspects of the ego can be dispensed with if we realize that the ego does not require an ego outside of time, and that it is only in a reflection ignoring consciousness as it simply presents itself that an ego is postulated as outside of time. Kant is forced by his reflective standpoint to account for the ego's origin outside of the consciousness which it produces because he did not make the distinc-

¹Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 35.

tion between the unreflective and reflective consciousness. It is only in the latter case that the transcendental unity of apperception is conceived as the unifier of the consciousnesses. Sartrean phenomenology provides no access to a non-temporal ego; it considers only what is itself presented, what shows itself: consciousness as essentially temporal. The phenomenologist abstains from making any judgement about what does not and cannot in principle show itself: the absolute atemporal interiority of consciousness. Kant said that we could have no knowledge of the atemporal, but he was still led to speculate concerning the origin of the ego as atemporal because the spontaneity of consciousness in time is masked by the ego. The logical necessity for a transcendental ego disappears when we discover spontaneous consciousness to be the origin of the states, actions, and the ego: it is an origin which is individual and impersonal, which creates itself in time at every instant of our life. "It determines its existence at each instant, without our being able to conceive anything before it. Thus each instant of our conscious life reveals to us a creation ex nihilo."¹

It is this impersonal spontaneity of consciousness that can give us the clue to an interpretation of Fichte's complete affirmation of the primacy of consciousness as self-consciousness; this interpretation does, however, require several significant modifications. We must understand the activity of self-consciousness as occurring in

¹ ibid., pp. 98-99.

time, and conceive the Ego and the Non-Ego not as "posited," but given as co-original. Fichte indeed viewed the Ego and the Non-Ego as reciporally determining each other as objective activities that are posited together so that the pure activity of the Ego can have an object. "The pure activity of the Ego is, therefore, now, as was required, the cause of the objective activity of the Ego, since no object can be posited without it."¹ Sartre similarly speaks of consciousness as having both the ego and the world, what Fichte calls the Non-Ego, as objects for spontaneous consciousness, which is an empty spontaneity directed wholly outside of itself. The self-consciousness that Fichte speaks of can be understood as a non-positional awareness of itself since self-consciousness for Fichte is not an object, nor is it an existent; rather it is the condition for existence.

Idealism is avoided by Sartre, and by this interpretation of Fichte, because consciousness cannot be made an object for itself, like the transcendental ego of Kant; and consciousness is not the subject because it no longer has any content due to its spontaneity. The only way that Sartre's theory can become an idealism is to try to grasp consciousness and make an object out of it, thereby endowing it with an ego and an opacity that was not there unreflectively. It is then this ego that is seen as the source of all being, a source that idealistically contains the content of the world. By affirming the source of being to be an empty consciousness, Sartre and Fichte place the em-

¹Fichte, The Science of Knowledge, p. 270.

phasis on consciousness of the Ego and the Non-Ego.

James can be said to combine the two trends of thinking that have come out of Descartes, that is the non-egological and egological theories of consciousness. James is concerned only with explaining consciousness as it appears. Thus, James and Sartre have in common their desire to explain what consciousness is. As we have indicated,¹ there are several problems that arise concerning James' theory, and it is to those that we shall apply Sartre's theory of consciousness.

The first problem concerns the relation between the present judging Thought and what it appropriates. It would seem that there is a part of the Thought that automatically retains all that has gone on before it in previous Thoughts, and a part that can actively select from these retentions the parts that it wishes to use or consider in the present phase of consciousness. A Sartrean answer would be that the unreflected consciousness itself performs the function of continually synthesizing the past and present moments of consciousness. What Sartre does not account for is the way that the present consciousness selects a certain part of this synthesis to use or consider. It may be that what appears to be a selective process is only a function that is attributed to the ego, while consciousness, as spontaneous, does not select: it is pure activity. This would still not account for the fact that we cannot remember certain things at one time, which may or may not become available at a later time. It may be that James'

¹Above, pp. 23-28.

doctrine of fringes can at least provide the way to look at the manner in which the selective process takes place.¹ The felt relation of certain retained elements to the present object of consciousness allows the elements to be closer, as it were, to the object of consciousness. These elements are more readily available to memory than those that have a very slight relation to the object of consciousness. However, this does not explain how the elements are chosen as being related, or how a spontaneous consciousness that is directed wholly towards its object can be selective at all.

James admits that we cannot know anything about the present phase of consciousness, yet he still wants to hold that there is a self present. Sartre would say that James is mistakenly applying to the unreflected Thought what he finds in the reflected Thought, that is, an ego. It would seem that Sartre's theory would be acceptable to James if James were willing to admit that the present unreflected Thought was impersonal in nature. He would have avoided some of his difficulties had he seen that consciousness, besides being consciousness, besides being consciousness of the world, is consciousness (of) consciousness, and that in going from one Thought to the next, he goes from the unreflected consciousness to the reflected one. It would mean getting rid of James' notion that the ego actively participates in the formation of our concept of ourself, a duty which impersonal consciousness itself takes over. Yet, James may be quite amenable to this suggestion which would let him preserve his insight that consciousness is

¹Above, pp. 26-27.

created anew at each moment.

The body, James believes, is the point where my past is attached to myself by the present Thought. He speculates:

The sense of my bodily existence, however obscurely recognized as such, may then be the absolute original of my conscious selfhood, the fundamental perception that I am. All appropriations may be made to it, by a Thought not at the moment immediately cognized by itself.¹

Sartre would answer that this feeling of the body as such is due to looking at consciousness as it appears in impure reflection, and trying to see the ego that is found as being fulfilled by the body, an illusory fulfillment.² James' speculations are the result of trying to find a self that can express the present unreflected Thought, an attempt that Sartre would not find necessary.

James' theory concerning the transitive and substantive parts of consciousness can be understood in terms of Sartre's theory of consciousness.³ Sartre would say that although the parts that James is talking about are only found by James in the reflected consciousness, we can see that what James has said about the transitive parts expresses much of what can be said of the spontaneity of consciousness. That is, it is the essential nature of transitive consciousness to be ungraspable, as is the nature of spontaneous consciousness. To make an object out of either one would be to destroy, or at least degrade, what it is. More important is James' realization that consciousness is not made up of separate moments of consciousness that can be distinguished from each other; it is instead a stream in which all moments

¹James, Principles of Psychology, p. 341.

²Sartre, op. cit., p. 90.

³Above, pp. 25-26.

of consciousness are but substantialized pieces of its essentially transitive nature. What James did not see was that the stream character of consciousness was due to the impersonal synthesis of consciousness.

James' statements concerning the possibility of the self as "publicly available" are significant in the light of Sartre's theory which states that the ego and its states and actions are public objects. There arise many problems that neither thinker specifically deals with, as we have indicated,¹ concerning how the ego or self becomes available to others, whether an explicit act of the consciousness is required to reveal the ego, or whether, as James suggests, there can be thought-transference. It must be remembered that in no case would Sartre say that the spontaneous consciousness itself could become available for public inspection.

By way of summary, in light of Sartre's theory we can go back over the principal problems of theories of consciousness which we set up previously.²

1. The problem of the nature of that which does the collecting in a non-egological theory like Hume's is answered by Sartre's statements concerning the perpetual synthesis of past and present consciousnesses that is done in the spontaneous consciousness. This consciousness is non-positionally aware of itself, and at this level no ego, or person, appears.

¹Above, pp. 28-29.

²Above, pp. 35-37.

2. The question that is concerned with whether anything extraneous to the present flow of consciousness is added in reflection is answered by Sartre's theory that the ego and its states and actions are added by the reflective act to the acts of consciousness reflected upon. What James calls "the Psychologist's Fallacy" works both ways: it can arise in the attribution of characteristics to the reflected consciousness that belong only to the reflective consciousness, and vice versa.

3. Sartre answers the question "Do the individual mental processes require, or have, a self which is their basis and instigator, or is the self made up of the individual acts?" by showing that the ego is constituted through the consciousnesses. The spontaneous consciousness does not have a personal self as its basis, nor does it need one.

4. The question of whether there is a self that can be found in consciousness that believes in itself as existent, even unreflectively, is answered by Sartre's theory that consciousness is non-positional with respect to itself, that is, it does not make itself an object for itself and it neither believes nor disbelieves in itself as existent. Sartre's answer to this problem lies in his belief that it is necessary to make something into an object in order to take an either believing or disbelieving stance towards it.

5. Sartre does not think that an atemporal origin of ourself and our world need be postulated. If consciousness is apprehended just as it presents itself, then the origin of the ego and the world will be seen to be that presented spontaneous consciousness itself and any questions concerning the origin of this consciousness are not valid

unless the state of affairs that is sought can by nature be presented. An atemporal origin is essentially inaccessible to the phenomenological method.

6. Concerning the problem of memory and how we forget, Sartre's theory answers that we retain everything in a continual synthesis of past consciousnesses and the present consciousness. However, as we have seen,¹ Sartre's theory is weak in accounting for our ability to forget.

7. As we have indicated,² Sartre holds neither a realism nor an idealism; instead, he finds that there is absolute spontaneous consciousness, that is not a subject because it is empty of content, and which has the ego and the world, which are co-original, as its objects.

¹ Above, pp. 72-73.

² Above, pp. 60, 71-72.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOME DISCUSSION ON SARTRE'S THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS ITSELF

Briefly, Sartre's theory of consciousness is that with respect to itself, consciousness is non-positional and non-egological at the unreflected level. Only in reflection can an ego be found; the ego is transcendent to consciousness and is the unity of states and actions, which are themselves transcendent unities. The ego is a passive relative existent constituted by reflective consciousness. To provide a background for the development of this theory, we have looked at some of the principal theories of consciousness in Modern Philosophy and some of the problems that arise in these theories. In this chapter we shall now develop some problems inherent in Sartre's theory itself. In particular, we shall consider the discussions of Sartre by Aron Gurwitsch¹ and Maurice Natanson.² In the present essay we can only hope to sketch some of the difficulties and problems that Sartre's theory must answer.

In his article on "A Non-egological Conception of Consciousness," Aron Gurwitsch begins with an account of the theory of consciousness

¹Aron Gurwitsch, "A Non-egological Conception of Consciousness," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1 (1940), pp. 325-338.

²Maurice Natanson, "The Empirical and Transcendental Ego," Literature, Philosophy and the Social Sciences (The Hague; Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 44-54.

held by Husserl in the first edition of the Logische Untersuchungen.¹ Husserl maintains that in many experiences, particularly pre-reflective ones (what we have so far called unreflective ones), one does not experience his act as part of his personal life. The ego that can be found only in reflection is nothing but the united complex of mental facts. Thus in reflection all that can be done is to ascribe a mental act to this complex, and there is no center from which the acts might issue.

Later in the Ideas and the Cartesian Meditations, Gurwitsch observes, Husserl endorsed an egological conception of consciousness. He advocated the concept of a "pure ego" from which phenomenological analysis allegedly reveals our acts to emerge. The "pure ego" is not attached to any particular act, and all acts emerge from this same "pure ego" which transcends them.

It is against this latter conception that Sartre works out his theory, vindicating Husserl's earlier view. Gurwitsch agrees with Sartre that consciousness is non-egological, but asks where the ego comes from when an act is reflected upon. Gurwitsch explains that reflection does modify the reflected to some extent; however, reflection should only make explicit and disclose the features of what is reflected on and not give rise to something that was not already there, such

¹Edmund Husserl, Logische Untersuchungen, II, V, §§ 4, 8, and 12b. (cited by Gurwitsch, p. 325), cf. Marvin Farber, The Foundation of Phenomenology (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1943), pp. 353ff.

as the ego:

In other words: reflection is held by Sartre to superinduce a new object and to be over and above the necessary condition of the constitution and existence of this object, viz., the ego. How then may reflection, as characterized above, give rise to a new object? What is the nature of the object thus given rise to? Under what aspect does this object present itself under the conditions in question? I must here confine myself to raising these questions, pointing out what I believe to be a gap in Sartre's argumentation.¹

Gurwitsch goes on to speak of two consequences of Sartre's conception of states and actions as transcendent objects and constituted synthesic unities. We can account for any mistakes we might make with respect to our states or actions; for example, I thought I hated this typewriter, whereas I find that I love it instead. This mistake is possible because the state of hating is constituted out of previous feelings that I have had toward this typewriter, each of which was itself a certainty. In this constitution a mistake may have been made, and even if not there may arise a subsequent feeling toward this typewriter that will change the state, but never change the facts of which it is composed.

The other consequence is in connection with the comprehension of other persons' minds.² My ego, states and actions are available to everyone since they are transcendent to consciousness of them; they no longer belong exclusively to me. It is only my consciousness that remains inaccessible to anyone else except myself, but we can understand each other through the availability of our egos:

¹Gurwitsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-333.

²Above, pp. 58-59.

It is, of course, true that my friend becomes conscious of his love by means of acts quite different from those by means of which I become conscious of his love. Yet the sense of objectivity consists specifically in that the object, as identically the same, may and does present itself through acts different from one another not only numerically but also typically.¹

Thus, we do not have to account for our knowledge of other people by the means of analogy, as we would have to if the ego were an essential structure of consciousness, which is itself impenetrable and inaccessible to others.

Gurwitsch goes on to compare the constitution of the ego to the way that material objects have been found to be organized unities of qualities and attributes. Just as material objects used to be considered to have a substance or essence which supports the qualities and is the source from which they issue, so the ego used to be considered the producer of its states and actions. It is the non-egological conception of consciousness that will allow us to see the ego as the organized totality of states and actions, and discard the substantive way of regarding the ego: "As in regard to material things, thinking in terms of substantiality gave way to thinking in terms of functions and relations, so, I submit, it will have to do in all fields of experience."²

Gurwitsch concludes by speaking of the result of Sartre's investigation as being that "The ego exists neither in the acts of consciousness nor behind these acts. It stands to consciousness and before consciousness."³ The ego only appears from a certain aspect of any grasping of it; it only appears in relation to the action or state through

¹Gurwitsch, op. cit., pp. 334-335.

²ibid., p. 337.

³ibid.

which it is grasped. We do not doubt that we have an ego, we may only be in doubt as to what we know or believe concerning it. We can never have complete knowledge of either our own or another's ego because there are always empty meanings¹ given with any apprehension of the ego which may or may not be contradicted by further apprehensions. "In this sense the ego's being partakes of this dubitability or better, relativity, which is the essential and existential condition of all transcendent existents."²

In his essay "The Empirical and Transcendental Ego," Maurice Natanson states that the empirical ego is the present events of my conscious life. Such events are naturally seen as part of my personal biography, and they are grounded in the spatiotemporal world of nature, particularly in my body. The transcendental ego³ is the pure structure of consciousness that is the matrix of the spontaneous intentional acts: "The transcendental ego may now be understood as the pure intentional stream of perceptual acts."⁴

¹By "empty meanings" we understand, with Gurwitsch, op. cit., p. 337, "Every apprehension of the ego involves empty meanings and intentions bearing on dispositions and actions which, for the time being, are not given, i.e., do not appear through a correspondent conscious fact grasped by reflection."

²Gurwitsch, op. cit., p. 338.

³Although we cannot develop it here in detail, we should note in passing that the transcendental ego for Natanson, Sartre, and Gurwitsch is, unlike Kant's concept, through and through temporal. We regard this as a problem to be clarified.

⁴Natanson, op. cit., p. 45.

The question about the relation of the "mine" to this transcendental ego has had two different answers in the phenomenological tradition. The first considers experience to be "mine" only because there is a transcendental ego that is the ground for the unity of experience due to its constitutive activity: the theory that Gurwitsch attributes to Husserl's conception in the Ideas and the Cartesian Meditations. The other is best expressed by Sartre's non-egological conception of consciousness, according to which, as we have seen,¹ all that is given in and through consciousness is the stream of consciousness--the continuous synthesis of past, present and future acts. The ego is not given in the intentional activity, it only appears as a "reflective addition." There is only the non-positional consciousness (of) consciousness of something. The transcendental ego is completely unnecessary for a phenomenological theory and description of consciousness.

Natanson sketches a phenomenological approach to consciousness:

My approach is built upon the following theses: first, that the decisive feature of consciousness is intentionality; second, that intentionality is a non-natural and purely a a priori structure; third, that we may distinguish between the experiential givenness of intentionality and its transcendental presuppositions; fourth, that the direct experiential givenness is non-positional or in other terms, presents no "I"; but, fifth, that the transcendental presuppositions of intentionality do both require and, in some sense, present a transcendental ego; and sixth, that this transcendental ego is the pure possibility which metaphysically underlies and attends the actualization of any empirical ego in the world.²

The first two theses are necessary for any phenomenological theory of consciousness and are held by Husserl, Sartre, Gurwitsch,

¹Above, pp. 39-40.

²Natanson, op. cit., p. 47.

and Natanson. The third and following theses are where Natanson differs. He goes along with Sartre in saying that in our immediately presented conscious activity no transcendental ego is found. The latter is a transcendental structure which is an ultimate "presupposition" for what is immediately presented, that is, universally found in all experience. This transcendental ego is the unifier and director of my conscious life; it makes it my conscious life.

The relationship between the ego as empirical and as transcendental is conceived by Natanson to be one of the actualization of the pure possibilities of the latter by the former. My empirical existence is a projection out of the pure possibilities of consciousness.¹ For Sartre this relation obtains between the pre-reflective consciousness and the empirical ego that is constituted by it. Natanson says that Sartre never gives a satisfactory answer to what this relation consists in, and Sartre cannot explain this relation without recourse to a transcendental ego.

If we consider, Natanson continues, Sartre's application of his theory to the case of helping Peter² we find that instead of "I am in the presence of Peter's suffering just as I am in the presence of the color of this inkstand;"³, Peter's suffering is not merely given; it is given to me. In this respect it differs qualitatively from the givenness of the color of an object which is for an observer. However,

¹ Ibid., p. 48.

² Above, p. 46.

³ Sartre, op. cit., p. 56.

the pity I may feel for Peter, and his quality of needing help, require an act on my part for them to be recognized. Peter's need is an objective quality of his being only if I refuse to recognize our encounter as a human act. "The suffering, anguish, and desperation of fellow men may be encountered as objective qualities of their being only if I choose to divorce myself from the meaning of recognition as a human act."¹ This recognition requires the ground of an ego that is phenomenologically prior to the objects that it encounters.

Suppose that we consider the ego, as do Sartre and Gurwitsch, as the correlate of reflective acts--a unity that appears only as one-sided through the particular state or action. "How can I recognize the transcendent ego as mine unless the individual acts of self-reflection are caught up in a thematic continuum of self-recognition?"² This would imply that there is an ego which is the transcendental ground and condition of the reflection in which a transcendent ego is found; an ego that is able to recognize this transcendent ego as its own and not someone else's because this transcendent ego is the correlate of the transcendental ego.

Sartre interprets the Kantian "I think" as a mere formal condition when it is said it must be able to accompany. However, Natanson goes on, this does not mean that there are moments of consciousness without an ego. The accompaniment of the transcendental ego is a necessary possibility, and is phenomenologically presented in the activity of consciousness:

¹Natanson, op. cit., p. 50.

²Ibid., p. 51.

The transcendental ego is not directly presented in the immediacy of consciousness, but its formal character is not restricted to its "validity" or pure possibility; instead--and this is the whole point--the transcendental ego is continuously evident and given in the thematic recognition that shocks the entire range of experience into existence as mine.¹

The transcendental ego is the ground for there being my life as an empirical fulfillment of the possibilities of the transcendental ego. The support of this thesis is to be found by making thematic the transcendental ground of intentional life, and not in consciousness as it is projected into empirical existence.

Let us bring together the results of our discussion by indicating some of the problems Sartre's theory leaves us with, and by offering a tentative solution to those problems.

Gurwitsch asks how Sartre can speak of reflection as superinducing a new object over the unreflective non-positional consciousness, that is, the ego. To be sure, unreflective consciousness is held to be uniting itself through the continual synthesis of past, present and future acts; however, it does not have any quality of being engaged in by an ego; it is impersonal. Yet reflection cannot produce what is reflected on; reflection can only disclose and make explicit something that was already there. Thus, our problem is how we can understand the ego which is seen in reflection and was not there unreflectively, or pre-reflectively.

In a similar manner, Natanson asks how the ego that is seen in reflection as a transcendent unity to consciousness can be conceived as my ego unless there is a correlative unity on the side of conscious-

¹ibid., p. 52.

ness that can apprehend the transcendent unity as its own. Not only must consciousness be a unity, but it must be unified in such a way that its recognition of the transcendent ego is a recognition of the ego as mine. Natanson also asks how Sartre can account for the relation between the transcendent ego and the spontaneous impersonal consciousness: "What is the connection between the nihilating structure of pre-reflective consciousness and the self-reflective person who has a name, a unique biography, and a life?"¹ Without a transcendental ego there can be no realization that my conscious acts are part of my life.²

In connection with a previous problem we are led to question the accessibility we have to our consciousness when Gurwitsch says that "My ego and my psychic facts, in contradistinction to the conscious acts, are then no longer my exclusive property, they are accessible to other people, whereas my consciousness is not; it is and remains closed and impenetrable for everyone except myself."³ Although consciousness is aware of itself, it is an awareness that is impersonal, or pre-personal in Gurwitsch's terms.⁴ This would imply that even if pure con-

¹ Ibid., p. 49.

² We must realize that any distinctions that we draw with respect to consciousness are only for analysis; there can be no infinite regress in trying to grasp the reflecting on the reflecting in any moment of consciousness as it is itself presented.

³ Gurwitsch, op. cit., p. 335.

⁴ We emphasize again that the "self-awareness" of which we speak is straight-forward, not reflective, and is to be sharply distinguished from a reflective, hence personal self-awareness.

consciousness becomes available in the phenomenological reduction it could not be recognized as my consciousness, in fact, it would be hard to tell how this consciousness that is presented is related to the pre-reductive self that initiated the inquiry.

As we have seen, the problems Natanson raises with respect to a strict non-egological theory of consciousness (problems that bring out an almost Kantian desire for the conditions necessary for there to my conscious life) can be solved, he believes, by allowing for a transcendental ego the "matrix" of acts of consciousness. This ego is not given in the immediacy of consciousness, but it is phenomenologically presented in the on-going activity of consciousness. Natanson equates a non-positional consciousness with the non-appearance of an ego in such a way that we become confused when he goes on to assert that there is an ego, one that is the matrix of the acts of consciousness. On the one hand, he is willing to say that no ego is presented to the pure reflective act of phenomenological inspection. On the other hand, the transcendental ego is allegedly presented as the unifier and director of my conscious life; it is presented as the cardinal ground for there to be my conscious life. He may mean that in the final analysis the transcendental ego is conceived to be the pre-reflective consciousness (of) consciousness, but he does not explicitly resolve the dichotomy between the non-positional consciousness and the transcendental ego. Natanson wishes to retain Sartre's conception of consciousness as impersonal spontaneity, while allowing for a transcendental ego which is the basis for my conscious life.

To resolve the dilemmas which Gurwitsch and Natanson lead to in

developing Sartre, we shall suggest, in preliminary fashion, a solution which would resolve these problems.

We have referred to the way Sartre, Gurwitsch, and Natanson treat the attitude that consciousness takes toward itself pre-reflectively, although attitude is much too strong a word for this relation in these theories. In Sartre's theory consciousness (of) consciousness is non-positional, which means for Sartre that it does not make an object of itself, nor does it assume a position of belief or disbelief with respect to itself as existing, it is what he also refers to as non-thetic consciousness.¹ Gurwitsch holds that although the pre-reflective consciousness is not made an object for itself, it is, nevertheless, aware of itself as existing.² Natanson calls the pre-reflective consciousness non-positional, yet he allows that it is also personal. Natanson and Gurwitsch do not hold that consciousness is impersonal in the sense that Sartre says it is; it is this difference in the sense of impersonality of consciousness that gives us a clue to understanding the significance of the differences that we find in the theories of these three phenomenologists.

We would like to suggest that there is a basic confusion concerning the concepts of the non-positional and the non-thetic. They are not to be considered as equivalent; rather they can be readily distinguished. A non-thetic consciousness may be either; 1) non-positional and objectivating; 2) positional and non-objectivating; or, 3)

¹Sartre, op. cit., p. 56. ²Gurwitsch, op. cit., p. 330.

non-positional and non-objectivating. Non-positionality here refers to a modification of consciousness in which the object is neither believed in nor disbelieved in as existent—it is what Husserl calls a "neutrality modification" of consciousness.¹ Consciousness may also be objectivating or not, that is, make an object out of that of which it is conscious.

An example of 1) is the perceiving of this table in which the table is neither believed in nor disbelieved in as existent; a perceiving in which I, as a phenomenologist, am interested only in the way that the table as an object is given to the consciousness of it. An example of 2) is an aesthetic appreciation of a table which is believed in as existent, although I am not busied with it as existent; I am explicitly busied with it in an aesthetic appreciating. The table as existent object is only made a theme or object for me when I objectivate not the appreciating, but the believing-perceiving which has been going on all the time. An example of 3) is an aesthetic appreciation of a table which is neither believed in nor disbelieved in as existent, perhaps the non-positionality can be attributed to the indistinctness of what is appreciated due to poor lighting. The non-positionality may also be due to the attitude that the phenomenologist is taking.

Sartre would say consciousness neither believes nor disbelieves in itself as existing because it does not ipso facto objectivate itself.

¹Husserl, Ideas, pp. 282-300.

However, the fact that it does not objectivate itself does not imply that it does not believe in itself as existing—just as the fact that I am aesthetically appreciating something does not imply that I do not believe in the object as existing. Indeed, the second example shows clearly objectivating is a further act (in which an ego is always engaged) and is different from believing.

With these distinctions in mind, we would like to submit that conscious (of) consciousness is of the second kind of non-thetic consciousness. It does not objectivate itself, but it does maintain a stance or belief with respect to itself. As there is consciousness of liking peanut butter there is simultaneously a positional consciousness of this consciousness. In fact, there is a positional consciousness of a consciousness of peanut butter that may be neither believed in nor disbelieved in as existent. The consciousness (of) is non-objectivating whereas the consciousness of peanut butter is objectivating. This believing in itself as existent that consciousness has does not imply that separate "substance," a self, is believed in as existent.

Instead, we must distinguish those acts of consciousness that are given as having been engaged in by an ego and those that are not given as having been engaged in by an ego. We may call the former acts "active," and the latter acts "passive." It is a "passive" synthesis that Sartre talks about as the perpetual synthesis of past, present and future acts of consciousness. An example of a "passive" consciousness is the perception of the floor that I am standing on as I am actively engaged in perceiving this table. This means that along with

each act of consciousness which is given with the quality of being engaged in by an ego there is also given various other consciousnesses which are not engaged in by an ego, such as the perception of the floor. Each "passive" consciousness can be subsequently given with the quality of being engaged in by an ego, as in our example, when I turn my attention to the perception of the floor so that the table perception is given as "passive" and the floor perception is given as "active." "Passive" in no way signifies "receptivity." Thus, at the pre-reflective level, there are phases of consciousness that are retained as that phase of itself which was anticipated and subsequently retained: our phenomenological datum. There is also at the pre-reflective level consciousness constituting some phases of itself as having been engaged in, or now engaged in, or anticipated as being engaged in by an ego. In a reflective apprehension of pure consciousness, the phases that are "active" are given as having an egoic quality, and these phases are passively retained in the perpetual synthesis. "If we consider the fundamental form of synthesis, namely identification, we encounter it first of all as an all-ruling, passively flowing synthesis, in the form of the continuous consciousness of internal time."¹

Thus, we agree with Sartre that there is no ego present at the pre-reflective level, and that consciousness does not make an object out of itself at this level. However, we would want to say that at this level there are also some phases of consciousness constituted as

¹Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, trans. Cairns (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), p. 41, see also § 37, 38.

having an egoic quality. Even at the reflective level all that is objectivated are phases of consciousness previously anticipated and subsequently retained as having been engaged in, or now engaged in, or anticipated as being engaged in by an ego. There is no ego presented at this level either, only an egoic quality of some mental processes. As I objectivate my consciousness of peanut butter in reflection all that is made explicit is this phase of consciousness as having been engaged in by an ego. The transcendent ego that Sartre talks about is not available to the phenomenologist because it does not show itself in the flow of consciousness. There is presented in the phases constituted as having been engaged, or now engaged in, or anticipated as being engaged in by an ego, the sense of the ego as being one and the same throughout the mental life. What Sartre talks about with regard to the transcendent ego is speculative with respect to the phenomenological method as understood by Sartre, Husserl, Gurwitsch, or Natanson.

By making the distinction between "active" and "passive" consciousnesses we can see that although most fundamentally consciousness is a "passive" synthesis and is impersonal, the retained phases may be constituted as having been engaged in by an identical ego. In other words, some phases of consciousness are given as having been engaged in by an ego, an ego that gives consciousness even at the reflective level a personal quality but not a person. Thus the positionality of consciousness (of) consciousness does not imply that upon reflection and objectivation an ego will appear, only that some phases will appear with an egoic quality. It is this consciousness (of) that we can, with

Natanson, refer to as the transcendental ego--an ego that is not a substantivized or reified version of the activity of consciousness.¹ To illustrate what we mean in the above solution we can refer to two experiences in our everyday life that occasionally appear, although are not necessarily experiences that everyone does have.

The first comes about as the result of a feeling of frustration when we think ourselves to be entirely unable to communicate to others exactly what we are or are not. Apart from the wanting to convey what we have done or been, there is at times a feeling that all that we are is not expressed by what we find in impure reflection to be our self. It is an awareness that there is some part of our consciousness that we can almost grasp, but each time we do it slips away. We submit that what we are trying to grasp in this instance is the transcendental ego itself, which is essentially ungraspable as an object for phenomenological reflection. All we can find is the phases of consciousness that are given as engaged in by an ego; they have an egoic quality. Perhaps some extra-phenomenological method must be found which will allow us to grasp and elucidate the "ego itself." This experience is similarly expressed by Sartre when he speaks of consciousness becoming anguished:

There are no more barriers, no more limits, nothing to hide consciousness from itself. Then consciousness, noting what could be called the fatality of its spontaneity, is suddenly anguished: . . . it is both a pure event of transcendental origin and an ever possible accident of our daily life.²

¹Natanson, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

²Sartre, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

The second experience is what Herbert Spiegelberg has called the 'I-am-me' experience.¹ This experience is quite distinct from the usual awareness that these acts are my acts and are being performed by the same person that was yesterday, is today, and will be tomorrow. It is a distinct awareness, sometimes abrupt and sometimes gradual, that is decidedly directed to the self as a unique individual, distinct from anything which appears to anyone else or even itself in its everyday awareness. An illustration of this experience that is quoted by Spiegelberg is an autobiographical fragment of Jean Paul Richter, the German Romanticist;

I shall never forget what I have never revealed to anyone, the phenomenon which accompanied the birth of my consciousness of self (Selbstbewusstsein) and of which I can specify both the place and the time. One morning, as a very young child, I was standing in our front door and was looking over to the wood pile on the left, when suddenly the inner vision 'I am a me' (ich bin ein Ich) shot down before me like a flash of lightning from the sky, and ever since it has remained with me luminously: at that moment my ego (Ich) had seen itself for the first time, and for ever. One can hardly conceive of deceptions of memory in this case, since no one else's reporting could mix additions with such an occurrence, which happened merely in the curtained holy of holies of man and whose novelty alone had lent permanence to such everyday concomitants.²

Like the first type of awareness its articulation requires one to de-grade what is felt if it is to be set down explicitly. Perhaps only a poetical expression could convey the feeling that we are on the level where our self really resides. What is experienced in the 'I-am-me'

¹Herbert Spiegelberg, "On the 'I-am-me' Experience in Childhood and Adolescence," Psychologia (Kyoto), 1961, pp. 135-146.

²Jean Paul Richter, Aus Jean Pauls Leben, Sämtliche Werke (Berlin: 1862), XXXIV, 26.

is the feeling that what is found is not something that comes into existence at that time, rather we feel that we are but explicating what was already there, that is the positionality of consciousness (of) consciousness with respect to itself. It is an active making explicit what is "passively" synthesized in consciousness. We cannot objectivate what we find in this experience, namely, the transcendental ego; yet we do find ourselves, as in the first experience, at the level of what Sartre calls the pure reflective act, or at the level of phenomenological reduction, in which consciousness is presented as it is in itself.

We can further illustrate what this solution is that we propose by going through the various theories of consciousness that we have examined and pointing out where we feel they are close or far from our solution. As we have seen,¹ in relation to Sartre's theory we agree that there is no ego or self presented in pre-reflective consciousness, and we even go further and say that there is no ego presented at the reflective level either, only egoic qualities of consciousness. What Sartre did not realize is that non-positionality does not necessarily follow from the non-objectivation of consciousness by itself--it is a logical, not a phenomenological, conclusion. Instead, consciousness (of) is positional with respect to itself and non-objectivating. "Passive" consciousness is positional with respect to itself but actively it may (or may not be) positional with respect

¹Above, pp. 92-93.

to something other than itself. Thus, there may be a positional consciousness (of) a non-positional consciousness of peanut butter. There is a transcendental ego that Sartre would not acknowledge because he did not want to allow an opacity into consciousness. However, if he drew the distinction between positionality and objectivation he could allow for the transcendental ego that is necessary to answer Natanson's and Gurwitsch's objections that Sartre does not account for the relation between the impersonal consciousness and the transcendent ego, and still maintain his insight that consciousness is spontaneous and impersonal.

Similarly, we can hold with Gurwitsch that "What we are left with by the phenomenological reduction is transcendental consciousness as an apersonal or prepersonal field."¹ And at the same time we can answer his question about what is explicated in reflection that shows itself as an ego by our concept of consciousness as positional with respect to itself, although we would not want to say that an ego appears, only the egoic quality of consciousness. We can answer Gurwitsch by drawing the distinction between the "passive" and "active" consciousnesses and showing that what is explicated in reflection is consciousness constituting some phases of itself as having been engaged in, or now engaged in, or anticipated as being engaged in by an ego; these phases are constituted as having an egoic quality.

We can agree with Natanson that: "An alternative interpretation

¹Gurwitsch, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

is to treat the transcendental condition as formally required but at the same time as phenomenologically presented in the on-going activity of consciousness."¹ The status of the transcendental ego in Natanson's theory can be seen more clearly in light of our solution that the transcendental ego is the consciousness (of) consciousness which is positional, non-objectivating with respect to itself, and is a "passive" impersonal synthesis of phases of consciousnesses that may or may not have been engaged in by an ego. By drawing these distinctions we can see that the unity of consciousness that is necessary for us to recognize acts of consciousness as mine is a unity that is "passively" and positionally aware of itself as existent and the same. Thus, what Natanson called, with Sartre, the non-positionality of consciousness (of) is what we have called a non-thetic consciousness, a consciousness which is positional and non-objectivating. And it is this consciousness (of) that we call with Natanson the transcendental ego, the pure structure of consciousness.

We have said that no ego is presented at either the pre-reflective nor the reflective level. However, Sartre, Gurwitsch, and Natanson do talk about an ego that is transcendent or empirical. We do not deny that our acts of consciousness have an egoic quality, but there is no ego itself presented. What may be found in an impure reflection is the ego on the horizon of the acts, but what this ego is can only be emptily pointed to. In any case, the transcendent ego can only be seen

¹Natanson, op. cit., p. 52.

in a reflection that is grounded in the world, that is, an impure reflection. In the phenomenological reduction, or pure reflection, no transcendent ego remains, there is only the on-going consciousness and the transcendental ego as the fundamental ground for there to be my mental life.

In relation to our solution that consciousness is positional with respect to itself we can see that Descartes saw that consciousness does believe in itself as existent at all times, however, he was not able to see the distinction between impure reflection, the level at which he carried out his meditating, and pure reflection, the level to which his methodological doubting almost led him.¹ Leibniz is quite close to our proposal in his theory of the petites perceptions which are similar to the passive synthesis that is positional, a synthesis that can be made explicit in "apperception." Neither Locke nor Hume could find any experience of the 'I-am-me' type in which they would have a perception of an identical self which is passively synthesized in consciousness.

Reid was mistaken that it is memory that gives us evidence for a personal identity. He confused, as we have seen,² memory with the passive retention of past, present, and future consciousnesses. Kant and Fichte may be said to have found out that consciousness is "passively" aware of itself as existent as in Kant's theory of the "I think" or

¹Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, pp. 1-26.

²Above, pp. 67-68.

Fichte's concept of the "pure, self-returning activity of the Ego," but neither of these theories was the result of a descriptive analysis of consciousness. They were logical analyses of the conditions necessary for consciousness to be the way it appears to be. Thus, they started from an impure standpoint that presented an empirical ego which they then tried to explain; as a consequence, their results can hardly be called phenomenological. James mistakenly assumed that since the Thoughts were given as egoic that an ego was present in consciousness; he saw that the phases of consciousness were synthesized, but he assumed that this implied a self. However, there is no ego that is accessible to us, as phenomenologists.

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