

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

PROBLEMS IN PHENOMENOLOGY

Stephen Priest

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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Contents

1. The Ego	3
2. The Body	159
3. Consciousness	179
4. Space	
5. Time	
6. Subjectivity	
7. Freedom	
8. Language	
9. Others	
10. Things	
11. Art	
12. Being	

I

THE EGO

1 The Transcendental Ego and the Epoche

We need a grasp of some central tenets of Husserl's phenomenology, and the role of the transcendental ego within it. (1)

Husserl's philosophical motivations may be understood as partly Cartesian and partly Kantian. Indeed, this is how he frequently depicts them himself. Husserl shares Descartes' aim of placing all knowledge upon secure foundations; finding some indubitable and incorrigible truths upon which all true beliefs depend for their truth. Like Descartes Husserl is, in a way, an intensely first person singular philosopher but unlike Descartes, Husserl eschews mind-body dualism. Indeed, it is an ambitious but essential part of his phenomenological method to suspend or put in parentheses any metaphysical commitment.

Husserl's motivations are Kantian because, like Kant, he is trying to answer the question How is knowledge possible? Like the philosophy of the Critique of Pure Reason, Husserl's phenomenology is a putative non-empirical grounding or founding of all knowledge, whether scientific, mathematical, commonsensical, or philosophical. Like Kant, Husserl grounds knowledge in the 'transcendental' structures of consciousness.

Four phases may be identified in Husserl's philosophical development: a psychologistic and non-phenomenological phase exemplified by *On the Concept of Number* (1887) and *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891), a

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

phenomenological and meriological phase exemplified by *Logical Investigations* (1900-1), transcendental phenomenology proper, expressed in the first book of *Ideas* (1913) but in many ways anticipated in the *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* delivered from 1905, and finally, a concern with the phenomenology of intersubjectivity salient in the 1931 *Cartesian Meditations* based on the *Paris Lectures* (delivered in 1929). As with any attempt to divide a philosopher's intellectual career into 'phases' some elements of one phase may be apparent within another. Husserl's case is made more complex because much of his work has been published posthumously, and an enormous bulk still remains to be published. Of crucial importance in the posthumous publications are *Experience and Judgement* (1973, German 1948), *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1970, German 1954) and the second volume of *Ideas* (1989, German 1952).

In *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre is concerned with what I am calling the third phase of Husserl's philosophy, the transcendental phenomenology of *Ideas*. It reaches its apogee in *Cartesian Meditations* which appeared in French translation in 1931. This phase is distinguished by Husserl's employment of a special device: the phenomenological reduction or *epoche*.

Epoche is the Greek word for 'suspension of belief' and was sometimes used by the ancient sceptics to denote their agnosticism about philosophical or commonsensical assumptions. Husserl uses 'epoche' to denote agnosticism about all assumptions about the world outside one's own consciousness. The whole of common sense, or the positing of what Husserl calls 'the world of the natural attitude' (*die Welt der natuerlichen Einstellung*) is suspended by the *epoche*, as is the whole of science, philosophy and every other objective ontological commitment. The external world, including other minds and all causal relations, is no longer 'posited'.

Husserl is not endorsing a kind of ontological idealism by his use of the *epoche*. He is not disbelieving in the existence of the external world. He is neither believing nor disbelieving in the external world but using a kind of methodological solipsism to describe just what appears to consciousness with the aim of putting all knowledge on a more secure foundation. 'Methodological solipsism' is not too misleading a term for this, so long as we bear in mind that even one's own existence qua living empirical human being is also suspended by the *epoche*.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The use of the epoche opens up the field of transcendental subjectivity, transcendental field, or region of pure consciousness (die Region des reinen Bewusstseins). Although all ontological commitment to the objective reality of objects in the external world has been suspended, the consciousness of those objects is thereby left untouched, unaffected. The objects themselves are 'reduced' to objects of consciousness, phenomena, or phenomenological appearances. The structures of consciousness itself are thereby opened to phenomenological investigation.

Husserl's phenomenological procedure is both descriptive and essentialist. It is descriptive because no true phenomenologist postulates entities that do not appear, nor provides causal explanations. The phenomenologist is supposed to offer descriptions in a way that is methodologically self-conscious about presuppositions. While many other kinds of philosophy are naively premised on the world as described by science or by common sense, phenomenology asks what the world is like and how any awareness of it is possible.

Phenomenology is essentialist because it seeks the essence of its subject matter: the essence of consciousness, the essence of perception, the essence of a physical object and so on.

If we consider the phenomenological reduction or epoche, the concern with description, and the essentialism together we may obtain a picture of how the Cartesian and Kantian aim of grounding knowledge is to be met.

In phenomenological essentialism it is putatively established that one kind of phenomenon grounds another. For example, phenomenological colour is grounded on extension because through imaginative variation it is established as eidetically impossible that there should be non-extended phenomenological colour. Similarly, Husserl thinks it is of the essence of a physical object that, if it is presented to consciousness, it is presented in a perspectival way, by sides or profiles (Abschattungen). It is of the essence of a mental state not to be given in this way.

The pure essence (eidos) of an object is radically different from that object. It is apprehended through the special faculty of eidetic intuition. It is through the establishing of such hierarchies of dependencies that Husserl hopes ultimately to ground all knowledge.

There are two features of transcendental phenomenology that are particularly important for Sartre's critique in *The Transcendence of the Ego*: the intentionality of consciousness and the ego itself.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

As part of his essentialism, Husserl asks what the essence of consciousness is. His answer is that the essence of consciousness is intentionality (Intentionalität). Intentionality is the alleged property of consciousness to be of or about something. For example, there is no seeing without seeing something or other (even if what is seen is illusory). There is no loving without loving someone or something, no thinking without thinking about something, even if what is thought about is wholly imaginary. Influenced by his teacher the Austrian psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano, Husserl holds that intentionality is mainly necessary and always sufficient for consciousness. He is not as strict as Brentano who holds that intentionality is always and everywhere necessary and sufficient for consciousness. In *Logical Investigations* Husserl says moods and sensations are mental states but do not exhibit intentionality. What their non-intentional mentality consists in is left unexplained. (2)

Once a distinction is drawn between an act of consciousness and its object or content, we may vary the act type and retain the same type of content or vary the content type but retain the same type of act. Husserl's term for the act of consciousness is noesis and he calls the content of the act the noema. (3) The eidetic reduction facilitates the description of what is common to a number of acts of the same type. The essence of an act of that type is thereby established. Husserl thinks that knowledge is transcendently grounded in the structures of consciousness.

Suppose we ask now the further question: How is consciousness possible? Is there anything that grounds consciousness? In particular, are there necessary conditions for the unity of consciousness, or for there being consciousnesses distinct from one another? In the *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (delivered from 1905) Husserl unifies the life of consciousness through the double intentionalities, transversal and vertical, of the inner temporality of the stream of experiences. Nevertheless, it is in order to answer these and closely related questions Husserl invokes the transcendental ego.

2 The 'Discovery' of the Transcendental Ego

Sartre uses the term 'transcendental ego' but Husserl uses 'ego' (Ich), 'pure ego' (reine Ich), 'transcendental ego' (transzendente Ich), 'spiritual ego' (geistige Ich), 'ego-pole' (Ichpol), 'personal ego' (personliche Ich) and

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

related expressions. It is presumptuous to take it for granted that Husserl's terms have a common referent. In *Ideas I*, Husserl does not use the expression 'transcendental ego' (except in the Preface he wrote especially for the English translation). He uses 'pure ego' to denote the contentless subjective pole of every intentional act. The term 'transcendental ego' is first introduced in the early 1920's in *Erste Philosophie* and *Phänomenologische Psychologie* and appears in *Ideas II* (in §30) which Husserl worked on from 1912-1928. (4) 'Transcendental ego' is fully adopted in *Cartesian Meditations* (1931).

In *Ideas II* and *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl does identify the pure ego with the transcendental ego and this allows a holistic picture of Husserl's phenomenology of the self to be extracted. It is this we need to grasp in order to make sense of Sartre's critique.

The transcendental ego is revealed by the epoche. When ontological commitment to the world is suspended it is not the case that nothing remains. I remain, not as a certain empirical human being nor as my psychological ego but as a pure ego:

'The epoche can [...] be said to be the radical and universal method by which I apprehend myself purely: as ego'
(CMT §8)(5)

Nevertheless, Husserl has the makings of an argument for the transcendental ego. He says

'Let us think of a self-perception as accomplished, but this time in such a way that we abstract from the body'
(*Ideas II* §22)(6)

In that case,

'What we find then is ourselves as the spiritual Ego related to the stream of lived experiences' (*Ideas II* §22) (7)

If I am conscious of myself, but not conscious of my body, then what I am thereby conscious of is a phenomenological I related to a stream of experiences.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Indeed, so long as the ego exists it is aware of existing: 'The ego is existent for himself in continuous evidence' (CMT §31). The fact that the spiritual ego exists is a phenomenological discovery, not the conclusion of a sound argument. Logically, there is no contradiction in the supposition that I am conscious of myself but not my body, but am not thereby presented with both a phenomenological ego and a stream of consciousness. There exist three further possibilities: I am presented with an ego but no stream of consciousness. I am presented with a stream of consciousness but no ego. I am presented with neither an ego nor a stream of consciousness but something else: one thought, a Buddhist void, pure presence, the interiority of a soul. There is a logical gap between, on the one hand, the fact of non-physical self-consciousness and, on the other hand, the structure and content of that consciousness.

The transcendental ego is a phenomenological discovery because it is 'what we find in ourselves' (Ideas II §22). Who are we? It is essential to distinguish descriptions within and outside the epoche. 'Person' is a concept of the natural attitude. It denotes nothing found within the field of transcendental consciousness after the epoche. Outside the epoche we may use 'we' to denote whoever carries out the transcendental reduction. The chronology of this discovery is as follows: A human being at a time (externally specified) is ignorant of their existence as a transcendental ego. That person at a later time is self-conscious but not thereby conscious of their body nor of themselves qua empirical person. Then, at some still later time, that person (externally described) 'finds' (internally described) that they are a transcendental ego 'related' to a stream of consciousness. 'Time' here denotes external time because within the epoche the time of the natural attitude is suspended. Husserl allows the use of the first person singular grammatical form throughout the transition from the natural attitude to the phenomenological attitude, from psychological ego to pure ego.

It is not clear what this finding is. It is at least a kind of disclosure within transcendental subjectivity, because no other phenomenological route is available for the detection of the transcendental ego. There could in principle be some non-phenomenological explanation for the transcendental ego's appearance: for example that the subject is caused to believe in it by a neurological mechanism, at the moment of self-consciousness. Although such an explanation is consistent with phenomenology, it cannot be entailed by it because phenomenology eschews causal explanations. Although belief in the transcendental ego is consistent with its non-existence because its

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

existence does not follow from belief in its existence, 'finding' is not just coming to believe in here. The ego appears within transcendental consciousness. It is presented as something rather than nothing so, phenomenologically, or qua appearance, it exists. Husserl thinks the transcendental ego is given to consciousness in an indubitable way. This is something that Sartre will call into question.

'Spiritual' (*geistig*) in Husserl's use carries no religious connotation (except *malgré* Husserl) because theological commitments are bracketed by the *epoche*. In Husserl's use of 'spiritual', 'x is spiritual' entails but is not entailed by 'x is non-physical' and the word has the sense of 'pertaining to consciousness'. (8)

It is important to read Husserl's descriptions of the discovery of the transcendental ego phenomenologically, not ontologically, in so far as this distinction can be drawn. Husserl invites us to 'abstract' from the body in thinking of a 'self-perception'. Whatever is thereby phenomenologically presented as non-physical could, arguably, be physical under a non-phenomenological ontological description. Because being physical does not entail appearing physical and appearing non-physical does not entail being non-physical Husserl's phenomenology is *prima facie* consistent with competing non-phenomenological ontologies of the mind. Indeed, if this were not the case the abstraction Husserl describes might be impossible or, at best, redundant. Although a critic of the *epoche* might claim it is impossible to be aware of oneself without thereby being aware of the body (a thesis suggested by Merleau-Ponty and some kinds of Buddhism). Husserl's phenomenology cannot possibly entail materialism even though it is consistent with that metaphysical position. Or, if the phenomenology tacitly entailed idealism, then the abstraction might be redundant as the body would already appear as only something that exists for consciousness. Husserl himself sometimes calls his philosophy 'transcendental idealism' (*transzendentaler Idealismus*) but that expression is equivocal and cannot plausibly be construed as denoting any strong ontological idealism. What makes ontology of the mind so hard is that in a profound sense Husserl is right: Appearance cannot establish reality. Phenomenology cannot prove non-phenomenological ontology, even if it grounds it.

Husserl says that the transcendental ego is 'related' to the stream of lived experiences. We need to know what this relation is. A clue is given in other quasi-arguments for there being a transcendental ego:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'The ego grasps himself not only as a flowing life but also as I, who live this and that subjective process, who live through this and that cogito, as the same I'

(CMT §31)(9)

'I find myself thereby as that which is one and the same in the changing of these lived experiences, as "subject" of the acts and states' (Ideas II §22) (10)

Three claims need to be separated here: There is something 'one and the same' in the changing experiences. I am that which is 'one and the same'. I am the 'subject' of those experiences. We should add a fourth claim entailed by Husserl's three claims: The 'subject' is identical with that which is 'one and the same' in the changing experiences. If I am identical with what is 'one and the same' and I am identical with the 'subject' then the subject is identical with what is 'one and the same'.

Although Husserl thinks 'I find myself [...] as that which is one and the same in the changing of these lived experiences' is made true by the findings of direct experience, this could be challenged. From a Humean point of view, if I introspect, then there appears no single perennial idea with which I could identify myself or which could explain my idea of myself. Against Hume, and in defence of Husserl, from the fact that no single idea (image, thought, perception) appears in self consciousness it does not follow that nothing one and the same appears. Arguably, there is something constantly present whenever I introspect. For example, that there is something or other is constant (except in the rare Buddhist condition of 'no-mind' when ideational and propositional thought ceases but awareness remains).

What we could call the interiority of consciousness is always there whatever the changing contents of introspection. The mentality of content is similarly perennial in introspection. Finally, and crucially, the property of being mine pertains to any content I introspect. The phenomenon of being me is disclosed. It is just this phenomenon, I suggest, that Husserl has in mind when he says 'I find myself [...] as that which is one and the same in the changing of these lived experiences' (Ideas II §22). It is what Husserl designates 'ownness' (CM §46) *Eigenheitlichkeit* (CM §46). Like Hume, Husserl refuses to identify himself with some idea or mental act. Unlike Hume, Husserl thinks something may be introspected that is not an idea or mental act. The only plausible candidate for this is the phenomenon of 'being me' or the appearance of any or all of my acts as 'being mine'.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

I shall argue in this book that although there is such a thing as being me, it is peculiarly resistant to description, analysis or explanation. This is the problem of being someone that Nagel insightfully draws our attention to in *The View From Nowhere*: What is it for something to be me? Despite his concern with subjectivity, Sartre does not see that there is a problem about being me until *Nausea* (1938) and in *Being and Nothingness* (1943) he states baldly that the problem cannot be solved. Kant is not aware of the problem even though he has discovered transcendental subjectivity. Husserl sees the problem but fails to solve it. (11)

Although Husserl can meet one Humean objection by denying that that which is one and the same is an idea and identifying it with the phenomenon of being me, a new Humean problem arises about this very identification. How can the I that introspects be numerically identical with the I that is introspected (the phenomenon of being me)? Subject and object would have to be identical.

This problem can be overcome. It is not inconsistent to hold that the I that introspects and the phenomenon of being me that is introspected are two aspects of what I am. That the subject qua subject is an object, or the object qua object is a subject is incoherent, but that subject and object are two parts or aspects of a phenomenological whole is not incoherent.

There is a further problem of how the I that is self-conscious can be justified phenomenologically. If the I is subject then qua subject it does not appear to consciousness. Phenomenology only describes what appears to consciousness, so there can be no phenomenology of the subject. The subject qua subject is invoked by, but cannot be justified by, phenomenology. True, the epoche putatively exposes the transcendental field and the ego-subject for phenomenological scrutiny but this generates the regressive problem of justifying the existence of whatever scrutinises that field, and so on. This is a difficulty in Husserlian phenomenology that Sartre will exploit to the full.

There are two further problems about the identification of the self. How could it be known that 'I am that which is one and the same' in changing experiences? If we concede that there is such a phenomenon as 'being me' and I am directly acquainted with it over time, then that problem is already solved, even if this phenomenon resists adequate phenomenological description and even if 'being me' resists thorough conceptual analysis. However, if what is introspected is not the phenomenon of being me but the constant, or perhaps intermittent, phenomenological property of my

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

experience's being 'mine', then I am being identified with a property of my experiences. This is not Husserl's view but it is close to the one Sartre will adopt. Husserl thinks I depend on my experiences and my experiences depend on me. Sartre thinks I depend upon my experiences but my experiences do not depend on me. It is not clear that Husserl has an argument to forstall this Sartrean construal of the phenomena.

If Husserl could forstall the objection, he would have a ground for his claim that I am the subject of those experiences. It is not clear that the phenomenology establishes this. As Hume and the Buddhists say, although I may introspect my experiences it is not clear that I introspect myself qua subject of them (even if pace Hume and the Buddhists, I introspect myself). This is not just because qua subject of the act of introspection I am unavailable to that act, but also because it seems intuitively wrong to say that in introspection I am confronted with both my experiences and myself as subject of them.

Husserl does not share this intuition. He thinks that the tripartite structure of consciousness survives the epoche. Not only does each act exhibit intentionality, directedness to an intentional content, each act has the same subjective pole: a source or origin in the transcendental ego whose act it is. Husserl speaks of 'the Ego as identical pole of the subjective processes' (CMT §31) 'Das Ich als identischer Pol der Erlebnisse' (CM §31) and 'the Ego as pole of his acts' (CMT §34) '[...] Ich als Pol seiner Akte' (CM §34).

Is it true that once the objectivity of what is, including the body and the external world, is 'bracketed' by the epoche that this tripartite structure remains ?

One of the obstacles to doing transcendental phenomenology, and philosophy of mind, is the contamination of thought by spatial metaphor and spatial images. It is tempting to think of the ego as an object, if not a physical object then a non-physical object, the intentional object as like a physical object, and the mental act relating the two as like a physical relation. Although Husserl is thinking of a mental act as a relation between two relata, ego and intentional object, we have to disregard all physicalist construals of this structure to grasp Husserl's meaning. This is psychologically difficult because we habitually conceive relations and their relata on the model of physical relations (perhaps because we are used to thinking about the external world). Husserl does not free himself from spatial metaphor, indeed he makes use of it.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

To decide on the plausibility of his postulation of the transcendental ego we need to inspect its alleged properties and try to unpack his spatial metaphors.

3 The Properties of the Transcendental Ego

(i) Directedness

Husserl says

'I, the Ego that in each case "thinks", have directed the ray of the Ego onto what is objective in the act' (Ideas II §22) (12)

and

'In the accomplishment of each act there lies a ray of directedness I cannot describe otherwise than by saying it takes its point of departure in the Ego' (Ideas II §22)(13)

Husserl uses the spatial image of a ray to denote the intentionality of an act of consciousness. It is the ego that directs its 'rays' onto their intentional contents. Now, it is reasonably clear what it is for a physical ray, a sunbeam or the beam of a searchlight, to be directed towards a physical object. In these cases the sun and the searchlight respectively have a causal role in illuminating what they are directed towards. Physical rays have a physical direction. It is less clear what it means for the transcendental ego to direct its acts to its contents, once the physical connotations of 'ray' are subtracted. Husserl himself feels a difficulty at this point when he uses 'I cannot describe otherwise than [...]'. This is partly the seeming ineffability of the self but it is also the seeming ineffability of intentionality.

There are two kinds of way of characterising intentionality: phenomenological and theoretical. Phenomenologically, we find a form of words, or a detail of description, that will capture the 'aboutness' of the mental. Theoretically, we eschew phenomenology and try to find some explanation sufficient for intentionality in terms of mental representations or neural processing systems. Pace Husserl, what intentionality is cannot be 'read off' the phenomena and pace several philosophies of mind, the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

neurological is not sufficient for the intentionality of the mental. Pace Cartesianism, there is no a priori obstacle to intentionality being wholly physical, or there being wholly physical intentional systems or relations. A photograph is a photograph of some subject. A footprint is a footprint of some boot sole etc. The intentionality is there and is wholly physical. It obtains in virtue of a causal relation and a qualitative similarity between object and representation. What is hard to see is how any physical mechanism, however complex, could be sufficient for the intentionality of the mental. It is the phenomenology of intentionality that is difficult to construe physically, not intentionality per se.

The directedness of the transcendental ego consists in its being a director; the director of its mental acts towards (in some non-spatial sense of 'towards') their contents.

Rather as Husserl makes the scholastic assumption that all consciousness (with the exception of moods and sensations) is consciousness of some object, so he makes the Cartesian assumption that all consciousness of the world is by some subject. Any consciousness is someone's consciousness:

‘Anything belonging to the world, any spatio-temporal being, exists for me – that is to say, is accepted by me – in that I experience it, perceive it, remember it, think of it somehow, judge about it, value it, desire it, or the like. Descartes, as we know, indicated all that by the name cogito.’ (CMT §8) (14)

After the epoche this owner is no longer the empirical human being, nor the psychological ego of scientific psychology and everyday life, but the transcendental ego.

Is Husserl right? There are other ways of describing the inside of consciousness, Buddhist or Humean for example, which do not carry this entailment. The Buddhist freeing of attachment (upadana) from thoughts and their objects and the resultant cessation of desire (raga, tanha) is in many ways strikingly analogous to Husserl's epoche. Yet the Buddhist conclusion is that there is no ego but selflessness, or soullessness (nairatmya), which implies that acts of awareness have no persistent inner owner. It is not self-evident that the Buddhists and the Humeans are wrong and it is a philosophy of the self consistent with theirs that Sartre will endorse.

(ii) 'Indubitability'

Husserl speaks of 'the Ego given in absolute indubitability as the "sum cogitans"' (Ideas II §22). Something is indubitable if it cannot be doubted, so the existence of the transcendental ego is indubitable if it is not possible to doubt it. There are different kinds of impossibility, so what kind does Husserl have in mind here?

He says the ego is given in absolute indubitability. This at least means that once I am reduced to it, I cannot be more certain of anything than I am of my own existence qua transcendental ego. It might also mean that certitude about the existence of the ego does not admit of degrees. It is certainly never the case that the ego is dubitable once disclosed.

The impossibility could still be psychological, logical or metaphysical. Construed psychologically, Husserl means it is not a psychological option for me to (sincerely) doubt my own existence qua transcendental ego. This in turn divides into the claims that I cannot doubt that I exist, and I cannot doubt that I am a transcendental ego. I can perhaps form the words 'I do not exist' or 'I am not a thinking being' but I can never believe them if I understand them. On this reading we are not constituted in a way that allows us to doubt that we exist. The thought makes sense to us. We can even think the thought 'It is true that I do not exist'. What we cannot do is think it sincerely. Similarly, once we have enacted the epoche and the transcendental field is exposed it is not a psychological option not to identify oneself with the transcendental ego.

If this is what Husserl means, it is doubtful that it is true. It is an entailment of the Buddhist doctrine of no-mind that a person can be in a state of consciousness where their psychology is so to speak 'dissolved'. They feel themselves to be Humeans (although not, of course, under that description). The existence of such states is sufficient to refute the indubitability of the self as transcendental ego or as 'sum cogitans'. The Buddhist or Humean states do not have to be veridical for the Husserlian view to be refuted.

Could the impossibility be logical? It is not clear that sentences like 'I do not exist' and 'I am not thinking' are self-contradictory, though they could be made to entail contradictions on some interpretations. Rather, such claims are self-stultifying. They may be uttered or thought just on condition they are false. Their falsity is a necessary condition for their production. Even the plausibility of this may be doubted on a 'no-self' view. If there is no self that

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

thinks, but only thinking, then 'I' denotes nothing, except perhaps the thinking itself. Even then, if there can be thinking without a thinker it seems redundant to claim that thought has to think itself, or thinking does its own thinking. What could that consist in except the thinking itself going on? Similarly, 'I exist' is false if 'I' refers to nothing. If 'I exist' is thought or uttered then something certainly exists but it is not clear that it has to be what the 'I' denotes. It is still less clear that if 'I' denotes it has to denote the transcendental ego.

Could the impossibility be metaphysical? Is it metaphysically impossible for me to doubt that I am a transcendental ego? Something is metaphysically impossible if and only if in every possible world it is not the case. Is there a possible world in which I doubt that I am a transcendental ego? Of course there are many, including all the possible worlds in which one is sceptical of Husserlian phenomenology. Is there a possible world in which Husserl's epoche is executed but no transcendental ego revealed? There are many: Buddhist worlds, Humean worlds, Sartrean worlds. Sartre's phenomenology of the self in *The Transcendence of the Ego* may be construed as one such possible world.

(iii) 'by no means whatsoever something mysterious or mystical'

In his desire to establish phenomenology as a strict science (streng Wissenschaft) Husserl shares with other post-Kantian philosophers a horror of the mystical and the metaphysical and an urge to transparency. He says about the ego:

'As what is absolutely given, or what can be brought to givenness in the a priori possible view of fixating reflection, it is by no means whatsoever something mysterious or mystical' (*Ideas II* §22)(15)

Something is absolutely given if nothing else has to be given in order for it to be given, and it is given as it is. The findings of reflection are a priori because they are known independently of sense experience. However, it is not clear that Husserl is right to suppose that the ego's being absolutely given entails that there is nothing mysterious or metaphysical about it. He thinks that because it is given immediately and as it is, nothing further is true of it. This inference is invalid and the conclusion almost certainly false. Even if something is given as it is, not all of it might thereby be given. It is

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

probably false that all of the ego is given because, as Husserl concedes there is something seemingly ineffable about the self. There is the Nagelian problem of what it consists in for something to be me. Ineffability, or even apparent ineffability, entails mystery.

Indeed, the self is arguably mystical because it seems to admit of no naturalistic explanation. My own existence cannot be logically derived from any set of purely naturalistic premises no matter how long and complicated. From premises of the form 'x exists' we cannot validly infer 'I am x'. Even from 'This particular unique x exists' we cannot validly infer 'I am x'. Although the logical independence of descriptions is not enough to establish the ontological independence of entities we have very little idea of what is said about something when it is said that I am it. I am, it seems, out of this world. Nevertheless, and paradoxically, the phenomenon of being me may be intuited.

(iv) Numerical Identity over Time

Husserl maintains that the transcendental ego, qua that which has my thoughts and experiences, remains numerically identical over the time it takes for those thoughts and experiences to occur. Consider some set of experiences occurring over some length of time. If those experiences are experiences of just one person then one and only one transcendental ego is the subject of all of them and exists over all of that time. If that transcendental ego exists at any of that time then that transcendental ego exists at all of that time.

What are Husserl's grounds for this? Two sorts of ground are implicit in his text. He thinks the transcendental ego is revealed whenever an act of consciousness is revealed within the transcendental field after the epoche. Secondly, he thinks the transcendental ego accounts for the unity of consciousness.

It is right that whenever I introspect, any mental phenomenon of mine appears to have the phenomenological property of being mine. This, however, is only sufficient to establish a qualitative similarity between those acts. It does not establish the numerical identity over time of a psychic subject or owner of them. It is extremely tempting to make the slide from the qualitative similarity of a property to the numerical identity of an entity. The slide, however, is not a logically valid one. The phenomenological property

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

of the acts feeling like mine might not be what their being mine really consists in.

Even if the transcendental ego may be introspected as a perennial accompaniment of my acts, it does not follow that it is their owner, that which 'has' them. Even if it is that which has them, the necessary and sufficient conditions for the unity of consciousness might lie elsewhere. They might account for my 'having' my experiences.

Sartre's strategy in *The Transcendence of the Ego* will be to accept the 'personal' nature of one's mental states but argue that the existence of the transcendental ego is actually inconsistent with the unity of consciousness. He then tries to account for that unity in a different way.

Husserl thinks the transcendental ego does not exist independently of its mental acts. He speaks of 'the transcendental ego [as] inseparable from the processes making up his life' (CMT §30). This inseparability is entailed by his view that ego and act are mutually dependent:

'The Ego cannot be thought of as something separated from these lived experiences, from its "life", just as, conversely, the lived experiences are not thinkable except as the medium of the life of the Ego' (Ideas II §22)(16)

However, from the fact that the ego never appears phenomenologically unaccompanied by one of its acts, it does not follow that it could not exist without its acts. Again, phenomenology does not establish ontology. Also, it is not clear that ego and act are unthinkable independently of one another. Plausibility would be lent to the ego as unifier of consciousness if it predated and postdated an act as well as lasted through it. If the ego depends on its acts support is given to the view that it is a property of them.

(v) Necessity

Husserl claims that a kind of contingency pertains to mental states but a kind of necessity pertains to the ego:

'At least, considered eidetically, any cogito can come and go, even though one may doubt that every cogito is necessarily something transitory and not simply, as we find it, something in fact transitory. In contradistinction, the

pure Ego would, however, seem to be something essentially necessary'
(Ideas I §57) (17)

Any token mental state exists contingently, not only because it might not have existed but also because it is temporary. Although a type mental state may exist intermittently, if tokens of that type exist at different times and do not exist at some intervening times, it does not necessarily exist intermittently. It is a contingent fact about any token mental state that it exists temporarily and a contingent fact about any type mental state that it exists intermittently because in principle any mental state might have been perpetual.

On the other hand, the transcendental ego 'seem(s) to be something essentially necessary' (Ideas I §57). Husserl does not say what kind of necessity pertains to the transcendental ego. There are three possibilities: necessary existence, necessary properties, and a necessary relation to experience. I shall consider each in turn.

It seems doubtful that the transcendental ego necessarily exists. If we make the background metaphysical assumption that it is a contingent fact that there is something rather than nothing at all, argument would be required to show that the existence of the transcendental ego is an exception. It does not seem contradictory to say that there might have been no transcendental ego.

If it could be established that the transcendental ego exists in all possible worlds then it would follow, in just that sense, that the transcendental ego necessarily exists. However, it is not clear that Husserl is committed to such a large claim. He thinks the transcendental ego is a condition for the possibility of this world, the actual world, being given to us. Even if we said that the imagining of any possible world tacitly presupposes a point of view, and more controversially, thereby presupposes a transcendental ego, we have still only made a claim indexed to the actual world (our world).

However, the existence of the transcendental ego could be argued to be necessary in a weaker, quasi-Kantian sense. For Husserl the transcendental ego is a necessary condition for the world. In *Ideas* the world is the totality of things. In the later Husserl it is construed as the ultimate horizon and so inseparable from transcendental subjectivity. On both construals of 'world' the transcendental ego grounds the 'perspectival' world as we know it. The ego is then transcendental in this neo-Kantian sense of 'necessary for the world of our experience'. If the transcendental ego is necessary for the world as we know it, then the existence of the world as we know it is a sufficient

condition for the transcendental ego. This is not the same thing as saying that the transcendental ego necessarily exists. However, it is equivalent to saying that the transcendental ego is necessary in a weakened sense of 'necessary', viz: 'p is necessary if and only if nothing in the world (as we know it) can refute p'. So, on this interpretation the existence of the transcendental ego is not logically necessary ('There is no transcendental ego' is not contradictory) but it is still necessary in a strong sense. Nothing we can ever come across can refute the claim 'There is a transcendental ego'.

Another possibility is that Husserl thinks the transcendental ego possesses its properties essentially or necessarily. For some property of the transcendental ego, F, not only is the transcendental ego F but the transcendental ego could not not be F. Different reasons could be adduced for this claim: It would be contradictory to say the transcendental ego is not F. The transcendental ego could not exist unless it were F. The transcendental ego could not be what it is (the transcendental ego) unless it were F. Through Husserl's process of eidetic intuition it appears that the transcendental ego could not lack some of the properties it has.

Finally, Husserl could mean that the transcendental ego is essentially or necessarily related to its experiences. We have already seen that the transcendental ego depends upon its experiences. If, as Husserl thinks, the ego is the subject of experiences and accounts for the unity of consciousness then it is a necessary condition for them (at least qua someone's). It follows that experience is sufficient for the transcendental ego. However, to say that the transcendental ego is necessarily related to its experiences is not to say that it necessarily exists. It is to say that the inference from experience to transcendental ego is a logically valid one. The validity of that inference is not a modal property of the ego itself.

Husserl does not just say the ego seems to be 'necessary'. He says it seems to be 'essentially necessary'. If something is necessary, what additional information is supplied by saying it is essentially necessary? If 'essentially' just means 'necessarily' then Husserl's concept is that of an iterated modality and the difference is just between: 'Necessarily p iff \Box p' and 'Essentially necessarily p iff $\Box \Box$ p' But the ego possesses its modality de re and 'essentially' does not just mean 'necessarily'. Suppose x is essentially F if and only if either x could not exist unless x was F or x could not be x unless x were F. If we conjoin this definition with the idea of an object possessing a property necessarily: x is F and x could not not be F, then we have the following interpretation of Husserl's 'essentially necessarily': 'x is essentially

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

necessarily F if and only if x is necessarily F and either x could not exist unless x were F or x could not be x unless x were F'

Clearly, in order for this schema to be informative the grounds for holding that x is necessarily F have to be different from the grounds for holding that x is essentially F.

Husserl's claim that mental states 'come and go' and are therefore contingent (exist contingently) seems unproblematic, so long as we understand it as a claim about types. It does not make much sense to talk about token mental states 'coming and going' if we individuate them through their unbroken temporal locations. If we give up that assumption then obviously we may say 'This is the same headache as the one I had yesterday' where this does not mean another token of the same type.

If something exists intermittently there is a sense in which it does follow that it exists contingently, so long as we assume that each thing either exists necessarily or contingently and nothing exists neither necessarily nor contingently. It follows because if something exists intermittently it sometimes does not exist, a fortiori it is possible that it does not exist, and that is just what it is for something to exist contingently. If something exists necessarily, it not only exists, it is not possible for it not to exist so it cannot exist intermittently.

The only serious objection to the soundness of this argument is the logical possibility that something necessarily exists intermittently, not in the sense of something that exists contingently (or non-necessarily), having the property of periodically ceasing to exist necessarily, but in the sense of something that necessarily exists when it exists but does not always exist. This must in fact be the modal status of the transcendental ego in Husserl (if it exists necessarily) because he thinks the transcendental ego only exists when its experiences exist. Its experiences do not always exist so it does not always exist. The only way of reading this claim consistent with the necessary existence of the transcendental ego is to say it necessarily exists when it exists.

(vi) 'Transcendancy Within Immanency'

What exactly is the appearance of the transcendental ego within consciousness after the epoche? Husserl says:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'[...] there is presented in the case of that Ego a transcendence of a peculiar kind - one which is not constituted - a transcendence within immanence' (Ideas I §57) (18)

Something is immanent if and only if it is directly present to consciousness. Something is transcendent if and only if it is presented to consciousness as not directly present to consciousness. For example, the back and one side of a visible physical object are presented to consciousness as not directly presented to consciousness if the front is being directly (visually) presented. A physical object is constituted. Consciousness constitutes it as a whole physical object for us. In the case of the transcendental ego the transcendence in immanence is not constituted from outside itself. In the developed philosophy of Cartesian Meditations the transcendental ego constitutes itself. It has a genesis, a history and an 'auto-constitution'. It has a genesis because it begins to be when a mental act begins to be. It has a history because it accumulates properties; the property of having been subject of act 1 at t1, of act 2 at t2, and so on. It has an auto-constitution because 'The ego is himself existent for himself in continuous evidence; thus in himself, he is continuously constituting himself as existing' (CMT §31)

'Das ego selbst ist für sich selbst seiendes in kontinuierlicher Evidenz, also sich in sich selbst als seiend kontinuierlich konstituierendes' (CM §31). The transcendental ego makes itself be and makes itself what it is (it has no prior 'essence'). Husserl says that in its full concretion the ego is correctly designated by the Leibnizian term 'monad'. Ego, act and content are given as if that is all there is. This is why Husserl says 'Consequently the phenomenology of this self-constitution coincides with phenomenology as a whole' (CMT §33) 'In weiterer Folge ergibt sich die Deckung der Phanomenologie dieser Selbstkonstitution mit der Phanomenologie überhaupt' (CM §33) and this is why Sartre's attack is potentially so subversive of the Husserlian project.

The transcendence of the transcendental ego is its existence as the subject of absent mental states when it is presented immanently as subject of present mental states. The fact of its transcendence can be intuited directly in its immanence. Why this should be so, Husserl does not say. In particular, the transcendental ego is not constituted as transcendent in the manner of a physical object, so that explanation is unavailable, even though Husserl calls the ego's self constitution 'transcendental self-constitution' (CMT §31)

footnote). However, Husserl thinks transcendency within immanency' captures the phenomenology.

Interestingly, Husserl does not choose to write 'immanency within transcendency'. Prima facie this is an accurate phenomenological description. Experiences occur over times, such that any experience later than a given time and before a later time is 'within' those two times. From the point of view of that experience, the transcendental ego is transcendent at those earlier and later times.

Husserl uses 'transcendency within immanency'. The act of phenomenological reflection to which the ego is immanently presented is the same act that detects earlier and later experiences as having the same transcendental ego as subject. It is this numerical identity over time possessed by the ego that makes it transcendent in respect of any one experience at any one time. (When, available to direct reflection, it is immanent.) In reflection it is grasped as both immanent and transcendent but in immanence, so it is grasped as transcendence in immanence.

In summary, then, we may say that Husserl thinks the transcendental ego is an ineliminable subject of experience revealed by his epoche or phenomenological reduction. It is that which has all one's experiences. It unifies states of consciousness as one's own, exists always and only when they do and has an auto-constitution. It's existence is indubitable within the framework of transcendental subjectivity and its existence is in some sense necessary. With this picture of Husserl's doctrine of the transcendental ego in mind we may turn to Sartre's critique.

The Transcendental Ego

'[...] the momentous fact is that I, with my life, remain untouched in my existential status, regardless of whether or not the world exists'

(Cartesian Meditations §11)

'By phenomenological epoche I reduce my natural human Ego and my psychic life – the realm of my psychological self-experience – to my transcendental-phenomenological ego' (Cartesian Meditations §11)

3) Sartre's Holism

Following Brentano entirely, and Husserl largely, Sartre says 'consciousness is defined by intentionality' (38) 'la conscience se definit par l'intentionalite' (TE 21). He thinks all and only mental phenomena exhibit that directedness towards some object or content which we call 'intentionality'. In other words, the intentional is necessary and sufficient for the mental.

Suppose that intentionality is the essence of the mental, or intentionality makes the mental what it is. With this assumption we may examine Sartre's alternative account of consciousness's unity.

To say that Sartre's account is an alternative to Husserl's is perhaps rather misleading. Sartre thinks that Husserl is in possession of a broadly accurate account of the unity of consciousness but then unnecessarily postulates a transcendental ego to account for that very same unity. Sartre says that consciousness 'unifies itself by escaping from itself' (38) 'elle s'unifie en s'echappant' (TE 21).

Let us take first the claim that consciousness escapes from itself. Sartre never abandons the view that consciousness is 'transparent'; that consciousness is consciousness of itself. Despite this he wishes to make room for the claim that consciousness is 'absorbed' in its intentional object. It is possible to make intuitive or pre-phenomenological sense of this by remembering that there are times when one is no doubt conscious of something or other but not conscious of being conscious. There seem to be periods when persons are conscious without thereby being occurrently self-conscious. If we were asked later what we were conscious of we could perhaps answer correctly and there might be various reasons for this. We might remember the object, or infer that we were conscious of the object on the basis of remembering the object in a particular way. Or it could be that consciousness is implicitly a kind of self-consciousness even when there is not any direct act of attention focussed on the consciousness of the object. These possibilities would seem to be open. But clearly, there is a kind of 'escape' from self-consciousness or consciousness's reflection upon itself involved when one's attention is absorbed by the object of consciousness. It could be that these distinctions admit of degrees that are not readily captured by the distinctions available to us at present.

But Sartre says more than that consciousness escapes from itself. He says that by doing this it unifies itself. The thinking here is that unless there existed an intentional object there could exist no unity of consciousness. (I mean by 'exist' here 'exist *qua* intentional object'. I do not mean that the intentional object need have some non-phenomenological existence.)

Putatively, phenomenological existence *qua* intentional object, or *qua* object of consciousness is a sufficient condition for the unity of the consciousness of that object. Sartre thinks intentionality is constitutive of the unity of consciousness. Why is this ?

Sartre's proffers a kind of holism of the mental. It does not make much sense to talk about a single act of consciousness taking a single intentional object wholly in abstraction from numerically distinct actual and possible acts of consciousness which jointly contribute to the synthesis of that object as the object that it is. Sartre provides us with the following example:

'The unity of a thousand active consciousnesses by which I have added, do add, and shall add two and two to make four, is the transcendent object "two and two make four".' (38) (49)

It is only against the background of a multiplicity of acts of consciousness that we can speak of, for example, a particular thought that two plus two makes four. The fact that is thereby thought counts as the one that it is in virtue of its transcendental constitution.

Sartre is not saying that empirical agreement or anything like that makes it the case that two plus two equal four. Clearly, from the fact that n people agree that p it does not follow that p , and Sartre knows that. Indeed, he calls 'two plus two equals four' 'this eternal truth' (38) so I take it he thinks that it is necessary. (50) He is concerned with its constitution as an object for consciousness: what the fact as a fact thought by us consists in. The fact that two plus two equal four is a transcendent object of consciousness according to Sartre. He means it is not something which exists *qua* fact only amongst the contents of consciousness. Its being the fact that it is transcends or is not exhausted by any consciousness of it. The possibility of its being an object for a particular act of consciousness, its being possible for example that I think it now, has transcendental conditions. Unless a multitude of other mental acts were possible, concerning addition, subtraction, the meaning of '+', and '=' etc. then this putatively isolated fact would not be thinkable. If that is right, then there cannot exist acts of consciousness in isolation from other acts of consciousness, and if that is right then it only makes sense to talk of numerically distinct acts of consciousness if such acts are in principle parts of some consciousness as a whole. For this reason Sartre says:

'Whoever says "a consciousness" says "the whole of consciousness"' (39)
(51)

This is an interesting line of argument which, if sound, does succeed in grounding the unity of consciousness in the intentional object and therefore makes the transcendental ego redundant.

There is however a number of problems for it. Perhaps the most fundamental is this. Suppose we maintain that the intelligibility of an object of experience *qua* this or that sort of object presupposes the possibility of a variety of acts of consciousness. Suppose we allow further that the set of acts of consciousness thus presupposed must turn out to be parts of one and the same consciousness; otherwise their content could not be presupposed in the intelligibility of the object to a single act of consciousness. On the face of it this looks like a respectable and familiar quasi-Kantian line of argument. The trouble is that it arguably proves too much.

Suppose the transcendental conditions for the possibility of the unity of consciousness are in fact social or public. For example, suppose it is a condition for two plus two equals four being not a fact *tout court* but a fact for some consciousness that other consciousnesses agree that this is indeed a fact. We would not wish to claim that that constituted good grounds for saying that putatively numerically distinct consciousnesses must actually turn out to be parts or aspects of one and the same consciousness. This is an option that Hegel takes up. (52)

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel wishes to maintain the individuality of the various consciousnesses whilst maintaining at the same time that they are aspects or perspectives of one and the same consciousness. Suppose however we just wish to retain the individuality of consciousness: retain good grounds for saying that your mind is not mine and mine is not yours. These grounds would seem not to be forthcoming from any view which makes the constitution of the objects of consciousness *qua* the sorts they are transcendently and intersubjectively constituted. Indeed, *prima facie*, the notion of intersubjectivity is undermined. The options would seem to be these: atomistic intelligibility of experience or Hegel.

(4) Consciousness Makes Itself

Sartre accepts, indeed emphasises, that synthesis is temporal:

'A principle of unity within duration is nonetheless needed if the continual flux of consciousness is to be capable of positing transcendent objects outside the flux. Consciousness must be perpetual synthesis of past consciousnesses and present consciousnesses. This is correct.' (38-39) (53)

This statement expresses a fundamental area of agreement with two characteristically Husserlian views: the view that consciousness constitutes its objects, and the view that any single act of consciousness is made possible by protention and retention. (54)

Sartre has already argued that it is the intentional object of consciousness which makes consciousness a unity. Now he is suggesting that it is certain facts about consciousness which make the object of consciousness what it is for consciousness. So the process is two-sided: The intentional object provides the unity of consciousness, but consciousness 'posits' its intentional object and makes it be what it is for consciousness. We should think of these as reciprocal processes, or as synthesised (*aufgehoben*) in Hegel's dialectical sense. (55)

Sartre's claim about time is that past acts of consciousness have to be in some sense present in any given act of consciousness in order for the objects of consciousness to be posited, or experienced as objects existing independently of consciousness. Any act of consciousness directed towards some object presupposes other acts in the same consciousness, but those other acts that are past acts must be 'read into' the present one to make it consciousness of an object of a mind-independent sort. (56)

If *per impossibile* there were solitary acts of consciousness then there could be no grounds for claiming that the objects of such acts are transcendent. As Sartre puts it, unity within duration is required for the positing of objects 'outside the flux' (39). The distinction between what is 'in' consciousness and what is 'outside' it is only possible if certain sorts of objects, paradigmatically physical objects, are posited. Nevertheless, within the minimal Husserlian framework which Sartre accepts, the existence for example of a physical object for consciousness is an achievement of consciousness, an achievement of synthesis.

Sartre's thesis that consciousness must be a synthesis of past and present acts of consciousness is not only consistent with but semantically similar to Husserl's protention-retention distinction. That is the view that in any act of consciousness of some object an anticipation of the nature of the object is read into it and a quasi-memory of the nature of the object retained in the

perception of it. In the *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* Husserl considers the example of the consciousness of a tune. Clearly, Sartre is reporting half of this picture when he claims a synthesis of past and present consciousness obtains. Sartre's thesis of past and present synthesis is entailed by but does not entail Husserl's doctrine of protention and retention.

It might be objected that the description Sartre has given of the 'principle of unity within duration' (38) is incoherent. He has said that consciousness is a synthesis of past and present consciousnesses, but he does not just mean that consciousness in general is such a synthesis. He means present consciousness is a synthesis of past and present consciousness. The difficulty is that something present is putatively both present and past but arguably it is logically impossible for anything to be both present and past because 'present' and 'past' are mutually exclusive predicates. (There is a clear sense in which they are not mutually exclusive; what was past may now be present; in other words something may last from then to now. But this is not Sartre's meaning here). Sartre seems to be committed to the view that what was past is present *qua* past and that would seem contradictory.

To make sense of this we need to view it in the context of Sartre's account of the present moment. In *Being and Nothingness* he commits himself to a view of the present as the is been. This violence to the tense categories of ordinary language is necessary according to Sartre to break down our rather static compartmentalised view of time as divided cleanly between past present and future. In fact the putative present is perpetually ceasing to be past and perpetually becoming future and this change constitutes the essentially dynamic quality of the present. The synthetic unity of past present and future is prior to their analytical separation. In *originary synthesis* room would seem to be left for the past, in this case past acts of consciousness, to be, or at least to be becoming, present. The distinction between past present and future is blurred in reality if not in language. The ekstasies of time are separable in abstract thought but not in what is phenomenologically given.

So, we have a new way of thinking of the unity of consciousness. Although it remains true that consciousness is unified through its intentional objects, it is true in addition that 'It is consciousness which unifies itself' (39). This is intended by Sartre as a complimentary claim, not one which competes with the thesis that unity is provided by the object. After all, consciousness was not without any role in the constitution of the unity of its

object. The several acts of consciousness have to be directed towards their intentional object not just so that we can speak of one and the same consciousness but so that we can speak of one and the same object. It would be fair to say that consciousness unifies itself before the object or in the face of the object, or the several acts of consciousness fuse into one single consciousness by being directed towards one and the same object, even though an equally legitimate way of thinking of this process is: the object counts as one and the same transcendent object for consciousness because the several acts of consciousness are directed towards it.

It might be objected to this description that it is circular: A unifies B and B unifies A but either the prior unity of A is a condition for the unity of B or the prior unity of B a condition for the unity of A but not both. I think Sartre's reply would be that it is one process that is being described in two ways here and not two separable processes. Although consciousness is not identical with its objects, the two are inseparable.

We are now in a position to interpret Sartre's claim that 'consciousness refers perpetually to itself' (39). This may be unpacked in two complimentary ways. Firstly, any given act of consciousness presupposes certain past acts of consciousness for the constitution of its intentional object. Secondly, in mentioning an act of consciousness one is implicitly making reference to the whole consciousness of which that act is a part. This is because its being the act that it is, its being the act directed towards a particular intentional object and an intentional object of that type, depends upon its location holistically as one act of consciousness amongst others. So when Sartre says 'whoever says "a consciousness" says "the whole of consciousness"' this is not the Hegelian point that talk of an individual consciousness presupposes the existence and nature of consciousness in general (a social and ultimately spiritual consciousness). Rather it is the claim that in a sense in referring to a part of consciousness one has referred to the whole of which it is a part.

This is a rather contentious claim philosophically. Suppose someone claims that if I refer to a part of x then I refer to x , then there is a sense in which this is true and a sense in which it is false. It is false in the sense that if I refer to a part of x I have not thereby referred to the whole of x *qua* that whole and 'the whole of x ' is one plausible meaning of ' x '. However, it remains true that if I refer to a part of x it is x that I have referred to; that very object rather than another. In referring to a part of x it was a part of x that I was referring to. Sartre really needs the second of these two thoughts

rather than the first in order for his point about consciousness to go through. If I refer to a particular act of consciousness I am implicitly referring to a consciousness as a whole because any act of consciousness is a part of a whole consciousness. Despite this, it remains true that 'act of consciousness' does not mean the same as 'consciousness as a whole'. The second of these is used to refer to a consciousness as a whole individual consciousness.

The force of Sartre's holistic conception of consciousness is to make the transcendental ego redundant. Indeed, to the extent that Husserl shares this holistic contention he does not need to postulate an I as the unifying subject of consciousness either, as Sartre emphasises. Sartre thinks the self-unification of consciousness in the face of its object may take place without any recourse to the postulation of a transcendental ego, and so the unity of consciousness may be fully accounted for without any subjective source of unity. (57)

Sartre is correct in this thought to the extent that his descriptions of how the unity of consciousness is possible are logically independent of any claims about the existence of the I as subject. Unless we make it analytic that if there is consciousness then there is a subject of consciousness then Sartre's claim goes through. The only ontological resources he has used are consciousness and the intentional object, and the only plausible line of objection to this strategy would be to insist that 'consciousness' and 'object' have no legitimate use unless some use is given to 'subject'. If we accept there may be 'impersonal' or 'pre-personal' consciousnesses in Sartre's sense that leaves just the objection that 'object' needs 'subject' for semantic contrast. There are two possibilities: either it does or it does not, and a Sartrean reply may be constructed for each.

If there are no objects without subjects then it is open to Sartre to maintain that the subject is not a Husserlian transcendental ego. It might for example be consciousness itself, and there might not be any irreducibly subjective source of consciousness. Or, the subject might be the whole person, that psycho-physical whole which each of us essentially is. In either case 'object' is given a semantic contrast without the postulation of the transcendental ego.

In any case, it is open to Sartre to maintain that there are objects in his sense without this claim depending on a possible use for 'subject'. This is because 'object' here means 'intentional object' or 'object of consciousness' and in order for it to be true that there is something which consciousness is consciousness of, it does not have to be true that there is something which is

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

conscious, or at least, this is only required if it is independently true that there is no consciousness without something which is conscious and to say that without argument is to beg the question against Sartre.

The effect of these arguments, if they are sound, is to abolish the transcendental subject, the left-hand side of the traditional phenomenological triad subject-consciousness-object. Sartre's developed strategy will be to incorporate what was designated 'subject' as part of what is designated 'object'. Briefly; the subject is an object.

Individuality

A defender of the transcendental ego might mount the following defence. Consciousnesses are individual consciousnesses. In other words, choose any consciousness you like, it is just that consciousness which it is and not any of those consciousnesses that it is not. This is on the face of it a rather vacuous modal point because it is a logical property of anything that it is just what it is and not anything that it is not. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre will maintain, rather provocatively, that consciousness is what it is not and is not what it is, but this claim requires separate treatment to unpack it as saying something coherent. (58) But, so the objection goes, not only is it true that this consciousness is not that but my consciousness is not yours and your consciousness is not his and so on. Indeed, the individuality of consciousness consists in precisely that fact that each consciousness is logically 'owned' by the subject of that consciousness. This means that if two putatively numerically distinct consciousnesses are to turn out to be in fact one and the same consciousness this is only because that which owns the one consciousness is numerically identical with that which owns the putative other. It is a logically necessary condition of two putatively distinct consciousnesses being numerically identical that they have a single subject, and it is logically sufficient for their being one and not two that they have a single subject. So if we ask the questions: What makes my consciousness mine and your yours ? and What stops my consciousness being yours and yours mine ? the answer can only come in the quasi-Kantian analytic and formal mode: mine is mine and yours is yours. In other words yours is owned by you or you are the subject of yours and mine is mine or I am the subject of mine. If we ask the question of what I am, the Husserlian reply comes: I am a transcendental ego or irreducibly subjective source of consciousness.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre's aim is the demolition of this entire picture of the individuality of consciousness as bestowed by the transcendental ego. Instead he says:

'The individuality of consciousness evidently stems from the nature of consciousness. Consciousness (like Spinoza's substance) can be limited only by itself
(39) (59)

Spinoza thinks there is only one substance, the totality of what is, which may be named either *deus* 'God' or *natura* 'Nature' in virtue of its two essential properties: thought and extension. (60) A substance is that which stands in no need of anything else in order to exist, and Spinoza clearly thinks that the only thing of which this could be true is the whole of what exists. Now, Sartre is saying that consciousness is in at least one respect like a substance in Spinoza's sense. Spinoza's substance is 'limited only by itself' in that there is nothing other than it which may constrain its being what it is. Any constraint on its nature arises from its nature and is not imposed by anything other than it.

This picture may be usefully contrasted with that of physical objects. If we ask what makes a certain physical object the thing that it is then this may be given either a causal or a logical construal. Construed causally it means something like: What causes this physical object to be how it is ? and the answer could come in this form: It interacts causally with other physical objects. Construed logically the question means: What makes this physical object just the thing it is and not any of the things it is not ? and the answer again, arguably, could come in terms of other physical objects. For example, it is arguably a necessary condition for one physical object not being identical with a putative other that they occupy numerically distinct portions of space-time. On this view, if two putatively distinct physical objects turned out to occupy numerically the same portion of space-time then they would turn out to be one and the same physical object. (This view of physical objects is not beyond doubt. Suppose two spatially distinct physical objects fused by occupying the same space, and then bifurcated by once again occupying numerically distinct spaces. It seems true to say that during the period of fusion two physical objects occupy the same space at the same time, even though talk of 'two physical objects' here is parasitic on talk of spatially distinct objects. On this view there is no a priori objection to an infinite number of physical objects occupying a place at a time).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Paradigmatically, something is not a physical object unless it can interact with other physical objects and paradigmatically, something is not a physical object unless it occupies a place distinct from other physical objects at a given time.

Now, I think Sartre is saying that nothing like these two sorts of criteria for determining the nature of physical objects is applicable in the case of consciousness. Consciousness makes itself be what it is. It is not caused to be what it is by anything other than the consciousness that it is. Also, it does not make much sense to talk about consciousnesses occupying spatio-temporal locations, so in stating the logical conditions for the numerical distinctness of consciousnesses, recourse cannot be had to things outside consciousness, in the 'external world'. The same two sorts of criteria would seem to be equally redundant in determining the nature of Spinoza's substance.

There is an important disanalogy between Spinoza's substance and consciousness of which Sartre must be aware. For Spinoza there exists only one substance, but for Sartre there exists more than one consciousness. So the problem arises for Sartre of how one consciousness is to be distinguished from another. Clearly for Spinoza there is no analogous problem of how one substance is to be distinguished from another. Sartre does not spell out clearly this disanalogy nor his solution to the problem it raises, but I think a Sartrean answer may be constructed. Any consciousness is presented to itself as if it could be the only thing that exists. In other words, solipsism is thinkable and this captures a possible phenomenology of consciousness. Arguably only consciousness is directly presented to consciousness and, even if that is false, other consciousnesses are not presented to any one consciousness. So, one consciousness not being another and this being a knowable fact depends upon the restricted type of epistemological access each consciousness has to consciousness. It is directly aware of itself but not another. Sartre does not state this explicitly and parts of it are inconsistent with what he says elsewhere, but he does say, for example, that 'consciousness refers perpetually to itself' (39) and 'consciousness is consciousness of itself' (40). It is also perhaps implied by this:

'Thus it [consciousness] constitutes a synthetic and individual totality entirely isolated from other totalities of the same type' (39) (61)

One consciousness is entirely isolated from another. This is something phenomenologically given about consciousness; it is intrinsic to its nature that its only direct access is to itself and not to another consciousness. This, so to speak, prevents one consciousness merging with another, or one consciousness being another. This is what Sartre means when he says that the individuality of consciousness stems from its own nature and not from anything outside itself.

If Sartre has succeeded in saying something meaningful and true here then he has thereby succeeded in making the transcendental ego redundant as that which bestows individuality on consciousness. He has not yet accounted for the seeming personality of consciousness - its seeming to be mine, yours, and so on, but he has perhaps shown that personality is not necessary for individuality.

Consciousnesses may be distinguished from one another without recourse to mentioning their subject, and this leaves logical room for there being in a sense no subject. Indeed, he will go on to argue that personality is produced by consciousness, not *vice versa*:

'The phenomenological conception of consciousness renders the unifying and individualising role of the I totally useless. It is consciousness on the contrary, which makes possible the unity and the personality of the I' (40) (62)

We see here starkly put the reversal of the Husserlian order of priorities. The I does not constitute consciousness. Consciousness constitutes the I.

10. Pre-Reflective Consciousness

Sartre maintains famously and perhaps paradoxically that 'consciousness is conscious of itself' (40) 'la conscience est consciente d'elle-meme' (TE 23). What does this mean? A clue, if not an explanation, is given by his claim that 'The type of existence of consciousness is to be consciousness of itself' (40) 'le type d'existence de la conscience c'est d'etre conscience de soi' (TE 23-4). So consciousness' consciousness of itself is the way or manner in which consciousness exists: It could not be nor be what it is unless it had a certain internal reflexive relation. Although 'being conscious of' sounds like a relationship and 'being conscious of itself' sounds like a reflexive

relationship, these would be rather misleading interpretations of the nature of consciousness in Sartre's view. This is because consciousness' being consciousness of consciousness is something which characterises *pre-reflexive* consciousness for Sartre. This is a kind of consciousness quite distinct from self-consciousness, or the mental act of being aware of some mental state of mine which he calls reflective or reflexive consciousness. Pre-reflexive consciousness is the sort of conscious state we are in when we are not consciously reflecting on our own mental states yet still conscious. But if pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness of consciousness then it is not clear what prevents pre-reflexive consciousness collapsing into reflective consciousness. It seems *prima facie* that Sartre is committed to the incoherent view that pre-reflexive consciousness both is and is not a kind of consciousness. There is however a way of dispelling this appearance of paradox.

The solution is to distinguish between two kinds of self-consciousness which are assimilated in the ordinary language term 'self consciousness'. Self consciousness may be consciousness of self or consciousness of consciousness. Reflexive consciousness is consciousness of self, or a kind of consciousness of consciousness in which the self or 'the me' appears. Pre-reflexive consciousness is a kind of consciousness of consciousness in which no self appears. Pre-reflexive consciousness is an implicit consciousness of consciousness or a subliminal awareness of the awareness itself in being aware. Clearly pre-reflexive consciousness is not just consciousness of consciousness even if, as Sartre maintains, its being this is essential to its being what it is. Pre-reflexive consciousness is our ordinary typical awareness of the objects and the people which surround us and it is this awareness which is implicitly or subliminally an awareness that it is an awareness.

If this dispells the appearance of paradox we may now ask whether it is true. It would seem not to logically follow from 'x is aware of y' that 'x is aware of being aware of y'. x's awareness of being aware of y (if we assume the awareness is veridical) is logically sufficient for the truth of 'x is aware' but it would seem not to be necessary. Indeed, it seems commonsensically plausible to assume that there are things we are or have been aware of without being aware that we are or were aware that we are or were aware of them.

Even if it does not logically follow from the fact that a being is conscious that that being is implicitly or explicitly conscious of being conscious, it

might still be true that at least some beings are conscious of being conscious when they are conscious.

An argument could be deployed to demonstrate this. Suppose it is true that some person 'x' perceives some object 'y'. Suppose further that x is interviewed about the perception of y and x is able to assert truly that it was indeed y that he perceived. It might be maintained that this supplies a kind of evidence for the conclusion that x was not only aware of y when aware of y but was further aware of being aware when being aware of y, and even aware of being x in being aware of y.

If this is evidence then it is evidence of only a weak or inductive kind. The reason for this is; from the fact that x is able to truly assert that he perceived y it does not logically follow that he was aware of being aware in perceiving y. It might be for example that x is presently able to remember y and presently assumes that the reason he can remember y is that it was in fact the case that he was perceiving y, and clearly this is quite consistent with the possibility that he was not aware of being aware when being aware of y and was not aware of being aware of y in being aware of y. The view that in being aware of y x was aware of being aware or aware of being aware of y is only one possible explanation of x's present ability to claim correctly that it was y that x was aware of.

Are there then any good grounds for Sartre's claim that pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness of itself? It is clearly of no use to say that it feels as though this is true, or that it appears to consciousness that when there is consciousness there is consciousness of this consciousness, or that consciousness is consciousness of this consciousness, or that consciousness is consciousness of being conscious of consciousness. Even if we could be sure that such meta-acts of consciousness were veridical they would at best show that there is consciousness of consciousness when there is consciousness of consciousness, and this rather tautological fact could be established *a priori* irrespectively of whether it is true in fact that if someone is conscious they are thereby conscious of being conscious.

There is then a problem about the verification of Sartre's claim. If we say that it is apparent to consciousness that it is consciousness of itself then the claim becomes vacuous and uninformative, or true *a priori* irrespectively of the phenomenological facts about consciousness. But if we say it is not by some act of consciousness that we know that consciousness is consciousness of itself then we are faced with the problem, which may be insuperable, of how we could even in principle come to know that Sartre's claim is true.

Despite these severe philosophical difficulties for Sartre's claim it is not necessarily a false one, still less a meaningless one. Meaning is not so closely tied to verifiability to make it nonsensical, and from the fact that we cannot know the truth value of a claim it does not follow that that claim is not true. I leave it open then as a logical possibility that Sartre is right: Ordinary pre-reflexive consciousness is implicitly an awareness of itself.

It is worth mentioning the relation between Sartre's notion of pre-reflexive consciousness and two competing tendencies in the philosophy of mind: one Cartesian and one Freudian. (63)

Any Freudian conception of an unconscious would seem to logically imply the view that a person may be in a mental state yet be ignorant of both the existence and the nature of that mental state. This is in fact what is essentially meant by calling a mental state 'unconscious'. Conversely, any Cartesian conception of the mental must preclude this possibility because an incorrigibility thesis is part of Cartesianism. This is the view that if a person is in a mental state then they know they are in that mental state.

I do not mean to suggest that Freudianism and Cartesianism are collectively exhaustive epistemologies of the self. There are other options; notably those which claim that one's first-personal perspective on one's own mental states is neither infallible, incorrigible, nor absolutely transparent, but in general offers full, correct and immediate access. Moreover, knowing is factive. So a person may, *per hypothes*e, believe they are in a certain mental state and not know they are - either because they are wrong, or because they are not justified in believing it (i.e. if, *per hypothes*e, the contents of certain mental states are determined by factors beyond the first-person singular perspective, the subject may not know what he thinks until he has carried out an investigation of his socio-physical environment).

Now, it is clear that barring certain interesting facts about self-deception, Freudianism and Cartesianism are to this degree mutually inconsistent theories about the mental. This is because if a person is in a mental state, on pain of contradiction, either they know they are in that mental state or they do not know they are in that mental state. Of course we may say in exception to this that a person knows they are in some mental state under a certain description, *qua*, for example, a mood, but does not know they are in that mental state under another description, *qua*, for example, brain process. Nevertheless, the claim that there is an unconscious appears self-contradictory within a Cartesian framework, and Cartesianism appears false, at least for a large class of mental states, within a Freudian framework.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre is located within this scheme of things as follows: He is Cartesian about incorrigibility and repudiates any idea of an unconscious. The only ambivalence is how Cartesian he is about incorrigibility and how anti-Freudian he is about the unconscious.

With regard to the unconscious, in Chapter Two of *Being and Nothingness* Sartre develops the idea of self-deception he calls 'bad faith' (*mauvaise foi*). Bad faith is an endemic kind of self-deception in which human beings hide from themselves the reality of their own freedom. Suppose being free entails being in a mental state (for example, of deliberation). The issue then arises of the logical relations between bad faith and Cartesian incorrigibility.

Bad faith is open to several interpretations. On any of them bad faith is distinct from mere ignorance. On one reading, a person in bad faith does know what mental state they are in but refuses to acknowledge it. It is not that such a person is ignorant of their own mental state. On another construal, a person has the propositional self-knowledge that they are in some mental state but adopts a behavioural disposition which suggests (to themselves and others) that they are not in that state. To the extent that the disposition constitutes a belief, it is a belief which is inconsistent with their propositional belief that they are in that mental state. On another construal a person possesses both the propositional belief and the propositional disbelief that they are in some mental state but does not notice the inconsistency. If the existence of bad faith logically implies that a person has numerous false beliefs about themselves and amongst these beliefs are beliefs about the person's own mental states then the existence of bad faith is inconsistent with Cartesian incorrigibility: A person is in a mental state, and holds a false belief about the existence or nature of that mental state. Construed in that way, the doctrine of bad faith is incompatible with full blooded Cartesianism about the incorrigibility of first person singular present tense psychological ascriptions. Damagingly, the doctrine of pre-reflexive consciousness implies that same Cartesianism. This tension, it seems to me, is unresolved in Sartre's philosophy as it stands.

One way of resolving it would be to drastically weaken Sartre's Cartesianism from 'If a person is in a mental state they know this', to: 'If a person is in a mental state they believe this'. Then the pre-reflexive idea of a person being aware of the mental state that he in would be captured, but room would be left for the first person singular present tense psychological ascriptions to be corrigible.

There is a parallel problem about bad faith and Freudianism. If a person is in bad faith they hold at least one false belief about at least one of their mental states. It follows that under at least one description there exists a mental state that they misidentify or misascribe a property to. But this is arguably part of what it means for a mental state to be unconscious, and the doctrine of pre-reflexive consciousness implies that there are no unconscious mental states. It follows that the doctrines of bad faith and pre-reflexive consciousness are incompatible.

Again, I do not think Sartre has a solution to this problem within his own philosophy. However, a solution may be constructed along the following lines. If a person holds a belief about one of their own mental states (even a subliminal belief) then it follows that to that degree they are aware of that mental state. It clearly does not follow from that that their belief is true and that leaves room for a kind of unconscious and a kind of bad faith which is compatible with a now weakened version of pre-reflexive consciousness.

Clearly, if Freudianism is true and if Sartre's thesis about pre-reflexive consciousness is inconsistent with Freudianism then Sartre's thesis is false. However, if the above argument is sound then Sartre's thesis is not inconsistent with Freudianism so even if Freudianism is true that cannot demonstrate the falsity of Sartre's thesis.

If Cartesianism is false and if Sartre's thesis is a version of Cartesianism then Sartre's thesis is false. However, if it is true that Sartre's thesis is an important departure from Cartesianism then the falsity of Sartre's thesis cannot be demonstrated by any demonstration of the falsity of Cartesianism.

With these threats to the plausibility of the view that pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness of itself removed we may examine the doctrine in more detail.

Sartre says

'Consciousness is aware of itself in so far as it is consciousness of a transcendent object' (40) (64)

A transcendent object is an object which is not exhausted by the consciousness of it. It is an object for consciousness, something that consciousness is conscious of, but not an item within consciousness in the sense of a part of consciousness. A transcendent object is an object which transcends the consciousness of it.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In evaluating Sartre's claim we need to decide the force of his 'in so far as'. A plausible interpretation is this. If consciousness is conscious of a transcendent object then consciousness is conscious of itself, and if consciousness is not conscious of a transcendent object then consciousness is not conscious of itself. (It would follow from that that in Sartre's terms we had ceased to talk about consciousness because consciousness is essentially consciousness of itself). On this reading, consciousness of a transcendent object is both necessary and sufficient for consciousness being conscious of itself.

The difficulty here is that 'necessary and sufficient' cannot mean 'logically necessary and sufficient'. This is because it seems not to be contradictory to maintain that consciousness is always conscious of a transcendent object but is either sometimes or never conscious of itself. Argument is required to show that it logically follows both that if consciousness is consciousness of a transcendent object then it is consciousness of itself and that if it is conscious of itself it is conscious of a transcendent object.

It is perhaps too strong a requirement on Sartre's thesis that it logically follow from supporting premises that consciousness of a transcendent object entails consciousness' consciousness of consciousness so I shall consider a weaker argument consistent with his phenomenology.

The objects of consciousness are transcendently constituted by acts of consciousness. An object being just the sort of object it is for consciousness depends upon the possibility of certain acts of awareness being directed towards it. It depends in particular upon certain preconceptions being 'read into' the present perception of the object. Now, for this kind of procedure to be possible consciousness has to, so to speak, draw on its own resources or draw on itself to make intelligible its present object of awareness. If that is right then consciousness of transcendent objects does indeed depend upon consciousness of consciousness. Consciousness has to 'refer to itself' to be conscious of its transcendental object.

So, although it does not straightforwardly follow from the fact that there is consciousness of a transcendent object that there is thereby a consciousness of consciousness, this does follow, albeit rather loosely, if a premise is supplied about the possibility of transcendent objects.

However, this is not exactly the kind of consciousness of consciousness that Sartre has in mind. He puts his view as follows:

'All is therefore clear and lucid in consciousness: the object with its characteristic opacity is before consciousness, but consciousness is purely and simply consciousness of being conscious of the object. This is the law of its existence ' (40) (65)

What Sartre needs is a reason for holding that consciousness is consciousness of being conscious of the object, and not purely and simply consciousness of the object. I see no reason forthcoming from Sartre's text. The claim is just baldly asserted.

There is one particular kind of consciousness which Sartre wishes to distinguish from pre-reflexive consciousness and this is any kind of consciousness where consciousness is its own object. So now we have two broad claims about pre-reflexive consciousness which need to be reconciled:

(1) Consciousness is consciousness of itself.

(2) Consciousness is not its own object.

On the face of it, if x is conscious of y then x takes y as the object of its consciousness so if x is conscious of x , or more paradoxically but more in keeping with Sartre's view, if x is x 's consciousness of x , then x is its own object, or x is the object for x . Sartre must distance himself from this kind of thinking in his characterisation of pre-reflexive consciousness on pain of incoherence. He needs a way of reading (1) which allows (2) to be true. Is there such a reading ?

We need, I think, to give 'object' a strong reading so that if consciousness is its own object then consciousness is presented to itself as an item for its own scrutiny. Arguably this cannot be what pre-reflexive consciousness consists in because it makes consciousness both subject and object in the same respect, and that is incoherent. *Qua* consciousness of consciousness consciousness cannot be what consciousness is of.

But if that is right, what are we to make of consciousness being a consciousness of itself? An inadequate model for understanding this is any kind of spatial image of consciousness arching towards itself or shining on itself. Sartre's image is 'clear and lucid' (40). The point is that there is no obstacle to consciousness's contents being immediately apparent to consciousness. This is not because there exist special or additional acts of consciousness which constitute consciousness's consciousness of itself.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Rather, consciousness's nature is self-evident to itself. It knows what it is just by being what it is. (66) If there were per *impossibile* such an obstacle then we would have to give up talking about consciousness here because any such opacity is characteristic of the objects of consciousness, not of the consciousness of those objects.

If Sartre's view that pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness of itself is open to question, the alleged translucency of consciousness bears on an interesting and important philosophical question: What is awareness?

Suppose a person is looking at a wall. We would want to say that it is at least true that two physical objects are involved in this situation: the person *qua* physical object and the wall. I am not suggesting that a person is just a physical object, but uncontroversially at least a physical description is true of both the person and the wall. Suppose further that we are acquainted with all the relevant physiological facts, and physical facts about the lightwaves from the wall contacting the person's retina. The important residual issue is this: What is the person's awareness of the wall they are looking at? (67)

It will perhaps be objected that I have constructed this example in dualist terms, or made it rest on dualist assumptions. This might be true but I do not think so. Suppose materialism is true, then the relation called 'awareness' (if it is a relation) is a physical one. But what is the awareness *qua* awareness, the consciousness of the wall *qua* consciousness? To put it another way, even if the awareness is physical, what have we said about it when we have called it 'awareness'? What can we say about the awareness that is identified with the physical thing?

It might be that this awareness is nothing at all, or it might be that the awareness is something non-physical, or a non-physical property of a physical relation. These options seem to me entirely open. (68)

The interest of this problem for Sartre is that he talks about consciousness as clear and lucid, and so seems to capture the notion of the awareness of a physical object (or anything else) as opposed to that which is aware and that which the awareness is awareness of. Conceptual room is left for Sartre's developed view in *Being and Nothingness* that consciousness from the point of view of phenomenological ontology is a kind of nothingness.

Consciousness Without the I

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre raises the question of whether pre-reflexive consciousness has an I as part of its structure. His answer is no. Pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness without the I.

The structure of Sartre's argument that pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness without the I is as follows. There are only two possible candidates for what an I might be: either the I is a subject or the I is an object. It is either that which is conscious or part of what consciousness is conscious of. Sartre takes it that he has already shown that the I is not a subject, or at least that it is phenomenologically illegitimate to postulate the I as subject because no such I appears to consciousness. Secondly, Sartre wishes to make a distinction between moments of consciousness when there is consciousness of the I and moments when there is not. He calls the type of consciousness where no I appears 'pre-reflexive consciousness' thereby capturing, as he thinks, our intuitive or pre-philosophical belief that it is possible for there to be consciousness of an object without that which is conscious appearing to consciousness in that act.

If this seems a question-begging procedure we may plead in Sartre's defence that he is describing what appears to consciousness, not what actually might be the case non-phenomenologically and it seems plausible to maintain that no I as subject appears to consciousness, and often no I as object appears either. Against Sartre, it could be argued that the precondition for anything appearing to consciousness is the I as subject, and therefore the I as subject is shown to exist by a phenomenological argument without having to be an object of awareness. From the point of view of strict phenomenological description, however, Sartre would seem to be correct.

Given this non-appearance of the I in consciousness, Sartre thinks no room is left for an I in pre-reflexive consciousness:

'Now we ask, is there room for an I in such a consciousness? The reply is clear: evidently not. Indeed, such an I is not the object (since by hypothesis the I is inner); nor is it an I of consciousness, since it is something for consciousness' (41) (69)

What is for consciousness is the me. By this Sartre means that the only self which appears to consciousness is oneself as a psycho-physical whole - that person who I am. Sartre draws an interesting analogy to illustrate this point. He says that the transcendental ego bears the same relation to the psycho-physical me as a mathematical point does to three dimensions. The force of

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

this is that mathematical points are not real in the sense that they have no real empirical or spatio-temporal reality and ascribing them such reality would interfere with geometrical models of three dimensional objects. Similarly, ascribing reality to the transcendental ego as the irreducibly subjective ground of experience interferes with a phenomenologically correct account of consciousness. Much as a mathematical point as something extended rather than ideal would disrupt our understanding of three dimensional solids, so a transcendental ego as a subjective item within consciousness would interrupt the understanding of consciousness as the pure awareness of its objects.

To make the subjective source of consciousness something also available to consciousness, as Husserl does by the transcendental reduction, is incoherent. Either the transcendental ego is irreducibly subjective, and so cannot be an object for consciousness, or else the transcendental ego is an object for consciousness and so cannot be irreducibly subjective. If it does not appear to consciousness then within the phenomenological framework we are not entitled to claim that it exists. If we are to claim that it exists then this can only be because it is an item for consciousness, and it is this that Sartre claims is true. If this is right then there is little point in continuing to talk of a transcendental ego at all. Transcendental facts are facts which are necessary conditions for experience and it is indeed the role of the transcendental ego, according to Husserl, to ground consciousness transcendently. But it can hardly be the role of the transcendental ego to ground consciousness if it is amongst the objects for consciousness. This is not only because if something is that which is conscious then to that extent it is hidden from consciousness, but also because the conditions for consciousness are not empirical. If x is a condition for consciousness then the existence of x may not depend upon the existence of consciousness epistemologically or ontologically, even if the existence of consciousness should turn out to be a condition for the individuation of a condition for consciousness *qua* condition for consciousness. So even if the existence of consciousness is necessary for a condition for consciousness being what it is under that description, the existence of that condition cannot depend upon consciousness.

Still less can a condition for consciousness be an object for consciousness because objects of consciousness depend upon consciousness for their existence *qua* objects of consciousness. In general there is no logical obstacle to its being the case that if A is a condition for B then B is a

condition for A, so in that case a certain condition for consciousness would itself be possible only if consciousness exists. The dependence would be, so to speak, reciprocal.

But this cannot possibly be the case with the Husserlian transcendental ego. In the strongly Kantian tradition within which Husserl writes, transcendental conditions are *qua* transcendental, not empirical and it is anyway independently the case that for Husserl the transcendental ego is the ground or condition for everything and nothing grounds it even if it only exists when its intentional acts exist.

I adduce these points in substantiation of Sartre's claim that Husserl is wrong to suppose a transcendental ego could be a part of consciousness.

Sartre has another argument against Husserl which goes like this. Consciousness according to Sartre is a 'spontaneity' (41). Again, the word is Kant's and is intended to draw attention to the agency of consciousness. (70) Within the Kantian tradition the activity or spontaneity of the understanding is contrasted with the passivity or receptivity of the the senses. Sartre accepts at least half of this picture because it is his view that the individual consciousness is inherently free. But consciousness could not be free if there existed a Husserlian transcendental ego. Consciousness is free, therefore there exists no Husserlian transcendental ego.

However, the relation between freedom and Kant's doctrine of spontaneity is more complex than this. There is a distinction between 'absolute' and 'relative' spontaneity. If a subject's thoughts and experiences are regarded as relatively spontaneous, they would require some external causal input to set them going. But, once started, they would be irreducible to a purely causal story about the sensory reception of material and its series-processing as information. If the subject's thinking were absolutely spontaneous, it would ultimately have been instantiated outside the causal order. It would seem open to the Husserlian to reply to Sartre that absolute spontaneity is a property of the transcendental ego itself: it freely produces its thoughts and experiences and is not caused to do so.

There is also a distinction between freedom as it pertains to the necessary conditions for experience (implying independence from causality) and freedom as it pertains to the necessary conditions for agency (implying autonomy in its practically relevant sense). The one need not be regarded as either necessary or sufficient for the other. Sartre overlooks this distinction, but again, it would seem open to the Husserlian to ground both experience

and agency in the freedom of the transcendental ego and not in consciousness itself.

If we accept that in at least some sense consciousness is free, we still need grounds for accepting Sartre's second premise. Why would a transcendental ego preclude the freedom of consciousness?

Sartre's comment on this, is *prima facie* not terribly revealing:

'Consciousness is then no longer a spontaneity; it bears within itself the germ of opaqueness' (41-2) (71)

To use Sartre's metaphors, if consciousness were *per impossibile*, an opaqueness, then consciousness would no longer be consciousness because consciousness is essentially transparent. Phenomenologically, it is possible to make sense of this.

Consciousness is pure awareness; awareness of the objects of consciousness. It would be an obstacle to this purity of consciousness for a transcendental ego to be present within it as one of its structures. But Sartre needs more than this. He needs to show that the existence of the transcendental ego is incompatible with the freedom of consciousness.

On at least one view of the transcendental ego its existence would not be incompatible with the freedom of consciousness although I suspect Sartre would not share this view. I mean, that there is a subjective source of consciousness, or something that is conscious, does not entail that consciousness is not free. We would have to say that the consciousness of the transcendental ego is free because the transcendental ego is free, as we might say the movements of someone's arm are free because that person is free.

But Sartre wants consciousness itself to be free, not that which is conscious (in this subjective sense) to be free. Now, it might well be that consciousness in that sense cannot be free if there is a transcendental ego because the operations of consciousness issue from a source which is free. They are, so to speak, dictated, constrained or determined by that source, much as someone's arm is not free if the movements issue from the whole person who nonetheless might be free.

If consciousness itself is free then it cannot be operated by anything else. It has to be a kind of pure agency and I think this is what Sartre tries to capture using 'spontaneity' (41). If we accept this interpretation as plausible and

meaningful then we should accept Sartre's thesis that the Husserlian transcendental ego is incompatible with the freedom of consciousness.

There is perhaps another reason which could be brought in support of Sartre against Husserl here. If consciousness is a pure spontaneity then the transcendental ego as an 'inhabitant' or structure of consciousness would inhibit or intrude into this freedom. Consciousness itself would have a self-constraining structure. Its putative transcendental ground would appear within itself and subject and object would in a sense collapse into one. This is incompatible with Sartre's view of the 'play' of consciousness in *Being and Nothingness* - its being just or only the free awareness of its objects. (72)

To pursue my analogy, suppose the brain moves the arm. As things are, this presupposes that the brain is not part of my arm and no part of my brain is part of my arm. In general, if A acts on B then A is not B, and no part of A is a part of B. For this not to be the case would inhibit agency.

Sartre rejects the idea that consciousness is a substance, so his philosophy of mind is incompatible with traditional idealism and dualism. If consciousness is not a substance then *a fortiori* it is not a mental substance. If Husserl's transcendental ego existed then consciousness would be a substance, but consciousness is not a substance, so Husserl's transcendental ego does not exist. As Sartre puts it:

'We would be forced to abandon that original and profound view which makes of consciousness a non-substantial absolute' (42) (73)

Sartre does not say why the adoption of the transcendental ego would have this effect but an argument for that conclusion may be adduced. The transcendental ego, whatever it is, if it exists is something rather than nothing. However, consciousness is a 'nothingness', a pure awareness of objects. If it became something, some-thing, it would cease to be that pure awareness. (74) It would have in its structure a substance in the quasi-Aristotelian sense of an entity which has properties - the operations of consciousness - but does not itself stand in need of anything else in order to exist, and which is not itself a property. The presence of such a being in the midst of consciousness is incompatible with Sartre's phenomenology of consciousness, his description of how consciousness appears, in that consciousness itself would become a substance; the transcendental ego would be its essential structure.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

If we accept that consciousness is not a substance, but Husserl's transcendental ego is, then I think Sartre is entitled to his conclusion.

There are in fact good grounds for saying that Husserl's transcendental ego is a substance, Husserl's disclaimers notwithstanding. The transcendental ego for Husserl is the ground of the world but is not grounded by anything else. This logically entails the Aristotelian view of a substance as that which makes properties possible but exists independently of other things. Clearly, if Husserl's transcendental ego is not grounded by anything else it does not depend upon anything for its existence and in that sense it is a substance. For this reason I think Sartre is correct to say that the transcendental ego is incompatible with the non-substantial view of consciousness.

Husserl has in fact missed an opportunity, the opportunity to describe consciousness as a pure phenomenon:

'A pure consciousness is an absolute quite simply because it is consciousness of itself. It remains therefore a "phenomenon" in the very special sense in which "to be" and "to appear" are one. It is all lightness, all translucence. This it is which differentiates the cogito of Husserl from the Cartesian cogito.' (42) (75)

There is much insight in this passage. The claim that to be and to appear are one may be taken in two ways, one Hegelian and one Berkleyan.

On the Berkleyan reading, to be and to appear are one and the same because *esse est percipi* (in the case of physical objects). (76) There is no difference between an appearance's appearing and it being perceived. Clearly, if something is an appearance then it is perceived, because all appearing is appearing to.

We can push this reading still further. Not only is Berkeleyan idealism thinkable but solipsism is thinkable.

On one sort of solipsism there is no difference, or at least no phenomenological difference, between what is, and what appears (to or within my consciousness). Whatever the philosophical merits or demerits of solipsism, this variety is thinkable because of certain phenomenological facts, *viz* that it can seem as though my experience ('now') is all there is.

On the Hegelian reading a certain insight about consciousness is being expressed. This is: there is no difference between consciousness being what it is and consciousness knowing what it is. This is constitutive of Hegel's Absolute Knowing. (77) The Hegelian reading of Sartre is given some

plausibility by the fact that Sartre uses the Hegelian term 'absolute' to describe consciousness in so far as consciousness is consciousness of itself.

Husserl's mistake is to fail to realise that implicit in his phenomenology is a quasi-Hegelian view of consciousness free from a particular Cartesian tenet, the tenet that consciousness is a substance. If the transcendental ego is subtracted from Husserl's phenomenology then the residue approximates more closely to this Hegelian picture.

Hegel's phenomenology of consciousness is more complex, sophisticated and subtle than that of either Husserl or Sartre but the Sartrean point is nevertheless a valuable one. If the transcendental ego is something rather than nothing and if it appears within consciousness, then at least one element of consciousness is reified into something over and above a pure awareness. (78)

This idea of consciousness is in one sense accurately described as 'Cartesian' because Descartes thought a mind is not exhausted by its acts of awareness. For Descartes, there not only exist the various thoughts of a mind but there exists that mind itself; that which has them. That much would seem to be common between Husserl and Descartes on consciousness, and so to that extent Husserl and Descartes are a common target for Sartre. (79)

Where there is a clear dissimilarity between Descartes and Husserl is that for Husserl the transcendental ego is available to consciousness through the transcendental reduction. For Descartes, a mind is not directly aware of itself - I mean aware of itself *qua* mind or soul. A mind is only directly aware of its own operations. In that sense the Cartesian view of the mind is much nearer to Sartre's than to Husserl's.

Whatever the philosophical merits and demerits of Sartre's critique of Husserl here, I think there is much intuitive plausibility in the idea that there is a kind of consciousness without an 'I'. Much of the time, in our daily preoccupations our attention is absorbed (as the metaphor has it) with what we are preoccupied with, and not with ourselves as that which is preoccupied. Indeed, it could be plausibly maintained that to the extent that a sort of consciousness is a reflection on the self or itself it cannot be a consciousness of the objects of day to day awareness. On this view we are only intermittently conscious of ourselves. Most of the time we are unreflectively aware of the objects and people around us.

12. Consciousness With the I

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Phenomenology is the description of what appears to consciousness just as it appears, without any assumption about the objective reality or causal properties of what does so appear. A phenomenology of consciousness is a description of how consciousness appears to consciousness. A clear and adequate phenomenology requires a correct account of the nature of consciousness. Sartre sees the Husserlian transcendental ego as precisely a threat to such an account, and so as an obstacle to a proper phenomenology. Phenomenology requires that the I not be an irreducibly subjective source of consciousness. Nor can it be something which appears within or to consciousness as part of its structure. The I must be an object for consciousness: something that consciousness is a consciousness of, or one of the intentional objects towards which consciousness is directed. So Sartre writes:

'All the results of phenomenology begin to crumble if the I is not, by the same title as the world, a relative existent: that is to say, an object for consciousness' (42) (80)

By a relative existent Sartre means something which depends upon the existence of something else for its existence. In his view, the I depends upon the existence of consciousness. Unless the I were amongst the intentional objects of consciousness the I would not exist, or what amounts to the same thing, the I *per impossibile*, would not be the I.

This idea of the I as a relative existent is fully consistent with Sartre's earlier claim that the I is not a substance. If x is a substance then there is nothing else that needs to exist in order for x to exist, but if x is a relative existent then if x exists then there also exists at least one item numerically distinct from x upon which the existence of x depends. So, if x is a substance then x is not a relative existent, and if x is a relative existent then x is not a substance. It follows that if Sartre can show that the I depends upon consciousness for its existence then he will thereby have shown that consciousness is a relative existent. It will further follow that Sartre has brought another argument against the thesis that the I is a substance or that consciousness, because it includes the I as one of its structures, is substantial. If it is true that Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness implies that the I is a substance, and if Sartre's argument is sound, then Sartre will have refuted that implication of Husserl's phenomenology.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The question we need to address is whether the I depends upon consciousness for its existence. Sartre has already argued that there is a kind of consciousness without the I: pre-reflexive consciousness. He now distinguishes this from reflexive consciousness, a kind of consciousness to which the I does appear. He develops the idea of reflective consciousness in the context of some remarks about Descartes, Kant and Husserl.

Sartre draws a distinction between Kant's view of the self and those of Husserl and Descartes as follows:

'The Kantian I think is a condition of possibility. The cogito of Descartes and Husserl is an apprehension of fact' (43) (81)

The distinction between these three theorists is not as clear as Sartre would have us believe. It is true that Kant's 'I think' (*Ich denke*) is a condition for the possibility of experience. Unless any of the experiences which take place in a self-same mind called 'mine' could in principle be prefaced by the thought 'I think...' then it would not make sense to say that they belong to a unified consciousness at all. It is the possibility of the 'I think' accompanying any of my experiences which makes them mine. A putative experience only counts as such if it is an episode in a mind, so in that sense it cannot be that there are experiences without a subject or experiencer. It is just that point that is accepted by Descartes and Husserl however. The self which they each postulate is a condition for possibility, because for Descartes it is true that there are no thoughts without a thinker - no thinking without a thing that thinks - and for Husserl the transcendental ego is the transcendental ground of consciousness. For these reasons, saying that the Kantian 'I think' is a condition for possibility fails to draw any contrast between Kant on the one hand and Descartes and Husserl on the other.

Despite this, Sartre is correct to maintain that the cogito of Descartes and Husserl is apprehended as a fact, and that of Kant is not. The fact that I think is introspectively available to Descartes, and for Husserl it is disclosed by the phenomenological reduction. In contrast to this, although one's empirical thinking is available through the exercise of inner sense according to Kant, the transcendental unity of apperception - which is the unity of consciousness as constituted by the possibility of the I think accompanying any of my perceptions - is established by philosophy. Kant may well think independently of this that if I am thinking 'I think' then I may be aware of that as a fact but that will just be another empirical fact; a fact about my

occurrent psychology. No introspective scrutiny or consciousness of consciousness will reveal the 'I think' as a transcendental condition for experience because no transcendental condition is empirical. To this extent, then, Sartre does succeed in drawing a contrast between Kant on the one hand and Descartes and Husserl on the other.

Sartre's strategy in developing his own phenomenology of the self is to accept from Descartes and Husserl that the I think is given as a fact, yet repudiate the view that the I is a condition for the possibility of consciousness. On the contrary, consciousness will turn out to be the condition for the I. Sartre's agreement with Descartes that the apprehension of the I think is a fact may be seen here:

'We have heard of the "factual necessity" of the *Cogito*, and this phrase seems to me most apt. Also, it is undeniable that the *Cogito* is personal.' (43) (82)

The 'factual necessity' ('necessite de fait') of the *cogito* is the putative necessary truth of 'I think' as thought by the thinker. Whether 'I think' could in some sense be a necessary truth, for example, as Descartes thought, when it is thought, is an unsolved philosophical problem. (83) I should say 'I think' is true just on condition it is thought, although the ontological status of the I in that case remains obscure.

Sartre is concerned only that we should accept a minimal phenomenological fact: If I think it is possible for me to be aware of that fact. Although Sartre clearly thinks 'I think' has the status of a necessary truth, he does not need that as a premise in the present argument. He wishes us to accept that there are moments of consciousness with the I, just as he earlier wished us to accept that there are moments of consciousness without the I. 'I think' does not have to have the status of a necessary truth for that conclusion to go through. The premise 'I think' is sufficient for that.

If it is true that there is a kind of consciousness with the I, it will follow that such a consciousness is personal. By 'personal' Sartre means 'someone or other's', so any consciousness that is owned by some subject of awareness, or any consciousness which includes experiences which are had or undergone by some subject will count as a personal consciousness. Clearly, then, a consciousness which involves an I in any of these senses is personal.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

To this extent Sartre's phenomenology of the self is strongly Cartesian. He is not saying there is no consciousness without a subject. Clearly this is in a sense possible for Sartre. The Cartesianism is in the claim that in at least some forms of consciousness there is both an I and a consciousness and these are not the same. He is thus at variance with the tradition stemming from Hume, where the ontological status of the self is exhausted by the existence of a set of experiences. In the type of consciousness under consideration, there is not only consciousness but a subject of consciousness:

'In the *I Think* there is an *I* who thinks' (43) (84)

The crucial departure from Cartesianism lies in the fact that the I denoted by the first person singular pronoun in the 'I think' is produced by conscious reflection. (85)

Sartre straightforwardly assumes that 'I' is a referring expression, even though this issue is controversial. For example, Sartre's view could not be correct if the grammatical grounds Wittgenstein adduces in *The Blue and Brown Books* for denying that 'I' is any kind of referring expression were conclusive. My view is that 'I' is a referring expression albeit of a special sort. 'I' is the nominative pronoun each person uses only to refer to himself. Although 'me' is also a pronoun that each person only uses to refer to himself, it differs from 'I' in being an accusative and dative pronoun with no grammatically well-formed nominative use. My use of 'I' differs from my use of 'Stephen Priest' because while I may use 'Stephen Priest' correctly to refer to someone other than myself, viz, someone else whose name is 'Stephen Priest', I cannot correctly use 'I' to refer to someone else. In my grammatically well formed uses of 'I' I cannot fail to refer to myself, even though I might misascribe properties to myself. Not only is 'I' a referring expression, when it is used grammatically it's user always succeeds in referring.

For these reasons Sartre is right in his assumption that 'I' is a referring expression. In these passages Sartre uses 'I' to refer to the I and this appears only in certain sorts of consciousness. It is itself the product of a certain sort of consciousness: self-conscious reflection. It follows that Descartes' thinker/thought distinction can only serve as Sartre's starting point:

'The fact that can serve as a start is, then, this one: each time we apprehend our thought, whether by an immediate intuition or by an intuition based on memory, we apprehend an I' (43) (86)

Descartes does not think that the soul can directly intuit itself. Although the soul is what thinks, there is no direct introspective acquaintance with the soul. However, it is clear that Descartes thinks there is no thought without a thinker and that we are introspectively acquainted with our thoughts *qua* ours. Both Descartes and Sartre hold that we are not identical with any one of our thoughts. It is to this extent common to Descartes and Sartre that an I appears to consciousness in reflection. The difference is that Descartes assumes that there is an I whether we introspect or not (even though he accepts the logical possibility that should he cease to think he should cease to exist) while Sartre does not make the assumption that there is an I when there is no conscious reflection. He leaves open the possibility he wishes to argue is real: that the I is created by reflection.

To illustrate the kind of Cartesian starting point he is adopting Sartre provides this example:

'If for example I want to remember a certain landscape perceived yesterday from the train it is possible for me to bring back the memory of that landscape as such. But I can also recollect that I was seeing that landscape' (43) (87)

Here Sartre distinguishes two kinds of remembering. It is possible to remember something or to remember oneself perceiving that thing. This seems a genuine distinction.

Suppose some person A perceives some object, x , at time t . Two possible modes of recollection of x then seem possible. Either A simply remembers x or else A both remembers x and remembers perceiving x , or even that it was he himself that perceived x .

These possibilities remain open, I think, whether or not it is the case that if A perceives x then A is conscious of perceiving x or whether if A perceives x A is not conscious of perceiving x in perceiving x . This is because if A is conscious of perceiving x in perceiving x then it is uncontroversially possible for A to both remember x and remember that they perceived x .

Even if it is the case that in perceiving x A was not conscious of perceiving x it remains logically possible that A should remember x but not thereby

remember perceiving or, themselves perceiving x . I do not mean by this that they forget the perception or, that they themselves perceived, or assume that someone else perceived x , but merely that there is no contradiction in the supposition that there should be a mental act of remembering x which is not partly constituted by a recollection of perceiving, or of oneself perceiving x , even if the perception of x was a self-conscious one. Although A does not remember A perceiving x or remember the perceiving of x in recollecting x , A does not forget this either.

If, conversely, A was not conscious of perceiving x in perceiving x then it is equally open for A to remember x but not remember that it was they that perceived x , or for them to both remember x and remember that it was they who perceived x .

In the first case, if A remembers x then A remembers x *tout court*, and it is reasonably uncontroversial that a recollection of the object of an experience that was not self-conscious need not itself be self-conscious. At least, there is no logical reason why such a recollection should be partly a recollection of oneself.

Perhaps more controversially, it is possible to remember that it was in fact oneself who perceived x in one's recollection of x even if one was not self-conscious in the perception of x . This is because of the mode of presentation of x in memory. By 'mode of presentation' here I mean that the memory of x is phenomenologically similar to x as x would be presented to A were A perceiving x . Now, from the fact that the memory of x exhibits such a mode of presentation it does not logically follow that the memory that it was oneself, A, who perceived x is veridical. There is no contradiction in supposing that such a memory is non-veridical no matter what the mode of presentation of its intentional object. Or, to put it another way, nothing logically follows from the phenomenology of memories about their truth values.

However, I am only arguing that it is possible that A should remember that it was himself who perceived x even if they were not conscious of perceiving x in perceiving x . This possibility exists because of the peculiar mode of presentation of memories of intentional objects of experiences truly denoted by first person singular expressions. By making these distinctions I hope to have removed logical obstacles to Sartre's distinction between remembering something and remembering that it was oneself who perceived that thing.

Sartre's view that memories do not come tagged with the I is consistent with remembering a past experience without knowing who had that past

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

experience; as long as the experience occurred, and the memory is dependent on this kind of experience in the right kind of way - and that this is correct. This makes Sartre an early exponent of 'quasi-memories'. (88) The non-tagged view faces several problems however. It appears to violate the application of the Kantian 'unity' requirement to memory: that unless one can ascribe concurrent and successive experiences to something that is, at least potentially, one and the same I, one cannot make genuine judgments or acquire knowledge of the world based on memory. (In so far as Sartre violates this Kantian view he escapes the Kantian framework in another respect). If the non-tagged view is true, the subject could not conclude that 'I do not remember experiencing x' from the premise 'I never experienced x'; but being able to draw such conclusions and make such judgments is necessary to distinguishing between memories and false memories, illusions, fantasies, passing images, and so on. We can distinguish between them; and if a precondition for doing so is indeed that memories come tagged, then *pace* Sartre, memories do come tagged.

Further, if the non-tagged view is true, then subjects who engage in ordinary inferential reasoning using various memories are guilty of systematic enthymeme (which is most implausible); for if memories are not tagged, the subject cannot trade on any identity between the referents of the different memories; but in ordinary inferential reasoning using various memories we do trade on such identities (i.e. without ascertaining whether we are using each memory involving premise to think of ourselves in the same way). If Sartre's view of memory is wrong, then he has lost a vital premise in his argument for the conclusion that not all consciousness is accompanied by an I. Even if his non-tagged view is right, it needs to be supplemented by a plausible account of quasi-memories such as that provided by Parfit in *Reasons and Persons*.

Sartre thinks drawing the distinction between remembering something and remembering that it was oneself that perceived that thing guards us against making a mistake about the self. From the fact that we may remember ourselves experiencing, or that it was oneself who perceived, we may be tempted to conclude erroneously that all consciousness is accompanied by an 'I', a Husserlian transcendental ego. This mistake may be thought of as thinking a logical inference is possible from the first of these two sentences to the that clause of the second:

- (1) 'I can always perform any recollection whatsoever in the personal mode, and at once the I appears' (44)
- (2) 'Thus it seems that there is not one of my consciousnesses which I do not apprehend as provided with an I' (44) (89)

Clearly, from that fact that it was possible for me to remember that it was I who perceived x , it does not logically follow that a transcendental I accompanies all my perceptions. If I veridically remember that I perceived x , what does logically follow is that I perceived x , but this does not of itself commit us to the existence of a Husserlian transcendental ego. However, if I veridically remember that I perceived x it does follow that there existed a quasi-Kantian but purely formal I at the time that I perceived x : myself whatever I am. My perceiving x is fully consistent with my being a Sartrean psycho-physical 'me' - a whole person. So, the inference fails even in those cases where I do in fact remember myself perceiving x .

The inference fails in any case because from the fact that something may be the case it does not logically follow that it is the case. The fact that I may apprehend my consciousness as accompanied by an I it does not entail that I do so. From the fact that I do sometimes apprehend my consciousness as accompanied by an I, it does not logically follow that I always do so. Nor does it follow that my consciousness is always accompanied by an I. (90)

So far I have interpreted Sartre as guarding against a certain kind of philosophical mistake; postulating a metaphysical self by taking an invalid inference as valid. It is possible to read him too as providing a psychological explanation of our coming to believe in a metaphysical self, if and when we do.

It is at least sometimes the case that if I remember something I remember that it was I who perceived that thing. Then an I does appear to memory, a remembered I. This entails a tripartite structure to what is remembered: the remembered object of perception, the perception, and the I as subject of that perception. It is tempting to then conclude that, always, if there is consciousness then there is an I that is conscious in the Husserlian sense. If we ask: Why in the Husserlian sense? then I think an answer is implicit in what Sartre has argued so far.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The I as recollected is, *qua* intentional object of memory a psychological I, and not a whole person -that human being who I am. Naturally, it is possible to remember oneself as the human being who one is perceiving some object, but this need not be the case. If I remember 'that it was I' who perceived the object then this memory may be, for example, an image of that person who I am perceiving that object, but this is not necessarily the case. I may just, for example, remember the fact that it was I who remembered the object. In that case no image of the whole person need appear to consciousness, and room is left for the thought of me as the truncated object of thought to be identified with the subjective Husserlian transcendental ego. I do not know how sympathetic Sartre would have been to this account but it is at least consistent with his view of how the mistake is made.

Sartre's argument here is essentially a Kantian one. Indeed, Sartre's comment on sentence (1) above is:

'Such is the guarantee of the Kantian claim concerning validity' (44) (91)

(Sartre's 'droit' is better translated as 'right' here, rather than 'validity'.) Kant's doctrine is that the 'I think' must be capable of accompanying all of my experiences as a condition of their being mine. Sartre is claiming that if I remember that I perceived some object, then that memory is in the 'personal mode' (43) There is an ambiguity here. Sartre wishes to maintain that memories in the personal mode are Kantian cases - cases of the 'I think' accompanying experiences. This claim may well be true, but it has not been established by the argument so far. We need to draw a distinction between a memory and what that memory is a memory of, and, in addition to that, between the act of remembering and the content of the memory. All that has been established so far is that if I remember myself perceiving something then an I appears to memory. We could interpret this I in two ways. We could say it is a part of the content of the memory, part perhaps of its occurrent phenomenological content, or we could say that it is oneself that is the I that is remembered. But, whichever of these we choose, it does not follow that the act of remembering is itself accompanied by an I. Clearly it is to Sartre's purpose in any case to deny that the memory is accompanied by an I in Husserl's sense. But then it cannot be the act of remembering which is in the 'personal mode' or is actually accompanied by an 'I think' in the Kantian sense.

It may be independently true that there is a distinction between self-conscious and non-self-conscious memories: I can remember and in doing so be conscious of remembering, or I can remember *tout court*. This distinction is consistent with the Kantian 'I think' doctrine, and is one Sartre would wish to maintain. However, it is not established or refuted by the appearance of an I to consciousness in memory. It is quite neutral with regard to that. I do not need to be conscious of remembering in order to remember myself perceiving, and I do not need to be conscious of myself as perceiving in order to remember myself perceiving, or remember *tout court*.

Nevertheless, Sartre's claim reconstrued as; that memory's content or object may appear in the personal mode, does substantiate the quasi-Kantian position he wishes to adopt. From the fact that such a content does include an I it logically follows that such a content may include an I because actuality implies possibility. Clearly, this is rather a revised Kantian position which does not establish that the 'I think' may (still less 'must be able to') accompany any of my mental acts, because Sartre wishes to deny that an I *qua* subject does accompany any of my mental acts in a transcendental sense.

Sartre will argue that there is a difference between conscious and self-conscious states but this distinction does not rely on the postulation of a Husserlian I.

13. Sartre's *Cogito*

Sartre says that

'All the writers who have described the *Cogito* have dealt with it as a reflexive operation, that is to say, as an operation of the second degree' (44) (92)

If we consider the work of Descartes, Kant and Husserl this claim seems justified. When Descartes concludes that he thinks because he doubts the *cogito* is a kind of reflection on the doubting. When Kant says the 'I think' must be capable of accompanying all my experiences the 'I think' is prefaced to the experiences as a kind of consciousness of them. When Husserl claims the discovery of the transcendental ego, as revealed by the transcendental reduction, it is as that which is the owner of the various mental acts opened up to phenomenological description. In each case, the *cogito* is a kind of

reflection on, or consciousness of, consciousness. Sartre is therefore correct when he claims:

'Such a *Cogito* is performed by a consciousness directed upon consciousness, a consciousness which takes consciousness as an object' (44) (93)

The point here is not just that there has to exist a meta-consciousness which ascribes the *cogito* to consciousness, it is also that the *cogito* is assumed to itself possess the status of a meta-consciousness, or a consciousness of consciousness. Sartre wishes to break decisively with this view by claiming that the *cogito* belongs not to reflecting consciousness, the consciousness which is consciousness of consciousness, but to pre-reflective consciousness; the consciousness which is the object of reflexive consciousness, and, as such, it is falsely believed to exist as the transcendental subject of all consciousness. In fact, according to Sartre, reflexive consciousness is not characterised by the *cogito* and the *cogito* only belongs to pre-reflective consciousness in so far as it is an object of reflective consciousness (FN Kant anticipates). This is a central step in Sartre's argument that the I exists only as the object and not as the subject of consciousness.

Sartre makes this point explicitly when he says

'Now, my reflecting consciousness does not take itself for an object when I effect the *Cogito*. What it affirms concerns the reflected consciousness' (44) (94)

The claim that reflecting consciousness does not take itself for an object is part of Sartre's thesis that there exists consciousness without an I, and in order to be conscious I do not have to be self-conscious.

In general, consciousness of some intentional object does not presuppose consciousness of oneself as being conscious of that intentional object. Sartre introduces the special (or particular) case of reflective consciousness where the intentional object of reflective consciousness is pre-reflective consciousness. Reflexive consciousness of pre-reflective consciousness does not presuppose consciousness of reflexive consciousness nor consciousness of being conscious in a reflexive way, nor consciousness of oneself being conscious in a reflexive way. So, although reflexive consciousness is a

consciousness of consciousness, it is not a consciousness of itself in so far as it does not take itself as its own intentional object.

This leaves conceptual room for Sartre to deny that the *cogito* is a structure of reflective consciousness, but assert that the *cogito* is produced by reflective consciousness as a structure of pre-reflective consciousness - as a structure of the object of reflective consciousness. The *cogito* is ascribed to the pre-reflective consciousness by the reflexive consciousness, and its existence consists in its being so ascribed.

This in turn allows Sartre to maintain that pre-reflexive consciousness is only accompanied by the I *qua* object of reflective consciousness. Without reflection there is no I.

If there arguments are sound then Sartre has shown that it is at least true that pre-reflexive consciousness, *qua* intentional object of reflexive consciousness is accompanied by an I. What he has not yet shown is that this is at most what is true of a personal consciousness. Before deciding whether Sartre succeeds in this we should briefly consider certain tenets of the Cartesian-Husserlian philosophy he wishes to retain.

Sartre's Retentions

Sartre wishes to retain the incorrigibility of the *cogito*:

'Let us agree: the certitude of the *Cogito* is absolute'
(44) (95)

That 'I think' is true if and only if it is thought is not entailed by Sartre's doctrine of the translucence of consciousness, because even if consciousness is a consciousness of itself it is not necessarily a consciousness of the subject of consciousness, and Sartre wishes in any case to deny that in the case of pre-reflective consciousness in so far as it is not an object of reflexive consciousness. Nor, indeed, does the reverse entailment hold. If it follows from the fact that 'I think' is thought that 'I think' is true - because if a thought is thought then it is thought by some subject, that does not imply that all consciousness is consciousness of consciousness. It does follow that 'I think' is a self-conscious thought, because of the indexicality of the first person singular pronoun, but from the fact that that thought is a self-conscious one it does not follow that all thinking is self-conscious. This is

because indexicality cannot be bestowed on any non-indexical thought by what follows from the indexicality of any indexical thought.

Nevertheless, the certainty of the *cogito* is fully consistent with the translucency of consciousness, as is Descartes' incorrigibility thesis about the mental. Descartes thinks that all first person singular psychological ascriptions are incorrigible. This means that if I believe I am in a mental state then that belief is true, and if I believe I am in a mental state of a particular kind then that belief is true, and, it is not possible for me to be in a mental state without my knowing that I am in that mental state. (It is not clear that the historical Descartes did subscribe to the theses of the incorrigibility and translucency of the mental in the stark way that I have just described. John Cottingham argues in his *Descartes* that Descartes at least did not argue for these views. I therefore use 'Descartes' ahistorically as a label for a cluster of views.)

There is a sense in which, despite the incorrigibility thesis, even for Descartes there is consciousness without the I. Descartes thinks that the soul is never directly acquainted with itself, only with its own operations. From a phenomenological point of view then, Descartes' idea of thinking and Sartre's idea of pre-reflective consciousness are similar, indeed, logically equivalent: Consciousness' contents appear to consciousness but the subject *qua* subject does not appear. This is what Sartre retains from the Cartesian picture.

Descartes assumes that the soul as subject continues to exist throughout the operations of thinking, but Sartre wishes to maintain that there is only a subject *qua* object of reflexive consciousness. This allows Sartre to accept both the certainty of the *cogito* (it is certain when and only when thought) and the incorrigibility thesis (if I am in a mental state then I know that) without subscribing to the idea of the perennial subject. Descartes, Husserl, and in a complex sense Kant think there is no consciousness without a subject. Sartre thinks there is.

Clearly, there is no contradiction in the supposition that it is both true that if 'I think' is thought then it is true, and consciousness is consciousness of itself. Equally, there is no incoherence in holding that if I am in a mental state then I know that, and consciousness is an awareness of its own contents.

If it is objected to this that Descartes' postulation of the I and Sartre's unwillingness to postulate an I are mutually inconsistent then it should be remembered that for both Descartes and Sartre (for Descartes always, for

Sartre sometimes) no I appears to consciousness. Also, for each of Descartes and Sartre there is another sense in which the subject does exist. For Descartes the soul exists (during the time between God's creation of it and God's possible annihilation of it) and, for Sartre, that psycho-physical whole person who I am exists (between the time of my birth and the time of my death). But equally clearly, for Descartes the soul never appears to consciousness and, for Sartre, I frequently do not appear to my consciousness either.

Sartre wishes to retain the certainty of the *cogito* for a special reason. This is what he calls the 'unity' of reflecting and reflected consciousness:

'As Husserl said, there is an indissoluble unity of the reflecting consciousness and the reflected consciousness (to the point that the reflecting consciousness could not exist without the reflected consciousness)' (44) (96)

There are at least two complimentary ways of understanding what Sartre wishes to retain from Husserl here. Reflecting and reflected consciousness are mutually dependent in the sense that *qua* reflecting consciousness reflecting consciousness is necessarily a reflecting on reflected consciousness, and *qua* reflected consciousness reflected consciousness is necessarily reflected on by reflecting consciousness. We could say this is a conceptual truth, depending on the semantics of 'reflecting' and 'reflected' and 'consciousness', or, we could say reflecting and reflected consciousness are dialectically antithetical (and so mutually dependent) in the Hegelian sense. (97) It does not seem to me to matter much which of these two ways we choose in reading Sartre here. In either case it comes out in a strong sense as impossible that there should exist either a reflecting or a reflected consciousness in abstraction from one another.

It is important to note, however, that Sartre privileges the conceptual or dialectical dependence in one direction. He says reflecting consciousness could not exist without reflected consciousness. This asymmetry is maintained on phenomenological grounds. Although pre-reflexive consciousness does not exist *qua* reflected consciousness without reflecting consciousness, clearly pre-reflexive consciousness may and does exist without being reflected upon by reflecting consciousness. (Think of ordinary cases where one is aware but not directly aware of oneself: taking a shot in billiards, repairing a tyre, typing on a word processor). There is no

equivalent of unreflected pre-reflexive consciousness in the case of reflecting consciousness - reflecting consciousness only exists as reflecting consciousness, but reflected consciousness exists as pre-reflexive consciousness when not reflected upon.

That much is conceded by Sartre to Husserl. The question now is how the certainty of the *cogito* is derived from the unity of reflecting and reflected consciousness. Sartre uses the Hegelian term 'synthesis' to describe this unity:

'The fact remains that we are in the presence of a synthesis of two consciousnesses, one of which is consciousness of the other' (44) (98)

It seems to me the derivation cannot be a deductive one. From the fact that one consciousness is consciousness of another it does not deductively follow that it is also or thereby a consciousness of the subject of that consciousness. So, the problem is why the reflected consciousness is accompanied by an I. I do not see any argument forthcoming from Sartre here and I take it that Sartre's view is that the I of reflected consciousness is simply phenomenologically given to reflecting consciousness. In a sense this is still unsatisfactory because it is not an explanation of the appearance of the I, but we should remember that phenomenology does not deal in explanations, only descriptions, so if Sartre is writing a phenomenology book there is no onus on him to provide such an explanation. (99)

I think a quasi-Hegelian answer could be constructed (to which Sartre might be sympathetic). This would make the I of reflected consciousness into a social construct. Hegel thinks it is a necessary condition for any conscious being becoming self conscious that they encounter another conscious being. In a complex struggle for mutual recognition, each takes the other as a model for the object of his self-awareness. (100) Although this Hegelian theme is apparent in Part Three of *Being and Nothingness*, where Sartre deals with the existence of others, the body, and concrete relations with others, the most Sartre offers us in *The Transcendence of the Ego* is a way in which the certainty of the *cogito* is made possible.

If an I appears to reflecting consciousness as a structure of reflected consciousness then reflecting consciousness is consciousness of such an I. To that extent it is not possible for reflecting consciousness to exist without being a consciousness of the I and the reflected consciousness and, in an obvious sense, this is a consciousness of the *cogito*. This amounts to the fact

that 'I think' is true at least so long as it is reflected upon. It is just that that Sartre wishes to retain of the Cartesian *cogito*.

Sartre's final retention is the intentionality of consciousness (101); the important tenet of phenomenology, from Brentano, through Husserl, to Sartre that consciousness is consciousness 'of' some object:

'The essential principle of phenomenology "all consciousness is consciousness of something" is preserved' (44) (102)

Why is Sartre entitled to this? He has already argued that pre-reflective consciousness exhibits intentionality. This is a condition of its being what it is. Now, it is necessarily true that reflecting consciousness too exhibits intentionality because it is a consciousness of consciousness. Reflecting consciousness is a consciousness of reflected consciousness so reflecting consciousness always takes reflected consciousness as its intentional object. So it is logically impossible that reflecting consciousness should not be intentional. That is a condition of its being what it is. In this way, the intentionality of consciousness is retained in the synthesis of reflecting and reflected consciousness.

15 Positional Consciousness

Pre-reflexive consciousness is non-positional because it has no I as subject. To the extent that a consciousness takes an I as intentional object, and to the extent that consciousness has an I as subject, the consciousness counts as positional.

Saying what a positional consciousness is is partly done by mentioning an I. It has a source, or somewhere from which it seems to emanate in the Husserlian sense.

(103)

'Positional' contains the term 'posit'. The crucial difference between Husserl and Sartre on the self is that for Sartre but not for Husserl consciousness posits the I. Nevertheless, phenomenological appearances are retained by it's seeming as though the I posits consciousness. Indeed, this is how Husserl's mistake of postulating the I as perennial subject of consciousness is possible: because it appears as though the I posits consciousness.

Sartre says:

'In so far as my reflecting consciousness is consciousness of itself, it is non-positional consciousness. It becomes positional only by directing itself upon the reflected consciousness which itself was not a positional consciousness of itself before being reflected' (44-5) (104)

This passage taken in isolation is inconsistent with the following view of positional consciousness. A consciousness is 'positional' if and only if either it is a reflecting consciousness or is a reflected consciousness. This, however, omits mention of the I in constituting a consciousness as positional, so I prefer: a consciousness is positional if and only if it takes an I either as subject or as object. If we do not adopt that interpretation then the scope of 'positional' is too wide.

Clearly, the intentionality of consciousness is not of itself sufficient for the positional nature of consciousness, or else all consciousness would be positional and that is something Sartre explicitly denies and there seems no good reason to say that a consciousness counts as 'positional' if its intentional object happens to be consciousness. It is the appearance of the I which makes both reflecting and reflected consciousness positional.

We cannot correctly say against this that it is consciousness' consciousness of itself which makes consciousness positional. For Sartre all consciousness is consciousness of itself but only some consciousness is positional. Being conscious of itself and being positional cannot be the same property of consciousness, nor can any putative dependence be always and everywhere reciprocal. (105)

Positional consciousness depends upon consciousness being a consciousness of itself, because that is part of the essence of consciousness. Consciousness could not exist unless it were consciousness of itself. Positional consciousness is a kind of consciousness, so clearly, positional consciousness depends upon consciousness being a consciousness of itself.

The reverse does not obtain, however, because consciousness may be a consciousness of itself without being a positional consciousness. For Sartre, this is the case for example with un-reflected consciousness. Indeed, Sartre explicitly says that reflecting consciousness, although it is positional *qua* a consciousness directed towards reflected consciousness, it is non-positional *qua* consciousness of itself.

For these reasons it is not a viable interpretation of 'positional consciousness' that it denotes what consciousness' consciousness of consciousness consists in.

Sartre draws an important conclusion from the distinction between reflecting and reflected consciousness. The cogito belongs to the reflected consciousness, not to the reflecting consciousness:

'Thus the consciousness that says "I think" is precisely not the consciousness which thinks. Or, rather, it is not its own thought which it posits by thisthetic act'
(45) (106)

So when within the Cartesian framework I think 'I think' I make a judgement about my occurrent thought. But this judgement is not a thought about itself. It is about a thought of mine other than that judgement itself. To put it in Sartre's terms, the reflecting consciousness' thinking of 'I think' is a thought about the thinking of the reflected consciousness, not a thought about itself.

Sartre's hesitation or revision introduced by 'or rather' in the passage above is to be explained as follows. Of course the reflecting consciousness thinks - it at least thinks 'I think' for example - so it is not true that the reflecting consciousness is not the consciousness that thinks. But it is true that the reflecting consciousness is not the consciousness that the 'I think' is thought about or refers to. Although reflecting consciousness thinks the 'I think' this thought is about the thinking reflected consciousness which has an I as part of its structure.

If we make a distinction between a thought and its truth conditions then we may say that the thought 'I think' belongs to reflecting consciousness - it does think that thought - but the truth conditions of 'I think' belong to reflected consciousness.

Sartre now addresses a question which may be raised about his account. How do we know whether the reflecting consciousness has an I as structure? Might it not even be the case that the I of reflected consciousness exists also as the I of reflecting consciousness? If, after all, we are in the last resort talking about two structures of one and the same consciousness what is to prevent our maintaining that one and the same I exists as subject of both structures?

'We are then justified in asking ourselves if the I which thinks is common to the two superimposed consciousnesses, or if it is not rather the I of the reflected consciousness' (45) (107)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre's answer is that the I belongs only to the reflected consciousness and not also to the reflecting consciousness. There are two grounds for this reply.

Firstly, from the fact that reflected consciousness has an I as part of its structure it does not follow that the consciousness which reflects upon this consciousness also has that (or any) I as part of its structure. Sartre is correct in thinking that no such inference obtains. The onus would be on the person who thinks that there is no impersonal consciousness to show that reflecting consciousness is personal.

Secondly, it is a part of Sartre's phenomenology of consciousness that there are moments of consciousness without the I. From a phenomenological point of view it is extravagant to postulate an I where none appears to consciousness. Indeed, this is phenomenologically illegitimate. Arguably, if an I appeared to consciousness as part of its own structure then all the objections about consciousness dividing and destroying itself would apply in the case of reflecting consciousness. It is a condition of reflecting consciousness existing as reflecting and not reflected consciousness that it have no I as any part of its structure. So, again, the onus is on Sartre's opponent to show that reflecting consciousness has an I as its subjective source.

It would be question-begging to bring against Sartre the objection that an I must exist as subject or condition for reflecting consciousness, even if it is true that reflecting and reflected consciousness are parts of one and the same consciousness. Sartre wishes to maintain that the I is a posit of consciousness and not the reverse. Sartre has not proved this but the contrary, Husserlian, position has not been proved either. The question is open.

Within the Sartrean framework so far established it is legitimate to suppose that reflecting consciousness is a consciousness without an I as subject, and that reflecting consciousness is not itself the object of its own reflection:

'All reflecting consciousness is, indeed, in itself unreflected, and a new act of the third degree is necessary in order to posit it' (45) (108)

From the fact that reflecting consciousness is a reflecting on consciousness it does not follow that it is a reflecting on itself. *Qua* reflecting consciousness it is not that, but a reflecting on reflected consciousness.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

There seems no logical objection to some reflecting consciousness being a reflecting on itself, but Sartre wishes to describe the reflecting on reflected consciousness in a different way. If there is a consciousness of reflecting consciousness then this is a new sort of consciousness; a meta-meta-consciousness. It is perhaps the kind of consciousness necessary to write or understand *The Transcendence of the Ego.*, in general, to be aware of the fact that one is self-conscious.

Sartre now adds a third kind of consciousness to the two he has already distinguished:

(1) Pre-reflexive consciousness

(2) Reflexive consciousness

(3) Consciousness 'of the third degree'

Consciousness of the third degree is reflection on reflective consciousness. Reflexive consciousness is consciousness of pre-reflexive consciousness, which thereby counts as reflected consciousness, and pre-reflexive consciousness is our ordinary, non-self-conscious awareness of objects and persons.

Sartre is concerned to dispell the danger of an infinite regress of postulated consciousnesses here. The regress threatens and at two levels, one epistemological and the other ontological but Sartre really only deals with the second of these:

'Moreover, there is no infinite regress here, since a consciousness has no need at all of a reflecting consciousness in order to be conscious of itself. It simply does not posit itself as an object' (45) (109)

It is true that consciousness does not presuppose self-consciousness, despite Lockean and Kantian arguments to the contrary. But Sartre, *prima facie*, faces a special difficulty. For him consciousness is consciousness of itself, so consciousness being a consciousness of consciousness is not simply a presupposition of consciousness it is constitutive of consciousness.

The objection that Sartre wishes to guard against is that this picture of consciousness makes all consciousness depend upon reflecting consciousness. This clearly would generate an infinite regress because

reflecting consciousness is a kind of consciousness and if all consciousness presupposes a reflecting consciousness then reflecting consciousness presupposes a reflecting consciousness (other than itself).

Sartre deals with this threat of an ontological regress by saying that there is a distinction between consciousness being consciousness of itself and consciousness being an object for a reflecting consciousness. Putatively, all consciousness is a consciousness of itself (including reflecting consciousness) but consciousness is only sometimes an object for reflecting consciousness (when it is reflected consciousness).

I take it the distinction is as follows. If consciousness is always and everywhere a consciousness of itself only one, or one kind, of consciousness is involved, but in the case of reflecting consciousness two, or two kinds, of consciousness are involved: the consciousness which reflects and the consciousness which is reflected on.

If this is right then consciousness being a consciousness of itself cannot possibly be identical with reflecting consciousness being a consciousness of reflected consciousness. If there is a problem here it is guaranteeing that if consciousness is a consciousness of itself it is thereby only one kind of consciousness and not two. What Sartre has to deny is that consciousness' being conscious of itself consists in consciousness directing some reflexive or meta-conscious act of consciousness towards itself. Sartre does deny this, or at least does not assert it, but, as we have seen (p. above) his positive characterisation of consciousness being a consciousness of itself is largely in metaphorical terms. If we try to unpack these, then I think something close to the Cartesian incorrigibility thesis emerges: If I am in a mental state then I know I am in that mental state, and if I believe I am in a mental state then that belief is true, and if I believe I am in a mental state of a particular kind then that belief is true. 'I know I am in a mental state' between knowing the intentional modality of a mental state (whether it is desire, belief, intention, etc.) and knowing its content (that p, that q, that r, etc.). Sartre has a grasp of the distinction between a psychic act and its content because he is familiar with Husserl's *noesis/noema* distinction. The fact that he deploys no such distinction here suggests that he does not think it not important to make it. If that is the case, then we may suppose that if Sartre holds that I know I am in a mental state then I know both the states intentional modality and what its content is.

Nevertheless, two reservations need to be made about talking about Sartre's incorrigibility thesis in this way. Firstly, to say that I believe such

and such must not be taken to imply the postulation of a meta act of consciousness directed towards consciousness. Some other account of what believing is needs to be given. (110)

Secondly, this characterisation does not capture the particular phenomenology of consciousness Sartre intends us to adopt. To put it rather paradoxically, it is as though consciousness counts as consciousness of itself just in virtue of being consciousness; as though being conscious were sufficient for the knowledge of the contents of one's own consciousness in the sense of logically sufficient. To put it another way, consciousness having a certain content implies consciousness of that content.

If we allow that Sartre has arrested the threatened ontological regress by denying that reflexive consciousness is necessary for consciousness of consciousness, the possibility of an epistemological regress still remains.

The problem is how we may know that pre-reflexive consciousness exists without an act of reflective consciousness, how we may know that reflexive consciousness exists without a meta-reflexive act of consciousness which takes reflexive consciousness as its object and so on ad infinitum.

The solution, I think, is to concede that reflective consciousness must indeed be the object for some kind of meta-reflexive act of consciousness, but deny that the existence of such a meta-reflexive consciousness may only be known by some act of meta-meta-reflective consciousness. A plausible alternative is simply to postulate the existence of such a meta-meta-reflexive consciousness to account for our knowledge of the existence of reflexive consciousness. This of course cannot be a phenomenological solution to the problem because something non-phenomenological will be necessary for but always escape, phenomenological characterisation.

In any case, from a phenomenological point of view it is extremely unlikely that such a meta-meta-act of consciousness is available to consciousness. (111)

I take it that if Sartre's account of consciousness' being a consciousness of consciousness is both coherent and true, then he has brought a convincing objection to the epistemological regress (at least implicitly) by denying that reflexive consciousness is needed for the Cartesian incorrigibility thesis to be maintained. To allow this we need to allow that I can know that I am in a mental state without consciously reflecting on that state. I must be able to know that I am in it just in virtue of being in it. This would seem a logical possibility only relative to certain accounts of what 'knowing' means - ones that exclude the plausible notion that I cannot know that p without, at least,

being consciousness aware of p. If this requirement on knowing is dropped then it is not incoherent to maintain that someone knows they are in a mental state yet is not directly acquainted with that state even though they are in it. It clearly would be incoherent to maintain that they had this knowledge but were not in that state. Although it is uncontroversial that being in a state is a necessary condition for knowing one is in that state, it requires argument to establish that being in a state is sufficient for knowing one is in that state. Sartre provides no such argument. We have to assume that one comes by the knowledge by some other route than being directly acquainted with the state. For example, my knowledge that I am in a mental state might eventually be found to have neurological sufficient conditions. (Though this is not to say that neurological evidence is likely to persuade someone that they have knowledge of one of their own mental states when they do not think they do). This possibility supplements Sartre's phenomenology but could not be endorsed from within it.

Sartre does not say exactly what the relationship is between me and my mental state if I know I am in it but am not directly conscious of it. I have used the locutions 'just in virtue of being in it', 'without consciously reflecting on that state' and 'without being directly acquainted with that state' to try to capture his meaning but these are not synonymous. In particular, I may consciously reflect on a state of my mind without having been immediately presented with it (the exact intentional modality, say, has been brought to my attention by someone else).

16 The Me

Sartre has so far argued that it is at least true that reflected consciousness is a personal consciousness - consciousness with an I. He now wishes to substantiate two of his earlier claims: that unreflected pre-reflexive consciousness is consciousness without an I, and that the I of reflected consciousness is produced by reflecting consciousness.

That the I is a product of reflection would solve two philosophical problems, and for Sartre, that is the reason for believing it is such a product. It would account for the fact that when I think about my thoughts I think of them as mine, and yet it avoids the incoherence that Sartre thinks is caused by the postulation of the transcendental ego:

'But is it not precisely the reflective act which gives birth to the me in reflected consciousness ? Thus would be explained how every thought apprehended by intuition possesses an I without falling into the difficulties noted in the preceding section' (45) (112)

It is clear that one possible explanation of why an I appears to reflecting consciousness is that that I is produced by reflecting consciousness. But from the fact that such an explanation is internally consistent it does not follow that it is true, so Sartre needs to provide further argument to demonstrate this. Also, from the fact that some putative solution to a philosophical problem fails to generate further philosophical problems to which other putative solutions are prone it does not logically follow that that solution is the correct one.

For these reasons we need to examine Sartre's grounds for holding that pre-reflexive consciousness is impersonal, and personal consciousness depends upon an act of reflection. It is, after all, consistent with the phenomenology so far described that pre-reflexive consciousness is perennially characterised by an I and that this I is discovered by reflecting consciousness.

How can Sartre rule this out ?

His tactic is to outline a phenomenology of pre-reflexive consciousness. Now, there might seem to be something paradoxical or inherently self-defeating about such a project. After all, pre-reflexive consciousness is by definition a kind of consciousness not open to conscious reflection and so *a fortiori* not open to conscious phenomenological reflection. The project is made doubly difficult if *qua* reflected consciousness pre-reflexive consciousness automatically appears with an I as subject. It would then be impossible to be conscious of consciousness without either supplying consciousness with an I or discovering an I in consciousness. Sartre needs a mode of access to pre-reflexive consciousness which will reveal whether it has an I as subject or not, and this in complete abstraction from the deliverances of reflecting consciousness. The project is made even more intractable because Sartre accepts from Husserl what might be true: that the act of reflection transforms consciousness as the object of reflection.

Sartre's solution is to try to remember pre-reflexive consciousness. It is precisely because consciousness is a consciousness of itself in which it does not present itself to itself as an object that a memory of that consciousness is possible which in turn does not present that consciousness as an object.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

What Sartre tries to do is to reconstruct in his present consciousness as accurately as he can what it was like to be in a non-reflexive state of consciousness a few moments earlier. To do this he tries to suspend, so far as he can, philosophical and phenomenological preconceptions about the structure and content of the earlier consciousness.

The example Sartre chooses is that of reading. He has just been reading, and he now tries to imaginatively reconstruct the lines he has been reading and the pre-reflexive consciousness of those lines. It is as though Sartre imaginatively places himself in the role of the remembered pre-reflexive consciousness and so remembers both that consciousness' consciousness of itself and its directedness towards its intentional objects.

This rather hermeneutic procedure does not present the remembered consciousness as an object for reflection, for two reasons. It is not a reflecting on the past consciousness because the past consciousness does not exist, and, it is not a reflecting in any case because it is an imaginative substitution of one's present consciousness for a past one. Sartre is confident about the result:

'There is no doubt about the result: while I was reading, there was consciousness of the book, of the heroes of the novel, but the I was not inhabiting this consciousness. It was only consciousness of the object and non-positional consciousness of itself' (46-7) (113)

So certain phenomenological structures are preserved. The intentionality of pre-reflexive consciousness appears to Sartre's phenomenological remembering, as does pre-reflexive consciousness' being a consciousness of itself. Precisely what fails to appear is the Husserlian transcendental ego.

It seems to be that there is both something tendentious and something plausible about Sartre's procedure here. If I remember some conscious state that I was in then there would seem to be three possible levels of remembered content:

- (1) I remember what I was conscious of: the objects of my consciousness.
- (2) I remember what I was conscious of plus my consciousness of those objects.

- (3) I remember what I was conscious of, my consciousness of those objects, and myself as conscious of those objects.

What is tendentious about Sartre's account is that he arrests the level of phenomenological remembering at level (2). There seems no *a priori* justification for this, and the procedure itself seems consistent with a phenomenological revealing of (1), (2) or (3). It is after all the case that I often remember objects or people I have perceived without remembering my consciousness of them - even though there was no doubt I was consciousness of them, and even though the mode of presentation of those people and objects in memory may well depend upon a certain mode of presentation of them in my perception of them.

Similarly, it is often the case that I not only remember objects and people, but I also remember that it was I who was conscious of them. Indeed, Sartre has already allowed that this happens. The fact, if it is a fact, that I was not self-conscious in the perception of certain objects or people is not a compelling ground for saying that I do not remember that it was I in that case that did that perceiving.

Given these alternative phenomenological findings, what is Sartre's justification for claiming (2) as the finding in his particular example? Sartre gives no argument. A weak reply in Sartre's favour would be to say; this is how it seemed to Sartre. The problems with this are that the fact that it seemed this way to Sartre does not preclude its seeming otherwise to other people (for example Husserl), or otherwise to Sartre on other occasions. Suppose Husserl phenomenologically remembers a transcendental subject and Sartre remembers none. Suppose Sartre has simply forgotten his transcendental ego. Memory is not infallible.

Sartre says:

'It suffices to try to reconstitute the complete moment in which this unreflected consciousness appeared'

(46) (114)

The problem is however that it does not suffice to try to do this, but it would suffice to succeed if the phenomenological findings were then an intentional pre-reflexive consciousness with an object but no subject.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The fallibility of memory, even careful phenomenological remembering, implies that it is always logically possible that the complete moment of some past consciousness has not been recollected. There is always logical room for some structure to be present in the original consciousness but omitted in the remembering of that consciousness. (Conversely, it is equally possible that some extraneous structure or content be imaginatively imposed by the remembering consciousness which as not a part of the original remembered consciousness.)

To a certain extent Sartre is aware of these difficulties. He partly addresses them when he draws a distinction between the incorrigibility of reflecting consciousness and the findings of phenomenological remembering:

'This non-reflective apprehension of one consciousness by another consciousness can evidently take place only by memory, and [...] therefore it does not profit from the absolute certitude inherent in a reflexive act' (47) (115)

For sake of argument let us grant Sartre the contentious Cartesian incorrigibility thesis alluded to here. We may then understand his dilemma as follows:

(1) An I is incorrigibly given to reflection.

(2) No I is corrigibly given to memory.

(2) is ambiguous between 'No I is given to memory at all' and being consistent with 'An I is given incorrigibly to memory'. It is the first sense that capture's Sartre's view. Sartre concedes that incorrigible claims are clearly to be preferred to corrigible claims, and that, *prima facie*, this threatens his view that pre-reflexive consciousness has no I as subject.

Sartre is clearly right to prefer incorrigible claims to corrigible claims. Assuming we wish to maximise the number of our true beliefs and minimise the number of our false beliefs, then clearly incorrigible claims are to be adopted wherever possible. The epistemological difficulty is in deciding which beliefs are true and which false.

Sartre presents his dilemma as between:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(1) 'an absolutely certain act which permits the presence of the I in the reflected consciousness to be affirmed'

(47)

and

(2) 'a questionable memory which would purport to show the absence of the I from the unreflected consciousness'

(47-8) (116)

The problem is that by the preference of incorrigibles, thesis (1) is to be preferred to thesis (2) but *prima facie* that does not yield the conclusion Sartre thinks avoids Husserl's difficulties.

Sartre's solution is to point out that the two claims are not in conflict so there is no compulsion to choose between them. (He cannot choose neither.) To put it clearly, if we read (1) and (2) as a disjunction then we should read the disjunctive connective inclusively (*vel*) and not exclusively (*aut*).

Sartre is correct in adopting this solution because from the fact, if it is a fact, that an I is incorrigibly given to some reflecting consciousness it does not follow that an I 'inhabits' the consciousness reflected upon when that consciousness is not reflected upon. Indeed, this does not logically preclude other modes of access to such a consciousness which may either fail to disclose an I or even establish that no I is present in it when it is not reflected upon; for example phenomenological remembering.

The question still remains, however, of how Sartre may make the inference from:

(1) No I is given to phenomenological remembering of pre-reflexive consciousness.

to

(2) No I 'inhabits' pre-reflexive consciousness.

The form of Sartre's epistemological difficulty is: From the fact that it has not been shown that p it does not follow that not- p , and, in particular, from the fact that some procedure has failed to demonstrate that p it does not

logically follow that not- p . Indeed, the possibility of either p or not- p is logically consistent with any number of failures to demonstrate that p .

Sartre's attempt to deal with this difficulty has two parts. Firstly, he claims that an I is never given in phenomenological remembering of pre-reflexive consciousness:

'All the non-reflective memories of unreflected consciousness show me a consciousness without a me'

(48) (117)

The trouble with this is from the fact, if it is a fact, that no I has ever appeared to non-reflective memories of unreflected consciousness does not entail that this is impossible, nor indeed that some future exercise of phenomenological remembering will not disclose an I. Also, it has already been allowed by Sartre that some remembering is remembering that I did such and such. So at least some remembering (if veridical) is remembering of the I.

Finally, even if an I is never remembered, it does not follow that it did not exist as part of the structure of the otherwise remembered consciousness. The exercise of phenomenological remembering therefore provides at most weak inductive grounds for the absence of the I from pre-reflexive consciousness.

The other part of Sartre's attempt to meet the difficulty is to assume independently that it is incoherent to suppose that an I inhabits pre-reflexive consciousness. He takes it he is entitled to this assumption because of the arguments treated above

(pp.). If those arguments are sound then Sartre has indeed proved that no I inhabits pre-reflexive consciousness because if it is impossible for the I to exist as transcendental subject of consciousness then *a fortiori* that it does not. In that case, however, it is not so much an independent assumption which is invoked here as an independent proof - one which makes the exercise of phenomenological remembering superfluous.

Despite this, Sartre presents his conclusion as following from the conjunction of the findings of phenomenological remembering and the incoherence of postulating a transcendental ego. The conclusion is:

'There is no I on the unreflected level' (48) (118)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre presents us with an interesting phenomenological description of what does appear on the unreflected level. This, I think, supports his case in a new way:

'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. In fact, I am then plunged into the world of objects: it is they which constitute the unity of my consciousness; it is they which present themselves with values, with attractive and repellent qualities - but me, I have disappeared; I have annihilated myself. There is no place for me on this level. And this is not a matter of chance, due to a momentary lapse of attention, but happens because of the very structure of consciousness' (48-9) (119)

Taken out of the context of Sartre's phenomenology the first sentence of this passage is *prima facie* incoherent. It both affirms and denies that there is an I, but, for Sartre, the sense in which there is an I is not the same as that in which there is no I. It was true of me -that psycho-physical whole that I am- that I ran for the streetcar, but no transcendental ego appeared as the subject of the consciousness of the streetcar. This supports Sartre's case because if it is true that there are veridical memories of moments of consciousness without the I then it follows that there are moments of consciousness without the I. Indeed, I think it is possible to do more than Sartre suggests. It is of course possible to reflect consciously on oneself, to present oneself to oneself as the object of one's own consciousness, but it is also possible to cease doing this. There is such a thing as beginning and ending being self-conscious. I can reflect upon the fact that I am now writing, and in some sense an I appears. or I can stop doing this and simply concentrate my attention on this pen and these words. The psycho-physical whole who I am presumably continues to exist throughout this process but the self as object of awareness ceases to exist. As Sartre puts it:

'I am plunged into the world of objects' (49) (120)

If we take seriously Sartre's claim that the consciousness of a self would interrupt the consciousness of other objects then the whole account begins to look more convincing.

This passage is notable in other ways. The description of the streetcar as having-to-be-overtaken is highly Heideggerian. Heidegger distinguishes two modes in which objects may be presented to *Dasein* (the kind of being a human being fundamentally is): In the mode *Zuhandenheit*, objects have instrumental usefulness for *Dasein*, but objects can also be 'there' for *Dasein* in the mode *Vorhandenheit* - the mere theoretical, uninterested contemplation of the spectator. (121). Sartre describes the streetcar in the mode *Zuhandenheit* as to-be-overtaken. What a streetcar is for Sartre is what it is for and this, for Sartre (but not Heidegger) is an achievement of consciousness.

Sartre has already argued that not only are the intentional objects of consciousness constituted by the consciousness of them but the unity of consciousness is due to several acts of consciousness being implicated in the constitution of a single intentional object. If it is true that there are moments of consciousness without the I, the I cannot be the owner or unifier of such consciousness. If we then ask 'What is?' then a highly plausible candidate, perhaps in the last resort the only candidate, is the objects of consciousness.

If we conjoin the various claims Sartre has made about the I and pre-reflexive consciousness I do not think the result is a deductive argument, with premises all guarantees to be true, yielding as conclusion the fact that there is no transcendental subject of pre-reflexive consciousness. Nevertheless, Sartre has at least succeeded in casting extreme doubt upon the existence of such a subject.

17 Phenomenology of the I

To substantiate the view that pre-reflexive consciousness is without an I Sartre presents a phenomenology of the self. In this Sartre defines his own position in relation to Husserl.

Husserl is committed to a strong contrast between the way in which a physical object is presented to consciousness and the way in which consciousness is presented to consciousness in reflection. Importantly, a physical object appears under distinct 'aspects', 'perspectives' or 'profiles' (*Abschattungen*), but an act of consciousness, in contrast, is grasped 'all at once' or in a wholly unperspectival way. A physical object is in fact an 'ideal unity' constructed out of the various perspectives on it, but consciousness is given as a unity directly to reflexive consciousness.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre accepts this contrast from Husserl, and argues that the incorrigibility of the findings of reflection depends upon the non-perspectival nature of the apprehension of consciousness by consciousness. Because physical objects are not given phenomenologically *qua* physical objects there is always logical room for a set of phenomena not to be the appearances of a physical object. To put it another way, the having of any particular set of sense experiences is logically consistent with either the truth or the falsity of the claim that they are experiences of a physical object.

In the case of consciousness' reflection upon consciousness the situation is quite different. If there is putative conscious reflection on consciousness then this is allegedly never consistent with the falsity of the claim that this is consciousness of consciousness. Nor does Sartre seem to leave room for the possibility that it appears to someone that there is reflective consciousness of consciousness but there is no such consciousness. Although this is not countenanced by Sartre it would seem to be at least a logical possibility.

In either case, this asymmetry between the perception of physical objects and conscious reflection on consciousness is adduced by Sartre as support for his corrigible/incorrigible distinction. Reflection is incorrigible but sense perception is corrigible. ()

Sartre offers a tripartite taxonomy of the findings of consciousness from a phenomenological point of view:

- (1) Physical objects
- (2) (Reflected) consciousness
- (3) 'eternal truths'

Physical objects, although they are ideal unities of their (infinite number of) aspects, manifest themselves as spatio-temporal particulars. Their temporality implies that, at least in a sense, they transcend the perception of them - a physical object is nothing over and above, or is not exhausted by, the set of perceptions of it. They do not transcend time. Similarly, with any conscious content as the object of reflection, although the content of reflected consciousness is not to be identified with the conscious reflection on it, it too is something temporal. In the case of 'eternal truths' however:

'As for meanings, or eternal truths, they affirm their transcendence in that the moment they appear they are given as independent of time, whereas the

consciousness which apprehends them is, on the contrary, individuated through and through in duration' (49-50) (122)

I take it the notion of an 'eternal truth' subsumes not only traditional *a priori* certainties such as definitions, logical truths and the truths of mathematics, but also Husserlian meanings. () An eternal truth, therefore, is not only transcendent in the sense that what it is is not specifiable in terms of the consciousness of it, but also in the sense that it transcends time; temporal predicates are not applicable to it. It follows that an eternal truth has no temporal parts. Consciousness, in contrast, changes in content, and the discrimination of one kind of consciousness from another depends upon an awareness of such changing content.

Sartre now poses the central question of his phenomenology of the self: Is the I given to reflective consciousness like an eternal truth, or like the content of consciousness? Is it a transient item to be discriminated as one content amongst others in the flux of one's mental life, or is it non-temporal, an entity which transcends all consciousness of it?

'The reply is clear; 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 consciousness, and - although it scarcely resembles a mathematical truth - its type of existence comes much nearer to that of eternal truths than to that of consciousness' (50) (123)

What the I has in common with an eternal truth is its transcendent atemporality. The I is not given as a changing and so temporal structure, nor is it given as part of the content of consciousness. On the contrary, it transcends all consciousness of it. Sartre thinks this is how the I is phenomenologically given: that is how it appears to consciousness when consciousness is stripped of preconception. There is, I think, much intuitive or pre-phenomenological plausibility in this. After all, we all, rightly or wrongly draw a distinction between on the one hand the changing flux of one's experience and, on the other hand, the relatively enduring subject of those experiences; that which has them. This pre-phenomenological view does not imply the non-temporality of the self, only the duration of the self through its experiences. But Sartre is saying more than this. He is not claiming that the subject of consciousness endures at least as long as the set of experiences of which it is the owner. He is saying that in some strong

sense the self is independent of the kind of temporality which pertains to the contents of consciousness. It is as though the temporality of experience is so pervasive of experience that the only temporality with which we are directly acquainted is the temporality of experience. So if we are acquainted with a self then this cannot be something temporal, or at least, cannot be temporal in the same sense. If it were it would perhaps count as part of the content of experience.

So far I have accepted Sartre's claim that a certain temporality pertains to the contents of consciousness. It may be doubted, however, that all the contents of consciousness are temporal. Temporality pertains to those contents with the character of occurrent thoughts, certainly events or processes with a definite start and stop, duration, mutability etc., but being in certain moods, believing that p, reflecting, intending, or meaning that q do not straightforwardly occur 'in time', where criteria for their doing so would include being able to be slowed down, reversed, left unfinished, interrupted, spot-checked, observed continuously, given a determinate duration etc. If this is correct, then the temporality argument only shows that the self is 'beyond' certain of the contents of consciousness; others of those contents are as temporal as the self. It follows that Sartre has not shown that the self is distinct from consciousness, but his concern, after all is to show that the self is not subject to that temporality that does pertain to consciousness. The fact that some of consciousness' contents are atemporal does not preclude this.

We may unpack the notion of the self being 'beyond' consciousness -any actual or possible consciousness- as follows. The self is given phenomenologically as the subject of consciousness, as that which is conscious, so, take any consciousness you like, to the extent that it is an object for reflection as I appears as its subject. This is analogous to the Kantian thought that the I think must be capable of accompanying any of my perceptions. It is in a sense independent of them. It is not to be identified with any or all of them, yet it is what their being 'mine' consists in.

18 The Ego and the *Epoche*

The next phase of Sartre's phenomenology of the self is the ironic invocation of a central phenomenological device against a mistake Sartre perceives as common to Descartes and Husserl. The mistake is the reification of the

subject, and the device is the phenomenological *epoche*, or reduction of the world of the natural attitude to that of transcendental subjectivity .

As we saw in the first chapter, the *epoche* essentially entails suspension of belief in the objective reality of the objects of experience. It is employed in Husserl's phenomenology to facilitate the description of the objects of consciousness *qua* objects of consciousness. If something does not appear as an object of consciousness it is not postulated within the descriptions of transcendental phenomenology.

Now, Sartre's point is precisely that the transcendental ego does not appear as an object for consciousness except in reflection, hence it must fall by the *epoche*. The irony of this criticism of Husserl is that the transcendental ego is the cornerstone of Husserl's 'transcendental phenomenology' yet it is precisely that which is phenomenologically illegitimate.

It seems to me that Sartre is entirely correct in this aspect of his critique of Husserl. There is a tension between, on the one hand, the employment of the *epoche* and on the other hand the postulation of a transcendental I. Husserl faces a dilemma. Either an exception has to be made to the thoroughgoing use of the *epoche*, or else the transcendental ego must be abandoned in so far as it does not appear to consciousness. Sartre does not consider the first option, and I think rightly not. Some good argument would seem to be needed to justify withholding the *epoche* in the case of the I but not in the case of, say, physical objects, and no such argument would seem to be available. This leaves only the option Sartre advocates; the abandonment of the transcendental ego.

Sartre resumes his attack on the Cartesian-Husserlian error of reifying the self, as follows:

'Indeed, it is obvious that Descartes passed from the *Cogito* to the idea of thinking substance because he believed that *I* and *think* are on the same level. We have just seen that Husserl, although less obviously, is ultimately subject to the same reproach' (50) (124)

As we have seen, the mistake common to Descartes and Husserl is to assume that because there is consciousness there is an irreducibly subjective psychic I that is conscious. There is no phenomenological warrant for such a postulation because an I exists only in so far as it is an object for reflection.

Although Sartre assimilates Husserl's transcendental ego to Descartes' thinking substance, there are obvious disanalogies between the two

concepts. For example, Descartes' subject is the immortal soul of Platonic Christianity, but Husserl's subject is a quasi-Kantian transcendental ground of experience. However, the two concepts of the subject are much closer than this disanalogy would suggest. Both are subjects of consciousness. Both are immaterial. Both are substances, in the sense that they are not properties and stand in no need of anything else in order to exist (with the important qualifications that the Cartesian soul depends upon God for its existence and the transcendental ego only exists when its experiences exist.). Both are discovered partly by an introspective scrutiny of thinking, partly by the exercise of pure reason. Both are a condition for experience. Descartes' *cogitationes* are operations of the soul. Husserl's acts of consciousness are emanations from the transcendental ego.

To understand the origin of this mistake we need to unpack the spatial metaphor 'level' (30) ('plan' TE 34). This cannot mean that what the Cartesian and Husserlian ego have in common is that they both appear to consciousness, because, clearly, the Cartesian soul has no direct acquaintance with itself, only with its operations. What Sartre means, I think, is that within the Cartesian-Husserlian framework it is equally self-evident that there is thinking and that I am a thing that thinks. Neither claim is more or less certain than the other. (125) It is not clear that this is true but it is the most plausible reading of Sartre's metaphor.

For Sartre it is by no means self-evident that there is an I if there is thinking. The I is not an entity given directly to consciousness whenever there is thinking, nor is there any logical compulsion to derive the existence of a mental subject from the fact that there is thinking. In this sense the I and thinking are on different 'levels'.

There is another interpretation of 'levels' here, which is highly Sartrean. Sartre distinguishes between the reflective and the pre-reflective levels of consciousness. It is the failure to make that distinction which misleads Descartes and Husserl into postulating an I wherever there is thinking.

At work in these passages are three kinds of method, each of which may yield a different notion of the self. Sartre calls them:

- (1) Metaphysical
- (2) Critical
- (3) Phenomenological (126)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

We could represent Sartre's location of the thinkers he considers in this section of *The Transcendence of the Ego* as follows:

- (1) Metaphysical - Descartes, Husserl
- (2) Critical - Kant, Husserl
- (3) Phenomenological - Kant, Sartre

Descartes does not engage in either phenomenology or critical philosophy in proving that he is a thing that thinks. Clearly, there are close analogies between the method of systematic doubt in the first two *Meditations* and Husserl's transcendental reduction but the soul is not proved to exist by any such quasi-phenomenological manoeuvres. It is not as though, for example, the soul is an indubitable residue given directly to consciousness, for Descartes. On the contrary, the soul is postulated as a metaphysical entity, as Descartes as he really is, and this is supposed to be established by rational argument.

Similarly, Descartes is not a critical philosopher of the self. Within the critical post-Kantian method adopted by Sartre, the self as soul is an extravagant rationalist postulate. Descartes is not trying to answer the question of how experience is possible even if it is true that there could be no thought without a thinker for him. Even if he decides on the limits of what may be known (with certainty), he draws those limits much more broadly than Kant or any post-Kantian critical philosopher.

Husserl does not count as a phenomenologist of the self for Sartre. (Indeed in *Being and Nothingness* Sartre argues that Husserl is not a phenomenologist but a phenomenalist: someone who thinks that any claims about physical objects may be translated into claims about actual or possible perceptual contents without loss of meaning). He thinks Husserl has no genuine phenomenology of the self because, as we have seen, the transcendental ego must fall before the *epoché*. The failure to realise this precludes Husserl from engaging in a phenomenology of the subject. Rather, Husserl's transcendental ego is a metaphysical postulate like the Cartesian soul. It is not in the world - it is not an item falling within possible experience - it grounds the world. For Sartre, no one can be a phenomenologist and maintain this.

Kant has the merit of avoiding the metaphysical trap which Descartes and Husserl succumb to. Indeed, it is possible to read *The Transcendence of the Ego* as the pushing of Kant's theory of the self to some of its logical

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

conclusions, even though Sartre's depiction of the self as an object is unkantian.

Sartre, is in his own estimation the true phenomenologist of the self who avoids any metaphysical mistakes about its existence and nature. Sartre, perhaps, would not accept this, but his critique of Husserl falls under the heading 'critical philosophy' as well as 'phenomenology'.

One final, but complimentary, reading of 'level' rests on this:

'If the I in the I think affirms itself as transcendent, this is because the I is not of the same nature as transcendental consciousness' (51) (127)

The I and the 'I think' are on a different 'level' because that I think is directly given to consciousness, but the putative I that thinks is given to only one sort of consciousness; reflective consciousness. In the absence of reflection no such I is given.

Sartre uses Kant's distinction between 'transcendent' and 'transcendental' to clarify this claim. If x is transcendent then x is not a possible object of consciousness, at least *qua* x , but if x is transcendental then x is a condition for consciousness and, even though not empirical, may be coherently thought of as x . The I of the 'I think' is transcendent because it is not given to consciousness (except as a product of reflection) but consciousness is transcendental as described phenomenologically because it is a condition of our everyday empirical consciousness.

19 Consciousness and the I

If Sartre's arguments so far are sound then Husserl's transcendental ego falls by the *epoche*. Its postulation from a phenomenological point of view is quite illegitimate.

However, although the I is not a transcendental ego according to Sartre, it is something rather than nothing even within the horizon of phenomenology. This means that there is a difference - a phenomenological difference - between the appearance of consciousness with the I and the appearance of consciousness without the I. Further, there is a distinction between consciousness and the I such that the I is not, and is not any part of, consciousness, even if it is not a transcendental ego:

'Let us also note that the I think does not appear to reflection as the reflected consciousness: it is given through reflected consciousness' (51) (128)

In reflection, then, there are two objects for the reflecting consciousness: the consciousness which is reflected upon, and the I which accompanies that reflected consciousness. I take it Sartre thinks this distinction is phenomenologically given. It is simply self-evidently not the case that the I that is reflected on is, or is a structure of, the consciousness which is reflected on.

What does it mean to say that the I is given 'through' reflected consciousness? Sartre provides us with a simile to help us understand this. He says that the I appears through reflected consciousness like a pebble at the bottom of water (51-2). Again, the appositeness or otherwise of this image may only usefully be appraised phenomenologically. Husserl employs alternative images; that of the I as 'behind' consciousness, or the sun emanating rays of sunlight as the I as the source of acts of consciousness. It seems difficult to find good philosophical grounds for preferring Husserl's similes of Sartre's or *vice versa*.

The images are presumably mutually inconsistent. If the I is sufficiently like a pebble in water for Sartre to be right, then it is sufficiently unlike the sun as a source of light for Husserl to be wrong. It does not seem logically impossible that the two images should be consistent but Sartre at least conceives of himself as providing an alternative model to Husserl's.

Suppose A appears phenomenologically through B. It follows that A is not B, (so) B is not A, A is not any part of B, and B is not any part of A. It follows also *ceteris paribus* that unless B appeared then A could not appear. What is not entirely clear is whether if A appears through B then if B appears then A appears. I see nothing in Sartre's text to commit him to that as a general principle, even if when reflected consciousness appears an I is given to reflecting consciousness. Aside from these logical points we have to be content with the image presented by 'through'. It is of course a spatial metaphor. It is reasonably clear what it means for a face to be visible 'through' a pane of glass, less so what it means for the I to appear 'through' reflected consciousness. The unclarity in the second case arises through thinking of the mental in spatial terms.

Although the I is given 'through' consciousness, it is not the 'source' of consciousness according to Sartre. Sartre provides us with two reasons for

doubting this tenet of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology, even though it may seem to be true:

'To be sure, the I manifests itself as the source of consciousness' (51) (129)

If 'x manifests itself' implies 'x appears phenomenologically' then it is doubtful whether Sartre's position may be understood consistently. After all, he has argued so far that the phenomenological findings are incompatible with the Husserlian view of the ego as the 'source' of consciousness. For this reason it is better to read 'manifests itself' as something like 'is easily taken as' or 'is easily believed to be'. Then we may read Sartre as criticising a recurrent tendency in modern philosophy to reify the self into a subjective source of consciousness despite the fact that this is not how the self is directly given to consciousness. Not only Husserl, but Descartes, and on certain readings, Kant are guilty of this reification.

Sartre does not produce a reason why philosophers have been systematically misled into postulating an irreducibly subjective ego as the 'source' of consciousness. If that is not how the ego appears to consciousness then it is puzzling that the mistake should have been made.

Sartre's account is however easily supplemented by linguistic considerations adduced by Kant, Wittgenstein and Ryle. The public use of 'I' by whoever uses it to denote whoever uses it is carried over into a private metaphysical use as the name of a purely psychical 'owner' of consciousness; as though because no physical self appears as the subject of consciousness there must exist a non-physical self as a kind of proxy. Because the self is not a physical object it must be a non-physical object. (130) It is argued by Ryle in *The Concept of Mind* that Cartesian dualism does not have to be true in order for our ordinary psychological vocabulary to be meaningful.(131)

20 Why the I is not the Source of Consciousness

Sartre reiterates two of his grounds for doubting that the I is the source of consciousness:

(1) 'Nothing but consciousness can be the source of consciousness.' (52)

(2) 'If the I is a part of consciousness, there would then be two I's.' (52) (132)

I shall treat each of these in turn.

(1) Consciousness as the Source of the Self

That there may exist no source of consciousness other than consciousness itself is implied by two characteristically Sartrean doctrines: Consciousness is an absolute, like a Spinozistic substance, and consciousness is free.

If something is a substance then although other things may depend upon it for their existence, it does not depend upon anything else for its own existence. It follows that if consciousness is a substance, or like a substance in this respect, then consciousness may have no source. This is because if a is the source of b , then a depends upon b for its existence but if b depends upon nothing for its existence then *a fortiori* b does not depend upon a for its existence.

Equally, if something is free then it is a cause but not an effect, but if a is the source of b then a may be the cause of b or the cause of some part of b . This is precluded if b is free, because if b is free then nothing is the cause of b so *a fortiori* a is not the cause of b .

Sartre does not offer independent arguments here (52) for consciousness' being a both Spinozistic substance and free but I take it these doctrines are already established to his satisfaction.

Clearly, if we allow that consciousness is a free substance, and if being a free substance is inconsistent with having a source other than itself, then consciousness has no source other than itself. Sartre's argument is valid because if p and q are mutually inconsistent, and if p is true, then q must be false, but it is only sound if, in addition, both its premises are true.

The possibility of consciousness being the source of itself is consistent with consciousness being a free substance. If a is a free substance then a is free and one way of reading 'free' here is 'cause of itself' or 'cause of its own actions' so if a is free then a is the cause of what a does. Similarly, if a is a free substance then a is a substance, so if a has a cause then a is the cause of itself. Nothing causes a to be other than a , so a is the cause of its own existence. Here I am taking it that if something is the source of something it is at least the cause of that thing.

(2) The Impossibility of Two I's

If the I of reflected consciousness existed as the source of that consciousness, then a single psyche would include two I's as its subject. Sartre assumes here that consciousness is a unity; the existence of two I's in one and the same consciousness is inconsistent with that unity, so if consciousness is a unity then then it is impossible that there should be two I's. Consciousness is a unity, the Husserlian phenomenology of the self generates two I's and so is incompatible with the unity of consciousness. Therefore the Husserlian phenomenology of the self is false.

This is a valid argument and is also sound if the two premises, that consciousness is a unity and Husserl's phenomenology implies the existence of two I's, are true. We may assume that if some putative consciousness in fact had two I's as subjects then that putative consciousness could not turn out to be a unity. It would in fact have to turn out to be two consciousnesses if consciousnesses are individuated through their subjects.

What are the two I's? Sartre identifies them as the I of reflexive consciousness and the I of reflected consciousness. In a sense for Sartre both these I's exist. The problem of the two I's only arises if we take the I of reflected consciousness to be a transcendental ego; the subject of reflected consciousness. Reflexive and reflected consciousness form a unity but this unity would be impossible if the subject of reflective consciousness were numerically distinct from the subject of reflected consciousness. Sartre's solution is to abandon the Husserlian idea that the I exists as subject of reflected consciousness. The existence of the problem on Husserl's account is taken by Sartre as confirmation of the cogency of his own phenomenology of the self.

21 Sartre's Conclusions on The I and the Me

Sartre ends the chapter of *The Transcendence of the Ego* called 'The I and the Me' with a summary of his four principle conclusions so far:

- (i) The I is an existent.
- (ii) The I is open to a special kind of intuition.
- (iii) The I only appears to reflexive consciousness.
- (iv) The I must fall by the *epoché*.

I shall examine each of these in turn.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(i) The I as an existent

Sartre says:

'The I is an existent. It has a concrete type of existence, undoubtedly different from the existence of mathematical truths, of meanings, or of spatio-temporal beings, but no less real. The I gives itself as a transcendent' (52) (133)

To say that this I exists or is an existent is to say that the I is something rather than nothing. Husserl's mistake is not to postulate an I when in fact no I exists but to misunderstand the nature of the I. In other words, Husserl's mistake is about essence not about existence. Husserl thinks the I is the transcendental ego, but for Sartre the I has a kind of permanence analogous to but not identical with that of mathematical truths.

Not only does the I exist according to Sartre but the I is real. Existence is to be contrasted with non-existence or absence of being, but being real is to be contrasted with being artificial or fictitious. The I is not artificial or fictitious for Sartre because it is not simply an invention of consciousness, or exhausted by our belief in its existence. Its reality consists in its independence of our belief in it, and its independence of particular conscious thoughts about it. What its reality does not consist in is being the transcendental subject of pre-reflexive, or reflected consciousness.

Sartre also claims that the I is given as a transcendent. In terms of the Kantian distinction between the transcendent and the transcendental, the I is not transcendental because it is not a condition for consciousness, but it is transcendent because what it is is not exhausted by the consciousness of it. It is, to put it metaphorically, 'beyond' consciousness, not in the sense that it is inaccessible to consciousness (clearly it is not or a phenomenology of the self would be impossible) but in the sense that its reality is not wholly apprehended by any particular act of consciousness. In this respect, if few others, the I is rather like a physical object.

(ii) The I as open to Intuition

Here Sartre is drawing our attention to a certain kind of mistake:

'The I proffers itself to an intuition of a special kind which apprehends it, always inadequately, behind the reflected consciousness' (53) (134)

Clearly, Sartre has made room for a kind of intuition distinct from both the intuition of mathematical truths and the intuition of physical objects, which is the intuition of the I. He does not differ from Husserl in precisely that respect, but over what the intuition of the I is an intuition of. The notion of an intuition is one the phenomenologists inherit from Kant, and it denotes the direct apprehension of some object by consciousness.

However, more than that is implied here. The intuition of the I is such as to easily mislead us into the Husserlian view that the I is a transcendental ego. Although Sartre has no account of how this error is possible, one possibility must be expressly excluded. It must not be the case that the I is phenomenologically given as a transcendental ego. If this were the case Sartre would have conceded to Husserl precisely the point he wishes to repudiate.

(iii) The I Only Appears to Reflective Consciousness

The nearest Sartre comes to offering an explanation of the error is:

'The I never appears except on the occasion of a reflective act [...] there is an unreflected act of reflection, without an I, which is directed on a reflected consciousness [...]. At the same time a new object appears which is the occasion for an affirmation by reflective consciousness' (53) (135)

The 'new object' which appears is the I, but the I must appear in such a way that it is (incorrectly) taken for a Husserlian ego or (correctly) taken for a Sartrean 'me'. In that sense the I is the occasion for all affirmation by reflective consciousness. It may, for example, be affirmed to be Husserlian or Sartrean. We need to know in virtue of exactly which phenomenological features the I may be misconstrued on the Husserlian model. Sartre gives us no clue to that, even though in the remainder of the book he develops his own positive phenomenology of the I.

(iv) The I Must Fall By the Epoche

This final irony Sartre has brought against Husserl is this:

'The transcendent I must fall before the stroke of the phenomenological reduction. The *Cogito* affirms too much. The certain content of the pseudo

"*Cogito*" is not "I have consciousness of this chair", but "There is consciousness of this chair" (53-4) (136)

Sartre's critique of Husserl and the post-Cartesian phenomenological techniques is suggestive of the criticism Russell and Lichtenberg brought against Descartes' *cogito*. From a phenomenological point of view, from the fact that consciousness appears to consciousness it does not follow that any I appears to consciousness, or exists as either subject or object of that consciousness. Indeed, from a logical point of view, from the fact that there exists consciousness it does not logically follow that something is conscious. No contradiction would seem to be involved in the supposition that there is consciousness without a subject.

The I falls before the *epoché*. Like any other object of consciousness, its objective taken for granted reality must be suspended in the interests of phenomenological description. In this sense, Sartre considers himself a stricter and more thoroughgoing phenomenologist than Husserl.

(3) THE THEORY OF THE MATERIAL PRESENCE OF THE ME

Summary

Sartre reiterates his rejection of any unconscious mind and argues for his identification of the psychophysical whole person with 'the me'. He describes the phenomenological relations between the ego and its actions, states, and qualities and analyses the concept of action. After a discussion of the relations of any object to its properties Sartre rejects the view that the ego is a thing, or like a physical object. Instead he compares the ego-states relation to the world-objects relation. Sartre describes phenomenologically the 'poetic' production *ex nihilo* by the ego of its states and argues that the ego is constituted by reflective consciousness. The ego has a pseudo-interiority which it borrows from the real interiority of consciousness. Sartre shows himself to be anti-Cartesian on self-knowledge in refusing to privilege first person psychological ascriptions over third person ones. The ego is mistakenly taken as real but is the ideal unity of states and actions.

(1) Sartre's Criticisms of La Rochefoucauld

Sartre identifies La Rochefoucauld as an early anticipator of two related movements in modern European thought: the so called "self-love" moralists

and those psychologists who make use of the concept of an unconscious. The self-love moralists thought that a self-reflexive act was implicit in any act of consciousness whatsoever so that if a person is conscious of something, then that person implicitly desires that object for himself. Indeed, the object is really desired by that person's psychic 'me', and all acts of cognition are implicitly referred back to such a psychic me. Sartre wishes to refute this kind of psychology because it seems to make a mistake closely analogous to Husserl's postulation of the transcendental ego.

It is well known that Sartre denies the existence of an unconscious mind, at least in the sense advocated by classic Freudian psychology. Indeed, the idea that consciousness is implicitly a consciousness of itself is a residual Cartesian strain in Sartre's essentially anti-Cartesian phenomenology. If someone believes in an unconscious then they believe that a person may be in a mental state without knowing that they are in that state. In particular, there exist psychological drives which motivate or determine the person's behaviour in ways of which the person is ignorant. One reason why Sartre wishes to repudiate this view is that it seems to present an insuperable barrier to a thoroughgoing phenomenology of consciousness. Another is that it is incompatible with his doctrine of human freedom.

The theories of the "self-love" moralists and the Freudians are closely related in that the psychologies of both logically entail the existence of an unconscious. The self-love moralist is committed to an unconscious because the 'me' which is the reflexive object of psychic acts is usually not available to introspection. It is concealed by emotion. Similarly, the Freudian is committed to the view that an agent *qua* psychic agent is not fully available to his own introspection. Indeed, his own true motives or drives are not available for conscious scrutiny (except under Freudian analysis).

Sartre's characterisation of these two theories, as they originate in La Rochefoucauld, is riddled with Husserlian themes:

'La Rochefoucauld was one of the first to have made use of the unconscious without naming it. For him, self-love conceals itself under the most diverse forms. It must be ferreted out before it can be grasped. In a more general way, it has been admitted as a consequence that the me, if it is not present to consciousness is hidden behind consciousness and is the magnetic pole of all our representations and all our desires. The me seeks, then, to procure the object in order to satisfy its desire'

(55) (137)

For example, Husserl's transcendental ego is hidden from consciousness, at least until the transcendental field is opened up by the phenomenological reduction. Further, Husserl refers to the transcendental ego as the subjective 'pole' of consciousness. It is common to La Rochefoucauld, the self-love moralists and to Husserl that a hidden 'me' is the source of all one's acts of consciousness. This 'hidden subject' is clearly present in Freud's psychology in a parallel way. Sartre's aim in these passages is nothing less than the demolition of this entire idea of the self. (138)

There is, according to Sartre, a fundamental methodological error which unites these traditions. It is the failure to recognise the distinction between reflexive and pre-reflexive consciousness. The consequence of this is a confusion of the structures of pre-reflexive consciousness with those of reflexive consciousness. In particular, what belongs to acts of reflection is mistakenly ascribed to the objects of reflection. It is a central task of Sartre's phenomenology of consciousness to clearly separate these two sorts of structure, and point out cases where what belongs to reflexive consciousness has been ascribed to pre-reflexive consciousness.

There is a second, and related, confusion. Sartre thinks what belongs to the objects of consciousness is misidentified as a structure of consciousness itself. What consciousness is of is confused with what consciousness is. Again, it is a task of his phenomenology to make a clear distinction between consciousness and its intentional objects. The ascription of the ego to pre-reflexive consciousness is a special case of the confusion between an object of consciousness and a structure of consciousness.

Sartre provides us with an example of the separation of the object of consciousness from the consciousness of it. ('Separation' means the distinction Sartre makes between the two in his phenomenological description of their relationship.) Suppose, Sartre says, that you pity your friend Pierre and you go to help him. Pierre is presented to your consciousness as having to be helped. This is how Pierre appears to you, and it is a property of Pierre, a phenomenological property, which appears to you. This property of Pierre is not a property of your consciousness but a property of Pierre as the object of your consciousness. Sartre is engaged in phenomenology here and not psychological explanation. Sartre's view is quite consistent with either a realist or an anti-realist explanation of perception at this point. For example, it would be no objection to Sartre's thesis to say that the appearance of Pierre as having to be helped, or needing

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

assistance, is the result of a quasi-Kantian imposition of preconceptions on Pierre as intentional object. The revelation that being-in-need-of-help is a property of Pierre within the framework of the phenomenological description is consistent with a variety of explanations of how that appearance is possible.

A hint of the kind of explanation with which Sartre would wish to supplement his phenomenology is given when he tells us that Pierre's appearance acts on one 'like a force' (56). This is an analogy to help us understand the phenomenology, but the appropriateness of the analogy depends upon our seeing the logical possibility of a causal relation running from the appearance to one's own consciousness. This cannot be construed literally by Sartre of course because nothing can act on consciousness. Consciousness is free.

This example illustrates the distinction between consciousness and its intentional object. That is part of the phenomenological framework Sartre needs to retain in his critique of Husserl and the broadly Husserlian position of La Rochefoucauld.

There is another consequence of the Pierre example which is to Sartre's purpose. No 'me' is present to one's consciousness of Pierre:

'There is no me: I am in the presence of Peter's suffering just as I am in the presence of the colour of this inkstand: there is an objective world of things and of actions, done or to be done, and the actions come to adhere as qualites to the things which call for them' (56) (139)

We see now, with new impact, why there must be moments of consciousness without the I. All there is for consciousness is Pierre's suffering, or Pierre as having to be helped. Consciousness of self - even of the unconscious but putatively perennial kind advocated by La Rochefoucauld, the self-love moralists, and the Freudians - would interfere as a barrier, as a distraction, to the possibility of Pierre's suffering being presented as an object for consciousness.

This does not mean that one is not conscious of Pierre. One is conscious of Pierre but not thereby conscious of oneself. Similarly, this does not mean that your consciousness of Pierre is not a 'consciousness of itself' (to use Sartre's turn of phrase). It simply means that the 'me' does not exist as an intentional object in addition to Pierre's appearance as suffering.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre's analogy between Pierre's suffering and the colour of the inkwell is designed to reinforce the claim that the properties of both are objective or mind-independent qualities of objective or mind-independent objects. This is true within Sartre's phenomenological description. It is how they are given to consciousness.

Just as it was open to a quasi-Kantian to claim that the appearance of Pierre as suffering is due (or partly due) to the imposition of *a priori* structures of consciousness on Pierre, so it is open to a quasi Lockean to say that the colour of the inkwell is a secondary quality - that it does not belong to the object (except as a power or disposition) independently of the perception of that object. Sartre could allow this as consistent with his phenomenology. His point is that the colour of the inkwell is given to consciousness as a property of the inkwell and not as a property of consciousness. It is given as mind-independent whether or not it is mind-independent. It will be an important part of his phenomenology of the self that the 'me' is given as an object for consciousness in a parallel way; and not as any kind of structure of consciousness.

Sartre has two objections to any account of an example of the 'Pierre's suffering' type which makes it dependent upon an unconscious or on a self-reflective desire. They are phenomenologically redundant and they turn out to be incoherent.

Sartre considers the view that I go to Pierre's assistance in order to terminate an unpleasant state of mind that I am in as a result of perceiving Pierre suffer. Sartre agrees that this may happen but it is something distinct from the spontaneous act of assisting Pierre based on the simple perception of his suffering. If I am in an unpleasant state as a result of seeing Pierre suffer then I can know I am in that state. It could be objected that Sartre begs the question against his opponents here, but a reply on Sartrean lines could be constructed: If I am motivated by an unpleasant state of mind I must feel this unpleasantness for it to motivate me. To the extent that I feel it I am aware that I am in it. To the extent that I am aware that I am in it, it cannot be an unconscious state.

The postulation of such a state is in any case phenomenologically redundant. It is the intuition of the unpleasant quality of Pierre which motivates the action of helping him. The quality is, phenomenologically speaking, on the side of the object and not on the side of consciousness. Indeed, even if the consciousness of Pierre includes a desire, that desire is to

remove the unpleasant property of the object. The desire is not directed against itself, nor against oneself as the subject of desire.

For a desire to motivate my action I must feel it and for a mental state to motivate my action I must know that I am in it. What the Freudians and the self-love theorists are explicitly committed to, and what La Rochefoucauld is implicitly committed to, is a confusion of reflected and unreflected acts of consciousness. In order for a putatively unconscious act of consciousness to play a role in one's psychology it must in fact be reflected, and thereby turn out not to be unconscious at all. Sartre asks rhetorically;

'Even if the unconscious exists, who could be led to believe that it contains spontaneities of a reflected sort? Is it not the definition of the reflected that it be posited by a consciousness? But, in addition, how can it be held that the reflected is first in relation to the unreflected' (57) (140)

Clearly, it is contradictory to maintain that an unconscious contains reflected acts of consciousness because, necessarily, if a state is unconscious it is not the object of an act of consciousness, but if a state is reflected then, necessarily, it is the object of an act of consciousness. Sartre thus condemns the Freudians, the self-love theorists, and La Rochefoucauld for implicitly maintaining that a person may be in a mental state but both be aware and not be aware that they are in that mental state. This argument goes through so long as Sartre is entitled to maintain that the respect in which one is putatively aware one is in a mental state is just the respect in which one is unaware one is in that mental state.

There is an additional reason why Sartre thinks allegedly unconscious states must be unreflected. If a state were thoroughly unconscious we could not know of its existence. It might be thought that this is not a sound objection for Sartre to bring on his own terms. After all, he maintains that there exist unreflected mental states; those of pre-reflective consciousness. However, even those, although unreflected, include an implicit awareness of themselves. From the standpoint of his throughgoing Cartesianism about the transparency of the mental he may consistently ask the epistemological question of the Freudian: How do you know the unconscious exists? If the Freudian replies that it is postulated to explain actions then Sartre may reply that his own philosophy shows that this postulation is redundant. If the Freudian replies that the unconscious is revealed under therapy, Sartre may reply that it is then no longer an unconscious.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre is at pains to persuade us that his critique of the unconscious is consistent with the reflected /unreflected distinction. The reflected depends upon the unreflected, but the unreflected is not to be identified with the unconscious. In particular, there is no unconscious self. Phenomenologically, the unconscious and the Husserlian transcendental ego are equally unwarranted postulations.

(2) The Autonomy of Unreflected Consciousness

Unreflected consciousness' autonomy consists in its acting but not being acted upon. This idea is facilitated by the critique of; the unconscious, the self as agent but object of desire, and the transcendental ego. For Sartre unreflected consciousness is consciousness without a subject. If consciousness did have a subject it would not be autonomous. Acts of consciousness would not have quasi-Kantian spontaneity. Rather, acts of consciousness would be performances by an ego, an unconscious or some other irreducibly subjective source of mental life. This would mean they are not free, but rather the determined result of some subjective but hidden agent.

Sartre takes it that the refutation of the idea of the subject implies the freedom of unreflected consciousness:

'We arrive then at the following conclusion: unreflected consciousness must be considered autonomous' (58) (141)

From the fact that no subject of consciousness performs the acts of consciousness it cannot be validly concluded that acts of consciousness are not causally determined. That is the conclusion Sartre desires, so for it to go through we need to conjoin the present critique of the self with the earlier argument that consciousness is a Spinozistic substance. It is a cause but not an effect. If that is true then nothing acts on consciousness and *a fortiori* no subject acts on consciousness.

It might be objected that the fact that x is uncaused does not entail that x is free. I agree that this inference does not go through as it stands but Sartre's characterisation of consciousness includes (perhaps uncontentiously) the idea that consciousness is composed of mental acts. If x acts but is not caused to act that is arguably what is meant by x being free on at least one plausible construal of 'free'. It is this particular construal Sartre wishes to

capture by the term 'spontaneity'. Something acts (absolutely) spontaneously if and only if it acts but is not acted upon, *a fortiori* its acting is not caused by its being acted upon.

Sartre is not even prepared to concede that the object of consciousness has an effect on consciousness. This is ruled out because there is not anything that determines consciousness. Instead, Sartre says it is phenomenologically *as if* the objects of consciousness determine consciousness. Consciousness itself retains its autonomy:

'Everything happens as if we lived in a world whose objects, in addition to their qualities of warmth, odour, shape etc., had the qualities of repulsive, attractive, delightful, useful, etc., and as if these qualities were forces having a certain power over us' (58) (142)

'As if' is the crucial expression in this passage. Sartre's point is that this is not in fact true. Consciousness is a free spontaneity which perpetually chooses its objects. This idea is crucial to the development of Sartre's existential phenomenology. It is a premise for the controversial thesis of *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions* that we choose our own emotions and it anticipates the the definition of 'consciousness' in terms of freedom in *Being and Nothingness* according to which there is no situation in which a consciousness does not have a choice. Freedom for Sartre is a disposition to make choices and consciousness possesses this disposition so long as it exists. Because consciousness is not subject to exterior causation, consciousness's choices are not determined but genuinely spontaneous.

No such real 'forces' as those mentioned in the passage just quoted are revealed by phenomenological investigation. One is reminded of Wittgenstein's insistent advice to 'look and see' in philosophy, rather than accept generalisations in a preconceived, taken for granted way.

Sartre says pre-reflective consciousness is a 'totality' (58) which has no need of being completed. Two items sometimes thought by philosophers and psychologists to be 'inside' consciousness, or to be part of its structure, lie 'outside' it: the 'me' and the objects of consciousness. The 'me' is one object of consciousness amongst others.

In this way the critique of psychology leads Sartre to the same conclusion as his phenomenology of the self:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'The me must not be sought in the states of unreflected consciousness, nor behind them. The me appears only with the reflective act' (59-60) (143)

The me is called by Sartre a 'noematic correlate' (60). As we have seen (p. above) the noema, or noematic correlate in Husserlian phenomenology is the intended content of an act of consciousness. So Sartre, in these pages, is standing Husserl on his feet. Far from the me being a subject or source of consciousness, the me is an object for consciousness of a particular type: reflective consciousness.

Sartre conceives of himself as having effected a radical shift in phenomenology: the abolition of the transcendental ego and its replacement by the me as object. The implications of this shift, if Sartre has been successful, are very great. The transcendental ego was after all the ground of consciousness and of the world according to Husserl. It remains for Sartre to say what sort of object the me is, and for us to evaluate that positive account.

3 The Constitution of the Ego

The ego for Sartre is essentially a unity. The fundamental error of Husserl's phenomenology of the self is that, when pushed to its logical conclusions, it bifurcates the ego into subject and object. In a sense there is an I and a me, but the I and the me are not subject and object. Rather, they are both objects but the appearance of their being two is an illusion. They are in fact two aspects of one reality: the psycho-physical whole which each of us essentially is:

'We begin to get a glimpse of the fact that the I and the Me are only one. We are going to try to show that this ego, of which I and Me are but two aspects, constitutes the ideal and indirect (noematic) unity of the infinite series of our reflected consciousness' (60)(144)

We have not yet reached the stage of the argument where the me is identified with the psycho-physical whole that I am. Here the me as it appears to me depends upon the unity of consciousness. Sartre draws from the fact of the unity of consciousness the conclusion that there can be only one self per consciousness. In this he is right if consciousnesses are individuated through their owners.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Nevertheless, the psycho-physical me is already implicitly introduced in the way Sartre draws the I/me distinction. He says:

(1) 'The I is the ego as unity of actions' (60) (145)

but also

(2) 'The me is the ego as the unity of states and qualities' (60) (146)

'Ego' here is Sartre's word for that human being who each of us is. A kind of dualism is being retained here but it is hardly Husserlian, still less Cartesian. It is the minimal intuitive psycho-physical dualism which makes the posing of the 'mind-body problem' possible. 'I' is the name of the human being *qua* agent and 'me' is the name of the human being *qua* thinker. The two personal pronouns may be given this use because one and the same human being may be understood under two sorts of description: physical descriptions which imply agency and psychological descriptions which imply mentality. Sartre is aware that there exists a variety of dependencies between the possibility of each of these descriptions, and perhaps for that reason he says the I/me distinction is at root 'functional' or 'grammatical':

'The distinction that one makes between the two aspects of one and the same reality seems to us simply functional, not to say grammatical' (60) (147)

Wittgenstein and Ryle could readily agree that a grammatical distinction between 'I' and 'me' could lead to a mistaken ontological distinction between the human being who one is and a hypostatized subjective ego. Indeed, Sartre's replacement of the Husserlian subject by the human being is highly suggestive of the neo-Aristotelian advocacy of the whole person as the subject of thought and action by Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein, Ryle, Strawson and others. Strawson for example thinks when I talk about myself I am not talking about my self.

When Sartre says the distinction is functional he means we have it because it is useful to us. Human beings both think and act so it is useful to be able to distinguish a person *qua* thinker from that person *qua* agent.

The problem that runs through this account, however, is that the 'I'/me' grammatical distinction does not coincide with the thinker/agent distinction or ordinary (French or English) language. I can say 'I am running' and 'I am

thinking' or I can reply 'Me' to 'Who was the runner ?' or 'Who was the thinker ?'. If Sartre is using the terms stipulatively, his substantial point may still stand. 'I' and 'me' are used to refer to a unitary human being. They are used to refer to the human being who uses them by the human being who uses them when he knows who he is referring to.

4 Consciousness and the Ego

Sartre's account of the relationship between consciousness and the ego is highly Kantian. Sartre distinguishes two kinds of unity which consciousness possesses (which should not be confused with the view that consciousness is two unities or anything of that sort). These are:

- (1) The immanent unity of consciousness.
- (2) The transcendent unity of consciousness.

These correspond roughly to what Kant calls the transcendental unity of consciousness and the empirical unity of consciousness. Sartre's transcendent unity is close to Kant's empirical unity, and Sartre's immanent unity is close to Kant's transcendental unity. (148) Sartre defines the immanent unity of consciousness as follows:

'[This is] the flux of consciousness constituting itself as the unity of itself'
(60) (149)

and the transcendent unity of consciousness in this way:

'states and actions' (60-61) (150)

So by 'immanent unity of consciousness' Sartre means what has traditionally counted as the unity of consciousness. The expression designates consciousness as a unity irrespective of the changing states of consciousness. By 'transcendent unity of consciousness' Sartre means the set of states of consciousness and actions which form a unity by being the states and actions of one and the same person. The first kind of unity counts as immanent because consciousness is immanent to itself. It constitutes itself as a unity and is directly aware of all of its own states. The second kind of unity

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

counts as transcendent because a person is not directly aware of all of his or her past, present and future states (at one time). In this sense the transcendent unity of consciousness transcends the consciousness of it. It is possible to grasp Sartre's meaning intuitively or pre-philosophically here. There is a distinction between, on the one hand, one's own present consciousness, which is a unity in the traditional sense - it is necessarily not more than one - and on the other hand the unity of oneself as a person constituted by all the states one is ever in and all the actions one ever performs. If these are all performed by one and the same person then they too form a unity.

We need to raise now the question of the ego's relations to these two kinds of being. Sartre says:

'The ego is the unity of states and actions' (61) (151)

Prima facie this is straightforwardly to identify the ego with the transcendent unity of consciousness, but this appearance is misleading. It is possible to think of one's states and actions in two ways. They can be thought of as a unity *tout court* or they can be thought of as a unity *qua* mine, and it is this second sense which Sartre is trying to capture by calling them the 'ego' and not simply a 'transcendent unity'. Indeed, Sartre says of the ego:

'It is the unity of transcendent unities and transcendent itself' (61) (152)

It might be objected to Sartre that one's states and actions always form a unity, so why invoke the ego to be the unity of unities? An argument may be constructed to give point to Sartre's distinction.

Consider any two states (or actions). If they are both states of one and the same person then they thereby form a unity, and so on for any such states. However, now consider the unity of all such unities; the set of all sets of states of one and the same person. Sartre uses the term 'ego' to designate precisely that set of sets, or unity of unities.

The ego is thus transcendent (but not transcendental) because it is the unity of transcendent unities. Sartre provides no argument for this, but it could be plausibly maintained that any unity of transcendent entities would itself have to be transcendent. If some states transcend consciousness, then the set of such transcendent states transcends consciousness.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Am I an ego? Reasons are available for answering positively and negatively. I am not my ego because my ego is only how I appear to myself or how I think of myself. I seem to myself to be an ego in reflecting consciousness. I am my ego because as Sartre famously maintains, a person is the sum of their actions, and my ego is the unity of my actions. It would seem to follow that I am my ego to the extent to which I think of myself as I am.

Sartre draws an analogy between the ego and the objects of pre-reflective consciousness. Just as pre-reflective consciousness achieves its synthetic unity through being a set of acts directed towards an intentional object, so reflective consciousness achieves its unity by being a set of acts directed towards the ego. The ego is an intentional object of reflective consciousness:

'It is a transcendent pole of synthetic unity, like the object pole of the unreflected attitude, except that this pole appears solely in the world of reflection' (61) (153)

There is a further point to this analogy. Just as the retention of the perception of a series of 'aspects' of an object has to be 'read into' the perception of some present consciousness of an intentional object of pre-reflective consciousness to make that object into a unity truly called 'a physical object', so my states and actions are synthesised by reflective consciousness into a consciousness of myself. Both the intentional object of pre-reflexive consciousness and the ego of reflexive consciousness are object poles of consciousness. Their role is in the achievement by consciousness of the experience of objectivity.

That, in outline, is Sartre's positive account of the ego, but more remains to be said. Sartre provides us with considerable phenomenological description of the nature of the unity of the ego. We may consider this under three headings: (i) states, (ii) actions, (iii) qualities.

(i) States

Implicit in Sartre's account is a distinction between four sorts of mental state. To use a partly non-Sartrean vocabulary, we may mark these categories: corrigible and incorrigible mental states, and dispositional and occurrent mental states. I define them as follows:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(1) A person is in an incorrigible mental state if and only if, if that person is in that state then that person knows they are in that state.

(2) A person is in a corrigible mental state if and only if, if that person is in that state then that person may or may not know they are in that state.

(3) A person is in an occurrent mental state if and only if there is some datable period $t_1 \dots t_2$ during all of which time some event is happening which constitutes that person's being in a mental state.

(4) A person is in a dispositional mental state if and only if there is some datable period during which they have a tendency to be in an occurrent mental state irrespective of whether they are in that occurrent state.

Sartre says:

'The state appears to reflective consciousness' (61) (154)

which does not entail that if S is a mental state then S always appears to reflection but does entail that if S is a mental state then S is a possible object of reflection. The non-entailment is to Sartre's purpose because he maintains that there are prereflexive states. That if S is a mental state then S may appear to conscious reflection is also to Sartre's purpose because Sartre repudiates the classic notion of the unconscious. If for any S, S is a possible object of reflection then it is impossible that there are states in principle inaccessible to conscious reflection.

Sartre maintains that in reflection it is possible to be directly aware of a mental state one is in:

'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' (61) (155)

So a state may be given phenomenologically to perception in an immediate or direct way. It is possible to apprehend it, in at least some respect, just as it is. As Sartre puts it, the state is 'real' (61). This is not to suggest that no preconception is brought to bear on one's mental states in reflection on them, but to point to the fact that phenomenologically there is no

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

appearance/reality distinction in the apprehension of a mental state. For example, if I consciously pay attention to my pain then what I apprehend is my pain as I experience it.

That phenomenologically there is no appearance/reality distinction does not entail that I cannot be mistaken about what kind of mental state I am in, because some of my mental states are dispositional. Being given phenomenologically as it is does not imply being given incorrigibly in any other way:

'Is it therefore necessary to conclude that the state is immanent and certain? Surely not. We must not make of reflection a mysterious and infallible power, nor believe that everything reflection attains is indubitable because attained by reflection' (61) (156)

Reflection suffers from two sorts of fallibility according to Sartre: fallibility with regard to 'validity' (61-2) ('droit' TE 45) and with regard to 'fact' (61-2) ('fait' TE 45). Sartre does not spell out the distinction but it amounts to this. If I make a mistake of *validity* in the exercise of reflection then I either ascribe properties to my state which it lacks or fail to ascribe properties to the state which it possesses. It is consistent with my making this kind of mistake that I nevertheless judge correctly that it is that mental state that I am in. However, if I make a mistake of *fact* in the exercise of reflection then I think I am in one kind of mental state when I am in another and so misidentify the mental state that I am in. Whether this distinction is tenable depends *inter alia* upon the criteria for the individuation of mental states. They must not depend upon the phenomenological properties of a mental state, or neither kind of mistake could be made.

Sartre supplies a case where I may be mistaken about the kind of mental state that I am in. It rests on the distinction between an occurrence and a disposition. Here is the occurrence:

'I see Pierre, I feel a sort of profound convulsion of repugnance and anger at the sight of him (I am already on the reflective level): the convulsion is consciousness' (62) (157)

The phenomenological content of this occurrent anger is given incorrigibly as an object of reflection. I cannot be mistaken about the existence and nature of its felt qualities. However, here is the disposition:

'But is this experience of repugnance hatred? Obviously not. Moreover, it is not given as such. In reality I have hated Pierre a long time and I think that I shall hate him always. An instantaneous consciousness of repugnance could not, then, be my hatred.' (62) (158)

Anger and hatred are not the same. Anger, or at least the feeling of anger, is an occurrent experience, but hatred is a long term disposition. Hatred is a disposition to anger. Although I cannot be mistaken about the nature of my feeling of anger when I reflect on it consciously, I may mistake it for hatred. I may mistake a single occurrence of anger for the disposition of hatred. However, if I conclude from my feeling anger that I hate Pierre, I may or may not be correct in that. This is what the corrigibility of the state consists in. Clearly, this leaves room for my being correct in judging that I hate Pierre on the basis of feeling anger towards him. This is precisely because hatred is a disposition to feel anger. As Sartre puts it, the disposition is given through the occurrence. It is through the occurrence that epistemological access to the disposition is possible:

'My hatred appears to me at the same time as my experience of repugnance' (62) (159)

Two related conclusions follow. Hatred is not a content of consciousness, as, say, a feeling of anger is, and hatred is not an incorrigibly known mental state, but a feeling of anger is. The first is presented here:

'Hatred is not of consciousness' (63) (160)

The corrigibility of first person singular ascriptions of anger is implicitly suggested by Sartre when he says this about anger:

'It overflows the instantaneousness of consciousness, and it does not bow to the absolute law of consciousness for which no distinction is possible by appearance and being' (63) (161)

So, is Sartre here abdicating his rather Cartesian view about the incorrigibility of the mental? I think not. He retains the incorrigibility thesis about occurrent mental states but rejects it about dispositional mental states.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

For Sartre, only occurrent mental states belong to consciousness, so the traditional Cartesian view of the incorrigibility of mental states is to that extent retained. As Sartre puts it:

'It is certain that Peter is repugnant to me. But it is and always will remain doubtful that I hate him' (64) (162)

We may leave on one side the objection that it might not be Pierre who is the object of repugnance, even though the misidentification of the intentional object makes the judgement that I am in a state of being angry at Pierre a corrigible state.

5 The Constitution of Actions

Understanding Sartre on action requires an appreciation of a pair of distinctions which he draws between

(1) 'active consciousness' (68).

and

(2) 'spontaneous consciousness' (68)

and between

(1) 'actions [...] in the world of things' (69)

and

(2) 'psychical actions' (69). (163)

Sartre does not say what these two distinctions consist in, but it is important to find ways of making them more precise because in their application they mark an important departure from Husserl. Husserl includes no account of physical action in his description of the ego so, *a fortiori*, no account of what Sartre calls 'actions in the world of things'. Of course, Husserl's human being of the natural attitude is an agent, but a phenomenology of action is not

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

taken up into Husserl's transcendental phenomenology of the self. Bodily actions are suspended by the *epoché*.

Sartre says drawing the distinction between active and spontaneous consciousness is one of the most difficult tasks of phenomenology. It is perhaps made peculiarly difficult for Sartre because he is unwilling to allow that acts of consciousness have causes. The distinction has to be made out in terms of the properties of the acts of consciousness themselves. In devising a theory of action, if not a phenomenology of action, it is important to distinguish between on the one hand pure randomness and on the other hand acting freely. If my actions were utterly random events with no causes then arguably we should have to give up calling them 'my' actions at all, or at least 'free' actions. This is because acting freely partly consists in being the cause of one's own actions. An account of the agent is needed which allocates the agent a strong causal role in the occurrence of their own actions.

It is partly possible to construct the notion of such an agent by mentioning only items to be met with in consciousness of the sort Sartre describes. For example, suppose *reasons* are items which exist within consciousness. Then it would be possible to distinguish spontaneous mental acts from active mental acts as follows:

- (1) A mental act is spontaneous if and only if it has an effect but no cause.
- (2) A mental act is active if and only if it has an effect and has a cause of a special type *viz* a reason.

Whether Sartre may consistently accept this depends upon whether what reasons are may be specified entirely by talking about consciousness. That may be doubted. If reasons exist wholly or partly outside consciousness then Sartre cannot consistently mark the distinction in this way because such a reason is a cause of a mental act outside consciousness and he thinks there is none.

Sartre's second distinction presents less of a problem. We may say:

- (1) An action is an action in the world of things if and only if it is physical.

and

(2) An action is a psychical action if and only if it is mental.

This distinction uses a physical/mental distinction in an unexplicated way. Phenomenologically a physical/mental distinction may be drawn between what is presented through *Abschattungen* and what is not. There is an intuitive but phenomenologically complex difference between, say, moving one's arm and thinking. From now on I shall call actions in the world 'physical' actions and psychical actions 'mental actions' or 'mental acts'.

Sartre argues that both mental and physical actions are transcendent. If x is transcendent then x has at least the following property: x is not exhausted by the consciousness of it. So if x is the intentional object of some act of consciousness, x is not just an intentional object. Sartre thinks we will be more readily convinced that physical actions are transcendent than that mental actions are. He claims about physical actions:

'We would like to remark that concerted action is first of all [...] a transcendent. That is obvious for actions like "playing the piano", "driving a car", "writing", because the actions are "taken" in the world of things' (68-9) (164)

Sartre is right to designate action of this sort 'transcendent' because unless some strong idealism is true then my playing the piano is not nothing over and above my consciousness of playing the piano. If the intentional object of my consciousness at that time is my playing the piano then there is more to my action of playing the piano than being the intentional object of my consciousness. To put it in phenomenological terms, my action transcends the horizon of my consciousness. Sartre's account is true of physical actions. They transcend consciousness.

However, Sartre wishes to persuade us that mental actions are transcendent in a parallel sense. As he puts it:

'But purely psychical actions like doubting, reasoning, meditating, making a hypothesis, these too must be conceived as transcendences' (69) (165)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Again, Sartre is right about this. The act of reasoning or doubting is not exhausted by one's consciousness of it, and there is more to such actions than being intentional objects.

This is not to suggest that there are properties of either mental or physical acts which are in principle inaccessible to phenomenological description (though that may be independently true). It is to suggest that there is more to both kinds of action than may be apprehended in a single act of awareness of them. What they are cannot be grasped directly all at once. This is what Sartre means when he says:

'What deceives us here is that action is not only the noematic unity of a stream of consciousness: it is also a concrete realisation' (69) (166)

The *noema* is the intentional content of an act of consciousness; that which is meant or intended by that act. Mental and physical actions are not identifiable with any single noematic correlate of consciousness. They are constructed out of them.

Indeed, actions for Sartre have the following phenomenological components:

- (1) 'noematic unity' (69)
- (2) 'concrete realisation' (69)
- (3) 'time' (69)
- (4) 'articulations' (69)
- (5) 'moments' (69). (167)

Each of these needs defining in relation to action:

- (1) An action is a noematic unity if and only if it is an intentional object.
- (2) An action has a concrete realisation if and only if there is something which it consists in for that action to occur.

- (3) An action is temporal if and only if it endures through some finite duration $t_1 \dots t_2$.
- (4) An action has articulations if and only if it has empirical properties.
- (5) An action has moments if and only if it has essential properties.

Even though in any act of awareness of an action not all the properties of that action are given to consciousness, the action is apprehended as the whole action that it is. Consciousness grasps the action as the unity that it is without apprehending all its properties. Sartre thinks a necessary condition for this holistic achievement of consciousness is that there be several acts of consciousness (either directed towards that action or to others of the same type) each of which is the direct apprehension of at least one of the moments of that action. This facilitates the consciousness of that action as a unity for consciousness:

'To these moments correspond concrete, active consciousnesses, and the reflection which is directed on the consciousnesses apprehends the total action in an intuition which exhibits it as the transcendent unity of the active consciousness' (69) (168)

This account takes Sartre some way towards distinguishing spontaneous occurrences within consciousness from mental actions. For example, catching a glimpse of something in the shadows is a momentary occurrence in consciousness. It is not the reflected unity of an action. But the methodical doubt of Descartes in the *Meditations* is a series of mental actions.

Mental and physical actions are partly constitutive of the ego for Sartre. This is a decisive break with Husserl, whose transcendental ego is by no means constituted by actions. It is their subject.

(iii) Qualities as Facultative Unities of States

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The ego according to Sartre is not transcendental but transcendent. It is not a subjective, contentless, pole of consciousness but a unity constituted by states and actions. Sartre also insists that the ego is partly constituted by dispositions so he reintroduces the idea of a disposition in his explanation of what a quality is. Sartre tries to treat a quality as 'an intermediary between' (70) states and actions, but in fact much of what he discusses under 'qualities' is not distinct from what he discusses under 'states'. Indeed, mental qualities are identical with those mental states which are dispositional. Sartre says:

'The ego [...] is directly the transcendent unity of states and actions. Nevertheless there can exist an intermediary between actions and states: the quality' (70)(169)

A quality is made up of the following phenomenological components for Sartre:

- (1) 'an intermediary' (70)
- (2) 'a disposition' (70)
- (3) 'a transcendent object' (70)
- (4) '[a] substratum' (70)
- (5) 'a relation of actualisation' (70)
- (6) 'a potentiality' (70)
- (7) 'a virtuality' (70)
- (8) '[a] unity of objective passivities' (70) (170)

Each of these needs defining as a putative property of a quality:

- (1) An quality is an intermediary between an occurrent state and an action if and only if it is not identical with either that state or that action and it makes possible both.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(2) A quality is a disposition if and only if it is a tendency or a propensity for a certain state to obtain or for a certain action to occur.

(3) A quality is a transcendent object if and only if it is not exhausted by the consciousness of it (ie it is something over and above an intentional object).

(4) A quality is a substratum if and only if it is both an intermediary and a disposition.

(5) A quality enters into a relation of actualisation if and only if it is a disposition realised by at least one state or at least one action.

(6) A quality is a potentiality if and only if it is logically possible that it enters into a relation of actualisation.

(7) A quality is a virtuality if and only if it admits of an appearance/reality distinction.

(8) A quality is a unity of passive objectivities if and only if it is a mind (consciousness) - independent potentiality which admits of more than one realisation.

I assume that each of (1) - (8) is singularly necessary for x 's being a quality, and that (1) - (8) are jointly sufficient. Sartre provides us with the following examples of kinds of quality:

'Naturally, faults, virtues, tastes, talents, tendencies, instincts, etc., are of this type' (71) (171)

So the ego is not only the unity of (occurrent) states and actions but of qualities too. This marks a significant departure from the Husserlian phenomenology of the self because Husserl's transcendental ego and the transcendental field of consciousness opened up by the *epoché* contain no dispositions.

6 The Ego as the Pole of Actions, States and Qualities.

Sartre's phenomenology of the self entails a description of the relation of the ego to its actions, states and qualities which putatively eschews any commitment to the doctrine that the ego is the transcendent subject of these.

Sartre draws a distinction between the psychic and consciousness . Consciousness is a series of mental acts unified by their intentional objects. The psychic in contrast lies entirely on the side of the intentional object. The psychic for Sartre is not a constituent of consciousness but an object for consciousness. It lies outside consciousness and consciousness is directed towards it. Indeed,

'The psychic is the transcendent object of reflexive consciousness' (71) (172)

Crucially, Sartre's claims the ego belongs to the psychic, not to consciousness. The ego is not a part of consciousness, nor is it the subject of consciousness- that which is conscious. On the contrary, amongst the transcendent objects given to consciousness there exists the ego. Indeed, it is that which makes possible the synthetic unity of the psychic. The question now arises of the relation of the ego to the synthetic unity of the psychic. There is a particular account which could be invoked here which Sartre is keen to avoid. It is one derived from Husserl's account of synthetic unity. Sartre quotes from Husserl's *Ideas I*:

'Predicates, however, are predicates of "something". This something also belongs to the nucleus in question and obviously cannot be separated from the nucleus. It is the central point of unity of which we were speaking earlier. It is the point of attachment for predicates, their support. But in no respect is it a unity of the predicates in the sense of some complex, in the sense of some linkage of predicates, even if one cannot set it beside them, nor separate it from them: just as they are its predicates, unthinkable without it and yet distinguishable from it.' (*Ideas* §131)(72-3) (173)

There is a drastic mistake which runs through Husserl's thinking here which needs to be rectified before we are in a position to examine Sartre's criticisms. Husserl has failed to distinguish between predicates and properties. A property is something that pertains to something, so something's properties are its characteristics, but a predicate is not that. A predicate is a word sense or set of word senses which may be used to ascribe a property to something. Paradigmatically, a predicate is an indicative

sentence minus its grammatical subject. It therefore makes no sense at all for Husserl to say predicates are 'of something' or for there to be 'a point of attachment for predicates' or 'a support' for them.

However, what Husserl wants to say is clear enough. He is presenting a neo-Lockean account of the relationship between an object and its properties. Properties, logically, are properties of something and Husserl calls this something a 'nucleus'. The nucleus is the bearer of properties or what the properties are properties of. Husserl expressly excludes from his account the possibility that what makes the properties of an object a unity, properties of one and the same object, is their relation to one another. Even if the nucleus *qua* nucleus depends on its properties, and even if the properties *qua* properties depend upon the nucleus, any properties and any nucleus are distinct from one another. In particular, it is not possible to correctly regard the nucleus as any kind of 'construction' out of its properties. It is Husserl's view that properties would be unthinkable as such without the existence of a nucleus as their bearer (and presumably the nucleus would be unthinkable without properties to bear).

Sartre thinks this whole account of the relationship between an object and its properties is mistaken, and may lead us into a mistaken account of what synthetic unity is. Sartre's answer to the question: In virtue of what is a set of properties properties of one and the same object? is that they are properties of each other and it does not make sense to talk about an object as something over and above its properties. He thinks it both false and phenomenologically illegitimate to postulate a nucleus or substratum as that which bears properties but which is not itself a property. At best, the postulation of such a nucleus is redundant:

'An indissoluble synthetic totality which could support itself would have no need of a supporting X' (73) (174)

Sartre says for a set of properties to be properties of one object they must be concretely analysable, that is, it must not in reality or be possible to separate one property from another. It is no obstacle to the unity of the properties as the object that they be analysable in thought. Indeed any synthetic unity may be intellectually analysed by a process of abstraction; thinking of one property or sub-set of properties of an object without thereby thinking of other properties of that object.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

To emphasise that there is no need to postulate an unknowable 'x' or nucleus for the properties to inhere in Sartre invites us to consider the case of a melody. The suggestion is that we will perhaps be more tempted to postulate the existence of a substratum in the case of a physical object than in the case of a musical object. In the case of a melody, something's being a melody depends upon the real inseparability of its notes and other musical properties. Sartre says it would be useless to postulate a nucleus in such a case. He does not say why, but I think a reason may be adduced.

Although both melodies and physical objects endure through time, a melody typically changes its properties (at least its macroscopic properties) more rapidly than a physical object. One note, for example, is replaced by another. Because the notes are not sustained throughout the melody we are not as tempted to postulate something which sustains them as we are in the case of the comparatively enduring properties of a physical object, its shape, size, or even colour for example.

It is by reference to the melody as a whole that we recognise a particular note as part of the melody, and not by reference to some unknowable nucleus which supports all the notes. The melody consists in the notes in the relations in which they stand to one another.

Sartre takes it then that there are severe philosophical objections to the notion of a nucleus, substratum or object 'x' which bears the properties of an object. As the account of the object/property relation offered by Husserl is mistaken, Sartre is unwilling to extend it to the particular case of the ego's relation to its actions, states, and qualities:

'For these very reasons we shall not permit ourselves to see the ego as a sort of X-pole which would be the support of psychic phenomena' (74) (175)

The relation of the ego to its states, actions and qualities may be described in this way: Ontologically it is nothing over and above them, but phenomenologically it is their unity. It is them considered as a unity.

Sartre amends the metaphor of the ego being a 'support' of its states by saying:

'The ego is nothing outside of the concrete totality of states and actions it supports' (74)(176)

Clearly there is a paradox here, but one Sartre intends. If a supports b then it is *prima facie* incoherent to suppose that a does not exist outside b or is nothing over and above b. But this is to assume a is not partly or wholly self-supporting. (After all, pillars may support a building but be part of it, and a building may be architecturally self-supporting like the beehive tombs near Mycaenae.) Sartre invites to relinquish the metaphor of the ego as an external 'support' of its states, to leave room for his positive account of the ego as that which the unity of actions and states consists in. A philosophical anticipation of the difference between Husserl and Sartre on the ego is the difference between Locke and Hume on the self.

The Ego-World Analogy

Not only is Husserl's account of the object-property relation mistaken, but any analogy between the ego and a physical object is a poor one. According to Sartre, the best analogy to illustrate the relation of the ego to its states is with the world and the objects in it.

Rather as Heidegger understands the world as the totality of significance within which *Dasein* understands itself by 'world' Sartre means the synthetic totality of what exists, not the mere aggregate of existing things:

'If we were to seek for unreflected consciousness an analogue of what the ego is for consciousness of the second degree, we rather believe that it would be necessary to think of the world, conceived as the infinite synthetic totality of all things' (74) (177)

The world is for the unreflected consciousness what the ego is for reflected consciousness. Unreflected consciousness is directed towards objects united by and into a world. Reflected consciousness is directed towards actions, states and qualities united into the ego. The world is the synthetic totality of things. The ego is the synthetic totality of actions, states, and qualities. The world is not a nucleus supporting the things in it, it is the synthetic unity of those things. The ego is not a nucleus supporting its states, it is the synthetic unity of those states:

'The ego is to psychological objects what the world is to things' (75) (178)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre considers this analogy most apposite. The phenomenological structure of the world-things relation is of the same type as the ego-states relation. The common and neo-Kantian name for both is 'synthetic unity'.

However, there is an important disanalogy between the two which Sartre wishes to warn us of. It is psychologically rather rare for the world to appear as the synthetic unity of things, but the ego invariably appears as the synthetic unity of states. Sartre does not mean that it is only, say in philosophy, that the world is conceived in this way. He means that the world is typically not given to us as that kind of unity. We are usually engaged with particular objects. However, in reflection we are always aware of the unity of states:

'But the appearance of the World in the background of things is rather rare: special circumstances, described very well by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, are necessary for it to "reveal" itself. The ego, on the contrary, always appears at the horizon of states' (75) (179)

Heidegger's point is each object is what it is in virtue of internal relations to everything else. Appreciation of the world as this totality of significance is not at all common.

Sartre's analogy is apposite. The world is the 'horizon' of things as the ego is the 'horizon' of states. The thought of a thing existing independently of the world, the totality of things related *qua* significant totality, is just as much an intellectual abstraction as the thinking of a state of consciousness which is mine as something existing independently of me as the totality of my states, actions, and qualities. Both kinds of abstraction are possible. I can think of this object as just this object - this peculiar unique one - without thereby thinking of it as a member of the totality of things which give it significance. I can analogously think of one of my mental states as just this peculiar unique mental state without thereby thinking of it as one of the synthetic totality of mental states truly called 'mine'.

Sartre describes the relation of the ego to its states pursuing further the parallel with objects and the world:

'Each state, each action is given as incapable of being separated from the ego without abstraction' (75) (180)

Equally, each thing is given as incapable of separation from the world without abstraction.

It is possible to abstract a mental state from the ego, but it is also possible according to Sartre, to abstract the ego from its mental states. I can think of myself as separate from my mental states. Sartre says an example of this is the making of the judgement 'I am in love' (75) 'Je suis amoureux' (TE 58). However, I can never truly think of myself as separate from my mental states. It is presumably precisely this kind of abstraction which enables Husserl to mistakenly postulate the transcendental ego as the subject of consciousness.

In at least one sense it is possible to think of the world in abstraction from the totality of objects which comprise it. Then 'world' would either mean 'being' or 'existence'; the being of what is in abstraction from what it is, or else 'what is' but not 'what is' in the sense of what actually is but 'what is' in the sense of whatever is. It is not even clear that the idea of what is in this sense is epistemologically parasitic upon the possibility of the world as it is: the totality of actual things.

Sartre thinks both ego and world are given as transcendent. Ego and world are not nothing over and above the consciousness of them, nor are they exhausted by being the intentional objects of pre-reflexive and reflexive consciousness respectively.

8 Sartre and the Evil Genius

How Cartesian is the relation between the ego and its states as described by Sartre? Clearly, the self is the soul for Descartes and for Sartre the soul does not exist. *Prima facie*, the existence of the soul is open to at least the objections that Sartre has brought against Husserl's neo-Lockean account of the relation between an object and its properties. Descartes would be the last to concede that the soul is nothing over and above its conscious states. So, ontologically, Sartre is much more like Hume than Descartes on the self.

What of the knowledge each of us has of our own ego and its states? Descartes thinks such knowledge both indubitable and incorrigible and Sartre, up to a point, shares this picture. But only up to a point; to construe Sartre as a Cartesian about self-knowledge it is not sufficient to point out that he regards first-personal access to one's occurrent mental states as being privileged over third person access-or asymmetrical to that access (which he clearly does). By that criterion Wittgenstein and Davidson come out as

Cartesian, which is grossly implausible. The point is that there is a logical gulf between the views of these philosophers and the Cartesian claims of infallibility and absolute transparency. Sartre, like Davidson, can claim that, in general, that I grasp my conscious states fully and correctly and immediately (i.e. without need of empirical evidence). But I may deceive myself; I may be wrong about whether any two thoughts of mine have the same content; about whether, on expression, they have an ambiguous meaning; about whether the intentional modality of a thought is correctly expressed in 'achievement' terms or not (Do I perceive that *p*, or does it merely seem to me that *p*?).

In many respects Sartre is not only non-Cartesian but resolutely anti-Cartesian. In the developed philosophy of *Being and Nothingness* he rejects 'ideas', the notion that the mind is a substance, the notion that minds could continue to exist, just as they are, whether or not any surrounding material world or environment existed, indirect realism in perception and so on.

Admittedly, Sartre has already claimed that 'the certitude of the *Cogito* is absolute' (44) and this would make Sartre a kind of Cartesian if by 'cogito' he means Descartes' argument 'I am thinking; therefore I exist' but there is no textual evidence in the accompanying passage that he does mean this. If he did mean this, he would be undermining his own argument by dealing with the *cogito* as a 'reflective operation', giving priority to reflection over the consciousness reflected on; and there is evidence elsewhere that he does not mean this, for example: '[...] there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito' (181).

We need to examine further an important departure by Sartre from Cartesianism. It has already been partly anticipated in the discussion of the corrigibility of first person singular claims about dispositions (section above), but we need to follow Sartre in his further applications of the notion of corrigibility.

Sartre remarks about the ego:

'This transcendent totality participates in the questionable character of all transcendence. This is to say that everything given to us by our intuitions of the ego is always given as capable of being contradicted by subsequent intuitions' (75) (182)

It is one of Sartre's principles that if *x* is a transcendent object then any claim about the nature of *x qua* transcendent object is in principle falsifiable. This

is because only descriptions of the phenomenological properties of what is directly given to consciousness are incorrigible, and it is part of the concept of a transcendent object that what it is is never entirely and directly given to consciousness. If this general principle is true, and if the ego as the unity of states is a transcendent object then it follows that claims about the ego are corrigible. Sartre states the corrigibility thesis in terms of intuitions. For any claim about the ego based on an intuition it is always in principle possible for there to exist some further intuition which would falsify that claim.

Clearly, from the corrigibility thesis it does not follow that knowledge of the nature of the ego is impossible (so long as knowing that one knows is not a condition of knowing). From the fact that I believe that p it does not follow that p is true, for most values of p but this does not disqualify me from knowing that p . Also, the fact that any proposition is in principle revisable does not entail that one specific currently believed proposition is false. From the fact that any proposition may be reallocated a truth value it does not follow that it will be. In other words, Sartre's corrigibility thesis is consistent with the truth or falsity of any of our current beliefs about the ego (where 'or' is clearly to be read as in 'either p or not p but not both').

The corrigibility thesis applies only to our dispositional states. Sartre remains thoroughly Cartesian about our occurrent states. In other words, he thinks that all first person singular psychological ascriptions about dispositional states may be true or false if believed, but all first person singular psychological ascriptions about occurrent states are true if believed.

There is another respect in which Sartre breaks with Cartesianism. Sartre thinks that the clarity of a first person singular psychological judgement is no guarantee of its truth.

'For example, I can see clearly that I am ill-tempered, jealous etc., and nevertheless I may be mistaken'(75) (183)

So, no matter how persuaded I may be, or how evident it may seem to me that I possess certain dispositions, it does not follow that I have them. There is always logical room for error.

Whether this position may be sustained depends upon how it is construed. It is true that from the fact that p seems evidently true it does not follow that p . Sartre is right that from the fact that I know I am in a particular occurrent state it does not follow that I am in a particular dispositional state - even where that type of occurrent state may be constitutive of that type of

disposition. However, I may be sequentially acquainted with a series of qualitatively similar mental states in such a way that it logically follows that I am in a particular dispositional state. For example, as Sartre says, from the fact that I am angry it does not logically follow that I hate (if we follow Sartre in maintaining that being angry is an occurrence but hating is a disposition). Nevertheless, if hatred is a disposition to be angry then if I am angry at the same object a sufficient number of times then it will follow that I hate the object of my anger. (I leave aside the question of how many times I have to be angry for the disposition of hatred to be realised).

Suppose I am directly and incorrigibly acquainted with a series of angry states directed towards a common object. Suppose I conclude on that basis that I hate that object. Arguably, then my belief that I hate that object is thereby true. It is not clear that knowledge of one's dispositions is logically incorrigible: that it would be contradictory or incoherent to deny one's beliefs about one's own dispositions.

Despite this reservation, it is clear that in many cases we are mistaken about our dispositions. From the fact that I feel tired it does not follow that I am tired. From the fact that I believe I am polite it does not follow that I am polite, and so on.

It follows that the nature of the ego, in so far as the ego is constituted by its dispositions, is dubitable. Any of us may be quite mistaken as to our natures in fundamental respects. However, Sartre does not wish us to conclude from this that each of us has a 'real me' or a 'true self'. On the contrary, we make ourselves what we are by our choices and actions. Our dispositions are themselves constantly open to revision by the thoughts and actions we commit ourselves to:

'This questionable character of my ego - or even the intuitional error that I commit - does not signify that I have a true me which I am unaware of, but only that the intended ego has in itself the character of dubitability (in certain cases, the character of falsehood)' (76) (184)

Sartre's reluctance to postulate a 'true self' has two philosophical motivations. Firstly, it would commit him to a notion of the unconscious: oneself as one really is, yet oneself as inaccessible to one's own acts of consciousness. Secondly, at least the existence of an immutable true self possessed of fixed traits of character would be inconsistent with the Sartrean thesis that each human essence is freely determined by that human being.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre wishes to repudiate any theory of the person on which personality is not determinable and revisable by the person. This repudiation is prerequisite to the self-defining humanity of *Being and Nothingness* and the public lecture *Existentialism is a Humanism*.

Descartes' evil genius may deceive me as to the contents of my memory, and this is a further reason why I may be mistaken about my dispositions. I conclude that I have a certain disposition by consulting my memory about certain occurrent states which would imply the existence of such a disposition. Memory is fallible so the claim that I have the disposition is fallible. Sartre agrees with Descartes therefore that I may not be mistaken about the phenomenological properties of my occurrent mental states, but remains thoroughly committed to the anti-Cartesian view that I may be systematically mistaken about my dispositions. As he puts it:

'The power of the malin genie extends so far'
(76) (185)

The Certainty of the *Cogito*

There is one respect, however, in which it is impossible for a person to be mistaken about their mental states, even those which are dispositional. This is with regard to whether they are that person's own mental states. If I am in a mental state and if I know that that mental state exists then I cannot be mistaken in my belief that it is mine.

This thesis of Sartre's is a conjunction of an incorrigibility thesis and an inalienability thesis. If p is incorrigible then if p is believed then p is true, but inalienability is a thesis about states: a state 'S' is inalienable if and only if it is necessarily a state of the person in that state, so that if a person is in a state of anger, for example, it is necessarily that person who is in that state and not another. The force of this rather tautological thesis is that no person may be in the mental state of someone else. The thesis must be construed as about the numerical and not the qualitative identity of mental states (or about token states not state types) because although 'if I am in a mental state that state is mine' is analytic, clearly it is logically possible that another person should be in a qualitatively similar yet numerically distinct state.

Sartre's claim is that for any person and for any state for which the inalienability thesis is true, that person knows the inalienability thesis is true of him. We have to construe Sartre as holding that a person cannot

consistently doubt the inalienability thesis in their own case, otherwise we ascribe to him the rather implausible view that each person mentally entertains the inalienability thesis.

Sartre advocates the conjunction of the incorrigibility and the inalienability theses by saying that the ego is not 'hypothetical' (76). He means; that I am the owner of my mental states is not a hypothesis. This is supposed to carry the implication that the proposition is not contingent and not empirical. If p is not contingent then p is necessary, and if p is not empirical then p is *a priori*, so it follows that the inalienability thesis is necessary and *a priori*.

Sartre is not committed to the view that the whole of his phenomenology of the ego is necessary and *a priori* but that the ego exists, and exists as the unity of one's mental states, would seem to have that status according to him:

'In fact the ego is the spontaneous transcendent unification of our states and our actions. In this capacity, it is no hypothesis. I do not say to myself "Perhaps I have an ego", as I may say to myself "Perhaps I hate Peter"' (76) (186)

Here Sartre makes the guarded claim that the ego is only inalienable and incorrigible under a certain description viz 'the spontaneous transcendent unification of our states'. This leaves room for knowledge of the ego to be corrigible under other descriptions of the ego. For example, it leaves room for me to be mistaken about my disposition to hate Pierre.

It follows that Sartre has retained two central components of the Cartesian conception of the person. I cannot be mistaken or consistently doubt whether I exist, and I cannot be mistaken about or consistently doubt what I am on a minimal psychological conception of my own nature. I am in fact an ego as the unification of a set of mental states. Descartes maintains a similar self conception in this minimal respect: I am, he says, a thing that thinks.

Sartre and Descartes do, of course, offer radically dissimilar answers to the question What thinks? For Descartes the thinker is the soul, but Sartre's rather Humean view of thinker makes the ego ontologically nothing over and above the set of its mental states: their unity. Unlike Descartes, Sartre offers no argument for this minimal incorrigibility thesis about the existence and essence of the ego but, clearly, Cartesian premises could be supplied.

That I am in a dispositional state is for Sartre a hypothesis (of mine). I take it there are two components in this claim. If I claim to have a certain

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

disposition then this, if true, is contingently true, and is to be confirmed by experience. But even then any putative disposition may turn out not to obtain.

The ego has a rather Kantian and formal relation to its states for Sartre. Although ontologically the ego is exhausted by its states, formally it is what their being mine consists in:

'I do not seek here a unifying meaning of my states. When I unify my consciousness under the title "hatred", I add a certain meaning to them, I qualify them. But when I incorporate my states in the concrete totality me, I add nothing to them' (76) (187)

Sartre's point is that if I call one of my states "hatred" then that is informative to me, because it could in principle turn out that a state of mine is not hatred. But if I call one of my states 'mine' then that is not informative because none of my states could turn out not to be mine.

If a state is hatred then something is true of it which does not obtain simply in virtue of its relations to other states. It has certain phenomenological properties constitutive of its being hatred. But if a state is one of mine then it has this status simply in virtue of its relation to other states of mine, that of being a member of that set. There is no additional phenomenological property which is constitutive of its being mine. A state of hatred *qua* hatred is phenomenologically distinct from states of mine which are not states of hatred, but a state of mine *qua* mine is not phenomenologically distinct from other states of mine. No new information is provided about one of my states (to me) by calling it mine. This is because the inalienability thesis is analytic.

Sartre considers three putative relations between an ego and its states. He rejects the first two and endorses the third. They are:

- (1) 'emanation' (77)
- (2) 'actualisation' (77)
- (3) 'poetic production' (77)(188).

Sartre says that emanation is the relationship of consciousness to emotion. Emanation is a spatial metaphor - for example the sun's rays may be thought

of as 'emanating' from the sun. This is a metaphor which Husserl sometimes adopts in his descriptions of the transcendental ego's relations to its states. I take that if B emanates from A then it is at least true that A is the source of B and B depends upon A for its existence.

Sartre says 'actualisation' is like the relation between a quality and a state. This means that the ego - state relation considered here is like the relation between an occurrent event and a disposition it realises. An ego may actualise or realise its states analogously.

Finally, by 'poetic production' is meant 'a relation of creation' (77). Normally, if A creates B then A is distinct from B but Sartre cannot intend this here because he is at pains to repudiate any view of the ego as distinct from its states. The 'creation' view of the ego is best viewed as the conjunction of four theses:

- (1) The ego is the unity of a set of mental states.
- (2) The ego is a spontaneity.
- (3) The ego is ontologically nothing over and above its states.
- (4) The ego is given as producing its states.

Sartre has provided sufficient argument against the idea that the ego is the subjective source of its mental states to feel entitled to reject the emanation view. It is less clear that the ego may not be a disposition for occurrent mental states to occur. Sartre supplies no direct refutation of this position, so one needs to be constructed from his views throughout the book.

The best Sartrean argument against the ego being a disposition relies on the premise that I am directly aware of my ego in reflexive consciousness, as the objective unity of my occurrent mental states. If Sartre is right about that, then it cannot be the case that the ego is a disposition realised by the obtaining of those states. The ego depends upon the states and the states depend upon the dispositions so the ego depends on the dispositions. If A depends upon B and B depends upon C then A depends upon C, but if A depends upon C, A cannot be identical with C unless 'depends on' is only the relation entailed by 'is identical with'. It follows that the ego is not a disposition.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Is the ego then a realisation of a disposition? The ego is the unity of states, both occurrent and dispositional. If an occurrent state is the realisation of a disposition, and if the ego is partly the unity of the dispositions themselves, then to that extent it makes sense to talk of the ego either as a complex of realisations of dispositions or as a unity of dispositions. In this sense Sartre has no good grounds for precluding the view that the ego is an 'actualisation'. This may all be consistent with his view of the ego's relation to its states as 'poetic production'.

10 Poetic Production

Sartre says that the production by the ego of its states is a creation *ex nihilo*:

'This mode of creation is indeed a creation *ex nihilo*, in the sense that the state is not given as having formerly been in the me' (77) (189)

Sartre is making a phenomenological claim which is consistent with the states of the ego having causal conditions. He says the state is not given as present in the ego before its 'production'. This means that in reflexive consciousness of the ego and its states, if we are acquainted with one state we are not thereby acquainted with any cause of that state, for example, another state. One state, to use Sartre's quasi-Kantian term, exists 'spontaneously' and is then replaced by another state, so that any state is like, or appears as, a creation *ex nihilo*. For Sartre, this captures an important feature of how we appear to ourselves psychologically.

Sartre has already argued that there exists an epistemological gap between a disposition and its realisation, in the sense that, for example, I may be directly acquainted with my anger and not thereby acquainted with my hatred even if my anger is the occurrent realisation of my hatred as disposition. So I may know of the existence of my anger but be ignorant of or mistaken about the existence of my hatred. It follows that the anger is 'given as something new', or appears as a 'creation *ex nihilo*'.

This appearance depends upon my non-acquaintance with both the causal conditions of the state I am in and the disposition it realises:

'Even if hatred is given as the actualisation of a certain power of spite or hatred, it remains something new in relation to the power it actualises' (77) (190)

Given this spontaneity, or appearance of creation *ex nihilo* in the stream of one's mental states, the question arises of how the ego may exist and persist as the unity of such states over time. This, according to Sartre, is an achievement of reflexive consciousness. The ego is constituted or constructed out of states by reflexive acts of consciousness. I detect three stages to this process of ego-construction:

- (1) 'the unifying act of reflection' (77)
- (2) 'a relation which traverses time backwards' (77)
- (3) 'the me (given) as the source of the state' (77)(191).

I shall say something about each of these in turn.

(1) The Unifying Act of Reflection

Sartre explains this as follows:

'The unifying act of reflection fastens each new state, in a very special way, to the concrete totality me'
(77)(192)

So, if I perform a unifying act of reflection I reflect on one of my states, but reflect upon it as mine: that is, as a member of the set of mental states which *qua* ego I am. The thought that this state is a member of that set called 'me' is read into the apprehension of that state, or, to put it another way, the state is reflected on under the description 'one of mine'. Clearly, either the recollection of previous states of the set, or the anticipation of future states of the set or the awareness of simultaneous but numerically distinct states of the set is implied by the possibility of such a unifying act of reflection.

(2) The Relation Traversing Time Backwards

Sartre realises this presupposition exists when he says:

'Reflection is not confined to apprehending the new state as attaching to this totality, as fusing with it: reflection intends a relation which traverses time backwards' (77) (193)

If some act of consciousness is the apprehension of some state at some time as a member of some sequence of states then that act, or some subject of that act, includes the knowledge or the belief that the series of states exists, and exists over any time which includes the time of the apprehension of the state.

The account of the constitution of the ego Sartre offers is no different in essentials from the account he gives of the constitution by consciousness of any of its intentional objects. The ego is an object of consciousness, albeit consciousness of a special sort, *viz* reflective consciousness. He says that consciousness 'intends' (77) the relation traversing time that constructs the ego. It is equally clear that reflective consciousness 'intends' the ego, in the further sense that the constructed ego is itself the intentional object of reflexive consciousness.

(3) The Me as the Source of the State

Sartre says

'(the) relation [...] gives the me as the source of the state' (77) (194)

The result of the apprehension of a state as one of a set constitutive of 'me' or that are 'mine' is that I, as ego, appear as the source of my states. This appearance must be illusory or an important component of Husserl's doctrine of the transcendental ego would be true. Although states are the 'poetic production' of the ego, the ego is ontologically nothing over and above those states, or those states as a unity.

An important question arises here to which, so far as I can see, Sartre has no answer. If the ego is not the subjective source of my states but their unity, why should it appear as their source? If I am really the sum of my mental states why should I mistakenly take myself to be their subjective origin? This is not only an important question to answer for understanding the difference between Husserl and Sartre on the self but also for settling the difference between Descartes and Hume.

One possible answer, within the Sartrean framework, is that I mistakenly identify my previous mental states with myself as the ego-source of my present mental state. The force of this quasi-Humean construal of Sartre is that I am acquainted with a series of states $S1...Sn$ over time $t1...tn$, but in the apprehension of, say, $S2$, the memory of $S1$ is retained. $S1$ no longer exists but in reflection it is tacitly assumed that I am in some sense the subject of my mental state and that my current state has an origin. If these two thoughts are not clearly distinguished, then, room is left for me to be assimilated to the states preceding $S2$. Just as Husserl's transcendental ego does not appear directly to present consciousness, so past states do not appear directly to present consciousness. This common property leaves open their assimilation, or the mistaking of one's past states for a transcendental ego. Sartre does not claim this, but it would not be inconsistent with his position to supplement it in this way.

In what sense exactly are mental states the poetic production of the ego? To understand this we need to clarify further the ontological status of the ego. By talking of the ego and its states we may be misled into thinking that the ego exists in addition to its states, which is false, and we must be careful that talking about the ego's states as its properties does not mislead us into taking the ego to be the subject or substantial bearer of those states, which is also false.

More misleading spatial metaphors are at work in our thinking about the ego. We may think of it as beside its states, or behind its states, or beneath its states, or visible through its states. Each of these tendencies needs to be resisted:

'The ego maintains its qualities through a genuine, continuous creation. Nevertheless, we do not finally apprehend the ego as a pure creative source beside the qualities' (78)(195)

It is impossible for an apprehension of the ego not to be the apprehension of a mental state because the ego is constructed out of mental states. Phenomenologically, the ego is not given as existing in addition to a set of mental states, so it is not given as a source of mental states. This is plausible because if A is the source of B then B depends upon A causally. That presupposes that B is distinct from A, but if B is distinct from A then A cannot be a construction out of B. The ego is a construction out of states so it is not the source or the origin of those states.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre presents a thought experiment designed to convince us that the ego is exhausted by the existence of its states. He invites us to imaginatively remove its states one by one, and draw the conclusion that the ego would not exist as an imaginative residue once the process of subtraction is completed:

'It does not seem to us that we could find a skeletal pole if we took away, one after the other, all the qualites' (78) (196)

As is usually the case with thought experiments of this quasi-Kantian type, there are no non-question-begging grounds for maintaining that the residual entity exists or does not exist. If I claim to be unable imaginatively to think myself away as subject of my mental states but you claim to be able to do this, then this would seem to be a psychological difference between us; a difference in our powers of imagination or perhaps our preferences. Even if such an imaginative power were universal, that fact could only feature as a premise in an argument against the transcendental ego. Even then, from the fact that it is conceivable (even by everyone) that not-p it does not follow that not-p. It is consistent with the thought experiment that Sartre is right; that the transcendental ego does not exist. What Sartre lacks is a true premise which would validly yield this as conclusion:

'At the end of this plundering, nothing would remain: the ego would have vanished' (78) (197)

It begs the question to say that the thought experiment must have this result because the ego is just the unity of its states.

Sartre draws a distinction between the spontaneity of consciousness and the spontaneity of the ego. The spontaneity of consciousness is genuine but the spontaneity of the ego is a *pseudo-spontaneity*. Consciousness erroneously ascribes its own spontaneity to the ego, but the ego, being a passive object for consciousness, cannot itself exhibit that spontaneity.

Many questions are left unanswered here. Perhaps the most fundamental is: Why should we make such a profound mistake about our own nature as to ascribe the spontaneity of consciousness to the ego? Sartre only describes the putative pseudo-spontaneity of the ego, he does not say why it exists:

'But this spontaneity must not be confused with the spontaneity of consciousness. Indeed, the ego, being an object is passive. It is a question,

therefore, of a pseudo-spontaneity which is suitably symbolised by the spurting of a spring, a geyser etc. This is to say that we are dealing here with a semblance only' (79)(198)

The difference between the pseudo-spontaneity of the ego and the spontaneity of consciousness rests on the difference between the incorrigibility of claims about consciousness and a certain kind of corrigibility about the nature of the ego. As we have seen (p....above) Sartre thinks that if I am in an occurrent mental state then I know I am in that state. Nevertheless I may be surprised by myself. For example I may be surprised that I am capable of hating my father. (80) In such case I am surprised that I am capable of such a thought or emotion. I did not realise that I am the kind of person who is capable of being in such a mental state.

If I can be surprised at myself, according to Sartre, there must be, or appear to be, some kind of distinction between the ego and its states. An anomaly is discovered between the sort of state preceding the current state and the current state. The taken for granted I is the unity of previous states. The I at which I am surprised is the I as current object of reflection.

However, no genuine spontaneity may possess the structure of 'source and state'. Acts of consciousness are spontaneous because they have no subject and no cause. They spontaneously exist. The ego, as a construction out of such states, is a pseudo-spontaneity exactly because it has the apparent structure of 'source and state'. But if states had even an apparent source they could not be genuinely spontaneous. A genuine spontaneity has no cause: not even an apparent one.

In this sense the ego's production of its states is a poetic production. Its causal efficacy is fictional not literal. The real author of the states of the ego is consciousness. Indeed, consciousness is the author of the ego itself:

'The ego is an object [..]constituted by reflexive consciousness' (81) (199)

11 Interiority

If A constitutes B then A makes B what it is. Consciousness stands in two relations to the ego, one of them real, one of them illusory. The real relation is:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(1) Consciousness constitutes the ego.

The illusory relation is:

(2) The ego constitutes consciousness.

It is consciousness itself that is subject to the illusion. Consciousness take itself to be constituted by the ego because:

'The order is reversed by a consciousness which imprisons itself in the world in order to flee from itself, consciousnesses are given as emanating from states, and states as produced by the ego' (81) (200)

In so far as Sartre is engaged in phenomenology there is no onus upon him to offer explanations, only descriptions. However, from a philosophical point of view we need to know how and why we come to be so systematically mistaken about our own nature, and why in particular consciousness wishes to flee from itself and imprison itself in objects. Sartre provides no answers to these questions. He merely contrasts what he takes to be the true order of dependence, the ego's dependence on consciousness, with what he takes to be the false order of dependence; consciousness' dependence on the ego. Sartre's account needs to be supplemented by an account of how this rather Buddhist status of the ego is possible.

According to Sartre a fundamental asymmetry obtains between consciousness and the ego. Consciousness is unaffected by anything outside itself, but the ego is affected by its own productions. This distinction requires careful formulation if it is to amount to a real distinction at all, perhaps more careful than the one Sartre presents:

'By virtue of this passivity the ego is capable of being affected. Nothing can act on consciousness, because it is cause of itself. But, on the contrary, the ego which produces undergoes the reverberation of what it produces' (82) (201)

Suppose 'A is the cause of itself' does not mean that A brings itself into existence but that if A is in some state 'S' then A has caused A to be in that state. This claim is then ambiguous between allowing and excluding a certain possibility. This possibility is that A be the cause of some second

item 'B', or one of its states, and B, or some state of B caused by A, be the cause of A's state S. Then it would still remain true that A is the cause of A's state but only indirectly, or via B: A causes A to be in A's state by causing B to cause A to be in A's state.

I take that it is Sartre's view that precisely this possibility is excluded in the case of consciousness but admitted in the case of the ego. Consciousness causes its own states *tout court* but the ego causes its own productions and those productions of the ego cause the states of the ego.

I do not see that Sartre has good grounds for distinguishing productions of the ego from states of the ego, or, indeed, good grounds for introducing the concept of a production of the ego at all. If, as the following passage suggests, the productions of the ego are to be identified with its states and actions, then the productions of the ego are really constituents of the ego. But then the required contrast between the activity of consciousness and the passivity of the ego is not well drawn. If the ego is affected by a part of itself then arguably it is causing itself to be what it is and thereby possesses one of the essential characteristics of consciousness. This is a conclusion Sartre wishes to avoid but it is not excluded by:

'The ego is "compromised" by what it produces. There a relation reverses itself: the action or the state returns upon the ego to qualify it' (82) (202)

Sartre requires an additional claim to mark the distinction successfully. For example the conjunction of:

(1) Consciousness produces its states but those states have no effect on consciousness.

and

(2) The ego produces its states but those states have an effect on the ego.

Sartre presents a version of (2) when he says:

'Each new state produced by the ego colours and tinges the ego slightly the moment the ego produces it. The ego is in some way spellbound by this action, it "participates" with it' (82) (203)

but if what the ego produces is identical with what constitutes it, its parts, then it remains true that the ego, along with consciousness, falls under the description 'cause of itself'. The only real distinction made out by reference to causation is that expressed by (1) and (2) above, and Sartre has no explicit statement of (1).

Sartre ascribes the following properties to the ego:

- (1) 'Everything the ego produces impresses it' (82)
- (2) 'Only what it produces [affects it]' (82)
- (3) 'The me can be transformed by external events' (82-3)
- (4) 'The ego is an irrational synthesis of activity and passivity' (83)
- (5) 'It is a synthesis of interiority and transcendence' (83) (204)

I shall offer some definitions of the predicates used to ascribe properties (1) - (5) to the ego:

- (1) A produces B if and only if A causes B to exist.
- (2) A affects B if and only if A partly alters what B is.
- (3) A transforms B if and only if A wholly alters what B is.
- (4) A is active if and only if A is a cause but not an effect.
- (5) A is passive if and only if A is an effect but not a cause.
- (6) A is irrational if and only if A's description is

contradictory.

- (7) A exhibits interiority if and only if A is both private and inalienable.
- (8) A is transcendent if and only if A is not exhausted by the present consciousness of it.

Using these definitions we may interpret the ascription of the five properties to the ego as follows:

(1) Whatever the ego causes to exist partly alters what the ego is, so if the ego produces some states or actions then they were caused to exist by the ego but also contribute to making the ego what it is.

It is doubtful whether the doctrine of the causal efficacy of the ego (even if only apparent) may be shown to be consistent with the theory that the ego is the unity of its states. If A causes B then A is not B, but if A is the unity of (*inter alia*) B then A is ontologically nothing over and above (*inter alia*) B. This leads to the incoherent view that the ego both is and is not its states. In fairness to Sartre, he has claimed under (5) that the ego is an irrational synthesis.

(2) Nothing alters what the ego is except what the ego has itself caused to be. Sartre claims the ego is only a pseudo-spontaneity, but there would seem to be a genuinely spontaneity to an entity which is only affected by what it causes. If the ego is unaffected by whatever it does not cause but is itself a cause then in it is active, and if the ego is active it is a spontaneity. If A causes B to be and thereby B alters what A is then A indirectly causes A to be what A is, and in that respect A is a cause of its own nature. Again, this entails a genuine spontaneity of the ego. The ego causes its states to be but its states alter what it is; so to that extent the ego is itself the cause of what it is. This barely suffices to distinguish the structure of the ego from the structure of consciousness.

(3) Sartre considers as an objection to the immunity of the ego to any causal influences other than its own effects the claim that it may be transformed by events external to it. He gives the following examples of 'external events':

'catastrophe, mourning, trickery, change in social environment' (83) (205)

What Sartre has in mind is that I, as ego, may be caused to be in a different state by one of these sorts of events, even though none of them is the ego nor any part of it. That would violate the principle that only two sorts of causal relation are possible with regard to the ego: It either causes its states to be or its states alter what it is. An additional feature of the ego exists if what states the ego has or is in may be determined by events external to it.

Sartre's reply is that an external event may have this causal efficacy only in so far as it stands in a special relation to the ego:

'But this so only in so far as external events are for the me the occasion of states or actions' (83) (206)

Sartre does not spell out exactly what it is for an event to be 'for the me', nor what it is for an event to be the 'occasion' of states or actions.

Suppose an event is for me if and only if that event is the intentional object of the me. We should rather say 'pseudo-intentional object' because only consciousness and not the ego exhibits intentionality.

Suppose further that an event is the occasion of states or actions of the ego if and only if the ego is in that state or exercises that action only if that event occurs.

We may now say that the ego is influenced by external events in just those two senses. The ego takes external events as pseudo-intentional objects, and there are no states that the ego is in when and only when certain external events occur. We could call this latter relation 'pseudo-causation' because there is no direct causal relation between an external event and a state of the ego: only a correlation. It is only *qua* pseudo-intentional objects of the ego that external events may be the occasion of state changes of the ego.

(4) The ego is active if the ego is a cause but not an effect and the ego is passive if the ego is an effect but not a cause. Sartre claims that the ego is an irrational synthesis of activity and passivity. Now, *prima facie*, 'active' and 'passive' are mutually exclusive predicates because if A is active then, *qua* active, A is not an effect, but if A is passive then A is an effect, and if A is passive then, *qua* passive, A is not a cause but if A is active then A is a cause. Two mutually exclusive predicates cannot, logically, apply to the

same entity at the same time and in the same respect, so it seems logically impossible that the ego in Sartre's sense should exist.

This irrationality, or appearance of contradiction, may be dispelled by drawing a distinction between how the ego appears to consciousness and how it is. It appears to consciousness that the ego constitutes consciousness, but in fact consciousness constitutes the ego. The ego is mistakenly taken by consciousness to be its own transcendental and subjective source, but the ego is an object of consciousness, constituted by acts of reflection. The ego is apparently active but really passive. The ego is passive because its existence and nature depend upon the operations of consciousness. It is apparently active because consciousness' operations seem to depend upon it. In this sense the ego is a synthesis of activity and passivity.

(5) Finally, Sartre says the ego is a synthesis in another sense: a synthesis of interiority and transcendence. It is clear that the ego is transcendent in that it is an object for consciousness that is not wholly given to consciousness. (For example, dispositional states of the ego may not be immediately available to consciousness). However, what is it for the ego to exhibit interiority? I have said (p. above) that A exhibits interiority if and only if A is both private and inalienable.

I define 'private' as follows:

(a) S is a private if and only if awareness of S is only possible from a first person singular point of view.

and 'inalienable' in this way:

(b) S is inalienable if and only if S is a part of some person and logically could not be a part of any numerically distinct person.

So, if an ego is both private and inalienable then only the person whose ego it is may be directly aware of it, and that ego is a part of that person and could not be the ego of someone else.

Sartre says:

'It is, in a sense, more "internal to" consciousness than one's states' (83) (207)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In the way I have defined 'interiority' it is not possible for interiority to admit of degrees, so what sense is Sartre allocating to the term here? He defines 'interiority' like this:

'Yet what do we mean by "interiority" ? Simply that to be and to be aware of itself are one and the same thing for consciousness' (83) (208)

So Sartre means by 'interiority' the Hegelian doctrine that there is no difference between consciousness being what it is and consciousness knowing what it is (that is, being conscious of what it is). (209)

Clearly, it is not inconsistent to speak of degrees of self-consciousness, but can sense be attached to 'more interior than' here? Again, an appearance/reality distinction is needed. The ego exhibits a two-fold interiority; one only apparent but the other real. The ego is an interiority because it exists only as an object of reflecting consciousness. It is private. But it has an illusory interiority of its own, as though it possessed a private awareness of its own states.

Sartre provides two characterisations of interiority, each intended as a partial explication of the Hegelian doctrine that consciousness' being is being conscious of itself:

- (1) 'For consciousness appearance is the absolute to the extent that it is appearance' (84)
- (2) 'Consciousness is a being whose essence involves its existence' (84) (210)

Appearance is an absolute because if there is awareness of appearance then *qua* appearance that appearance admits of no appearance/reality distinction. It is absolutely what it is. The contents of consciousness are given to consciousness *qua* contents of consciousness just as they are.

The essence of consciousness implies its existence for Sartre because it wrong to say what consciousness is without acknowledging a commitment to the existence of consciousness. In describing what it is it is necessary to presuppose that it is.

Sartre says that a consequence of the interiority of consciousness and the stronger interiority of the ego is that

'one lives interiority (one "exists inwardly")
(84) (211)

Living interiority is not the same as introspecting one's mental states. It consists in being in them, or partly being them. What I partly or even essentially am falls under the description 'private and inalienable' so what I partly am is accessible to me only through the first person singular perspective. What I partly am falls under true first person singular psychological descriptions.

For Sartre, living interiority is constitutive of what it is to be a person as opposed to observing a person. It is for this reason impossible for living interiority to be observed. I am partly co-extensive with my interiority and my being my interiority precludes the level of detachment or objectivity necessary for its observation. To put Sartre's point metaphorically, I am too close to my interiority to see it for what it is. This is only a metaphor, not only because of the spatial connotations of 'close to' but because I am my interiority and if A is close to B then A is not B. Nevertheless, the difficulty might well be compared with the incapacity of the seeing eye to see itself.

The fact that the ego may be an object for consciousness is a clue for Sartre to the falsity of its interiority. The ego is given to consciousness as a kind of interiority but this can only be illuminating because, as he puts it

'an absolute interiority never has an outside' (84) (212)

'Outside' is a spatial metaphor designed to capture a phenomenological fact about the ego, and indeed, consciousness. Consciousness has no 'outside' because of its interiority, because there is something it consists in to be a consciousness. Consciousness may only be observed by the consciousness it is, and any interiority may only be apprehended by itself. The ego is an object for consciousness yet not part of consciousness. It follows that the notion of the ego is a contradictory because if the ego is an interiority it cannot be observed by anything but itself. The ego is an interiority, but it is observed by something other than itself; consciousness. It follows that the ego both is and is not observed by something other than itself. This contradiction, according to Sartre, is a clue to the fact that the ego is only an appearance, an illusion, a postulated object for consciousness.

Sartre claims that interiority has two structures: intimacy and indistinctness.

When Sartre says that the ego is given to consciousness as 'intimate' (85), I read this as follows: x is intimate if and only if x is a part of consciousness. Although the ego is given as intimate, this intimacy is illusory. The ego is not a part of consciousness but an object for consciousness, so the ego has a false intimacy.

Sartre says the ego is given as 'opaque' (85) to consciousness, and this opacity appears as indistinctness. To see more precisely what Sartre means by 'indistinctness' we need to inspect his examples.

In different philosophical contexts, God may be thought of as indistinct, as may pure being (what is, in abstraction from any of its properties). This suggests that if x is or appears indistinct then it is at least true that the concept of x is vague (or difficult to define) and it is perhaps true of x that x may not be (or may not be wholly) apprehended in its true nature. The ego as it features in Sartre's phenomenology falls under those two descriptions.

Sartre does provide us with an explicit characterisation of 'indistinctness':

'[This] is interiority seen from the outside' (85) (213)

'Seen' is a metaphor and is best unpacked as 'thought' or 'imagined', so if x is characterised by interiority but is imagined from a third person point of view then x is thought as 'indistinct'; what x is is not clear in the imagining of x .

Both intimacy and indistinctness are relational structures of interiority. One is a relation to the consciousness whose ego exhibits interiority, the other is a relation to another, third person, consciousness. They are not intrinsic properties of the ego.

Self Knowledge

Sartre's conception of self-knowledge is best understood as a systematic repudiation of Cartesian privacy. On a Cartesian epistemology of the self each person has a uniquely privileged access to their own mental states through introspection. Sartre maintains that the sorts of things I may know about oneself are the sorts of things other people may know about me. Indeed, according to Sartre, others may understand me much better than I understand myself.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Nevertheless, Sartre begins his exposition of self-knowledge with an assertion *prima facie* not only inconsistent with Cartesianism, but with there being self-knowledge at all:

'The me, as such, remains unknown to us' (86) (214)

Sartre means the me as subject is unknowable because there is no such entity for our knowledge to be of. *Qua* object there are just four possible, but imperfect, modes of epistemological access to the me:

(1) 'observation' (86)

(2) 'approximation' (86)

(3) 'anticipation' (86)

(4) 'experience' (86) (215)

Sartre does not explain what these procedures consist in, but he does say that each is only appropriate to apprehension of a non-intimate object, and the me is too intimate to be captured by any of them appropriately. We may understand them as follows:

(1) There is *observation* of x if and only if there is either sense perception or introspection of x .

(2) There is *approximation* to x if and only if there is some largely accurate estimation of the nature of x .

(3) There is *anticipation* of x if and only if attention is paid to x .

(4) There is *experience* of x if and only if x exists as an object for at least one consciousness.

If we unpack Sartre's four procedures in this way then room is left for knowledge of the ego by their means, but knowledge of an uncertain kind. Arguably there may only exist knowledge where there is room for error, and,

in any case, part of Sartre's criticism of the Cartesian picture is that it makes it impossible to be in error as to one's (psychological) nature.

However, there is evidence that these procedures may be systematically misleading, or that it may in principle be impossible to acquire self-knowledge by their means. To understand why we need to examine Sartre on the intimacy of the me. He says:

'It is too 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' (86) (216)

Sartre's account is riddled with a spatial vocabulary: 'present', 'external', 'viewpoint', 'accompanies', 'withdrawal', 'circle around'. We could say we know intuitively what Sartre means by the intimacy of the me, but the difficult but worthwhile task would be to unpack the vocabulary non-metaphorically. The problem is that although the me is an object it behaves like a subject. If the me were a subject then it would, for example, be true that it 'accompanies us' in the sense that we are it, or perhaps as Kant's 'I think' must be capable accompanying (*begleiten*) any of our perceptions. Suppose I try to think some thought about myself, or introspect myself, and try to thus introspect or think myself as something that exists independently of my thinking or introspecting. If not a paradox, there is a psychological difficulty in attempting this because the me is necessarily dependent on any thinking or introspecting I engage in. It is not dependent on my thinking as the subject of my thoughts but as an object of my thoughts, but no less dependent for that. We could formulate the difficulty in this way:

- (1) An 'external viewpoint' is possible on x
if x exists independently of thought and perception.
- (2) An 'external viewpoint' is not possible on x
if x depends on thought or perception.

Clearly, if the me *qua* the me depends upon thought or perception then an external viewpoint on it is not possible.

'Infinitely near' is also a spatial metaphor. Spatially, no matter how near x is to y it is always in principle possible for x to be nearer to y , but Sartre wishes us to entertain the idea of infinite nearness: x and y are near but it is

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

in principle impossible for x and y to be nearer, or, there is no limit to how near they are. Unpacking the metaphor, Sartre is claiming that the me is as good a candidate as may be found for something that I am. Yet the me is not I myself as subject. It is not that psycho-physical human being that I am, but it is 'infinitely near' in the sense that there exists no better failed candidate for what I am. It is nearly what I am.

An epistemological problem is raised here which Sartre does not solve. Why should it be difficult to know the me? Spatially speaking, it is frequently difficult to see some object clearly which is close to one's eyes, and this difficulty is a result of certain empirical facts about focussing. It is hard to envisage a parallel difficulty about knowledge of the me, once the spatial metaphors are stripped away. Some argument would be needed to show that the Cartesian account of self-knowledge is radically mistaken. It cannot simply be taken for granted that if x depends on my consciousness then x is unknowable by me, nor that if x depends on my consciousness x 's nature is self-evident to me.

Sartre provides a putative example of self-knowledge. (86) If I ask myself whether I am lazy or hard working then the best route to a correct answer to this question is to ask others, or perhaps, to collect information about oneself and to interpret it as dispassionately as if the information were about someone else. Either of these methods he regards as more reliable than direct introspection of the me.

It seems that Sartre has assimilated two pairs of distinctions which need to be distinguished. These are a subjective/objective distinction and a biased/unbiased distinction. Something counts as subjective if it pertains to consciousness. Something is objective if it does not pertain to consciousness. The subjective/objective distinction is thus an ontological distinction, a distinction between sorts of entity. The biased/unbiased distinction is, in contrast, an epistemological distinction. It makes sense to speak of beliefs, opinions, theories, ideologies and so on as biased or unbiased. Now, Sartre assumes that beliefs about a subjective entity, the me, are more likely to be biased than beliefs about objective entities. I see no reason to accept this. I should say an opinion is biased if and only if it is allocated a specific truth value because of a *desire* that it possess that truth value, and not because of evidence that it possesses that truth value. If we say I am more likely to favour myself than others and so self-knowledge is likely to be distorted, then even if this is true we may still ask Why ?

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

It is understandable that a person's beliefs about themselves should make a difference to what they are and not merely tautologically. For example if someone believes they are confident then to that extent they are confident. If someone believes they are self-conscious then to that extent they are self-conscious. What is required is the construction of contrasting cases where a person generates false beliefs about themselves, or fails to acquire true beliefs about themselves, because it is himself that the beliefs are about.

Sartre considers the me an obstacle to self-knowledge. In the example of my deciding whether I am lazy or hard-working, it is possible to see how the me could bar such knowledge. If I think of my 'self' as a kind of introspectible psychological item, then this is a distraction from my coming to know what dispositions I have, and being lazy or hard-working is possessing a disposition.

Another person is better able to know my dispositions than I am because they are not acquainted with the me as an ontologically misleading inner entity in the way in which I am. So there does not exist for the other the same psychological obstacle to knowledge of me as exists in my knowledge of myself. In that respect at least another may know me better than I know myself.

To know oneself is for Sartre to know oneself as others know one, but to know oneself in that way is to ironically adopt a perspective which is necessarily false:

'Thus "really to know oneself" is inevitably to take toward oneself the point of view of others, that is to say, a point of view which is necessarily false' (87) (217)

Sartre does not mean that the point of view others have on one is necessarily false. It is not necessary that of any set of sentences of third person grammatical form believed of a person some percentage will be false just because they are not autobiographical but third person. Sartre means that in self-knowledge I know myself as if I were another. The knowledge I have of myself is necessarily not third person knowledge and the knowledge another has of oneself is necessarily not self-knowledge. Clearly this is consistent with the fact that what I know about myself may be what another knows about me. The same propositional content may be truly expressed in first person singular and third person singular grammatical form. It follows that what one believes about oneself may be true even if it depends on the

authority of others, or on adopting towards oneself the attitude of others, or both. Perhaps only to that extent is self-knowledge possible on Sartre's account.

14 The Ego as Ideal

There is a further obstacle to self-knowledge. The ego is taken as real but is in fact the ideal unity of its states and actions. It is ideal in that it only exists as an object for consciousness, and independently of that it has no reality so *a fortiori* no reality as the unity of states and actions. My states and actions are infinite according to Sartre (presumably because there are no non-stipulative criteria for their individuation and enumeration) but the ego is a finite entity. Nothing finite can be the real unity of something infinite so no ego can be the real unity of states and actions. This is what Sartre means by

'The intuition of the ego is a constantly gulling mirage, for it simultaneously yields everything and yields nothing' (87) (218)

The ego is putatively what the ontological unity of my states and actions consists in *qua* mine. Really it is incapable of fulfilling that role. It appears to have it, so it has it ideally only.

What does it mean to say that the ego is an *ideal* unity of states and actions? Sartre remarks

'Those who have some acquaintance with Phenomenology will understand without difficulty that the ego may be at the same time an ideal unity of states, the majority of which are absent, and a concrete totality giving itself to intuition' (88) (219)

Sartre has in mind the Husserlian distinction between fulfilled and unfulfilled intentions. Intentional acts are empty if their objects are absent, fulfilled if their objects are present. 'Fulfilment' is Husserl's term for the transition from absence to presence. The ego is the *ideal unity* of its states and actions in so far as these are possible objects of a series of unfulfilled intentional acts. The ego is a *concrete totality* in so far as it is the object of a fulfilled, present, act of consciousness. Clearly, that the ego has this status presents a further obstacle to self-knowledge. If I am directly acquainted with the ego only as an intentional object, and not with the states and actions

which it unifies, then I am correspondingly ignorant of those states and actions.

Sartre also claims

'The ego is a noematic rather than a noetic unity'
(88) (220)

As we have seen, the *noema*, in Husserlian phenomenology, is the intentional object, or object as meant or intended by an act of consciousness. The *noesis* is the act of consciousness itself. Sartre is thus reiterating his earlier claim that the ego is not a part of consciousness but an object for consciousness. It is not a property of or an inhabitant of consciousness but something consciousness is directed towards.

Within Sartre's phenomenological ontology the ego has much more the status of a physical object than an act of consciousness. As he puts it

'A tree or a chair exist no differently' (88) (221)

Sartre has in mind at least two salient phenomenological features common to the ego and a physical object. Both are given to consciousness as objects, as objects for consciousness, and both are constructions out of *Abschattungen* or perspectives. Indeed, a physical object, like the ego, is a unity of fulfilled and unfulfilled intentions. In establishing that there is much broadly in common between the phenomenology of the ego and the phenomenology of physical objects Sartre provides yet another reason for objecting to the Husserlian picture of the ego as subject, or transcendental condition for consciousness.

15 The Ego and Reflection

Sartre has consistently argued so far in *The Transcendence of the Ego* that the ego is an object of reflection. It exists in so far as it is given to reflexive consciousness. He now introduces two important reservations about that view. The ego only appears indirectly to reflection and, perhaps surprisingly, there is a sense in which the ego appears on the unreflected level. I shall treat each of these in turn.

(i) The Indirect Appearance of the Ego

Sartre says

'The ego never appears, in fact, except when one is not looking at it' (88) (222)

Clearly, 'looking at' is a metaphor here for 'reflecting on' (which is in turn metaphorical) or 'apprehending as object of reflexive consciousness'. If we read Sartre literally here then he is claiming that the ego only appears when there is no reflection on it, and that is clearly inconsistent with the thesis argued so far. The solution is that the ego does not appear as a direct object of reflection, only as an indirect one. It is not possible, to pursue Sartre's metaphor, to *focus* on the ego as a unique enduring particular clearly discriminable from other objects of reflection. On the contrary

'It is, therefore, never seen except "out of the corner of the eye"' (80) (223)

If an attempt is made to pay direct attention to the ego then the ego vanishes. This is because any such attempt takes the form of trying to apprehend the ego as an object for unreflected consciousness. The switch from reflexive to pre-reflexive consciousness loses the ego as object of consciousness because the ego only appears (if only indirectly) to reflexive consciousness.

This oscillation between reflexive and pre-reflexive consciousness accounts for the systematically elusive nature of the I according to Sartre. It is not that the I is perpetually subject but never object, and so may never be the object of any inner intuition. On the contrary, the I is an object, the indirect object of reflexive consciousness, but it is mistaken for an object of pre-reflexive consciousness. The attempt to make it a direct object of consciousness misconstrues it as an object of pre-reflexive consciousness and, in this way, the 'I' systematically evades direct apprehension by consciousness. The I is not *behind* consciousness.

(ii) The Ego on the Unreflected Level

In a way that is *prima facie* inconsistent with a major thesis of his book Sartre asserts

'It is certain, however, that the I does appear on the unreflected level' (89) (224)

and he provides this example:

'If someone asks me "What are you doing ?", and I reply, all preoccupied, "I am trying to hang this picture" or "I am repairing the rear tyre" these statements do not transport us to the level of reflection' (89) (225)

However, the I does not appear on the unreflected level in the same sense in which the I appears to reflection. What appears is the *thought* of the I. There is no intuition of the I as object, direct or indirect. Sartre equivocates between the view that the I is thought but not intuited in this example, and the view that the word I is used meaningfully but over and above that, there is no thought of I. The second view is suggested by

'But this "I" which is here in question nevertheless is no mere syntactical form. It has a meaning: it is quite simply an empty concept which is destined to remain empty' (89) (226)

The I concept is thought but there is no intuition of the I to fulfil that thought.

The second view is suggested by

'Just as I can think of a chair in the absence of any chair merely by a concept, I can in the same way think of the "I" in the absence of the "I"' (89) (227)

The two views are in fact mutually consistent if using the term 'I' (or a synonym) meaningfully and possessing the concept of I are mutually dependent capacities.

On the unreflected level the I loses its intimacy. It is, as Sartre puts it, 'degraded' (91). In a sense the use of 'I' on the unreflected level is revealing of the nature of the I. This is because the term 'I', on that level, is used to refer to the psychophysical whole who I am; an agent in the world.

(2) The Refutation of Solipsism

The second consequence Sartre claims for his phenomenology of the ego is a refutation of solipsism. If solipsism is the doctrine that only my psyche exists then Sartre has refuted solipsism if he has proven a claim which is inconsistent with the thesis that only my psyche exists. He also says 'this conception of the ego seems to us the only possible refutation of solipsism' (103) (234) but he does not have a sound argument for this. It would in fact be extremely difficult to prove that one refutation of solipsism is the only possible one. This would require showing *a priori* that there is no other sound argument with a conclusion that is inconsistent with 'Only my psyche exists.'

Although he makes the point in a rather psychologistic and *ad hominem* way, Sartre does not think the putative refutations of solipsism presented by Husserl in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and in *Cartesian Meditations* are sound and he does have the makings of an argument for this.

He characterises solipsism as follows:

'As long as the I remains a structure of consciousness, it will always remain possible to oppose consciousness, with its I, to all other existents. Finally, then, it is really the me who must produce the world' (1034) (235)

Clearly this argument for solipsism is invalid. From the fact that a distinction may be drawn between consciousness and its I on the one hand and the rest of what is on the other it does not logically follow that the me produces the world. Nor, *a fortiori*, does it follow that the me must produce the world. However, it is possible to reconstruct a more useful observation on solipsism here.

So long as the I is maintained as a subject of consciousness and as a condition for the possibility of experience in a Kantian, Husserlian or, for that matter, Cartesian way room is left for scepticism about the existence of what the I is a condition for the possibility of. From the fact that the I is a necessary condition for experience it does not follow that it is sufficient for experience. The existence of the I, then, provides no guarantee of the existence of experience and its objects. It is this fact that leaves conceptual room for the kind of scepticism called 'solipsism'. The solipsist does not need a conclusion of the strength Sartre ascribes to him. He does not need to say that the me produces the world nor that the I necessarily produces the world. All the solipsist needs is the logical possibility that there is no world independent of his own psyche if *prima facie* there is only one's own psyche.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

This provides materials for an argument that Husserl's putative refutations of solipsism fail. If Sartre can show that some thesis is vulnerable to solipsistic scepticism and that Husserl is logically committed to such a thesis then it follows that Husserl is vulnerable to solipsistic scepticism. Sartre thinks he has found precisely such a thesis in the Husserlian view that the transcendental ego is both subject of consciousness and transcendental ground of the possibility of experience.

This will always leave logical room for the reaffirmation of solipsism despite the manoeuvres of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and *Cartesian Meditations*. Husserl's detailed phenomenology of the other is ultimately not logically inconsistent with solipsism despite Husserl's description of the differences between being presented with a human being as opposed to, say, a straightforward physical object. This is why Sartre says

'Small matter if certain layers of this world necessitate by their very nature a relation to others. This relation can be a mere quality of the world that I create and in no way obliges me to accept the real existence of other I's' (104) (236)

In this passage Sartre shifts modalities from 'it is' and 'must' to the more modest 'can be' and thereby moves from a version of solipsism on which what is depends or necessarily depends on the existence of my psyche to a version on which it is logically possible that what is depends on my psyche.

Sartre's argument against Husserl is sound because Husserl's phenomenological descriptions of the other have not removed this logical possibility. They are compatible with there being no such thing as what Sartre is calling 'the real existence of other I's' (104). *Pace* Husserl's descriptions the other might not have any psychological interiority, any subjectivity. The other might be wholly other.

The question now is whether Sartre's own phenomenology of the ego provides a genuine refutation of solipsism where Husserl's fails. Arguably it does.

Sartre's strategy is not to deny that the existence of other selves is dubitable. He accepts that it is dubitable. His strategy is to deny that the existence of other selves is any more or less dubitable than the existence of one's own self. He thus abdicates the rather Cartesian metaphysical assumption that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology rests on and so abdicates one part of the thinkability of solipsism. (237) Solipsism is partly

the doctrine that other minds are doubtful but solipsism is also partly the doctrine that the existence of one's own mind is certain. It is this second tenet of solipsism that Sartre denies and it is just this tenet that Husserl is unable to escape.

Husserl cannot escape because he has made the self, *qua* transcendental ego, a necessary condition for experience and the 'ground' of the world. It follows that only extremely weak assumptions are sufficient to establish the ego's existence, *viz*; there is experience or there is a world. Sartre can accept the existence of experience and the world (in the sense of what experience is experience of) without thereby being logically committed to his own existence. This marks an important break with Cartesian philosophy; a break facilitated by Kant but continued by Sartre.

When Sartre says

'But if the I becomes a transcendent, it participates in all the vicissitudes of the world' (104) (238)

he means that the fact that the I is an object for consciousness rather than the its subject entails that

its existence is as dubitable as that of any other object of consciousness.

What Cartesian philosophy, including Husserlian transcendental phenomenology has mistakenly taken to be the 'owner' presupposed by consciousness is not in fact any kind of necessary condition for consciousness, therefore consciousness is not sufficient for its existence. If the existence of the I does not follow from the existence of consciousness then, to that extent, the existence of the I is dubitable. By 'dubitable' here I mean: *p* is dubitable if and only if there is no contradiction in denying the conjunction of *p* and 'consciousness exists' (Even if, for example, 'consciousness exists' is true if doubt exists.) Clearly Sartre is right to suggest that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is vulnerable to sceptical solipsism because it is committed to the view that the existence of the ego is indubitable but the existence of the external world is dubitable (even if not doubted).

If Sartre's arguments in *The Transcendence of the Ego* for the conclusion that 'there are moments of consciousness without the I' (32) are sound then he has adduced a ground for denying solipsism. By 'strong solipsism' I mean the conjunction of: 'Only I exist' and 'I necessarily exist' (Or, more precisely, 'Only my mind exists' and 'My mind necessarily exists'.) If there

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

are moments of consciousness without the I and moments of consciousness with the I then the I exists intermittently. If the I exists intermittently then it does not necessarily exist. If the I does not necessarily exist but it exists then it contingently exists. Although there are times when it exists there is no incoherence in the supposition that it does not exist because there are times when it does not exist. Any claim that it does not exist made at a time when it does exist is only false, not necessarily false. This implication of Sartre's thought relies on two assumptions which could be challenged. Nothing necessarily exists intermittently and everything is either necessary or contingent but not both. There seems no *a priori* objection to something's existing necessarily when it exists but sometimes not existing. Indeed, this seems to be Husserl's view of the transcendental ego. Although it is logically impossible for something to be both necessary and contingent, there seems no incoherence in the idea that something should be neither.

Sartre says of the I reconstrued as object rather than subject 'It is not an absolute' (104). Something is an absolute if and only if it exists, it depends upon nothing else for its existence but the remainder of what exists does depend upon it for its existence. ('An absolute' in the sense of the first two conjuncts is roughly synonymous with 'substance' in Aristotelian metaphysics.) The I is not an absolute because although it exists it only exists intermittently and only *qua* object for consciousness. It depends upon consciousness for its existence and so is not an absolute.

Understood as object, not subject, the I is not any kind of precondition for experience. If experience does not depend on it then something does not depend on it so it is not an absolute. When Sartre says 'It has not created the universe' (104) he means the existence of the ego is not necessary for what is presented to consciousness (except, modally, itself).

It is an entailment of Sartre's view that the I 'falls like other existences at the stroke of the *epoche*' (104), because whatever is an object for consciousness is open to that suspension of ontological commitment that is the phenomenological reduction. The ego is an object for consciousness so it falls by the *epoche*. If the ego is not any kind of precondition for consciousness it is coherent to suspend belief in its existence.

The phenomenological *epoche* is itself the implementation of a kind of solipsism. Although the *epoche* entails no disbelief in the external world it entails a kind of sceptical solipsism on which the existence of one's mental states is consistent with either the existence or nonexistence of the external world.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre summarises the consequences for solipsism of his reversal of the phenomenological role of the ego as follows:

‘Instead of expressing itself in effect as “I alone exist as absolute”, it must assert that “absolute consciousness alone exists as absolute”, which is obviously a truism’ (104) (239)

Sartre retains from solipsism the thesis that only consciousness depends upon nothing else for its own existence, but rejects the thesis that such a consciousness is necessarily one’s own or ‘mine’. He thinks it is a truism that consciousness alone exists as an absolute because the existence of consciousness logically and indubitably follows from the existence of consciousness.

Sartre has not refuted the various solipsist theses: only my consciousness exists, only one consciousness exists, nor the modal variants of these obtained by prefacing them by ‘It is possible that’ or ‘It is necessary that’. He has succeeded in casting doubt on the ideas that a consciousness is necessarily owned, is someone’s, that its being someone’s is a necessary condition for its being, and that such ownership consists in the existence of a transcendental subject.

Sartre draws an important and possibly original distinction which damages a central tenet of Cartesian epistemology. It is the distinction between the *certainty* and the intimacy of the I:

‘My I, in effect, is no more certain for consciousness than the I of other men. It is only more intimate.’ (104) (240)

This is not just a reiteration of the claim that my ego’s existence is as dubitable as the ego of another, although it is partly that. It is the claim that there is a difference between the intimacy of the I, the privacy of access to it, and the certainty of the I, the incorrigibility of some first person singular claims about it. Sartre is saying that privacy is no guarantee of incorrigibility and in this he is right. From the fact (if it is a fact) that a consciousness has a kind of direct and perhaps introspective access to its own ego that no other consciousness shares and which it has to the ego of no other consciousness, it does not follow that such epistemological access yields incorrigible beliefs. There is no incoherence in the supposition that the deliverances of such access should be falsified.

Sartre's conclusion is

'Solipsism becomes unthinkable from the moment that the I no longer has a privileged status' (104) (241)

He is right in so far as solipsism has two essential entailments: the external world is dubitable and my own existence is indubitable. It is the second of these that Sartre undermines and, in doing so, damages not only Husserl's phenomenology but the profound Cartesianism it rests on. It can only be what it is if it is not all there is.

6 The Ego as the Pole of Actions, States and Qualities.

Sartre's phenomenology of the self entails a description of the relation of the ego to its actions, states and qualities which putatively eschews any commitment to the doctrine that the ego is the transcendent subject of these.

Sartre draws a distinction between the psychic and consciousness . Consciousness is a series of mental acts unified by their intentional objects. The psychic in contrast lies entirely on the side of the intentional object. The psychic for Sartre is not a constituent of consciousness but an object for consciousness. It lies outside consciousness and consciousness is directed towards it. Indeed,

'The psychic is the transcendent object of reflexive consciousness' (71) (172)

Crucially, Sartre's claims the ego belongs to the psychic, not to consciousness. The ego is not a part of consciousness, nor is it the subject of consciousness that which is conscious. On the contrary, amongst the transcendent objects given to consciousness there exists the ego. Indeed, it is that which makes possible the synthetic unity of the psychic. The question now arises of the relation of the ego to the synthetic unity of the psychic. There is a particular account which could be invoked here which Sartre is keen to avoid. It is one derived from Husserl's account of synthetic unity. Sartre quotes from Husserl's *Ideas I*:

'Predicates, however, are predicates of "something". This something also belongs to the nucleus in question and obviously cannot be separated from the nucleus. It is the central point of unity of which we were speaking

earlier. It is the point of attachment for predicates, their support. But in no respect is it a unity of the predicates in the sense of some complex, in the sense of some linkage of predicates, even if one cannot set it beside them, nor separate it from them: just as they are its predicates, unthinkable without it and yet distinguishable from it.' (*Ideas* §131)(723) (173)

There is a drastic mistake which runs through Husserl's thinking here which needs to be rectified before we are in a position to examine Sartre's criticisms. Husserl has failed to distinguish between predicates and properties. A property is something that pertains to something, so something's properties are its characteristics, but a predicate is not that. A predicate is a word sense or set of word senses which may be used to ascribe a property to something. Paradigmatically, a predicate is an indicative sentence minus its grammatical subject. It therefore makes no sense at all for Husserl to say predicates are 'of something' or for there to be 'a point of attachment for predicates' or 'a support' for them.

However, what Husserl wants to say is clear enough. He is presenting a neoLockean account of the relationship between an object and its properties. Properties, logically, are properties of something and Husserl calls this something a 'nucleus'. The nucleus is the bearer of properties or what the properties are properties of. Husserl expressly excludes from his account the possibility that what makes the properties of an object a unity, properties of one and the same object, is their relation to one another. Even if the nucleus *qua* nucleus depends on its properties, and even if the properties *qua* properties depend upon the nucleus, any properties and any nucleus are distinct from one another. In particular, it is not possible to correctly regard the nucleus as any kind of 'construction' out of its properties. It is Husserl's view that properties would be unthinkable as such without the existence of a nucleus as their bearer (and presumably the nucleus would be unthinkable without properties to bear).

Sartre thinks this whole account of the relationship between an object and its properties is mistaken, and may lead us into a mistaken account of what synthetic unity is. Sartre's answer to the question: In virtue of what is a set of properties properties of one and the same object? is that they are properties of each other and it does not make sense to talk about an object as something over and above its properties. He thinks it both false and phenomenologically illegitimate to postulate a nucleus or substratum as that

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

which bears properties but which is not itself a property. At best, the postulation of such a nucleus is redundant:

'An indissoluble synthetic totality which could support itself would have no need of a supporting X' (73) (174)

Sartre says for a set of properties to be properties of one object they must be concretely analysable, that is, it must not in reality or be possible to separate one property from another. It is no obstacle to the unity of the properties as the object that they be analysable in thought. Indeed any synthetic unity may be intellectually analysed by a process of abstraction; thinking of one property or subset of properties of an object without thereby thinking of other properties of that object.

To emphasise that there is no need to postulate an unknowable 'x' or nucleus for the properties to inhere in Sartre invites us to consider the case of a melody. The suggestion is that we will perhaps be more tempted to postulate the existence of a substratum in the case of a physical object than in the case of a musical object. In the case of a melody, something's being a melody depends upon the real inseparability of its notes and other musical properties. Sartre says it would be useless to postulate a nucleus in such a case. He does not say why, but I think a reason may be adduced.

Although both melodies and physical objects endure through time, a melody typically changes its properties (at least its macroscopic properties) more rapidly than a physical object. One note, for example, is replaced by another. Because the notes are not sustained throughout the melody we are not as tempted to postulate something which sustains them as we are in the case of the comparatively enduring properties of a physical object, its shape, size, or even colour for example.

It is by reference to the melody as a whole that we recognise a particular note as part of the melody, and not by reference to some unknowable nucleus which supports all the notes. The melody consists in the notes in the relations in which they stand to one another.

Sartre takes it then that there are severe philosophical objections to the notion of a nucleus, substratum or object 'x' which bears the properties of an object. As the account of the object/property relation offered by Husserl is mistaken, Sartre is unwilling to extend it to the particular case of the ego's relation to its actions, states, and qualities:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'For these very reasons we shall not permit ourselves to see the ego as a sort of Xpole which would be the support of psychic phenomena' (74) (175)

The relation of the ego to its states, actions and qualities may be described in this way: Ontologically it is nothing over and above them, but phenomenologically it is their unity. It is then considered as a unity.

Sartre amends the metaphor of the ego being a 'support' of its states by saying:

'The ego is nothing outside of the concrete totality of states and actions it supports' (74)(176)

Clearly there is a paradox here, but one Sartre intends. If a supports b then it is *prima facie* incoherent to suppose that a does not exist outside b or is nothing over and above b. But this is to assume a is not partly or wholly selfsupporting. (After all, pillars may support a building but be part of it, and a building may be architecturally selfsupporting like the beehive tombs near Mycaenae.) Sartre invites to relinquish the metaphor of the ego as an external 'support' of its states, to leave room for his positive account of the ego as that which the unity of actions and states consists in. A philosophical anticipation of the difference between Husserl and Sartre on the ego is the difference between Locke and Hume on the self.

The EgoWorld Analogy

Not only is Husserl's account of the objectproperty relation mistaken, but any analogy between the ego and a physical object is a poor one. According to Sartre, the best analogy to illustrate the relation of the ego to its states is with the world and the objects in it.

Rather as Heidegger understands the world as the totality of significance within which *Dasein* understands itself by 'world' Sartre means the synthetic totality of what exists, not the mere aggregate of existing things:

'If we were to seek for unreflected consciousness an analogue of what the ego is for consciousness of the second degree, we rather believe that it would be necessary to think of the world, conceived as the infinite synthetic totality of all things' (74) (177)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The world is for the unreflected consciousness what the ego is for reflected consciousness. Unreflected consciousness is directed towards objects united by and into a world. Reflected consciousness is directed towards actions, states and qualities united into the ego. The world is the synthetic totality of things. The ego is the synthetic totality of actions, states, and qualities. The world is not a nucleus supporting the things in it, it is the synthetic unity of those things. The ego is not a nucleus supporting its states, it is the synthetic unity of those states:

'The ego is to psychological objects what the world is to things' (75) (178)

Sartre considers this analogy most apposite. The phenomenological structure of the worldthings relation is of the same type as the egostates relation. The common and neoKantian name for both is 'synthetic unity'.

However, there is an important disanalogy between the two which Sartre wishes to warn us of. It is psychologically rather rare for the world to appear as the synthetic unity of things, but the ego invariably appears as the synthetic unity of states. Sartre does not mean that it is only, say in philosophy, that the world is conceived in this way. He means that the world is typically not given to us as that kind of unity. We are usually engaged with particular objects. However, in reflection we are always aware of the unity of states:

'But the appearance of the World in the background of things is rather rare: special circumstances, described very well by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, are necessary for it to "reveal" itself. The ego, on the contrary, always appears at the horizon of states' (75) (179)

Heidegger's point is each object is what it is in virtue of internal relations to everything else. Appreciation of the world as this totality of significance is not at all common.

Sartre's analogy is apposite. The world is the 'horizon' of things as the ego is the 'horizon' of states. The thought of a thing existing independently of the world, the totality of things related *qua* significant totality, is just as much an intellectual abstraction as the thinking of a state of consciousness which is mine as something existing independently of me as the totality of my states, actions, and qualities. Both kinds of abstraction are possible. I can think of

this object as just this object this peculiar unique one without thereby thinking of it as a member of the totality of things which give it significance. I can analogously think of one of my mental states as just this peculiar unique mental state without thereby thinking of it as one of the synthetic totality of mental states truly called 'mine'.

Sartre describes the relation of the ego to its states pursuing further the parallel with objects and the world:

'Each state, each action is given as incapable of being separated from the ego without abstraction' (75) (180)

Equally, each thing is given as incapable of separation from the world without abstraction.

It is possible to abstract a mental state from the ego, but it is also possible according to Sartre, to abstract the ego from its mental states. I can think of myself as separate from my mental states. Sartre says an example of this is the making of the judgement 'I am in love' (75) 'Je suis amoureux' (TE 58). However, I can never truly think of myself as separate from my mental states. It is presumably precisely this kind of abstraction which enables Husserl to mistakenly postulate the transcendental ego as the subject of consciousness.

In at least one sense it is possible to think of the world in abstraction from the totality of objects which comprise it. Then 'world' would either mean 'being' or 'existence'; the being of what is in abstraction from what it is, or else 'what is' but not 'what is' in the sense of what actually is but 'what is' in the sense of whatever is. It is not even clear that the idea of what is in this sense is epistemologically parasitic upon the possibility of the world as it is: the totality of actual things.

Sartre thinks both ego and world are given as transcendent. Ego and world are not nothing over and above the consciousness of them, nor are they exhausted by being the intentional objects of prereflexive and reflexive consciousness respectively.

4 Subject-object dualism

The Transcendence of the Ego ends with the bold conclusion that subject-object dualism has been transcended. Unfortunately, as so often in philosophy, the intractability of the problem has been underestimated and the putative solution is too hasty.

Sartre says

'In fact, it is not necessary that the object precede the subject for spiritual pseudovalues to vanish and for ethics to find its bases in reality. It is enough that the *me* be contemporaneous with the World, and that the subject-object duality, which is purely logical, definitely disappear from philosophical preoccupations' (105) (246)

Now, even if Sartre is right that the ontological priority of the subject over the object does not have to be reversed in order for the values which he regards as illusory to be criticised, it does not follow that subject-object dualism is 'purely logical'. Indeed, this seems wrong.

Subject-object dualism is the distinction between two seemingly mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive portions of what is: the part that I am and the remainder that I am not. It is a profound metaphysical mystery why this distinction should obtain at all.

It is not clear how the subject-object distinction is to be drawn ontologically. In particular my body is on some views part of what I am, on other views part of the objective order, and on still other views part of both.

If the distinction were 'purely logical' as Sartre suggests then it would possess many properties which it lacks and lack many properties which it has. For example, the distinction would possess the property of obtaining *a priori*, on the minimal assumption that logic is *a priori*. However, not only may the distinction be established by experience, in a broad sense 'empirically', arguably it can only be established empirically. It follows that it is not *a priori* and so it is not purely logical.

The subject-object distinction is a pragmatic presupposition of our everyday dealings with the world. If it were purely logical it would be merely tautologous that it obtains. However, no analytic or tautological fact can be a pragmatic presupposition of everyday life. Only an ontological, transcendental or perhaps empirical fact can have that status.

If the distinction were purely logical it would obtain of necessity on the minimal assumption that logical facts are necessary facts. However, that there is a subject-object distinction is a contingent fact not a necessary one. Indeed, Sartre himself is logically committed to this view because he thinks that *everything* is contingent. That there is subjectivity is contingent. That there is objectivity is contingent. That out of all the people that there are I am one of them is contingent and that there is a portion of what is which is

numerically and qualitatively distinct from myself is contingent. It is also contingent that the complex conjunction of all these facts obtain. But if the distinction obtains contingently it cannot be purely logical.

The fact that the distinction is contingent should not be confused with the fact (if it is a fact) that it follows with deductive necessity from the premise that there is experience. It may be that experience is a relation and it may be that, logically, there can be no relations without *relata*. In that case it follows that there is subject-object dualism because 'subject' means 'that which experiences' and 'object' means 'what experience is experience of'. However, the necessity of this inference should not be confused with the modality of the conclusion that subject-object dualism obtains. In general it is fallacious to infer the modal status of a conclusion from the modal status of the inference that yields it. In this case too, the fact that the subject-object distinction obtains even if its obtaining is a necessary condition for experience and even if there is experience, is insufficient to establish that its obtaining is a necessary truth. (This is a distinction which Kant systematically fails to grasp in the *Critique of Pure Reason*).

It follows that Sartre is wrong to characterise subject-object dualism as 'purely logical'. It is also true that he has not shown that the distinction is not genuine or does not obtain.

Throughout *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre has sought to establish that the ego is an object not a subject: an item to be encountered in the course of experience, like the ego of another, and not an irreducibly subjective 'source' or precondition of consciousness. If his arguments are sound he has relocated the subject as another kind of object. The subject of intentionality has turned out to be one of the objects of intentionality. It is surprising then that he should misrepresent his own position as one which is neutral between subjectivist and objectivist ontologies but there is no doubt that this is what he does:

'The World has not created the me: the me has not created the World. These are two objects for absolute, impersonal consciousness, and it is by virtue of this consciousness that they are connected' (1056) (247)

It follows that subject-object dualism is a construction out of consciousness. Consciousness itself is intrinsically neither subjective nor objective but the distinction between ego and world is phenomenologically supervenient on it: a kind of phenomenological neutral monism.

Now, this topic neutrality of consciousness with regard to subjectivity and objectivity has simply not been established by the arguments of *The Transcendence of the Ego*. Even from the fact that there is a sound argument for the conclusion that the subject is an object it does not follow that both subject and object are constructions out of a consciousness that is intrinsically neither subjective nor objective. Of course, that ontology may be independently true; true on grounds that are logically independent of Sartre's arguments against Husserl's transcendental ego. It would however require separate argument to establish it.

Arguments for precisely that conclusion are advanced by Hegel in the final chapter of *Phenomenology of Spirit* called 'Absolute Knowing' but this is not the place to appraise their soundness.

5 Absolute Interiority: Towards a Phenomenology

of the Soul That something is me is not an empirical fact. Being me is not just the fact that a particular being exists. Nor is being me any modal fact, for example; that a particular being is numerically distinct from all other beings, or that some being is selfidentical. Even if some of these facts are necessary for something's being me, none is sufficient. There is always more to something's being me than something's being.

If all the facts are empirical facts or modal facts or metaphysical facts and if being me is a fact but not an empirical fact nor a modal fact then being me is a metaphysical fact. Being me is a fact. It follows in a fairly precise sense that *I am out of this world*.

This metaphysical view is *prima facie* inconsistent with both the Husserlian doctrine that I am a transcendental ego and the doctrine of existential phenomenology that my being is essentially beingintheworld. It is inconsistent with the view that I am a transcendental ego because Husserl, following Kant, denies that the transcendental I is *metaphysical*. It is inconsistent with my being being beingintheworld because the terms of that putatively fundamental situation are existentially inseparable (even if separable in abstract thought) but my being being out of this world implies my separability from the world. How may phenomenology be reconciled with this metaphysics ?

It is possible that I am a transcendental ego if pace Kant and Husserl the transcendental subject is metaphysical. It is possible for my being to be beingintheworld if my being in the world but not my being is temporary.

The disagreement between Sartre and Husserl over the existence of the transcendental ego presupposes a common basis which they partly acknowledge. In Husserlian terminology it is the *transcendental field* or *field of transcendental subjectivity* after the *epoche*. In the existential phenomenological terminology of the Sartre of 1943 it is the *nothingness* of being-for-itself. In *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre calls it ‘an inside without an outside’ or ‘absolute interiority’. We could call it ‘subjective space’ or ‘inner space’. It is the space of one’s own psychological interiority, the zone of awareness where my experiences happen. In the *non-psychologistic* vocabulary of Heidegger’s 1927 fundamental ontology which eschews ‘subjective’ and ‘inner’ it is the *Lichtung* or clearing in the forest where being is disclosed to being.

These spatial concepts differ sharply in sense but not in reference. That they differ sharply in sense establishes sharply different phenomenologies. That they do not differ in referent allows them to denote a common presupposition of the difference between Husserl and Sartre over the ego.

Subjective space has phenomenological properties. It is phenomenologically indistinguishable from physical space as perceptually presented to oneself at its centre: unbounded, in the sense that travel seems in principle possible forever away from its centre.

Subjective space is Parmenidean: It is like the inside of a *sphere* with one’s own being as its interior. Thoughts and experiences, including experiences of physical objects, arise and subside within it. It is the zone where being and phenomenological content coincide.

This space is primordial with regard to the dispute between Sartre and Husserl. It is hard to see how I could exist without it or it without me. It does not follow that I am it and we are left with the problem of exactly what I have said about subjective space if I do say I am it.

It is necessary and sufficient for my existence. It is not physical. I am or am directly acquainted with its interiority. It is hard to see how it could admit of natural generation or destruction. I conjecture that subjective space is the soul.

THE BODY

Merleau-Ponty's Concept of the Body-subject

My body is not before me as a thing that can be studied with detachment. My head and back are largely invisible to me and I have only a peculiar perspective onto the front of my body. My seeing eyes do not see themselves in so far as they see. Nevertheless, my body is perpetually in the margins of all my perceptions and makes them possible. Scientific reductionist explanations of the human inauthentically repress those very features of the human they presuppose: subjectivity, freedom, self-consciousness, individuality. Being worthy of ethical respect, we are individual subjects not mere scientific objects.

Phenomenology admits of a subjective subject matter repressed by science. Merleau-Ponty holds that the body is subliminally aware of itself, as well as active in all perception. Merleau-Ponty is not idealist about physical objects but is logically committed to idealism about time *malgre lui*. Disembodied existence is logically possible and conceivable even though ordinary mental states depend empirically on brain states (and a fortiori ordinary mental states are sufficient for brain states).

Keywords: phenomenology, body, subjectivity, science, disembodied existence, mental causation,

'Merleau-Ponty began with the body and allowed the notions of for-itself and in-itself to evolve from the description of the body.' (MORELAND)
Was that the right way round?

Stephen Priest 'Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: How is the ThirdPerson Perspective Possible?' in Jorge J. E. Gracia, Gregory M. Reichberg and Bernard N. Schumacher (eds.) *The Classics of Western Philosophy*

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

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Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception:
How is the Third Person Perspective Possible?

Stephen Priest

If the 1945 work of the French existential phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) *Phenomenology of Perception* deserves the status of a classic it is for its thesis that the existence of one's own body (*le corps propre*) is prior to the problems of philosophy, science and common sense. The concepts needed to think about mind and matter, space and time, self and other, things and world depend on a primordial, practical and prereflective embodiment in the world. The truth of the descriptions of Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology is putatively prior to any scientific claim because it is necessary for its formulation, necessary for its truth or falsity, and, a fortiori, necessary for any knowledge of its truth or falsity. Here I describe this purported primordially of *le corps propre* and identify some of the limits it usefully exposes in scientific explanations of the distinctively human.

In a part repudiation of Husserl's 1913 *epoché* but a part endorsement of the Moravian's mid-1930's doctrine of the *lifeworld* (*Lebenswelt*), Merleau-Ponty says the world is not what I think but what I live through. The subject is his body and *le corps propre* is a living agent. The Heideggerian existential category *being-in-the-world* (*in der Weltsein*,) is substituted for Husserl's methodologically solipsistic reduction of the world to its givenness to a pure ego (*reine Ich*) within the field of transcendental subjectivity. Overcognitive philosophical and scientific conceptions rely on prereflective experience or the prepredicative life of consciousness (*la vie antepredicative de la conscience*) which is always embedded in a finite situation in a way that ultimately depends upon the irreducible and inextricable *being-in-the-world* of *le corps propre*, the terms of which may be separated in abstract thought but not in existence. Merleau-Ponty hopes to disclose and describe the ambiguous but primordial levels of being that make any theorising possible, but in a way that eschews sensationalist foundationalism. The sensation is not 'the unit of perception'. There are no

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

uninterpreted sensations so no 'sensedata'. By describing the preobjective domain (domain preobjectif) a number of dualisms which constitute metaphysical problems will be exposed as not existentially fundamental, but as constituted by consciousness.

Le corps propre

Merleau-Ponty thinks le corps propre has characteristics incompatible with its being only an object (objet). Although my body is physical, and from the point of view of the other it appears as an object, my body qua mine is a body subject.

For something to be an object is for it to be at some distance from me, paradigmatically standing in front of me. Even if most objects are not present before me, if I think of a physical object I think of it as if it were present to me. This is its paradigmatic mode of phenomenological presentation and is suggested by the Latin etymology of objet (in objectus: a lying before or opposite). A physical object is in principle observable with the objectivity or detachment that observation entails. If a physical object is in practice unobservable, its being an object is partly its being thinkable as something observable and thereby remote (eloigne). We can think of objects in the abstract because some of them are directly present within our tactile or visual fields.

I can manipulate a physical object, touch it or pick it up. A physical object gains and loses properties but nevertheless remains the object it is through such transitions. A physical object presents sides (cotes), or profiles (profils, Abschattungen) and would be presented as an idea (idee) and not as a thing (chose) if it were not presented in that way. Something can be an object only to the degree to which it can be moved away from me (eloigne), and ultimately disappear from my visual field. Merleau-Ponty says that in the case of a physical object its presence entails its possible absence. His phenomenology also entails that its absence entails a possible presence.

The way in which the existence of my own body is phenomenologically presented to me is radically different from these. My body is constantly kinesthetically or subliminally perceived by me, even though the practical articulation of my body renders 'kinaesthetic sensation' a naive. Physical objects are intermittently and nonkinesthetically perceived by me. I do not leave my body and my body does not leave me. My body is not at the extremity of some indefinite exploration. It defies clinical, objective,

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

thirdperson observation or exploration by me. My body exhibits a peculiar phenomenological subjectivity because it always presents itself visually to me from the same angle. Its continuing existence is not a continuing existence in front of me in the world. It is not an objective particular that I could encounter, touch or pick up. Its existence is continuous from my subjective point of view. I am my body but phenomenologically not quite it. My body is always intimately 'near' me. My body is always 'there' for me in the sense of never absent from me. My body is never wholly and objectively before me. I cannot single it out as one particular amongst others in my visual field. My body is perpetually marginal in every perception that is mine. My body is with me in a sense that is more intimate than accompaniment or mere objective juxtaposition.

Although physical objects also never expose one of their sides to me without thereby concealing the others, in their case I can choose which side they present by moving my body or by moving them. My body in contrast only ever presents part of the front of my torso and my legs within my visual field and if I move then I do not thereby cause a very different aspect of my body to be appear.

My habitual actions are part of the original structure of my own body, rather than contingent appendages to it, because *le corps propre* is essentially an agent. My dispositions are instrumental complexes integral to my body and my body itself may be correctly described as my basic habit. It makes possible and explains all my other behavioural habits.

My body is as permanent as I am. It is where I am. It is when I am. Its unvarying perspective is a necessity in the quasitranscendental sense of being a necessary condition for my experiences and for their being mine. It follows that nothing in the course of my experience could refute the claim that my body exists. To that extent, my existence qua body subject is a priori and, in that weak Kantian sense of 'necessary' which means 'not refutable by experience', necessary.

I use my body to observe physical objects, manipulate them, examine them, walk round them, so *le corps propre* is not another thing which I manipulate, observe or touch. For this to be possible I would need a metabody which itself would be unobservable without a metametabody and so on. The absence of my body is inconceivable by me whereas the absence of any object is readily conceivable. I cannot see my own head, except perhaps parts of my nose end and the rims of my eye sockets. I have never seen my own face. I can see my eyes in mirrors but they are the eyes of another seen

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

from the outside not my living eyes as I see through them. Although startled to see myself in a mirror in a shop window, I cannot easily catch myself seeing myself. The nearer the aspects of le corps propre considered are to the eyes, the less plausibly it can be construed as an object. My body is a phenomenological quasispace.

To the extent that my body sees or touches the world it cannot be seen nor touched by me. I move objects by using my body but I move my body by moving. I do not find my body in one region of objective space and then move it to another. I have no need to search for my body, it is already with me. I am located in a certain place from which I see objects and which I cannot see. My body is a subjectobject, not just an object.

Subjective Points of View

The theory of the body is already a theory of perception. We can perceive physical objects only because we are body subjects. When I walk round my flat, the various aspects it presents to me could not appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each presents the flat seen from one spot or another. I have to be a persisting body subject adopting a sequence of subjective points of view in order for the flat to be presented as the same flat to me. Merleau-Ponty also thinks I have to be at least implicitly aware of the continuity of my own body during this process in order for anything to be presented as the same thing to me through my fluctuating perceptions of it.

There are two kinds of objectivity. On the one hand, something might be presented to me from the front, as detached, or 'overthere'. On the other hand, something might be presented from above or in plan. The plan view is typically more complete than the front view, not more true or accurate. It is the flat seen from above. I have a subjective point of view on the neighbouring house which thereby presents some sides but not others. If I change my view point or use an aeroplane the house presents other aspects. Merleau-Ponty judges it meaningless to speak of the house seen from nowhere (*vue de nulle part*) because seeing is always seeing from somewhere. An object seen from nowhere would be invisible. From the subjective point of view of my body I never see the six sides of the cube as equal in length (even if the cube is transparent). Nevertheless, I have a concept of the whole cube and "cube" has a meaning. The cube as it is in itself, beyond its phenomenological *Abschattungen* has six sides of equal

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

length. This concept of objectivity depends upon a series of phenomenological presentations which depend in turn on *le corps propre*.

The Thing

Merleau-Ponty analyses the thing as an intersensory entity (*choses intersensorielle*). The problem is how an object can be presented as numerically identical through a sequence of experiences each of which presents a qualitatively distinct content given that no single quale need endure through any sequence of perceptions of the same object, nor does it endure through the exercise of different sensory modalities. Merleau-Ponty's solution is to say that the object is presented as a whole even in a partial perception of it. Indeed, being presented with a part is only intelligible if it is or could be being presented with part of a whole. The properties of a thing which appear are properties of one another and thereby constitute one and the same thing. Merleau-Ponty postulates no quasi-Lockean substance or substratum that the properties of the object are properties of. That would be phenomenologically illegitimate and arguably neither necessary nor sufficient for the endurance of numerically the same object over time.

Other Subjects

Merleau-Ponty raises the question of how the word 'I' can be put into the plural. He rejects the conjunctive Cartesian assumption that first person singular psychological ascriptions are certain and indubitable but third person psychological ascriptions are uncertain and dubitable. The existence of what he calls the human world (*le monde humain*) makes possible a degree of certainty and uncertainty about both one's own reality and the reality of others. The human world would be unintelligible without the subjectivity of others. The human world is intelligible, so there is the subjectivity of others. For example someone uses the pipe for smoking, the spoon for eating, the bell for summoning. The artifacts of the human world have a human atmosphere (*une atmosphère de l'humanité*) and carry the stamp (*la marque*) of human purposes and acts and so presuppose the embodied subjectivity of the other.

Merleau-Ponty also rejects the Cartesian assumption that the body of another is inhabited (*habite*). It is a mistake to think of the person as divided into two parts, one wholly mental and the other wholly physical. Already in

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The Structure of Behaviour he had introduced the distinction between 'human predicates' and 'mental predicates' and argued that our having the concept of the whole human being is a necessary condition of our ascribing mental or physical properties to that human being. A person is not a combination of a mental soul and a physical body so nothing psychologically inner or private dwells in the body. The body of the other is a body-subject. Indeed, it is not a phenomenological or a sincere psychological option for me to assume that the other is not a whole living corps propre. The other's body is not given only as an object for me. The trace (la trace) of the other is the other as not fully present and not fully absent. The trace resists any clean assimilation to mind or body, interior or exterior, subject or object. Any lived body is a subjectobject (sujetobjet).

Self and other are mutually dependent. There is no such being as myself without others who I am not, and no such being as the other without some self who he is not. That we have a concept of ourselves living together in the one public human world as anonymous subjects of perception entails that there exists the primordial phenomenon of the bodyforus.

Nevertheless, because I have a body which presents a physical exteriority to the other, I may be reduced to the status of an object beneath the other's gaze in a quasiHegelian or Sartrean antagonistic power struggle. Then I no longer count as a person for him. In a parallel fashion I may master the other through turning my look (regard) on him. Because the other has a hold over me, a hold over what I am, I cannot ultimately and authentically doubt his existence, the reality of his physical subjectivity. We constitute each other as mutually constituting one another.

Souless Cartesianism

Because I am most fundamentally a body subject I am not a pure subject such as a Husserlian transcendental ego (transzendente Ich) or a Platonic or Cartesian soul. Nor, on the other hand am I a pure object like a physical object. Merleau-Ponty rejects mindbody dualism because he rejects the view that I am or have a mind that could exist independently of my embodiment. He rejects materialism because any purely physicalist explanation of my lived subjectivity is inadequate to its phenomenology. He rejects idealism as inconsistent with yet presupposing my embodiment in the physical world. Merleau-Ponty also repudiates Husserl's endorsement of St. Augustine's dictum that truth inhabits the inner man. Not only does truth not inhabit the

inner man, there is no inner man. The human being is inextricably in the world, and only in the world does he know himself.

Nevertheless, there are strong residual Cartesian elements in Phenomenology of Perception. Merleau-Ponty thinks it impossible to doubt one's own existence, even though Descartes was wrong to think that being in a mental state entails knowing that one is in that state. Merleau-Ponty thinks that each person has to think the Cartesian cogito in application to their own case to perceive its truth. It cannot be appreciated in the abstract or if couched in covert or overt third person grammatical form.

Despite his repudiation of incorrigibility, Merleau-Ponty endorses the Cartesian thesis that consciousness entails self consciousness in the strong, not merely dispositional, form that all occurrent consciousness entails occurrent consciousness of that consciousness by that consciousness. He thinks this is a necessary condition for consciousness having an object. He holds that Cartesians are right to insist that how significance and intentionality could consist in only molecular structures or masses of cells can never be understood. If we do not view ourselves only as objects but as body-subjects this problem need not arise. Because the subject is a body-subject, on the one hand the subject cannot be a series of psychic events and on the other cannot be eternal.

In and Out of Time

Merleau-Ponty says time presupposes a supplement of time (*un supplément de temps*); a standpoint which is outside time in allowing a view of time, but inside time because itself temporal. Any cognitive grasp of time is grounded in the unreflected lived experience of time. In any science, phenomenology or philosophy of time *le corps propre* is presupposed. *Le corps propre* is temporal, *le corps propre* constitutes time so, Merleau-Ponty concludes, time constitutes itself (*il se constitue*). In thinking of time one tacitly assumes a witness in a particular spatial location viewing successive events. Time is not like a river, not a flowing substance but events are cut out (*decoupe*) by a finite observer from the spatiotemporal totality of the objective world. If we abstract from the perspectives of the real or ideal observer then we can make no phenomenological sense of the idea of an event. The Parmenidean consequence is that the event has no place in the objective world and the world itself is simply one indivisible and unchanging being (*un seul être*

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

indivisible et qui ne change pas). Merleau-Ponty concludes that time is not a real or subject-independent process.

Unblocking the Roads to Freedom

Following Sartre, Merleau-Ponty thinks putative obstacles to freedom are really devices deployed by freedom. For example, a rock face counts as 'unclimbable' only for some (actual or possible) person intending to climb it. The projects of *le corps propre* carve out meanings from the uniform mass of the in-itself and cause a disambiguated world to arise, a world of significant things. Nothing can limit freedom, except those limits that freedom has set itself. *Le corps propre* fashions the world that limits me, so the body-subject constitutes the world and the world constitutes the body-subject. However, neither the world nor the living subject is ever fully constituted. We are always free in the sense of retaining the capacity to choose; the disposition or power of doing or thinking one thing rather than another but only within a constituted situation. That we may choose is a fact. What we may choose is circumscribed by our situation. The world is the totality of situations, not as their mere aggregate, but as the situation of all situations.

How Scientific is Science?

Science rests upon assumptions that cannot be justified scientifically. The scientist is a body-subject in the human world but bodily subjectivity and the human world sharply resist reductivist scientific explanation. Reductivist science is inauthentic because it denies the reality of that which makes it possible. Merleau-Ponty says that he cannot conceive of himself as only a part of the world, as only an object of biological, psychological or sociological inquiry. I cannot reduce myself to just what science says I am. It is not just that it is psychologically impossible to do this, or requires immense self-deception, although it is partly that. The scientific reductivist view is self-refuting.

Merleau-Ponty diagnoses the failure of science to explain human reality in its obsession with objective thought: the treating of any subject matter as only other or as only abstract. Of course Merleau-Ponty does not mean that scientific claims should be reconstrued as mere matters of opinion. He means that objective thought cannot explain subjective subject

matter. Merleau-Ponty recovers and describes a primitive and practical bodily experience of the world which is scientifically inexplicable. Psychologists, especially those of a behaviourist or materialist persuasion adopt the standpoint of objective thought and thereby reduce persons to objects. This is selfrefuting because the psychologist is himself a body-subject phenomenologically similar to the persons he studies.

Merleau-Ponty thinks everything that I know about the world, including any science, is gained from my own particular point of view. Without the beinginthe world of *le corps propre* and the point of view of *le corps propre* the symbols of science would be meaningless. Merleau-Ponty argues that all of science is built upon the world as directly experienced or 'lived' (*le monde vecu*). People are worthy of moral respect because they are subjects not just objects. If we allow the scientific view of the world to destroy subjectivity, individuality and freedom in theory we allow a spurious legitimacy to their destruction in practice.

Sartre on the Body

'My body as it is for me does not appear to me in the midst of the world'
(BN 303)

'[...] nothing prevents me from imagining an arrangement of the sense organs such that a living being could see one of his eyes while the eye which was seen was directing its glance upon the world. But it is to be noted that in this case again I am the Other in relation to my eye.' (BN 304)

'eye [...] Either it is a thing among other things, or else it is that by which things are revealed to me. But it cannot be both at the same time.' (BN 304)

'[...] we are dealing with two essentially different orders of reality. To touch and be touched, to feel that one is touching and to feel that one is touched [...] they exist one two incommunicable levels' (BN 304)

'Of course, the discovery of my body as an object is indeed a revelation of its being. But the being which is thus revealed to me is its beingforothers'
(BN 305)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

‘Being-for-itself must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness; it can not be united with a body. Similarly being-for-others is wholly body. There is nothing behind the body. But the body is wholly “psychic”.’ (BN 305)

‘we do not see this centre as the structure of the perceptual field considered; we are the centre’ (BN 317)

‘we cannot see without being visible’ (BN 317)

‘this object exists for us only in the capacity of an abstract indication; it is what everything indicates to me and what in principle I can not apprehend since it is what I am. In fact what I am can not in principle be an object for me in as much as I am it.’ (BN 3178)

‘I could have no intuition of it as an object because I am it. I who am presence to myself as the being which is its own nothingness’ (BN 318)

‘My body is coextensive with the world, spread across things, and at the same time it is condensed into this single point which all things indicate and which I am without being able to know it’ (BN 318)

‘the body is present in every action although invisible’ (Bn 324)

‘the body is lived but not known’ (BN 324)

‘In one sense the body is what I immediately am. In another sense I am separated from it by the infinite density of the world’ (BN 3256)

‘the body is perpetually the surpassed’ (BN 326)

‘it is at once a point of view and a point of departure’ (BN 326)

‘I am my body to the extent that I am; I am not my body to the extent that I am not what I am’ (BN 326)

‘the body as facticity is the past as it refers originally to a birth’ (BN 327)

Merleau-Ponty's thesis that 'le sujet est son corps' (SNS 125) 'the subject is his body' (SNST 72)

through the epoche one's empirical self and the existence of one's own body is phenomenologically suspended. Although I indubitably am, and am indubitably conscious, I am no longer a human being.

The Constitution of the Body

'I do not have the possibility of distancing myself from my Body, or my Body from me, and accordingly the manifolds of appearance of the Body are restricted in a definite way: certain of my corporeal parts can be seen by me only in a peculiar perspectival foreshortening, and others (e.g., the head) are altogether invisible to me'

(Ideas II §41b)

Merleau-Ponty's Body-subject

'[...] characteristics incompatible with the status of an object':

'[...] my body is constantly perceived' (PP 90)

'[...] my body is always perceived by me' (PP 91)

'It is therefore an object which does not leave me' (PP 90)

'But in that case is it still an object?'" (PP 90)

"'It is an object'" means":

(1) 'it is standing in front of us'

(2) 'it is observable'

(3) 'situated, that is to say, directly under our hand or gaze'

(4) 'indivisibly overthrown and reintegrated with every movement they make. Otherwise it would be true like an idea and not present like a thing' (PP 90)

(5) 'It is particularly true that an object is an object only in so far as it can be moved away from me, and ultimately disappear from my field of vision. '

(6) 'Its presence is such as entails a possible absence' (PP 90)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

‘Now the permanence of my body is entirely different in kind [...]’ (PP 90)

- (1) ‘It is not at the extremity of some indefinite exploration’ (PP 90)
- (2) ‘it defies exploration’
- (3) ‘it [...] is always presented to me from the same angle’
- (4) ‘Its permanence is not a permanence in the world’
- (5) ‘Its permanence is [...] a permanence from my point of view’
- (6) ‘To say that it is always near me, always there for me, is to say that it is never really in front of me, that I cannot array it before my eyes’
- (7) ‘it remains marginal to all my perceptions’
- (8) ‘it is with me’ (PP 90)
- (9) ‘It is true that external objects too never turn one of their sides to me without hiding the rest, but I can at least freely choose the side which they are to present to me’ (PP 9091)
- (10) ‘[...] those actions in which I habitually engage incorporate their instruments into themselves and make them play a part in the original structure of my own body’ (PP 91)
- (11) ‘[...] it is my basic habit, the one which conditions all the others, and by means of which they are mutually comprehensible’
- (12) ‘Its permanence near to me, its unvarying perspective are not a de facto necessity, since such necessity presupposes them’
- (13) ‘I observe external objects with my body, I handle them, examine them, walk round them’
- (14) ‘but my body itself is a thing which I do not observe’
- (15) ‘In order to do so I should need the use of a second body which itself would be unobservable’
- (16) ‘[...] there must be, in the way my own body presents itself, something which makes its absence or its variation inconceivable’
- (17) ‘My head is presented to my sight only to the extent of my nose end and the boundaries of my eye sockets’
- (18) ‘I can see my eyes in three mirrors but they are the eyes of someone observing’
- (19) ‘I have the utmost difficulty in catching my living glance when a mirror in the street unexpectedly reflects my image back to me’
- (20) ‘as we come nearer to the eyes, it becomes divorced from objects, and reserves among them a quasispace to which they have no access’ (PP 912)
- (21) ‘In so far as it sees or touches the world my body can [...] be neither seen nor touched’

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(22) 'I move external objects with the aid of my body [...] But my body itself I move directly' (PP 94)

(23) 'I do not find it at one point of objective space and transfer it to another'

(24) 'I have no need to look for it, it is already with me'

(25) 'I apprehend my body as a subjectobject' (PP 95)

'[...] psychologists [...] chose the position of impersonal thought to which science has been committed' (PP 94)

'He thus saw everything from the point of view of universal thought' (PP 95)

'[...] the psychologist was himself, in the nature of the case, the fact which exercised him' (PP 95)

'objects [...] I am myself in a certain place from which I see them and which I cannot see' (PP 92)

PP references are to Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception* trans. Colin Smith (Routledge, 1962)

'Etre corps, c'est etre noue a un certain monde...'

Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenologie de la Perception* (p. 173)

'To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world...'

Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception* (p. 148)

p. ix second para. l. 4 Insert immediately after 'Body for that election.':

Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*

by

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Stephen Priest

The Body-subject= theme of paper = key to problems of PP.

‘The world is not what I think but what I live through’ (ix)

‘when I begin to reflect my reflection bears upon an unreflective experience’
(ix)

‘How significance and intentionality could come to dwell in molecular edifices or masses of cells is a thing which can never be made comprehensible, and here Cartesianism is right’ (351)

Merleau-Ponty’s Body-subject

‘[...] characteristics incompatible with the status of an object’:

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‘[...] the psychologist was himself, in the nature of the case, the fact which exercised him’ (PP 95)

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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

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Perception

The theory of the body is already a theory of perception.

We can perceive physical objects only because we are physical subjects. because physical orientations and practices make theory and reflection possible. Hike over landscape makes geography possible.

When I walk round my flat, the various aspects in which it presents itself to me could not possibly appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each of them (re)presents the flat seen from one spot or another' (203) (also has to be aware of continuity of his own body, MP thinks).

'what I call a plan is only a more comprehensive perspective: it is the flat "seen from above"

'I see the house next door from a certain angle, but it would be seen differently from the right bank of the Seine, or again from an aeroplane' (67) 'the house seen from nowhere. But what do these words mean? Is not to see always to see from somewhere?' (67)

'From the point of view of my body I never see as equal the six sides of the cube, even if it is made of glass, and yet the word "cube" has a meaning: the cube itself, the cube in reality, beyond its sensible appearances, has its six equal sides' (203)

'the intelligible structure which provides the explanations of it' (203)

'There is an erotic 'comprehension' not of the order of understanding' (157) ie sexual desire prior to intellectual grasp here.

'we base our memory on the world's vast Memory' (70)

'In so far as I have a body, I may be reduced to the status of an object beneath the gaze of another person, and no longer count as a person for him, or else I may become his master and, in my turn, look at him' (167)

MP

‘a relationship of being in which, paradoxically, the subject is his body, his world, and his situation, by a sort of exchange [*italics omitted*].’(SNST 72) (26)

Merleau-Ponty's thesis that 'le sujet est son corps' (SNS 125) 'the subject is his body' (SNST 72) is logically entailed by the sustained argument of *Phenomenologie de la Perception* that human persons are bodily subjects. Merleau-Ponty thinks subjectivity is physical; not in a materialist reductionist sense which would deny obvious facts about our mental lives in the interests of a brave new pseudoscience, but in a sense which enriches the concept of the body to allow it to think, to perceive.

There is a philosophical problem about whether identity is a relation; about whether $a=b$ should be read as aRb , whether something's being what it is is it's being related to itself in some way. Merleau-Ponty assumes in this passage that the answer to this question is 'yes' because the identification of the subject with their body is 'un rapport d'etre' 'a relationship of being'. It follows that, for Merleau-Ponty being something is being related to that thing. For example, the subject being their body is a way in which the subject is related to their body. It would seem to follow from this that if something's being something is a way of being related to that thing then it is a way of being related to itself. In general the idea that something should be related to itself is not nonsensical: I can perceive myself, touch myself, be conscious of myself: where this just means that I am both the subject and the object of those actions. I am both perceiver and perceived, toucher and touched, and so on. However, if a subject is their body it is not clear what the two terms of the putative identity relation are. However, if the subject is their body then 'subject' and 'body' admit of only a single referent and this is what the identity of subject and object consists in. Also, if they admit of different senses, or even putatively different senses, then the identification is given sense or semantic content and, controversially, identity could be a relation. For example, if 'subject' means 'that which perceives' and 'body' means 'living human organism' then it makes sense to say 'that which perceives is a living human organism'. The subject is its body by being it.

III

CONSCIOUSNESS

intentionality is the essence of consciousness.

Intentionality

The term 'intentionality' expresses the idea that, as Husserl puts it, 'all consciousness is consciousness of' (Husserl, 1929 p. 13). Consciousness is always directed towards some object, even if that object is imaginary, purely mental or in some sense nonexistent. Husserl uses the Kantian term 'presentation' (Vorstellung) for just one amongst many objects of awareness: 'presentations, probabilities, and nonbeing, and also the modes of appearance, goodness and value etc.' (Husserl, 1929 p. 13). The phenomenological notion of intentionality has much in common with Kant's conception of experience as a relation between subject and object. Kant speaks of a 'necessary connection in which the understanding, by means of the categories, stands to appearances' (CPR 143). The point here is that all experience is of some appearance. A little later Kant says: 'Save through its relation to consciousness [...] appearance could never be for us an object of knowledge and so would be nothing to us' (CPR 1434). This expresses his quasiempiricist view that we can only know possible objects of experience, but includes the intentionality doctrine, that all appearance is to some perceiving or imagining consciousness. Indeed, the threefold structure of experiencer, experience, and experienced is as essential to Kant's transcendental idealism, as it is to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. (~)

This view is to be distinguished from the preKantian scholastic concept of intentionality which had been revived by the German psychologist and philosopher Brentano. This entailed the idea that in having experiences I am representing their object. The view of Kant and the phenomenologists, in

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

contrast, is that consciousness transcendently constitutes the world. It makes it what it is. In Husserl, it is the various acts of consciousness which achieve this. In Kant it is the application of the categories. Merleau-Ponty appreciates the Kantianism of the phenomenological idea of intentionality when he says:

'Intentionality [...] is [...] too often cited as the main discovery of phenomenology ... "All consciousness is consciousness of something": there is nothing new in that. Kant showed in the Refutation of Idealism that inner perception is impossible without outer perception.' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p)

But even inner experience is relational on Kant's view. There is a paradox which phenomenology inherits about how I can be conscious of myself if subject and object are one and the same. As selfconscious subject I am related to myself as object, and so appear distinct from myself. Thus Kant speaks of 'the subject which is the object of the [inner] sense' (CPR 88) and says 'The whole difficulty is how a subject can inwardly intuit itself'. Apart from the Refutation of Idealism conclusion, it is Kant's view anyway that outer experience is straight forwardly intentional in the phenomenological sense:

'Outer sense gives us nothing but mere relations, this sense can contain in its presentation only the relation of an object to a subject' (CPR 87).

The idea of intentionality is a central theme of phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty himself, for example, accepts it when he says: 'the act of relating is nothing if divorced from the spectacle of the world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.) (). The revealing of 'intentional structures' requires the phenomenological device of the epoche which we should consider before the structures themselves.

The intentionality doctrine is entailed by the principle that of any perceiver 'a', any perception 'b', and any perceived 'c', any one of a, b, or c could, logically, exist only on condition the other two of a, b, or c also exist: PP ix. Kant and Merleau-Ponty both claim perception is a relation ship (between perceiver and perceived, or subject and object). Merleau Ponty's word for 'relation' here is 'liaison':

Merleau-Ponty and Sartre

The sense in which Merleau-Ponty is an existentialist may be further clarified by examining what he accepts and what he repudiates in the existentialism of JeanPaul Sartre. In the essay 'La Querelle de L'Existentialisme' (SNS 123143) Merleau-Ponty not only defends some central doctrines of L'Etre et le Neant against Sartre's Catholic and Marxist critics but also defines his own attitude to Phenomenological Ontology, a Sartrean method which entails existentialism.

Merleau-Ponty thinks the fundamental question addressed in L'Etre et le Neant is 'man's relationship to his natural or social surroundings' (SNST 71) '[le] rapport entre l'homme et son entourage naturel ou social' (SNS 124)(21) and, arguably, this is also a description under which the concerns of Phenomenologie de la Perception could be subsumed. According to Merleau-Ponty a distinction needs to be drawn between two traditional but competing views of this relationship:

'One treats man as the result of the physical, physiological, and sociological influences which shape him from the outside and make him one thing among many.' (SNST 71)(22)

but

'The other consists in recognising an acosmic freedom in him, in so far as he is spirit and represents to himself the very causes which supposedly act upon him.' (SNST 712)(23)

These two theses are mutually inconsistent, so it follows that at least one of them is false. However, Merleau-Ponty's view is that they are both false. He says 'Neither view is satisfactory' (SNST 72). (24)

The first view is false because it reduces the subject to an object: reduces the living conscious acting human being to a describable item that could be encountered in the course of one's experience of the external world. Merleau-Ponty is not of course denying that we may encounter others, and accepts that other people are presented to us as physical beings. What he denies is that either the totality of what a person is or the essence of what a person's consciousness is is thus presented. In particular, the psychological

interiority of a person is not available to this objective perspective and the materialist thesis that a person is a physical object is inconsistent with their consciousness exhibiting intentionality. Even if it should turn out that persons are entirely or essentially physical, it is still a mistake to think of a person as a physical object. A person is a physical subject.

The first view is also false because it is deterministic. As we shall see in the chapter on freedom, below, Merleau-Ponty rejects both conjuncts of the deterministic thesis that every event has a cause and caused events are inevitable and so makes conceptual room for a human freedom which entails that if someone does something there is always a sense in which they could have not done what they did and, perhaps, done something else. The repudiation of necessitarian determinism, and the possibility of always acting otherwise, is consistent with the common existentialist thesis that what is is contingently, and what is is contingently what it is.

The second view is false because it is metaphysical and exaggerated. Although it rightly ascribes mentality and freedom to the human subject it incorrectly identifies that subject with a spiritual item, a soul perhaps, and makes the exercise of its freedom limitless. Merleau-Ponty rejects this picture because it is inconsistent with his thesis that the kind of being that pertains to human beings is 'beingintheworld' 'etreaumonde'. For Merleau-Ponty it makes no sense to specify mental and physical acts independently of the world in which the agent is embedded. On the second view, however, the spirituality and freedom of the subject are not in the world but 'acosmique'(SNS 124) 'acosmic' (SNST 72). Merleau-Ponty has no argued refutation of this metaphysical picture. He takes himself to have established the impossibility of any human being not being situated, not beingintheworld, on independent grounds. If he has proved that then, clearly anything logically inconsistent with is false.

Merleau-Ponty wishes to retain what is true from both pictures and repudiate what is false. He endorses from the first the thesis that people are physical, but physical subjects not physical objects, and he endorses from the second the view that people are free, but not absolutely or metaphysically free; free within a situation that limits their freedom.

More radically, Merleau-Ponty sees the crucial existentialist departure from previous epistemology and metaphysics in the concepts of being and existence themselves. Following Heidegger's use of 'Existenz' Merleau-Ponty uses 'existence' to refer to the ecstatic and freely spontaneous being

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

that pertains uniquely to human being and asserts that this existence is always 'involved':

'In the modern sense of the word, "existence" is the movement through which man is in the world and involves himself in a physical and social situation which then becomes his point of view on the world. All involvement is ambiguous because it both affirms and restricts a freedom.'
(SNST 72)(25)

Merleau-Ponty speaks of existence as a 'movement', not in the sense of physical motion but in the adverbial sense of 'being': being as something that is done, rather than being as something inert or passive. Existence, if not a relation, is at least has the inherent property of being relational because paradigmatically it is people that exist and it makes no sense to speak of the existence of people independently of their relations with the world.

Crucially, existentialism is not a kind of epistemology but a philosophy of existence. It does not make cognitive capacities central to its investigations but modes of being; ways of existing. For example, Merleau-Ponty accepts that existentialism inherits the Kantian, Hegelian and Husserlian distinction between subject and object but does not think the primordial relation between them is cognitive: it is existential and active. Indeed, it is human existence that makes cognition possible and it is the neglect of embodiment and action as prerequisites for knowledge that generates traditional epistemological problems:

'The relationship between subject and object is no longer that relationship of knowing postulated by classical idealism, wherein the object always seems the construction of the subject, but a relationship of being in which, paradoxically, the subject is his body, his world, and his situation, by a sort of exchange [*italics omitted*].'(SNST 72)(26)

By 'classical idealism' Merleau-Ponty means paradigmatically the German idealism of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel but arguably also Husserlian phenomenology. It is common to these thinkers both to draw a distinction between subject, as that which knows or experiences, and object, as that which is known or experienced, and to argue that the empirical world is, in differing degrees and senses, the cognitive construction of the subject. Despite Merleau-Ponty's use of 'n'est plus' 'no longer' in this passage, he

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

does not wish to deny the existence of cognitive relations between subject and object nor the subjective constitution of the empirical world. Rather, he wishes to deny that these facts are phenomenologically primitive. It is part of his 'existential' phenomenology that the relations between subject and object are ultimately pragmatic, and it is our ability to pick up, use, or walk around objects which makes possible both their subjective constitution and our knowledge of them.

There are at least two ways of understanding the *prima facie* paradoxical 'rapport d'etre' in which the subject is his world, and situation; one quasi Heideggerian, the other quasi Hegelian. On the Heideggerian construal 'I am what I am concerned with'. In other words, I am identified with the totality of my pragmatic interests in a situation, including everything that I am confronted with and everything that I try to use as a means to an end, everything with which I am acquainted. On the Heideggerian construal a world or a situation is someone's world or situation. *Prima facie*, if something is someone's we would not wish to make that conclusive grounds for identifying it with that person. However, if there is no person without the world that is their's then, plausibly, their world is essentially what they are.

On the Hegelian construal, 'identical' has to be understood as 'dialectically dependent' such that a and b are dialectically dependent if and only if if not a then not b and if not b then not a. Then we have the thesis that there is no subject without a world and a situation and no world and no situation without a subject. Subject on the one hand and world or situation on the other hand are then 'identical' in the sense that they are parts of a single existential whole, or primordial existential unity. Clearly, on the Hegelian construal 'identical' does not mean 'numerically identical' nor anything synonymous with that.

Although Western philosophy since Kant, and a fortiori Husserlian phenomenology, is essentially Kantian, Husserl is both a protoHeideggerian fundamental ontologist and a metaphysician *malgre lui*. Husserl distinguishes individual being, real being and absolute being. His construal of transcendental consciousness as absolute being is unknowingly an existential disclosure of the interiority of the soul. The soul is not physical, it is necessary and sufficient for one's existence, naturally indestructible, and a substance. Phenomenology is not logically prior to metaphysics (as Husserl

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

supposes) but metaphysics is logically prior to phenomenology. One escape route from the critical paradigm is thereby opened.

The epoche

‘the method of parenthesizing’ (Ideas I §32)

‘We put out of action the general positing which belongs to the essence of the natural attitude’ (Ideas I §32)

Intentionality

‘all consciousness is consciousness of’ (The Paris Lectures p.13)

Noesis

‘Every intentive mental process is precisely noetic; it is of its essence to include in itself something such as a “sense”’ (Ideas I §88)

Noema

‘there is a multiplicity of Data demonstrable in actual pure intuition, in a correlative “noematic content” or, in short, in the “noema”’ (Ideas I §88)

Eg:

‘Perception [...] has [...] the perceived as perceived’

‘remembering has its remembered as remembered’

‘judging has the judged as judged’

‘liking has the liked as liked’

‘It is obvious that the perception and the accompanying liking are not, at the same time, what is perceived and liked’ (Ideas I §88)

IV

SPACE

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'The experienced physical thing proper provides the mere "This", an empty X, which becomes the bearer of mathematical determinations and corresponding mathematical formulae, and which exists not in perceived space but in an "Objective space" of which <perceived space> is merely a "sign" [...]' (Ideas I §40)

'The temporality of factual Being—intheworld is what primordially makes the disclosure of space possible' (BT 417)

No disclosure of space without time.

Kant.

Heidegger uses Kant's 'Aesthetic' to try to illustrate the point that space and time are phenomena in the phenomenological sense but not in the ordinary sense:

'Manifestly, space and time must be able to show themselves in this way they must be able to become phenomena if Kant is claiming to make a transcendental assertion grounded in the facts when he says that space is the a priori 'inside which' of an ordering.' (_ 55)

Heidegger does not spell out the connection with the 'Analytic' here; that the 'Analytic' is a discussion of what, phenomenologically speaking, are 'ordinary phenomena' and that the 'Aesthetic' is a discussion of 'phenomenological phenomena'. Heidegger does however have a footnote to the above quotation referring us to the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', Section I (CPR 34; BT 55).

For Kant, unless space and time were our forms of intuition, we could not have experience of the world of objective appearances. For Heidegger, unless there were phenomena in the phenomenological sense there could not be phenomena in the ordinary sense. (~!~) Heidegger also uses Kant to distinguish two senses of 'appearance':

'Kant uses the term 'appearance' in this twofold way. According to him 'appearances' are, in the first place, the objects of empirical intuition. But what thus shows itself (the phenomenon in the genuine primordial sense) is at the same time an 'appearance' as an emanation of something which hides itself in that appearance an emanation that announces. (BT 53_4)

The Natural Attitude

‘I am conscious of a world endlessly spread out in space’ (Ideas I §27)

Making Space

Merleau-Ponty says space is neither a ‘container’ nor an ‘ether’ because these concepts apply only to objects, not to the space objects occupy. According to Merleau-Ponty a direction can only exist for a subject who adopts it and the orientation of what is presented within the visual field is inexplicable by the existence of my body construed only as an object in objective space. It is explicable by my body as *le corps propre*; a pattern of possible actions in a phenomenological quasispace defined by tasks and practical situations. Things are presented to my body in a pattern of possibilities and impossibilities depending on my practical projects, depending on what is to be done. Space as we think of it, in the abstract, or in geometry, physics or geography depends upon the primitive and practical orientations of *le corps propre* in the world. Hiking over the landscape makes geography possible.

The prereflective space of *le corps propre* is prior to rationalism and empiricism about space. Space as an object of thought or space as a sensory presentation would not be possible without lived spatial routes taken through the world. Merleau-Ponty thinks there is an absolute here (*un ici absolu*) which commonsensical spatiotemporal location depends upon phenomenologically. Something can only be presented as here, or in another place, if it is presented to a body subject who is ‘here’, in phenomenological quasispace. Nevertheless the absolute here is an absolute ‘within the relative’ (or relational) because no subject can adopt a view from nowhere (*spectacle de nulle part*).

MP

‘[...] that gearing of the subject to his world which is the origin of space’
(251)

MP

‘there can be a direction only for a subject who describes it’ (247)

Space

is not a container nor an ether. The concepts apply only to objects.

‘there can be a direction only for a subject who takes it’ (107)

‘A constituting mind is eminently able to

‘What (ac)counts for the orientation of the spectacle is not my body as it is fact is, as a thing in objective space, but as a system of possible actions, a virtual body with its phenomenological ‘place’ defined by its task and situation’ (24950)

‘My body is wherever there is something to be done’ (250)

‘[...] that gearing of the subject to his world which is the origin of space’ (251)

‘there can be a direction only for a subject who describes it’ (247)

‘Intellectualism as well as empiricism remain anterior to the problem of orientated space’ (247)

‘[...] an absolute ‘here’ which can gradually confer a significance on all spatial determination’ (247)

V

TIME

Time

'[...] both time reckoning and the clock are founded upon the temporality of Dasein, which is constitutive of this entity as historical' (BT 417)

'Dasein has its basis in temporality' (BT 413)

'[...] the ecstatical projection of Being must be made possible by some primordial way in which ecstatical temporality temporalizes'
BT 437)

'Is there a way which leads from primordial time to the meaning of Being?
Does time itself manifest itself as the horizon of Being?'
(BT 437)

Temporality

'The subject [...] cannot be a series of psychic events' and
'nevertheless cannot be eternal either' (410)
The subject is the body-subject.

'Time presupposes a view of time' (411)

'It is, therefore, not like a river, not a flowing substance' (411)

'I am tacitly assuming the existence of a witness tied to a certain spot in the world, and I am comparing his successive views. (411)

'The events are [shapes] cut out by a finite observer from the spatiotemporal totality of the objective world' (411)

'the very notion of an event has no place in the objective world' (411)

'If I consider the world itself, there is simply one indivisible and changeless being [in it]' (411)

'Change presupposes a certain position which I take up and from which I see things in procession before me: there are no events without someone to

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

whom they happen and whose finite perspective is the basis of their individuality' (411)

'Time is, therefore, not a real process, not an actual succession that I am content to record' (412)

SARTRE ON TEMPORALITY

A paradox:

- (1) 'the past is no longer' (107)
- (2) 'the future is not yet' (107)
- (3) 'the instantaneous present [...] this does not exist at all' (107)

Past, present and future are 'an original synthesis' (107) ie 'a totality which dominates its secondary structures' (107)

The Past:

- (1) 'The past is not nothing' (110)
- (2) The being of the past is in-itself (ensoi).
- (3) 'On going into the past an event does not cease to be; it merely ceases to act' (109)
- (4) '[A past event] remains "in its place" at its date for eternity' (109)
- (5) "'My" past is first of all mine' (110) 'I am my past. I do not have it; I am it' (114) 'At the moment of death we are' (115)
- (6) 'It is originally the past of this present' (110)

The Present:

- (1) 'the Present is for-itself (poursoi)' (120)
- (2) 'present' is ambiguous between: (a) 'now' and (b) 'present to'. (a) is contrasted with 'past' and 'future'.
(b) is contrasted with 'absent'

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

- (3) My present is to be present' (121)
- (4) Presence = presence to being-in-itself.'The for itself is defined as presence to being' (121)
- (5) 'What we falsely call the Present is the being to which the present is presence' (123)
- (6) The present is a synthesis of being and nothingness. (cf. p. 120)

The Future:

- (1) The future is neither in-itself nor for-itself (129)
- (2) 'It is only by human reality that the Future arrives in the world' (124)
- (3) 'There is a future because the for-itself has to be (a a etre) its being instead of simply being it' (126)
- (4) 'I give to the world its own possibilities' (127) 'The future qua future does not have to be' (129)
- (5) 'The Future constitutes the meaning of my present For-itself, as the project of its possibility' (128)
- (6) 'I am my future in the constant perspective of the possibility of not being it. [...] I am an infinity of possibilities' (129)

Reading:

Jean-Paul Sartre *Being and Nothingness* (Routledge) 'Temporality' chapter.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception* (Routledge)

'Temporality' chapter.

Stephen Priest *Merleau-Ponty* (Routledge) 'Temporality' chapter.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Quotations substantiating some of these ideas

'consciousness itself'

'a concrete being in itself' (Ideas I §39)

'the perceived being'

'the factual being of the thing itself' (Ideas I §39)

'[...] "true being" would be something determined completely and, of essential necessity, differently from the actuality given "in person"' (Ideas I §40)

'The perceived physical thing can exist without being perceived, without even being potentially intended to [...] and it can exist without changing' (Ideas I §41)

'Being as consciousness and Being as Reality' (Ideas I §42)

'[...] there emerges a fundamentally essential difference between being as a mental process and being as a physical thing' (Ideas I §42)

'[...] the essentially necessary diversity among modes of being'

'[...] the most cardinal of them all, becomes manifest: the diversity between consciousness and reality' (Ideas I §42)

'[...] this most radical of all ontological distinctions being as consciousness and being as something which becomes "manifested" in consciousness, "transcendent" being' (Ideas I §76)

'[...] the essential relationship between transcendental and transcendent being' (Ideas §76)

'In the one case, being is "Immanent being", being as closed mental processcorrelate; in the other case, being is transcendent being, i.e., being, the "transcendence" of which inheres precisely in the infinity of the noematic correlate which it requires as the "material" of being' (Ideas §144)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'Every perception of something immanent necessarily guarantees the existence of its object' (Ideas I \$46)

'If reflective seizing upon is directed to a mental process of mine, I have seized upon something absolute itself, the factual being of which is essentially incapable of being negated, i.e., the insight that it is essentially impossible for it not to exist' (Ideas I \$46)

'[...] it would be a countersense to believe it possible that a mental process given in that manner does not in truth exist' (Ideas I \$46)

'I say unqualifiedly and necessarily that I am, this life is, I am living: cogito' (Ideas I \$46)

'each Ego, as Ego'

'the guarantee of its absolute factual being' (Ideas I \$46)

'absolute factual being' (Ideas I \$46)

'[...] my emphasising my consciousness of whatever sort, is originarily and absolutely given not only with respect to its essence but also with respect to its existence' (Ideas I \$46)

Objective psychology:

'[...] anything psychical, in the sense relevant to psychology, psychical personality, psychical properties, mental processes or states, are empirical unities and are therefore, like other realities of every kind and level, merely unities of intentional "constitution" in its sense, truly existing: intuitible, experientiable, scientifically determinable on the basis of experience, but still merely "intentional" and hence merely "relative". To take them as existing in the absolute sense is consequently a countersense' (Ideas I \$ 54)

'All Reality Existent'

'By Virtue of "Sense Bestowal" Not a "Subjective Idealism"' (Ideas I 55)

'[...] all of realities; [...] to identify the latter with all of being, and thus to absolutize it itself is a countersense. An absolute reality is just as valid as a round square.' (Ideas I \$ 55)

'the fully valid being of the world'

'[...] the world itself has its whole being as a certain "sense" which presupposes absolute consciousness' (Ideas I § 55)

...belief characteristics ?

...fictional objects ?

'In every actional cogito the ego lives out its life in a special sense. But all mental processes in the background belong to it: and it belongs to them [...]. All of them, as belonging to one stream of mental processes which is mine, must admit of becoming actional cogitationes [...]. In Kant's words, the I think must be capable of accompanying all my representations (I 133)

The Cogito

Body subject – not a pure subject like the transcendental ego or soul. Not a pure object like a physical object. (evades both).

'the Cartesian cogito acquires its significance only through my own cogito' (271)

'All thought of something is at the same time self-consciousness failing which it could have no object' (371)

'Truth does not 'inhabit' only 'the inner man', or more accurately, there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself' (ix)

FREEDOM

'If freedom is doing, it is necessary that what it does should not be immediately undone by a new freedom.' (MERLEAU-PONTY) Does this restrict my freedom to change my mind?

Les prisonniers de Kant.

KANT ET HUSSERL

Epoche

Il y a deux epoques chez Kant:

La difference entre l'Aesthetique Transcendentale et l'Analytique Transcendentale. Dans l'Aesthetique, les categories ne sont pas appliquees aux intuitions, aux contenus des sensations. Dans l'Analytique elles sont appliquees.

La difference entre la doctrine de jugement dans la Critique de La Raison Pure et, a l'autre main, la Critique de la Jugement. Dans la Critique de Jugement, les categories sont appliquees aux intuitions, comme condition necessaire de l'experience, mais: l'application des concepts empiriques est suspendue, pour que l'objet soit devenir objet d'appréciation aesthetique (objet de beauté).

La difference entre le mode de l'Analytique et le monde de l'Aesthetique et la difference entre le monde de 'l'attitude naturelle' et le monde 'reduit' du subjectivite transcendentale.

Intentionality

Dans Les Discours Parisiens, Husserl a exprimer 'essence de la conscience:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

‘tout conscience est conscience de...’ (PL 13 ET)

Kant ne se serve pas de l’expression ‘intentionalite’ mais une doctrine de ce qui en effet l’intentionalite est, en effet, essential a la philosophie critique: L’experience est relation entre sujet et objet.

Il y a une ‘connection necessaire’ entre l’entendement (Verstand) et les apparances.

Toute apparance a une ‘relation a la conscience’ comme condition necessaire de l’experience.

Pour Kant, il n’y a pas de experience/comprehension/conscience/ sans quelque chose qui experience (etc) et quelque chose experiencee, compris, ou vers qui la conscience est dirigee.

Merleau-Ponty pense que la Refutation de l’Idealisme (dans la deuxieme ‘B’ edition) de la Critique de la Raison Pure montre que Kant a le concept de l’intentionality (sinon le mot). C’est parce que Kant, il a essayer de montrer que l’experience interieure est possible seulement parce qu’il ya experience exterieur. (Il y a, alors un objet de l’experience, un objet vers qui la conscience est dirige)

Les prisoniers de Kant.

KANT ET L’ONTOLOGIE FONDAMENTALE

Comprendre Sein (etre) presuppose comprendre notre comprehension de Sein. Alors, selon Heidegger il faut faire une enquete dans Dasein pour comprendre Sein. Dasein – ca veut dire l’espece de l’etre que possede l’etre humaine. Chez Kant, comprendre comprehension est necessaire – est ‘prolegomena’ a la possibilite de la metaphysique.

Dans Sein und Zeit, Heidegger, il a dit que le Seinsfrage a ete oublie. ‘Seinsfrage’ ca veut dire: qu’est que c’est exactement ‘etre’ ? (Ce n’est pas tout a fait la meme question que: Quest qui il ya ? Qu’est qu’il y a ? Cette question veut dire: Qu’existil ? ou qu’y a t il ? C’est Aristote qui a surtout oublie le Seinsfrage. (Le plus Heidegger develop sa pensee, le plus tot dans

l'histoire est le Seinsfrage oublié: Aristote, Platon, les Presocrates.) Aristote: il est distrait. Il a oublié la question qu'est que c'est être, et il s'adresse à la question distincte: Quel sont les conditions nécessaires et suffisants pour être substance ? Ce n'est pas la même question.

Alors. Ce que je voudrais vous suggérer maintenant c'est: Heidegger a oublié le Seinsfrage. Heidegger, lui aussi, il a oublié le Seinsfrage. Comment est-ce possible ? Tout l'effort de Heidegger, du jeune homme qui lit Brentano sur les quatre sens de 'l'être' chez Aristote, à *Sein und Zeit*, aux derniers essais est dirigé à comprendre 'être'. Heidegger a oublié le Seinsfrage parce qu'il a découvert *Dasein*. La question 'Qu'est ce que c'est l'être ?' est devenu 'Qu'est que c'est que l'être humaine ?'

Pourquoi ? Pourquoi, Heidegger a-t-il oublié le Seinsfrage ? C'est Kant qui est le responsable. C'est Kant qui est coupable. Heidegger a adopté les assumptions Kantienne suivantes: Il faut faire une enquête dans l'enquête pour faire une enquête. Il faut faire une enquête dans ce qui/ce que fait l'enquête pour faire l'enquête. En particulier, ce que c'est le monde – on ne peut pas préciser ça sans mentionner la grande contribution de la subjectivité de l'être humaine.

Sein und Zeit est inachevée. Pourquoi ? Parce que Heidegger, il n'a pas réussi à répondre au Seinsfrage. Il n'a pas réussi à résoudre le problème: qu'est que c'est l'être ? Il nous offre une clarification de la question (et c'est vraiment une clarification en dépit de l'opinion des philosophes positivistes ou neopositivistes). Il nous offre des descriptions des structures existentielles de l'être au monde (*in der Welt Sein*). Il a essayé de découvrir une espèce de temps qui est supposé par *Dasein*. C'est un ouvrage de grande importance philosophique. Mais le Seinsfrage reste une question sans réponse.

Encore une fois, c'est la faute de Kant. Heidegger, il est prisonnier de Kant. Les descriptions des structures existentielles de notre existence ne sont pas des descriptions de l'être, de ce que c'est l'être. Naturellement, qu'elles soient vraies, elles sont dans un sens des descriptions de l'être – parce que nous sommes. Mais l'ontologie fondamentale n'est pas assez fondamentale. On a achevé *Dasein*. On n'a pas achevé *Sein*. On n'a pas même achevé cet 'Sein' dans 'Dasein'. On a expliqué le 'Da' mais pas le 'Sein' dans 'Dasein'. (NB 'Hiersein' est mieux que 'Dasein' – 'ici-être' et pas 'là-être').

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Heidegger: est qu'il a remarqué qu'il est prisonnier de Kant ? –pas comme question de biographie historique mais comme question du problème des textes. A mon avis, oui. Bien sûr il l'a remarqué. Peut-être du point de vue de l'histoire et biographie il ne savait pas. Mais dans les textes, qu'est qu'il se passe ? *Sein und Zeit*, le livre a paru en 1927 mill neuf vingt sept. En 1928 mill neuf vingt huit il a écrit le *Kantbuch: Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* Kant et le Problème de la Métaphysique.

Dans *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, Heidegger a identifié le Schematisme du *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* comme point de crise/ point de crise de cette livre (et de la philosophie critique). Mais, le *Kantbuch* c'est le point de crise/point de prise dans l'œuvre de Heidegger. Qu'est qu'on peut dire ? La crise que Heidegger a identifiée chez Kant est une crise chez lui-même.

Combien de Heideggers y a-t-il ? S'il y avait un 'Kerhe' (point de changement/ tourne/tournement) dans la philosophie de Heidegger c'est un *Kehre* kantien.

On peut dire que dans un certain sens il y a deux Heideggers au moins. Il y a le Heidegger de *Sein und Zeit* et le Heidegger de 'Bauern, Wohnen, Denken' / 'Construire, Habiter, Penser'. C'est trop simple mais pas totalement faux de dire: Le Heidegger de *Sein und Zeit*, c'est un Heidegger de temps. Le Heidegger des années cinquantes, c'est un Heidegger de l'espace. (C'est trop simple parce que *Dasein* a un certain spatialité. *Dasein* est le lieu, site, 'Lichtung' dans la forêt l'espace ou l'être se dévoile à lui-même).

Mais, disons qu'il y a un Heidegger du temps et un Heidegger de l'espace. Un Heidegger qui regarde le temps comme primordial et un Heidegger qui regarde l'espace comme primordial dans la compréhension de *Dasein*. C'est une oscillation qui a lieu dans l'espace du 'Transcendentalisch Aesthetik' du *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*. La Kant a essayé d'établir que le temps est présupposé par toute expérience et l'espace est présupposé par l'expérience extérieure. Selon Kant, ce n'est pas possible s'échapper du temps et de l'espace: ni dans l'être ni dans la pensée. Pour Heidegger lui aussi nous sommes des prisonniers du temps et de l'espace. La réalité c'est autrement. Heidegger est prisonnier de Kant.

Faut remarquer que la structure de *Sein und Zeit* est celle du *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Surtout: L'Analytique de Dasein: c'est la description des conditions nécessaires de l'intelligibilité de l'être. Les structures existentielles sont les catégories de Heidegger.

Les prisonniers de Kant.

Is Phenomenology Essentially Kantian?

'La critique de Hegel par Kant vaudrait sans doute aussi contre Husserl'
Jacques Derrida *La voix et le phénomène* (Derrida 1967: 114)

'Hegel's critique of Kant would no doubt also hold against Husserl'
Jacques Derrida *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Derrida 1973: 102)

Phenomenology is essentially Kantian. Its techniques and doctrines are anticipated in the critical philosophy and, if its Kantianism were to be subtracted from it, nothing worth calling 'phenomenology' would remain. By 'Kantian' I mean: logically or semantically equivalent to claims or concepts advanced by Kant in his published writings, especially the *Critique of Pure Reason*. (1)

After defining 'phenomenology' in Section I, I discuss those concepts common to most of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty which comprise the main phenomenological techniques: intentionality in Section II, the $\Gamma \ \backslash \ / \ \overline{\quad} \ \bullet$ in III, the structures of experience in IV, phenomena, self-evidence in V and the transcendental subject in VI. In Section VII, I conclude that phenomenology operates within the parameters of Kant's philosophy.

I

What is Phenomenology?

'So the transcendental deduction in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was essentially operating on phenomenological territory. *So bewegt sich [...] die transzendente Deduktion der ersten Auflage der Kritik der reinen Vernunft eigentlich schon auf phänomenologischem Boden*' (Husserl 1950: §62)

Husserl gives this reason why Kant did not pursue phenomenology further:

[...] but Kant misinterprets the same as psychological, and therefore abandons it of his own accord. [...] *aber Kant mißdeutet denselben als psychologischen und gibt ihn daher selbst wieder preis*' (Husserl 1950: §62)

But is it Husserl who misinterprets Kant here. Kant's phenomenology is no more psychological than Husserl's. Kant is engaged in 'transcendental logic', a critical *a priori* inquiry into the possibility of experience which he is at pains to distinguish from psychology. It is not clear either that Kant ever abandons phenomenology, although he does not produce the detailed descriptions characteristic of Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty.

The term Husserl uses for the inquiry into how science and how ordinary experience are possible is 'transcendental' (*transzendental*); Kant's term. The name Husserl gives to his pure phenomenology is 'transcendental idealism' (*transzendente Idealismus*); Kant's name. I show now that Husserl has not misunderstood himself.

II

Intentionality

The term 'intentionality' (*Intentionalität*) expresses the idea that, as Husserl puts it, 'all consciousness is consciousness of'. (Husserl 1975: 13) Consciousness is always directed towards some object, even if that object is imaginary, purely mental or in some sense nonexistent. Husserl uses the Kantian term 'presentation' (*Vorstellung*) for just one amongst many objects of awareness: 'presentations, probabilities, and nonbeing, and also the modes of appearance, goodness and value etc.' (Husserl, 1975: 13) The phenomenological notion of intentionality, is essentially Kant's conception of experience as a relation between subject and object. Kant speaks of a

'necessary connection in which the understanding, by means of the categories, stands to appearances (*Erscheinungen*).' (A 119, CPR 143) The necessity is that all experience is *of* some appearance. Kant says: 'Save through its relation to a consciousness, that is at least possible, appearance could never be for us an object of knowledge and so would be nothing to us.' (A 120, CPR 1434) His quasiempiricist view that we can only know possible objects of experience therefore includes the intentionality doctrine, that all appearance is *to* some perceiving or imagining consciousness. The threefold structure of experiencer, experience, and experienced is as essential to Kant's transcendental idealism, as it is to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.

Phenomenological intentionality is to be distinguished from the preKantian scholastic concept of intentionality, revived by the Austrian psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano, which entails that in having experiences I am *representing* their object. The view of Kant and the phenomenologists is that consciousness *transcendentally constitutes* its object. It makes it what it is to us. In Husserl, the various acts of consciousness and in Kant the application of the categories in making judgments, make possible a world for us. Merleau-Ponty appreciates the Kantianism of the phenomenological idea of intentionality when he speaks of: 'the notion of intentionality' as 'too often cited as the main discovery of phenomenology [...]' and says

"All consciousness is consciousness of something", that is not new. Kant has shown in the *Refutation of Idealism* that interior perception is impossible without exterior perception.' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: xii) (4)

Both inner and outer experience are necessarily relational on Kant's view.

There is a paradox, which phenomenology inherits from Kant, about how I can be conscious of myself if subject and object are one and the same in self-consciousness: I am what I am aware of but as self-conscious subject I am related to myself as object, and so appear distinct from myself and never as subject. Kant speaks of 'the subject (*das Subjekt*) which is the object (*der Gegenstand*) of [inner sense]' (B 68, CPR 88) and says 'The whole difficulty is how a subject can inwardly intuit itself (*wie ein Subjekt sich selbst innerlich anschauen könne*)'. This is a problem Husserl never solves and is exploited by Sartre in his early critique of the transcendental ego. (5)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Kant thinks outer experience is straight forwardly intentional in the phenomenological sense:

'Outer sense gives us nothing but mere relations, this sense can contain in its presentation only the relation of an object to a subject (*nur das Verhältnis eines Gegenstandes auf das Subjekt*)' (B 67, CPR 87).

Merleau-Ponty accepts that the putative phenomenological solution to these problems, that subject and object are mutually constituting, is anticipated by Kant in the third *Critique*:

'Kant himself shows in the *Critique of Judgment* that there is a unity of imagination and understanding and a unity of the subjects *before the object* (*il y a une unité de l'imagination et de l'entendement et une unité des sujets avant l'objet*)' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: xii)

The Kantian idea of intentionality is essential to phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty retains it in his existential phenomenology, despite his repudiation of the $\Gamma \ // \ // \Gamma \bullet$, as incompletable in principle, when he says: 'Without doubt, the act of relating is nothing without the spectacle of the world which it binds (*Sans doute l'acte de liaison n'est rien sans le spectacle du monde qu'il lie*)' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: iii) where 'The world is not what I think but what I live (*Le monde est non pas ce que je pense, mais ce que je vis*).' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: xixii) However, the revealing of 'intentional structures' in pure phenomenology does require the reductive device of the $\Gamma \ // \ // \Gamma \bullet$, which is itself anticipated by Kant.

III

The $\Gamma \ // \ // \Gamma \bullet$

Husserl argues that there are two fundamentally different sorts of attitude to the world: that of taken for granted common sense, 'the natural attitude', and that of pure phenomenology, 'the phenomenological attitude'. The world as it appears within the natural attitude is that of everyday physical objects and persons, including oneself:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'I find continually present to hand and standing over against me the one spatiotemporal factworld to which I myself belong, as do all other men found in it and related in the same way to it. *Ich finde beständig vorhanden als mein Gegenüber die eine räumlichezeitliche Wirklichkeit, der ich selbst zugehöre, wie alle anderen in ihr vorfindlichen und auf sie in gleicher Weise bezogenen Menschen.*' (Husserl 1950: §30).

The belief in the objectivity and reality of this world is *bracketed*, or *put in parenthesis*, in order to inspect it phenomenologically, or strictly just as it appears to consciousness. This suspension of belief in the world of the natural attitude is called $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner \bullet$, the Greek for 'suspension of belief'. The $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner \bullet$ effects the transition from our ordinary taken for granted assumptions to phenomenology. Husserl calls it a phenomenological or transcendental 'reduction' because what we naturally believe in is reduced to what is directly presented to our consciousness. Husserl is not denying the existence of physical objects or endorsing ontological idealism. He is employing an agnosticism about himself and the external world as a methodological device to discover how objects are possible phenomenologically; as objects of consciousness. Nor is Husserl claiming there are two ontologically distinct worlds, that of the natural attitude and that of the reduction. He is saying the one world can be viewed in two ways: from the 'natural standpoint' or from the standpoint of phenomenological description. (6)

Kant anticipates the phenomenological reduction or $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner$ in the difference between the first two major sections of *The Critique of Pure Reason*: the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Aesthetic. In the Transcendental Analytic, Kant is concerned with the empirical world taken for granted in everyday thinking, containing physical objects entering into causal interaction. Within this world we judge some things possible and others impossible, some things to exist, others not to exist. Some things are in groups or are of a certain sort, some stand on their own. The empirical world of Kant's Analytic, constituted by the categories, is the world of everyday commonsense, the world of Husserl's natural attitude, Heidegger's 'beinginthe world' (*in derWeltSein*), Merleau-Ponty's 'world that I live' (*monde que je vis*) and Sartre's 'lived world' (*le vécu*).

Kant's Aesthetic, on the other hand, depicts the world after the phenomenological $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner \bullet$. Kant considers only what appears in its bare perceptual givenness, not the world as complex, physical and objective.

Like Husserl, Kant is committed to only one world; treated in the Aesthetic only as it appears to perceptual consciousness, in the Analytic also as it appears to the understanding (*Verstand*). Subtracting the contribution of the understanding, and *a fortiori* the categories, is precisely subtracting those features of the natural attitude Husserl requires us to suspend to do phenomenology: objectivity, causality, reality, substantiality, physicality.

Kant and Husserl share the same motivation in contrasting what is given to consciousness directly with what is taken for granted as existing objectively. Both philosophers are trying to answer the question 'How is experience possible?'. Husserl says:

'We are plainly concerned with a quite necessary generalisation of the question as to the conditions of the possibility of experience.' (Husserl 1970: 232)

and adds that the 'historical (Kantian) echoes [...] are intentional'.

It is not then surprising that we find Husserl calling phenomenology by the Kantian name 'critique' in his book *The Idea of Phenomenology*. It is, he says, a 'critique of cognition' (Husserl 1970b: 18) and he intends 'critique' to be taken in the Kantian sense of *exhibiting the limits of*. Kant and Husserl are trying to decide how the objective world we take for granted is possible. Both agree the answer lies in the subject's consciousness containing certain perennial cognitive structures. For Kant these are the categories; for Husserl, the structures of intentional acts. For both philosophers, transcendently speaking, the empirical world is an achievement of consciousness. The move back from the phenomenological attitude to showing how the natural attitude world is possible is effected by Husserl in the detailed phenomenological descriptions of aspects of consciousness. By Kant it is effected by listing the categories and justifying them. It is, no doubt, for this reason that Husserl says the transcendental deduction in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was actually operating on the ground (*Boden*) of phenomenology. (Husserl 1950: §62)

IV

The Structures of Experience

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

One consequence of the $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner \bullet$ is that phenomenology is not concerned with the intrinsic nature of the subject or object of consciousness, or with establishing causal connections between subject and object. It aims to be purely descriptive of what appears to consciousness. This concentration of attention on the constitutive relations between subject and object, and lack of inquiry into subject and object intrinsically is Kantian. It is an essential part of Kantian doctrine that I cannot know myself as I really am in myself, any more than I can know the objects of outer perception as they really are in themselves. No real knowledge is possible of either subject or object for Kant. We are acquainted only with their 'phenomenal' appearances, and so know them only empirically. Husserl insists that nothing which appears to consciousness could be called either oneself as one really is or objects as they really are. Rather than making the negative ontological claim that we know nothing of subject or object they instead put the reality of each 'in brackets'.

Husserl draws a distinction between the *act* of imagining, hearing, seeing, feeling, etc. the *noesis* and *what* is imagined, heard, seen, felt etc. the *noema*. After the $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner \bullet$, the phenomenological structure of consciousness is nonetheless relational. There exists a pure ego that does not actually appear to consciousness, acts of consciousness, and the content of those acts.

Admittedly, *The Critique of Pure Reason* does not contain the wealth of detailed description of kinds of mental acts and their contents found in Husserl's *Ideas*. Despite this, Kant draws a threefold distinction between transcendental unity of apperception, mental act and that act's content which corresponds, at the level of the reduced world of the $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner \bullet$, to Husserl's transcendental ego, *noesis* and *noema*. The distinction between mental acts and their content is further anticipated by Kant in the difference between *synthesis* and *the manifold*, for example in this definition of 'synthesis':

'By synthesis, in its most general sense, I understand the act of putting different presentations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge (*verschiedene Vorstellungen zu einander hinzutun, und ihr Mannigfaltigkeit in einer Erkenntnis zu begreifen*).' (A 77/B 103, CPR 111)

(The German *Erkenntnis* admits of a distinction between singular and plural in the way that 'knowledge' does not.) For Kant and Husserl, consciousness

constitutes its objects, yet there remains despite this, a *given* in experience. Both philosophers call this given 'phenomena', which means, what is experienced just as it is experienced. Kant characterises the synthetic constitution of objects by uniting presentations but Husserl distinguishes within the *noetic* component of the experience various 'modes of attention', such as 'just noted', 'primarily noted' and even "'completely unnoticed", although still continuing to appear'. (Husserl 1950: § 268) What Kant classifies under the one term 'synthesising activity', Husserl distinguishes into a multiplicity of 'intentional acts'. Kant and Husserl agree that the world as we perceive it is the joint result of what is given phenomenally and the constitutive activity of our transcendental psychology.

One way of thinking of the difference between the Aesthetic and the Analytic and the difference between the phenomenological attitude and the natural attitude is as between subjectivity and objectivity. Kant and Husserl are concerned to solve the problem: How does our experience come to be of a world of objective enduring physical objects, given that our experiences are subjective and fleeting? The $\Gamma \begin{array}{l} \diagup \\ \diagdown \end{array} \bullet$ reduces the objective to the subjective; the world to my present experience of it, me to transcendental subjectivity. The world of the Aesthetic is *subjective* because it consists of experiences, temporal or spatiotemporal 'intuitions' but this is an anonymous subjectivity. It requires the categories of the Analytic to be transformed into the *objective*, physical world of science and common sense.

For Kant partly, and for Husserl wholly, objectivity itself is an achievement of the subject. The similarities are evident in their accounts of how the experience of an entire, objectively existing physical object 'there' is transcendently 'built up' out of our actual and possible perspectives on it. Both Kant and Husserl use the example of a house. (I do not know whether Husserl took his example from Kant.) Kant and Husserl note that it is not possible to visually perceive the totality of a physical object at any one moment of perception. Husserl speaks of


'The experience of a house, as I experience it [...] a house which appears in such and such a way, and has certain specific determinations when seen from the side, from nearby, from afar.' (Husserl 1975: 12)

and Kant says

'The apprehension of the manifold in the appearance of a house which stands before me is successive' (CPR 220)

meaning, one perceives first one part (say the front), then another part (say the side), and so on. When Kant says,

'that which lies in the successive apprehension is here viewed as presentation' (CPR 220)

he anticipates Husserl's distinction between the house perceived before and after the : It is reduced to a momentary 'subjective mode of givenness, or subjective mode of appearance, exemplified by perspective'. (Husserl 1975: 13) The problem common to both philosophers is how we come to perceive a whole house as that, given that we are directly acquainted at any one moment only with a 'presentation' (*Vorstellung*) or an 'appearance' (*Erscheinung*) or 'profile' (*Abschattung*).

Husserl includes in his phenomenology certain 'objectifying acts', which are 'original factors in the constituting of objects'. (Husserl 1950: § 332) These are postulated as the solution to the difficulty that 'in principle a thing can be given only in one of its aspects', 'through perspectives', and that 'a thing is necessarily given in mere modes of appearing'. (Husserl 1950: § 137) The objectifying consciousness provides a *rule* or a *frame* or a *form* which 'does not determine a content, but a form for all possible objects of this kind of possible experience'. Husserl says it is established *a priori* by this objectifying function that 'an absolutely fixed frame is marked out for the course of future experience'. For Kant the transition from subjectively given presentations to experience of objectively enduring physical objects could not be made without the use of the categories of substance and causation and the rule following considerations adduced in the Analogies. For both Kant and Husserl it is a necessary condition of something's being a physical object that it be a discriminable particular capable of entering into causal relations. A necessary condition for my perceiving it as a physical object is that any perception of it is embedded in other possible perceptions in a rule governed way. (7)

Husserl's 'objectifying function' of consciousness is the role of Kant's categories. For example, Kant often speaks of the categories as rules: rules for making sense of perceptions as perceptions of objective particulars. The categories determine the structure of our experience *a priori*, as the various

noetic functions do for Husserl. It is doubtless for this reason that one of the most respected of phenomenological commentators can say:

'Some of the functions performed by Husserl's intentions, naturally the objectifying and the constituting ones, are likely to remind the reader of Kant's analysis of experience, in which the intellect (*Verstand*), with the help of its categories, synthesises the sensedata supplied by the perceptions thus constituting identical objects within the flux of our sensations.' (Spiegelberg 1976: 110)

Spiegelberg has correctly isolated what is in common to the two philosophers' treatment of the transition from subjective phenomena to objective objects: the recoveries from the transcendental reduction or $\square \nearrow \nearrow \nearrow$ • of the natural attitude, and from the Transcendental Aesthetic to the Transcendental Analytic.

Perhaps because their aims and techniques are so similar, Husserl tries to list some points of difference between his phenomenology and Kant's critical philosophy. In *Logical Investigations* he reproaches Kant

'(to whom we (Husserl) feel quite close) for a failure to draw any clear distinction between these oppositions: thinking/intuiting, intuition signification, sensuous/categorical intuition, inadequate/adequate intuition, individual intuition/universal intuition. (Husserl 1970: 832833)

Husserl is in fact even closer to Kant than he supposes because every one of these distinctions is drawn to some degree by Kant. Kant and Husserl use the term 'intuition' in a very similar sense. I agree with Sokolowski when he says that Husserl means by intuition 'consciousness of an object in its direct presence' (Sokolowski 1974: 27). As Husserl puts it himself:

'To have something real primordially given, and to become aware of it and to perceive it in simple intuition, are one and the same thing' (Husserl 1950: § 51).

Like Kant on the first page of the Aesthetic, Husserl introduces 'intuition' on the first page of *Ideas*, and even accompanies it with a contrast between 'outer perception' and 'inner or self perception'. Kant's corresponding terms

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

are 'outer sense' and 'inner sense'. Husserl says the distinctions are not clear in Kant. That might be so, but they are there.

Kant distinguishes thought from intuition by devoting the Aesthetic to intuition and the Analytic to thought, but insists thought and intuition are mutually dependent:

'Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (A 51/B 75, CPR 93)

He then goes on explicitly to say

'that is no reason for confounding the contribution of either with that of the other' (A 51/B 76, CPR 93)

It is true that Kant never gives us the mass of detailed phenomenological distinctions within thought and perception that Husserl offers. But it is manifestly untrue that Kant confuses thought and intuition. As he puts it:

'The two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing'
(A 51/B 75 CPR 93)

Kant possesses a near equivalent of Husserl's 'signitive act', in his notion of 'judgement'. Indeed, signitive acts are judgements according to Husserl. Husserl breaks the signitive act down into expressed meaning (or sense), what is judged (the content), and the object (or referent) of the judgement. The expressed meaning is intentionally directed to the referent. Kant partly captures 'expressed meaning' when he says

'In every judgement there is a concept which holds of many presentations'
(A 68/B 93, CPR 105).

Clearly for both writers a term may have the same sense but distinct referents.

Any judgment (*Urteil*) has a content (*Inhalt*) for Kant, which is distinct from its referent. Like Husserl's, Kant's judgements depend upon ultimate reference to intuitions, yet possess significance in the absence of any

specific referent. Thus in his example 'All bodies are divisible' (CPR 105) he says 'the concept of the divisible applies to various other concepts' but is here applied in particular to the concept of body, and this concept again to 'certain appearances that present themselves to us' (CPR 105). There is at least a Kantian analogue of Husserl's distinction between fulfilled and unfulfilled intentions; the contrast, for example, between thinking of or speaking about an object in its absence and actually perceiving it. For Kant and Husserl the former are phenomenologically dependent upon the latter.

Kant does not use the expression 'categorical intuition' but Husserl's concept is designed to denote the very Kantian thesis that in perception our conceptual scheme is 'read into' the objects we perceive, and so, to some extent, makes them what they are to us. Husserl says:

'As examples of logical categories we may cite such concepts as property, relative quality, substantive meaning (fact), relation, identity, equality, group, (collection), number, whole and part, genus and species.' (Husserl 1950: § 68)

Kant's list of categories, it will be recalled, includes: attribute, reality, three categories of relation, unity, totality, and plurality. Like Kant, Husserl thinks his categories govern fundamentally different types of judgement or proposition. He says the 'meaning categories' are 'fundamental concepts of the various kinds of propositions, of their elements and forms, which belong to the essence of the proposition'. (Husserl 1950: § 68) Husserl is thoroughly Kantian about categories and about the logical form of judgments.

Husserl's distinction between adequate and inadequate intuitions is between what does and what does not suffice for perceptual acquaintance with the essence of a thing. We can never directly perceive the totality of properties of any object, but we can come to know what it is in the sense of what sort of thing it is. This thought is present in Kant's philosophy as the distinction between the multiplicity of the manifold in perception and the categorial ordering of the manifold in synthesis. Our conceptual scheme divides objects into sorts because the complex and chaotic nature of a (hypothetical) bare manifold would be unintelligible to us ('nothing to us'). Husserl uses the Kantian term 'manifold' himself, to mean a complex of phenomena in need of ordering, either in perception or in thought. (8) Instead of drawing a universal/particular intuition distinction, Kant distinguishes between universal and particular 'judgments' in his Table of

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Judgments (A 70/B 95, CPR 107) and for Kant, to perceive an object is to judge it to be a particular *one* and to be of a particular *sort*.

It follows that many Husserlian distinctions are anticipated by Kant. Kant did not draw them in Husserlian detail, but this is consistent with phenomenology being the continuation or execution of a project that is Kant's. The translator of *Logical Investigations* recognises this when he says:

'The vague 'syntheses' of Kant are for the first time given concrete flesh and blood and Husserl's theory [...] seems to raise the syntheses of Kant to a higher level of clarity, and to reconcile their subjective and objective sides.'
(9)

It is possible that Husserl underestimates the varieties of what he would call 'intentional objects' distinguished by Kant. In this passage from *Being and Nothingness* Sartre appreciates that Kant did engage in phenomenology, by adopting the standpoint of transcendental subjectivity:

' Kant adopted the point of view of the pure subject in order to determine the conditions for the possibility not only for an object in general but for the various categories of object: the physical object, the mathematical object, the beautiful or ugly object, the one which presents teleological characteristics.'
(Sartre 1943: 5)

Indeed, Kant and Husserl share a Cartesian or 'first person singular' starting point for their philosophies, made explicit by Husserl in *Cartesian Meditations* (Husserl 1960) and recognized in Kant by Heidegger when he says:

'Kant took over Descartes' position quite dogmatically, notwithstanding all the essential respects in which he had gone beyond him.'
(Heidegger 1961: 45)

Kant like Husserl and Descartes begins his philosophy by considering the experiences of the subject, where the model for the subject is oneself, not another person. Kant went 'beyond' Descartes in the idea of a critique of metaphysics. This is what Heidegger means by 'essential respects'.

Phenomena and Appearances

In *Being and Time* Heidegger distinguishes the ‘ordinary’ conception of a phenomenon from the ‘phenomenological’ conception. He draws on Kant to explain these senses:

I by “that which shows itself” we understand those entities which are accessible through the emirical “intuition” in, let us say, Kant’s sense, then the formal conception of “phenomenon” will indeed be legitimately employed. In this usage “phenomenon” has the signification of the *ordinary* conception of phenomenon. But this ordinary conception is not the phenomenological conception.’ (Heidegger 1927: 54)

and

‘If we keep within the horizon of the Kantian problematic, we can give an illustration of what is conceived phenomenologically as a “phenomenon” [...]’ (Heidegger 1927: 54)

Here the central concept of phenomenology, phenomenon, is to be explained within the framework of Kant's philosophy. (10) When Heidegger says the phenomenological notion of phenomenon is 'prior' to the ordinary notion he means phenomenologically prior: Unless we had experience of phenomena in the phenomenological sense we could not have experience of phenomena in the ordinary sense. Heidegger says the phenomenological phenomenon 'already shows itself in the appearance' (Heidegger 1927: 54) and 'What [...] shows itself in itself will be the phenomena of phenomenology' (Heidegger 1927: 55). By 'in itself' here Heidegger means 'as it is' or 'as it does directly appear'.

Heidegger uses Kant's Aesthetic to argue that space and time are phenomena in the phenomenological sense but not in the ordinary sense:

'[...] manifestly, space and time must be able to show themselves in this way they must be able to become phenomena if Kant is claiming to make a

transcendental assertion grounded in the facts when he says that space is the *a priori* “inside which” of an ordering.’ (Heidegger 1927: 55)

Heidegger does not spell out the connection with the Analytic here; that the Analytic is a discussion of what, phenomenologically speaking, are 'ordinary phenomena' and that the Aesthetic is a discussion of 'phenomenological phenomena'. Heidegger does however have a footnote to the above quotation referring us to the Transcendental Aesthetic, Section I. (Heidegger 1961: 55, A 2330/B3745, CPR 6774)

For Kant, unless space and time were our forms of intuition, we could not have experience of the world of objective appearances. For Heidegger, unless there were phenomena in the phenomenological sense there could not be phenomena in the ordinary sense. Heidegger also uses Kant to distinguish two senses of 'appearance':

'Kant uses the term “appearance” in this twofold way. According to him “appearances” are, in the first place, the 'objects of empirical intuition': they are what shows itself in such intuition. But what thus shows itself (the “phenomenon” in the genuine primordial sense) is at the same time an 'appearance' as an emanation of something which *hides* itself in that appearance an emanation which announces.’ (Heidegger 1961: 534)

The two sorts of appearance Kant distinguishes correspond to objects of consciousness before and after the $\overline{\text{---}} \text{ // } \text{---} \bullet$. The 'objects of empirical intuition' Heidegger mentions are, paradigmatically, physical objects, as are the objects of Kant's Analytic and of the 'natural attitude' in Husserl's phenomenology. Physical objects *appear* in the way that, for example, a motor car (rather than some sense data) might appear around a bend in the road. This is empirical or commonsensical appearing. The thing appears. The other sort of appearing, 'an emanation' in Heidegger's words, is the phenomenological sort of phenomena: what remains when the transcendently constituted objectivity of the object of perception is suspended. It is what is directly given in experience. (11)

The phenomenological and ordinary senses of 'phenomenon' distinguished by Heidegger are called by Kant 'appearances' and 'phenomena' respectively. Here is the 'ordinary' sense of 'phenomenon'

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'Appearances (*Erscheinungen*), so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called *phaenomena*.' (A 2489, CPR 265)

and this is the 'phenomenological' sense of 'appearance':

'The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is entitled appearance (*Erscheinung*).' (A 20/B 34, CPR 65)

Thingsin themselves are objects as they are independently of our perceptions of them. Thingsin themselves *transcend* our perceptual and cognitive perspectives on them:

'[...] appearances are not things in themselves, and yet are what alone can be given to us to know, inspite also of the fact that their (re)presentation in apprehension is always successive [...]' (A 190/B 235, CPR 220)

Husserl uses the Kantian term:

'The perceived thing, as a whole, whatever parts, sides, moments accrue to it [...] transcends the perception.' (Husserl 1931: 87)

I conclude that the idea of a phenomenon as employed in its various senses in phenomenology is a Kantian one. Kant uses 'appearance' in the phenomenological and 'phenomenon' in the 'ordinary' sense.

VI

Self Evidence

It seems on the face of it that there is an essential aspect of Husserl's phenomenology that cannot be reconciled with Kant's critical philosophy: the insistence that phenomenology be conducted without presuppositions, revealing phenomena as they are, without any perceptual or intellectual prejudice. In phenomenology, it should be selfevident according to Husserl, what the phenomena are like: for example, that red is not the same colour as yellow. It is selfevidence that allows Husserlian phenomenology to be an *eidetic* science. On the other hand, part of the force of Kant's Copernican

revolution is supposed to be that there is an ineliminable intellectual and perceptual contribution from the subject in any inquiry.

Husserl's idea of selfevidence does have parallels with Kant's conception of experience, but in his third *Critique*. Aesthetic experience for Kant involves perceiving objects for their own sake: contemplating them in their bare particularity as ends in themselves. This requires not bringing empirical and functional conceptual preconceptions to the object (although the categories are still imposed or we could not speak of aesthetic *objects* here). Merleau-Ponty acknowledges this anticipation of phenomenological selfevidence:

'Kant himself showed in the *Critique of Judgement* that there exists a unity of the imagination and the understanding and a unity of subjects *before the object*, and that, in experiencing the beautiful for example, I am aware of a harmony between sensation and concept, between myself and others, which is itself without any concept.' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: xii)

Although Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty became disillusioned with the goal of pure or absolutely presuppositionless phenomenology and Heidegger replaced it first with hermeneutics, then with his own fundamental ontology, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre adopted a more modest version of phenomenology based on the Kantian idea of reflection. (12) Merleau-Ponty realises that 'pure' phenomenology would have to be altered on Kantian lines to be plausible:

'For an absolute selfevidence free from any presupposition to be possible, and for my thought to be able to pierce through to itself, catch itself in action at a pure 'assent of self to self' it would, to speak the language of the Kantians, have to cease to be an event and become an act through and through.'

(Merleau-Ponty 1962: 395)

There could be no such thing as absolute or pure selfevidence to reflecting consciousness, because

'[...] reflection is not absolutely transparent to itself, it is always given to itself in an experience, in the Kantian sense of the word. (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 42)

Objective experience on the Kantian view is necessarily categorially organised *a priori*. The compromise Merleau-Ponty and Sartre make with the Husserlian ideal of pure phenomenology brings them very close to Kant's doctrine that we never know objects, including ourselves, as they really are, only as they appear to us. This is true despite Sartre's rejection of 'the beingbehindtheappearance' or 'the thing in itself', as he construes it, as phenomenologically unwarranted.

The compromise with Husserl is not an outright rejection. The new goal is to try to make one's presuppositions explicit. It is impossible not to have any, but it might be possible to know which they are. The model for this search for preconceptions is Kant's 'Transcendental Deduction', as Merleau-Ponty recognises:

'The whole of the transcendental deduction hangs on the affirmation of a complete theory of truth. It is precisely to the sources of this affirmation that we must revert if we wish to adopt a reflective method.' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 220)

The 'source' of this affirmation is the list of categories. For Kant and Merleau-Ponty it is an inescapable fact about the human psyche that the order, the significance and the intelligibility of the world has its transcendental origins in our ways of thinking, in our *a priori* concepts. Phenomenological reflection is the attempt to make these presuppositions explicit just as the Analytic, including the Transcendental Deduction, is the attempt to make our most fundamental categorial presuppositions explicit. This is why phenomenology needs a 'new definition of the *a priori*' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 220)

'Kantianism would seem to have seen quite clearly that the problem of perception resides in its being an originating knowledge.'
(Merleau-Ponty 1962: 43)

I conclude that the ideal of pure phenomenology is present in *The Critique of Judgment*, and the postHusserlian revisions are modeled on the transcendental deduction. Each version of phenomenology is logically equivalent to a species of Kantianism.

VII

The Transcendental Ego

The early Husserl grounded experience and all its structures in the world but the later Husserl grounded them in the transcendental ego. Husserl means the same as Kant by 'ground' (*Grund*): *a* grounds *b* if and only if *a* makes *b* possible, or: if not *a* then not *b*. Both authors also sometimes use 'condition' (*Kondition*) in roughly this sense.

The term 'transcendental ego' (*transzendente Ich*), which is a Kantian one adopted by Husserl, refers to that which is conscious of objects but which is not itself an object of its own consciousness. The transcendental ego is irreducibly subject but not object of its own experiences. Although not an entity, according to Kant and Husserl it is a condition of there being any experience. Compare Husserl:

'The originary of becoming in the stream of consciousness is quite a peculiar one [...]. The ego does not live in the positings as passively dwelling in them. The positings are instead radiations from the pure ego as from a primal source of generations (Husserl 1931: 291)

with Kant claim in the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction:

'There must [...] be a transcendental ground of the unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of all our intuitions, and consequently also of the concepts of objects in general, and so of all objects of experience, a ground without which it would be impossible to think any object for our intuitions [...]

This original and transcendental condition is no other than transcendental apperception. (A 1067, CPR 1356)

Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* rejects the view of the self as an immaterial spirit. Its unity is due partly to the synthesis of the objects of its experience and partly to the possibility of self-consciousness. The 'I think' (*Ich denke*), Kant says, must be capable of accompanying all my presentations, implying that if it were impossible to be selfconscious then experiences would not belong to persons. Such a putative experience would not belong to a single self or ego.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

It is clear that Husserl accepts much of this account. For example in explaining his view of the self he explicitly acknowledges Kant:

'In every actional *cogito* the ego lives out its life in a special sense. But all mental processes in the background belong to it: and it belongs to them [...]. All of them, as belonging to one stream of mental processes which is mine, must admit of becoming actional cogitationes [...]. In Kant's words, the I think must be capable of accompanying all my representations (Husserl 1931: 133)

Sometimes Husserl seems to reify the transcendental ego into a nonphysical, subjective entity rather like a Cartesian soul. For example, he says that after the $\ulcorner \diagup \diagdown \urcorner$ he remains as pure transcendental ego and 'I exist' no longer then means 'I, this man, exist'. (Husserl 1931: 5) This happens because 'this man' belongs to the natural attitude and so has to be put in parentheses by the phenomenological reduction.

Despite his refusal to engage in ontology, only in description, the transcendental ego is said by Husserl to exist. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty think Husserl has thereby hypostatized the transcendental ego into something both ontologically peculiar and phenomenologically illegitimate. In *The Transcendence of the Ego* (Sartre: 1958) Sartre argues that being conscious requires what he calls 'prereflexive consciousness' not reflexive consciousness and Husserl's making the self into a 'thing' is a mistake. Sartre thinks that the phenomenologically correct approach to both these issues is to be found not in Husserl, but in Kant.

Sartre finds the distinction he requires between reflexive and prereflexive consciousness in Kant:

'It must be conceded to Kant that the *I think* must be able to accompany all our (re)presentations. But need we then conclude that an I in fact inhabits all our states of consciousness? (Sartre 1958: 324)

and answers himself correctly:

'This inference would appear to distort the Kantian view.

It is the view of Kant and Sartre that being conscious does not require being perpetually selfconscious. Sartre therefore quotes Kant approvingly:

'Kant says nothing concerning the actual existence of the *I think*. On the contrary he seems to have seen perfectly well that there are moments of consciousness without the I, for he says 'must be able to accompany' (Sartre 1958: 32)

Sartre therefore follows Kant in avoiding assimilating prereflexive to reflexive consciousness, and asserting the existence of the transcendental self. It is clear that Sartre thinks Kant has a strictly phenomenological attitude to the self. Husserl does not realise, as Sartre and Kant do, that even the putatively reduced self must, in phenomenological terms, fall before the $\Gamma \diagup \diagdown \Gamma$. The conscious subject does not itself appear to the consciousness of the conscious subject.

Kant and Sartre think most states of consciousness are not selfconscious states. In most of our daily tasks we are absorbed in what we are concerned with, and only from time to time pause to reflect on ourselves. Think, for example, of a billiard player absorbed in taking his shot. At his moment of greatest concentration what he is not conscious of is himself as player, but of the ball as 'to be played'.

The conclusion Sartre reaches about the self is Kantian. He says the subjectobject distinction is produced by reflexive consciousness. It is only in self-consciousness that there appears a self, so from a strictly phenomenological point of view, it is only in self consciousness that there *is* a self. Kant says the unity of the ego is produced partly by the possibility of the 'I think' accompanying any (but not necessarily all) of one's presentations. This unity of consciousness, although made possible by the unity of the manifold, appears as, and so phenomenologically is, distinct from it. Merleau-Ponty recognises this when he says:

'The unity of consciousness in Kant is achieved simultaneously with that of the world.' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: ix)

Each makes the other possible, yet each is not the other, so far as self-consciousness is concerned. I can be conscious of myself, but only in fundamentally the same sorts of ways as I can be conscious of other people.

Heidegger's antipsychologistic clarification of the question of being (*Seinsfrage*) in fundamental ontology (*Fundamentalontologie*) entails that original unity which the subjectobject distinction presupposes:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'beingintheworld'. He realises, while making this proposal, that the distinction between subject and object, as well as their presupposing *some* original unity, is a thoroughly Kantian doctrine. Heidegger says:

'Kant presupposes both the distinction between the 'in me' and the 'outside of me', *and also the connection* between these [...].' (Heidegger 1962: 248)

Heidegger is right. The division between transcendental subject and empirical object rests for Kant on the transcendental unity of apperception. There is a monism of phenomena presupposed by the distinction between experiencer, experience and experienced. It is this taken together with the possibility of the *Ich denke* which seems to divorce the self from its presentations. In fact though, as Heidegger says:

'The "I" is not just an 'I think', but an 'I think something'. And does not Kant himself keep stressing that the "I" remains related to its representations, and would be nothing without them?' (Heidegger 1962: 367)

Merleau-Ponty also disallows any fundamental ontological dualism between subject and object. His notion of the 'ready made world' has just that function. I conclude that in so far as they are original unities designed to dissolve subject-object dualism, 'beingintheworld', '*le vécu*', and the 'ready made world' have the same function as Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. (16)

Phenomenology faces the same dilemma as Kant over the self. It maintains the Cartesian first person starting point for doing philosophy, yet is reluctant to postulate an immaterial soul. Hence Heidegger praises Kant's phenomenologically correct view of the self thus:

'Kant, indeed in strict conformity with the phenomenal content given in saying "I", shows that the ontical theses about the soulsubstance which have been inferred (*erschlossen*) from these characteristics, [i.e. simplicity, personality, etc.] are without justification.' (Heidegger 1961: 366)

and posits a Kantian consciousness 'without the I' instead:

'[...] one *is* that with which one concerns oneself' (Heidegger 1961: 368)

Yet the phenomenologists do not quite free themselves of the idea of a transcendental ground for experience which is utterly subjective. For example Merleau-Ponty says:

'There can be sensation only on condition that it exists for a central and unique I' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 219)

even though he tries to give this a nonreified interpretation by quoting Kant approvingly:

'The I think must be able to accompany all our (re)presentations' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 219)

Indeed, Merleau-Ponty accepts Sartre's reflexive/prereflexive distinction but gives it a peculiarly Kantian twist:

'The reflective I differs from the unreflective at least in being thematised, and what is given is not consciousness or pure being; it is, as Kant himself profoundly put it, experience.' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 219)

Gilbert Ryle was right when he said, 'Husserl [...] develops a Kantian or neoKantian doctrine of a pure or absolute subject' (Ryle 1932) and, if anything, Ryle's comment understates the prevalence of the Kantian theory of the self in the phenomenological movement. (13)

VIII

Transcendental Philosophy

Husserl and Kant share similar methods and similar motivations in doing philosophy. They wish to show how everyday experience, mathematics, and empirical science, are possible. Husserl insists that

'Genuine science [...] demands as the foundation of all proofs judgements which as such are immediately valid, drawing their validity from primordial data intuitions.' (Husserl 1970: 3)

Phenomenology will be the strict but subjective science whose findings the mathematical, natural and social sciences depend upon. Phenomenology is therefore designed to answer at least the two questions Kant set himself in the introduction to the first *Critique*: 'How is pure Mathematics possible?' and 'How is pure science of nature possible?' (B 20, CPR 56) Both philosophers call their methods 'transcendental'. Transcendental philosophy demonstrates how experience is possible: how it can be that there is a world for us. For Husserl, the objects of phenomenological description depend on transcendental subjectivity; the phenomenological whole within which and by which they are constituted. For Kant, empirical objects are possible objects of experience for us, because of our possession of the forms of intuition and the categories, and their *a priori* constitution within the transcendental unity of apperception.

Both thinkers make it clear that transcendental philosophy a second order *a priori* inquiry which uncovers necessary truths and shows how any first order inquiry is possible.

The propositions of Kant's critical philosophy and Husserl's transcendental phenomenology have the same logical and epistemological status. If true, they are necessary and synthetic *a priori*. They are necessary in the same sense of 'necessary': *p* is necessary if and only if the truth of *p* is necessary for experience. But if *p* is necessary for experience then the obtaining of experience is sufficient for *p* so the definition has this consequence: Nothing in experience can refute *p*. Intuitively: experience entails its own prerequisites. Kant and Husserl, as they both recognize, are not (here) discovering necessary truths in any stronger sense, for example any whose negations entail contradictions.

The propositions of Kant's critical philosophy and Husserl's transcendental phenomenology are synthetic because they are putatively informative, not analytic. They are *a priori* because, if knowable, they are knowable intellectually, without recourse to empirical investigation.

Husserl says phenomenology contains synthetic *a priori* propositions. (Husserl 1931: 779) Indeed he wants to discover the 'logically originated fundamental constitution of all possible knowledge' (Husserl 1931: 78), while Kant says he has invented a 'transcendental logic' which 'would [...] treat of the origin of the modes in which we know objects'. (A 55/B 80, CPR 96) Husserl says, 'Individuals must be determinable in terms of concepts and laws and under the heading of "synthetic a priori principles"'. (Husserl 1931: 789) For Kant also, any possible object of experience must conform

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

to synthetic *a priori* principles. To take a famous example, Kant thinks 'every alteration has its cause' (A 2/B 3, CPR 43) is a synthetic *a priori* principle determining the course of any experience we could have. Such a law or rule's holding good rests on our possessing those *a priori* concepts we in fact have.

Husserl claims his phenomenology in *Cartesian Meditations* exposes 'a transcendental grounding of knowledge'. (Husserl 1931) And Kant, similarly, says, 'I entitle transcendental all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with our mode of knowledge of objects'. (A 1112/B 25, CPR 59) With such strong Kantian strains in phenomenology it is hardly surprising to find the initiator of the movement explicitly acknowledging his debt to Kant. It is perhaps for these reasons that Herbert Spiegelberg says:

'Husserl became fully aware and proud of the parallels and common concern he had with Kant and the neoKantians.' (Speigelberg 1960: 1060)

One of the main conclusions of *The Critique of Pure Reason* is that all our knowledge is confined to what appears to consciousness: the phenomenal world. Phenomenology takes a series of Kantian projects to its logical conclusion. In its most important concerns and methods, phenomenology has not moved outside the parameters of Kantian ways of thinking. This matters because Kantianism obstructs the solving of philosophical problems. If phenomenology is to be resumed, it has to escape the critical paradigm.
(14)

NOTES

(1) *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Macmillan, London, 1979) (henceforth 'CPR') and Immanuel Kant *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Philipp Reclam, Stuttgart, 1980).

(2) 'La phénoménologie, c'est l'étude des essences, et tous les problèmes, selon elle, reviennent à définir des essences: l'essence de la perception, l'essence de la conscience, par exemple. Mais la phénoménologie est aussi une philosophie qui replace les essences dans l'existence et ne pense pas qu'on puisse comprendre l'homme et le monde autrement qu'à partir de leur <<facticité>>.'

(Merleau-Ponty 1945: i)

(3) He might not be right to do so. Michael Petry argues that 'Phenomenology had first been brought into discussion as a distinct discipline by the mathematician and logician J. H. Lambert, who conceived of it as the theory of the appearances constituting the bases of all cognition deriving from experience.' (Hegel 1981: p. xiv) For the phenomenology of J. H. Lambert (1728-1777) see Lambert (1764) esp. II 217 ff. In the history of ideas, claims of the form '*A* was the first to think that *p*' should be made with immense caution.

(4) Merleau-Ponty talks about 'la notion d'intentionnalité' as 'trop souvent citée comme la découverte principale de la phénoménologie' and says: '<<Toute conscience est conscience de quelque chose>>', cela n'est pas nouveau. Kant a montré dans la Réfutation de l'Idéalisme, que la perception intérieure est impossible sans perception extérieure' (Merleau-Ponty 1945: xii)

(5) See (1985) and ***

(6) Because, like Husserl, Kant rejects empirical idealism this passage entailing a logical relation between perceiver, perception and perceived should be read as expressing the constitutive perspectivism of transcendental idealism:

'So bald wir unsere subjektive Beschaffenheit wegnehmen, das vorgestellte Objekt mit den Eigenschaften, die ihm die sinnliche Anschauung beilegte, überall nirgends anzutreffen ist, noch angetroffen werden kann, indem eben diese subjektive Beschaffenheit die Form desselben, als Erscheinung, bestimmt.' (A44/B62)

'If our subjective constitution be removed, the (re)presented object, with the qualities which sensible intuition bestows upon it, is nowhere to be found. For it is this subjective constitution which determines its form as appearance.' (CPR 84)

Husserl is a transcendental idealist. I mean by 'transcendental idealism' any doctrine entailing that some nonempirical proposition *p* is necessary for

experience (knowledge, science, presentation of the world etc.), so experience is sufficient for *p*.

(7) Both Kant and Husserl subscribe to a 'physical efficacy' thesis: a particular *a* is a physical particular only if it is capable of affecting some other particular, *b*. So, on the efficacy thesis there are true sentences of the form *Rab* where '*R*' expresses a causal relation, if there are some physical objects. It is a kind of functionalism; essentialist functionalism about physical objects.

(8) See, for example, CPR 111, 1312, 144, 155, 161, 166, 169, 198, 213.

(9) F. N. Findlay (Husserl 1970: 36)

(10) The term Macquarrie and Robinson translate as 'appearance' is 'Erscheinung', and their 'phenomenon' is 'Phänomen'. See Heidegger 1962: 534, and Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Band 2, *Sein und Zeit* (Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1977), p.412. For Kant's use of 'appearance' see CPR 65, 124 ff., 1434, 201, 470, and 494. For 'phenomena' see CPR especially pp. 257-275.

(11) It follows that Heidegger in *Being and Time* is engaged in producing a transcendental argument. An argument is transcendental if and only if it putatively establishes some nonempirical conclusion necessary for knowledge or experience. If an argument is transcendental, knowledge or experience is sufficient for the conclusion.

(12) Heidegger's *Fundamental Ontology* is an attempt to answer 'the question of being' (*die Seinsfrage*): 'What is Being?' (*Was ist, 'Sein'?*). Heidegger is not entirely correct in thinking this question was forgotten between the times of the ancients and Hegel because, not only Aquinas, Duns Scotus and Berkeley, but Kant raises it when he says

“'Sein' ist offenbar kein reales Prädikat, d.i. ein Begriff von irgend etwas, was zu dem Begriffe eines Dinges hinzukommen könne.” (A597/B625)

“'Being' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing.” (CPR 504)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The question of what being is, is raised by Kant in a way that is logically distinct from the question of what exists.

Nevertheless, if anyone escapes the critical paradigm it is Heidegger. However, *Fundamental Ontology*, in so far as it escapes Kantianism, departs from phenomenology also.

(13) See Ryle (1932). Ryle's later work *The Concept of Mind* (Hutchinson, London, 1949) is a kind of phenomenology in reverse. The inner world is bracketed so that outward behaviour may be described as it appears. This is thirdperson phenomenology or phenomenology of the other. (If it is philosophy of mind, it is philosophy of mind without the mind.)

(14) JeanFrancois Lyotard says about phenomenology:

'It is philosophy, and even postKantian philosophy because it seeks to avoid metaphysical systematisation'

and draws this contrast:

'Kant was looking for the *a priori* conditions of knowledge: but this *a priori* already prejudices the solution. Phenomenology does not want this hypostatization: from there its interrogative style, its radicalism, its essential incompleteness (*son style interrogative, son radicalisme, son inachevement essential*).' (Lyotard 1982: 4)

but misses the point that Husserl (rightly) thinks the findings of Husserlian phenomenology are synthetic *a priori*.

To the things themselves!' (HUSSERL) Is this good advice?

What] [HOW CLEAR] is the difference between noesis and noema?

Heidegger confuses two questions: "What is the meaning of the verb to be?" and "What is the meaning of Being for us?" These questions are distinct

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

from each other, just as the question “What is the meaning of the word life?” is distinct from the question “What is the meaning of life?” ’ Discuss.

Are there different ‘modes of Being’?

[Why] could there be no world without Dasein?

Does Heidegger say enough about suicide?

Why] is history [so] [AS] important [for] [AS] Heidegger [THINKS IT IS]?

Is subjectivity really the ‘hole in Being’ (SARTRE)?

‘But why should he not choose to deceive himself?’ (SARTRE) Why not?

Is Sartre right to deny that love is the solution to the problem of beingforothers?

‘I am my Future in the constant perspective of the possibility of not being it.’ (SARTRE) Discuss.

‘As a thinking subject we are never the unreflective subject that we seek to know.’ (MERLEAU-PONTY) Does Merleau-Ponty overcome this difficulty?

other

‘Unless I have an exterior, others have no interior. The plurality of consciousness is impossible if I have an absolute consciousness of myself.’ (MERLEAU-PONTY) Discuss.

How can we decide whether [or not] someone is an existentialist?

Phenomenology

‘a science of “phenomena”’

‘pure phenomenology is not psychology’

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

‘a science of essences’ (Ideas I Introduction)

Essence (Eidos, Wesen)

‘It belongs to the sense of anything contingent to have an essence and therefore an Eidos which can be apprehended purely’ (Ideas I §2)

‘Thus, for example, any tone in and for itself has an essence and, highest of all, the universal essence tone as such, or rather sound as such – taken purely as the moment that can be singled out intuitively in the individual tone (alone or else by comparing one tone with others as something “common”)’ (Ideas I §2)

‘any material thing has its own essential species and, highest of all, the universal species “any material thing whatsoever”, with any temporal determinations whatever, any duration, figure, materiality whatever’ (Ideas I §2)

Intuition of Essences

‘Any such What can be put into an idea’ (Ideas I §3)

‘Experiencing, or intuition of something individual can become transmuted into eidetic seeing (ideation)’ (Ideas I §3)

‘What is seen when that occurs is the corresponding pure essence, or Eidos’ (Ideas I §3)

Constitution

‘Of essential necessity there belongs to any “allsided”, continuously, unitarily, and selfconfirming experiential consciousness of the same physical thing a multifarious system of continuous multiplicities of appearances and adumbrations in which all objective moments falling within perception with the characteristic of being themselves given “in person” are adumbrated by determined continuities’

(Ideas I §41)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In a sense the transcendental field is nothing, but in a sense it is everything.
Stephen Priest

The transcendental field is objectively nothing in the sense that no third person nonpsychological ascription is made true by any feature of it. In other words, the transcendental field is objectively nothing because it contains nothing which exists independently of consciousness.

The transcendental field is subjectively everything. It makes true all first person singular psychological ascriptions which do not ascribe dispositions. The transcendental field is everything that is directly given, everything that constitutes the contents of consciousness.

Stephen Priest

The subjective/objective distinction is undermined by the transcendental field.

Stephen Priest

The phenomenological content of the transcendental field is reduced to what was formerly thought of as the relation between subject and object. The relata are abolished so it no longer makes much sense to talk about a relation.

‘Inner’ and ‘outer’ are common metaphors in the philosophy of mind but they are rarely rendered literal so it is not clear what they amount to. I suggest the following:

x is inner if and only if x may be truly characterised qua x by at least one first person singular psychological description.

x is outer if and only if x may be truly characterised qua x by some third person nonpsychological ascription.

Clearly, this leaves room for the possibility that x may be both inner and outer because both sorts of description may in principle be true of one and the same item. At least, nothing in the definitions *prima facie* excludes that.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The contents of the transcendental field make possible the distinction between inner and outer in themselves. As they are given phenomenologically, it does not make sense to think of them as intrinsically inner or outer.

There are many ways in which such a subjective/objective distinction might be drawn. On any nonidealist epistemology spatiotemporal things count as 'objective' in the sense of 'mind-independent'. They exist irrespective of whether minds and perceptions exist and their existence does not consist in their being thought or perceived. Psychic states count as subjective because they are essentially mind-dependent (whatever account of minds we wish to give). Spatiotemporal particulars are paradigmatically what make third person nonpsychological ascriptions true and count as 'subjective' in just this sense. Psychic states are paradigmatically what make first person singular psychological ascriptions true, and count as 'subjective' in just that sense.

If some person, A, is in a state S, then S counts as a privileged state of A just in case if A has a belief that A is in S then that belief is true but that inference fails for persons other than A. Also, if S is a privileged state of A which is open to direct acquaintance then it is only open in this way to A.

Time Travel and Possible Worlds

Time travel consists in making another possible world actual. The past is a possible world. The past + you is another possible world. Have you visited the past? Say the people in the past that you visit are numerically identical with the people in the (ordinary historical past) that you have not visited (yet). They preserve transworld identity despite the fact that you are in one world and not the other of the two they are in. Use modal logic to illustrate the possibility of time travel. Modal realism is the ontology.

"Exists" and the Existential Quantifier

Heaven is skylike. i.e. all around you, not just above you. The earth beneath your feet stops you seeing that the sky is all around you.

I and World

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Philosophy deconditions the individual. Society = set of rules for avoiding the raising of philosophical questions. esp. society thereby avoids terror in face of death, meaninglessness. (existentialism). God, heaven revealed if society stripped away.

XII THE WORK OF ART

The conclusion of *The Psychology of the Imagination* includes a discussion of the work of art, reproduced below. Here I discuss Sartre's views on music and painting.

Although music meant a great deal to Sartre personally, he wrote very little about it. What he does say, in *The Psychology of Imagination*, in *What is Literature?* and in *Situations* is of considerable philosophical interest.

Sartre thinks that what is expressed or communicated through music cannot be wholly expressed or communicated in words. Words cannot substitute for music (and, if they could, music would be in a sense redundant. Music would be, perhaps, an abbreviation of verbal language). Sartre says of music it will always be over and above anything you can say about it. No matter how thorough the attempt to characterise in words what is expressed in music something remains uncaptured. Music says more than we can say that it says. Music as heard cannot be verbally described, even though musical notation is an abstract description of music, and the language of physics or aesthetic appreciation includes true assertions about music.

Sartre thinks music does not take on meaning by referring to nonmusical reality. The 'significance' of a melody nothing outside the melody itself. If what music signifies is music then the significance of music cannot be found in nonmusical reality. It does not follow that words cannot express what music expresses but it is inconsistent with the existence of any nonmusical source of musical significance that could be accessed either verbally or musically. Language expresses nonlinguistic reality but music does not express nonmusical reality. This does not soundly refute the possibility of the verbal expression of the musical but it is inconsistent with one picture of that putative possibility.

What is music? What is a musical work of art? Sartre does not address these questions directly but, perhaps surprisingly, he says of Beethoven's 7th Symphony 'I do not hear it actually'. He says 'I listen to it in the imaginary'. If we draw a distinction between a symphony and the performance of that symphony then it makes more sense to speak of

listening to the performance than listening to the symphony. If one is listening to a performance then, at any one time ('actually'), one is hearing only part of the performance although, in another sense, one is thereby hearing all of it.

In order to hear part of a performance of a symphony as part of the performance of that symphony certain psychological facts have to obtain. Sartre largely endorses the distinction Husserl draws between protention and retention in *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (1905). Protentions are tacit anticipations about the course of one's future experience. Retentions are memorylike traces, of the past course of one's experience. Both protentions and retentions are 'read into' the present content of one's experience to make it the kind of experience it is. For example, a note that is part of Beethoven's 7th is heard as such if and only if it is located as such through protention and retention. It has to be heard as a continuation of as much of the performance has elapsed and as the initiation of the remainder of the performance. Hearing the performance as a performance, and as a performance of Beethoven's 7th, requires imagination. We see here a preliminary plausibility in Sartre's claim that 'I listen to it in the imaginary'.

Sartre is claiming that the performance is heard in the concert auditorium but the symphony it is a performance of is heard in the imagination. A performance is an audible and datable occurrence and numerically distinct performances may exist at different times and in different places. A symphony is not that. A symphony is what a performance is a performance of. A symphony not only does not exist at different times in different places, a symphony could exist even if there were no performances of it. There could be and are unperformed symphonies.

Sartre refuses to identify the symphony with its performance it is beyond the real. The real is what exists in the past, present or future. The symphony does not exist in past present or future so the symphony does not exist in the real.

Sartre's concept of painting is also ontologically controversial. He does not provide us with necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being a painting, but he does try to explain how it is possible to see something as a painting. He also claims that a painting may effect peculiar ontological syntheses. For example, he says in *What is Literature?* that 'Tintoretto did not choose that yellow rift in the sky above Golgotha to signify anguish or to provoke it. It is anguish and yellow sky at the same time. Not sky of anguish or anguished sky: it is an anguish become thing, an

anguish that has turned into yellow rift of sky' (3). It is doubtful whether Sartre knows Tintoretto's intentions, and doubtful whether they affect the truth of the crucial identification of anguish with the yellow sky. Anguish is an emotion, something intrinsically unobservable but undergone. A painted rift in the sky is observable and it lacks literal sense to say it is undergone, even though I might undergo something on observing it. However, if we could see anguish it might look like Tintoretto's yellow sky. Anguish and his sky have something in common which is more aesthetically conspicuous than the differences between them. The yellow sky could be an expression of anguish. It could be anguish made outward in paint, rather, perhaps, as speech is the expression of thought. Speech is thought made outward in sound. Can you hear thinking? Perhaps listening to speech is the nearest possibility.

Rather as a piece of music is neither its performance nor its score, a painting is not a distribution of paint on canvas even though to destroy an intentionally painted canvas is enough to destroy a painting, and to intentionally put paint on canvas is enough to bring a painting into existence. A painting is not identical with what is necessary and sufficient for its existence. The painted canvas is only the distribution of paint molecules on a surface, or a grouping of phenomenological colours. Something makes the canvas, wood and paint count as, say, a painting of Charles VIII. A painting is not what a painting is a painting of (excluding certain ambitiously selfreflexive paintings). A painting of Charles VIII is not Charles VIII. A painting is something 'between' the canvas and what it is a painting of. It is neither but it depends on both.

Sartre says a painting is an 'unreality', and an 'aesthetic object'. It is a product of the special kind of consciousness he calls 'imaginative consciousness'. Rather dramatically, imaginative consciousness negates the world and freely generates its own substitute unrealities. Visually confronted with the physical object that is wood, canvas and paint imaginative consciousness sees this as a painting of Charles VIII. The content of this act of imagination is not an image. Sartre is not claiming that an image of Charles VIII psychologically accompanies the visual presentation of the painted canvas. It is not the case that two things are presented simultaneously: the painted canvas and the image. Rather that painted canvas is seen in a special way, as something phenomenologically similar to the visual appearance of Charles VIII.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre tries to draw a distinction between cinema and theatre when he says

'A tree for a cinema goer is a real tree, while a tree on the stage is obviously synthetic' but this provides us at best with an inductive generalisation about some films and some plays. Midtwentieth century black and white films frequently include artificial scenery and a theatre play might deploy real trees or plants. Sartre misses the point that in watching a play we see real people but in watching a film we see pictures of people, and each showing of a play is a performance of that play but each showing of a film is not a performance of that film.

Sartre claims 'It is not the character who becomes real in the actor, it is the actor who becomes unreal in his character'. Hamlet never becomes nonfictional in a performance or film showing of Hamlet but the living psychophysical whole human being who is the actor who plays Hamlet is negated or ignored by an act of imagination by the audience. The audience sees the actor as Hamlet but they do not mix him up with a real prince of Denmark.

Although Sartre never published any poetry, it is clear that he regards poetry as a radical art form. He says in *What is Literature?* 'the poet is outside language'(6). Sartre takes the neoHegelian view that language is the 'element' in which human beings exist, rather, perhaps as fish exist in water. With the exception of rare individuals such as Nausea's Roquentin human reality is mediated by language. The world appears to us through our language. Poets are capable of escape this linguistic prison and perceive things in their bare particularity. With unscientific detachment they concatenate words in original forms to present us with new phenomenologies of things. Sartre says of the poet 'He sees words inside out'.

A work of art involves an image and what Sartre calls an 'analogue'. The analogue of a work of art is its material vehicle. The analogue of a poem or a novel is the ink distributed over the page, the analogue of a painting is the wood, canvas and paint, the analogue of a character in a play is the actor who plays that character. The existence of the analogue is a necessary condition for the existence of the work of art, at least as a publically available object.

Does the work of art as aesthetic object have an ethereal or abstract ontological status in Sartre's philosophy? It is not spatiotemporally located. It is not identical with its material vehicle. It is not an image in the

consciousness of the artist or the audience. It is unreal. Despite all this, the work of art exists. What is it then? Sartre's answer in *What is Literature?* is dispells any Platonic construal: 'the aesthetic object is properly the world in so far as it is aimed at through the imaginary' (p. 42).

If the world is what is, then in watching a play or looking at a painting, we are grasping what is in a new way. The work of art does not exist in its own world. We are imaginatively presented with a transformed world.

[INSERT IN MERLEAU-PONTY AT END OF ART CHAPTER]

How is Painting Possible?

'The amorphous perceptual world that I spoke of in relation to painting – perceptual resources for the remaking of painting – which contains no mode of expression and which nonetheless calls them forth and requires all of them and which arouses again with each painter a new effort of expression – this perceptual world is at bottom Being in Heidegger's sense, which is more than all painting, than all speech, than every "attitude", and which, apprehended by philosophy in its universality, appears as containing everything that will ever be said, and yet leaving us to create it (Proust): it is the $\ominus \ // \blacksquare \ // ? \ \Gamma \bullet \] \cdot \checkmark \ - \ \Gamma \blacktriangle \ // ?$ which calls for the $\ominus \ // \blacksquare \ // ? \ \ // \times \ // \] \ // \times \bullet \ \cup \ // ?$ [CHECK GREEK] (VIT 170)

Although painting makes the natural sciences possible, in the sense that a world that could not in principle be painted could not admit of piecemeal scientific explanation of its occupants, there is a fundamental ground of painting. The renewal of painting requires changes in the perceptual world but, primordially, Merleau-Ponty tells us, the perceptual world is Being in Heidegger's sense. In his unfinished 1927 work *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time) Heidegger attempts to clarify the *Seinsfrage*, the question of being, or what it is to be. The question is hard because being is not being something. Being rather than not being does not consist in having one feature rather than another. This is why Merleau-Ponty says being is 'more than all painting etc.'. What it is to be exceeds anything that could be expressed in painting.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

said in language, thought or believed including by philosophising. All that falls on the side of essence and leaves the Seinsfrage unanswered.

“‘subjectivity’ and the ‘object’ are one sole whole’ (VIT 185)

‘It is not we who perceive, it is the thing that perceives itself yonder’
(VIT 185)

‘it is not we who speak, it is truth that speaks itself at the depths of speech.’
(VIT 185)

[INSERT IN MERLEAU-PONTY AT END OF BEING CHAPTER]

Heidegger’s Fundamental Ontology

‘The “interior life”: a world in the world, a region within it, a “place from which we speak” (Heidegger)’ (VIT 180)

‘The search for the “wild” view of the world nowise limits itself to a return to precomprehension or to prescience. “Primitivism” is only the counterpart of scientism, and is still scientism. The phenomenologists (Scheler, Heidegger) are right in pointing out this precomprehension which precedes inductivity, for it is this that calls in question the ontological value of the Gegenstand. But a return to prescience is not the goal.’ (VIT 182)

The Gegenstand is not primordial.

‘The world is a field, and as such is always open.’ (VIT 185)

‘Transcendence is identity within difference.’ (VIT 225)

The Thing and the Natural World

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Merleau-Ponty offers an ‘analysis of the thing as an intersensory entity’ (317).

The problem is how ‘the thing as presented [...] stays the same for us through a series of experiences’ (317) No single quale endures through perceptions through different sensory modalities.

Solution = that object is presented as a whole, in in partial perception of it. (Part only intelligible as part of whole.)

‘The sensory “properties” of a thing together constitute one and the same thing’ (317) is no Lockean substance. (phenomenologically illegitimate and not necessary or sufficient for the endurance of numerically the same object over time.

Other people and the Human World

Merleau-Ponty rejects the assumption that first person singular psychological ascriptions are certain and indubitable but third person singular or plural psychological ascriptions are uncertain and dubitable. The existence of what he calls the human world makes possible a degree of certainty and uncertainty about both one’s own reality and the reality of others.

‘How can the word I be put into the plural[...]?’

Human world would be unintelligible without the subjectivity of others. The human world is intelligible, there is the subjectivity of others:

‘Someone uses the pipe for smoking, the spoon for eating, the bell for summoning, and it is through the perception of a human act and another person that the perception of a cultural world could be verified’ (348)

‘The body of another, like my own, is not inhabited’ (349)

‘another’s body is not an object for me’ (352)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

‘a primordial phenomenon of the bodyforus’ (351)

Self and other are mutually dependent.

‘both are brought together in the one single world in which we all participate as anonymous subjects of perception’ (353)

Freedom

‘Even what are called obstacles to freedom are in reality deployed by it’ (436)

‘An unclimbable rock face, a large or small, vertical or hanging rock, are things which have no meaning for anyone who is not intending to surmount them, for a subject whose projects do not carve out such determinate forms from the uniform mass of the in itself and cause an orientated world to arise – a significance in things’ (436)

‘There is, then, ultimately nothing that can set limits to freedom, except those limits that freedom itself has set in the form of its various initiatives, so that the subject has simply the external world that he gives himself’ (436)

‘Our freedom does not destroy our situation’ (442)

‘The world is already constituted but never completely’ (453)

Science

‘[...] we have in fact learned to shed doubt upon objective thought, and have made contact with, on the hither side of scientific representations of the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

world and the body, with an experience of the body and the world which these scientific approaches do not successfully embrace' (349)

'I cannot conceive of myself as nothing but a bit of the world, a mere object of biological, psychological or sociological investigation. I cannot shut myself up within the realm of science' (viii)

'All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless' (viii)

'The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced ('le monde vecu')' (viii) ie the lived world[not 'experienced' world.

An asterix signifies an introductory book.

Questions

Has Derrida deconstructed phenomenology?

Is phenomenology more fundamental than philosophy and science?

Is Heidegger right in his view that the question of being has been forgotten in Western philosophy?

At the end of *Being and Time*, has Heidegger discovered a kind of time that is primordial with regard to being?

Are we as free as Sartre supposes?

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

itional content of a sentence including an expression in an indexical role is determined by the context of its utterance.

For example:

To say 'It is cold here' at a place is to say it is cold at that place.

To say 'It is cold now' at a place, is to say it is cold at that place.

For a person to say 'I am cold' is for that person to say that they are cold.

What is the difference between believing:

(1) 'The tutorial is in DHT 3.12'
and

SARTRE ON BEING

Contingency:

Sartre thinks that everything exists contingently. In philosophy, contingency is contrasted with necessity:

- 1) P is contingently true if and only if P is true but could have been false.
- 2) P is necessarily true if and only if P is true and could not have been false.
- 3) P is contingently false if and only if P is false but could have been true.
- 4) P is necessarily false if and only if P is false but could not have been true.

Something exists contingently if and only if it exists, but might not have existed.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In the 1938 novel *Nausea* Roquentin discovers that both existence and essence are contingent. What is might not have been. What is might have not have been what it is.

This existential discovery causes anguish or anxiety and the nausea of the novel's title.

What is being ?

Distinguish sharply two questions:

(1) What exists ?

(1) What is being ?

The answer to (1) is some list of (types) of thing that exist. (2) is What is it to be ? or What does it mean to say something is (rather than is not) ?

Beingin-itself and BeingFor-itself:

In *Being and Nothingness* (1943) Sartre distinguishes two kinds of being: *l'etrepoursoi* (beingfor-itself) and *l'etreensoi* (beingin-itself).

Beingfor-itself is free, conscious, selfdefining, subjective and projected towards the future. It is the kind of being that human reality is or has.

Beingin-itself is unfree, not conscious, inert, objective and includes the fixed accumulations of the past.

Nothingness is introduced into the world by beingfor-itself.

NB Sartre is strongly influenced by Heidegger.

Heidegger distinguishes between

1) (Traditional) Ontology (What is there ?) and

2) Fundamental ontology (What is being ?)

See:

Martin Heidegger *Being and Time* (Blackwell) (*Sein und Zeit* 1927)

Michael Inwood *Martin Heidegger* (OUP Past Masters)

SARTRE AND INCORRIGIBILITY

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

One of the sternest critics of the strong incorrigibility of introspective reports is Sartre who thinks, like Ryle, that selfknowledge and knowledge of other persons are no more certain than each other. Sartre says;

'The state appears to reflective consciousness ... Is it therefore necessary to conclude that the state is immanent and certain? Surely not. We must not make of reflection a mysterious and infallible power, nor believe that everything reflection attains is indubitable because attained by reflection. (TE 61)

and concludes that;

'My I ... is no more certain for consciousness than the I of other men. It is only more intimate' (104) Sartre is reacting against a tradition in which it was thought that philosophy could be placed on sure foundations in the findings of introspection. hence Brentano;

'As everyone knows, memory is to a great extent subject to illusion, while inner perception is infallible and does not admit of doubt' (PES35)

Husserl, in the introduction to the English translation of *Ideas* says his phenomenological method will be;

'pure self reflection revealing original selfevident facts'
(I 1920)

The main target of Sartre's attack is Husserl's reification of the Ego which results according to Sartre, in persons generally, form a reflective act of consciousness. An important by product of Sartre's attack is criticism of the assumption that what is known in self knowledge is 'given' or free from interpretation. Sartre brings together the attack on the reified Ego and the attack on incorrigibility in this passage;

'I can see clearly that I am ill tempered, jealous etc and nevertheless I may be mistaken. In other words I may deceive myself in thinking that I have such a me'

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

I argued earlier that first person psychological reports were readily falsifiable to the extent to which they make implicit ontological commitments to the objective (publicly???? available) world of objects. It is a similar kind of objectivity claim that Sartre is attacking here, except the ontological commitment is to a (purely mental) reified self and not to a publicly available object.

The manner in which this opens up first person psychological claims to falsification is parallel though. If 'I' is used in the sense of 'persisting reified ego' then the claim is falsifiable (if Sartre's arguments against Husserl or some other one's work).

If 'I' is used without this connotation, as it might well be, then this will not provide a ground for holding a claim to be corrigible even if it is couched in the first person. I can make first person psychological reports without an implicit reification of the self. I merely hold that I exist and leave unanswered the question of my characterisation. The use of the first person pronoun is consistent with the possession of a wide variety of concepts of the self, but not with none at all.

Sartre has another argument against incorrigibility of first person psychological ascriptions and this involves drawing attention to the dispositional nature of many mental state. On this account it does not follow that I really have a particular psychological attitude towards another person just because on a certain occasion I notice I am feeling a certain way towards him. Sartre's example is hatred. The proposition 'I hate Pierre' is not rendered incorrigible by my reflectively becoming aware of the emotion of hatred directed at him by me. Hatred lasts for Sartre and by saying you hate someone one 'implicates the future' makes a generalisation which commits the utterer to more than what is evident simply from present experience. This dispositional analysis supports further the view that the sorts of things a person can know about himself are the same sorts of things a person can know about another person. Just as it would be rash to generalise about another person's attitude to oneself, or another person on the basis of witnessing one piece of behaviour so also in one's own case, a judgement based on a single present experience is not incorrigible.

Sartre and Art

Sartre's novels, stories and plays are not only literary expressions of his existential phenomenology and his Marxism but tests of the philosophy of art he presents in *What is Literature?* Before examining the viability of Sartre's literature as philosophy and before appraising his philosophy of literary commitment I discuss his scattered remarks on various art forms.

Although music meant a great deal to Sartre personally, he wrote very little about it. What he does say, in *The Psychology of Imagination*, in *What is Literature?* and in *Situations* is of considerable philosophical interest.

Sartre thinks that what is expressed or communicated through music cannot be wholly expressed or communicated in words. Words cannot substitute for music (and, if they could, music would be in a sense redundant. Music would be, perhaps, an abbreviation of verbal language). Sartre says of music 'It will always be over and above anything you can say about it' (*WIL?* 3). Taken ontologically, this is true of anything. Nothing is numerically identical with what is said about it (except perhaps certain selfreflexive propositions). He means, rather, no matter how thorough the attempt to characterise in words what is expressed in music something remains uncaptured. Music says more than we can say that it says.

In another sense, Sartre is saying that what music is cannot be captured in words. Music as heard cannot be verbally described. This is not to deny that musical notation is an abstract description of music, nor is it to deny that the language of physics or aesthetic appreciation can be used to make true assertions about music. His point is that music qua sound cannot be verbally expressed or communicated.

Sartre has the makings of an argument for this. He thinks music does not take on meaning by referring to nonmusical reality. For example,

'The significance of a melody if one can still speak of significance is nothing outside the melody itself'
(*WIL?* 3)

Sartre's reservation about the use of 'significance' is that signifying is arguably a twoterm relation between signifier and signified and, logically, such a relation could not obtain in the absence of one of its two relata. His

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

worry is groundless, however, because if something signifies itself it still has the logical form of a relation, but the form Raa, not Rab.

If what music signifies is music then the significance of music cannot be found in nonmusical reality. It does not logically follow from this that words cannot express what music expresses but it is inconsistent with the existence of some nonmusical source of musical significance that could be accessed either verbally or musically. Language expresses nonlinguistic reality but music does not express nonmusical reality. This does not soundly refute the possibility of the verbal expression of the musical but it is inconsistent with one picture of that putative possibility.

The thesis that music as heard cannot be expressed or communicated verbally is entailed by the empiricist epistemological thesis that private experiential contents cannot be characterised in a public language. Such contents, variously called 'qualia', 'sense data', 'phenomena' or 'impressions' may be known to the perceiver of them but are systematically uncommunicable to another. It is this alleged privacy of experience and meaning that the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein sought to refute in his so called Private Language Argument in *Philosophical Investigations* (1952). Sartre's thesis that music is logically private is inconsistent with the conclusion of that argument.

What is music ? What is a musical work of art ? Sartre does not address these questions directly but, perhaps surprisingly, he says of Beethoven's 7th Symphony 'I do not hear it actually'(PI 251). He says 'I listen to it in the imaginary' (PI 251). There are two ways of taking this. If we draw a distinction between a symphony and the performance of that symphony then it makes more sense to speak of listening to the performance than listening to the symphony. Secondly, if one is listening to a performance then, at any one time ('actually'), one is hearing only part of the performance although, in another sense, one is thereby hearing all of it (rather as seeing part of a physical object counts as seeing that physical object).

In order to hear part of a performance of a symphony as part of the performance of that symphony certain psychological facts have to obtain. Sartre largely endorses the distinction Husserl draws between protention and retention in *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (1905) . Protentions are predictions or anticipations but of a special kind. They are tacit anticipations about the course one's future experience will take. Retentions are memories or psychological traces, but, again, of a special kind. They are tacit memories of the past course of one's experience

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Both protentions and retentions are, so to speak, 'read into' the present content of one's experience to make it the kind of experience it is. For example, a note that is part of Beethoven's 7th is heard as such if and only if it is located as such through protention and retention. It has to be heard as a continuation of as much of the performance has elapsed and as the initiation of the remainder of the performance to come. Hearing the performance in this way, as a performance, and as a performance of Beethoven's 7th, requires imagination. We see here a preliminary plausibility in Sartre's claim that 'I listen to it in the imaginary' (PI 252).

More profoundly, Sartre is claiming that the performance is heard in the concert auditorium but the symphony it is a performance of is heard in the imagination. ('In the imagination' is something of a misnomer here because as we saw in chapter Sartre thinks the imagination is not a space. The imagination is not like an auditorium). To appraise this claim we need a distinction between a symphony and its performance. A performance is an audible and datable occurrence and numerically distinct performances may exist at different times and in different places. A symphony is not that. A symphony is what a performance is a performance of. A symphony not only does not exist at different times in different places, a symphony could exist even if there were no performances of it. Not only is 'unperformed symphony' not a contradiction, there are unperformed symphonies. This is sufficient to show not only that there is a genuine ontological distinction between a symphony and any performance of it but that it would be a mistake even to identify a symphony with the set of performances of it. If it can exist without any of them it can exist without all of them.

Sartre refuses to identify the symphony with its performance when he says,

'In the degree to which I hear the symphony it is not here, between these walls, at the tip of the violin bows. Nor is it in the past...It is completely beyond the real'
(PI 251)

The real is what exists in the past, present or future. The symphony does not exist in past present or future so the symphony does not exist in the real. In fact, 'the seventh symphony is in no way in time. It is therefore in no way real' (PI 251).

Even when a possible misunderstanding is removed objections may be brought against Sartre here. Sartre is not claiming that the symphony does

not exist. To say that something is not real is not to say that it does not exist. (For example, to say that these flowers are not real but artificial is not to say that the artificial flowers do not exist). Sartre is saying that the symphony does exist but it does not exist in time. It exists but its existing does not take up any time. It is but does not last.

This conclusion has not been established by his argument so far and there are grounds for thinking it false. Even if we accept his claim that the symphony does not exist in past present or future it does not follow that it does not exist in time. Suppose there is no past present or future, there might still exist beginnings, durations, changes, and endings and perhaps a symphony begins, lasts, changes and ends. Arguably, a symphony does at least have a beginning: no symphony predates its composition and all symphonies postdate their composition. It also makes sense to say that a symphony has existed for a duration; the period of time since its composition. A symphony may change if its composer changes its composition. It could even be argued that a symphony ceases to exist, ends, if every material, mental or abstract realisation of it ceases to exist. Conversely, Sartre's atemporal concept of the symphony may be defended if it is conceded both that past present and future exist and that the symphony does not exist in them. This is because there is no time that is not past present or future. It follows that there is no time at which a symphony exists.

Could a symphony exist but not exist for any period of time? Could anything be but not last? Some philosophers have argued that there are nontemporal objects; things that exist but do not take up any time to be, for example: numbers, God, universals, mathematical points, geometrically perfect forms, instants (that is, times without duration), time itself. If anything should be on this list, should symphonies be added?

Sartre says that although the symphony is not in time and is therefore not real 'it depends on the real for its appearance' (PI 251) He is making the epistemological point that a symphony could not be known to exist unless certain events could be witnessed. Paradigmatically we know of symphonies through their performances but clearly a symphony may also be read, or be thought. It is questionable whether something putatively nontemporal could depend upon the temporal for knowledge of it. This is allegedly the case for the theological and abstract objects just mentioned. It is even less clear that something nontemporal could depend upon something temporal for its existence. That is not a claim Sartre has made directly. It is, however,

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

arguably entailed by his claim that when we hear a performance in the auditorium we hear the symphony in the imaginary.

Sartre's concept of painting is also ontologically controversial. He does not provide us with necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being a painting, but he does try to explain how it is possible to see something as a painting. He also claims that a painting may effect peculiar ontological syntheses. For example, he says

'Tintoretto did not choose that yellow rift in the sky above Golgotha to signify anguish or to provoke it. It is anguish and yellow sky at the same time' (WIL? 3)

and to dispell any misunderstanding says

'not sky of anguish or anguished sky: it is an anguish become thing, an anguish that has turned into yellow rift of sky' (WIL? 3).

It is doubtful whether Sartre knows Tintoretto's intentions, and doubtful whether they affect the truth value of the crucial identification of anguish with the yellow sky. Prima facie the identification is incoherent. Anguish is an emotion, something intrinsically unobservable but undergone. I might observe that you are in a certain emotional state but it makes only poetic sense to say I observe your emotion. A painted rift in the sky is observable and it lacks sense to say it is undergone, even though I might undergo something on observing it. However, construed as an insight rather than an incoherence, we can say two things. If we could see anguish it might look essentially like Tintoretto's yellow sky. Anguish and his sky have something in common which is more aesthetically conspicuous than the differences between them. Also, the yellow sky could be an expression of anguish. It could be anguish made outward in paint, rather, perhaps, as speech is the expression of thought. Speech is thought made outward in sound. Can you hear thinking? Perhaps listening to speech is the nearest possibility.

Although 'a is the expression of b' is not logically equivalent to 'a is numerically and qualitatively identical to b', the relation between anguish and its expression is very close. Anguish is necessary for its expression and it could be argued that the expression of anguish is necessary for anguish. It still would not follow that anguish and its expression are identical but they would be mutually dependent and so mutually sufficient. Sartre, like

Hegel, sometimes uses 'identical' to mean 'mutually dependent'. The rather expressivist account I have given of Sartre's meaning is consistent with his claim that the sky 'is an anguish become thing' (WIL? 3).

Rather as a piece of music is neither its performance nor its score, a painting perhaps surprisingly, is not a distribution of paint on canvas. *Prima facie* this is odd, because to destroy an intentionally painted canvas is enough to destroy a painting, and to intentionally put paint on canvas is enough to bring a painting into existence.

However, a painting is not necessarily identical with the necessary and sufficient conditions for its existence; the set of such necessary conditions must, after all, be very large. Nor is a painting intentionally painted canvas *tout court*. That physical object is only the distribution of paint molecules on that surface, or a grouping of phenomenological colours. Something makes the the canvas, wood and paint count as, say, a painting of Charles VIII.

Nor, clearly, is a painting what a painting is a painting of (excluding certain ambitious putatively selfreflexive paintings). A painting of Charles VIII is not Charles VIII. After all, Charles VIII might be dead but the painting might exist now . A painting seems to be something 'between' the canvas and what it is a painting of. It is neither but it depends on both.

Sartre says a painting is an 'unreality', and an 'aesthetic object'. It is a product of the special kind of consciousness he calls 'imaginative consciousness' (PI 246). Rather dramatically, imaginative consciousness negates the world and freely generates its own substitute unrealities. Visually confronted with the physical object that is wood, canvas and paint imaginative consciousness sees this as a painting of Charles VIII. The content of this act of imagination is not an image. Sartre is not claiming that an image of Charles VIII psychologically accompanies the visual presentation of the painted canvas. It is not the case that two things are presented simultaneously: the painted canvas and the image. Rather that painted canvas is seen in a special way, as something phenomenologically similar to the visual appearance of Charles VIII.

Sartre tries to draw a distinction between cinema and theatre when he says

'A tree for a cinema goer is a real tree, while a tree on the stage is obviously synthetic' (P/L 38).

but this provides us at best with an inductive generalisation about some some films and some plays. Midtwentieth century black and white films

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

frequently include artificial scenery and a theatre play might deploy real trees or plants. Anyway, Sartre misses the point that in watching a play we see real people but in watching a film we see pictures of people. Also, each showing of a play is a performance of that play but each showing of a film is not a performance of that film.

However, the essential relation between an actor and the character he portrays is putatively the same in both theatre and cinema. Sartre claims

'It is not the character who becomes real in the actor, it is the actor who becomes unreal in his character' (PI 250).

Hamlet never becomes nonfictional in a performance or film showing of 'Hamlet' but the living psychophysical whole human being who is the actor who plays Hamlet is negated or ignored by an act of imagination by the audience. The audience see the actor as Hamlet but they do not mix him up with a real prince of Denmark.

Although Sartre never published any poetry, it is clear that he regards poetry as a radical art form. He says 'the poet is outside language'(WIL? 6). Sartre takes the neoHegelian view that language is the 'element' in which human beings exist, rather, perhaps as fish exist in water. With the exception of rare individuals such as Nausea's Roquentin human reality is mediated by language. The world appears to us through our language. Poets are capable of escaping this linguistic prison and perceiving things in their bare particularity. They then use words in original ways to present us with new understandings of things. Indeed, poets grasp words themselves in original ways. Sartre says of the poet 'He sees words inside out' The poet has an objectivity and a detachment which enables him to manipulate word meanings into novel sentential forms. Nonpoets use language in a less reflective and more practical way.

There is an account of the possibility of the work of art resupposed by Sartre's remarks on art forms. A work of art involves an image and what Sartre calls an 'analogue'. The analogue of a work of art is its material vehicle. For example, the analogue of a poem or a novel is the ink distributed over the page, the analogue of a painting is the wood, canvas and paint, the analogue of a character in a play is the actor who plays that character. The existence of the analogue is a necessary condition for the existence of the work of art, at least as a publically available object.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Prima facie it follows that the work of art qua aesthetic object has a rather ethereal or abstract ontological status in Sartre's philosophy. It is not spatiotemporally located. It is not identical with its material vehicle. It is not an image in the consciousness of the artist or the audience. It is 'unreal'. Despite all this, the work of art exists. What is it then ?

Sartre's answer in *What is Literature ?* is designed to dispell any metaphysical or quasiCartesian conception of the work of art:

'the aesthetic object is properly the world in so far as it is aimed at through the imaginary' (WIL? 42).

So, if the world is what is, then in watching a play or looking at a painting and so on, we are grasping what is in a new way. We are imaginatively presented with a revision of what is the case. Sartre does not use the word in this context but it would be fair to say that the world is transformed by the work of art. The work of art does not really exist in its own world but presents our world in a new way.

Literature is the art form in which Sartre expresses his own philosophy. The novels and plays are strewn with characters in bad faith: Garcin in *No Exit*, Goetz in *The Devil and the Good Lord*, the senator in *The Respectable Prostitute*, Hugo in *Dirty Hands*, Franz in *Altona*, Lucien in the short story 'Childhood of a Leader' in *The Wall*, Daniel in *The Roads to Freedom*, Kean in the play of that name, and of course, the cafe waiter who features not only in *The Age of Reason*, the first volume of *The Roads to Freedom*, but in one of the more colourful passages of *Being and Nothingness*.

Opposed to them, but fewer in number, are the characters who in differing degrees recognise their own freedom: Mathieu in *Iron in the Soul* (but not in *The Age of Reason* and *The Reprieve*), Oreste in *The Flies*, the tortured resistance fighters in *Men Without Shadows*, Lizzie in *The Respectable Prostitute*, Roquentin in *Nausea*.

I said in the first chapter that there is something tendencious in doing philosophy as literature. In the absence of argument for a claim we might as well believe the opposite. However, freedom and bad faith are existential categories. It is part of Sartre's philosophy that people really are in bad faith and really are free. It follows that to the extent that Sartre's fictional depictions are credible, realistic, it is credible that freedom and bad faith really exist. Rather as laboratory experiments provide a test for scientific hypotheses, works of fiction provide a criterion for the truth of a 'humanistic'

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

philosophy such as Sartre's existentialism. Rather as the laboratory is not the world of nature but a partial replication of it, so a novel or a play is not 'real' but a depiction of a part of human reality.

Whether or not Sartre would be persuaded by this analogy, he draws a sharp distinction between literature and science;

'What distinguishes literature from scientific communication...is that literature is ambiguous' (L\S 7).

Each sentence of science has, or should have, one and only one meaning. Sentences of literature may have multiple meanings, or may express different propositions. Perhaps surprisingly to readers of *Being and Nothingness* or *Critique of Dialectical Reason* philosophy is distinguished from literature by the same criterion;

'In philosophy, every sentence should have only one meaning' (L/S 7).

These claims about ambiguity present Sartre with something of a dilemma. To the extent to which the sentences making up his novels, stories and plays are ambiguous they do not serve as a vehicle for his philosophy. To the extent to which they are unambiguous, they are not literature, at least by his own criterion. This dilemma is never fully resolved in his work.

As we saw in Chapter One, Sartre's literature, especially *Nausea*, contains putative solutions to philosophical problems. For example, in *Nausea*, some versions of the problem of induction are depicted as genuine, and as at once psychologically liberating and disturbing to the central character, Antoine Roquentin. What exists exists contingently rather than necessarily, and what is is what it is contingently, not necessarily. What passes for reality is constructed by language which in turn is driven by pragmatic preconceptions, but these can in principle be set aside by certain unusual experiences. Existence is shown to precede essence in the case of human beings, but it is shown to coincide in naturally occurring objects such as the root of the chesnut tree, and the reverse relation obtains in the case of human artefacts such as a beer glass or the tram seat. Roquentin himself feels his existence to be pointless or without justification.

The philosophical questions to which these putative answers correspond are: Will the future resemble the past ?, Could what is not be ? Could what is have not been what it is ? Are the ordinary objects of our experience

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

linguistically, psychologically or pragmatically 'constructed' ?, If so, could they be perceived as they are, or at least in new ways ?, What is the relation between being and being something ? Is it possible to be without being anything ? Is it possible to be something without being ? Does life have a meaning ?

In philosophy the putative answers to philosophical questions feature as the conclusions of arguments: sets of premises putatively entailing those conclusions. However, it could be argued that a good pragmatic test of a philosophy is whether that philosophy can be lived. Plausibility is lent to a philosophy by two things: the fact that one may really psychologically adhere to it, sincerely believe it, and that fact that one may behave as though it were true. For example, the eighteenth century Scottish philosopher, David Hume, thinks it psychologically impossible to doubt the existence of physical objects (although we may conduct a worthwhile philosophical inquiry into what causes us to have this belief in them). This gives at least *prima facie* confirmation to the thesis that physical objects exist. Similarly, William James, the American pragmatist philosopher thinks the test of a putative truth is whether it works in practice; whether adherence to it is consistent with the real course of one's experience.

If we hold these pragmatic considerations in mind then we may understand Roquentin, in *Nausea*, as living a philosophy. Roquentin lives Sartre's existential phenomenology. As with the characters in *freedom and bad faith*, to the extent to which we find Roquentin's experiences credible we should find Sartre's existential phenomenology credible.

Having said this in Sartre's defence, I think his literature never provides a conclusive solution to any philosophical problem. It only exhibits the plausibility of such solutions. The fundamental reason for this is that empiricism and pragmatism do not provide us with conclusive solutions to philosophical problems either. From the fact that we find it psychologically impossible to disbelieve P it does not follow that P. From the fact that belief in P is useful it does not follow that P. From the fact that P is confirmed by all of one's experience and refuted by none of it, it does not follow that P. One of the things that makes philosophical problems so seemingly intractable is that mutually inconsistent solutions to them are consistent with our lives being just as they are. To the extent to which Sartre's literature portrays our lives as they are it does not escape this empiricist and pragmatist constraint.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In Sartre's work philosophy and literature are connected in another way. Writing is an ethical and political act; an act which should be an authentic and committed expression of the author's freedom. It is to this idea of committed literature we should now turn.

Although statements advocating literary commitment are frequent in his writings on literature, for example,

'We think that the writer should commit himself fully in his works' (WIL? 22)

we need to know what this commitment is. What is the difference between committed and uncommitted literature ?

One answer is ruled out straight away. Sartre cannot simply mean that the author should write what he or she believes and refrain from writing what he or she disbelieves. This ethical requirement rests upon a picture of the author which Sartre rejects: the author as a repository of beliefs or attitudes which may be externalised in writing sincerely or insincerely. Rather, writing is 'a choice' (WIL? 23). Not only is there a choice whether to write or not, but having chosen to write, the act of writing is itself the making of choices. The literary work does not predate the writing of it. It does not already exist in the writer's mind before being written down. It comes into being by being freely composed.

The distinction between committed and uncommitted literature depends upon the distinction between authenticity and bad faith. Authenticity is the recognition of freedom, and bad faith is the denial or refusal of freedom. Committed literature is produced by authentic acts of writing; acts of writing that the author recognises as exercises of his own freedom and for which he alone accepts and has responsibility. Uncommitted literature is produced by inauthentic acts of writing in which the author refuses to recognise his own freedom and for which he refuses to accept responsibility. Sartre thinks most writing is done in bad faith:

'One of the chief motives of artistic creation is certainly the need of feeling that we are essential in relation to the world, (WIL? 267).

In fact our existence is contingent. We are but we might not have been. We are inessential to the world. What is could and will continue without us. Sartre is, I think, right about much literary motivation. We write in order to

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

be read, in order to be needed, in order to find a substitute for immortality. This is a kind of bad faith because it is a case of 'beingforothers'; producing an image of oneself which others will judge favourably rather than exercising one's free possibilities as a writer. He himself frequently insists that he writes for the present generation, not for posterity, although when interviewed he has confessed that he would not be displeased if his works were still read a hundred years from now. They no doubt will be.

Because they are written in bad faith, most literary works are produced 'to flee' or 'to conquer' (WIL? 26). What is fled from is the freedom of the writer. What is conquered is the freedom of the reader. The writer is master and the reader slave but, in true Hegelian style, the writer enslaves himself in enslaving the reader and the reader finds a new freedom in freely interpreting the writer's works in ways that undo the writer's mastery over them. Qui perde gagne: loser wins.

Not only does the loser win but the winner loses. When the writer writes in bad faith the following dialectical transitions obtain:

'[...] in the perception, the object is given as the essential thing and the subject as the inessential. The latter seeks essentiality in the creation and obtains it, but then it is the object which becomes the inessential' (WIL? 28).

In perception objects are presented as though they could exist irrespective of one's own existence. This contingency of one's own existence produces anguish. The writer therefore tries to make his existence necessary, indispensable, by creating something that does depend upon his own existence; a literary work. This is successful, because the work's existence does depend upon his having written it. This security is undermined, however, because what the work is is not wholly dictated by the interpretation of its author. Its essence is open to manipulation by its readers. Its existence too is contingent and not necessary. Even if it is read for thousands of years, there will no doubt come a time when it is forgotten. Then its author too will be forgotten.

A literary work has to be created freely because its existence is not causally determined. This is entailed by Sartre's view that

'the appearance of the work of art is a new event which cannot be explained by anterior data' (WIL? 32).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The state of the world prior to the existence of a literary work does not necessitate the existence of that work. It is the creation of the free spontaneity of its writer and its readers. In so far as the writer accepts these facts he evades bad faith.

Authenticity and bad faith are responses to the same situation: 'there is no art except for and by others' (WIL? 30). It follows that any literary work is produced by oneself or by other people. If it is produced by oneself it is nonetheless produced to be read by other people. The role of the other in literary production is inescapable but it can either be affirmed or denied by the writer. There is a choice between authenticity and bad faith. Freedom is primordial with regard to both.

Sartre thinks that the authentic creation of a literary work is sufficient for the morality of that work. Literary commitment cannot be immoral. The act of committed writing cannot be immoral and the content of committed writing cannot be immoral. He says, for example,

'nobody can suppose for a moment that it is possible to write a good novel in praise of anti-Semitism' (WIL? 46).

But could not a writer recognise that their writing is the exercise of their own freedom and yet choose to write the most appalling laudits to suffering and injustice? Commitment in writing seems neither necessary nor sufficient for the morality of what is written: not necessary because something moral could be the product of bad faith, not sufficient because something immoral could be the product of authenticity. This in turn is because if there is freedom either good or evil can be done freely.

Is there any ground, then, for Sartre's claim that

'at the heart of the aesthetic imperative we discern the moral imperative' (WIL? 45)?

Certainly many problems of aesthetics and many problems of morality have a common logical form. We can wonder whether there are aesthetic facts as well as whether there are moral facts. Arguably, both aesthetic judgements and moral judgements are universalisable. Both either admit or refuse foundations in theology or social consensus. Neither aesthetics nor morality can be reduced to science.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre, however, has something else in mind. Freedom is prior to both aesthetics and morality. Not only could there be no aesthetics and morality if there were no freedom, freedom is the ultimate value. Freedom, for example, is more valuable than the ultimate utilitarian value; happiness, and the minimisation of pain. Whether we agree with this or not we can see here a logical justification for the impossibility of an immoral committed literature. Committed literature not only exercises and acknowledges freedom it provokes it, and provokes its acknowledgement. In reading committed literature the reader is 'a pure freedom' and 'an unconditioned activity' and is 'conscious of being free' (WIL? 35). What is reading? 'Reading is a free dream' (WIL? 35).

Writing is a political act. A good society is a free society. We do not know what a good society would be like, precisely because it would be a free society. There can be no blueprint for a good society; no Platonic blueprint, no Marxist blueprint, no Christian or utilitarian blueprint. There is no a priori knowledge of a free society. All we know is that we would be free to make it.

Committed literature has a vital role in facilitating political freedom. Indeed, it is the responsibility of the intellectual to be committed; committed to freedom. Sartre says of the readers of committed literature;

'For the moment they have become what they would have been if they had not spent their lives hiding their freedom from themselves' (WIL? 36).

Committed literature dissolves the reader's bad faith. Committed literature shows the reader he is free.

Sartre not only writes novels, plays, stories, essays and works of philosophy. He engages in another kind of writing which is neither fact nor fiction or, rather, it is a putative synthesis of both. His massive 'biography' of Flaubert, *The Family Idiot*, and to a lesser degree his books about Jean Genet and Baudelaire, are designed to be members of a new genre: the 'true novel'. The 'true novel' has a second aim which, if anything, is even more ambitious than 'going beyond' the distinction between fact and fiction. It is supposed to present us with a total understanding of its subject matter.

Is a synthesis of fact and fiction possible? Factual writings are made true by the obtaining of states of affairs. For example, the sentences of a factual account of a human being are true if and only if there exists (or has existed or will exist) a real human being who is just as reported by those sentences.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

If not, the account is false. That is not enough to make it fictional (except perhaps in a metaphorical or pejorative sense) but it is enough to make it only purportedly factual. Fiction, on the other hand, even though it may include true reports of types of persons, actions and states of affairs is literally false if construed as about what did, will or does exist. It would seem then that nothing can be both fact and fiction. Of course it is possible to include within the covers of one book factual passages and passages of fiction and *The Idiot* of the Family frequently reads that way. Clearly too, works of fiction may include mention of facts. Sartre's *The Reprieve* includes a description of the Munich crisis for example. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* includes descriptions of the battles of Austerlitz and Borodino. However, this does not prevent those works being works of fiction because they include much that is not even putatively factual. It follows that the inclusion of facts in a novel is not sufficient to make it a 'true novel' in Sartre's sense either.

Sartre is best read, I think, as deploying both fictional and factual techniques in attempting a total understanding of Flaubert: Marxism and existential psychoanalysis as well as literary prose styles. There is something common to all viable methods for understanding human beings, whether fictional or factual. He says

'The attitude necessary for understanding a man is empathy' (L/S 113).

We understand a person to the extent to which we know what it is like to be that person. The notion of empathy Sartre is alluding to here is *Verstehen*. 'Verstehen' is the infinitive form of the ordinary German word which means 'to understand' but 'Verstehen' is also a technical term in the philosophy of the early twentieth century German philosopher of history Wilhelm Dilthey. *Verstehen* is the imaginative reconstruction of the mentality of some other person, group of person especially through their written and unwritten artefacts. Sartre thinks that to understand a person it is necessary to know what it was like to live their life. We have to grasp *le vecu*, the lived.

There is much plausibility in this. The prospects for a wholly scientific or reductivist understanding of a human being seem slim. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how subjects such as history or archaeology or psychology could proceed in the absence of something like what Sartre is calling 'empathy'.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

We may still ask, however, whether a 'total' understanding of another human being is possible. There is no doubt that this is Sartre's ambition. He says

'The most important project in the Flaubert is to show that fundamentally everything can be communicated, that without being God, but simply as a man like any other, one can manage to understand another man perfectly' (L/S 123)

and

'[...] every man is perfectly knowable as long as one uses the appropriate method and as long as the necessary documents are available' (L/S 123).

Two obstacles to Sartre's project may be removed. He himself concedes that total understanding of a living person is impossible. A living person is incomplete because they are in the process of defining their own essence through free choices. Secondly, we are not compelled to adopt the sceptical Cartesian view according to which the mental states of another are so inscrutably private as to be logically incommunicable to another. As we saw in Chapter Sartre rejects the privacy of the mental. Indeed, he thinks it possible to know someone else better than one knows oneself.

Nonetheless, an insuperable obstacle remains. There exists an infinity of facts about a human being and a biography is a document of finite length. Of course Sartre is aiming at understanding, not an inventory of facts. The problem is that any newly discovered facts may require us to revise our understanding. We always have more to learn. He should have let this be his considered view because it leaves open our freedom.

like an auditorium). To appraise this claim we need a distinction between

a performance is an audible and datable occurrence and numerically distinct performances may exist at different times and in different places. A symphony is not that. A symphony is what a performance is a performance of. A symphony not only does not exist at different times in different places, a symphony could exist even if there were no perfor

12.

BEING

Husserl's Concept of Being: From Phenomenology to Metaphysics

Individual and Real Being

Husserl alters what he calls the ordinary concept of reality to facilitate a distinction between two kinds of being:

'[...] the ordinary concept of reality needs a fundamental limitation according to which a difference between real being and individual being (temporal being simpliciter) must be established' (Ideas I xxi)

It is not yet clear what the sense of 'real' is ordinarily or in Husserl's amended use but it is clear that the extension of 'real' is being restricted. Ordinarily, or prephenomenologically, one might be inclined to regard ordinary spatiotemporal particulars as real, perhaps as the paradigm case of reality, but Husserl is inviting us to give up this assumption. The limitation of 'real' he is talking about is, then at least a limitation of scope or extension.

What is this distinction between real being and individual being? Husserl says individual being is

'[...] factually existing spatiotemporally' (Ideas I §2)

So if something is an individual being it is spatiotemporal and it is a fact that it exists. Husserl does not mean by this that it is analytic or part of the concept of an individual being that it exists. Quite the contrary, because he says

'Individual existence of every sort is, quite universally speaking, "contingent". It is thus; in respect of its essence it could be otherwise' (Ideas I §2)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

So, in the case of any individual being it is not a necessary truth that that being exists and it is not a necessary truth that it is the thing it is. Although this conjunctive disclaimer marks a difference between real beings and individual beings it would seem only stipulatively constitutive of that distinction. This is because it does not seem incoherent, even if unlikely to be right, to hold that something that is not real necessarily exists and conversely, that something that is real contingently exists. For example, someone might hold that numbers necessarily exist (for example on the ground that they exist in every possible world) but hold that they are not real (perhaps because they are abstract objects). On the other hand, someone who held to the 'ordinary' view, against Husserl, that spatiotemporal particulars are real might nonetheless agree with him that they exist contingently and could be other than they are. Because Husserl has no argument against these suggestions he has done no more than assert that the class of individual beings is part of the class of contingent beings. He has not yet shown that contingency is essential to irreality or that necessity is essential to reality.

Husserl glosses over a problem when he says that any individual being in respect of its essence could be otherwise. We can make sense of the idea of a spatiotemporal particular gaining or losing properties so long as we think of these properties as not essential to it. There seems to be a difficulty in saying that something could lose any or all of its essential properties. This is partly the conceptual point that something's essential properties are precisely the one's it could not lack yet still be or be the thing it is. It is also the more metaphysically threatening point that something's possibly lacking all its essential properties and possibly acquiring a new set does not seem to be any kind of possibility at all. This is because 'it' cannot retain a reference through the putative transition. This is obvious if we ask what could lose all its essential properties and possibly acquire a new set? No answer would seem to be possible, even in principle. Husserl in fact does not need this strong claim about the essences of spatiotemporal particulars for the rest of his phenomenology so he should just drop it. Then we have: an individual being has some contingent properties.

What kind of modal notion is being invoked by Husserl in his use of this distinction between contingency and necessity? A modest clarification is offered when he says

'But the sense of this contingency, which is called factualness, is limited in that it is correlative to a necessity' (Ideas I §2)

I take it contingency is limited by necessity because if something is contingent it is not necessary and if something is necessary it is not contingent. This is uncontroversial because $\Box P \supset \Diamond P$ and $\Diamond P \supset \Box P$. I take it contingency is correlative because necessity and contingency are interdefinable: $\Box P \Leftrightarrow \neg \Diamond \neg P$ and $\Diamond P \Leftrightarrow \neg \Box \neg P$. Husserl's endorsement of these formal relations tells nothing however about the content of the modality he has in mind.

A clue is given when he calls the contingency of individual beings 'factualness' and contrasts it with 'eidetic necessity' (Ideas I §2). It is essential to Husserl's phenomenology that pure essences may be intuited: what something is may be studied independently of whether it is. Through the imaginative process of eidetic variation hierarchies of dependencies may be established. For example, redness is founded or grounded on extension and so on. These dependencies are not factual because they obtain whether or not there are any red objects or any extended objects. The dependencies are necessary dependencies but the factual existence of objects is a contingent existence.

Although this tells us a little more about Husserl's modal notions it leaves the fundamental philosophical problem about modality unsolved: saying exactly what new information is added to 'If x is red then x is extended' by prefacing that whole sentence with the necessity operator. Saying that this would add that if x is red x cannot not be extended just shifts the problem of the unanalysed modal notion onto 'can'. It is hard to see how modality can be analysed in nonmodal terms. Suppose someone wished to maintain that the world is all that is the case. It is hard to see what extra information is provided about a portion of the world when it is claimed that it is not only the case could not not be the case or although the case might have not been the case.

To summarise so far, Husserl draws a distinction between real being and individual being. Real being is a realm of eidetic necessity but individual being is a realm of spatiotemporal contingency. If this distinction sounds familiar it is probably because it sounds so thoroughly Platonic. Husserl himself however positively insists that this is not the case. This is because essences may have spatiotemporal location. Prima facie this blurs the distinction he has just drawn because it would seem that *malgré lui* essences as well as individual beings have what he calls 'actual (veritable) being' (Ideas I §22). Husserl's difficulty is perhaps not so acute as might appear

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

because the spatiotemporal location of essences differs in crucial respects from the spatiotemporal location of individual beings. Notably an essence can be in different places at the same time but an individual being can only be in one place at one time. For example, Husserl thinks that redness may exist simultaneously in this coloured surface, in that coloured surface.

Against Husserl, we could claim that this allows essences 'actual (veritable) being' (Ideas I §22): the redness exists (rather than there being no redness), the redness is actual because redness can exist now, and redness is veritable because the redness is truly here and truly there. In favour of Husserl we may construe 'actual (veritable) being' as a narrow empirical concept. A token of redness may be directly presented to perceptual consciousness but redness may only be detected by the abstractive process of imaginative variation. This would be to use an epistemological criterion, or as Husserl would prefer, a phenomenological criterion to distinguish tokens of red from redness, or individuals from essences.

Absolute Being

Individual being is not only to be distinguished from real being, but from what Husserl calls 'absolute being'. Absolute being is consciousness. or, perhaps better, absolute being is the kind of being that consciousness is or has. By 'consciousness' here we must not understand consciousness as the ordinary empirical awareness we all exercise on a day to day basis, but that consciousness as 'reduced' by the phenomenological reduction or epoche. As Husserl puts it:

'The realm of transcendental consciousness as the realm of what is, in a determinable sense, "absolute" being, has been provided [for] us by the phenomenological reduction' (Ideas I §76)

We are offered here a criterion for distinguishing individual being from absolute being. Individual being falls by the epoche. It is subject to that phenomenological suspension of belief or putting into parentheses of the natural attitude that entails a methodological agnosticism about the existence of the empirical world. One's own consciousness survives the epoche and so falls on the side of absolute being, even though one's empirical self and the existence of one's own body is phenomenologically suspended. Although I

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

indubitably am, and am indubitably conscious, I am no longer a human being.

Why does Husserl call consciousness as opened up by the epoche 'absolute being'? In one sense of 'absolute' something is absolute if it depends upon nothing else, but other things, perhaps everything, depend on it. We can see the second of these dependencies in this:

'It is the primal category of all being (or in our terminology, the primal region), the one in which all other regions of being are rooted, to which, according to their essence, they are relative and on which they are all essentially dependent.' (Ideas I §76)

It is controversial to what degree Husserl's transcendental idealism is a kind of idealism but because Husserl is describing the constitution of objects after the epoche it would be a gross misconstrual of this passage to take it to express a quasi-Berkleyan empirical idealism. By 'rooted' here Husserl means 'phenomenologically rooted' and by 'dependent' he means 'phenomenologically dependent'. To explore this rootedness or dependency further would require analysis of Husserl's doctrine of the transcendental constitution of objects. For the moment we may just note that the empirical world is not 'absolute' because it depends on consciousness and one ground for holding that consciousness is absolute has been adduced by saying the empirical world depends on it.

'[...] the possibility of nonbeing of everything physically transcendent' (Ideas I §49)

We can see the lack of dependence of consciousness on the empirical world in this:

'[...] while the being of consciousness, of any stream of mental processes whatever, would indeed be necessarily modified by an annihilation of the world of physical things its own existence would not be touched' (Idea I §49)

So, if there were no empirical world the being of consciousness would be modified but its existence would not be touched. This means which mental processes obtain would be affected by the disappearance of the empirical

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

world but consciousness as a whole would survive this disappearance. For example, a mental process which falls under the description 'the knowledge that such and such is the case' or 'the true belief that such and such is the case' or 'the veridical perception of that such and such' would not fall under those descriptions if their putative objects in the empirical world did not exist. Husserl is enough of an externalist to realise that those mental processes would not be just those states in the absence of their objects in the external world. This is what it means to say 'the being of consciousness, of any stream of mental processes whatever, would indeed be necessarily modified'.

On the other hand consciousness' 'own existence would not be touched' because phenomenologically, or from the inside consciousness is unaffected by the epoche. Husserl is enough of an internalist to realise that from within its own resources consciousness has no check on the veridical or nonveridical nature of its own mental states. Using 'real' in its 'ordinary' sense and not in its gradually constructed phenomenological sense Husserl validly infers from his claims so far:

'Consequently no real being, no being which is presented and legitimated in consciousness by appearances, is necessary to the being of consciousness itself' (Ideas I §49)

Phenomenologically it is as though if the empirical world were to be annihilated consciousness would survive.

We now have a new criterion for distinguishing between absolute and individual being. Absolute being sustains a measure of internalism about consciousness. Individual being sustains a measure of externalism. If we ask at exactly what point internalism about the mental becomes false and externalism becomes true, then Husserl's noesis/noema distinction falls wholly on the internalist side of the distinction as does the transcendental ego. The whole of the world of the natural attitude falls on the externalist side of the distinction.

Husserl talks about consciousness as 'immanent being' and says that immanent being is absolute being because it needs no thing in order to exist:

'Immanent being is therefore indubitably absolute being in the sense that by essential necessity immanent being nulla "re" indiget ad existendum'

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The empirical world of physical objects is 'transcendent' because it is not exhausted by the consciousness of it. It is not part of absolute being precisely because it depends upon consciousness for its own constitution as a world:

'In contradistinction, the world of transcendent "res" is entirely referred to consciousness and, more particularly, not to some logically conceived consciousness but to actual consciousness' (Ideas I §49)

Husserl considers an objection to the whole project of the phenomenological reduction. He worries that it might be inconceivable, contradictory or meaningless:

'[...] is it still conceivable and not rather a countersense that the corresponding transcendent world does not exist?' (Ideas I §49)

It is not incoherent to deny the existence of the external world because no contradiction is entailed by the claim 'There is no external world'. Husserl's epoche is not a denial of the existence of the external world. It is agnosticism about that, but even that agnosticism requires the coherence of the supposition that there be no external world because it requires the coherence of the second conjunct of 'It is possible that there is an external world and it is possible that there is no external world'.

There is a further worry. Husserl talks about consciousness in relation to the corresponding transcendent world. Does it make sense to affirm the existence of an immanent world while entertaining the possible nonexistence of a transcendent world? Arguably it does. If Husserl were involved in making the ontological denial that there is an transcendent world then there would be no clear or obvious sense in which consciousness could be called 'immanent'. It would be rather like the claim that something is up even though nothing is was or could be 'down'. However, Husserl is only employing the heuristic device of supposing that there might not be a transcendent world. The concept of a transcendent world used to do this would seem to provide 'immanent' with the requisite semantic contrast.

The answer to Husserl's question then is that it is conceivable that there is an immanent world but no transcendent world.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Husserl tries to mark for further distinction between absolute being and individual being, or real being in the ordinary sense of 'real' when he says:

'[...] consciousness (mental process) and real being are anything but coordinate kinds of being, which dwell peacefully side by side and occasionally become "related to" or "connected with" one another' (Ideas I §49)

Once shorn of metaphorical content it is not clear that this passage expresses very much. We can at least say that Husserl is trying to dispell the idea that phenomenologically we are presented with consciousness and the external world in the same kind of way: as for example we might be presented with two physical objects through the same sensory modalities. The phenomenological differences between the ways of accessing absolute being and individual being are so radially distinct as to be partly constitutive of the distinction between these two kinds of being. Individual being is accessed by perceiving it. Absolute being is accessed by being it.

Is Husserl therefore committed to the view that 'being' is equivocal, that there are different sense of 'being' ? Certainly, the sense and reference of 'absolute being' is not the sense and reference of 'individual being' but Husserl recognises that there is a primordial sense of being that they share. He sometimes calls this 'existence'. For example he says

'An immanent or absolute being and a transcendent being are, of course, both called "existent".' (Ideas I 49)

This means that what falls under the description 'absolute being', consciousness, and what falls under the description 'transcendent being', the empirical world, both exist. They are rather than are not.

This suggests that Husserl does not think 'being' equivocal. There are different kinds of being in the sense that part of what is truly called 'immanent' and 'absolute' and part of what is truly called 'empirical' and 'transcendent' but these two portions of what is do not differ in respect of being. In so far as they both are they are identical.

I turn now to a fresh way in which Husserl draws the distinction between absolute being and individual being. He says that on the one hand there is

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'[...] an adumbrated being, not capable of ever becoming given absolutely, merely accidental and relative'

and on the other hand there is

'[...] a necessary and absolute being, essentially incapable of becoming given by virtue of adumbration and appearance' (Ideas I §49)

What does this distinction amount to? A adumbrated being is an object that is perceptually presented through phenomenological profiles or perspectives rather than all at once. Husserl thinks that physical objects are perceptually presented in this way. A nonadumbrated being is not presented through profiles or perspectives but is presented all at once. Husserl thinks feelings and other mental states are presented in this way. Crucially adumbrated beings admit of an appearance/reality distinction but nonadumbrated beings admit of no appearance reality distinction.

This is a new way of marking the distinction between absolute being and individual being because no absolute being admits of an appearance/reality distinction and any individual being admits of an appearance/reality distinction. Husserl speaks of the

'Merely Phenomenal Being of Something transcendent, [and the] Absolute Being of Something Immanent' (Ideas I 44)

Phenomenal being is appearing to be. Appearing to be is consistent with appearing veridically to be but does not logically entail it. Although states of consciousness in a sense appear: they are available to phenomenological reflection once the field of transcendental subjectivity is opened by the epoche, they do not appear in the way that empirical objects appear. Empirical objects are transcendently constituted by intentional acts and it is this fact of constitution that leaves room for an appearance/reality distinction. Appearing to be presupposes appearing to someone or something or other so Husserl talks of

'the being of something transcendent, understood as being for an ego' (Ideas I §44)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Consciousness is an absolute being because it does not appear to anything in this rather perspectival way.

The examples Husserl adduces in support of this distinction are rather contentious. He thinks that feelings does not admit of an appearance reality distinction but the tone of a violin does. Here is Husserl on feelings:

'A mental process of feeling is not adumbrated. If I look at it, I have something absolute; it has no sides that could be presented sometimes in one mode and sometimes in another' (Ideas I §44)

Husserl has to be right that there is an enormous phenomenological difference between the way a feeling is presented and, say, a physical object is presented. In the case of a physical object I may be visually presented with one or more sides but not all of them at once. I may tour the physical object if it is not too large or remote, pick it up if it is not too heavy, crack it open if it is not too resilient and so on. There is a clear nonidealist sense in which one's knowledge of the physical object is 'constructed' out of one's various experiences of it. Although the whole of it is not directly presented at any one time I take it to be a whole object that is presented through my perspectives on it.

Now, nothing quite like this seems to be true of the ways in which I am conscious of my own feelings. Clearly, they have no physical sides, back, front, and so on. It makes no literal sense to tour them, pick them up and so on. However, what is far less clear is whether these phenomenological contrasts justify Husserl's claim that my feelings admit of no appearance/reality distinction. This seems not to be right.

To the extent to which my feelings are dispositions or take objects in the external world their internal phenomenology is no infallible guide to what they are. I might feel something phenomenologically similar to love that is only infatuation and might make empirical mistakes about the identity of the person I feel this for. (My millionaire property tycoon was a bankrupt gangster). Even construed internalistically after the epoche it is not clear that there is no logical room for mistakes about the phenomenology of my feelings. If it seems to me that I am in love it follows from this that it seems to me that I am in love but this tautological entailment tells us nothing about phenomenological incorrigibility. If I say 'I believe I am in love' it does not follow that I am in love. This is because I may be caused to believe that I am in love by something other than being in love. Someone might have

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

persuaded me for example. I leave aside the Freudian and the neurological possibilities that the phenomenology of a state might not be revelatory of the reality of the state.

For all these reasons Husserl might not be right about mental states even internalistically construed to say:

'I see when I look at it [it] is there, with its qualities, its intensity, etc., absolutely' (Ideas I §44)

There are also reasons for blurring the distinction in the opposite direction, even if less persuasive ones. He thinks an episode or object in the external world always and everywhere admits of an appearance reality distinction. Here he gives the example of a violin tone:

'A violin tone, in contrast, with its objective identity, is given by adumbration, changing its mode of appearance' (Ideas I §44)

Clearly, if a tone alters over time and its changes are only directly empirically detectable, it is necessary to hear the tone over all that time to become acquainted with all of it. Although this seems right, it hardly marks a contrast with one's feelings which could equally change over time. A tone at a time is given just as incorrigibly or incorrigibly as a feeling at a time. If anything at all is given incorrigibly it would seem to be phenomenological content at a time and if this is right, it is right whether this contributes to understanding the contents of consciousness or the contents of the external world.

Husserl provides us with a more secure contrast between the absolute being of consciousness and the transcendent or individual being of the external world when he says

'[...] the sort of being which belongs to the mental process is such that the latter is essentially capable of being perceived in reflection. The physical thing is also essentially capable of being perceived' (Ideas I §45)

So the contents of consciousness but not the contents of the external world may be perceived in reflection. By 'reflection' Husserl means the special kind of scrutiny of consciousness by consciousness facilitated when the field of transcendental subjectivity is opened up by the epoche. He does not mean

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

ordinary empirical introspection. If he meant 'reflection' in its broad ordinary sense it is not clear that he would be right. I can after all reflect upon episodes that have occurred in then external world, for example if I remember them. Using his phenomenological sense of 'reflection' his claim is stipulatively right because reflection is consciousness's awareness of its own contents after the epoche. Husserl cannot however use this as an independent criterion for demarcating what belongs to consciousness from what does not because the concept of consciousness is already being invoked.

Husserl develops in more detail the idea that consciousness could exist even if nothing else existed. This ground for calling consciousness 'an absolute being' is logically similar to some quasiAristotelian grounds for calling something a substance:

'[...] consciousness considered in its "purity" must be held to be a selfcontained complex of being, a complex of absolute being into which nothing can penetrate and out of which nothing can slip, to which nothing is spatiotemporally external and which cannot be within any spatiotemporal[ly] (sic) complex, which cannot be affected by any physical thing and cannot exercise causation upon any physical thing [...]' (Ideas I §49)

It perhaps should be reiterated that Husserl is making a set of phenomenological claims not a set of ontological claims here. He is describing how consciousness appears after the epoche not claiming how it is metaphysically. Nonetheless, it appears to be a substance. Consciousness after the epoche is given to itself as though it could exist even if nothing else existed. The immunity of consciousness to physical causes is reminiscent of Leibniz's claim that those substances called 'monads' have no windows through which anything could enter or go out.

Phenomenologically this seems to be right. Indeed, it is the fact that consciousness may be given to itself as though it could exist even if nothing else existed that makes solipsism thinkable. Why consciousness may be given to itself in this way seems to me an unsolved and difficult philosophical problem.

Suppose then, that Husserl is right that consciousness is phenomenologically given as a selfcontained complex of being. This would seem not to warrant the conclusion that consciousness is an absolute being. If we accept that something is absolute if it depends upon nothing else for its

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

existence then Husserl would seem only entitled to the conclusion that consciousness is given as if it is an absolute being.

Husserl talks about 'the whole spatiotemporal world' as 'a merely intentional being' and says it has 'the merely secondary sense of a being for a consciousness' (Ideas I §49). This raises a question faced by all kinds of transcendental idealism, including Kant's and Husserl's. Is there conceptual room to talk about a world that is not our world. Husserl, and in a way, Kant, think there is no such room. Necessarily, what we take to be reality is reality as it appears to us. Husserl says

'It is a being posited by consciousness in its experiences'

and, perhaps rashly

'[...] beyond that it is nothing' (Ideas §49)

How can he know that there is nothing to the world except what we can in principle know of it? This would seem to be a negative metaphysical existential claim that outstrips the self-imposed limits of his own phenomenology.

'Thus the sense commonly expressed in speaking of being is reversed. The being which is first for us is second in itself; i.e., it is what it is, only in "relation" to the first' (Ideas I §50)

HEIDEGGER

The Question of Being (Seinsfrage)

'The Question of Being. This question has today been forgotten'

(BT 2)

'[...] first of all we must reawaken an understanding of the meaning of this question' (BT 1)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

‘Being [...] cannot be conceived as an entity’ (BT 4)

‘The Being of entities ‘is’ not itself an entity’ (BT 6)

Dasein

‘[...] it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it’ (BT 12)

‘We are ourselves the entities to be analysed’ (BT 42)

‘The ‘essence’ of Dasein lies in its existence’ (BT 42)

‘[...] it is in such a way as to be its “there”.’ (BT 133)

‘[...] it is itself the clearing (Lichtung)’ (BT 133)

‘Dasein is its disclosedness’ (BT 133)

Truth (aletheia)

[...] the entities of which one is talking must be taken out of their hiddenness; one must let them be seen as something unhidden’ (BT 33)

Being (not entities) is something which ‘there is’ only in so far as truth is. And truth is only in so far as Dasein is. Being and truth ‘are’ equi-primordially’ (BT 230)

Concern (Sorge)

‘The totality of Being-in-the-world as a structural whole has revealed itself as care (Sorge). In care the Being of Dasein is included.’ (BT 231)

‘The Being of Dasein is care (Sorge)’ (BT 465)

Nothing

‘The nothing noths’ (What is Metaphysics?)

Thinking

‘Thinking does not overcome metaphysics by climbing still higher, surmounting it, transcending it somehow or other; thinking overcomes metaphysics by climbing down to the nearest of the nearest’ (‘Letter on Humanism’ in David Krell ed. Martin Heidegger Basic Writings p. 374)

Technology

'Being, as the element of thinking, is abandoned by the technical interpretation of thinking' ('Letter on Humanism' p. 195)

References to Being and Time (BT) are to the marginal page numbers of the Robinson and Macquarrie translation which also those of the original German.

16.4.97

Nausea

Lecture by Stephen Priest

1. JeanPaul Sartre's novel Nausea, was published in August 1938. The public lecture *Existentialism and Humanism* was delivered in October 1945, and published in 1946.
2. Philosophy is essentially dealing with what is not explained between science and theology. An infinite number of philosophical problems lies in this space. In Nausea, philosophical problems are approached from a fictional point of view, as the psychological problems of Roquentin. Problems dealt with include existence and essence, universals, and the meaning of life.
3. Sartre points out through Roquentin that that there is existence rather than nothing at all, and especially that we ourselves exist, is a remarkable and puzzling philosophical fact. For Roquentin, the experience is traumatic and disgusting. "I am suffocating. Existence is penetrating me all over... The veil is torn away. I have understood, I have seen." The veil torn away is essence, or things being what they are, and what is seen is existence or the being of things. Existence can't be explained in terms of nothing. Nor can existence be explained in terms of essence. Being is not the same thing as being something.
4. Roquentin's extreme discomfort and physical illness are caused by his realisation of the intrinsically meaningless nature of existence: a sense of claustrophobia resulting from our inability to escape the universe. We are condemned to die, and to live our lives in view of death, although we never chose to live. Roquentin feels it would have been better never to have existed at all rather than to live with the inevitable prospect of death (like being on a plane realising it will crash, without having chosen to be there on

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

the flight). Sartre presupposes that there is no life before birth so his antitheological position is inconsistent with that of Plato, for example, who claims we can choose our incarnations.

5. Science theology as fail to fully explain the universe. Logic is completely a priori. It does not follow logically from something having essence that it also has existence. Existence has no explanation. It is simply a brute fact that there is something rather than nothing. There is no meaning to this fact.

6. Existence and essence are contingent. It is true that what is is, but it might not have been. It is true that what is is what it is, but it might not have been. Contingency vs. necessity. Sartre argues that existence is not necessary, there might just as well have been nothing rather than something. Similarly, essence is contingent, so anything could have been anything. The fact that things are what they are is a political, social, psychological or linguistic construction. Roquentin deconditions himself from these constructions, and sees the world afresh. Sitting on a seat, the word "seat" refuses to attach itself to what he is sitting on in his mind. "This red belly... this is not a seat." It is an arbitrary fact that things are what they are. They can be interpreted in radically different ways; it is merely that our conceptual scheme has indoctrinated us into a certain view of the world. Roquentin's disgust at his own body. His disgust at flesh as something not quite solid and not quite liquid, sometimes hot and sometimes cold. "I see my hands spread out on the table. It is alive, and it is me... It opens, it shows me its underbelly... It looks like an animal upside down."

7. Compare the dualism of Descartes. The *Meditations* and *Nausea* are both strongly personal and intensely first person singular works. Descartes, after arguing for his existence, concludes that he himself is a spiritual being, something that thinks yet depends on nothing physical. There is a quasimaterialist inversion of Cartesian philosophy in *Nausea*. Roquentin talks as if he were trapped inside his body, which is going to die. (One is reminded of Dr. Johnson's dictum 'I am trapped inside a dying animal'.)

8. Three ways of formulating the problem of universals. 1. What are examples examples of? 2. What are types? Do they exist as well as particular, individual things? 3. How do general words take on meaning? By and large it strikes us that there are similarities between things that allow us to categorise them. Plato's doctrine that universals are (nonpsychological)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

ideas or forms (eidos) existing outside of space and time is inconsistent with the nominalist view, according to which the only thing objects we call by the same name have in common is precisely that we call them by the same name. Roquentin: "It is out of laziness that the world looks the same day after day." Our pragmatic approach to objects (the bus is there to take us where we want to go, a shirt is there for us to wear) is an obstacle to a clear perception of them for their own sake. We perceive objects only as means to our ends. We only perceive as

much of the object as is useful to us. We do not perceive objects in their intrinsic properties, or as they are in their own right.

9. The future as a mere abstraction. We are at the interface of past and future and the present is permanently becoming the future. Nevertheless, preoccupation with the future is an obstacle to understanding existence. The making of inductive references from the past or present to the future. It does not logically follow from the fact that there was a lecture on Monday and that the University calendar says there will be one on Wednesday, that there really will be one on Wednesday. The experience of Roquentin is truncated to a solipsism of the present moment. The existence of other countries, for example, becomes merely a thought in Roquentin's mind. If you were to see an overhead projector for the first time without ever having heard about anything like it, you would perceive it clearly, like Roquentin, who sees the world afresh.

10. Sartre is influenced by the phenomenology of Husserl (see especially *Ideas*, 1913) and Heidegger's existentialism (see *Being and Time* 1927). Heidegger's Dasein, is the kind of being that is capable of raising the question of being, of interrogating being. Paradigmatically, Heidegger means human existence (not the empirical human being, still less the human mind). It is not too misleading to think of Dasein as human being so long as we stress the 'being'. Roquentin is an example of Dasein in action. Dasein is described by Heidegger as the site of being's disclosure to being: the forest clearing or area of light (Lichtung) where being is revealed to itself.

11. In his 1945 lecture *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre distinguishes three kinds of things: artefacts, naturally occurring objects, and human beings. He claims that while essence precedes existence in the case of artefacts, and existence and essence coincide in the case of naturally occurring objects, existence precedes essence in the case of human beings.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Here 'precedes' means 'is a necessary condition for' or 'is a prerequisite for'. Our being is necessary for our being something. An artefact's being something is necessary for its being. In the case of natural objects being and being something are mutually necessary (and so mutually sufficient). Our existence is prior to our essence so our being is prior to our being what we are. This is a key point of Sartre's philosophy. It is peculiar to humanity to have no fixed or a priori nature, whether Godgiven or biological. We are the beings who make ourselves what we are. Humanity is selfdefining and therefore free.

Lecture delivered in the University of Edinburgh Wednesday 16th April 1997 10.00 – 11.00 am. George Square Lecture Theatre.

18.4.97

Sartre and Freedom

1. The problem of free will vs. determinism. Ethics and law, assuming responsibility and culpability, presuppose free will, whereas science, with some exceptions (chaos theory, quantum mechanics) presupposes determinism. (Note there is a debate over free will and determinism in law, although the trend seems to be towards free will.)
2. Sartre is a believer in free will, believing determinism to be a wholly false philosophy. Radical libertarianism. "There is no determinism... Man is free... Man is freedom." (Existentialism and Humanism) For introductions to Sartre's literature and philosophy, see the following works. Iris Murdoch, Sartre. Hazel Barnes, Sartre. A.C. Danto, Sartre. Mary Warnock, The Philosophy of Sartre. All these writers are puzzled by Sartre's extreme denial of determinism, especially since Sartre was a Marxist, and Marxism is quite a determinist ideology.
3. We normally think of freedom as something pleasant and perhaps politically desirable. Sartre talks of man being "condemned to be free," of the burden of freedom and the anguish it brings. In "Being and Nothingness" (1943), a book fusing existentialism and phenomenology, there is a chapter on freedom, in which Sartre distinguishes between freedom, the ability to make choices, and power, the ability to change the world. Our power may be limited without our freedom being limited. For example, French resistance fighters being tortured by Nazis were powerless but still horribly free to decide whether they should betray their comrades or not. Human beings are deciding beings; this is an ontological fact about them.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

4. Phenomenology is the description of what appears to consciousness. Sartre claims we experience ourselves as free, not as determined. But Sartre thinks we are so close to our freedom that it often escapes our attention. If it was to be subtracted from our experience, the reality of our existence would be radically transformed. The facts that make us aware of free will are concrete and real, whereas examples supporting determinism are abstract. For Sartre, human experience is more reliable and informative than abstract science.

5. Just like freedom, consciousness cannot be scientifically explained, no matter how much we investigate neurology. Despite this, Sartre is not a Cartesian dualist; he does not believe in a soul. Being somebody, being who one is rather than who one is not, cannot be explained scientifically. The existence of now cannot be explained scientifically, from which it follows that the past and future cannot be explained either. Sartre is a profoundly antipositivist philosopher, where positivism is the view that all problems can be solved scientifically.

6. The case, in "Existentialism and humanism," of a young man coming up to Sartre during the German occupation, and asking whether he should join the Resistance to avenge his dead brother, or give in to his mother, who insisted that he should stay home. Sartre: "You are free; choose yourself." Nobody can make decisions for us. Nobody can die your death for you, nobody can make your life choices for you. If you seek advice, you have already chosen the advice you want to hear by deciding who to ask.

7. Remarks on being unlucky in life are just so many excuses, according to Sartre. We always choose our own situation. Sartre thinks we are spiritually and emotionally empty inside, that we cannot turn inside for truth and meaning. All meaning is to be found outside of our minds, in action. In this way, Sartre, Heidegger and other atheist existentialists, are opposed to Plato, Descartes and other philosophers, who believe in some inner quest. For Sartre, human essence is complete only at the moment of death. I am perpetually creating myself until I die.

8. Sartre's lecture "Existentialism and Humanism" annoyed Heidegger because of Sartre's remark that Heidegger is a humanist. There is a debate in 20th century philosophy on whether it is good to be a humanist. Should the starting point for philosophy be one's own existence, as Descartes suggested? Sartre's term "human reality" is a translation of Heidegger's Dasein. Heidegger wrote his "Letter on Humanism," stating that he is really talking about being, not specifically human existence. The French

philosopher Jacques Derrida, in 1967, published "Margins of Philosophy." Included was an essay titled "The Ends of Man," in which Derrida argued that Sartre had a better understanding of Heidegger's work than Heidegger himself, questioning the view that the author of a text must necessarily understand it better than anyone else.

23.4.97

Sartre's Moral Philosophy

1. Sartre's moral philosophy. Two important notions responsibility and bad faith (*mauvais foi*).
2. Sartre's notion of responsibility was developed to solve a problem in moral philosophy. A middle way between the two extreme views that moral values are absolute, and that they are relative. The claim that moral values are absolute is usually grounded in theology, i.e. in a belief in God. Relativism claims that one cannot say that x is right/wrong, but only that someone claims x is right/wrong.
3. Sartre holds that if humans were to be subtracted from the universe, there would be no values. The distinction between right and wrong is part of the human world. Sartre's reasons for rejecting relativism may have been political. While it may at first appear desirable because it is liberal, Sartre rejects it because it makes it impossible to condemn brutal regimes, or brutality in human relations. E.g. the moral point of view of a rapist is, under relativism, as respectable as that of the victim.
4. "Existentialism and Humanism," p. 49: "We are unable ever to choose the worst. What we choose is always the better." Sartre's moral philosophy is grounded on two facts, authenticity and bad faith. To be authentic is to choose one's freedom, while bad faith is the denial of one's freedom. The hypocritical pretense that we are not free. We are unable to choose the worse from those options open to us.
5. Our freedom brings with it responsibility. "Existentialism and Humanism," p. 29: "Man is responsible for what he is." Who are human beings responsible to? Sartre thinks each human has a responsibility to each other human. Two reasons, a causal and a logical reason. i) Causal. In acting, one is setting an example to other people. In joining the trade union, I am implicitly recommending to others that they do the same. ii) Logical. It would be incoherent for me to say: "I am joining this trade union, but no one else should." Here, Sartre is not thinking of practical issues. There could be many practical reasons why others should not act as you do. Moral

philosophy requires not making an exception of oneself. "One ought always to ask oneself, what would happen if anyone would do as one is doing... I am obliged at every instant to perform actions which are examples."

6. Bad faith. The hypocritical denial of freedom. In a cafe, Sartre writes about the waiter, describing his manner and illustrating how we act out what we are. We all act a series of roles in life, and this implies that we are something different from what we think we are. We are false to ourselves in our tone of voice, in our gestures, even in our thinking about ourselves. Bad faith is endemic to humanity. Soldiers on parade are a paradigm of bad faith. Acting like a machine or an object is to pretend to be mechanic rather than human. In Sartre's play "Kean," Kean cannot tell the difference between when he is acting and when he is not acting. The play raises the question what each of us is except for the roles we play, the roles of student, mother, friend, acquaintance etc. Sartre knows that roles have practical purposes. Sartre is interested in the hypocrisy of the role rather than its practical importance. Perhaps disturbingly, Sartre thinks there is no soul or inner self beneath the mask. There is only freedom. "We are not free not to be free." That is the only respect in which we are not free.

7. Types of bad faith. i) Human comedies. Attaching importance to things that are of no importance. People at meetings who pretend that the business coming before the meeting is genuinely important. People attaching importance to the tedium of everyday life. ii) The past. Attaching oneself to the past, identifying oneself with what one was ("I am what I was") or feeling regret or remorse about the past. For Sartre, there is no past, only the present. iii) Others. Presenting an image of oneself to other people. People who dress impressively, or fake upper class accents. iv) Easy answers. Adopting a readymade value system, eg. becoming converted to Christianity, the preexisting value system. Although Sartre was politically leftwing, he never joined the Communist party. v) The bastards. (*Les salauds*.) Those who deny not only their own freedom but also that of others. See the short story "Childhood of a Leader," the story of a young man who becomes a fascist. Or see the political work "Antisemite and Jew," in which Sartre explains antisemitism in terms of bad faith.

8. Hardly anyone escapes Sartre's condemnation. Bad faith produces a paradox. By denying my freedom, I am concealing it from myself, but on the other hand, I know that I am free. Sartre rejects one possible explanation of the paradox, the psychoanalytical one. Sartre does not believe in the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

unconscious. Sartre accepts Descartes' view that if someone is in a mental state, they know they are.

9. It follows from Sartre's theory of bad faith that there is no connection between the moral and the legal, and the immoral and the illegal. In the 50s, Sartre greatly approved of his friend Genet having chosen to be a homosexual. He also approved of Genet's being a thief, because he believed he had chosen to be a thief in full integrity. Baudelaire, on the other hand, is condemned as being in a bad faith. He falls under the heading of "the past," having often expressed sentiments of regret and remorse over his past in his poetry.

25.4.97

Etre en soi and etre pour soi

1. For Sartre, there are two kinds of being, or modes of existence. Être en soi (objective being) and être pour soi (subjective being). Terminology derived from Hegel. It is characteristic for Sartre and other existentialists to feel the need for a new vocabulary, with which to describe what has hitherto escaped our understanding. Note that Sartre's atheism does not imply a notion of the universe having at one point appeared out of nothing. What is could have begun to be even without a God. This is difficult to imagine, but not illogical. An unsolved metaphysical problem, whether what is ever began to be.

2. En soi describes the world as it is independent of human beings, as it would be if there were no humans.

3. Sartre says being-in-itself is not subject to temporality. Time is a complicated concept, one that can be divided into subconcepts. The existence of time entails change, a distinction between before and after, between past, present and future, between beginning and ending etc. What exactly does Sartre mean by "time"? See the chapter on temporality in "Being and Nothingness," in which Sartre claims that the distinction between past, present and future are subjective, or introduced into the universe by human beings. Note that "now" means something like "when I am," or "when I am doing x." "Past" means "before I was" or "before I did x." "Future" means "after I am" or "after I do x." These are concepts that each human being adapts to the specific circumstances of their existence. They do not belong to the objective world or être en soi. (Note that concepts such as "before," "simultaneous" and "after" are not subjective.) Remember

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

that Sartre perceives humans as being on the edge between the past and future.

4. Ensoi is contingent. It exists, but it might not have existed. It is a truth that there is something rather than nothing, but not a necessary truth. This is a highly controversial point in metaphysics. Others have argued that since there is something rather than nothing, there must necessarily be something than nothing. Sartre sees this metaphysical as being confused as to the difference between existence and the necessity of existence.

5. Ensoi is undifferentiated. The being of things that exist outside of humanity is exactly the same in each case. They may differ in essence, but they all exist in the same way.

6. Ensoi is massif or solid. There are no gaps in being; it is a unity. The fact that there is something rather than nothing is just one fact, not a series of facts. All things that exist in themselves have just one thing in common; their mode of existence. Being in-itself appears to humans as a vast ("massive") totality.

7. Ensoi is opaque to itself. The concept of consciousness as light, transparent to itself. Sartre and Descartes share the view that if someone is in a certain mental state, they know they are in that mental state. If I believe I am in a certain mental state, I am. I cannot be wrong; my mind is transparent to itself. This view is diametrically opposed to that of Freud. But being in-itself is opaque to itself. A tree or rock has no consciousness of itself. This is an ontological distinction between objects that exist in themselves and humans.

8. In the case of being-in-itself, existence and essence coincide. In the case of naturally occurring objects, existence does not precede essence. In the case of artificial, created objects, essence precedes existence. Humans shape matter in accordance with their ideas. Only with humans does existence precede essence.

9. Sartre says about being-in-itself that "it is what it is." This seems like a logical truism.

10. Being-for-itself is the kind of being that pertains to humans. It implies the existence of consciousness. Intentionality is a characteristic of consciousness, the characteristic of being about something. There is no thinking without thinking about something. Sartre thinks that this intentionality cannot belong to the objective, physical, mind-independent world. The mind's magical ability of ranging over distances, e.g. the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

possibility of travelling in thought, thinking outside the here and now thinking of New York when in Paris.

11. Freedom is another characteristic of being for-itself. See previous lectures.

12. The distinction between prereflexive consciousness and reflexive consciousness. Prereflexive consciousness is consciousness of objects, as when you are repairing your bicycle tire. Reflexive consciousness is consciousness of consciousness, as when you think about perception.

12. Being-for-itself "is in the manner of an event." That is, although to others we appear as objects, our being is really more like a process. Although we appear as physical objects, we are psychophysical processes. One emotion gives way to another etc. Sartre is not being dualist. It is one of the same being that is simply being perceived from two different perspectives (inside and outside.)

13. In the case of being-for-itself, existence precedes essence. We are free and always choosing. There is no situation in which we do not have choice. Sartre does not mean that it is within our power to do impossible things. See previous lectures.

14. Sartre says of being-for-itself that "it is what it is not, and it is not what it is." The human reality cannot be specified or captured in a well-defined way. There is something elusive about human reality. This is bound up with time and essence. Humans are constantly changing and there is thus no time when we can say they are what they are. It is a mistake to talk about moments, an atomistic view of time that falsifies reality, which is constant flux.

15. Being-for-others, a third manner of being, not really in the fundamental sense of the two others. A power struggle between two beings that exist for themselves. Being-for-itself is always in conflict with itself. This operates on the level of individuals, groups, states etc. Being-for-others is a constantly occurring clash of two freedoms. Sartre thinks that it is not possible for two people to pass each other in the street without one dominating the other. See "The Look" in "Being and Nothingness." Each individual is perpetually struggling to maximise their own freedom. This view contrasts with that expressed by Hegel, who believed in a kind of forgiveness or spiritual overcoming of power struggles. ("The Phenomenology of Being," "Master and Slave Dialectic.") Sartre, being an atheist, admitted no such optimism.

16. The power struggle takes the form of an attempt to reduce the other from *pour-soi* to *en-soi*. We try to reduce others to objects and affirm ourselves as subjects.

28.4.97

The Transcendental Ego

1. Sartre's first philosophical book was published in a magazine from 1936 to 1937. "The Transcendence Of The Ego." An attack on Husserl's "Ideas" (1913) and the notion of the transcendental ego postulated therein. An inner self, the real me. Not a Cartesian soul, not something existing independently from the body. A notion postulated in order to solve the problem of personal identity. What lasts from birth to death? What makes me now identical with the person who existed ten years ago?

2. Note the word "identical" is actually ambiguous in English. It can be used to mean "the same sort" or "the same one." Qualitative and numerical identity. Husserl believed that personal identity cannot be explained physically or psychologically. Physically, our bodies are constantly restructuring themselves and changing, psychologically we are constantly abandoning and replacing thoughts and feelings.

3. The second problem that Husserl hoped to solve was this: What makes me who I am? Again, Husserl believed it was neither something physical nor something psychological. In theory, there could have been a being physically and psychologically like me, without actually being me.

4. The third problem: How is it subjectivity possible? Since Kant and Hegel, there had been a distinction in French and German philosophy between subject and object. Consciousness was thought of as a relationship. There is no consciousness without something that consciousness is consciousness of. The relationship between subject and object. Husserl believed it was not at all clear how something physical could be a subject. By subjectivity, Husserl means a perceiver that is not perceived by itself (just like eyes that see do not see themselves). For Husserl, subjectivity is a very peculiar fact. An additional reason for postulating the transcendental ego.

5. For Husserl, these problems cannot be explained scientifically because science is limited to explaining objective rather than subjective phenomena. By transcendental, Husserl means something that makes experience possible but is not experienced itself, i.e. transcends experience. The transcendental ego cannot itself be experienced because it is that which is experienced.

6. Sartre believes there is no transcendental ego. The kind of philosophy called phenomenology cannot postulate a transcendental ego.

Phenomenology must describe that which appears to consciousness, no more. The transcendental ego does not appear to consciousness. The

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

difference between Husserl and Sartre is much like that between Descartes and Hume. Descartes believes there cannot be thoughts without a thinker. Hume disagrees, stating that each of us might just be just a collection of thoughts, "a bundle of perceptions." Hume believes that if you survey your mind, you never come across any subjective thinker, but find only thoughts and images.

7. In reflexive consciousness, it appears as if one had a psychological self or inner me. But this is an illusion, Sartre argues, because it is something that appears to consciousness. If there is no reflexion on consciousness by consciousness, then this sense of the inner self does not appear. There are many moments when this inner self does not appear, eg. when one is absorbed in a task such as repairing a motorbike. According to Sartre, we are best understood as processes, even though when we look at each other we appear as objects. For Sartre, there is no personal identity, but only a process that goes on for so many years.

8. Sartre is unable to solve the problem of personal identity. He cannot explain what it means to say that these characteristics apply to me, that I am x, y and z. Neither does Husserl, Sartre claims. If Husserl is right, there are as many transcendental egos as people. How would I determine which of these is mine?

9. There are two ways of thinking about people. On the model of somebody else, or on the model of ourselves. Sartre thinks we obtain radically different views depending on which option we choose. By and large, materialist philosophers are thinking about people on the model of somebody else, while dualists think about people on the model of themselves. Sartre claims the dualist is right in perceiving people as thinking beings, while the materialist is right in perceiving people as embodied.

10. The philosophical descriptions of the body in "Being and Nothingness." I cannot perceive my own head, whereas I can perceive other people's heads. They are objects to me, although I sense myself as a subject. For them, the situation is reversed. Sartre agrees with Descartes on the incorrigibility thesis, whereby no one can be mistaken about the content of one's own mind. If I think I am in a certain state of mind, then I am. Two reasons for doubting this. Logically, it does not seem to validly follow from the premise "I believe I am in pain" that I actually am. Also, I could in principle be caused to believe that I am in pain even though I am not.

11. Other fundamental concepts from "Being and Nothingness." The idea of nothingness or absence of being is quite important in Sartre's philosophy. It

is essential to what we are. Negation or notbeing is essential to the imagination. Being able to imagine, requires the ability to imagine what is not the case. If we did not have the ability to negate or nullify what is, we would be trapped in our experience. Furthermore, Sartre thinks that each one of us is a kind of nothingness. Consciousness as a nothingness. This does not mean it does not exist. It is like an empty zone in the midst of being.

12. Facticity. Usually thought of as a constraint on freedom, although it is really a constraint on power. We can think of our existence as "being in the world." We can think of ourselves as the inside of the world. Facticity is that which is around us, the field in which we exercise our power. Our historical location is part of our facticity, as is our geographical location. The situation that we are thrown into constrains our power. This is compatible with the notion of freedom, because freedom is merely the situation of having a choice, even if this choice is unpleasant.

13. The distinction between what happens and what is done. Doing something presupposes freedom.

30.4.97

Existentialism and Marxism

1. Is there any point to Marxist philosophy considering that Marxist states are historically in decline, with the exception perhaps of China? There will always be something like socialism as the antithesis of capitalist individualism. The importance of studying Sartre's political philosophy for understanding what is going on in China today. Sartre, whether he was aware of it or not, reconciled many capitalist ideas with Marxism.

2. Sartre's main political work: "Critique of Dialectical Reason." An attempt to combine Existentialism and Marxism. A difficult task, as there are many philosophical tasks in the way, eg. disagreement over the problem of free will vs. determinism.

3. A second problem. There is an emphasis on consciousness in Existentialism, while Marxism is a materialist philosophy. This is not to be overemphasised; Sartre is not a dualist like Descartes. It is also not true that Marx and Engels believe that there are only physical objects. They believe that something can only have nonphysical (abstract, legal, political) properties if it also has physical properties. Unless physical conditions change, emotional, legal and religious conditions cannot change. A distinction between the economic base or the superstructure of ideology. The

material means used by society to perpetuate itself vs. its world picture, i.e. the legal system, religious beliefs etc.

4. The third major contrast between Existentialism and Marxism is that Existentialism is a philosophy of the present, whereas Marxism has a view of history. For Sartre, there is only present existence. He is interested in the metaphysical mystery of why there should be such a time as "now." Man is the point where the past becomes the future. For Marxism, history can be divided into stages based on economic developments. The 20th century is the age of capitalism, where the capital that sustains society is in private hands. Before capitalism came feudal society, which was organised according to land tenure. Marx and Engels think capitalism will collapse because it contains internal contradictions or tensions that will lead it to destroy itself. This has not yet happened. Although there have been socialist revolutions, these have tended to overthrow feudal rather than capitalist societies.

5. The idea of the Lumpenproletariat, which is that part of the proletariat that contains drug addicts and other degenerates. The working class in capitalist society, according to Marx, is being divided in two. Part is being incorporated into the upper class, and the rest becomes the Lumpenproletariat. There is no such division of society in Sartre's Existentialism.

6. In Sartre, it is the individual human being that acts. A group only acts if the individuals that compose the group acts. In Marxism, it is the working class that acts. There may or may not be such a thing as class consciousness in an individual. We may not realise that in what we are trying to do in our lives we are acting in the interest of an economic group. In Marxism, nothing ever does anything as an individual. Everyone is a person of a certain type, a member of a group. Sartre writes of individuals.

7. Sartre attempts to solve these problems in the "Critique of Dialectical Reason." The word "critique" is a deliberate allusion to Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," published in 1781. Kant, in this book, attempted to demonstrate the impossibility of metaphysics, where metaphysics is knowledge of reality rather than appearance. The claims that there was a first event, or that there wasn't, or that there is a God, or that there is life after death are metaphysical claims. The term "metaphysics," meaning "beyond physics," is derived from the title of a book that Aristotle wrote after he wrote one on physics. For Kant, we are equipped so as to pose metaphysical questions, but not so as to answer them.

8. Dialectical reasoning as explained by Hegel in the "Phenomenology of Spirit," 1807. Dialectical reasoning involves showing philosophical problems to be contradictions, but not in the logical sense. (Logically, a proposition is a contradiction if it contains its own negation.) For Hegel, terms such as "up" and "down" are dialectically related, because they are two concepts that belong together and help to explain each other. It does not make much sense for something to be "up" unless in principle something could be "down." Hegel applies this principle to the whole of philosophy, and claims that philosophical thinking presupposes dialectical pairs, eg. free will vs. determinism, mind vs. matter, self vs. other, one vs. many. For Hegel, it is a mistake to insist on the reality of one concept and the falsehood of the other.

9. Sartre was fascinated by this idea and felt it could solve the problems preventing the union of Existentialism and Marxism. His ambitious work "Critique of Dialectical Reason" is several hundred pages long and was written at great speed. Sartre consumed up to 20 amphetamine tablets a day while writing it. Sartre claims that human beings freely act on the world, and the world makes human beings what they are. A compatibilist view of free will and determinism. Praxis, a term sometimes used by Marx, is the manipulation of matter according to human intentions or human ideals. Human beings create a human world. We literally manipulate matter so that we are surrounded by cars, houses etc. Even the natural world is manipulated so that it sustains our agriculture, entertainment etc. Sartre's term for manipulated matter is the practico-inert. (The book is written in the most appalling political and philosophical jargon.)

10. For Sartre, consciousness operates by praxis. We read our aims and objectives into the world. This is consistent with Marx's view that economic classes perceive the world according to their interests, so that there is a capitalist and a proletariat view of the world. Someone who owns much capital lives in a different world or mindspace than someone who aspires to owning much capital. Sartre never gives up his view that although our power is enormously constrained, we are still free. We are choosing beings.

11. Sartre takes the view that there are no groups without individuals, and no individuals without groups. Series vs. groups. A series is a set of human beings who are knowingly in competition with each other. For example, in capitalist society everyone is in competition with everyone else and we only cooperate so as to further our own interests. In Marxist society, there are genuine groups.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

12. Sartre: "Scarcity is the motor of history." Because the world is not an abundant place, there are different forms of social organisation. Scarcity has created both capitalism and the possibility of its socialist alternative.

2.5.97

From Kant to Sartre

Lecture by Stephen Priest

1. Before Kant, philosophers were divided into two schools. Rationalists (Spinoza, Descartes, Leibniz) held that since our senses are contingent, so is our particular perception of reality through them, and that reason is therefore the best means to understand the universe. Empiricism (Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume) held that experience offers the only possibility for understanding the universe, reason divorced from experience being useless.
2. Kant argued against the possibility of successful metaphysical thinking. We are psychologically equipped so as to pose metaphysical questions, but not so as to answer them. All our thoughts and perceptions are spatially and temporally limited. Even when we believe we are thinking of something abstract or nonphysical like a number, we are in fact only using a spatiotemporal image as a metaphor of that number. We cannot imagine anything nonphysical. We are not only physical, but also cognitive prisoners of the spatial and temporal universe.
3. Kant further argues that there are twelve concepts or categories (existence, nonexistence, plurality etc.) that are common to all human beings. He claims that his list of categories is presupposed by any conceptual scheme, no matter from which society or historical period it is drawn. If we had a different cognitive filter, the world would appear to us in a different way.
4. Finally, Kant argues that metaphysics produces contradictions. There can be a seemingly fully valid argument for the existence of God, and a seemingly fully valid repudiation of the existence of God. Valid arguments are mutually exclusive. Kant feels there is something wrong with the procedure of advancing arguments for and against metaphysical propositions. Thinking is being used outside space and time, outside the area of its usual application. To do this is for thinking to be idle.
5. Kant distinguished three kinds of philosophy: aesthetic, analytic and dialectic. Dialectical reasoning was developed by Hegel and Marx after the death of Kant. Analytical philosophy is now common in the USA. Its aim is

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

to analyse concepts. Since we cannot understand metaphysics, we can try to understand our conceptual scheme. If we cannot understand the world, we can try to understand our understanding of the world. Frege, Wittgenstein have caused the replacement of metaphysics by linguistic analysis.

6. Logical positivism is a movement closely related to analytical philosophy. It entails the view that every problem can be solved scientifically. This is why metaphysics is impossible. Metaphysical statements seen as meaningless. Analytic or a priori vs. synthetic or a posteriori statements.

Statements that are true by definition (eg. $2 + 2 = 4$) vs. statements, including all empirical statements, statements confirmed through sense experience ("Edinburgh is in Scotland.") These are the only two valid kinds of statement. Metaphysical statements fall into neither of the two categories. The Vienna Circle. A.J. Ayer. The replacement of metaphysics by science.

7. Two other movements. Phenomenology. The aim of philosophy must be to describe the appearance of the world to us. Franz Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger. Structuralism is not just a philosophical, but an interdisciplinary movement. Piaget was also a psychologist. Althusser was also a political theorist. According to structuralism, the world is structured through language and appears to us through a linguistic filter. The language we speak determines our perception of the world. This, like all the above, is presupposed by Kant's idea of the conceptual filter.

8. Poststructuralism. Jacques Derrida. He agrees with the structuralists that language determines reality, but holds that the meanings of language are perpetually postponed or deferred; they are elusive. We cannot be sure of them. The author of a book has no privilege to understanding the language he uses; another person might understand it better than him. Derrida also believes that reasoning operates dialectically, but he is not as optimistic about this as Hegel.

9. Existentialism is partly derived from Kant's moral philosophy, which argues that we have free will, are individuals rather than members of groups etc. Sartre is opposed to logical positivism. He thinks that some problem, such as the existence of consciousness, freedom and subjectivity cannot be explained scientifically. The concepts of being me and now also cannot be explained scientifically. Sartre shares the view that metaphysics are impossible. There is no attempt to explain the origin of the universe, or answer the question of whether God exists.

10. Sartre has no interest in analytical philosophy. He thought British philosophers were boring. Sartre endorses some of the views of

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

musical notation is an abstract description of music, nor is it to deny that the language of physics or aesthetic appreciation can be used to make true assertions about music. His point is that music qua sound cannot be verbally expressed or communicated.

Sartre has the makings of an argument for this. He thinks music does not take on meaning by referring to nonmusical reality. For example,

'The significance of a melody if one can still speak of significance is nothing outside the melody itself
(WIL? 3)

Sartre's reservation about the use of 'significance' is that signifying is arguably a twoterm relation between signifier and signified and, logically, such a relation could not obtain in the absence of one of its two relata. His worry is groundless, however, because if something signifies itself it still has the logical form of a relation, but the form Raa, not Rab.

If what music signifies is music then the significance of music cannot be found in nonmusical reality. It does not logically follow from this that words cannot express what music expresses but it is inconsistent with the existence of some nonmusical source of musical significance that could be accessed either verbally or musically. Language expresses nonlinguistic reality but music does not express nonmusical reality. This does not soundly refute the possibility of the verbal expression of the musical but it is inconsistent with one picture of that putative possibility.

The thesis that music as heard cannot be expressed or communicated verbally is entailed by the empiricist epistemological thesis that private experiential contents cannot be characterised in a public language. Such contents, variously called 'qualia', 'sense data', 'phenomena' or 'impressions' may be known to the perceiver of them but are systematically uncommunicable to another. It is this alledged privacy of experience and meaning that the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein sought to refute in his so called Private Language Argument in *Philosophical Investigations* (1952). Sartre's thesis that music is logically private is inconsistent with the conclusion of that argument.

What is music ? What is a musical work of art ? Sartre does not address these questions directly but, perhaps surprisingly, he says of Beethoven's 7th Symphony 'I do not hear it actually'(PI 251). He says 'I listen to it in the imaginary' (PI 251). There are two ways of taking this. If we draw a

distinction between a symphony and the performance of that symphony then it makes more sense to speak of listening to the performance than listening to the symphony. Secondly, if one is listening to a performance then, at any one time ('actually'), one is hearing only part of the performance although, in another sense, one is thereby hearing all of it (rather as seeing part of a physical object counts as seeing that physical object).

In order to hear part of a performance of a symphony as part of the performance of that symphony certain psychological facts have to obtain. Sartre largely endorses the distinction Husserl draws between protention and retention in *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (1905). Protentions are predictions or anticipations but of a special kind. They are tacit anticipations about the course one's future experience will take. Retentions are memories or psychological traces, but, again, of a special kind. They are tacit memories of the past course of one's experience. Both protentions and retentions are, so to speak, 'read into' the present content of one's experience to make it the kind of experience it is. For example, a note that is part of Beethoven's 7th is heard as such if and only if it is located as such through protention and retention. It has to be heard as a continuation of as much of the performance has elapsed and as the initiation of the remainder of the performance to come. Hearing the performance in this way, as a performance, and as a performance of Beethoven's 7th, requires imagination. We see here a preliminary plausibility in Sartre's claim that 'I listen to it in the imaginary' (PI 252).

More profoundly, Sartre is claiming that the performance is heard in the concert auditorium but the symphony it is a performance of is heard in the imagination. ('In the imagination' is something of a misnomer here because as we saw in chapter Sartre thinks the imagination is not a space. The imagination is not like an auditorium). To appraise this claim we need a distinction between a symphony and its performance. A performance is an audible and datable occurrence and numerically distinct performances may exist at different times and in different places. A symphony is not that. A symphony is what a performance is a performance of. A symphony not only does not exist at different times in different places, a symphony could exist even if there were no performances of it. Not only is 'unperformed symphony' not a contradiction, there are unperformed symphonies. This is sufficient to show not only that there is a genuine ontological distinction between a symphony and any performance of it but that it would be a

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

mistake even to identify a symphony with the set of performances of it. If it can exist without any of them it can exist without all of them.

Sartre refuses to identify the symphony with its performance when he says,

'In the degree to which I hear the symphony it is not here, between these walls, at the tip of the violin bows. Nor is it in the past...It is completely beyond the real'

(PI 251)

The real is what exists in the past, present or future. The symphony does not exist in past present or future so the symphony does not exist in the real. In fact, 'the seventh symphony is in no way in time. It is therefore in no way real' (PI 251).

Even when a possible misunderstanding is removed objections may be brought against Sartre here. Sartre is not claiming that the symphony does not exist. To say that something is not real is not to say that it does not exist. (For example, to say that these flowers are not real but artificial is not to say that the artificial flowers do not exist). Sartre is saying that the symphony does exist but it does not exist in time. It exists but its existing does not take up any time. It is but does not last.

This conclusion has not been established by his argument so far and there are grounds for thinking it false. Even if we accept his claim that the symphony does not exist in past present or future it does not follow that it does not exist in time. Suppose there is no past present or future, there might still exist beginnings, durations, changes, and endings and perhaps a symphony begins. lasts, changes and ends. Arguably, a symphony does at least have a beginning: no symphony predates its composition and all symphonies postdate their composition. It also makes sense to say that a symphony has existed for a duration; the period of time since its composition. A symphony may change if its composer changes its composition. It could even be argued that a symphony ceases to exist, ends, if every material, mental or abstract realisation of it ceases to exist. Conversely, Sartre's atemporal concept of the symphony may be defended if it is conceded both that past present and future exist and that the symphony does not exist in them. This is because there is no time that is not past present or future. It follows that there is no time at which a symphony exists.

Could a symphony exist but not exist for any period of time ? Could anything be but not last ? Some philosophers have argued that there are

nontemporal objects; things that exist but do not take up any time to be, for example: numbers, God, universals, mathematical points, geometrically perfect forms, instants (that is, times without duration), time itself. If anything should be on this list, should symphonies be added ?

Sartre says that although the symphony is not in time and is therefore not real 'it depends on the real for its appearance' (PI 251) He is making the epistemological point that a symphony could not be known to exist unless certain events could be witnessed. Paradigmatically we know of symphonies through their performances but clearly a symphony may also be read, or be thought. It is questionable whether something putatively nontemporal could depend upon the temporal for knowledge of it. This is alledgedly the case for the theological and abstract objects just mentioned. It is even less clear that something nontemporal could depend upon something temporal for its existence. That is not a claim Sartre has made directly. It is, however, arguably entailed by his claim that when we hear a performance in the auditorium we hear the symphony in the imaginary.

Sartre's concept of painting is also ontologically controversial. He does not provide us with necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being a painting, but he does try to explain how it is possible to see something as a painting. He also claims that a painting may effect peculiar ontological syntheses. For example, he says

'Tintoretto did not choose that yellow rift in the sky above Golgotha to signify anguish or to provoke it. It is anguish and yellow sky at the same time' (WIL? 3)

and to dispell any misunderstanding says

'not sky of anguish or anguished sky: it is an anguish become thing, an anguish that has turned into yellow rift of sky' (WIL? 3).

It is doubtful whether Sartre knows Tintoretto's intentions, and doubtful whether they affect the truth value of the crucial identification of anguish with the yellow sky. Prima facie the identification is incoherent. Anguish is an emotion, something intrinsically unobservable but undergone. I might observe that you are in a certain emotional state but it makes only poetic sense to say I observe your emotion. A painted rift in the sky is observable and it lacks sense to say it is undergone, even though I might undergo

something on observing it. However, construed as an insight rather than an incoherence, we can say two things. If we could see anguish it might look essentially like Tintoretto's yellow sky. Anguish and his sky have something in common which is more aesthetically conspicuous than the differences between them. Also, the yellow sky could be an expression of anguish. It could be anguish made outward in paint, rather, perhaps, as speech is the expression of thought. Speech is thought made outward in sound. Can you hear thinking? Perhaps listening to speech is the nearest possibility.

Although 'a is the expression of b' is not logically equivalent to 'a is numerically and qualitatively identical to b', the relation between anguish and its expression is very close. Anguish is necessary for its expression and it could be argued that the expression of anguish is necessary for anguish. It still would not follow that anguish and its expression are identical but they would be mutually dependent and so mutually sufficient. Sartre, like Hegel, sometimes uses 'identical' to mean 'mutually dependent'. The rather expressivist account I have given of Sartre's meaning is consistent with his claim that the sky 'is an anguish become thing' (WIL? 3).

Rather as a piece of music is neither its performance nor its score, a painting perhaps surprisingly, is not a distribution of paint on canvas. *Prima facie* this is odd, because to destroy an intentionally painted canvas is enough to destroy a painting, and to intentionally put paint on canvas is enough to bring a painting into existence.

However, a painting is not necessarily identical with the necessary and sufficient conditions for its existence; the set of such necessary conditions must, after all, be very large. Nor is a painting intentionally painted canvas *tout court*. That physical object is only the distribution of paint molecules on that surface, or a grouping of phenomenological colours. Something makes the the canvas, wood and paint count as, say, a painting of Charles VIII.

Nor, clearly, is a painting what a painting is a painting of (excluding certain ambitious putatively selfreflexive paintings). A painting of Charles VIII is not Charles VIII. After all, Charles VIII might be dead but the painting might exist now. A painting seems to be something 'between' the canvas and what it is a painting of. It is neither but it depends on both.

Sartre says a painting is an 'unreality', and an 'aesthetic object'. It is a product of the special kind of consciousness he calls 'imaginative consciousness' (PI 246). Rather dramatically, imaginative consciousness negates the world and freely generates its own substitute unrealities. Visually confronted with the physical object that is wood, canvas and paint

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

imaginative consciousness sees this as a painting of Charles VIII. The content of this act of imagination is not an image. Sartre is not claiming that an image of Charles VIII psychologically accompanies the visual presentation of the painted canvas. It is not the case that two things are presented simultaneously: the painted canvas and the image. Rather that painted canvas is seen in a special way, as something phenomenologically similar to the visual appearance of Charles VIII.

Sartre tries to draw a distinction between cinema and theatre when he says

'A tree for a cinema goer is a real tree, while a tree on the stage is obviously synthetic' (P/L 38).

but this provides us at best with an inductive generalisation about some some films and some plays. Midtwentieth century black and white films frequently include artificial scenery and a theatre play might deploy real trees or plants. Anyway, Sartre misses the point that in watching a play we see real people but in watching a film we see pictures of people. Also, each showing of a play is a performance of that play but each showing of a film is not a performance of that film.

However, the essential relation between an actor and the character he portrays is putatively the same in both theatre and cinema. Sartre claims

'It is not the character who becomes real in the actor, it is the actor who becomes unreal in his character' (PI 250).

Hamlet never becomes nonfictional in a performance or film showing of 'Hamlet' but the living psychophysical whole human being who is the actor who plays Hamlet is negated or ignored by an act of imagination by the audience. The audience see the actor as Hamlet but they do not mix him up with a real prince of Denmark.

Although Sartre never published any poetry, it is clear that he regards poetry as a radical art form. He says 'the poet is outside language'(WIL? 6). Sartre takes the neoHegelian view that language is the 'element' in which human beings exist, rather, perhaps as fish exist in water. With the exception of rare individuals such as Nausea's Roquentin human reality is mediated by language. The world appears to us through our language. Poets are capable of escaping this linguistic prison and perceiving things in their bare particularity. They then use words in original ways to present us with new

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

understandings of things. Indeed, poets grasp words themselves in original ways. Sartre says of the poet 'He sees words inside out' The poet has an objectivity and a detachment which enables him to manipulate word meanings into novel sentential forms. Nonpoets use language in a less reflective and more practical way.

There is an account of the possibility of the work of art resupposed by Sartre's remarks on art forms. A work of art involves an image and what Sartre calls an 'analogue'. The analogue of a work of art is its material vehicle. For example, the analogue of a poem or a novel is the ink distributed over the page, the analogue of a painting is the wood, canvas and paint, the analogue of a character in a play is the actor who plays that character. The existence of the analogue is a necessary condition for the existence of the work of art, at least as a publically available object.

Prima facie it follows that the work of art qua aesthetic object has a rather ethereal or abstract ontological status in Sartre's philosophy. It is not spatiotemporally located. It is not identical with its material vehicle. It is not an image in the consciousness of the artist or the audience. It is 'unreal'. Despite all this, the work of art exists. What is it then ?

Sartre's answer in *What is Literature ?* is designed to dispell any metaphysical or quasiCartesian conception of the work of art:

'the aesthetic object is properly the world in so far as it is aimed at through the imaginary' (WIL? 42).

So, if the world is what is, then in watching a play or looking at a painting and so on, we are grasping what is in a new way. We are imaginatively presented with a revision of what is the case. Sartre does not use the word in this context but it would be fair to say that the world is transformed by the work of art. The work of art does not really exist in its own world but presents our world in a new way.

Literature is the art form in which Sartre expresses his own philosophy. The novels and plays are strewn with characters in bad faith: Garcin in *No Exit*, Goetz in *The Devil and the Good Lord*, the senator in *The Respectable Prostitute*, Hugo in *Dirty Hands*, Franz in *Altona*, Lucien in the short story 'Childhood of a Leader' in *The Wall*, Daniel in *The Roads to Freedom*, Kean in the play of that name, and of course, the cafe waiter who features not only in *The Age of Reason*, the first volume of *The Roads to Freedom*, but in one of the more colourful passages of *Being and Nothingness*.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Opposed to them, but fewer in number, are the characters who in differing degrees recognise their own freedom: Mathieu in *Iron in the Soul* (but not in *The Age of Reason* and *The Reprieve*), Oreste in *The Flies*, the tortured resistance fighters in *Men Without Shadows*, Lizzie in *The Respectable Prostitute*, Roquentin in *Nausea*.

I said in the first chapter that there is something tendencious in doing philosophy as literature. In the absence of argument for a claim we might as well believe the opposite. However, freedom and bad faith are existential categories. It is part of Sartre's philosophy that people really are in bad faith and really are free. It follows that to the extent that Sartre's fictional depictions are credible, realistic, it is credible that freedom and bad faith really exist. Rather as laboratory experiments provide a test for scientific hypotheses, works of fiction provide a criterion for the truth of a 'humanistic' philosophy such as Sartre's existentialism. Rather as the laboratory is not the world of nature but a partial replication of it, so a novel or a play is not 'real' but a depiction of a part of human reality.

Whether or not Sartre would be persuaded by this analogy, he draws a sharp distinction between literature and science;

'What distinguishes literature from scientific communication...is that literature is ambiguous' (L\S 7).

Each sentence of science has, or should have, one and only one meaning. Sentences of literature may have multiple meanings, or may express different propositions. Perhaps surprisingly to readers of *Being and Nothingness* or *Critique of Dialectical Reason* philosophy is distinguished from literature by the same criterion;

'In philosophy, every sentence should have only one meaning' (L/S 7).

These claims about ambiguity present Sartre with something of a dilemma. To the extent to which the sentences making up his novels, stories and plays are ambiguous they do not serve as a vehicle for his philosophy. To the extent to which they are unambiguous, they are not literature, at least by his own criterion. This dilemma is never fully resolved in his work.

As we saw in Chapter One, Sartre's literature, especially *Nausea*, contains putative solutions to philosophical problems. For example, in *Nausea*, some versions of the problem of induction are depicted as genuine, and as at once

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

psychologically liberating and disturbing to the central character, Antoine Roquentin. What exists exists contingently rather than necessarily, and what is is what it is contingently, not necessarily. What passes for reality is constructed by language which in turn is driven by pragmatic preconceptions, but these can in principle be set aside by certain unusual experiences. Existence is shown to precede essence in the case of human beings, but it is shown to coincide in naturally occurring objects such as the root of the chesnut tree, and the reverse relation obtains in the case of human artefacts such as a beer glass or the tram seat. Roquentin himself feels his existence to be pointless or without justification.

The philosophical questions to which these putative answers correspond are: Will the future resemble the past ?, Could what is not be ? Could what is have not been what it is ? Are the ordinary objects of our experience linguistically, psychologically or pragmatically 'constructed' ?, If so, could they be perceived as they are, or at least in new ways ?, What is the relation between being and being something ? Is it possible to be without being anything ? Is it possible to be something without being ? Does life have a meaning ?

In philosophy the putative answers to philosophical questions feature as the conclusions of arguments: sets of premises putatively entailing those conclusions. However, it could be argued that a good pragmatic test of a philosophy is whether that philosophy can be lived. Plausibility is lent to a philosophy by two things: the fact that one may really psychologically adhere to it, sincerely believe it, and that fact that one may behave as though it were true. For example, the eighteenth century Scottish philosopher, David Hume, thinks it psychologically impossible to doubt the existence of physical objects (although we may conduct a worthwhile philosophical inquiry into what causes us to have this belief in them). This gives at least *prima facie* confirmation to the thesis that physical objects exist. Similarly, William James, the American pragmatist philosopher thinks the test of a putative truth is whether it works in practice; whether adherence to it is consistent with the real course of one's experience.

If we hold these pragmatic considerations in mind then we may understand Roquentin, in *Nausea*, as living a philosophy. Roquentin lives Sartre's existential phenomenology. As with the characters in *freedom and bad faith*, to the extent to which we find Roquentin's experiences credible we should find Sartre's existential phenomenology credible.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Having said this in Sartre's defence, I think his literature never provides a conclusive solution to any philosophical problem. It only exhibits the plausibility of such solutions. The fundamental reason for this is that empiricism and pragmatism do not provide us with conclusive solutions to philosophical problems either. From the fact that we find it psychologically impossible to disbelieve P it does not follow that P. From the fact that belief in P is useful it does not follow that P. From the fact that P is confirmed by all of one's experience and refuted by none of it, it does not follow that P. One of the things that makes philosophical problems so seemingly intractable is that mutually inconsistent solutions to them are consistent with our lives being just as they are. To the extent to which Sartre's literature portrays our lives as they are it does not escape this empiricist and pragmatist constraint.

In Sartre's work philosophy and literature are connected in another way. Writing is an ethical and political act; an act which should be an authentic and committed expression of the author's freedom. It is to this idea of committed literature we should now turn.

Although statements advocating literary commitment are frequent in his writings on literature, for example,

'We think that the writer should commit himself fully in his works' (WIL? 22)

we need to know what this commitment is. What is the difference between committed and uncommitted literature ?

One answer is ruled out straight away. Sartre cannot simply mean that the author should write what he or she believes and refrain from writing what he or she disbelieves. This ethical requirement rests upon a picture of the author which Sartre rejects: the author as a repository of beliefs or attitudes which may be externalised in writing sincerely or insincerely. Rather, writing is 'a choice' (WIL? 23). Not only is there a choice whether to write or not, but having chosen to write, the act of writing is itself the making of choices. The literary work does not predate the writing of it. It does not already exist in the writer's mind before being written down. It comes into being by being freely composed.

The distinction between committed and uncommitted literature depends upon the distinction between authenticity and bad faith. Authenticity is the recognition of freedom, and bad faith is the denial or refusal of freedom.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Committed literature is produced by authentic acts of writing; acts of writing that the author recognises as exercises of his own freedom and for which he alone accepts and has responsibility. Uncommitted literature is produced by inauthentic acts of writing in which the author refuses to recognise his own freedom and for which he refuses to accept responsibility. Sartre thinks most writing is done in bad faith:

'One of the chief motives of artistic creation is certainly the need of feeling that we are essential in relation to the world, (WIL? 267).

In fact our existence is contingent. We are but we might not have been. We are inessential to the world. What is could and will continue without us. Sartre is, I think, right about much literary motivation. We write in order to be read, in order to be needed, in order to find a substitute for immortality. This is a kind of bad faith because it is a case of 'beingforothers'; producing an image of oneself which others will judge favourably rather than exercising one's free possibilities as a writer. He himself frequently insists that he writes for the present generation, not for posterity, although when interviewed he has confessed that he would not be displeased if his works were still read a hundred years from now. They no doubt will be.

Because they are written in bad faith, most literary works are produced 'to flee' or 'to conquer' (WIL? 26). What is fled from is the freedom of the writer. What is conquered is the freedom of the reader. The writer is master and the reader slave but, in true Hegelian style, the writer enslaves himself in enslaving the reader and the reader finds a new freedom in freely interpreting the writer's works in ways that undo the writer's mastery over them. Qui perde gagne: loser wins.

Not only does the loser win but the winner loses. When the writer writes in bad faith the following dialectical transitions obtain:

'[...] in the perception, the object is given as the essential thing and the subject as the inessential. The latter seeks essentiality in the creation and obtains it, but then it is the object which becomes the inessential' (WIL? 28).

In perception objects are presented as though they could exist irrespective of one's own existence. This contingency of one's own existence produces anguish. The writer therefore tries to make his existence necessary, indispensable, by creating something that does depend upon his own

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

existence; a literary work. This is successful, because the work's existence does depend upon his having written it. This security is undermined, however, because what the work is is not wholly dictated by the interpretation of its author. Its essence is open to manipulation by its readers. Its existence too is contingent and not necessary. Even if it is read for thousands of years, there will no doubt come a time when it is forgotten. Then its author too will be forgotten.

A literary work has to be created freely because its existence is not causally determined. This is entailed by Sartre's view that

'the appearance of the work of art is a new event which cannot be explained by anterior data' (WIL? 32).

The state of the world prior to the existence of a literary work does not necessitate the existence of that work. It is the creation of the free spontaneity of its writer and its readers. In so far as the writer accepts these facts he evades bad faith.

Authenticity and bad faith are responses to the same situation: 'there is no art except for and by others' (WIL? 30). It follows that any literary work is produced by oneself or by other people. If it is produced by oneself it is nonetheless produced to be read by other people. The role of the other in literary production is inescapable but it can either be affirmed or denied by the writer. There is a choice between authenticity and bad faith. Freedom is primordial with regard to both.

Sartre thinks that the authentic creation of a literary work is sufficient for the morality of that work. Literary commitment cannot be immoral. The act of committed writing cannot be immoral and the content of committed writing cannot be immoral. He says, for example,

'nobody can suppose for a moment that it is possible to write a good novel in praise of anti-Semitism' (WIL? 46).

But could not a writer recognise that their writing is the exercise of their own freedom and yet choose to write the most appalling laudits to suffering and injustice? Commitment in writing seems neither necessary nor sufficient for the morality of what is written: not necessary because something moral could be the product of bad faith, not sufficient because

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

something immoral could be the product of authenticity. This in turn is because if there is freedom either good or evil can be done freely.

Is there any ground, then, for Sartre's claim that

'at the heart of the aesthetic imperative we discern the moral imperative' (WIL? 45) ?

Certainly many problems of aesthetics and many problems of morality have a common logical form. We can wonder whether there are aesthetic facts as well as whether there are moral facts. Arguably, both aesthetic judgements and moral judgements are universalisable. Both either admit or refuse foundations in theology or social consensus. Neither aesthetics nor morality can be reduced to science.

Sartre, however, has something else in mind. Freedom is prior to both aesthetics and morality. Not only could there be no aesthetics and morality if there were no freedom, freedom is the ultimate value. Freedom, for example, is more valuable than the ultimate utilitarian value; happiness, and the minimisation of pain. Whether we agree with this or not we can see here a logical justification for the impossibility of an immoral committed literature. Committed literature not only exercises and acknowledges freedom it provokes it, and provokes its acknowledgement. In reading committed literature the reader is 'a pure freedom' and 'an unconditioned activity' and is 'conscious of being free' (WIL? 35). What is reading ? 'Reading is a free dream' (WIL? 35).

Writing is a political act. A good society is a free society. We do not know what a good society would be like, precisely because it would be a free society. There can be no blueprint for a good society; no Platonic blueprint, no Marxist blueprint, no Christian or utilitarian blueprint. There is no a priori knowledge of a free society. All we know is that we would be free to make it.

Committed literature has a vital role in facilitating political freedom. Indeed, it is the responsibility of the intellectual to be committed; committed to freedom. Sartre says of the readers of committed literature;

'For the moment they have become what they would have been if they had not spent their lives hiding their freedom from themselves' (WIL? 36).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Committed literature dissolves the reader's bad faith. Committed literature shows the reader he is free.

Sartre not only writes novels, plays, stories, essays and works of philosophy. He engages in another kind of writing which is neither fact nor fiction or, rather, it is a putative synthesis of both. His massive 'biography' of Flaubert, *The Family Idiot*, and to a lesser degree his books about Jean Genet and Baudelaire, are designed to be members of a new genre: the 'true novel'. The 'true novel' has a second aim which, if anything, is even more ambitious than 'going beyond' the distinction between fact and fiction. It is supposed to present us with a total understanding of its subject matter.

Is a synthesis of fact and fiction possible? Factual writings are made true by the obtaining of states of affairs. For example, the sentences of a factual account of a human being are true if and only if there exists (or has existed or will exist) a real human being who is just as reported by those sentences. If not, the account is false. That is not enough to make it fictional (except perhaps in a metaphorical or pejorative sense) but it is enough to make it only purportedly factual. Fiction, on the other hand, even though it may include true reports of types of persons, actions and states of affairs is literally false if construed as about what did, will or does exist. It would seem then that nothing can be both fact and fiction. Of course it is possible to include within the covers of one book factual passages and passages of fiction and *The Idiot of the Family* frequently reads that way. Clearly too, works of fiction may include mention of facts. Sartre's *The Reprieve* includes a description of the Munich crisis for example. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* includes descriptions of the battles of Austerlitz and Borodino. However, this does not prevent those works being works of fiction because they include much that is not even putatively factual. It follows that the inclusion of facts in a novel is not sufficient to make it a 'true novel' in Sartre's sense either.

Sartre is best read, I think, as deploying both fictional and factual techniques in attempting a total understanding of Flaubert: Marxism and existential psychoanalysis as well as literary prose styles. There is something common to all viable methods for understanding human beings, whether fictional or factual. He says

'The attitude necessary for understanding a man is empathy' (L/S 113).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

We understand a person to the extent to which we know what it is like to be that person. The notion of empathy Sartre is alluding to here is *Verstehen*. 'Verstehen' is the infinitive form of the ordinary German word which means 'to understand' but 'Verstehen' is also a technical term in the philosophy of the early twentieth century German philosopher of history Wilhelm Dilthey. *Verstehen* is the imaginative reconstruction of the mentality of some other person, group of person especially through their written and unwritten artefacts. Sartre thinks that to understand a person it is necessary to know what it was like to live their life. We have to grasp *le vecu*, the lived.

There is much plausibility in this. The prospects for a wholly scientific or reductivist understanding of a human being seem slim. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how subjects such as history or archaeology or psychology could proceed in the absence of something like what Sartre is calling 'empathy'.

We may still ask, however, whether a 'total' understanding of another human being is possible. There is no doubt that this is Sartre's ambition. He says

'The most important project in the *Flaubert* is to show that fundamentally everything can be communicated, that without being God, but simply as a man like any other, one can manage to understand another man perfectly' (L/S 123)

and

'[...] every man is perfectly knowable as long as one uses the appropriate method and as long as the necessary documents are available' (L/S 123).

Two obstacles to Sartre's project may be removed. He himself concedes that total understanding of a living person is impossible. A living person is incomplete because they are in the process of defining their own essence through free choices. Secondly, we are not compelled to adopt the sceptical Cartesian view according to which the mental states of another are so inscrutably private as to be logically incommunicable to another. As we saw in Chapter Sartre rejects the privacy of the mental. Indeed, he thinks it possible to know someone else better than one knows oneself.

Nonetheless, an insuperable obstacle remains. There exists an infinity of facts about a human being and a biography is a document of finite length. Of course Sartre is aiming at understanding, not an inventory of facts. The

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

problem is that any newly discovered facts may require us to revise our understanding. We always have more to learn. He should have let this be his considered view because it leaves open our freedom. fÆ;wu3ö%owÿO^
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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

4. Being a swine ('un salaud')
 5. Easy answers
- (1) Human Comedies
 - (i) Finding significance in the trivia of everyday living
 - (ii) Acting automatically/by mechanical gestures
 - (iii) Acting a part/r"le
 - (iv) Being inauthentic
 - (2) Living in the Past
 - (i) Identifying oneself with what one was
 - (ii) Maintaining one's established values
 - (iii) Reflecting on past achievements/regrets
 - (3) BeingforOthers
 - (i) Trying to be the person others take one to be
 - (ii) Assuming one is significant to others
 - (iii) Being a coward ('l'fche')
 - (iv) Depending on others to sustain illusion of oneself

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

- (4) Being A Swine
 - (i) Denying freedom to others (as well as to oneself)
 - (ii) Assuming one's existence matters
 - (iii) Trying to make others feel inferior to oneself
 - (iv) Assuming one's own valuescheme is correct, and imposing it on others

- (5) Easy Answers
 - (i) Adopting fixed value system (religion/ideology) to live by
 - (ii) Being concerned with theories/ideologies, not situation of human beings

Bad faith = refusal to recognise:

- a) Freedom
- b) Contingency of existence

BAD FAITH 2

1. "Let's consider the caf, waiter. His attitude is quick and busy, a little too precise, a little too quick, he comes towards the customers with a step that's a little too lively, he leans over with a bit too much bending, his eyes express an interest a little too full of concern for the customer's order...He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing at? You don't have to observe him for very long to realise; he is playing at being a caf, waiter." (L' tre et Le N,ant pp.989)

2. "He was a bit too much the barman, he shook the shaker, opened it, poured the green liquid into the glasses with light gestures which had a superfluous precision; he was playing at being a barman." (L'Age de Raison p.254)

3. "They had to find something to conceal the enormous absurdity of their existence. All the same...is it really necessary to lie to oneself?"

I scanned the room. This is a farce! All these people are sitting with serious airs, they are eating. No they are not eating! They are replenishing their energies to carry out all the better the task which burdens them. Each one has his own little personal preoccupation which prevents him from noticing that he exists; there is not one of them who does not believe himself indispensable to someone or something."

(La Naus,e pp.989)

4. "My truth, my character, and my name were in the hands of adults; I had learned to see myself through their eyes; I was a child, this monster that they fabricated with their regrets."

(Les Mots p.66)

BEING

The subtitle Sartre gives to *Being and Nothingness* is 'An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology'. This, for Husserl, would have been a contradiction in terms. Ontology is the branch of philosophy which tries to decide what kinds of things fundamentally exist, but it is precisely this project which is putatively eschewed by Husserl's phenomenology. It deals only with phenomena, or what appears to exist, without any commitment to the real or objective existence of things.

Sartre has no such reservations and divides being what is into two fundamentally distinct categories: *l'être-en-soi* and *l'être-pour-soi*, or being-in-itself and being-for-itself. *L'être-en-soi* (or the 'en-soi') is objective being and includes the physical world. *L'être-pour-soi* (or the 'pour-soi') is subjective being, including consciousness. In espousing this ontological dualism Sartre is not logically committed to the mind-body dualism of Descartes.

Descartes not only thought consciousness and the physical world are radically different sorts of thing, he also thought the one could, at least in principle, exist without the other. Sartre accepts the first Cartesian tenet but utterly rejects the second. Sartre's *pour-soi* is not a disembodied Cartesian soul but a living centre of conscious existence logically inseparable from the empirical world. The physical world in turn depends upon consciousness, not in a thoroughly idealist sense, but because what it is to us is inseparable from our conscious projects. Although ontologically distinct, *en-soi* and *pour-soi* are mutually dependent. Although not the same thing, one could not exist without the other. There is no subjectivity without objectivity and vice versa.

1. Being-in-itself

The subject-independent world, or being-in-itself (*l'être-en-soi*), possesses a number of metaphysical characteristics. Sartre says it is 'uncreated' meaning that although it is, it never began to be and, there is no cause for it to be and no reason for it to be. The *en-soi* 'is not subject to temporality' (BN xlii) because temporality pertains uniquely to consciousness. If the *en-soi* is not temporal in any sense then it follows from that that the *en-soi* had no beginning. It follows that the *en-soi* was not created and was not caused to be because only what begins to be may be caused to be and only what is caused to be may be created. However, none of this is sufficient to show that there is no reason for what is to be. *L'être-en-soi* may not be pointless even if it is timeless.

Sartre says that the past actions of a human being are *en-soi*, or belong to being-in-itself. The past is fixed and unalterable so *en-soi*, but the present and future are open and freely malleable and so *pour-soi*. We can see clearly that the for-itself/in-itself distinction does not coincide with the mental/ physical distinction.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

L'être-en-soi is contingent. There is no necessity for it to be. It is but it might not have been. This follows from there being no cause and no reason for what is to be, and is consistent with Roquentin's discovery in *Nausea* that existence is superfluous (*de trop*). Sartre has an argument for the contingency of the en-soi. He says 'Necessity concerns the connection between ideal propositions but not that of existents' (BN xlii). Rather like Hume, Sartre maintains that one proposition may follow from another with logical necessity but rejects the thesis that there is a natural or metaphysical necessity in the external world. For example, the fact that something exists in no way necessitates the existence of anything else and from the fact that something does exist it does not follow that it itself necessarily exists. Of course if it does exist it logically follows from that fact that it exists but, as Sartre sees, that is logically consistent with the fact that it might not have existed.

Strictly speaking, when Sartre says existence is contingent he just means it is not necessary. He is not committed to the view that the portion of being he calls 'en-soi' might not have been in any realist sense, because 'possible' and 'impossible' are subjective concepts. He says 'Being-in-itself is never either possible or impossible. It is.' (BN xlii) Things are not intrinsically possible or impossible, they just are. It is consciousness that introduces possibility and impossibility into the world by thinking what can and cannot be. It is consciousness that has then power of negation. In fact, there is only what is, irrespective of these thoughts so 'the possible is a structure of the for-itself' (BN xlii).

If it is objected to Sartre that from the fact that the en-soi is it logically follows that it is possible for it to be, I think his reply would be to reiterate that 'possible' and 'impossible' have no application to the en-soi. Whether he is right depends partly on solving the problem of what possibility is and no one has yet done that.

Similarly, when we act on the objective world we think of it as passive and our manipulations of it as active. This is not wrong according to Sartre but it is anthropomorphic because 'active' and 'passive' both apply only to human reality and the en-soi is neither active nor passive. It just is.

The en-soi is 'undifferentiated' (BN xli), ('indifférencié' (EN 32)). In saying this Sartre comes close to holding that nothing is true of the en-soi except that it is. This would be to make the en-soi pure being. However Sartre says the en-soi is 'solid' (BN xlii), ('massif' (EN 33)), and 'opaque to itself' (BN xli), ('opaque ... lui-même' (EN 32)) and this is because it is 'filled

with itself' (BN xli), ('rempli de lui-même' (EN 32)). Sartre sums up these ascriptions in the *prima facie* tautological thought 'being is what it is' (BN xli), ('l'être est ce qu'il est' (EN 32)). Each of them is best understood by contrasting the *en-soi* with the *pour-soi*. While the *pour-soi* entails not just consciousness but consciousness of itself, the *en-soi* lacks this property and it is just that which is captured by Sartre's rather poetic and metaphorical use of 'solid' and 'opaque'. The idea of consciousness being translucent or transparent is a recurrent Leitmotif of western philosophy and here Sartre is using the antithetical notion to characterise the inert, unconscious world. 'Massif' may also be translated as 'massive' and read this way Sartre is capturing the fact that the *en-soi* is presented to consciousness as an enormous and unbounded whole.

Sartre claims that the statement 'being is what it is' (BN xli) is not analytic but synthetic. If a claim is analytic in philosophy then it is a tautology, necessarily true in virtue of the meanings of its constituent words. If a truth is synthetic it is not a tautology but an informative statement contingently true in virtue of the way the world is. 'Being is what it is' looks at least necessary, even if not analytic, because nothing can be other than what it is whatever it is. A more sympathetic reading is this. Suppose we ask the question 'What is the *en-soi*?'. The answer cannot possibly be a mention of any essence of the *en-soi* because the *en-soi* has no essence. Or, to put it another way, its essence is its existence: The answer to 'what is it?' is 'being' so, in just that sense, 'being is what it is' ('l'être est ce qu'il est' (EN 32)). In the case of the *en-soi* there is no difference between its being and its being what it is. Existence and essence coincide.

2. Being-for-itself

Being-for-itself, or *l'être-pour-soi*, is the kind of being that entails the existence of consciousness. It is that existing centre of conscious awareness that each of us finds him or herself to be. It is subjective being. It is the kind of being of which it makes sense to say 'I am it'. You and I are *pour-soi*, but the objective world that confronts us is *en-soi*.

Paradoxically, the relationship of the *pour-soi* to the *en-soi* is partly constitutive of the *pour-soi* (or definitive of 'pour-soi'). Its relation to what it is not is part of what it is. In common with his phenomenological predecessors Brentano and Husserl, Sartre maintains that all consciousness

is consciousness of something or other. All perceiving is perceiving something, all thinking is thinking about something, even when what is perceived or thought is imaginary or illusory. This alleged 'aboutness' of consciousness is known as 'intentionality'. To say that consciousness exhibits intentionality is to say it takes an object or is consciousness of something. Any such object is known as an 'intentional object'. ('Intentional' in this context should in no way be confused with the ordinary English word 'intentional' meaning 'deliberate' or 'on purpose'). Sartre thinks intentionality uniquely pertains to the *pour-soi* and logically relates the *pour-soi* to the *en-soi* as its intentional object.

What is this subjective being that I am? A fundamental distinction necessary for understanding the *pour-soi* is that between two kinds of consciousness: reflexive consciousness (*la conscience réflexive*) and pre-reflexive consciousness (*la conscience pré-réflexive*). The distinction finds its original and clearest expression not in Being and Nothingness but in Sartre's short 1936 work *The Transcendence of the Ego*.

There Sartre argues, against Husserl, that there is no transcendental ego, that is, no irreducibly subjective and psychic self, no hidden inner source of one's own mental states. Husserl's transcendental ego is putatively transcendental in two senses. On quasi-Kantian grounds Husserl argues in *Cartesian Meditations* and elsewhere that there exists an ego that is transcendental in the sense of 'a necessary condition for experience'. The ego is also putatively transcendental in the sense that it transcends our ordinary pre-phenomenological consciousness. It is not to be found within the world of the 'natural attitude'. Rather, in Husserl's philosophy, it is revealed as the source of the transcendental field, or subjective consciousness, by the application of the *epoché* or transcendental reduction. It is what each of us ultimately is.

In *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre brings an argument against Husserl which is devastating. Phenomenology is the description of what appears to consciousness, without any preconception about the objective reality of what thus appears. Sartre rightly points this out: no transcendental ego appears to consciousness, not before the phenomenological *epoché* and not after it. Rather Husserl assumes or postulates the transcendental ego as an explanation of how consciousness is possible. As Sartre says, it is not the business of phenomenology to make such postulates. Phenomenology deals in descriptions not explanations. Ironically, the transcendental ego falls before the *epoché*.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

It does not logically follow from Sartre's critique of Husserl that there is no transcendental ego, only that there are no consistent phenomenological grounds for postulating one. What is thoroughly convincing about Sartre's argument is his insistence on subjectivity: that which is conscious is not what that consciousness is consciousness of. The subject of consciousness, qua subject, is not an object of that consciousness. This is an old thought but an important one in so called modern continental philosophy. In my opinion the theses of *The Transcendence of the Ego* show that Husserl misread Kant's theory of the self in *The Critique of Pure Reason* and that Sartre understood Kant correctly. Kant, like Sartre, rejected the transcendental ego although most commentators, like Husserl, mistakenly ascribe this to Kant.

The psychic subject according to Sartre, far from being the subjective source of consciousness is itself a product of consciousness. It is in fact the result of consciousness being turned on consciousness in reflexive consciousness. It is not a psychic subject but a psychic object: the intentional object of reflexive consciousness.

Sartre thinks that *Beingfor Itself* possesses three fundamental structures: facticity, temporality and transcendence. I postpone discussion of transcendence until the next chapter because it is essentially tied to consciousness. It is to facticity and temporality that we should now turn.

Once we appreciate Sartre's distinction between freedom and power we may recognise that there are existential and historical constraints on what we may do; constraints which it may be difficult or impossible for us to remove. Sartre's name for the set of such constraints is 'facticity'.

Indeed, Sartre insists that facticity is a necessary condition for there being the kind of being called 'beingfor-itself' at all. He says 'The for itself is, in so far as it appears in a condition which it has not chosen' (BN 79). This dependence is entailed by the mutual dependence between beingfor-itself and beingin-itself because facticity belongs to beingin-itself.

There are many layers of facticity. BeingintheWorld is existentially primordial, or necessary for the others. In his neoHeideggerian idiom, Sartre says of beingfor-itself 'It is thrown into the world' (BN 79) meaning, not that we predate our worldly existence quite the reverse but that we did not choose to be and our being and that of the world coincide. Our existence is itself part of our facticity because we did not choose to be.

Our contingency is also part of our facticity. Although Sartre insists that we make ourselves what we are by the free exercise of choice, it is a

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

contingent fact that we are free and it is a contingent fact that our choices issue in the results they do. It is also a contingent fact that any of us exists at all. For these reasons it is part of the facticity of the for-itself that 'it is a pure contingency' (BN 79). My being and my being what I am are as contingent as the existence and essence of a physical object of the in-itself.

Two layers of facticity may be distinguished according to whether I may or may not alter a constraint on my power. In neither case did I choose the constraint. My being in the world and my historical location are of the first kind. My socioeconomic location is of the second kind.

For example, Sartre stresses the tenses of the verb 'to be' when he says 'Pierre is a French bourgeois in 1942, as Schmitt was a Berlin worker in 1870' (BN 79) to emphasise the fact that I have not chosen and cannot change the time at which I live. Despite this, it may be within my individual power, or my class's collective power, to change my socioeconomic location.

All the necessary conditions for my existence fall under the heading of 'facticity'. Sartre's reply to the question 'What am I?' falls into two halves. On the one hand he says 'I am a being which is not its own foundation' and on the other hand I am a being that 'could be other than it is' (BN 80). The first half of this conjunction is his thesis that I am not a substance but depend on my facticity. The second half leaves room for my freedom. It is a contingent fact that I am what I am so I can change what I am.

Facticity has an essential role in Sartre's philosophy in mediating the relation between existence and essence in the case of human reality. It is because of facticity that human beings do not have exaggerated Cartesian or Platonic freedom:

'Without facticity consciousness could choose its attachments to the world in the same way as the souls in Plato's Republic choose their condition. I could determine myself to "be born a worker" or to "be born a bourgeois" (BN 83).

However, there are prerequisites for my existence, prerequisites I did not choose, so I do not choose my situation.

There is something about facticity which is profoundly anti-Cartesian. Although Sartre agrees with Descartes that 'I cannot doubt that I am' (BN 84) there are strong limits to what I can know about myself through introspection:

'The for-itself looking deep into itself as the consciousness of being there will never discover anything in itself but motivation; that is it will be perpetually referred to itself and to its constant freedom' (BN 83).

This is not only Hume's point that I am not aware of myself as a persistent psychic entity in introspection, though it is at least that. Sartre is saying I cannot introspect my essence: I cannot come to know what I am by paying attention to my own mental states.

I do introspect and the contents of my introspection have a phenomenology. However, any introspectively available content is what Sartre calls 'a motivation'. This means it exists only in relation to my freedom. My freedom depends upon facticity so the mental states I introspect depend upon my facticity. On yet another level my being is shown to be beingintheworld.

The in-itself for-itself distinction is Hegelian rather than Cartesian. Sartre's very terminology here is a French transliteration of two of Hegel's technical terms. 'En-Äsoi' is his rendering of Hegel's 'an-Äsich' and 'pour-Äsoi' his rendering of 'fr-Äsich'. The ontologies of both philosophers are explorations of the relations between subjective and objective aspects of what is. The fundamental contrast between them is that Hegel thinks the opposition between 'an-Äsich' and 'fr-Äsich' can be overcome in a dialectical and spiritual synthesis called 'Absolute Knowing' but Sartre thinks that no such speculative synthesis is possible. In particular, human beings can never realise their desire to be both pour-Äsoi and en-Äsoi at once; their desire, in fact, to be God.

THE STRUCTURE OF BEING AND NOTHINGNESS

Essential Concepts:

1. Nothingness
2. Being
3. Bad Faith
4. Beingfor-itself/beingin-itself
5. Facticity
6. Temporality
7. Transcendence
8. Beingforothers
9. The body
10. Concrete relations with others
11. Having, doing and being

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

12. Freedom

The Structure of Being and Nothingness

1. Nothingness 2. Beingfor-itself

Negation Bad Faith Facticity Temporality Transcendence

3. Beingforothers 4. Having, doing and being

The existence of others The Body with others Concrete Relations with others Freedom Doing & Having

BEING AND NOTHINGNESS

1. Nothingness

- (i) Being conscious of x 'annihilates' notx
"The being considered is that, and outside that nothing" (L' tre et Le N,ant p.43)

- (ii) Absence of being
"Pierre is not there" (BN p.10)
"I myself expected to see Pierre, and my expectation has caused the absence of Pierre to happen as a real event concerning this caf," (BN p.10)

2. Being

- (i) "The dualism of being and appearance is no longer entitled to any legal status within philosophy" (BN XXI)

- (ii) Being reduced to phenomena:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

"Phenomenal being manifests itself"

"It manifests its essence as well as its existence"

"It is nothing but the well connected series of its manifestations" (BN XXII)

(iii) "Being is simply the condition of all revelation"
(BN XXV)

(iv) "In order to know being such as it is, it would be necessary to be that being" (BN p.21)

3. Bad Faith see separate sheet

4. Beingfor-itself

(i) Consciousness

(ii) Myself (oneself as subject)

(iii) Exhibits (a) intentionality
(b) freedom and
(c) "it is not what it is and is what it is not"
(BN p.79)

(iv) N.B. Two main kinds of consciousness:

a) Reflexive consciousness

b) Prereflexive consciousness

cf The transcendence of the ego

(v) "My thinking, this is me") La Naus,e pp.1423
"I exist because I think") (Roquentin)

5. Facticity

(i) A property of the for-itself

(ii) A constraint/limit to freedom
"A condition which it (the for-itself) has not chosen"

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(BN p.79)

e.g. Pierre: a French Bourgeois in 1942

Schmitt: a Berlin worker in 1870

(iii) The for-itself "is in so far as it is thrown into a world" (BN p.79)

(iv) "I am a particular being" (BN p.81)

(v) "Contingency is what we shall call the facticity of the for-itself" (BN p.83)

6. Temporality

(i) "The past is no longer") A paradox

(ii) "The future is not yet") to be

(iii) "The present...this does not exist at all") avoided

(BN p.107)

(iv) Temporality = "a totality which dominates its secondary structures" (BN p.107)

(v) "The past is in-itself" (BN p.120)

(vi) "The present is for-itself" (BN p.120)

(vii) "There is a future because the for-itself has to be its being, instead of simply being it" (BN p.126)

(viii) "The future is the continual possibilization of possibles" (BN p.129)

7. Transcendence

(i) x is transcendent if and only if x is not exhausted by the consciousness of it.

(ii) cf Kant's distinction:

a) transcendent

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

b) transcendental (in *The Critique of Pure Reason*)

8. Beingforothers

- (i) Solipsism is false cf Hegel's improvement over Kant and Husserl
- (ii) Relations with the other = conflict of two freedoms (e.g. "the look")
- (iii) Beingforothers = form of bad faith
Either:
A dominates B A is sadistic, B is masochistic
OR
B dominates A B is sadistic, A is masochistic
- (iv) The (poursoi) for itself makes the other to itself into an in itself (en soi)

9. The Body

- (i) "My body as it is for me does not appear to me in the midst of the world" (BN p.302)
- (ii) Contrast
 - a) being a body
 - b) observing a body

10. Concrete Relations with Others

- (i) Love, language, masochism
- (ii) Indifference, desire, hate, sadism
- (iii) "Being with" "the we" impossible "in the we nobody is the object" (BN p.413)

11. Having, Doing, Being

- (i) Distinguish
 - a) being

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

b) doing

- (ii) Having
Human desire to be both en soi and poursoi
"Human reality is the pure effort to become God"
(BN p.576)

12. Freedom see separate sheet

JEANPAUL SARTRE: BASIC WRITINGS

Edited by Stephen Priest

Introduction

I EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism and Humanism complete, including final discussion, but excluding Philip Mairet's introduction (PP. 2370)

II PHENOMENOLOGY

Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions (pp. 1431)

Being and Nothingness (pp. xxixxxviii)

III EMOTION

Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions (pp. 5691)

IV IMAGINATION

The Psychology of Imagination (pp. 207219)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

V BEING

Being and Nothingness (pp. xxxviiiixliii, 7383, 617625)

VI NOTHINGNESS

Being and Nothingness (pp. 411)

VII THE SELF

The Transcendence of the Ego (pp. 4854)

Being and Nothingness (7684, 95105)

VIII TEMPORALITY

Being and Nothingness (pp. 107129)

IX FREEDOM

Being and Nothingness (pp. 433457)

X ETHICS

Being and Nothingness (pp. 553556, 625628)

Notebooks for an Ethics (pp. 555560)

XI BAD FAITH

Being and Nothingness (pp. 4772)

AntiSemite and Jew (pp. 754)

XII OTHERS

Being and Nothingness (pp. 361432)

XIII PSYCHOANALYSIS

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Being and Nothingness (pp. 557575)

Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions (pp. 4855)

XIV WRITING

What is Literature ? (pp. 148)

The Family Idiot (pp. 118129)

XV THE WORK OF ART

The Psychology of Imagination (pp. 219226)

XVI POLITICS

Search for a Method (pp. 334, 85100)

Critique of Dialectical Reason Vol. I (pp. 125139, 153196,256269,343363)

Bibliography of the works of Sartre

JEANPAUL SARTRE: BASIC WRITINGS

Preface

SARTRE IN THE WORLD

by Stephen Priest

I EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism and Humanism complete, including final discussion, but excluding Philip Mairet's introduction (PP. 2370)

II PHENOMENOLOGY

Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions (pp. 1431)

Being and Nothingness (pp. 911)

Being and Nothingness (pp. 259260)

III EMOTION AND IMAGINATION

Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions (pp. 5691)

The Psychology of Imagination (pp. 207219)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

IV THE SELF

The Transcendence of the Ego (pp. 4854)

V FREEDOM

Cartesian Freedom

VI RESPONSIBILITY

Being and Nothingness (pp. 553556, 625628)

Notebooks for an Ethics (pp. 555560)

VII BAD FAITH

Being and Nothingness (pp. 5860)

AntiSemite and Jew (pp. 754)

VIII WRITING

What is Literature ? (pp. 148)

The Family Idiot (pp. 118129)

IX THE WORK OF ART

The Psychology of Imagination (pp. 219226)

X POLITICS

Search for a Method (pp. 85100)

Critique of Dialectical Reason Vol. I (pp. 256269, 343352)

SARTRE ON BEING

Contingency:

Sartre thinks that everything exists contingently. In philosophy, contingency is contrasted with necessity:

- 1) P is contingently true if and only if P is true but could have been false.
- 2) P is necessarily true if and only if P is true and could not have been false.
- 3) P is contingently false if and only if P is false but could have been true.
- 4) P is necessarily false if and only if P is false but could not have been true.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Existentialism is a movement in nineteenth and twentieth century European philosophy which addresses fundamental problems of human existence, such as: Am I free ?, Should I fear death ?, To what should I commit my life ?, What is existence ?

Sartre says that existentialism is the doctrine that existence precedes essence in the case of human beings.

Distinguish two questions:

- (1) Is it ?
- (2) What is it ?

- (1) is a question about existence.
- (2) is a question about essence.

Something's essence is what it is. Something's existence is its being rather than not being.

Sartre thinks three sorts of thing exist:

- (1) Naturally occurring objects (trees, stones etc).
- (2) Artefacts (penknives, buildings etc).
- (3) Human beings.

They are distinguished from one another by relations between existence and essence:

- (1) In naturally occurring objects existence and essence coincide.
- (2) In artefacts essence precedes existence.
- (3) In human beings existence precedes essence.

'Precedes' is better understood in a logical than a chronological sense:

a precedes b if and only if a is a necessary condition for b

Then Sartre may be interpreted as holding that:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

- 1) In the case of naturally occurring objects existence and essence are mutually dependent.
- 2) In the case of artefacts essence is necessary for existence.
- 3) In the case of human beings existence is necessary for essence.

See JP. Sartre *Existentialism and Humanism* (Methuen) a translation of *L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, the text of a public lecture delivered in the Club Maintenant (the "Now Club") in Paris, October 29th 1945.

I EXISTENTIALISM

To say that something exists is to say that it is. To state something's essence is to state what it is. Understanding Sartre's existentialism requires understanding his thoughts on the relation between existence and essence and these are most clearly presented in the novel *Nausea* and the public lecture *Existentialism and Humanism*. I shall say something about each of these.

In *Nausea*, Antoine Roquentin, the existentialist antihero and voicepiece for Sartre's own philosophy, makes a series of profound and traumatic philosophical discoveries. Each discovery is a thesis canvassed intermittently in western philosophy.

Roquentin notices a change. He is not sure whether the change is in the things around him or in his consciousness of them but it amounts to this: he discovers that the things he perceives exist. More specifically he realises that the bare existence of things cannot be captured by our ways of describing them. When for example he acts on an urge to join some children throwing pebbles into the sea he suddenly has to drop his pebble in disgust: It exists. Staring closely at his beer glass in a bar he notes its shape, the name of the brewery written on it and further properties. Even so, something about the glass eludes all these perceptible qualities: the existence of the glass.

Roquentin has discovered that existence cannot be reduced to essence. Sartre is right in this thought because from no description of a putative object, no matter how complete, can we logically derive the claim that that object exists. As Roquentin puts it: 'To exist is simply to be there; what

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

exists appears, lets itself be encountered, but you can never deduce it.' (N 188)

Sartre presents Roquentin's discovery as an empirical one. Roquentin sees existence and sees that existence is distinct from essence. This experience oppresses Roquentin emotionally and gives him the physical nausea of the novel's title. Those passages in which Roquentin nauseously discovers existence are masterpieces of phenomenological description and exemplary philosophical fiction. Roquentin is riding on a tram in Bouville ('Mudtown');

'I murmur: "It's a seat," rather like an exorcism. But the word remains on my lips, it refuses to settle on the thing. It stays what it is, with its red plush, thousands of little red paws in the air, all stiff, little dead paws. This huge belly turns upwards, bleeding, puffed up – bloated with all its dead paws, this belly floating in this box, in this grey sky, is not a seat' (N 180)

Our customary, taken for granted, meanstoend thinking fails to find its application. Typically our idea of what an artefact is is whatever that object is for. Indeed, we usually only notice the aspects of objects necessary for us to use them as means to our ends. We take objects to be their functions and for this reason barely attend to them. In Roquentin's case these habitual preconceptions are stripped away and instead he sees just what is directly given in perception: the empirical content of the present. In the tram seat example Roquentin interprets what he experiences under grotesque surrealistic descriptions but there is typically a further phase to a bad attack of nausea; the disclosure of existence becomes overwhelming:

'I'm suffocating: existence is penetrating me all over, through the eyes, through the nose, through the mouth....

And suddenly, all at once, the veil is torn away, I have understood, I have seen.' (N 181)

The veil is essence. What is seen is existence.

Most shattering of all, Roquentin realises that he himself exists. He contemplates his own hand:

'I see my hand spread out on the table. It is alive – it is me. It opens, the fingers unfold and point. It is lying on its back. It shows me its fat underbelly. It looks like an animal upside down.' (N 143144)

and a little later says 'I am. I am, I exist.' (N 146)

What disgusts Roquentin most about existence is its contingency. In philosophy contingency is contrasted with necessity. If something exists contingently then it exists but it is possible that it should not have existed: It is but it might not have been. If something exists necessarily then it exists and it is not possible that it should not have existed: It is and it could not fail to be. Roquentin sees that existence is contingent. Although what is is, there is no reason for it to be: 'The essential thing is contingency. I mean that, by definition, existence is not necessity.' (N 188) Roquentin is right in so far as from the fact that something is it does not logically follow that it necessarily is. However, conversely, it does not logically follow that it contingently is either. Also, nobody from Parmenides to Heidegger has managed to provide 'existence' with a definition. What is existence? is an unsolved philosophical problem. So is whether what is has to be or could have not been.

If everything that exists exists contingently and if Roquentin exists then it follows that Roquentin exists contingently. It strikes Roquentin with the force of a revelation 'I too was superfluous' (N 184). The realisation that there is no necessity for his own existence produces in him a profound anxiety: 'I hadn't any right to exist. I had appeared by chance, I existed like a stone, a plant, a microbe' (N 124). The expression translated as 'superfluous' here is 'de trop'. 'De trop' also means 'too much' and 'etre de trop' has the sense of 'to be in the way' or 'unwelcome'. Roquentin is at once fascinated and disgusted by there being no reason, no justification, for his own existence.

Not only is it true that existence is contingent for Roquentin but essence is contingent too. It is a contingent fact about the things that are that they are what they are. Everything could be other than what it is. Indeed, this is the force of Roquentin's surrealistic interpretations of his experiences. The tram seat and his own hand are seen as animals. Anything, including himself, can be other than what it is.

Once essence is seen as illusion Roquentin realises that only particular things exist; in all their uniqueness and individuality. In other words, Roquentin suddenly sees the world as if conceptualism or nominalism were true. Conceptualism and nominalism are both solutions to the problem of universals which is that of stating what generality consists in, or what it is for there to be types or sorts of things. According to nominalism generality

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

only belongs to language. According to conceptualism generality belongs only to our conceptual scheme; to our modes of classification. On both theories there are not kinds or sorts of things outside language or concepts. The world is not already objectively divided up. We divide it up linguistically or conceptually by imposing an organising framework upon it. In Roquentin's experiences the classificatory framework is peeled off the world and objects are revealed in their particularity. This produces in him feelings of both freedom and terror. Sartre has Roquentin discover the contingency of essences in two ways; by depicting him as feeling the force of the problem of induction and by having him realise that classification is largely linguistic. The problem of induction is that of justifying the inference from 'Some A's are B's' to 'this A is a B' when it does not logically follow from 'Some A's are B's' that 'this A is a B'. For example, Roquentin says:

'It is out of laziness, I suppose, that the world looks the same day after day. Today it seemed to want to change. And in that case anything, anything could happen.' (N 114)

The past course of experience is consistent with any present or future course of experience. From the fact that the world has always looked one way it does not follow that it will not look radically different. Roquentin reports the nauseous contemplation of a chestnut tree root in the park in Bouville; 'I no longer remembered that it was a root.' (N 182) In Nausea what something is depends closely on what it is called, and the linguistic taxonomy depends in turn upon human pragmatic interests.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

However, Roquentin says of the chestnut root 'The function explained nothing' (N 186) and in the tram 'Things have broken free from their names' (N 180).

In *Nausea*, then, Sartre introduces some of the central themes of Existentialism. Existence is inherently meaningless and pointless but brutally and oppressively present. Existence is contingent. There might as easily have been nothing as something and, in particular, one's own existence is inherently meaningless and contingent. Only particulars exist and things being what they are depends on the fragile contingencies of human language and faces the unsolved problem of induction. The effect of this Existentialist vision on those who experience it is a most profound sickness and anxiety.

It could be objected that Sartre's presentation of the existentialist theses as discoveries is rather tendentious. The fictional format allows him to dispense with arguing for existentialism and in the absence of argument we might as well believe the opposite of Existentialism. For example, someone could write a philosophical novel, call it *Ecstasy*, in which the central character discovers that existence, including his own existence, is necessary and inherently meaningful. Not only do particular things exist but they really are objectively divided into sorts where this division depends neither on our language nor our pragmatic interests. The problem of induction emerges as a pseudoproblem which need cause no one any psychological, still less physical, discomfort. Not only is everything as it is, it could not be other than as it is. The staggering realisation of this Essentialism is accompanied by profound sensations of wellbeing and harmony called 'ecstasies'.

In *Existentialism and Humanism* Sartre clarifies and partially revises his view of existence and essence. He divides the things that exist into three kinds: human beings, manmade objects or artefacts, and naturally occurring objects. In the case of human beings existence precedes essence. In the case of artefacts essence precedes existence and in the case of naturally occurring objects existence and essence coincide. To see what he means, take the case of artefacts first. If a person makes a paperknife the idea of the paperknife in the mind of the manufacturer predates the existence of the paperknife itself. It follows that essence precedes existence in this case because there is an answer to the question 'What is it?' before there is a correct affirmative answer to the question 'Is it?'. The essence of the paperknife predates its existence. The 'what' precedes the 'is'.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In the case of naturally occurring objects, such as stones and trees, their being what they are does not predate their being and their being does not predate their being what they are. They are and they are what they are simultaneously. In this sense the existence and essence of natural things coincide.

In the case of human beings, in contrast with both of these, 'existence comes before essence.' (E 26) Sartre means there is no predetermined human essence and there is no human nature. Human beings first of all exist and subsequently make themselves what they are by their own actions. When we are born we have no essence as human beings. Only the totality of choices we make in life makes us the people who we are. As he puts it; 'Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself.' (E 28)

Sartre's antiessentialist view of humanity is incompatible with a certain theological view. If we were God's creation then we would stand in a relation to God rather like that of the paperknife to the manufacturer. Our essence would precede our existence because the idea of what we are would exist in the mind of God and predate our existence. If Sartre is right then this theological view must be false.

In discussing existence and essence another theme of central importance to existentialism has already been hinted at. For all his feelings of nauseated disgust at the disclosure of existence Roquentin felt something new as the stale taken-for-granted ways of perceiving broke down. Also, if we have no prior essence but define our own natures through choices then something fundamental follows about us. What Roquentin feels and what follows for us is this: We are free.

SARTRE'S EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism is a movement in nineteenth and twentieth century European philosophy which addresses fundamental problems of human existence, such as: Am I free ?, Should I fear death ?, To what should I commit my life ?, What is existence ?

Sartre says that existentialism is the doctrine that existence precedes essence in the case of human beings.

Distinguish two questions:

- (1) Is it ?
- (2) What is it ?

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

- (1) is a question about existence.
- (2) is a question about essence.

Something's essence is what it is. Something's existence is its being rather than not being.

Sartre thinks three sorts of thing exist:

- (1) Naturally occurring objects (trees, stones etc).
- (2) Artefacts (penknives, buildings etc).
- (3) Human beings.

They are distinguished from one another by relations between existence and essence:

- (1) In naturally occurring objects existence and essence coincide.
- (2) In artefacts essence precedes existence.
- (3) In human beings existence precedes essence.

'Precedes' is better understood in a logical than a chronological sense:

a precedes b if and only if a is a necessary condition for b

Then Sartre may be interpreted as holding that:

- 1) In the case of naturally occurring objects existence and essence are mutually dependent.
- 2) In the case of artefacts essence is necessary for existence.
- 3) In the case of human beings existence is necessary for essence.

See JP. Sartre *Existentialism and Humanism* (Methuen) a translation of *L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, the text of a public lecture delivered in the Club Maintenant (the "Now Club") in Paris, October 29th 1945.

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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

situations. All of these depend most fundamentally upon being in the world; the situation of all situations.

There is something profoundly anti-Cartesian about Sartre's concept of a situation. Descartes thought that a person could in principle exist in abstraction from their physical and social environment. He thought it makes sense to specify someone's mental states without reference to the ways in which those states are embedded in the world, without reference to what they are typically or paradigmatically about. Sartre's use of 'situation' and 'being in the world' is sharply opposed to this picture. As a mental and physical agent what I do only makes sense if I am logically, epistemologically, causally and behaviourally related to an external world populated by other people who are similar agents, that is, if I am in a situation.

In our unreflective taken-for-granted living we do not think of the situation as constituted by our freedom: 'there exist concretely alarm clocks, sign boards, tax forms, policemen' (BN 39) but in so far as we recognise our own freedom we perceive the fragility of the situation:

'I discover myself suddenly as the one who gives its meaning to the alarm clock, the one who by a signboard forbids himself to walk on a flower bed or on the lawn, the one from whom the boss's order borrows its urgency, the one who decides the interest of the book he is writing...' (BN 39).

It is my acquiescence in authority, rather than any objective constraint, that determines my behaviour. Once I recognise my freedom to disobey, to rebel, I am deconditioned. The contribution of my acquiescence is, so to speak, peeled off the world and the possibility of my changing the world is opened up.

In Sartre's existentialism, human being and human situation form a mutually dependent totality, such that

'He cannot be distinguished from his situation, for it forms him and decides his possibilities'

yet

'immensely, it is he who gives it meaning by making his choices within it and by it'

(AS & J 60).

It follows that the relations between a human being and his or her situation are dialectical or reciprocal. The situation presents the agent with a range of possibilities. The agent acts to realise some of these possibilities and this action alters the situation and thereby presents a new range of possibilities. Agency constitutes both the agent and the situation. The situation only exists as a situation for some agent. The agent only exists as an agent in some situation. For this reason Sartre says 'To be in a situation, as we see it, is to choose oneself in a situation' (AS & J 60).

It follows that the relation between agent and situation is very close. The reciprocal relation is not only causal. It is not even only constitutive. Agent and situation may only be adequately understood as two aspects of one reality. Sartre does not put it this way, but it is as though the agent is the inside of the situation and the situation is the outside of the agent.

In order to reconcile this dialectical relation between agent and environment with Sartre's absolute libertarianism we need to remember his distinction between freedom and power. Although our freedom is absolute, our power is limited. Although there is no situation in which we do not have a choice, there is no situation which does not limit our power. Sartre spells this out clearly in the 1949 essay 'Cartesian Freedom' when he says 'the situation of a man and his powers cannot increase or limit his freedom' (CF 173). Although what I can do is limited by where as well as when I am, that I can do something rather than nothing is in no way affected. I retain the dispositional property of being a choosing agent even though which choices I may exercise varies from situation to situation. Clearly some choices may be unpleasant to me but, logically, an unpleasant choice is nevertheless a choice. The expression 'I had no choice' is therefore misleading here.

The theme that freedom is unimpaired by constraints on power pervades Sartre's literature. Sometimes his characters are horribly constrained: the tortured resistance fighters in *Men Without Shadows*, Mathieu and his comrades trapped in the clock tower in *Iron in the Soul*. As their power is reduced their awareness of freedom increases.

In Sartre's existentialism, the recognition of freedom is a lonely first person singular phenomenon for which recourse to others provides no respite. For example, also in *Iron in the Soul*, Sartre has Odette shift swiftly from the first person plural thought 'What ought we to want?' to the first person singular thought 'What ought I to want?' (IS 185) against the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

background 'situation' of the May 1940 invasion of France. Odette is expressing the ethical tenet of Being and Nothingness that 'It is I who sustain values in being' (BN 39). Sartre did not write 'It is we who sustain values in being'. For all his repudiation of Descartes in 'Cartesian Freedom' the primacy and inescapability of the first person exercise and confrontation with freedom remains thoroughly Cartesian.

Sometimes, the existence of freedom is depicted as dependent upon its acknowledgement or recognition by the agent. For example, in *The Flies* Sartre has Zeus say of Orestes

'Orestes knows that he is free'

and Aegistheus replies

'He knows he is free? Then to say hands on him, to put him in irons, is not enough'

(AOP, 292).

Although, as we shall see, Sartre thinks there is a pervasive human tendency to deny one's own freedom, it is the fact that a person is free that makes freedom unconstrained. Freedom is merely entailed by knowledge of freedom.

We are now in a position to resolve certain paradoxes entailed by Sartre's libertarianism. Like JeanJacques Rousseau, Sartre says of 'man' both that 'he is free' and 'he is at the same time in bondage' (AS & J 60). Any situation 'bonds' a person dictates the range of available choices but in no way impairs the ability to make these choices. Freedom and constraint are mutually dependent aspects, or dialectical 'moments' of the human condition. These are fundamental to, or 'ground' others which are boundaries or limits to our condition. For example, Sartre says of 'man'; 'he is born' and 'dies', he 'enjoys life' and 'suffers', 'he loves and hates' (ASEY 60). Indeed, to be held in these dialectical antitheses is part of what it consists in to be a human being.

It may seem paradoxical. to assert that freedom is primordial to, is a necessary condition for, existence and birth. There is no doubt that this is Sartre's position however. He says 'the sole foundation of being is freedom' (CP 184). We need to make sense of this, because on the face of it being is a

necessary condition for being anything at all; for example being free or being determined.

As we have seen, Sartre endorses Heidegger's view that we are 'thrown' into the world. We are but we did not choose to be. Seemingly inconconsistently with this, he says in *Being and Nothingness* 'In a certain sense I choose being born' (BN 556). Clearly, any kind of Platonic preexistence is out of the question here. Sartre thinks it is false that we predate (and postdate) our empirical existence. The apparant contradiction needs to be dissolved by drawing a distinction between existence and essence. Sartre means that what my birth is, or is to me, largely depends on how I freely think of it. It's significance is the significance I bestow upon it. Clearly this is logically consistent with my freedom not predating my existence. Indeed, in one passage Sartre identifies freedom with existence he means human existence when he says 'freedom is existence, and in it existence precedes essence' (BN 5678). As we saw in chapter two, in the case of a human beings, existence is prior to essence and essence is freely chosen by that human being.

In *Being and Nothingness* a person is their freedom Sartre identifies 'the upsurge of freedom' 'choice' and 'the person himself' as one and the same being. One existent may be correctly subsumed under these three distinct descriptions.

Sartre's view that I am my freedom is incompatible with the commonsensically plausible view that, if I am free, I am that which exercises my freedom. To think in this way would be to mistakingly assimilate my being to the kind of being exhibited by objects, paradigmatically physical objects, in the external world. My relation to my freedom is not like the relation of a physical object to it causal efficacy (even though being a physical object logically entails having causal efficacy). I do not have my freedom. I am it.

It follows from Sartre's libertarianism that 'free will' is a philosophically misleading expression. There is freedom but this freedom is not the freedom of a psychological faculty called 'the will'. Sartre agrees that there is (such a thing as) willing, but says 'we must distinguish between will and spontaneity' (PI 122). Rather like the English seventeenthcentury philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, Sartre thinks that deliberation is not choosing but the end of choosing. Hobbes thinks of deliberation literally as deliberation the ending of liberty. Sartre says 'when I deliberate the chips are

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

down' and 'a voluntary deliberation is always a deception' (BN 450).
Deliberation is a resolution, a sign that one's mind is made up.

For this reason the will has no role is the exercise of freedom; 'when the will intervenes, the decision is taken' (BN 450) ('is taken' here has the sense of 'has already been taken' not 'is being taken'). There is willing in the sense of trying but trying presupposes having decided to try. Like Gilbert Ryle, the Oxford philosopher who authored *The Concept of Mind* (1949), and like Ludwig Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* (1952), Sartre refuses to identify trying with an inner, private, psychological process. Attempts exist in so far as these are bodily actions in the world. They are not attempts in virtue of inner mental rehearsals for action. As he puts it

'Every action ... is not the simple effect of the prior psychic state' (BN 459).

Sartre thinks that his libertarianism logically entails that human actions are unpredictable. If a person acts freely then we cannot know how he will act. People do act freely, so we cannot know how they will act. It is a common position in philosophy to assume that causal determinism logically implies predictability, and libertarianism logically implies unpredictability. Sartre subscribes at least to the second thesis:

'There can be no question of determining a priori and ontologically what appears in all the unpredictability of a free act'
(BN 568).

Sartre's phrasing is rather tautological, but the import of his words is that it cannot be known which free actions will be performed before they are performed (except by the agent). It is doubtful whether this claim is true. I may predict which actions you will perform by being acquainted with your preferences. I may know your preferences by being acquainted with the patterns in which you exercise your freedom. Admittedly, such predictions have only inductive certainty but my predictions of natural, wholly physical and causally determined, events have no greater certainty.

Sartre thinks objects as we know them are not parts of the lawgoverned deterministic systems offered by science. Objects are perceived as obstacles or means to our ends. In an anticipation of the structuralism of his partial contemporary, the literary critic Roland Barthes, Sartre says 'objects are mere demands' (BN 626). The glass is there to be drunk from, the mountain

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

is there to be climbed, the landscape to be admired. We perceive the world as fulfilling or hindering our projects. We choose our projects so, to that extent, we choose our world.

We see here another sense in which 'I am not able not to choose' (BN 556). Confrontation with the world allows no respite from freedom. Being in the world involves choices. An obvious objection presents itself here; we could refrain from action, or omit to act. Would this not be a way of escaping one's own freedom?

Sartre's position is that refraining from action presupposes the choice not to act; otherwise we could not talk about refraining or omitting here. After all, there exists an infinity of actions I am not performing at any given time. Only a subset of them are refrainings or omissions. Arguably those are precisely the ones I have chosen not to perform. Perhaps rather provocatively, in *Iron in the Soul* Sartre has Ivich and Boris agree about the French soldiers involved: the May 1940 invasion of France that 'they chose to have this war' (IS 69). Sartre means they did nothing to prevent it.

Similarly, it is one of Sartre's political views that those who live in the developed countries are causally responsible for the death, by starvation and malnutrition, of those who live; the third world. To fail to save life is as causally efficacious and as morally culpable, as to actively take life. This kind of reasoning leads Sartre to justify political violence by, or on behalf of, oppressed groups, for example in the Preface he wrote for Franz Fenon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (19). The distinction between our acts and our omissions does not mark a distinction between what we are and are not responsible for.

I have argued that Sartre is an extreme libertarian. He thinks, by definition, a human being retains the capacity to choose whatever their situation, whatever the constraints on their power. It has to be pointed out, however, that there are some passages, especially in Sartre's later writings, that seem on the face of it inconsistent with this libertarianism. I think this appearance is illusory but the passages have to be examined. The most representative examples come from interviews he gave in his seventieth year. He says:

'I believe we are not free at least not these days, not for the moment because we are all alienated' (L/S 116).

Here Sartre is not talking about the capacity of the individual to make choices, he is talking about political freedom. He is endorsing the view of

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

the early Marx that members of capitalist society are psychologically estranged from their work, the products of their work, nature, and each other. This alienation is an obstacle to the construction of what Sartre would call a free society: a society we would freely choose rather than historically inherit. Clearly, it is logically consistent with our lacking political freedom in this sense that as individuals we retain the capacity to choose. This disposition continues to ontologically differentiate us from naturally occurring objects and artefacts.

In another passage Sartre says:

'In a certain sense, all our lives are predestined from the moment we are born' (L/S 116)

and justifies this by reference to the situation:

'We are destined for a certain type of action from the beginning by the situation of the family and the society at any given moment' (L/S 116).

There is no reason to infer from the claim that we are predestined the conclusion that we are causally determined in a way that precludes freedom. Indeed, Sartre says 'predestination is what replaces determinism from me' (L/S 116) so he does not intend that entailment to hold. What Sartre means is that the actions I will freely perform are in a specific historical location. It is not an option for me to freely act in the situation of a later nineteenth century German coalminer if I am a midtwentieth century French intellectual. My historical location opens for me a range of token actions I may perform but there is an infinity of other token actions which are not thereby opened to me. All of this, however, is clearly logically consistent with my retaining the perennial existential feature of having the capacity to choose.

A grasp of Sartre's libertarianism allows a deeper understanding of his views about truth. He says 'the foundation of truth is freedom' (TEX 13). This is perhaps surprising because truth, what is the case, seems primordial. After all, there is only what is the case, and everything seems premised on that. Sartre means that the only truth that can make sense to us is in our situation, in beingintheworld, and our situation is constituted by our free actions. It follows that the truth we experience is a truth we have partly constituted. This is what he means when he says 'truth appears only to free

projects' (TEX 17). Following Heidegger, Sartre thinks there would be no truth without the revelation or disclosure of being and 'the foundation of all revelation of being is freedom' (TEX 1516).

Sartre's considered view is that there is a dialectical dependency between freedom and truth. There is no truth without freedom but also 'no freedom without truth' (TEX 16). Even Sartre accepts that without something's already being the case freedom could not be exercised.

Understanding Sartre's concept of freedom also allows an improved grasp of what it is to be human. It is true of any man (ie human being) that 'he is free' but 'he is at the same time in bondage' (AS&J 60). He is a chooser but a chooser whose power is politically and historically constrained. He 'enjoys life' and 'suffers' (AS&J 60) because there could be no enjoyment without suffering nor suffering without enjoyment. He 'lives and hates' and he 'dies'. It is only at the moment of death that a human being is completed. Before death a brave person could become a coward or a coward could become brave. Only death brings an end to freedom.

1. FREEDOM

FROM 'L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme' (Paris 1970)

- (1) "There is no determinism" (36)
- (2) "Man is free" (367)
- (3) "Man is freedom" (37)
- (4) "God does not exist" (37)
- (5) "We are alone, without excuses" (37)
- (6) "Man is condemned to be free" (37)
- (7) "Once thrown into the world he is responsible for all he does" (37)
- (8) "Man is responsible for his emotion" (38)
- (9) "Man is the future of man" (38)
- (10) "In choosing he chooses for all men" (25)
- (11) "We can never choose evil"
- (12) "The individual action commits ('engage') all humanity" (27)
- (13) "In choosing myself I choose man" (27)

From 'La Mort dans L' ame'

"(Mathieu) fired on man, on virtue, on the world; freedom, that's terror ... He fired on the beautiful officer, on all the beauty of the earth, on the road, on

the flowers, on the gardens, on all that he had loved. Beauty took an obscene dive and Mathieu fired again. He fired: he was pure, he was all powerful, he was free." (pp.2801)

INTRODUCTION: SARTRE IN THE WORLD BY STEPHEN PRIEST

JeanPaul Sartre (19051980) is one of the greatest French thinkers. A polemical and witty essayist like Voltaire, a philosopher of subjectivity like Descartes, a political activist like SaintSimon, a revolutionary political theorist like Proudhon, a humanistic novelist like Camus, Malraux or SaintExupery, a didactic playwright like Genet, his genius lies in his powers of philosophical synthesis and the genre breaching breadth of his imagination.

Sartre's Syntheses

The French journalist Michel Rybalka used to divide Sartre's intellectual development into three stages: liberty, equality and fraternity. The three concepts of the slogan of the French revolutionaries of 1789 were being used to denote three kinds of philosophy which Sartre endorsed: existentialism, from the midnineteenthirties, Marxism, increasingly from the second world war, and anarchism, in the last few years before he died in 1980.

Rybalka's threefold taxonomy is too neat, too clean and, however appealing, an oversimplification. The adult Sartre was always an existentialist, a practitioner of that style of philosophising which addresses the fundamental problems of human existence: death, anxiety, political, religious and sexual commitment, freedom and responsibility, the meaning of existence itself. It follows that Sartre remained an existentialist during his long Marxist phase and during his short, final, overtly anarchist phase.

Sartre's existentialism was never a pure existentialism. One of his two outstanding philosophical syntheses is his fusing of the existentialism he inherits from Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoievsky and Heidegger with the phenomenology of the Moravian, German speaking philosopher Edmund Husserl (18591939) and Husserl's Austrian teacher, the psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano (18381917). Phenomenology is the attempt to explain the possibility of all knowledge, including philosophy, by describing the content and structure of consciousness. It was Husserl's hope that this

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

partly Cartesian and partly Kantian project would place knowledge on indubitable and incorrigible foundations.

Sartre was not alone or wholly original in marrying phenomenology and existentialism into a single philosophy. Phenomenology had already undergone the profound transformation into 'fundamental ontology' at the hands of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger in his large if incomplete 1927 masterwork *Being and Time*. The 1945 synthesis of phenomenology and existentialism in *The Phenomenology of Perception* by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sartre's philosophical friend and political antagonist, follows hard on the heels of Sartre's own 1943 synthesis, *Being and Nothingness*, with which it is partly inconsistent. Sartre's existentialism, like that of Merleau-Ponty, is 'existential phenomenology'.

Sartre's Marxism was never a pure Marxism. Not only did he never join the PCF (Parti Communiste Francais), the second massive synthesis of his philosophical career was the fusion of Marxism with existentialism. The large 1960 first volume of *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* (*Critique of Dialectical Reason*) is an attempt to exhibit existentialist philosophy and Marxist political theory as not only mutually consistent but as mutually dependent: as dialectically requiring one another for an adequate understanding of human reality. This 'totalising' philosophy promises us all the intellectual apparatus we need to understand the direction of history and the unique human individual in their complex mutual constitution.

Sartre's Marxism is a 'humanistic' Marxism. His faith in Marxism as the most advanced philosophy of human liberation is tempered by his awareness of the crushing of the aspirations of the human individual by actual Marxism in, for example, the Soviet collectivisation of the farms and purges of the 1930's and 1940's, the suppression of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, the decades of atrocities in the Soviet Gulag, the ending of the Prague Spring in 1968. . Like the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper, Sartre does not think the oppression of the individual by communism is only a problem of political practice. He thinks Marxist political theory is flawed. Unlike Popper however, he seeks to humanise Marxist theory rather than reject it utterly. Unlike Popper, he thinks the neglected resources for a theory of the freedom of the individual can be found within the early writings of Marx himself. The young Marx is to be construed as a kind of protoexistentialist.

The putative synthesis of existentialism and Marxism is extraordinarily ambitious. Some of the most fundamental and intractable problems of metaphysics and the philosophy of mind are obstacles to that synthesis.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Classical Marxism is determinist and materialist. Sartre's existentialism is libertarian and phenomenological. Marxism includes a theory of history with prescriptive prognoses for the future. Existentialism explores agency in a spontaneous present which bestows only a derivative existence on past and future. Marxism is a social theory in which the class is the subject and object of change. In existentialism individuals do things and things are done to individuals. Marxism has pretensions to be a science. Existentialism regards science as part of the very problem of dehumanisation and alienation.

Despite the fact that Sartre's overt anarchism emerges only at the end of his life it is mainly professed in a series of interviews with his then secretary Beny Levy for the magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Sartre also claimed in the 1970's that he had always been an anarchist.

Anarchism is the theory that the abolition of the state is both possible and desirable. It is true that Sartre was a figure who increasingly challenged authority, especially the authority of the state; from the mocking of bourgeois values in the 1938 novel *Nausea*, through the support for the Algerian and Cuban rebels in the 1950's and early sixties, and a host of other leftwing or anticolonial causes, to his hawking of Maoist newsheets on the streets of Paris in the early 1970's. Sartre never wrote a philosophical synthesis of anarchism and the other philosophies he espoused. Rather, his anarchism is in his behaviour. It is also true that Sartre lost patience with communism after the failure of the May 1968 riots to overthrow French capitalism. He penned the tract *Les Communistes ont Peur de la Revolution* (*The Communists are Afraid of Revolution*) to condemn what he saw as the betrayal of the revolution by the PCF. His acceptance of the editorship of *La Cause du Peuple* (*The People's Cause*) and other Maoist papers was his last significant Marxist gesture. He struggled to learn the political stance of his young revolutionary colleagues who sometimes viewed the aging writer with mirth or contempt.

Despite these complexities, there is something apposite about Rybalka's use of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' to denote Sartre's existentialism, Marxism and anarchism. The doctrine that human beings have an ineliminable freedom to choose, no matter how constrained they may be, is essential to Sartre's existentialism. We are the beings who choose what we are. In Marxism, equality is not only a value, it is the core political value: the value upon which other values depend. In anarchism, fraternity makes social harmony in the absence of the power of the state possible. Ordinary human

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

friendships do not need to be sustained by police, army, courts or taxation and this is a clue to the fact that society without the state is possible.

It could be that existentialism, Marxism and anarchism are not mutually consistent. It is at least true that philosophical problems need to be solved to show their compatibility. If so, this applies equally to the slogan of the French revolution of 1789. Arguably the history of the Westernized world since the 1790's has conspicuously included the attempt to reconcile the competing claims of liberty, equality and fraternity. If that is right, the avid reception of Sartre's works world wide becomes more comprehensible.

Sartre, then, is a synthesiser. It is not unusual for the greatness of a philosopher to consist in being a synthesiser. Plato reconciled the static, rationalist, monist worldpicture of Parmenides with the pluralistic, empirical, process ontology of Heracleitus. Descartes, the seventeenthcentury French philosopher and mathematician, wrote his dualist philosophy to reconcile the medieval theological world picture he had inherited, with the findings of the new physical science. Kant, consciously if messily, synthesised the continental rationalism of Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza with the British empiricism of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Marxism, as Lenin pointed out, is a meeting of French socialism, British economics, and German philosophy. Sartre's syntheses of phenomenology and existentialism in the 1940's and existentialism with Marxism from the late 1950's take their place with these others in the history of philosophy. They are at least as philosophically significant as the synthesis of psychoanalysis and Marxism of his GermanAmerican contemporary, the Frankfurt School radical Herbert Marcuse, who was so much more influential than Sartre in the evenements of May '68.

Who was Sartre ?

He was born JeanPaul Charles Aymard Sartre on 21st June 1905, in Paris. His naval officer father died of a tropical disease the following year and so Sartre was brought up by his doting mother and rather austere maternal grandparents. His grandfather, Charles Schweitzer (who was the uncle of Albert Schweitzer the famous Protestant theologian) dominated the household. Paradoxically, he treated Sartre as an adult and Sartre's mother as a child. Sartre was allowed no friends of his own age so he sought the comapnionship of the books in his grandfather's large library. Educated at home by Charles until he was eleven, Sartre attended a string of Lycees until

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

intellectual and personal liberation came in the form of the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1924.

It was at the Ecole Normale that Sartre met his lifelong companion and lover Simone de Beauvoir. De Beauvoir was to become the brilliant feminist existentialist author of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (The Second Sex) 1948, many philosophical novels, and the most significant work of existentialist ethics: *Pour Une Morale de L'Ambiguïté* (For a Morality of Ambiguity) 1944. The mutual influence of de Beauvoir and Sartre is immense. They tested their ideas against each other. Their relationship seems to have allowed a frankness extremely rare between two human beings.

It was usually in the company of de Beauvoir that Sartre travelled abroad. At first just for holidays, later at the invitation of political leaders, Sartre visited between the 1930's and 1980's Spain, England, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Greece, Morocco, Algeria, Norway, Iceland, Scotland, Ireland, China, Italy, Yugoslavia, Cuba, the USA, Russia, Brazil and Japan. Some countries he visited more than once. He met Tito in Yugoslavia, Brezhnev in Russia and Castro in Cuba as well as the Chinese communist leadership.

Sartre's literary and philosophical output is immense. What enabled him to write so much was a combination of a naturally strong physical constitution, high motivation, an extremely efficient writing routine, and an occasional abuse of amphetamine tablets which increased his production if not his coherence.

Sartre suffered problems with his eyes. In 1909 he caught a cold which led to a leucoma in his right eye and strabism. Henceforth he had hardly any vision left in that eye and was left with the distinctive squint which would be exploited with ruthless mirth by political cartoonists when he became a world figure. In the 1970's he went blind. Fortunately, by 1975 (when he was 70) he felt able to claim in an interview 'I have said everything I had to say' (L/S 20). Although Sartre sometimes suffered from the symptoms of stress he was blessed with great physical and intellectual stamina.

Many conjectures could be made about his motivation to write. Perhaps in his solitary childhood his early reading and writing is a substitute for the human conversation and playful childhood interchanges that were denied him. Certainly, the release from his grandfather's orderly study into the comparative chaos of the world fascinated him. The contrast motivates his existentialism and perhaps his later socialism. Perhaps he wrote because of

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

the excitement of realising he could write. It is certain that he hated his childhood and much of his writing is writing against it.

Sartre's writing routine was as follows: at 8.30 he got up. From 9.30-1.30 he would write. (Four hours in the morning and four hours in the evening, that was his only rule). From 2.00-4.00 he would lunch in a cafe, perhaps work on some writing but certainly meet friends for conversation. Before 5.00 he would walk home and the second four-hour stretch of writing would be from 5.00-9.00. At 9.00 he would typically walk to Simone de Beauvoir's flat and they would talk and listen to music. Sartre would be asleep by 12.30 and, in the morning, would breakfast in a local cafe, between 8.30 and 9.30.

Certain features of this routine are key. He would not overeat. Although he drank plenty of black coffee and smoked excessively he drank very little alcohol. His social life took place in the afternoons. 3.00, he thought, was too late to finish anything and too late to start anything. His work, then, is not subject to the soporific effects of food and alcohol and he makes a clean break in his writing.

The first volume of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* was written at three times the normal speed because Sartre took twenty amphetamine tablets per day to finish it. Although he was physically strong, or perhaps partly because of it, Sartre took little care of his body. Sport bored him. He was happy to abuse his body to accelerate his written output.

Sartre enjoyed being the centre of attention in intellectual cafe life. His cafes included 'La Coupole' on Boulevard Montparnesse, 'Les Trois Mousquetaires' on the avenue de Maine and 'Les Deux Magots' and 'Café Flore' side by side on Boulevard Saint Germaine. The appropriately named 'La Liberte' on the corner of rue de la Gaite and the boulevard Edgar-Quinet was his favourite for breakfast.

Between Fact and Fiction

Sartre's oeuvre oscillates between fact and fiction. His juvenalia are literary; already at thirteen years of age he is penning a novel about Goetz von Berlichingen. Five years later his 'L'Ange du Morbide' and 'Jesus la Chouette' appear in *La Revue Sans Titre* in 1923. It is just over a decade later, on his return from a crucially educational visit to the French Institute at Berlin, that he begins work on the novel that will be *La Nausee* (Nausea). The 1933-4 period in Germany was spent learning phenomenology, and in Sartre's first serious publications we can see him situating himself partly within and partly outside that philosophy.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

La Transcendance de l'Ego (The Transcendence of the Ego) appeared in 1936 as a long paper in the 1936/7 volume of *Recherches Philosophiques*, a distinguished journal of academic philosophy. Sartre attacks Husserl's thesis that there exists an irreducibly subjective source of one's own consciousness called the 'transcendental ego': an inner self that is a condition for the possibility of a person's experience. Rather, Sartre argues that the postulation of the transcendental ego is phenomenologically illegitimate. Phenomenology describes only what appears to consciousness. No transcendental ego appears to consciousness, so no consistent phenomenologist can maintain the existence of the transcendental ego. (The difference between Sartre and Husserl here is in some ways analogous to that between Hume and Descartes on the self).

When Sartre was a philosophy undergraduate at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* he wrote his final year dissertation on the philosophy and psychology of the imagination: *L'Image dans la Vie Psychologique* ('The Image in Psychological Life'). On his return from Berlin he rewrote this as the 1936 book *L'Imagination*. It reads mainly as a survey of metaphysical and psychological theories, though its final chapter marks another break with Husserl. Sartre's other book on the imagination, *L'Imaginaire* (The Imaginary), is more original. Rather like Wittgenstein and Ryle, Sartre argues that a mental image is not a private picture: a non physical psychological item that may be scrutinised by introspection. Rather, mental images are mental acts directed to objects in the world that may or may not exist. We see here already a departure from the phenomenological description of the interiority of consciousness and an endorsement of the existentialist thesis that our being, including our psychological being, is 'being in the world'.

Like the early philosophical writings the novel *Nausea*, published in April 1938, is a work of both existentialism and phenomenology. The central character, Antoine Roquentin, confronts the brute contingency and meaninglessness of his own existence in a way that produces existential angst and the nausea of the novel's title. The thesis that existence, including one's own existence, is contingent rather than necessary is essential to existentialism. On the other hand, there are many passages in *Nausea* when Roquentin confronts the world as it would appear if it were subjected to Husserlian pure phenomenological description. On the bus, on the sea shore, looking at a chestnut tree, objects are reduced to phenomena. What is is what appears to be.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

To the extent to which Sartre's portrayals of Roquentin's experiences are internally consistent, credibility is lent to 'existential phenomenology'. There is another sense in which *Nausea* is an overtly philosophical novel. Roquentin confronts philosophical problems as problems in life. The problems of induction, universals and particulars, how language refers to the world, objective truth, and what it is for something to 'be' are all sources of profound anxiety and discomfort to him.

Although *Nausea* is an overtly didactic novel, it has one strength lacking in, say, Albert Camus' *The Plague* (1948) or Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869). Although Tolstoy is a stronger artist than Sartre: he paints in more detail, he constructs mentality with at once greater economy and greater plausibility, his grasp of history is less naive, Tolstoy can only include philosophy in *War and Peace* by addressing the reader directly. Tolstoy has to lecture us for page after page to convince us of his atomistic historical determinism. With slightly more subtlety, Camus in *The Plague* makes us aware of the confrontation with death and meaninglessness through conversation between Rieux and Tarrou. The reader is allowed to eavesdrop on their profundity. Sartre has the better of both these writers in weaving existentialism and phenomenology into the experience of his character. Although the experience is necessarily thereby unusual, Sartre himself does not have to intervene to tell us about philosophy, nor does Roquentin.

Sartre's second significant work of fiction was the collection of short stories *Le Mur* (*The Wall*), published in 1939. In each story at least one central existential problem is lived 'from the inside' by a fictional character. Notably, the condemned Republican volunteer Pablo Ibieta contemplates being shot at dawn by a Fascist firing squad in the Spanish Civil War story 'Le Mur' which gives the collection its title. Two very different kinds of bad faith, or refusal to recognise one's own freedom and its consequent responsibility, are exhibited by Lulu in 'Intimite' ('Intimacy') and by the young Lucien Fleurier in 'L'Enfance d'un Chef' ('Childhood of a Leader'). Lulu feels unable to quite leave her husband, Henri, or quite commit herself to the new lover, Pierre, and by choosing neither allows herself to be manipulated by her friend Rirette. Lucien becomes an antisemite and a fascist French nationalist leader, thus committing that double act of bad faith that Sartre calls being a 'swine' ('salaud'): not only denying one's own freedom by the adoption of a readymade ideology, but denying the freedom of others.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In *The Wall* Sartre experiments stylistically, for example, by unexpectedly changing tenses or changing grammatical person, sometimes within a single sentence. He is unable to do this with the confidence and lack of artificiality that one finds in Don Passos or Joyce who are Sartre's influences. It is however the beginning of that disavowal of the mastery of the author over the authored that will be essential to the mature literary theory of *Qu'est que la Literature ?* (What is Literature ?) 1948.

World War II

The second world war is the most decisive turning point of Sartre's intellectual career. Before the war, Sartre is an individualist in theory and practice. His philosophy and literature treat human subjects as atomic agents. Despite the antiFascist sentiments of 'The Wall' and 'Childhood of a Leader' and despite his mocking cynicism towards the middle classes in *Nausea*, his own life remains that of an essentially apolitical writer of growing reputation. Some of his friends join the Popular Front but he does not. Nor does he show any overt political commitment to the republicans in the Spanish Civil War (1936-9) which motivated so many leftwing intellectuals in Europe and the United States, if not to fight, then at least to write. In Berlin in 1933, he seems to have been oblivious to the rise of the Nazi movement with the exception of noticing that the communists had gone underground. During the 1938 Munich crisis he is a pacifist. When war comes in September 1939 he is anti Nazi but for the nationalist reason that France could be invaded; a reason he would later regard as inadequate. The Sartre of the thirties has no developed political consciousness. The Sartre that emerges from the conflict in 1945 is increasingly a Marxist, an eloquent and committed revolutionary who feels a duty to speak out for the dispossessed of the world, a mass media critic of French colonialism in IndoChina and Algeria, the Batista regime in Cuba, the treatment of the Basques in Spain, and the American involvement in Vietnam. A perennial irritant to the Gaullist government, he eschews the PCF as too far to his right. His serious theoretical works are increasingly political works, from the 1949 essay 'Materialism and Revolution' through the climactic 1960 book *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and its prefatory *Questions de Methode* (Questions of Method) to his final loss of patience with Marxism in the aftermath of '68.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The postwar Sartre is willing to take risks. In 1962 his rented accommodation at 42 rue Bonaparte is bombed (probably by Pieds Noirs appalled by his urging the French withdrawal from Algeria) so he moves to an apartment on the Quai Bleriot. That is bombed too so he has to move to 222 Boulevard Raspail.

What was it about the second world war which turned Sartre the naive individualist into Sartre the political figure? In an interview late in his life he says of being called up (into the meteorological corps of the French army) in September 1939: 'This was what made the social aspect enter my mind. I suddenly understood that I was a social being' (L/S 47). He spent the phoney war, September 1939-May 1940, on the militarily ineffectual Maginot Line, taking the opportunity to make copious notes that would much later be *Les Carnets de la Drole de Guerre* (War Diaries). The diaries anticipate themes in *Being and Nothingness*. It is his capture by the Wehrmacht on 21st June 1940, along with thousands of other French soldiers, and his incarceration in a prisoner of war camp in Triers that makes Sartre realise that he is subject to political forces and needs to take political action. On his escape in March 1941 he helps found the resistance group 'Socialisme et Liberte'.

It could be that the experience of the 1939-45 war left Sartre with two enduring models or attitudes for his politics in the period 1945-1980. The Nazi occupation of France provided him with a stark contrast between oppressor and oppressed. It seemed so obviously right to side with democracy, socialism and France against the violent totalitarianism of the invader (even if, for many of Sartre's contemporaries, collaboration or passive acquiescence was a more prudent strategy). This clean distinction between the rights of the oppressed and the wrongs of the oppressors is a moral distinction that informs nearly all his postwar political commitments. The French state and the Algerian people, the Batista regime and the Cuban rebels, the USA and the Vietnamese communists, the Franco regime in Madrid and the ETA separatists, German business and government and the Baader Meinhoff gang, the Renault management and the striking car workers: in each case Sartre unquestioning divides the political antagonists into oppressor and oppressed, immoral and moral. The Nazi occupying forces and the French resistance are the prototype for these clashes of good and evil.

The other enduring political attitude that is bequeathed to Sartre by the Second World War is an immense sympathy for the Soviet Union. In their

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

cafe arguments in the 1950's Sartre would allow himself to criticise Soviet policy but if Albert Camus or Maurice Merleau-Ponty joined him he would spring to the Soviet Union's defence. It is not just the fact that the Soviet Union was the most effective antidote to Nazism in the period 1941-45, it was also the fact that in Sartre's eyes the communist French resistance seemed so much more effective than the Gaullist, pro-Western, French resistance in killing Germans and sabotaging the Nazi military economy. His admiration for the communist resistance fighters was immense. In himself he felt ashamed and inadequate: ashamed of his bourgeois upbringing, ashamed of his privileged education and lifestyle, ashamed of his political and military ineffectiveness as 'an intellectual' rather than a fighter. Indeed, it was mainly by writing that he resisted. In January 1943 he joined the 'Comite National des Ecrivains' and in 1944 started writing for the resistance paper *Combat*. He staged the politically didactic *Bariona is the Stalag* and *Les Mouches* (*The Flies*) in Paris in 1943, the descent of the flies onto Argos being a barely concealed allegory for the Nazi occupation of France.

Sartre entered the Second World War young but emerged middle aged. He was thirty-four when it began in 1939 and forty when it ended in 1945 so it was the mature Sartre who was the socialist Sartre.

Nevertheless, Sartre's immediate impact in the postwar period was not as a Marxist but as the world leader of the philosophical vogue called 'existentialism'. On Monday 29th October 1945 in *Le Club Maintenant* ('The Now Club') at 8 Rue Jean Goujon Sartre delivered his lecture 'L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme'. (The title is usually translated into English as 'Existentialism and Humanism' or simply 'Existentialism' but the literal translation is 'Existentialism is a (kind of) Humanism'). Delivered without notes to a packed and animated audience the published version is still the best short introduction to existentialism there is. We need to draw upon it to understand one of the fundamental concepts of Sartre's philosophy, the concept of existence

Being and Nothingness

The culmination of Sartre's fusion of existentialism and phenomenology is the massive and complex philosophical treatise of 1943, *L'Être et le Néant* (*Being and Nothingness*). The book can be read in many ways: as a reconciliation of Heidegger's thought with much of what Heidegger rejected in Husserl, as an antidote to the positivism and pseudoscience that dominates twentieth-century philosophy, as the imposition of the ontological constraints

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

of 'existentialism' on phenomenological 'essentialism', as an atheistic metaphysics, as a series of profound psychological and sociological observations.

The 'being' of the book's title is divided by Sartre into two types, roughly speaking subjective being and objective being, which he labels 'l'etrepoursoi' ('beingfor-itself') and 'l'etreensoi' ('beingin-itself'). This neo Hegelian distinction is between the active existing of a free conscious human individual, and the passive being of inert nonhuman reality. The 'nothingness' of the book's title is introduced into the world by human reality. Only human beings have the power to imaginatively negate their surroundings. I am myself a kind of nothingness at the heart of being.

In chapters on freedom, bad faith, temporality, transcendence, and the ontology of social relations Sartre describes the existential structures of human reality. What is perhaps most striking about the book is that where a scientific treatise would seek mechanisms 'behind the scenes', or a lawlike physical reality beyond appearance, Sartre treats everything as 'surface'. Appearance is reality. It is science that fabricates a world of abstractions and our daily world of choice and consciousness is concrete reality.

JEANPAUL SARTRE

Twentieth century philosopher, novelist, playwright, political theorist and political activist.

Born: 1905. Died: 1980.

Although Sartre always remained an existentialist, he successively sought to reconcile existentialism with phenomenology, Marxism and (briefly) anarchism.

The Transcendence of the Ego (1936)

Sartre rejects the postulation of the transcendental ego by the Moravian phenomenologist Edmund Husserl.

Nausea (1938)

In this existentialist novel Antoine Roquentin discovers the contingency of existence, including his own existence. His realisation that he is *de trop*, superfluous, causes him existential anguish.

Being and Nothingness (1943)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre tries to fuse phenomenology and existentialism into a single 'Existential Phenomenology'. The work is influenced by the German fundamental ontologist Martin Heidegger and influences the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960)

Sartre tries to fuse existential phenomenology with Marxism in this long and convoluted work.

Essential Reading:

JeanPaul Sartre *Existentialism and Humanism* (Methuen) or
L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme (Editions Nagel)

Novels by Sartre:

Nausea (1938)

The Age of Reason (1945)

The Reprieve (1945)

Iron in the Soul (1949)

(The last three form the 'Roads to Freedom' trilogy. Sartre left unfinished a fourth and final volume *The Last Chance*.)

The Wall (1939) is a collection of short stories.

Some plays by Sartre:

The Flies (1943)

In Camera (1944)

Dirty Hands (1948)

Altona (1959)

Secondary Literature:

Iris Murdoch *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (Fontana)

Hazel Barnes *Sartre* (Quartet Books)

Mary Warnock *The Philosophy of Sartre* (Hutchinson)

1 CONSCIOUSNESS

Because *Being and Nothingness* is 'An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology' Sartre wishes to describe consciousness as it appears and as it is.

This requires stating the relation of consciousness to the being and the nothingness of the title.

1. Nothingness

It is sometimes said about Sartre that he reifies nothingness: treats it as though it were a thing, or, at least, speaks as though nothing exists. (The claim 'nothing exists' is ambiguous between; it is not the case that there is something that exists, and, it is the case that there is something, truly called 'nothing' that exists. It is in the second sense that Sartre is accused of saying that nothing exists).

Although some passages may logically commit Sartre to this incoherent position it is not his overt or professed view. Indeed, he is conscious of it as a possible misunderstanding and tries to rule it out by saying 'Nothingness is not' (BN 22). He tries to improve on Heidegger's famous, or infamous, dictum that 'nothingness nihilates' ('das Nichts nichtet') by saying 'Nothing does not nihilate itself; Nothingness "is nihilated"' (BN 22). Heidegger too is trying to avoid the charge of holding that nothing in some sense exists but Sartre sees he makes a mistake in his formulation. By saying 'nothing nihilates' Heidegger imparts an agency to nothing; the power to nihilate, but this agency could hardly be efficacious unless it or that which exercises it existed. Sartre's "Nothingness is nihilated" (BN 22) does not carry the logical or grammatical connotation of accomplishment. It is a putative affirmation of nothing's nonbeing logically consistent with that of the eleatic presocratic philosopher Parmenides. Sartre fails to observe that his passive rendering of Heidegger's active voice may have equally incoherently construed nothing as a subject of annihilation, and hence, something that exists.

Nonetheless, it is true according to Sartre that there are absences. There are refusals and denials, acts of imagining that things could be otherwise. For example,

'I have an appointment with Pierre at four o'clock. I arrive at the cafe a quarter of an hour late. Pierre is always punctual. Will he have waited for me? I look at the room, the patrons, and I say "He is not here"

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

It is certain that the cafe by itself with its patrons, its tables, its books, its mirrors, its light, its smoky atmosphere, and the sounds of voices, rattling saucers, and footsteps which fill it the cafe is a fullness of being ...

But now Pierre is not here'
(BN 910).

Sartre wonders whether it is a judgement, a thought, that Pierre is absent or whether there is an experience (an 'intuition') of Pierre's absence; an intuition of nothingness. Sartre knows there is a *prima facie* absurdity in speaking of the experience of nothing. Nothing is not anything, so an experience of nothing would not be an experience of anything. Nevertheless, Sartre decides that it is by sight that the absence of Pierre was detected. There was at least the phenomenon of seeing that Pierre is absent, even if not a seeing of Pierre's absence.

It is as if nothingness existed. We may speak of absent friends, holes the ground, negative and false propositions, purely imaginary states of affairs, fictional characters as though they existed, but this is only a *façon de parler*. Nothingness does not exist and 'If we can speak of it, it is only because it possess an appearance of being, a borrowed being' (BN 22).

The appearance of nothingness depends upon the appearance of being. For example, a hole in a wall exists is a borrowed sense because it is nothing over and above the arrangement of the remaining parts of the wall.

Nothingness also depends upon consciousness. We are aware of the absence of Pierre from the cafe because we expect to see him there; as a figure against a background: 'I myself expected to see Pierre, and my expectation has caused the absence of Pierre to happen as a real event concerning this cafe'. (BN 10).

It might seem that Sartre fails to distinguish clearly between nonexistence that depends on consciousness and nonexistence that does not. After all, many people are absent from the cafe The Duke of Wellington and Paul Valery are absent. But they are only thought to be absent, in the abstract, or not even thought. Pierre's absence is experienced. In these ways, according to Sartre, 'consciousness is prior to nothingness' (BN xxxii).

Consciousness is defined by negation. This is partly the modal point that its being and its being what it is depend upon its not being what it is not. It is partly the psychological claim that its imaginative power to negate is one of its essential properties. Unless we could think or imagine what is absent we could not intuit that which is present.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

There is a more profound connection between consciousness and nothingness. I am my consciousness and my consciousness is a kind of nothingness; a nothingness at the heart of being.

To appreciate this point, we need to contrast the being of consciousness with the kind of being of Sartre calls 'en-soi' or 'in-itself'. Being-in-itself is massive, opaque, full, dense and inert. It confronts me and it surrounds me. If I try to locate myself as consciousness, in contrast, I am strangely absent. Phenomenologically, I seem to be a region of nonbeing within the plenitude of being. Consciousness is a kind of emptiness or non being. Consciousness is certainly not one object amongst others that I could encounter in the course of my experience. As Sartre puts it in *Truth and Existence*: 'I am nothing but consciousness of Being, Nothing separates me from Being' (TAE 29).

Sartre sometimes speaks as though consciousness were itself a kind of nothingness or emptiness. Sometimes he says consciousness is a prerequisite for nothingness. Sometimes he says nothingness confronts consciousness. For example, when he speaks of Being and Nothingness he says of consciousness 'it is total emptiness (since the entire world is outside it)' (BN xxxii) he implies that consciousness is a kind of nonbeing; an absence of being-in-itself.

Read patiently, these views may be exhibited as mutually consistent. Sartre is establishing a hierarchy of dependencies between kinds of absence. Consciousness is a kind of absence that depends on being: being-in-itself. Consciousness essentially involves the power of negation: the possibility of denial and imagination. This in turn makes possible the experience of absence as a kind of quasibeing.

It is through its power of negation that consciousness distinguishes itself from its own objects. This distinction is essential to what consciousness is. It is what has come to be thought of as consciousness' intentionality.

2.Intentionality

By 'intentionality' is meant the alleged property of consciousness always taking some object or other. As Sartre puts it, 'All consciousness is consciousness of something' (PI 13). Sartre thinks it does not make sense to speak of consciousness that is not consciousness of something. All perception is perception of, all thinking is thinking of, all loving is loving something, all hating, hating something. For any act of consciousness, that

act could not exist unless it were directed towards some object. The object need not be a physical object, it could be a fictional character, an abstract object like a number, or an imaginary being.

The doctrine of the intentionality of consciousness was not invented by Sartre. Intentionality was thought to be the essence of consciousness by the Moravian phenomenologist Edmund Husserl. Husserl's teacher, the Austrian philosopher and psychologist Franz Brentano had used the concept of intentionality to demarcate the mental from the nonmental (including the physical). It was first formulated systematically by the thirteenth century scholastic philosopher St Thomas Aquinas, but anticipations may be found in Plato and Aristotle. (Sartre, following Husserl, allows some exceptions to the doctrine of intentionality. Sensations of pain, and certain moods, for example are not 'about' anything. This leaves both Sartre and Husserl with the problem of what these phenomena being mental might consist in).

Sartre makes a crucial break with the doctrines of Brentano and Husserl on intentionality when he insists that the objects of consciousness exist. Brentano had thought that they 'in exist' as presented to consciousness, that is, neither exist nor do not exist. Husserl suspended belief and disbelief in the existence of objects in the external world by his epoche, or phenomenological reduction, in order to describe consciousness purely. Sartre regards these positions as confused. Even if an object is fictional or abstract or imaginary, it exists. It is rather than is not. As for Husserl on intentionality 'he misunderstood its essential character' (BN xxxvii).

Husserl fails to see the impossibility of the epoche or phenomenological reduction. No object can be reduced to the consciousness of it, not even to an infinity of acts of consciousness of it, because 'consciousness cannot be that of which it is conscious' (TAE 4) The object, in some nonspatial sense of 'outside', is always irreducibly 'outside' consciousness.

If the objects of consciousness are not 'in' consciousness as Brentano and Husserl supposed then where are they? As we have seen, Sartre thinks our fundamental mode of being is truly captured by the Heideggerian notion of 'beinginthe world'. Indeed, Sartre's critique of Husserl's phenomenological reduction, like Merleau-Ponty's, owes much to Heidegger's 'break' with Husserl that culminated in *Being and Time* (1927). If our being is beingintheworld then it is logically impossible that we could persist in abstraction from the world of objects and subjects that surrounds us. The objects of our consciousness are in the world. Even though one's own being and the being of the world are collectively exhaustive of what is if

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

something does not belong to one's own being then it must belong to the being of the world subject and world are ontologically inseparable. This is the import of the hyphenation in beingintheworld ('etreaumonde', 'inderWeltsein').

Although, I can be conscious of myself, paradigmatically, 'I am nothing but consciousness of Being, Nothing separates me, from Being' (TAE 29). Trivially, consciousness is conscious of what is. Essentially, consciousness is conscious of something outside itself. Consistently with that, consciousness is a conscious of consciousness; a consciousness of itself 'in the face of being'. Self-consciousness will turn out to be possible only because consciousness is directed towards objects outside itself.

It follows that Sartre is a realist about the objects of consciousness. Indeed, consciousness could not exist unless there were a world of objects for its acts to be directed towards. Idealism, the doctrine that only consciousness and its mental contents exist, is incoherent.

Husserl had thought that consciousness constitutes its objects; it makes them be what they are. It was his quasiKantian view that although Berkelyan idealism is false objects do not depend on consciousness for their existence nevertheless what objects are to us is largely due to our subjective modes of awareness.

Sartre treads a careful path between naive realism and Husserl's neoKantianism. He is concerned to resolve the apparent paradox that 'Although the object enters my perception in its completeness, I nevertheless see it only from one side at a time' (PI 8). When I see a physical object I see it only from a certain angle. For example if I am looking at a small cube I can see a maximum of three sides simultaneously. Nevertheless, there is a real sense in which I perceive the whole physical object. Sartre should have put the point this way. I see the whole physical object but I do not see the whole of the physical object.

Sartre, like Husserl, argues that being aware of the whole physical object depends on the possible awareness of its parts, (say its sides). However, Sartre insists that the object really exists outside consciousness. It is our awareness of the object as a whole that is constituted by the actual and possible mental acts we direct towards it. The object itself is not constituted by consciousness. It is really there.

We can now see the sense in which it is true that 'The object of the perception overflows consciousness constantly' (PI II). There is always more to an object than the consciousness of it. It is incoherent to suppose an

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

object could be the consciousness of it. Also, an object systematically exceeds what it directly presents to consciousness. In the visual case, a front implies a back and some sides. The whole exceeds the momentarily presented parts.

Sartre's phenomenology of perception is a realist transformation of Husserl's theory of the constitution of objects. Sartre retains from Husserl what we could call a kind of 'perspectivism'. An object is always perceived from a point of view and always presents an aspect to that point of view. It follows that 'the object appears only in a series of profiles, or projections' (PI 9). The profile is however part of the object. The profile is any part of the object that appears to a point of view at a time.

Husserl thought that an object is constituted by the infinity of possible points of view on it. Sartre thinks the object really exists, independently of any point of view. Nevertheless,

'I always see it only in a certain fashion which includes and excludes at one and the same time an infinity of other points of view' (PI 9).

What I see exists even when unseen. Other points of view are excluded in the sense that at any one time I may adopt just one and not any other of them. Other points of view are included in the sense that at other times I could adopt any one of them.

It is the object that makes possible the points of view on it. The points of view do not make the object possible, even though they make possible the perception of it. So when Sartre says 'The object itself is the synthesis of all these appearances' (PI 9) an appearance is nothing mental. The appearances of an object are the parts of it that can appear.

Husserl was wrong to claim that consciousness constitutes objects. rather, objects constitute consciousness. In his first philosophical work, *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1936), Sartre argues that consciousness constitutes itself in the face of objects. The presentation of objects is a necessary condition for the unity of consciousness. If there were no world, there could be no consciousness as we know it.

Sartre's realism therefore entails a kind of externalism. What consciousness is depends upon the objects of consciousness that lie outside it. Objects transcend consciousness, there is more to them than both the consciousness of them and what is directly presented in the consciousness of them. 'Transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness' (BN

xxxvii). An object is transcendent if and only if it is not exhausted by the consciousness of it.

Similarly, Sartre says 'consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself' (BN xxxvii). A necessary condition for the existence and nature of consciousness is the existence of objects for consciousness which exist independently of consciousness.

It follows straightforwardly from this externalism that consciousness is not a substance. Consciousness depends on its external objects, but if something is a substance then it depends on nothing outside itself, therefore, consciousness is not a substance. It follows in turn that Sartre's existential phenomenology is inconsistent with the Cartesian doctrine that consciousness is a mental substance capable of existing independently of physical objects. If consciousness is not a substance then consciousness is not a mental substance. If Sartre is right, Cartesian mindbody dualism is false.

Nevertheless, Sartre's realism is not immune to objections. Even if it is part of common sense, and may be sustained by philosophical argument, that physical objects exist independently of the perception of them, this view looks far less plausible when applied to mental images, fictional characters, imaginary beings and perhaps abstract objects such as numbers. On the face of it these items are 'internal' rather than 'external'. Arguably their existence depends upon consciousness rather than vice versa.

Sartre's reply is to draw attention to what he calls 'the illusion of immanence' (PI 5). From the fact that there are mental images and abstract objects it does not follow that there are nonphysical objects that exist within consciousness.

In fact according to Sartre, the mental image is not an object towards which acts of consciousness are directed. The image is itself a mental act, embedded by and embedding further mental acts. An image is not an object of awareness, it is a kind of awareness. It posits its own object as nonexistent, as absent or as existing elsewhere. It follows that the image itself includes an act of belief, an act of positing (or not positing) an object. The image is a relation not an object. It is a relation between subject and object.

Succumbing to the illusion of immanence involves thinking of consciousness as a place, and thinking of images as 'in' consciousness. Sartre thinks of Hume as the paradigm case of someone who commits this

fallacy. However he thinks it widespread in philosophy, psychology and common sense.

Because he denies that consciousness is a place a strange nonphysical place Sartre regards expressions of the form 'a mental image of Peter' as philosophically misleading and 'the imaginative consciousness of Peter' (PI 7) as philosophically perspicuous even if Peter does not exist. Imagining an imaginary object is logically parasitic on imagining a real object, rather as holding a false belief depends upon being capable of holding a true belief.

3. Self-consciousness

Another seeming objection to Sartre's externalist realism hinges on the existence of self-consciousness. As early as the 1936 book *The Transcendence of The Ego* Sartre draws an important distinction between two kinds of consciousness: reflexive consciousness and prereflexive consciousness.

Prereflexive consciousness is the ordinary awareness of objects in the external world that we exercise typically from morning to night. Reflexive consciousness is consciousness of consciousness: a new act of consciousness directed by consciousness onto itself. Reflexive consciousness is only intermittently exercised on prereflexive consciousness so the picture so far seems reasonably clear: There is prereflexive consciousness whenever we are conscious. From time to time we are selfconscious in that a new act of consciousness is directed onto consciousness by itself. It seems therefore that Sartre rejects the view that we are perpetually occurrently selfconscious.

Sartre complicates this picture by saying that 'Every consciousness exists as consciousness of existing' (BN xxx). Prereflexive consciousness is conscious of itself and reflexive consciousness is conscious of itself. In addition to this, reflexive consciousness is conscious (sometimes) of prereflexive consciousness.

Why does Sartre present us with this complicated and barely coherent picture? It is of dubious coherence. He says, for example 'consciousness is consciousness of itself, rather than 'consciousness is conscious of itself', meaning that it is identical with the awareness it has of itself: What is, then, the subject and the object of this awareness?

His motivation is Cartesian and antiFreudian. As we saw in the discussion of bad faith, Sartre thinks there is no unconscious. Indeed the idea of an

unconscious mental state is contradictory and so impossible. He agrees with Descartes that if I am a mental state then I am aware of that mental state. All consciousness is therefore selfintimating or transparent.

If that is so however, reflexive consciousness would seem to be redundant. Prereflexive, consciousness is already 'a consciousness of itself' so there is no need for reflection to inspect its states.

We saw in the discussion of being-for-itself that the difference between reflexive and prereflexive consciousness partly depends on the ego. Sartre thinks the ego is only the content and the result of reflection by reflexive consciousness on prereflexive consciousness.

There are other important differences between the selfintimations of prereflexive consciousness and the acts of reflexive consciousness. Not only is reflexive consciousness presented with an ego and prereflexive consciousness not presented with an ego (except, sometimes, the ego of another). Reflexive consciousness consists in a set of mental acts extra to or in addition to those of prereflexive consciousness. Reflexiveconsciousness always only takes conscious states and the ego as its objects. Prereflexive consciousness takes external objects as its objects, as well as intimating its own mental states.

The findings of acts of reflective conscious are incorrigible. The findings of acts of prereflexive consciousness are corrigible, at least in so far as they are directed towards external objects. Sartre endorses the Cartesian epistemological thesis that if I believe, or am otherwise aware, of being in a mental state then that belief cannot be false. That awareness cannot be nonveridical. In the case of awareness of objects in the external world, however, there is always room for error. I may misidentify an object, ascribe to it a property it lacks or think there is an object where there is none. As he puts it 'a reflective consciousness gives us knowledge of absolute certainty' (PI 3) and 'The act of reflection ... has a content of immediate certainty' (PI 4). If I believe I am in a mental state it is impossible for me to be mistaken.

It is doubtful that this doctrine is true. Obviously, if it is true that I believe I am in a mental state then it follows validly that I am in at least one mental state viz that state of belief. Not much more than this can be said with certainty however. This is not just because Sartre might be wrong about the nonexistence of an unconscious mind. It is also because I may be caused to believe I am in a mental state by something other than my being in it. Clearly too, if there is an unconscious mind then, by definition, I may be in a

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

mental state and not know I am in it and I may believe I am in a mental state and that belief may be false.

Sartre however, thinks the corrigible/incorrigible distinction marks another important difference between reflexive and prereflexive consciousness. Prereflexive conscious of external objects is corrigible Reflexive conscious of consciousness is incorrigible.

This picture of self-consciousness is not only consistent with Sartre's externalism, it entails it, because it's truth depends on there being consciousness of objects outside the mind. The hierarchy of dependencies is as follows: Consciousness unifies itself only through its objects. Only as unified can it be its own object. Intentionality depends upon on external objects. A unified consciousness depends on intentionality and self-consciousness depends upon a unified consciousness. Self-consciousness is therefore not only consistent with externalism, it logically presupposes it.

In what sense is Sartre's phenomenology of perception phenomenology? Phenomenology is the presuppositionless description of what appears to consciousness as it appears: without ontological commitment to it's objective reality and causal relations.

Sartre aspires to the ideal of phenomenological description free from preconceptions. Preconceptions have to be uncovered and subjected in turn to phenomenological scrutiny. This is facilitated by the fact that there exists no unconscious mind. Sartre also accepts that phenomena admit of no appearance/reality distinction. He says of 'the phenomenon', 'it is as it appears' (BN xxvi).

However, Sartre makes important departures from Husserlian phenomenology. Sartre thinks Husserl's phenomenology collapses into phenomenalism; the empiricist theory of perception according to which any claim about physical objects may be translated into a claim about the contents of senseexperience, without loss of meaning. Sartre thinks phenomenalism is false. Any such translation project is doomed to failure because objects perpetually exceed our perception of them.

Sartre thinks the objects of perception look objective. The world is presented to consciousness as distinct from conscious so to this extent appearance and reality coincide. For this reason Being and Nothingness can be subtitled 'An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology' a contradictory title in Husserl's terms. What is and what appears to be coincide. The being of the phenomenon is the phenomenon of being.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Solipsism is an extreme form of idealism. Idealism is the doctrine that only minds and their contents exist. If something nonmental seems to exist this will turn out, on idealism, to be logically dependent upon minds for its existence. Solipsism is the doctrine that only my own mind exists. It follows that idealism follows from solipsism but solipsism does not follow from idealism. If there is only my mind then there are only minds but if there are only minds there might be minds other than my own.

Solipsism is the firstperson singular form of idealism according to which no persons other than oneself have minds. Some people regard solipsism as a ridiculous position in the philosophy of mind, even though it is hard to see how it could be refuted. Others find solipsism profoundly terrifying, once they see its plausibility.

Attempts to refute solipsism usually take one of two forms. Either it is argued, inductively, that other people have minds because they look and behave like me and I have a mind, or, it is argued that the formulation of solipsism as a theory in some way presupposes its falsity. For example, Hegel argues in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* that one consciousness being a self-consciousness depends upon an encounter with another consciousness. Solipsism presupposes self-consciousness, so solipsism presupposes at least one other consciousness. Wittgenstein argues that solipsism presupposes a logically private language for its formulation. A logically private language is impossible, therefore solipsism may be formulated just on condition it is false.

Sartre takes neither of these routes. His refutation is based upon human emotion, paradigmatically; shame. Sartre invites us to consider the following case:

'Let us imagine that moved by jealousy, curiosity or vice I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole ..

But all of a sudden I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me!

What does this mean?'

(BN 25960).

It means that I feel shame. Shame however is shame before another. This is not to say that I am not ashamed of myself it is precisely myself that I am ashamed of but without the intervention of the other my shame would be impossible. Of course I may be ashamed of myself when I am not in the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

physical presence of another human being, but even then, the possibility of the other's moral judgement is presupposed.

Is this a refutation of solipsism? It is not a logically conclusive refutation because my belief that I have been discovered looking through a keyhole is sufficient to cause my shame. Even if the belief were false I would still feel the shame. The existence of the other is not logically necessary for the belief so it is not necessary for the shame. However, if I sincerely believe another is looking at me I am thereby not subscribing to solipsism: quite the reverse. At least while I feel shame it might be psychologically impossible for me to believe solipsism.

It could be that there just is no logical inference from the existence of my mind to the existence of other minds. In that case we cannot hope for a refutation of solipsism that is much stronger than the one Sartre provides.

Sartre's phenomenology of the body is a description of the asymmetries which obtain between one's own body the body that I am and the bodies of others the bodies I may observe or encounter in a third person way.

It is arguably one of the merits of the existential phenomenology of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty that, whilst eschewing mindbody dualism, they take subjectivity seriously. Subjective reality is part of reality.

Sartre does not doubt that the following is a roughly true description of a human body:

'a certain living object composed of a nervous system, a brain, glands, digestive, respiratory, and circulatory organs whose very matter is capable of being analysed chemically into atoms of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorous, etc.' (BN 303).

But is not a description of my body as I experience it. It is partly derived from the observation of other people's bodies, notably cadavers on the anatomist's slab, partly from medical and biological textbooks.

Fundamentally it is a description of the body as a thing: as one object amongst others in the world.

Crucially, my own body is not for me a thing. It is a thing from the perspective of another, and another's body is a thing from my perspective, but my own body is not presented to me as an object in the world; as something I could encounter or straightforwardly observe.

Sartre is not denying that each of us experiences his own body. I have a limited visual perspective onto the front of my body from the shoulders

downwards. However, I cannot see my own head and back. I also have a kinaesthetic awareness of the relative positions of the parts of my body, but not of their locations in the world.

Qua subject the body cannot be object and qua object the body cannot be subject. For example, the eyes that are seeing cannot see themselves. Although I can see using my eyes I cannot see my seeing. There could be a human being, or an operation on a human being, such that one of the two eyes could watch the other while the other watched objects in the world. Nevertheless, in such a case, I am adopting the standpoint of the other in relation to one of my eyes. The eye that sees still does not see the eye that sees.

Similarly, my hand may touch objects in the world, and I may touch one of my hands with the other. However, my hand cannot touch itself, or, at least, the part that is touching is not touching itself. Sartre says 'we are dealing with two essentially different orders of reality. To touch and to be touched' (BN 304). Always, being the subject of an experience precludes being simultaneously the object of that same experience.

We see here a new level on which *poursoi* and *ensoi* are incommensurable for Sartre. My body as I experience it is *poursoi*. My body as experienced by another is *ensoi*. There are not two numerically distinct bodies, but there are two radically distinct modes of being exhibited by one and the same body: subjective and objective, free and mechanical, lived and observed.

It is important to emphasise that this is a dualism of perspectives, not a dualism of entities. The phenomenology of the human body derived from being one is radically distinct from that derived from observing one, encountering one as a thing in the external world. However, if I am my body, then the question remains; what is the relation between conscious and this body that I am? Even if the body is a subject, not just an object, what is it for the body-subject to be aware ?

Sartre's view is that Beingfor itself is primordial with regard to both consciousness and the body. Unless there were the subjective type of being called 'Beingfor-itself' there could not obtain the distinction between consciousness and the body: 'Beingfor-itself must be wholly body and it must be wholly conscious; it can not be united with a body' (BN 305). Neither consciousness nor the body is a substance. Rather, both are pervasive properties of the subjective kind of being that I am: Beingfor-itself.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

By 'beingforothers' Sartre means my mode of being my overall state of experience when I take myself to be as others perceive me, or when I make myself be as others perceive me, or both. My taking myself to be an object or 'thing' in the world is a paradigm case of beingforothers. It is adopting towards myself the kind of perspective that others have on me: 'Of course, the discovery of my body as an object is indeed a revelation of its being. But the being which is thus revealed to me is its beingforothers' (BN 305).

Beingforothers is a kind of bad faith. It is not a false belief about myself. There is a way in which I appear to others and this is thinkable by me. However, it is not how I am and it is not how I experience myself to be. To this extent it is inauthentic and unreal. It does not correspond to my own lived experience.

Consciously or not, the phenomenology of human relations that Sartre offers us operates with the parameters of Hegel's 'Master and Slave Dialectic' in the 1807 work *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. There selfconscious beings are depicted as mutually constituting through a struggle for recognition: a power struggle where one party may bestow or withhold psychological identity from another, a complex play where the freedom of one is sought in the control of the other.

Sartre says that his descriptions of human relations have to be understood within the perspective of conflict. The possibility, if not the actuality, of conflict is a necessary condition for there being human relations at all. As Sartre puts it 'Conflict is the original meaning of being for others' (BN 364).

Human conflict is fundamentally conflict over freedom. In trying to define my own essence through the exercise of free choice I try to repress the freedom of the other. Simultaneously, the other is doing the same:

'While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the other, the other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the other, the other seeks to enslave me' (BN 364).

It follows that the perverse form of bad faith called 'Being a swine' ('salaud') is at the root of human relations.

It is Sartre's view that there is no human encounter where one party does not psychologically dominate the other: one is master and one is slave. If two strangers pass in the street 'the look' ('le regard') of one will make the other uncomfortable.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

This is not simply a psychological generalisation. Sartre has philosophical premises for why it should be so. He subscribes to the Hegelian doctrine that my being what I am is partly due to the recognition or acceptance by others of what I am. This is a kind of badfaith according to Sartre because I really or authentically am what my freedom makes me. Nevertheless, my being a waiter, a woman, a soldier, a leader, or my adopting any role, depends upon the quiescence of others. As he says, 'The other holds a secret the secret of what I am' (BN 364). It follows that the other may choose to bestow or withhold his recognition of what I am. My psychological security, my social identity as a person, is subject to the freedom of the other. The other 'has a hold' over me.

For this reason I try to deny the freedom of the other and the other tries to deny mine. In denying each other's freedom we are exercising our own. This is the antagonistic powerstruggle that prevades all human relations according to Sartre. It has no optimistic resolution.

Why, we might object, should not conflict be overcome in love. Why should not two human being, who perhaps care more for each other than they do for themselves, feel secure in each other's freedom and not threaten one another's psychological security? Sartre's reply is 'love is a conflict' (BN 366).

Love is a conflict because the love of the lover can always be withdrawn. There is no absolute security in love and it is in the nature of love not to require such absolute security. Love presupposes freedom. Love is freely bestowed and freely withheld. The lover wants the object of his love to love him but to love him freely. The lover would not feel loved if who he loved was forced to love him. To be loved is to be freely loved. However, to love freely implies the possibility of not loving, and to be loved freely implies the possibility of not being loved. To be truly loved involves the perpetual possibility of that love being withdrawn. Love implies insecurity.

It follows that love cannot undermine Sartre's pessimism about human relations. Love presupposes freedom but freedom does not presuppose love, and freedom for Sartre is in many ways a terrible thing. Indeed the layers of human interaction in which each of us is implicated accentuates our bad faith. Our beingforothers hides our freedom from ourselves, and this is as true of loving relationships as much as sadistic ones: 'without the other I apprehend fully and nakedly this terrible necessity of being free which is my lot' (BN 381).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre thinks that acts of love and acts of sadism have something essential in common, roughly the other's freely surrendering:

'Love does not demand the abolition of the other's freedom but rather his enslavement as freedom; that is, freedom's selfenslavement. Similarly, the sadist does not seek to suppress the freedom of the one whom he tortures but to force this freedom freely to identify itself with the tortured flesh. This is why the moment of pleasure for the torturer is that in which the victim betrays or humiliates himself' (BN 403).

The dialectic of freedom and domination is more fundamental than the moral distinction between acts of love and acts of sadism.

When Sartre gave the lecture *Existentialism and Humanism* at the Club Maintenant (The 'Now Club') in Paris in 1946 he tried to refute those Marxist and Christian critics who accused him of pessimism. However, if one reads *Being and Nothingness* one cannot help but feel that the critics are justified. No hope is held out for a politics of human solidarity. Nor is there any possibility of a spiritual communion of souls or a divine love. Even the Heideggerian notion of a 'we' or 'mitsein' is denied ontological primordially. Solidarity is only someone's feeling of solidarity.

In Sartre's pessimism we can see a radical break with Hegelianism. Hegel thinks a speculative synthesis of subjective and objective being is possible. A reconciliation of the for-itself and the in-itself in the spiritual whole called 'absolute knowing' overcomes the 'contradictions' between the two. For Sartre, however, such a spiritual synthesis is impossible. There can never be a dialectical synthesis of the poursoi and the ensoi; 'Unfortunately there are consciousness and there is being-in-itself' (TAE 3). The privacy and interiority of numerically distinct consciousness precludes their integration into Geist or Spirit. The objectivity of the world is a brute fact that makes the 'overcoming' of subject-object dualism impossible.

Sartre's existential phenomenology of human relations is subjectivist and individualist. He only seriously addresses its limitations when he integrates it into a Marxism in the massive 1960 work *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.nd cannot change the time at which I live. Despite this, it may be within my individual power, or my class's collective power
The subtitle Sartre gives to *Being and Nothingness* is 'An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology'. This, for Husserl, would have been a contradiction in terms. Ontology is the branch of philosophy which tries to

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

decide what kinds of things fundamentally exist, but it is precisely this project which is putatively
Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the movement in nineteenth and twentieth century European philosophy which attempts to begin philosophy anew. Its most significant practitioners are the German speaking Moravian Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and his Austrian teacher the psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano (1838-1917), the German Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and the Frenchmen Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1907-1961) and Sartre himself.

Husserl attempts to ground all knowledge, and so all scientific and philosophical knowledge as well as common sense, in appearances. If nothing appeared nothing could be known. If nothing were ever presented to consciousness then consciousness could have no content. In his seminal 1913 work *Ideas I*, Husserl uses the methodological device of *epoche* to suspend judgement about the external world and his own existence as a human being. (*Epoche* is the Greek for 'suspension of belief'. It was a term used by the ancient sceptics.) Once the objectivity of what is is no longer posited everything is reduced to its appearance.

In the extract from *Being and Nothingness* below, Sartre clarifies four aspects of phenomenology: its overcoming of a number of dualisms in philosophy, the relation between appearance and being, consciousness, and the object of consciousness.

POLITICS

Sartre's massive and complex 1961 work *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and its 1957 preface *Search For a Method* are a putative synthesis of existentialism and Marxism. Sartre tries to integrate into one philosophy his own humanistic existentialism and Marxist political theory.

Logically, his situation is as follows. He believes that existentialism and Marxism are both true. He therefore has to prove that they are mutually consistent: that the truth of one does not logically preclude the truth of the other. If they should prove inconsistent with one another it would follow

that at least one of them is false. Then Sartre would have to give up his belief either in existentialism or in Marxism: something he would be extremely reluctant to do.

I shall suggest later that *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* expresses an even more profound synthesis than the overt reconciliation of existentialism with Marxism. There is a hidden synthesis of which Sartre is unaware: a synthesis which would have appalled Sartre both as a reading of his book and in reality. I mean a synthesis of capitalism and socialism: the missing synthesis of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. First I evaluate the professed marriage of existentialism and Marxism.

On the face of it existentialism and Marxism are mutually inconsistent philosophies. Existentialism entails libertarianism, the doctrine that human beings have freedom of choice, but classical Marxism is deterministic. Marx and Engels thought that the economic organisation of a society causally determines all other facts about that society. In particular the 'superstructure' the laws, religions, social mores and the behaviour of individuals is caused by the 'infrastructure' or 'economic base'.

Marxism is also a kind of materialism, but Sartre's existentialism places an enormous emphasis on the existence of consciousness. Marxist materialism is not the eliminative thesis that everything is only physical. However, it is the thesis that unless there were physical things there could be nothing nonphysical. In particular, social, abstract and mental change depends on physical change. Sartre, however, frequently speaks as though each person's consciousness were a quasi-Kantian 'spontaneity'; a repository of free acts that has no physical prerequisite.

Marxism entails a theory of history but existentialism emphasises the lived reality of the present time. Despite the occasional allusions to the revolutions of 1789 and 1848 in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre has very little to say about history qua existentialist. Marxism, in contrast, includes an account of how one form of socioeconomic organisation supplants another through class struggle. Nomadic societies are replaced by settled agriculture over which feudal relations of land tenure are established. Feudalism is eventually destroyed by an emergent moneyed, merchantile, professional and capital owning parliamentary class. This capitalist class or bourgeoisie will eventually be overthrown by the proletariat or working class whose labour they exploit for profit. After a short but severe 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in which the capitalist class and its state is destroyed a classless

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

communist society is established. This historicist account is essential to Marxism but existentialism contains nothing like it.

Marxism is a social theory. Existentialism is an extreme form of individualism. If we ask the question 'who acts?' existentialism and Marxism provide radically different answers. For the Marxist it is the group, paradigmatically the socioeconomic class, that acts. Individuals only act qua members of a class. For the existentialist groups only act in so far as their individual members act. The agent is the individual human being.

If we draw a distinction between self and other: between being a human being, the one that is, and observing some human beings, all those one is not, then existentialism is a philosophy of the self. Marxism is a philosophy of the other. Sartre's existentialism contains a phenomenological obsession with what it is like to be someone. Marxism depicts people in the abstract with an almost Newtonian anonymity. To understand existentialism it is necessary to think of a human being on the model of oneself. To understand Marxism it is necessary to think of human beings on the model of someone else.

Finally, if despite all his disavowals Sartre's existentialism is a pessimistic philosophy then Marxism is its opposite in this sense too. Even though Marx criticised nineteenth century socialists, for example the anarchist Pierre Proudhon, for what he saw as their unrealistic utopianism, Marxism remains profoundly optimistic. History concludes with the revolutionary overthrow of exploitation and unfair inequality and its replacement with an ideal classless society without the state. Sartre's existentialism, on the other hand, includes no political solution to human anxiety in the face of loneliness, freedom and death. Humanity is condemned to the impossible project of being both in-itself and for-itself. Man wants to be God, but in Sartre's existentialism there is no metaphysical heaven and no heaven on earth either.

It follows that existentialism is an individualistic libertarian philosophy of consciousness, subjectivity and the present which offers mankind no grounds for political or metaphysical optimism. Marxism on the other hand is a deterministic social and historical theory that is essentially materialist in content and holds out the promise of a future utopia in which scarcity and exploitation will be overcome. It seems that Sartre faces an insurmountable task in reconciling these two philosophies into a homogenous worldpicture.

The problems Sartre faces are some of the central problems of philosophy: freedom and determinism, the mind-body problem, the existence of past,

present and future, relations between individual and social, self and other. Metaphysics is an obstacle to politics.

In *Search for a Method and Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre develops concepts which putatively synthesise or overcome the dialectical tensions of philosophy. To understand these synthesis we need to understand the sense in which *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* is a critique of dialectical reason. We need to understand the title of the book.

'Dialectic' has several sense in philosophy. It is sometimes used to denote the Socratic practice of philosophy by question, answer, new question, revised answer. Sometimes it means 'argument' in the sense of 'debate'. Sartre understands it in the Hegelian sense of exhibiting philosophical problems as *prima facie* contradictions or paradoxes, and their answers as unificatory resolutions of these. Dialectic as the depiction of the unity of opposites, although paradigmatically Hegelian, is recurrent in Western and Eastern thought. It is anticipated not only in the triadic arrangement of those concepts called 'categories' and those pairs of opposing arguments called 'antinomies' by Hegel's idealist predecessor Immanuel Kant. It is also in Plato's *Phaedo*, Plotinus' *Enneads* and in the antagonistic dependencies between Ying and Yang in Taoism, the school of ancient Chinese dialectics.

Hegel thought dialectic is a method of problem solving uniquely appropriate to the problems of philosophy. Marx thought it appropriate to any aspect of human reality. Engels, less plausibly, tried to give it an application to the natural world. Essential to dialectic is the demonstration that opposites are mutually dependent: semantically, psychologically, ontologically, or in all these ways. So, dialectically, there is no freedom without determinism and vice versa, no self without another and vice versa, no individual without the social and vice versa. Dialecticians are compatibilists about philosophical problems.

Sartre's choice of the title *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is a deliberate allusion to Kant's epoch making 1781 work *Critique of Pure Reason*. A critique in the Kantian sense is a drawing of limits to what can be known through the object of criticism. 'Critique' also carries the sense of 'demystification' or 'debunking'. It follows that Sartre is both delimiting what can be know by dialectic, and exposing dialectic for what it is.

Sartre seeks authority for his synthesis of freedom and determinism in Marx's essay *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* which he quotes:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'men make their own History ... but under circumstances ... given and transmitted from the past' (CDR

Sartre's existentialist thesis that an individual freely chooses in a situation is now located in the Marxist doctrine that humanity is selfdetermining in history. Crucially, Sartre's situation now conspicuously includes class location. Dialectic does not exist independently of history so Sartre claims

'Dialectical rationality the whole of which is contained in this sentence, must be seen as the permanent and dialectical unity of freedom and necessity'
(CDR 35).

The relationship between a human being and their environment is dialectical in the sense of 'reciprocal'. Humans constitute their environment and the constituted environment constitutes humanity. The logical structure of this relation is mutual dependency without point of origin or primordality: a makes b be what b is and b makes a be what a is. Humanity and human situation arise or fall together as a unity.

This unity of the human and the human situation fuses two concepts essential to existentialism and Marxism respectively: beingintheworld and praxis. Reciprocal constitution between humanity and environment may be understood as a structure of beingintheworld; as entailing but not being entailed by beingintheworld.

'Praxis' is the Greek word for 'action'. In Marxist theory it is used to denote the transformation of the natural material world by human beings. Marx thinks it is labour (rather than reason, self-consciousness, language, laughter etc.) which distinguishes the human from the nonhuman. Human labour, however, is not only the selfperpetuation of the species by physical and mental work. It also entails the manipulation of physical reality into new forms which express perceived human interests, especially economic interests. The technical term for this active manipulation is 'praxis'. Sartre thinks understanding praxis is essential to understanding dialectic:

'If there is such a thing as a dialectal reason it is revealed and exhibited in and through human praxis (CDR 33).

Clearly 'praxis' denotes one side of the dialectal relation between humanity and the human situation: the constitution of the situation. It also subsumes Sartre's idea of the project. The future orientated choice of the individual is included in the historical praxis of the class.

In *Search for a Method and Critique of Dialectal Reason* Sartre tries to understand the individual in terms of the social and the social in terms of the individual. Marxist dialectic is not thoroughly dialectal because it does not recognise the historical role of the individual. For example, Sartre says that although Paul Valery is a petty bourgeois intellectual, not every petty bourgeois intellectual is Paul Valery. Traditional Marxism only detects half the entailments required for a grasp of human reality. Valery is and acts in accordance with the perceived interests of his socioeconomic class, but the members of that class are not interchangeable. The originality and spontaneity of Valery the poet are not entailed by his being 'bourgeois' even though his being Valery entails his being 'bourgeois'.

According to Sartre's 'progressiveregressive' method it is necessary to refer to the society to understand the individual and to the individual to understand the society, because societies have individuals as parts and what an individual is, *inter alia*, is a member of a society. This twoway explanatory dependency obtains if it is true that understanding a whole requires understanding its parts and understanding a part requires understanding the whole it is a part of.

The individual lives the structures of society in his 'interiority'. The structures of society are constituted by the lives of its individual members.

Sartre thinks there are three fundamental forms of social organisation: the series, the group, and the class. The existence of a set of living human individuals is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the existence of any one of these. A series is based on competition, a group is based on cooperation and a class is based on economics. A class may be a series or a group or exhibit features of both. A series or a group is not necessarily a class.

Sartre says that a series is defined by competition. This suggests that competition is both necessary and sufficient for the existence of a series. Certainly he thinks that the members of a series have no common, internal or collective purpose qua members of a series. It is, as he puts it 'a plurality of solitudes'. Nor does an individual have to be conscious of being in competition with other individuals to belong to the same series as those individuals. Being in a series does not presuppose being conscious of being

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

in a series. Being conscious of being in a series is consistent with being in a series because it entails it, if that consciousness is veridical.

The members of a series are paradigmatically individuals living under capitalism. They compete over material wealth, status, education, health care, sex and political power. The bourgeoisie, or capital owning class, is essentially a series but the proletariat also exhibits seriality to the extent to which its members are compelled to engage in competition. It would seem to follow from Sartre's sociology that any individuals in mutual competition are a series. This follows, for example, even if they are geographically separated and do not know of each other's existence. It follows in that case that there are as many series as there are relations of competition between individuals. As these relations come and go out of existence so the social structures called 'series' come and go out of existence.

The members of series are individual human beings but, in a sense, there is competition between objects that are not individual human beings. Conspicuously, in capitalist society there is competition between private companies. It is not clear on Sartre's view whether relations of competition between such companies form a series. A reason for answering 'no' is that the companies rather than, say, their employees are in competition and serial competition is individualistic. A reason for answering 'yes' is that if companies are in mutual competition then their employees are in mutual competition: not qua individuals but qua contributors to the competitiveness of the company. In the limiting case, being forced out of business entails redundancy.

While the series is defined by competition, the group is defined by cooperation. The existence of cooperation is both necessary and sufficient for the existence of the group. The members of a group have to have some common, internal or collective purpose in being members of the group. Being conscious of being in the group is a necessary condition for being in the group. The group is essentially characterised by solidarity or fraternity because each member knows that his actions partly depend upon the actions and omissions of other members for their success.

Paradigmatically, the members of a group are individuals living in a socialist society. Such individuals freely cooperate in meeting their collective needs and do not compete. In the group, according to Sartre, the individual converts his own praxis into social praxis. Social praxis differs from individual praxis in two respects. It is a joint consequence and it has joint consequences. It is a kind of action that cannot be executed by one

individual without others. It is a kind of action that benefits more than one individual.

The kind of praxis exercised by the group is morally and metaphysically 'higher' than that exercised by the series. Praxis has a biological origin. Praxis exists because 'the organism tries to sustain itself' (CDR 80) and the primordial practical relation is between humanity and nature. Unless humanity were related to nature by struggle, humanity would not be related to itself in series and groups. Matter is manipulated through praxis because humans need food, shelter and warmth. Some human needs do not require praxis. For example, humans need oxygen but do not need to actively mould the world to breath it. However, agriculture and industry, towns and communication systems imply praxis. These human organisations exist to overcome scarcity, whether real or perceived, global or local. Praxis, as Sartre puts it, is 'born of need' (CDR 85).

Historically and dialectically, biological need is prior to individual praxis, individual praxis is prior to serial praxis, and serial praxis is prior to group praxis. Serial praxis is morally inferior to group praxis because it sacrifices the needs of one individual to those of another. In these dialectical dependencies and their moralistic culmination we are able to discern the Marxist historical transitions from nomadic society through feudalism and mercantile capitalism to the overthrow of capitalism by socialism. Sartre's individual is at the heart of this process. His free project is human praxis.

In political reality the difference between a series and a group is frequently one of degree. Cooperation may be discerned between individuals in competition and competition may be discerned between individuals in cooperation. Also, groups and series may become one another. In a socialist revolution the series that was the proletariat under capitalism becomes a group. Crucially however, according to Sartre any group is in danger of lapsing into seriality. It follows that socialism is in danger of lapsing into capitalism and the most severe political measures are needed.

Sartre distinguishes between 'the pledge', 'violence' and 'terror' all of which contribute to halting the regress of the group into seriality. The pledge is a social contract between members of the group to further their collective interests, and refrain from furthering their individual selfinterest at the expense of those collective interests. Violence is the infliction of pain or death on bodies exterior to the group which threaten to convert the group into a series. Terror is pain and death exerted by the group on the group to eliminate the same threat. Terror is internalised violence.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Terror is dialectically related to the pledge, because whoever makes the pledge further agrees to submit to terror. Indeed, he agrees to submit himself to terror because in terror the individuals in the group are both the subjects and the objects of terror.

This Stalinist and Jacobin political philosophy is inherently illiberal. It violates John Stuart Mill's principle that political society needs to be guarded against 'the tyranny of the majority' in its obsession with the fear of regressing to capitalism. It overwhelmingly favours the interests, or perceived interests, of the group over the rights of the individual. There seems little room for an individual in a group emerging from seriality to refuse to take the pledge. Chillingly, there is no role for the individualist, the critic, the rebel, the outsider, the intellectual, in Sartre's world of perfect cooperation:

'[...] the intellectual as a man who thinks for others must disappear: thinking for others is an absurdity which condemns the very notion of the intellectual' (L/S 534).

If the 1938 author of *Nausea* or the 1940's author of *The Roads to Freedom* was hauled before the tribunal of Sartre's 1960 group to be judged for 'seriality' or 'thinking for others' he would have to be judged guilty. In so far as this is true existentialism and Marxism are irreconcilable.

What is the logical status of Sartre's talk of series, groups and classes ? Is this empirical sociology, prescriptive philosophy of history, or something else ? Sartre, and here the Kantian connotations of *Critique of Dialectical Reason* are overt, says he is 'laying the foundations for Prolegomena to any future anthropology' (CDR 66), a clear allusion to Kant's 1783 work *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*. Kant tried to both demonstrate the impossibility of traditional metaphysics, the project of finding out the nature of the world as it really is in itself, and establish a more modest metaphysics: the project of showing how our empirical and mathematical knowledge is possible. Sartre tries to demonstrate the impossibility of capitalist, bourgeois, political philosophy and establish a 'humanistic' Marxism which will not only criticise Eastern and Western twentieth century political reality but also ground any true 'anthropology': any true study of the world of the human.

Sartre claims a logical and epistemological status for his philosophy similar to Kant's. He claims that the propositions of *Critique of Dialectical*

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Reason are necessary and a priori, not contingent and a posteriori. Indeed, he thinks it an error of classical Marxism to have grounded itself on contingent and a posteriori findings (about, say, the European revolutions or near revolutions of 1848, or the Paris Commune of 1871). To the extent that Marxism is empirical it is rightly open to empirical falsification.

Rather as Kant thinks it an a priori fact that those very general concepts called 'categories' apply to any possible experience, so Sartre thinks it an a priori fact that dialectical reason, including dialectically antithetical social categories such as 'series' and 'group', apply to any possible social reality. Much as Kant though he had discovered the necessary conditions for any possible experience, so Sartre thinks he has discovered the necessary conditions for any possible society. Both Kant and Sartre are engaged in 'transcendental philosophy': philosophy which putatively exposes the 'grounds' or conditions for the possibility of some phenomenon.

If Sartre's social philosophy is a kind of transcendental philosophy then there is some justification for his claim that its findings are a priori, not a posteriori. If it is established that the truth of some claim, P, is a necessary condition for the existence of some phenomenon, x, then we do not have to conduct any empirical investigation into whether P holds whenever we encounter a case of x. If we know that P's truth is necessary for x then we may infer that x is sufficient for P's truth. We do not need any further, a posteriori, inquiry into P's truth conditions. As Sartre puts it:

'We shall have established a priori and not as the Marxists think they have done, a posteriori the heuristic value of the dialectical method when applied to the human sciences' (CDR 66).

He also thinks he has shown

'the necessity, with any fact, provided it is human, of reinserting it within the developing totalisation and understanding it on that basis' (CDR 66).

Are the central propositions of Critique of Dialectical Reason necessary truths? A necessary truth is a proposition which is not only true but could not be false. In this unrestricted sense it is doubtful whether any proposition of Sartre's political philosophy is a necessary truth. However, in a more restricted, Kantian, sense, some of them may be necessary.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Suppose the truth of some proposition, P, is a necessary condition for some phenomenon, x, then the existence of x will never refute P. The existence of x is always consistent with the truth of P because it entails it.

Suppose, as Kant thinks, he has established that the truth of certain propositions is necessary for experience. Then no experience will refute those propositions and in this restricted sense those propositions are necessary truths. They are not absolutely necessary because there might not have been any experience but they are confirmed by all experience and refuted by none no matter how experience changes.

Suppose, as Sartre thinks, he has established that the truth of certain propositions is necessary for the existence of human society. Then the existence of no human society will refute those propositions and in this restricted sense those propositions are necessary truths. They are not absolutely necessary because there might not have been any human society but they are confirmed by the existence of every human society and refuted by none, no matter how such societies vary.

Strictly speaking, none of the transcendental propositions of the philosophies of Kant and Sartre is a necessary truth. This is because it is logically possible for them to be false. They are however very difficult to refute if it is accepted that they are genuinely presupposed by experience (in Kant's case) or by society (in Sartre's case). This is because the formulation of a denial would seem, in some sense of 'presuppose', to presuppose experience and society. In that case the denial also presupposes what it was intended to deny.

Sartre tries to reconcile the individual with the social at a transcendental, or formal, level. The putative reconciliation of the existential phenomenology of consciousness with Marxist materialism cannot be purely formal. It is a debate about the content of what is.

Sartre repudiates the view that materialism is in some way scientific. Materialism is as metaphysical as its antithesis:

'[...] by what miracle is the materialist, who accuses idealists of indulging in metaphysics when they reduce matter to mind, absolved from the same charge when he reduces mind to matter ?' (MR 187).

'Reduce' is left unanalysed by Sartre here. 'A is reducible to B' can mean: any statement about A may be translated into a statement or set of statements about B without loss of meaning, or, A is numerically identical to

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

B, or, A is qualitatively identical to B, or, A is a property of B, or, A is caused by B. Typically, such claims are conjoined with 'A is nothing over and above B' but, with dubious coherence, the claim 'B is nothing over and above A' is typically ignored or denied.

'Metaphysics' is similarly ambivalent. Sartre understands by 'metaphysical' at least 'nonempirical'. For example, he says of the materialist

'Experience does not decide in favour of his doctrine nor, for that matter, does it decide in favour of the opposing one either.' (MR 1878)

This thought is right: experience confirms neither materialism nor idealism. The truth of either would leave experience exactly as it is. Experience seems to refute idealism until we appreciate that idealists accept all the truths of physics and the existence of all ordinary objects such as tables and chairs. Experience seems to refute materialism until we appreciate that materialists accept that people think.

The nonempirical is necessary but not sufficient for the metaphysical for Sartre. He is right in this because mathematics and logic, for example, are nonempirical but not metaphysics. Metaphysical philosophy putatively eschews the standpoint of human reality to deliver truths about what is as it really is in itself. Metaphysical philosophy is philosophy from no point of view. It putatively reveals the world with the human contribution subtracted from it. Sartre quotes Marx and Engels to show that Marxism includes this metaphysics:

'The materialist conception of the world means simply the conception of nature as it is, without anything foreign added.'

(Marx and Engels, *Complete Works*; Ludwig Feuerbach, Volume XIV, p. 651, Russian edition. MR 188)

No one, however, could obtain metaphysical knowledge. To do so would require abdicating one's human standpoint to compare the world with our knowledge of it. No human being could obtain this God's eye view.

Sartre criticises materialism as a denial of subjectivity. It is a 'flight from one's own self' (MR 201). Ontologically, materialism minimises the importance of the living conscious individual that I am. Epistemologically, materialism entertains the hopeless ambition of delivering unsituated

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

knowledge. Materialism presupposes that very human subjectivity it seeks to deny:

'But if materialism is a human attitude, with all the subjective, contradictory and emotional aspects involved in such an attitude, it ought not to be presented as a rigorous philosophy, as the doctrine of objectivity. I have witnessed conversions to materialism; one enters into materialism as into a religion. I should define it as the subjectivity of those who are ashamed of their subjectivity.'

(MR 201)

The eradication of human subjectivity in totalitarian Marxism can be traced back to metaphysical roots. The subject is eliminated in theory before he is eliminated in practice. Sartre hopes to liberalize Marxism by locating the existential subject in Marxist philosophy. Can this be done ?

The subject is *pour soi* but is treated by Marxism as *en soi*. In order for a complete synthesis to be possible the subject would have to be both *pour soi* and *en soi* but in Being and Nothingness such a reconciliation has been pronounced impossible. Something short of that synthesis is however attempted by Sartre in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. It is accepted that the psychophysical whole person has both psychological and physiological characteristics. Indeed, Sartre argues in 'Materialism and Revolution' that 'the close connection', and perhaps mutual dependency, between the mental and the physical can be established empirically (MR 188). It follows that this claim is not intended to be metaphysical. It is perhaps logically equivalent to the prephilosophical assumption that human beings have bodies and think and experience and that all these facts would have to be mentioned in explaining what it is to be a human being.

The picture of a human being as a conscious subject is not only consistent with Marxism, in Sartre's view, it is entailed by it. Little sense can be made of 'class consciousness', 'false consciousness' and 'revolutionary consciousness' unless humans are conscious. Dialectically, it makes little sense to say that a human being is an object unless it also makes sense to say that he is a subject. There could hardly be oppression to be combatted unless oppression was felt, consciously undergone.

JeanPaul Sartre is one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century. His immense output of novels, plays, essays, political tracts and substantial

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

works of philosophy expresses existentialism, Marxism, phenomenology, existential psychoanalysis, anarchism and complex relations between them. Taking Sartre's philosophical writings as his basic writings I have arranged the selection according to problems Sartre grappled with. It is customary for editors of anthologies to disarmingly remark that their selection is subjective and could readily have been otherwise. I make no such apology. These writings are basic in the sense that if you understand these you can understand Sartre's thought. If you do not understand these you cannot understand Sartre's thought.

The book can be used to obtain an overview of Sartre's philosophy by those without the time to read his entire corpus or by those who wish to understand the philosophy presupposed by the literature. The book could also feature on university courses on problems in philosophy. Sartre's proposed solutions to philosophical problems are usually a refreshing antidote to the ruling scientific and pseudoscientific orthodoxies of AngloAmerican philosophy.

THE QUESTION OF METHOD

Philosophy:

- (1) "Philosophy does not exist" (3)
- (2) "There are philosophies" (3)
- (3) "A philosophy is developed for the purpose of giving expression to the general movement of society" (3)
- (4) "A particular way in which the "rising" class becomes conscious of itself" (34)
- (5) 3 "moments" of modern philosophy
 - (i) Descartes and Locke
 - (ii) Kant and Hegel
 - (iii) Marx

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

"There is no going beyond them so long as man has not gone beyond the historical moment which they express" (7)

"An 'AntiMarxist' argument is only the apparent rejuvenation of a pre Marxist idea" (7)

Ideology

N.B. NOT used by Sartre in the Marxist sense here

- (1) Existentialism = "an 'ideology'" (8)
- (2) "A parasitical system living in the margin of knowledge" (8)
- (3) Existentialism is:
 - a) opposed to Marxism
 - b) needs to be integrated into Marxism
- (4) An analogy:
 - a) Kierkegaard Hegel
 - b) Sartre Marx

Marxism

- (1) "Creative work is alienated: man does not recognise himself in his own product" (13)
- (2) "Marx wrote that the ideas of the dominant class are the dominant ideas. He is absolutely right" (17)
- (3) "It is true that the individual is conditioned by the social environment and that he turns back upon it to condition it in turn: it is this and nothing else which makes his reality" (71)
- (4) "How are we to understand that man makes history if at the same time it is history which makes him?" (85)

Page refs: J.P. Sartre *Search for a Method* trans. H.E. Barnes, New York 1968

ETHICS

Responsibility

Sartre maintains that ethical values are invented, not discovered. There is no God so there is no divine authority on the distinction between right and wrong and it is an act of bad faith to endorse a preestablished value system such as Christianity, humanism, or Communism. Rather, each person is radically free to create his or her own values through action. Ethics is something that exists only within the world of things human. Indeed, the human world is the only one we can find intelligible. He says 'there is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity' (EH 55) and 'Man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity' (EH 29). We cannot look outside our lives to answer the question of how to live. We can only do that by freely choosing how to live.

Superficially, Sartre might appear to be a naive relativist about morality. Relativism in morality is the thesis that it makes no sense to speak of some actions as right and some wrong, only of some individual or some society holding them to be right or wrong. Relativism embodies a mistake. From the obvious and uncontroversial historical truth that value systems vary from person to person and from society to society it is invalidly concluded that these systems cannot themselves be right or wrong. It is important to refute relativism because, although it is sometimes misidentified as a liberal and tolerant doctrine, it in fact precludes our condemning individuals or regimes that practice genocide, torture, arbitrary imprisonment and other atrocities. On the relativist view these practices are, so to speak 'right for them but wrong for us'; a putative claim that makes no sense.

Sartre's moral philosophy opens a conceptual space between absolute Godgiven morality on the one hand and naive relativism on the other. He insists that values belong only to the human world, and that we are uncomfortably free to invent them, yet he provides us with strict criteria for deciding between right and wrong.

The essential concept in the establishment of this middle path is responsibility. To say that someone is responsible for what they do is to say that they do it, they could have refrained from doing it, and they are answerable to others for doing it. (This last component of 'responsibility' is

apparent in the word's etymology. It means 'answerability'.) It is a consequence of Sartre's theses that existence precedes essence in the case of humanity, and people have an ineliminable freedom, that 'man is responsible for what he is' (EH 29). Indeed 'Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself' (EH 28). It follows that everyone is wholly and solely responsible for everything they do.

Responsibility for Sartre includes another, crucial, dimension. In choosing for myself I am implicitly choosing for others. By joining a trade union, by joining the communist party, by getting married, by becoming a Christian, by fighting in the French resistance, by everything I do, I am implicitly prescribing the same course of action to the rest of humanity. To put it another way, all my actions are recommendations. By acting I set an example for all similarly placed others to follow. As Sartre puts it 'I...am obliged at every instant to perform actions which are examples' (EH 32).

This implicit recommendation to others is called in moral philosophy 'universalisability', and finds its most sophisticated expression in Kant's ethical works; the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Kant, like Sartre, tries to found an objective morality that does not rely on theological premises. In Sartre's texts universalisability admits of two interpretations; one causal, the other logical.

On the causal interpretation we take literally Sartre's notion of setting an example. By joining a trade union I may cause others to join a trade union, and so my responsibility is in a direct sense a responsibility for what I make others do, not just for what I do myself. Sartre leaves unresolved the problem of how each person may be rightly held responsible for all their own actions if some of them are caused, or influenced, by the actions of others. Normally, it only to the extent that I am the cause of my own actions (or omissions) that I am responsible for them.

On the logical interpretation, in order to be consistent we have to accept that persons similarly placed to ourselves should do as we do. A person is only one person amongst others and it would be inconsistent to maintain that one person but not others should follow a course of action where all those people are similarly placed. There would be something incoherent about someone who freely chose to join a trade union, or who became of convert to Christianity, but disapproved of people making just those choices. Of course Sartre accepts that that may happen. One form of commitment may be suitable for one person but not another, or I may deceive myself that only I am suitable for some political or religious role. *Prima facie*, however, if it

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

is right for one person to do something then it is right for any similar and similarly placed person to do the same. Being just one person rather than another cannot make a moral difference.

The causal and the logical interpretations are mutually consistent. For any of my actions, say joining the French resistance, it may both be causally efficacious in encouraging others to join the French resistance and exhibit the rule that if I join then similarly placed others are obliged to join, on pain of inconsistency.

Consistency is a condition for ethics according to Sartre. Following Kant, Sartre argues that acting immorally, that is, acting in a way that cannot be universalised, results in incoherence. In an example that is also one of Kant's, Sartre says 'the act of lying implies the universal value which it denies' (EH 31). Sartre means not only that there is no lying without truth telling but also that lying cannot be universalised. The implicit recommendation to everyone to lie could never be adopted. If there was no truth telling the distinction between lies and truth would break down and there could be no lying either. Because consistency is a constraint on morality what cannot be universalised is immoral. For these reasons Sartre says;

'I am thus responsible for myself and for all men, and I am thus creating a certain image of man as I would have him be. In fashioning myself I fashion man.' (EH 30)

Universalisability provides us with a test to distinguish between the rightness and the wrongness of our actions: 'One ought always to ask oneself what would happen if everyone did as one is doing.' (EH 3031) If the action cannot be consistently universalised then it is immoral. If the action can be consistently universalised it is not immoral. In trying to resolve a moral dilemma, we have to ask what the consequences would be of everyone adopting our action as a rule.

The thinking of this thought provokes in us the deepest sense of dread and anxiety as we realise the full burden of our responsibility to humanity. This profound psychological discomfort is a reason why we plunge ourselves into bad faith. Facing our freedom requires facing our responsibility. We can hardly bear to face our responsibility so we deny our freedom.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

We are free and responsible despite our refusal to accept them in our bad faith. These are objective facts about us which endure through our pretence and for that reason 'man is in anguish.' (EH 30)

In this way Sartre emerges as a moral objectivist despite his rejection of theological premises for ethics. His moral philosophy is in many ways a humanistic transformation of Christian ethics. To take one conspicuous example, instead of being responsible before God a person is responsible before humanity. Instead of God watching our every action:

'Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly. So every man ought to say, "Am I really a man who has the right to act in such a manner that humanity regulates itself by what I do (?)'" (EH 32)

To disavow this responsibility is to hide from anguish and freedom and be lost in bad faith. Sartre's humanity, like Christian humanity, is a fallen humanity but Sartre's fall is a secular fall. We are not fallen from any perfect natural state; we fall short of our own possibilities of acting freely and responsibly. To admit this freedom is to become committed (engage). Before we can make sense of commitment, however, we need to know more about bad faith.

ALTERNATIVE TEMPORALITY

(BW TEMPORALITY DOC)

Sartre thinks that Beingfor Itself possesses three fundamental structures: facticity, temporality and transcendence. I postpone discussion of transcendence until the next chapter because it is essentially tied to consciousness. It is to facticity and temporality that we should now turn.

By 'temporality' Sartre means time as entailed by the existence of past, present, and future. Past, present and future arguably exist only because a human subject exists: a past is someone's past, a future is someone's future and the present is when someone is. For this reason, past present and future are amongst the structures of the for-itself. It is important to reiterate, however, that anyone's past belongs to beingin-itself not beingfor-itself. My actions are poursoi in so far as I will perform them or am performing them. They are ensoi once done.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

There is an ancient distinction between two kinds of philosophy: analytic philosophy and synthetic philosophy. Analytic philosophy decomposes ideas into their conceptual parts to examine what they presuppose. Synthetic philosophy constructs ideas out of conceptual parts to see what they could depict. Sartre thinks neither kind of philosophy is adequate for explaining the relations between past, present and future.

Once analysed into putatively discrete 'elements' past, present and future cannot be synthesised into temporality. Temporality is 'an original synthesis' (BN 107) that is, a synthesis that does not admit of analysis.

Sartre thinks that temporality exists. It is a structure of the for-itself and may be described phenomenologically. He is concerned to refute the philosophical position according to which tenses are not real, or past present and future are an illusion. The danger is 'the past is no longer' (BN 107) and 'the future is not yet' (BN 107) so neither past nor future exist, and 'the instantaneous present [...] this does not exist at all [...] like a point without dimension' (BN 107). Once we have given up the idea of the present as a duration, say five minutes, or a milisecond, there seems no temporal room between past and future for the present to exist at all. Under this brief philosophical scrutiny it seems that temporality does not exist.

Sartre thinks temporality is phenomenologically given as existing and so, to that extent is real. It follows that there is something fallacious in the reasoning that concludes that temporality does not exist.

The mistake according to Sartre is to think of time as a series of "nows"; an infinity of discrete given present times ordered by a before/after relation. Once this assumption is given up temporality may be reinstated. The atomistic view of time, time as a series of times, is part of the wider mistake of thinking of time as analytic or synthetic (or both). If time is not analytic it cannot be analysed into temporal atoms. If time is not synthetic it cannot be synthesised out of temporal atoms.

Rather, according to Sartre we should think of temporality as 'a totality, which dominates its secondary structures' (BN 107). 'Temporality' denotes the whole that is past, present and future. Unless this whole existed, past, present and future could not exist, nor could the relations between them. We should turn now to Sartre's discussion of the ontological differences between past, present and future and the dependencies between them.

The unity of past present and future just is beingfor-itself. In particular, it is the being mine of some beingfor-itself that this unity consists in: "myself" [...] is an ontological relation which unites the past to the present'

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(BN 110) and 'my past is first of all mine; that is [...] it exists as the function of a certain being that I am' (BN 110).

Similarly, the future is my future for some 'my' user. Sartre comes to the very brink but misses the crucial insight here; I am the becoming past of the future.

Sartre says the question 'What is the being of a past being ?' (BN 108) cannot be answered if it is assumed that 'everything is present' and if, therefore, 'being is to be attributed to the present alone' (BN 108).

Sartre is not inviting us to endorse a view of all events as existing *sub specie aeternis*. Rather he is claiming that there is no clear boundary between past and present and between present and future. Past and present, present and future so to speak blurr into one another and form an unbroken continuum. This is part of what he means when he says 'the for-itself is in the manner of an event' (BN 79). According to Sartre I am a process, or something that is happening, not an entity, substance or object. Rather than a thing located in time I am a constituent of time. We may still talk of 'the past'. 'the present' or 'the future' but this is only because these are temporal ecstases of human individuals. For example, 'individual pasts can be united so as to form the past' (BN 112).

Temporality is a logical prerequisite for freedom. Freedom itself is a structure of the *poursoi*. We have seen that Sartre thinks we make ourselves what we are by the exercise of choices; we determine our own essence. While we are alive we are in a constant state of selfdefinition and it is only at death that the question 'What am I ?' can have a conclusive answer. 'At the moment of death we are' (BN 115) says Sartre. Until the moment of death we are making ourselves what we are.

It follows that temporality is essential to freedom. The transition from future through present to past is a necessary condition for the truth of the existentialist thesis that existence precedes essence in the case of human reality. Ironically perhaps and paradoxically , it follows that I am my past. I am perpetually becoming my present and the future is the open field of my possibilities.

As we have seen, that past is in-itself not for itself. But I am my past. (Sartre insists on this, he says 'I do not have it I am it' (BN 114)). By my present actions I contribute to the ever growing in-itself of the past which defines me. Finally, 'By death the for-itself is changed forever into an in-itself' (BN 115). In death the subject has become an object.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Being-for-itself is perpetually remaking itself in a way that makes it impossible to correctly ascribe it an essence and Sartre describes this free process in the paradoxical sentence 'the being of the for-itself is defined [...] as being what it is not and not being what it is' (BN xli). He also says 'the for-itself is' (BN 79). meaning that although the for-itself is in the sense that it exists, it is always becoming so it never 'is' in any fixed or static sense. Being-for-itself is a becoming. It is always becoming other than what it was.

The in-itself for-itself distinction is Hegelian rather than Cartesian. Sartre's very terminology here is a French transliteration of two of Hegel's technical terms. 'En-soi' is his rendering of Hegel's 'an-sich' and 'pour-soi' his rendering of 'für-sich'. The ontologies of both philosophers are explorations of the relations between subjective and objective aspects of what is. The fundamental contrast between them is that Hegel thinks the opposition between 'an-sich' and 'für-sich' can be overcome in a dialectical and spiritual synthesis called 'Absolute Knowing' but Sartre thinks that no such speculative synthesis is possible. In particular, human beings can never realise their desire to be both pour-soi and en-soi at once; their desire, in fact, to be God.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

- (1) The future is neither in-itself nor for-itself
(129)
- (2) 'It is only by human reality that the Future arrives
in the world' (124)
- (3) 'There is a future because the for-itself has to be
(a a etre) its being instead of simply being it'
(126)
- (4) 'I give to the world its own possibilites' (127) 'The
future qua future does not have to be' (129)
- (5) 'The Future constitutes the meaning of my present
For-itself, as the project of its possibility' (128)
- (6) 'I am my future in the constant perspective of the possibility of not being
it. [...] I am an infinity of possibilities' (129)

Reading:

JeanPaul Sartre Being and Nothingness (Routledge) 'Temporality' chapter.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty Phenomenology of Perception (Routledge)

'Temporality' chapter.

Stephen Priest Merleau-Ponty (Routledge) 'Temporality'
chapter.

XIII WRITING

Prose discloses world

Poetry is an end in itself

freedom

Own freedom presupposes freedom of others.

Duty of writer is to facilitate freedom of others.

commitment

Footnotes

1. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty Phenomenology of Perception (London, 1962), The Visible and the Invisible (Evanston, 1968) Adventures of the Dialectic (Evanston, 1973) and Stephen Priest Merleau-Ponty (London, 1998).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

2. The form of this kind of philosophical problem solving, dialectic, is presented by Hegel in his *Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, Nuremberg 1812/16). It is given content in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Jena 1807), *The Philosophy of Right* (*Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Berlin 1821) the volumes of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (Heidelberg, 1815/1830) and posthumously published series of lectures. See Michael Inwood (ed.) *Hegel: Selections* (London and New York, 1989)

3. Karl Popper (1902/1994) attacks the philosophical foundations of rightwing totalitarianism in the first volume of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London, 1945) subtitled 'Plato') and left wing totalitarianism is the second volume (subtitled 'Hegel and Marx')
The assumption that what happens in the present is historically inevitable is criticised in *The Poverty of Historicism* (London, 1957). See also Anthony O'Hear *Karl Popper* (London, 1980) and Bryan Magee *Popper* (London 1973).

4. The philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes (1596/1650) attempted to reconcile the theocentric world picture of the middle ages with the emerging modern science of the seventeenth century. Although Sartre rejected Descartes' substantial distinction between mind and matter, he inherited his profound concern with human subjectivity. See Rene Descartes *Discourse on Method and the Meditations* (Harmondsworth, 1974), Stephen Priest *Theories of the Mind* (London, 1991) and Anthony Kenny *Descartes: A Study of His Philosophy* (New York, 1968).

5. The critical theorist Herbert Marcuse synthesises Freudianism and Marxism in *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1955). In *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964) and *Negations* (Harmondsworth, 1968) he argues that the capitalist system defuses the opposition of those it exploits, by a combination of liberal 'repressive tolerance', the construal of everything as a commodity and the ideological production of consumerist appetite. On Marcuse see Alasdair MacIntyre *Marcuse* (London, 1970). On the May 1968 events see Charles Posner (ed.) *Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968* (Harmondsworth, 1970).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

6. On de Beauvoir see T. Keefe *Simone de Beauvoir: A Study of Her Writings* (London, 1984), M. Evans *Simone de Beauvoir: A Feminist Mandarin* (London, 1985) and Judith Okely *Simone de Beauvoir: A ReReading* (London, 1986). On the relationship between de Beauvoir and Sartre see Alex Madsen *Hearts and Minds: The Common Journey of Simone de Beauvoir and JeanPaul Sartre* (New York, 1977) and Kate Fullbrook and Edward Fullbrook *Simone de Beauvoir and JeanPaul Sartre: the Remaking of a TwentiethCentury Legend* (New York, 1994)

7. The Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and the English philosopher Gilbert Ryle attack the Cartesian idea that psychological concepts take on meaning only by reference to inner and private mental states and argue that there have to be third person criteria for psychological ascriptions. See Gilbert Ryle *The Concept of Mind* (London, 1949), Ludwig Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1952) and Stephen Priest *Theories of the Mind* (London, 1991).

8. The American modernist novelist John don Passos deployed the radical technique of 'montage' in his U.S.A. trilogy (New York, 1930, 1933,1936). The literary inventiveness and authentic concern with human reality shown by the Irish novelist James Joyce (18821941) in his *Ulysses* (Paris 1922) possibly makes it the most significant work of fiction of the twentieth century.

9. Sartre speaks frankly about his life and work in 'Simone de Beauvoir interviews Sartre' in *JeanPaul Sartre Life/Situations: Essays Written and Spoken* trans. Paul Auster and Lydia Davies (New York, 1977) and *Simone de Beauvoir Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre* (Harmondsworth and New York, 1985). Two thoroughly researched and informative biographies of Sartre are Ronald Hayman *Writing Against: A Biography of Sartre* (London, 1986) and Annie CohenSolal *Sartre: A Life* (London, 1987).

Sartre's Works

Sartre's oeuvre oscillates between fact and fiction and ends as a synthesis of the two. His juvenalia are literary; already at thirteen years of age he was penning a novel about Goetz von Berlichingen. Five years later his 'L'Ange du Morbide' and 'Jesus la Chouette' appeared in *La Revue Sans Titre* in 1923. It is just over a decade later, on his return from a formative visit to the

French Institute at Berlin, that he began work on the novel that will be *La Nausee* (Nausea). The 1934 period in Germany was spent learning phenomenology, and in Sartre's first serious publications we can see him situating himself partly within and partly outside that philosophy.

La Transcendance de l'Ego (The Transcendence of the Ego) appeared in 1937 as a long paper in the 1936/7 volume of *Recherches Philosophiques*, a distinguished journal of academic philosophy. Sartre attacks Husserl's thesis that there exists an irreducibly subjective source of one's own consciousness called the 'transcendental ego': an inner self that is a condition for the possibility of a person's experience. Sartre argues that the postulation of the transcendental ego is phenomenologically illegitimate. Phenomenology describes only what appears to consciousness. No transcendental ego appears to consciousness, so no consistent phenomenologist can maintain the existence of the transcendental ego. (The difference between Sartre and Husserl here is in some ways analogous to that between Hume and Descartes on the self).

When Sartre was a philosophy undergraduate at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* he wrote his final year dissertation on the philosophy and psychology of the imagination: *L'Image dans la vie psychologique* ('The Image in Psychological Life'). On his return from Berlin he rewrote this as the 1936 book *L'Imagination*. It reads mainly as a survey of metaphysical and psychological theories, though its final chapter entails a partial break with Husserl on the *epoché*, or methodological reduction of the world to its appearance, on intentionality, or the 'aboutness' of all consciousness, and on the mental image, which Sartre treats as an act not a psychic entity. Sartre's other book on the imagination, *L'Imaginaire: Psychologie Phenomenologique de l'Imagination* (The Imaginary) (1940), takes up this theme. Rather like Wittgenstein and Ryle, Sartre argues that a mental image is not a private picture, a non physical psychological item that may be scrutinised by introspection. (7) Mental images are mental acts directed to objects in the world that may or may not exist. We see here already a departure from the phenomenological description of the interiority of consciousness and an endorsement of the neoHeideggerian existentialist thesis that our being, including our psychological being, is 'being in the world'.

Like the early philosophical writings, the novel *Nausea* published in April 1938 is a work of both existentialism and phenomenology. The central character, Antoine Roquentin, confronts the brute contingency and

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

meaninglessness of his own existence in a way that produces existential angst and the nausea of the novel's title. The thesis that existence, including one's own existence, is contingent rather than necessary is essential to existentialism. There are also many passages in *Nausea* when Roquentin confronts the world as it would appear if it were subjected to neoHusserlian phenomenological description. On the bus, on the sea shore, looking at a chesnut tree, objects are reduced to phenomena. What is is what appears to be.

Nausea is an overtly philosophical novel. To the extent that Sartre's portrayals of Roquentin's experiences are internally consistent, credibility is lent to existential phenomenology. Roquentin confronts philosophical problems as problems in life. The problems of induction, universals and particulars, how language refers to the world, objective truth, and what it is for something to be are all sources of profound anxiety and discomfort to him.

Although *Nausea* is a strongly didactic novel, it has one strength lacking in, say, Albert Camus' *The Plague* (*La Peste*, 1948) or Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (18689). Although Tolstoy is a stonger artist than Sartre; he paints in more detail, he constructs mentality with at once greater economy and greater plausibility, his grasp of history is less naive, Tolstoy can only include philosophy in *War and Peace* by addressing the reader directly. Tolstoy has to lecture us for many pages to convince us of his atomistic historical determinism. With slightly more subtlety, Camus in *The Plague* philosophises about the confrontation with death and meaninglessness through conversations between Dr. Rieux (who turns out to be the narrator) and his humanistic neighbour, Tarrou. The reader is allowed to eavesdrop on their profundity. Sartre has the better of both these writers in weaving existentialism and phenomenology into the experience of his character. Although the experience is necessarily thereby unusual, Sartre himself does not have to intervene to tell us about philosophy, nor does Roquentin.

Sartre's second significant work of fiction is the collection of short stories *Le Mur* (*The Wall*), published in 1939. In each story at least one central existential problem is lived from the inside by a fictional character. Notably, the condemned Republican volunteer Pablo Ibieta contemplates being shot at dawn by a Fascist firing squad in the Spanish Civil War story 'Le Mur' which gives the collection its title. Two very different kinds of bad faith, or refusal to recognise one's own freedom and its consequent responsibility, are exhibited by Lulu in 'Intimite' ('Intimacy') and by the young Lucien Fleurier

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

in 'L'Enfance d'un Chef' ('Childhood of a Leader'). Lulu feels unable to quite leave her husband, Henri, or quite commit herself to the new lover, Pierre, and by choosing neither allows herself to be manipulated by her friend Rirette. Lucien becomes an antisemite and a fascist French nationalist leader, thus committing that double act of bad faith that Sartre calls 'being a swine' (salaud): not only denying one's own freedom by the adoption of a readymade ideology, but denying others' their own freedom.

In *The Wall* Sartre experiments stylistically, for example by unexpectedly changing tenses or changing grammatical person, sometimes within a single sentence. He is unable to do this with the confidence and lack of artificiality that one finds in Don Passos or Joyce who are Sartre's influences. (8) It is however the beginning of that disavowal of the mastery of the author over the authored that will be essential to the mature literary theory of *Qu'est que la Literature ?* (What is Literature ?) (1948). (10)

In *Esquisse d'une theorie des emotions* (Sketch For a Theory of Emotions) (1938) Sartre criticises the scientific or pseudoscientific psychology of his time, including psychoanalysis, introduces us to phenomenological psychology and advances the provocative thesis that we choose our emotions. Rather than my being involuntarily subject to a wave of emotion, I choose, say, to be sad and to cry at a strategic moment, to control another's behaviour or evade the other's control of myself.

The culmination of Sartre's fusion of existentialism and phenomenology is the massive and complex philosophical treatise *L'Etre et le Neant* (Being and Nothingness) (1943). The book can be read in many ways: as a reconciliation of Heidegger's thought with much of what Heidegger rejected in Husserl, as an antidote to the positivism and pseudoscience that dominates twentiethcentury philosophy, as the imposition of the ontological constraints of 'existentialism' on phenomenological 'essentialism', as an atheistic metaphysics, as a series of profound psychological and sociological observations.

The 'being' of the book's title is divided by Sartre into two types, roughly speaking subjective being and objective being, which he labels 'l'etrepoursoi' ('beingfor-itself') and 'l'etreensoi' ('beingin-itself'). This neoHegelian distinction is between the active existing of a free conscious human individual, and the passive being of inert nonhuman reality. The 'nothingness' of the book's title is introduced into the world by human reality. Only human beings have the power to imaginatively negate their surroundings. I am myself a kind of nothingness at the heart of being.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In chapters on freedom, bad faith, temporality, transcendence, and social relations Sartre describes the existential structures of human reality. The complexity of insight, the richness of description, exceed Heidegger's *Being and Time* and Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. What is perhaps most striking about the book is that where a scientific treatise would seek mechanisms 'behind the scenes', or a lawlike physical reality beyond appearance, Sartre treats everything as 'surface'. Appearance is reality. It is science that fabricates a world of abstractions and our daily world of choice and consciousness is concrete reality. Sartre left *Being and Nothingness* unfinished. A large impression of the moral philosophy promised in its closing pages appeared posthumously as *Cahiers pour une morale* (*Notebooks For An Ethics*) (1983). There is however something in principle incompletion about Sartrean existential phenomenology. If the distinction between being-for-itself and being-in-itself is Hegelian in origin, it resists any Hegelian overcoming or synthesis in absolute knowing. Although human reality is the desire to be God, this desire is forever frustrated. In this incompleteness, this perpetual deferral, lies our capacity for selfdefinition, our freedom. We make ourselves what we are by our choices and this process of selfdefinition is only complete at the moment of death.

What is Literature? (1948) is an attempt to answer the questions: What is writing?, Why write? and For whom does one write?, and ends with a meditation on the situation of the writer in the postliberation France of 1947. Sartre insists that one should write for one's own age, not for posterity, not to restore the past, not to gain status or money. Literature must be committed literature or engaged literature (*la littérature engagée*). The literature of a given age is alienated and inauthentic when it does not recognise within itself its own freedom but subjects itself to a prevailing ideology or ruling interest. The writer should write to express their own freedom and liberate the reader. Committed literature is committed to freedom.

A paradigm case of Sartrean committed literature is the *Roads to Freedom* (*Les Chemins de la liberté*) trilogy: *The Age of Reason* (*L'Age de Raison*, 1945), *The Reprieve* (*Le Sursis*, 1945), and *Iron in the Soul* (*La Mort dans l'âme*, 1949). Parts of a fourth volume *The Last Chance* (*La Dernière Chance*) were serialised in the November and December 1949 issues of *Les Temps Modernes*. In a famous passage which concludes the first part of the last complete volume of the trilogy, *Iron in the Soul*, Mathieu Delarue the previously ineffectual schoolteacher acts meaningfully and decisively for the first time in his life. Deserted by their bourgeois officers

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

during the May –June 1940 Nazi invasion of France he and his comrades choose to resist to the death the oncoming Wehrmacht from the cover of a village clock tower:

‘Mathieu was in no hurry. He kept his eye on this man; he had plenty of time. The German army is vulnerable. He fired. The man gave a funny little jerk and fell on his stomach, throwing his arms forward like somebody learning to swim’

(*Iron in the Soul*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1963 p. 216)

In the narrative, Mathieu’s shooting of the German infantryman is a freely chosen and deliberate act for which he alone is responsible. It is a deeply significant act metaphysically, personally, and politically. Metaphysically it is the termination of a life. Personally it is Mathieu’s recognition of his own freedom; ‘For years he had tried, in vain, to act’ (p. 217) Sartre reminds us Politically it is the commitment to resist the forces of right wing totalitarianism.

The Germans shell the clock tower and one by one Mathieu’s comrades are killed. Mathieu is alone and becomes infused with the feeling that he is going to die. Facing death alone, as in a profound sense we all must, he realises his own freedom;

‘Just time enough to fire at that smart officer, at all the Beauty of the Earth, at the street, at the flowers, at the gardens,, at everything he had loved. Beauty dived downwards, like some obscene bird. But Mathieu went on firing. He fired. He was cleansed. He was all powerful. He was free.’ (p. 225)

In the play *Men Without Shadows* (*Morts sans sepulture*, 1946), one of Sartre’s most poignant pieces, captured French resistance fighters are being tortured and interrogated by Nazi collaborators. Even under torture, Sartre has his characters choose whether to talk, scream or remain silent. Sorbier deliberately throws himself through the window to his death rather than disclose the location of the group’s leader. Canoris chooses to talk. Even under the most extreme duress we still have a choice according to Sartre. Indeed, under duress, the agonising reality of our freedom of choice is inescapable. Bad faith or the denial of freedom is then impossible.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Our freedom is a burden that confronts us. It is a source of profound anxiety because it carries with it a terrible responsibility. I and I alone can make my choices and I and I alone am accountable to the rest of humanity for my actions. Sartre illustrates this with an episode from his own life experience in a passage in *Existentialism and Humanism*. During the Second World War one of his pupils approached him with this dilemma: His elder brother had been killed by the Germans in 1940 and the young man burned to avenge his brother's death and fight in the struggle against Nazism. On the other hand, the young man's mother was sick with grief at his brother's death, lived alone, and needed her remaining son to care for her. If he joins the Free French he deserts his mother. If he stays with his mother he does nothing to avenge his brother or fight the Nazis. Sartre's advice to his tormented pupil was this: 'You are free, therefore choose' (p. 38).

Sartre cannot make his choice for him. To choose an advisor is to make a choice. It is also to choose the kind of advice one would like to hear. In this example Sartre turns the tables on the determinist. It is the lived confrontation with freedom which is concrete and real. Determinism is a scientific abstraction. Even if determinism were true it would not be of the least help to the young man in resolving his dilemma. Nothing can lift from us the burden of our freedom.

Sartre says we are condemned to be free. We did not choose to be free, indeed, we did not choose to exist. In the Heideggerian idiom, Sartre says we are thrown into the world. We have no predetermined essence. First of all we exist, then we face the lifelong burden of creating ourselves, generating our essence by free choices. We are nothing other than what we do and the only constraint on our freedom is this: we are not free not to be free.

The recognition of our own freedom causes such anxiety that we pretend to ourselves that we are not free. The multitude of behavioural strategies which make up this pretence Sartre calls bad faith. He thinks most of us are in bad faith most of the time. It is usually only in extremis, like Mathieu in the clock tower, that we are confronted with the reality of our own freedom. The locus classicus of bad faith is in *Being and Nothingness*:

'Let us consider the waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forwards a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer [. . .]

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a café waiter' (p. 59)

Committed literature combats bad faith.

Questions of Method prefaces the first volume of Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960). (It had appeared in an earlier version in a Polish magazine in 1958.) Sartre argues that existentialism and Marxism are mutually necessary in the explanation of human reality. Henceforth, the lived present of the choosing existential individual is located in history. Sartre says 'philosophy' does not exist, there are only philosophies. Any philosophy is an expression of a rising social class, and in modern history there have been three: the bourgeois individualism of Descartes and Locke, the idealist philosophy of Kant and Hegel and now Marxism. It is not possible to think 'beyond' a philosophy unless the historical conditions of its genesis are replaced. Hence any putative antiMarxist philosophy can only be a return to preMarxist ideas according to Sartre. In Questions of Method Sartre allocates only a modest place for existentialism, calling it an 'ideology', not in the Marxist sense, but in the sense of a parasitical system living in the margin of knowledge. Existentialism is prima facie opposed to Marxism but needs to be dialectically incorporated into a wider Marxism, rather as Kierkegaard's existentialist individualism is purportedly opposed to Hegel's 'totalising' philosophy but ultimately subsumable by it.

In the final section of Questions of Method Sartre outlines the ProgressiveRegressive Method. The aim is nothing less than the total explanation of the human. We have to understand, according to Sartre, that humanity makes history and history makes humanity. Humanity fashions the world in accordance with human ends and projects. The human manipulated world of history constitutes humanity in turn. It follows that the humanhistory relation is dialectical, or reciprocal. In this framework Sartre seeks to overcome the 'contradictions' between existentialism and Marxism: the individual and the social, the free and the determined, the conscious and the material, the subjective and the objective, the actual and the historical.

These problems are addressed in the complex Marxist and Hegelian vocabulary of Critique of Dialectical Reason. Sartre of course envisages this book as a synthesis of Marxism and existentialism. In it existentialism is allocated a more salient role than the modest remarks in Questions of Method would suggest.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre is also a biographer, but not a conventional biographer. Aside from the autobiography *Les Mots* (Words) 1963, there exist Baudelaire (1947), Saint Genet, *comedien et martyr* (1952) and the massive three volume study of Flaubert: *L'Idiot de la famille* (The Family Idiot) (1972). His aim, especially in the Flaubert, is nothing less than the total explanation of one human being by another. Sartre's method is the ProgressiveRegressive method. Why Flaubert? Because Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), realist and objectivist author of *Madame Bovary* (1857) and perfecter of the short story in *Trois Contes* (1877), is the inauthentic antithesis of Sartre. By repressing his own passions and by writing with an almost scientific detachment Flaubert writes uncommitted literature.

Sartre intends the Flaubert as a 'true novel' that overcomes the 'contradiction' between fact and fiction. The ProgressiveRegressive Method of Questions of Method and the Critique is deployed alongside the existential psychoanalysis of Being and Nothingness and Sartre's fictional imagination to understand the total Flaubert; psychological interiority and social exteriority, Flaubert in the world, history's constitution of Flaubert and Flaubert's reciprocal effect on history. Although Sartre's Maoist friends around *La Cause du Peuple* had no patience with what they saw as the indulgent bourgeois individualism of the Flaubert project, it may in fact be read as the synthesis of Sartrean syntheses: Marxism and existentialism, existential phenomenology and psychoanalysis, and fact and fiction.

Since Sartre's death in 1980 a number of significant works have been published: *War Diaries* (*Les Carnets de la drôle de guerre*, 1983) composed on the Maginot line during the phoney war period September 1939-May 1940, *Notebooks For an Ethics* (*Cahiers pour une morale*, 1983) which provides some of the moral philosophy promised at the end of *Being and Nothingness*, two volumes of correspondence with Simone de Beauvoir and others: *Lettres au Castor et a quelques autres*, I 1926-1939, II 1940-1963 (1983), the screenplay for a film about Freud *Le Scénario Freud* (1984), the second volume of *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (*Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Tome II: *L'intelligibilité de l'Histoire* (1986) and the metaphysically trenchant *Truth and Existence* (*Vérité et existence*, 1989). The thesis that self-definition ceases at the moment of death clearly needs to be treated with some caution. (9)

SARTRE IN THE WORLD

by

Stephen Priest

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

JeanPaul Sartre (19051980) is one of the greatest French thinkers. A polemical and witty essayist, a metaphysician of subjectivity, a political activist, a revolutionary political theorist, a humanistic novelist like, a didactic playwright, his genius lies in his powers of philosophical synthesis and the genre breaching breadth of his imagination.

In the 1970's the French journalist Michel Rybalka delivered a lecture on Sartre which divided his intellectual development into three stages: liberty, equality and fraternity. The three concepts of the slogan of the French revolutionaries of 1789 were used to denote three kinds of philosophy which Sartre endorsed: existentialism, from the midnineteenthirties, Marxism, increasingly from the Second World War, and anarchism, in the last few years before he died in 1980.

Rybalka's threefold taxonomy is too neat, too clean and, however appealing, it is an oversimplification. The adult Sartre was always an existentialist, a practitioner of that style of philosophising which addresses the fundamental problems of human existence: death, anxiety, political, religious and sexual commitment, freedom and responsibility, the meaning of existence itself. It follows that Sartre remained an existentialist during his long Marxist phase and during his final overtly anarchist phase.

Sartre's existentialism was never a pure existentialism. One of his outstanding philosophical syntheses is the fusing of existentialism with phenomenology. The Moravian, German speaking philosopher Edmund Husserl (18591939) and his Austrian teacher, the psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano (18381917) are the founders of phenomenology. Phenomenology is the attempt to explain the possibility of all knowledge, including philosophy, by describing the content and structure of consciousness. It was Husserl's hope that this partly Cartesian and partly Kantian project would place all knowledge on indubitable and incorrigible foundations. Husserlian phenomenology is Cartesian because it shares with Descartes the ambition of methodically exposing preconceptions and grounding knowledge in certainty. It is Kantian because it shares with the German idealist philosopher Immanuel Kant (17241804) the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

‘transcendental’ ambition of showing how all knowledge is possible (notably in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781 and 1787).

The Danish protestant theologian Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1859) and the German atheistic nihilist Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) are considered the initiators of existentialism. Profound dilemmas of human existence are explored in the works of the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevski (1821-1881). His *Notes From the Underground* (1864) particularly anticipates Sartrean themes.

Sartre was not alone or wholly original in marrying phenomenology and existentialism into a single philosophy. Phenomenology had already undergone the profound transformation into 'fundamental ontology' at the hands of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger in his large if incomplete 1927 masterwork *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*). The book is an examination of what it means to be, especially as this is disclosed through one's own existence (*Dasein*). The 1945 synthesis of phenomenology and existentialism in *Phenomenology of Perception* (*Phenomenologie de la Perception*) by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sartre's philosophical friend and political antagonist, follows hard on the heels of Sartre's own 1943 synthesis, *Being and Nothingness*, (*L'Être et le Néant*) with which it is partly inconsistent. Sartre's existentialism, like that of Merleau-Ponty, is 'existential phenomenology'. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1907-1961) offers a phenomenology of the body which eschews mind/body dualism, reductivist materialism and idealism. He influenced Sartre politically and collaborated in editing *Les Temps Modernes* but broke with Sartre over what he saw as the latter's 'ultrabolshevism'.

Sartre's Marxism was never a pure Marxism. Not only did he never join the PCF (*Parti Communiste Français*), the second massive synthesis of his philosophical career was the fusion of Marxism with existentialism. The large 1960 first volume of *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (*Critique de la Raison Dialectique I*) is an attempt to exhibit existentialist philosophy and Marxist political theory as not only mutually consistent but as mutually dependent: as dialectically requiring one another for an adequate understanding of human reality. This neoHegelian 'totalising' philosophy promises us all the intellectual apparatus we need to understand the direction of history and the unique human individual in their complex mutual constitution. The German idealist philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) thought that philosophical problems could be exhibited as apparent contradictions that could be relieved, overcome or 'synthesised'

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

(aufgehoben). Hence, for example, human beings are both free and causally determined, both mental and physical, social and individual, subjective and objective and so on, not one to the exclusion of the other. 'Synthetic' or 'totalising' philosophy shows seemingly mutually exclusive views to be not only compatible but mutually necessary. (2)

Sartre's Marxism is a 'humanistic' Marxism. His faith in Marxism as the most advanced philosophy of human liberation is tempered by his awareness of the crushing of the aspirations of the human individual by actual Marxism in, for example, the Soviet collectivisation of the farms and purges of the 1930's and 1940's, the suppression of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, the decades of atrocities in the Soviet Gulag, the ending of the Prague Spring in 1968. Like the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper, Sartre does not think the oppression of the individual by communism is only a problem of political practice. (3) He thinks Marxist political theory is flawed. Unlike Popper however, he seeks to humanise Marxist theory rather than reject it utterly. Also unlike Popper, he thinks the neglected resources for a theory of the freedom of the individual can be found within the early writings of Marx himself. The young Marx is to be construed as a kind of protoexistentialist.

The putative synthesis of existentialism and Marxism is extraordinarily ambitious. Some of the most fundamental and intractable problems of metaphysics and the philosophy of mind are obstacles to that synthesis. Classical Marxism is determinist and materialist. Sartre's existentialism is libertarian and phenomenological. Marxism includes a theory of history with prescriptive prognoses for the future. Existentialism explores agency in a spontaneous present which bestows only a derivative existence on past and future. Marxism is a social theory in which the class is the subject and object of change. In existentialism individuals do things and things are done to individuals. Marxism has pretensions to be a science. Existentialism regards science as part of the very problem of dehumanisation and alienation.

Despite the fact that Sartre's overt anarchism emerges only at the end of his life it is mainly professed in a series of interviews with his then secretary Benny Levy for the magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Sartre also claimed in the 1970's that he had always been an anarchist.

Anarchism is the theory that the abolition of the state is both possible and desirable. It is true that Sartre was a figure who increasingly challenged authority, especially the authority of the state; from the mocking of bourgeois values in the 1938 novel *Nausea* (*La Nausee*), through the support for the Algerian and Cuban rebels in the 1950's and early sixties, and a host

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

of other leftwing or anticolonial causes, to his hawking of Maoist newsheets on the streets of Paris in the early 1970's. Sartre never wrote a philosophical synthesis of anarchism and the other philosophies he espoused. Rather, his anarchism is in his behaviour.

Sartre lost patience with communism after the failure of the May 1968 riots to develop into a revolutionary overthrow of French capitalism. He penned the tract *Les Communistes ont peur de la révolution* (The Communists are Afraid of Revolution) to condemn what he saw as the betrayal of the revolution by the PCF. His acceptance of the editorship of *La Cause du Peuple* (The People's Cause) and other Maoist papers was his last significant Marxist gesture. In the 1970's he struggled to learn the political stance of his young revolutionary colleagues who sometimes viewed the ageing writer with mirth or contempt.

Despite these complexities, there is something profoundly apposite about Rybalka's use of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity to denote Sartre's existentialism, Marxism and anarchism. The doctrine that human beings have an ineliminable freedom to choose, no matter how constrained they may be, is essential to Sartre's existentialism. We are the beings who choose what we are. In Marxism, equality is not only a value, it is the core political value: the value upon which other values depend. In anarchism, fraternity makes social harmony in the absence of the power of the state possible. Ordinary human friendships do not need to be sustained by police, army, courts or taxation and this is a clue to the fact that society without the state is possible.

It could be that existentialism, Marxism and anarchism are not mutually consistent. If philosophical problems need to be solved to show their compatibility, then this applies equally to the slogan of the French revolution of 1789. Arguably the history of the Westernised world since the 1790's has conspicuously included the attempt to reconcile the competing claims of liberty, equality and fraternity. If that is right, the avid reception of Sartre's works world wide becomes more comprehensible.

Sartre, then, is a synthesiser. It is not unusual for the greatness of a philosopher to consist in being a synthesiser. Plato reconciled the static, rationalist, monist worldpicture of Parmenides with the pluralistic, empirical, process ontology of Heraclitus. Descartes, wrote his dualist philosophy to reconcile the medieval theological world picture he had inherited, with the findings of the new physical science. (4) Kant, consciously if messily, synthesised the continental rationalism of Descartes,

Leibniz and Spinoza with the British empiricism of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Marxism, as Lenin pointed out, is a meeting of French socialism, British economics, and German philosophy. Sartre's syntheses of phenomenology and existentialism in the 1940's and existentialism with Marxism from the late 1950's take their place with these others in the history of philosophy. They are at least as philosophically significant as the synthesis of psychoanalysis and Marxism of his GermanAmerican contemporary, the Frankfurt School radical Herbert Marcuse, who was so much more influential than Sartre in the evenements of May '68. (5)

XII PSYCHOANALYSIS

The Viennese doctor Sigmund Freud (1856-1938) designed psychoanalysis as a scientific cure for neurotic disorders through the patient talking to a trained 'analyst'. It has become a *Weltanschauung* whose scientific status is controversial. Psychoanalysis entails the antiCartesian tenet that I may be in mental states of which I am wholly or partly unaware. My actions are the product of a power struggle between ego, superego and id and are the expression of libido and childhood trauma. Cure or explanation entails making the unconscious conscious.

Sartre invents a kind of explanation called 'existential psychoanalysis' even though he insists that the unconscious does not exist because the idea of an unconscious mental state is contradictory. Part of a state's being mental is its being conscious. How is this psychoanalysis without the unconscious possible?

To decide this, we need to examine what Sartre endorses and repudiates in classical or Freudian psychoanalysis. Sartre and Freud agree that the explanation of human action has to be holistic not atomistic. Any piece of behaviour, no matter how trivial, is revelatory and symbolic of the person as a totality, in terms of whom it has to be deciphered. A person cannot be understood as an aggregate of empirical components. Nevertheless, both Sartre and Freud reject any fixed, a priori view of human nature whether biological, historical or theological. A person cannot be usefully studied in abstraction from their life, including their lived situations.

Sartre's rejection of the unconscious is not so Cartesian as might appear. From the fact that my mental states are conscious it does not follow that I know what they are. Even if my attitudes towards my hopes, fears and

intentions are conscious I may misunderstand or be ignorant of their contents.

Sartre replaces the Freudian concept of libido with his own concept of the project. Existential psychoanalysis entails the disclosure of a person's fundamental or original project. Sartre knows that each of us has many empirical aims, hopes and fears. Indeed, the possible projects of an individual form an infinite set. By the fundamental or original project Sartre means the unity of my deeds that fuses them into my biography. My original project does not predate my biography. Sartre denies that my actions are inwardly or mentally rehearsed before I perform them. Indeed, there is no unconscious mind or noumenal realm where this could be executed. My original project is who I am making myself through living. Sartre says the original project is the project of being. It is the desire to be. What is the desire to be?

Sartre partly means the desire to live rather than die. He also means the desire of being-for-itself to be someone, to be something. Ultimately, the original project is the inevitably frustrated desire of being-for-itself to be a synthesis of being-for-itself and being-in-itself, the desire, in fact, to be God. Existentially, it is the pattern of the uncomfortable exercise of free selfdefinition. If there is an a priori (but not chronologically prior) tenet of existential psychoanalysis it is the original project.

Because the being of being-for-itself is not distinguishable from choice, existential psychoanalysis must uncover what Sartre calls 'the original choice'. In a fashion reminiscent of Hindu and Buddhist doctrines of karma (kama) Sartre holds that who I am here and now is a direct consequence of my previous subjective choices. Existential psychoanalysis explains why I am who I am through bringing to knowledge the choice original to my present condition. As in classical psychoanalysis, I can in principle psychoanalyse myself but this is difficult because it requires the detachment involved in treating oneself as another. Whether selfadministered or not, existential psychoanalysis like classical analysis aims at a therapeutic selfknowledge.

Sartre deploys the techniques of existential psychoanalysis with increasing sophistication in his biographies of Baudelaire (1947), Jean Genet (1952) and Flaubert (1972). His ambition in writing the Flaubert is to totally explain another human being. *The Idiot of the Family* is a methodological culmination of Sartre's work, drawing on the phenomenology of *The Psychology of the Imagination*, the Marxist existentialism of *Search for a*

Method and Critique of Dialectical Reason as well as the existential psychoanalysis of Being and Nothingness. The title is taken from Gustave Flaubert's father's judgement on his young son; 'You will be the idiot of the family'.

Sartre's biography seeks to uncover Flaubert's selfconstitution as a writer within his lived historical situation. Although in Being and Nothingness Sartre only claims to have shown the possibility of existential psychoanalysis and admits that the discipline has not yet found its Freud, Sartre thought that in the concrete case of his writing on Flaubert one person had wholly explained another.

Two extracts follow, one from Sketch For a Theory of the Emotions, the other the chapter called Existential Psychoanalysis from Being and Nothingness. In Sketch For a Theory of the Emotions we see the Sartre of 1939 distancing himself from classical psychoanalysis through the example of emotion. In Being and Nothingness Sartre argues the merits of psychoanalysis over empiricist and positivist psychology and then argues the merits of his own psychoanalysis over Freud's.

III IMAGINATION AND EMOTION

Understanding the application of Sartre's phenomenology to imagination and emotion requires further clarification of the concept of intentionality and the distinction between reflexive and prereflexive consciousness introduced in the last chapter.

By 'intentionality' is meant the alleged property of consciousness always taking some object or other. All consciousness is consciousness of something, whether real or imaginary. All perception is perception of, all thinking is thinking of, all loving is loving something, all hating, hating something. For any act of consciousness, that act could not exist unless it were directed towards some object. The object need not be a physical object, it could be a fictional character, an abstract object like a number, or an imaginary being.

Brentano had used the concept intentionality to demarcate the mental from the nonmental (including the physical) by claiming that all and only mental phenomena exhibit intentionality. Husserl thought intentionality is the essence of consciousness. Intentionality was first formulated systematically by the thirteenth century scholastic philosopher St Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), but anticipations may be found in Plato and Aristotle.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre, following Husserl, allows some exceptions to the doctrine all mental states are intentional. Sensations of pain, and certain moods, for example are not 'about' anything. (This leaves both Sartre and Husserl with the problem of what nonintentional phenomena being mental consists in).

Sartre makes a crucial break with the doctrines of Brentano and Husserl when he insists that the intended objects of consciousness exist. Brentano had thought that they 'inexist' as presented to consciousness, that is, neither exist nor do not exist. Husserl suspended belief and disbelief in the existence of objects in the external world by his epoche in order to describe consciousness purely. Sartre regards these positions as confused. Even if an object is fictional or abstract or imaginary, it exists. It is rather than is not. In failing to see this, Husserl misunderstood intentionality's essential character.

Husserl also fails to see the impossibility of the epoche or phenomenological reduction. No object can be reduced to the consciousness of it, not even to an infinity of acts of consciousness of it, because consciousness cannot be that of which it is conscious. The object, in some nonspatial sense of 'outside', is always irreducibly 'outside' consciousness.

If the objects of consciousness are not 'in' consciousness as Brentano and Husserl supposed then where are they? As we have seen, Sartre thinks our fundamental mode of being is truly captured by the Heideggerian notion of being in the world. If our being is being in the world then it is impossible that we might persist in abstraction from the world of objects and subjects that surrounds us. The objects of our consciousness are in the world. Essentially, consciousness is consciousness of something outside itself.

Nevertheless, consciousness is a consciousness of consciousness; a consciousness of itself 'in the face of being'. The implicit consciousness of itself called 'prereflexive consciousness' and the overt self-consciousness called 'reflexive consciousness' are possible only because consciousness is directed towards objects outside itself. Although I am a consciousness of being, nothing separates me from being.

Sartre is a realist about the objects of consciousness. Idealism, the doctrine that only consciousness and its mental contents exist, is incoherent. Husserl

thought that consciousness constitutes its objects; it makes them be what they are. It was his quasi-Kantian view that, although Berkeleyan idealism is false because objects do not depend on consciousness for their existence,

nevertheless what objects are to us is largely due to our transcendental constitution.

Sartre treads a careful path between naive realism and Husserl's neoKantianism. He is concerned to resolve the apparent paradox that even though an object enters my visual perception as complete, I nevertheless see it only one side (or profile) at a time. When I see a physical object I see it only from a certain angle. For example if I am looking at a small cube I can see a maximum of three sides simultaneously. Nevertheless, there is a real sense in which I perceive the whole physical object. Sartre should have put the point this way: I see the whole physical object but I do not see the whole of the physical object.

Sartre, like Husserl, argues that being aware of the whole physical object depends on the possible awareness of its parts, (empirically and realistically its sides or, phenomenologically, its available profiles or *Abschattungen*). However, Sartre insists that the object really exists outside consciousness. It is our awareness of the object as a whole that is constituted by the actual and possible mental acts we direct towards it. The object itself is not constituted by consciousness. It is really there.

We can now see the sense in which the object of the perception constantly overflows or exceeds the consciousness of it. There is always more to an object than the consciousness of it. It is incoherent to suppose an object could be the consciousness of it. Also, an object systematically exceeds what it directly presents to consciousness. In the visual case, a front implies a back and some sides. The whole exceeds the momentarily presented parts.

Sartre's phenomenology of perception is a realist transformation of Husserl's theory of the constitution of objects. Sartre retains from Husserl what we could call a kind of 'perspectivism'. An object is always perceived from a point of view and always presents an aspect to that point of view. It follows that 'the object appears only in a series of profiles, or projections' (PI 9). The profile is however part of the object. The profile is any part of the object that appears to a point of view at a time.

Husserl thought that an object is constituted by the infinity of possible points of view on it. Sartre thinks the object really exists, independently of any point of view. Nevertheless it is only ever seen as presenting an aspect which both implies and excludes an infinite number of other points of view. What I see exists even when unseen. Other points of view are excluded in the sense that at any one time I may adopt just one and not any other of

them. Other points of view are included in the sense that at other times I could adopt any one of them.

It is the object that makes possible the points of view on it. The points of view do not make the object possible, even though they make possible the perception of it. So when Sartre argues in *The Psychology of Imagination* that an object itself is a synthesis of all the appearances of it, an appearance is nothing mental. The appearances of an object are the parts of it that can appear.

Husserl was wrong to claim that consciousness constitutes objects. Rather, objects constitute consciousness. In *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1937) Sartre argues that consciousness constitutes itself in the face of objects. The presentation of objects is a necessary condition for the unity of consciousness. If there were no world, there could be no consciousness.

Sartre's realism therefore entails a kind of externalism. What consciousness is depends upon the objects of consciousness that lie outside it. Objects transcend consciousness, there is more to them than both the consciousness of them and what is directly presented in the consciousness of them. Transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness. An object is transcendent if and only if it is not exhausted by the consciousness of it. Sartre thinks consciousness is supported by a being which is not itself. A necessary condition for the existence and nature of consciousness is the existence of objects for consciousness which exist independently of consciousness.

It follows straightforwardly from this externalism that consciousness is not a substance. If something is a substance then it depends on nothing outside itself, but consciousness depends on its external objects, so consciousness is not a substance. Sartre's existential phenomenology is inconsistent with the Cartesian doctrine that consciousness is a mental substance capable of existing independently of physical objects. If consciousness is not any kind of substance then consciousness is not a mental substance. If Sartre is right, Cartesian mindbody dualism is false.

Nevertheless, Sartre's realism is not immune to objection. Even if it is part of common sense, and may be sustained by philosophical argument, that physical objects exist independently of the perception of them, this view looks far less plausible when applied to mental images, fictional characters, imaginary beings and perhaps abstract objects such as numbers. On the face of it these items are 'internal' rather than 'external'. Arguably their existence depends upon consciousness rather than vice versa.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre's reply is to draw attention to what he calls the illusion of immanence in *The Psychology of Imagination*. From the fact that there are mental images and abstract objects it does not follow that there are nonphysical objects that exist within consciousness.

In fact according to Sartre, the mental image is not an object towards which acts of consciousness are directed. The image is itself a mental act, embedded by and embedding further mental acts. An image is not an object of awareness, it is a kind of awareness, a way of being aware. It posits its own object as nonexistent, as absent or as existing elsewhere. It follows that the image itself includes an act of belief, an act of positing (or not positing) an object. The image is a relation, not an object. It is a relation between subject and object.

Succumbing to the illusion of immanence involves thinking of consciousness as a place, and thinking of images as 'in' consciousness. Sartre thinks of Hume as the paradigm case of someone who commits this fallacy. However he thinks it widespread in philosophy, psychology and common sense.

Because he denies that consciousness is a place, a strange nonphysical place, in *The Psychology of Imagination* Sartre regards expressions of the form 'a mental image of Peter' as philosophically misleading and 'the imaginative consciousness of Peter' as philosophically perspicuous even if Peter does not exist. Imagining an imaginary object is logically parasitic on imagining a real object, rather as holding a false belief depends upon being capable of holding a true belief.

In the extract from *The Psychology of Imagination* called 'Consciousness and Imagination' reprinted below, we see Sartre's existential phenomenology applied to the mental image. He also introduces the concept of negation which is important for understanding the next topic in this book.

In the extract from *Sketch For a Theory of the Emotions* Sartre applies the doctrine of intentionality to emotion and draws distinctions between being conscious and being conscious of being conscious. He argues that an emotion is a transformation of the world. Although it is always part of our existential predicament to choose, to act, the world frustrates us in our preferences. At that moment we choose an emotion in an effort to transform the world as if by magic. Disturbingly, it follows that we are responsible for our emotions. We see here not only the repudiation of scientific psychology, but that Sartrean fusion of existentialism and phenomenology called 'existential phenomenology'.

VI THE SELF

What is this subjective being that I am? The distinction between reflexive consciousness (la conscience reflexive) and prereflexive consciousness (la conscience preflexive) is essential to understanding Sartre's phenomenology of the self. It finds its original and clearest expression not in *Being and Nothingness* but in Sartre's short 1937 work *The Transcendence of the Ego*.

There Sartre argues against Husserl, that there is no transcendental ego, no irreducibly subjective and psychic self, no hidden inner source of one's own mental states. Husserl's transcendental ego is transcendental in two senses. On quasi-Kantian grounds Husserl argues in *Cartesian Meditations* and elsewhere that there exists an ego that is a necessary condition for experience. The ego is also transcends our ordinary prephenomenological consciousness. It is not to be found within the world of the natural attitude. It is revealed as the source of the transcendental field, or subjective consciousness, by the application of the *epoche* or transcendental reduction. It is the subjective 'pole' of my mental states and does not exist without them. It explains my numerical identity over time. It is what I ultimately am.

In *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre brings this argument against Husserl: Phenomenology is the description of what appears to consciousness, without any preconception about the objective reality of what thus appears. But no transcendental ego is given to consciousness, not before the phenomenological *epoche* and not after it. Rather Husserl assumes or postulates the transcendental ego as an explanation of how consciousness is possible. It is not the role of phenomenology to postulate but to describe. Ironically, the transcendental ego falls before the *epoche*.

It does not follow from this argument alone that there is no transcendental ego, only that there are no consistent phenomenological grounds for postulating one. Nevertheless Sartre insists on subjectivity: that which is conscious is not what consciousness is consciousness of. The subject of consciousness, is not an object of that consciousness.

Sartre thinks that the existence of the transcendental is inconsistent with the unity of consciousness. There is a unity of consciousness, so there is no transcendental ego. He perhaps overestimates the role of the transcendental ego in unifying consciousness in Husserl's philosophy. Husserl thinks that acts of consciousness are parts of the same consciousness through the horizontal and vertical intentionalities of time consciousness.

However, Husserl does think that some mental act's being mine is its source being a particular transcendental ego.

Sartre suggests instead that it is the intentional object of acts of consciousness that accounts for their unity. Consciousness unifies itself in the face of its objects and that is as much unity as consciousness has. Neither thinker has resolved the ultimate problem of what it is for acts of consciousness to be mine.

Sartre also argues that the existence of the transcendental ego is inconsistent with the freedom of consciousness. Consciousness is free, so there is no transcendental ego. Consciousness is a free spontaneity or play of nothingness. If conscious states were directed by a transcendental ego this spontaneity would be impossible.

The Transcendence of the Ego shows that Husserl misread Kant's theory of the self in *The Critique of Pure Reason* and that Sartre understood Kant correctly. Kant, like Sartre, rejected the transcendental ego although most commentators, like Husserl, mistakenly ascribe it to Kant. In the *Paralogisms* chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant insists that there is no substantial, subjective, quasiCartesian self. Kant's distinction between the noumenal self and the phenomenal self is only the distinction between how I am and how I appear to myself. The noumenal self is not an extra entity.

The psychic subject according to Sartre, far from being the subjective source of consciousness is itself a product of consciousness. It is in fact the result of consciousness being turned on consciousness in reflexive consciousness. The I is not a psychic subject but a psychic object: the intentional object of reflexive consciousness. In reflection I appear to myself as an ego. Independently of reflection I am the me. In the world, as the me, I am a psychophysical totality, a flesh and blood thinking, feeling, moving, human being.

Prereflexive consciousness is the ordinary awareness of objects in the external world that we exercise typically from morning to night. Reflexive consciousness is consciousness of consciousness: a new act of consciousness directed by consciousness onto itself. Reflexive consciousness is only intermittently exercised on prereflexive consciousness so the picture so far seems reasonably clear: There is prereflexive consciousness whenever we are conscious. From time to time we are selfconscious in that a new act of consciousness is directed onto consciousness by itself.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre complicates this picture by saying that every consciousness is a consciousness of existing. Prereflexive consciousness is conscious of itself and reflexive consciousness is conscious of itself. In addition to this, reflexive consciousness is an intermittent consciousness of prereflexive consciousness.

Why does Sartre present us with this complicated and barely coherent picture? He says, for example consciousness is conscious of itself rather than consciousness is conscious of itself, meaning that it is identical with the awareness it has of itself. What is the subject and the object of this awareness?

Sartre's motivation is Cartesian and antiFreudian. As we shall see in the discussions of bad faith and psychoanalysis (Chapters X and XII below) Sartre thinks there is no unconscious. Indeed the idea of an unconscious mental state is contradictory and so impossible. He agrees with Descartes that if I am a mental state then I am aware of that mental state. All consciousness is therefore selfintimating or transparent. If that is so however, reflexive consciousness would seem to be redundant. Prereflexive, consciousness is already 'a consciousness of itself' so there is no need for reflection to inspect its states.

There are important differences between the selfintimations of prereflexive consciousness and the acts of reflexive consciousness. Not only is reflexive consciousness presented with an ego and prereflexive consciousness not presented with an ego (except, sometimes, the ego of another). Reflexive consciousness consists in a set of mental acts extra to or in addition to those of prereflexive consciousness. Reflexiveconsciousness always only takes conscious states and the ego as its objects. Prereflexive consciousness takes external objects as its objects, as well as intimating its own mental states.

The findings of acts of reflective conscious are incorrigible. The findings of acts of prereflexive consciousness are corrigible in so far as they are directed towards external objects. Sartre endorses the Cartesian epistemological thesis that if I believe, or am otherwise aware, of being in a mental state, internally or psychologically described, then that belief cannot be false. That awareness cannot be nonveridical. In the case of awareness of objects in the external world, however, there is always room for error. I may misidentify an object, ascribe to it a property it lacks or think there is an object where there is none. Reflexive consciousness delivers knowledge

that is absolute certain. If I believe I am in a conscious state it is impossible for me to be mistaken.

It is doubtful that this doctrine is true. Obviously, if it is true that I believe I am in a mental state then it follows validly that I am in at least one mental state viz that state of belief. Not much more than this can be said with certainty however. This is not just because Sartre might be wrong about the nonexistence of an unconscious mind. It is also because I may be caused to believe I am in a mental state by something other than my being in it. If Sartre is wrong and there is an unconscious mind then I may be in a mental state and not know I am in it, and I may believe I am in a mental state and that belief may be false.

Sartre however, thinks the corrigible/incorrigible distinction marks another important difference between reflexive and prereflexive consciousness. Prereflexive conscious of external objects is corrigible. Reflexive conscious of consciousness is incorrigible.

This picture of self-consciousness depends on there being consciousness of objects outside the mind. Consciousness unifies itself only through its objects and only as unified can it be its own object. Intentionality depends upon on external objects, a unified consciousness depends on intentionality and self-consciousness depends upon a unified consciousness. Self-consciousness is therefore not only consistent with consciousness being embedded in the world, it presupposes it. We see here another way in which our being is beingintheworld.

IV BEING

The question What is being? is not the question What exists ? or What is there? It cannot be answered by producing a list of things that exist. The question is: What exactly have we said about anything when we have said that it is rather than is not?

In *Being and Time* (Sein und Zeit, 1927) Heidegger calls What is being ? 'the question of being' (Seinsfrage) and the attempt to answer it 'Fundamental Ontology'. Traditional ontology is the attempt to establish what exists and what does not exist. Fundamental ontology seeks to establish what it is for what is to be. Heidegger thinks that because Western philosophy, since at least Plato and Aristotle, has forgotten and suppressed the question of being in favour of epistemology and traditional ontology What is it to be? has slipped all too readily into What exists?. The meaning of the Seinsfrage has to be recovered and rethought with Presocratic purity

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

because our technocratic and meanstoend modes of thinking make us largely oblivious to the puzzlement of just being.

We know that Sartre read and reread Heidegger, partly in the original and partly in the translation *l'Être et le Temps*. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre does not answer the Seinsfrage but produces phenomenological descriptions of being. The subtitle of *Being and Nothingness* is *An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, a concatenation of words which would have made no sense to Husserl because he insists it is necessary to suspend or bracket ontology to engage in phenomenology. For Husserl it is necessary to ignore what is in order to reveal what appears to be; the phenomenon. Sartre eschews Husserl's methodological solipsism and uses Heidegger's fundamental existential category *beingintheworld* to characterise our human existence and thus puts phenomenology back into the world. For this reason the philosophy of *Being and Nothingness* is existential phenomenology.

Sartre thinks there are fundamentally two manners of being: *beingfor-itself* (*l'êtrepoursoi*) and *beingin-itself* (*l'êtreensoi*). Other modes of being, such as *beingforothers*, are parasitic on these. Roughly, *beingfor-itself* is subjective being and *beingin-itself* is objective being. *Beingfor-itself* is the kind of being that pertains to one's own existence. *Beingin-itself* is the manner in which the world external to one's own reality exists.

More precisely, *beingfor-itself* entails the existence of consciousness, and consciousness of itself. It is that present centre of conscious awareness that each of us finds him or herself to be. It is *being* in the sense of being someone, the kind of being of which it makes sense to say 'I am it'. Because *beingfor-itself* entails consciousness, it entails that directedness towards the world called 'intentionality' which consciousness entails. *Beingfor itself* is partly constituted by presence to *beingin-itself*. It is what it is over and against the world.

Beingfor-itself possesses three existential structures: facticity, temporality and transcendence. Facticity is the unchosen condition or situation of the *for-itself* in which freedom is exercised. Temporality is the totality past, present, future, and transcendence is the controversial fact about *beingfor-itself* that it is what it is not and is not what it is. Sartre means that I am, in a sense, constantly projected towards the future in my free selfdefinition.

Being for itself is free and entails a kind of lack or nothingness. *Beingfor-itself* does not so much have choice as is choice. An essential part

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

of my ownmost ontology is my constant capacity to choose, no matter how unpleasant and constrained the choices available. I am a kind of nothingness because there is nothing that I am independently of my self constitution through those choices. My consciousness is a kind of interior phenomenological space of nonbeing, surrounded by the plentitude of the world.

Being-in-itself is opaque, objective, inert and entails a massive fullness or plentitude of being. Beingin-itself is uncreated, meaning that although it is, it never began to be and there is no cause and no reason for it to be. Beingin-itself is not subject to temporality because past, present and future pertain uniquely to beingfor-itself. (However, the human past is in-itself, not for-itself, because it is fixed and unalterable.) Beingin-itself is undifferentiated, solid and opaque to itself and filled with itself. Sartre sums up these ascriptions in the quasitautological thought; it is what it is. In beingin-itself there is no difference between its being and its being what it is. Existence and essence coincide.

Sartre thinks all being is contingent. Whatever is might not have been. Whatever is might not have been what it is. As Roquentin realises in *Nausea* there might not have been any conscious beings including oneself. There might not have been anything. That there is something rather than nothing is a fact that could have been otherwise. That there is what there is rather than something else is a fact that could have been otherwise. Humanity seeks to evade its contingency in the inauthentic denial of freedom called 'bad faith' described in chapter X below. Sartre thinks that the fundamental human aspiration is to be a synthesis of beingfor-itself and beingin-itself, the perpetually frustrated aspiration, in fact, to be God.

In order to appreciate Sartre's distinctions between manners of being, in the passages from *Being and Nothingness* which follow, it is necessary to pay close and direct attention to one's own existence and the surrounding world. It is not possible to understand them by thinking in any abstract, objective, or quasiscientific way. They are entailed by phenomenological descriptions, not theories.

We need to know what the new present is and what it is for the new present to be a transcendent.

The new present is the presence of the temporal supplement. This presence may be understood in the double sense of 'presence': it is both the case that

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

the supplement is in the present in the sense of existing at the present time and it is the case that time is present to in the presence of the temporal supplement. This is a 'new' present because it is one established by the temporalisation of the putative observer of time.

This present is not only a transcendent in the familiar phenomenological sense of exceeding any immediate consciousness of it but also in additional senses which Merleau-Ponty itemises. Notably:

'On sait qu'il n'est pas la, qu'il vient d'etre la' (VI 238).

'One knows that it is not there, that it was just there'
(VIT 184).

This is the putative observation that if one tries to pay attention to the present time one finds it impossible to be conscious of it qua present but only, so to speak, as just having been. It follows from this property of presence that presence is a transcendent in the familiar phenomenological sense because the existence of this property logically entails that the present qua present cannot be wholly immediately intuited.

(VIT 238).

The time when I am is never exactly the present time. In other words; whenever I am, that time is never all and only the present time. Prima facie this claim is controversial because arguably the present is just when I am (for some conscious subject) and 'present' means 'when I am'. Merleau-Ponty is not relying on the familiar fact that the present is elastic (that the present time could be this century, this microsecond, today etc.) in establishing the thesis that either when I am exceeds the present or the present exceeds when I am. He is relying on the assumption that... ..same time.

For example, if it could be shown that that those events making up the apprehension of time should happen at different times from those events making up apprehended time is a necessary condition for those prima facie numerically distinct sets of events not being the same events, then that would be enough to show that my present was not exactly the same time as an apprehended present. However, I see no a priori reason why two wholly simultaneous sequences of events should not be numerically distinct.

Crucially, the present is not a time interval:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'Il n'est pas un segment de temps a contours definis qui viendraient se mettre en place' (VI 238).

'It is not a segment of time with defined contours that would come and set itself in place' (VIT 238).

By 'contours definis' I take it Merleau-Ponty means a datable or (vel) clockable beginning or (vel) end. If so he is right about this because it is metaphysically impossible to take, say, a stopwatch, set it at the finish of the past, let it run only for the present, and stop it at the start of the future. (Unless that is all anyone is ever able to do with a stopwatch).

The absence of a beginning and end to the present entails its transcendence because even if one were to succeed in consciously intuiting some portion of the present when this intuition of the present is clockable one would not have thereby succeeded in consciously intuiting all of the present. It follows that the present is transcendent in the sense that it is not exhausted by the immediate intuition of it.

TIME

Merleau-Ponty thinks that time is subjective, that is, the existence and nature of time depend upon the existence and nature of a perceiving bodily subject. Before examining his arguments for this conclusion I shall say something about the relations between time and subjectivity according to Merleau-Ponty.

He says

'all our experiences, in as much as they are ours, arrange themselves in terms of before and after' (PPT 410).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Now, it is right, indeed a necessary truth that if two experiences occur, call them E1 and E2, then either E1 precedes E2 or E2 precedes E1 or E1 and E2 are wholly simultaneous or E1 and E2 are partly simultaneous.

It is a difficult and unsolved philosophical problem what 'before' and 'after' mean in their temporal sense, but by E1 and E2 being wholly simultaneous I mean that both E1 and E2 occur and that at any time that E1 is occurring E2 is occurring and at any time that E2 is occurring E1 is occurring. Also, what is logically entailed by this is also true; at no time that E1 is occurring is E2 not occurring and at no time that E2 is occurring is E1 not occurring.

By E1 and E2 being partly simultaneous I mean that both E1 and E2 occur and there is a time when both E1 and E2 are occurring but either there is also a time when E1 is occurring but E2 is not occurring or there is a time when E2 is occurring but E1 is not occurring, or both.

The reason why any pair of experiences exhibits these temporal properties is that all experiences are events and all pairs of events exhibit these properties. Why this should be so, indeed why time exists at all, are unsolved philosophical problems but, arguably, an essential part of what we mean by a pair of events being temporal is that they have these properties.

For these reasons Merleau-Ponty is right to claim that each subject's experiences exhibit a before and after ordering.

It is also right that their having this ordering is something they have 'in so much as they are ours' (PPT 410) ('En tant qu'elles sont notres' PP 469) if this means, in the neoKantian idiom, that that is a necessary condition of some set of experiences being my experiences. This is right, because it is a prerequisite for their happening exhibiting a temporal ordering at all (unless of course they are simultaneous) and that some experiences happen at all is a necessary condition of some set of experiences being mine.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

I would not want to rule out on logical grounds the empirical peculiarity of the set of a being's experiences being simultaneous (and so not successive).

It should also be noted that any set of nonsimultaneous experiences exhibits the before and after ordering, including any set of token experiences undergone by numerically distinct subjects. Merleau-Ponty of course does not make the false claim that that a set of experiences exhibits a before and after ordering is a sufficient condition for those being the experiences of only one subject or of one subject, rather than another.

Merleau-Ponty gives a special reason why our experiences are ordered by the before/after relation. He says it is because

'temporality, in Kantian language, is the form taken by our inner sense' (PPT 410).

Kant's thesis that time is the (immediate) form of inner sense (and the mediate form of outer sense) is open to many interpretations the most plausible of which being that the temporality of my experience is a necessary condition for my awareness of it. Merleau-Ponty, however, along with most writers on Kant, reads Kant as an idealist and interprets Kant as holding that time is 'subjective' or pertains only to the inner psychology of the subject.

Whatever the merits or demerits of this reading of Kant Merleau-Ponty is certainly right that it follows logically from it that experience is ordered by the before/after relation. This is because the exercise of inner sense makes experience temporal and if experience is made temporal it is ordered by the before/after relation.

Therefore, if inner sense is exercised then experience is ordered by the before/after relation.

The assumption that inner sense operates is a plausible one because inner sense is introspective. Although the neoKantian premise is dubitable, it

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

yields, with that assumption, the conclusion that if I am aware of my experiences then they exhibit the before/after ordering: something that may in any case be true.

Merleau-Ponty also thinks the conclusion that all my experiences are ordered by the before/after relation follows from another premise. This is because

'[temporality] is the most general characteristic of "psychic facts"' (PPT 410).

This inference is clearly valid because if temporality entails the before/after relation and if experiences are psychic facts then if psychic facts exhibit this feature then experiences exhibit this feature. If something possesses a property that is very general then it possesses that property.

It is less clear what is meant by saying that temporality is the 'most general characteristic' (PPT 410) ('Le caractere le plus general PP 469) of "psychic facts"' (PPT 410) ('<<Faits psychiques>>' PP 469). It could mean this. Consider the elements of a set 's' $\{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$. Suppose there is a property, F, of each member of a subset of S. Suppose further that there is a further property, G, possessed by every member of S. It then follows that if any element of S is G then that element is F, but if any element of S is F it does not thereby logically follow that that element is G. When these conditions are met we may say that G is a 'more general characteristic' ('Un caractere plus general') than F.

Interpreting the members of set 's' as 'our experiences' (PPT 410) ('Nos experiences' PP 469) and 'being temporal' as 'being G' and 'having some other characteristic less general than G' as 'being F', then we have; Any experience of mine is temporal if it has any characteristic less general than temporality, but it does not follow from its temporality alone that any experience of mine has any characteristic less general than temporality. It

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

does follow from this, however, that any experiences of mine exhibits the before/after ordering, on the plausible assumption that any pair of experiences exhibits that ordering if its members are temporal.

Merleau-Ponty also excludes two putative temporal properties of the subject. Why he does so we shall examine in the next chapter. Here I just wish to clarify them. They are;

'Le sujet...ne peut etre une serie d'evenements psychiques' (PP 469).

'the subject... cannot be a series of psychic events' (PPT 410)

and

'ne peut cependant etre eternel' (PP 469).

'nevertheless cannot be eternal either' (PPT 410)

It is not clear what kind of 'cannot' ('ne peut') is at work in the first claim. On any construal it comes out, at least, as true that if x is a subject then x is not a series of psychic events. This is consistent however with either if x is a subject then x 'is a series of events' or 'if x is a subject then x 'is psychic' but not with both. Merleau-Ponty could mean it is a contingent fact that no subject is identical with any series of psychic events, such that although, always and everywhere, if x is a subject x is not a series of psychic events, nevertheless, although false it would not be necessarily false, because, say, contradictory, to affirm the conjunction of 'x is a subject' and 'x is a series of psychic events'.

Conversely, Merleau-Ponty may mean that if x is a subject it logically follows that x is not a series of psychic events, such that it would be not only false but necessarily false to affirm the conjunction of 'x is a subject' and 'x is a series of psychic events': for example because the conjunction is or entails a contradiction once the semantics of each conjunct are made explicit.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

On either construal, the claim that any set of experiences undergone by any subject is ordered by a before/after relation is consistent with any such subject not being numerically identical with any such set of experiences. Indeed, a minimal distinction between a subject and his or her experiences is arguably logically entailed by the thought that such experiences are 'had' or 'undergone' by such a subject. This is not to deny that the experiences of a subject may be states of that subject, merely to deny that such a subject could be coherently maintained to be nothing over and above the content of their own experience.

Merleau-Ponty says the subject cannot be eternal either. 'Eternal' is equivocal in metaphysical content. It may mean; x is eternal if and only if, x exists and x exists at all times. This means, choose any time you like, x exists at that time if x is eternal. Or, sometimes, 'eternal' is taken to mean 'nontemporal' such that if x is eternal then x exists but no temporal predicates truly apply to x or, to put it another way, x has no temporal properties. Although x is there is not any true answer to when x is. Sometimes, too, 'eternal' is used in a third sense such that x is eternal if and only if x has a beginning but no end. Then x is eternal if x began to be, x is, but x will not not be. Sometimes, too, ' x is eternal' is taken to mean x is but x did not begin to be and x will not cease to be, such that although x is there was never a time when x was not nor a time when x is not nor a time when x will not be. This sense of 'eternal' is, however, logically entailed by the first sense.

When Merleau-Ponty says the subject is not eternal he implies that the subject is not eternal in any of these sense. This is because, on Merleau-Ponty's view, if x is a subject, although x exists, x began to exist and x will cease to exist. In other words, x exists at a time but there both was time when x was not and will be a time when x will not be. This thesis is logically inconsistent with the thesis that the subject is eternal in any of the senses defined above so, if proven, it proves that thesis false.

I turn now to Merleau-Ponty's thesis that time is subjective: made, and made to be what it is, by the constitutive operations of a bodily subject.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The structure of Merleau-Ponty's argument is rather loose but, roughly, it is this: time is either subjective or objective: these two possibilities are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. The thesis that time is objective is confused and mistaken, therefore, time is subjective.

Merleau-Ponty characterises what he takes to be the objective view of time in this way: 'time passes or flows by' (PPT 411) ('Le temps passe ou s'écoule' PP 470) and 'we speak of the course of time' (PPT 411) ('On parle du cours du temps' PP 470). Centrally, the objective view of time includes this doctrine;

'If time is similar to a river, it flows from the past towards the present and the future. The present is the consequence of the past, and the future of the present' (PPT 411).

There are two distinct notions which need separating out here. One is the idea that events are ordered by the before/after relation. The other is the idea that events stand in a causal relation. Not only are the two notions not the same notion but they are not as closely logically related as might appear.

If x and y stand in a before/after relation then either x happens only at an earlier time, t1, and y happens only at a later time, t2, or y happens only at an earlier time t1 and x happens at a later time t2. Crucially, it does not logically follow from this that x and y are causally related.

From 'first x then y' we cannot validly infer 'y is a causal consequence of x' and from 'first x then y' we cannot validly infer 'x is a cause of y'.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

What causation is is an unsolved philosophical problem but, plausibly, if two events, E1 and E2 are causally related such that E1, is the cause of E2 then it is either both true that if not E1 then not E2 and if E1 then E2 or, it is true that either if not E1 then not E2 or if E1 then E2 but not both. In other words, if two events are cause and effect, respectively, then either one event is both necessary and sufficient for the other or one event is either necessary or sufficient for the other.

Now, if E1 is the cause of E2 (and, by entailment, E2 is the effect of E1) then it seems the following is true; either E1 chronologically precedes E2 or E1 and E2 are simultaneous but it is not the case that E2 chronologically precedes E1. It follows from this that I am ruling out backwards causation. But I remain open to persuasion; suppose for example E2 is chronologically subsequent to E1 and E1 is a necessary condition for E2. Then I fully accept that E2 is sufficient for E1. (It follows from that too that E2 is 'sufficient for E1 having happened').

Merleau-Ponty says the metaphor of time flowing like a river is 'extremely confused' (PPT 411) ('Tres confuse' PP 470). The reason he gives is this:

' Looking at the things themselves , the melting of the snows and what results from this are not successive events, or rather the very notion of an event has no place in the objective world' (PPT 411).

Now, at least three issues need to be distinguished here. One is the question of the relation between causal relations and the before and after relation. A second is whether there are events in the objective world; events occurring in what exists when what exists is not being perceived or thought to exist.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

A third is whether either before/after ordering or causal relations are influenced by the objective existence or nonexistence of events.

Crucially, both before and after ordering and causal relations are logically independent of whether any events are either subjective or objective. To see this, consider some set of empirical events standing both in a before and after relation and a causal relation. First suppose empirical realism is true, so that events perceived or thought to exist (generally) do exist. Now suppose empirical idealism is true, such that those events exist only if they are perceived or thought to exist. Nothing intrinsic to the events, including their mutual temporal and causal relations, is thereby changed. If it is thought to be an objection to this that causal relations may only obtain between physical events it should be noted that empirical idealism per se does not logically rule out mental events being physical events (for example brain processes). Admittedly Berkeley's classical empirical idealism is inconsistent with that, but Putnam's 'Braininavat' thesis for example, is not. Merleau-Ponty is an empirical idealist about events but thinks the subject is physical.

Merleau-Ponty's claims about time 'flowing' may now be evaluated. He says the melting of the snow and what results from it are not successive. I take it this means, for two events E1 and E2 if E1 causes E2 then E2 does not succeed E1 chronologically. This claim is by and large empirically false; if E1 causes E2 then E2 succeeds E1 chronologically. Of course this is consistent with radical theses about events and causality. For example; there might be no events and no causality, or, as Merleau-Ponty supposes, both events and causation may be subject dependent.

Merleau-Ponty is nevertheless right to suppose that if E1 and E2 are causally related then it does not logically follow that if E1 causes E2 then E2 succeeds E1 chronologically. As I suggested above, E1 and E2 may be causally related even if E1 and E2 are simultaneous. There by 'simultaneous' I do not mean only 'partly simultaneous', I see no contradiction in the supposition that E1 and E2 are causally related even if wholly simultaneous, even if it is empirically false that there exist such causal relations between such temporally ordered events.

I turn now to Merleau-Ponty's radical thesis that 'the very notion of an event has no place in the objective world' (PPT 411) ('La Notion meme d'evenement n'a pas de place dans le monde objectif' PP 470).

One point needs to be cleared up straight away. It is reasonably uncontroversial that the notion of an event is not subjectindependent because notions, or ideas, or concepts are plausibly mental occurrences or dispositions in a subject. What Merleau-Ponty means is that there are no subjectindependent events, not that there are no subjectindependent notions of events (even though that is also true for him).

Suppose I make the claim that two events in the external world, E1 and E2, are chronologically related such that E1 exists at t1 but not at t2 and E2 exists at t2 but not at t1, and suppose further that E1 is the, or a, cause of E2 and E2 is thereby the, or an, effect of E1, then, according to Merleau-Ponty:

'I am tacitly assuming the existence of a witness tied to a certain spot in the world, and I am comparing his successive views' (PPT 411).

Now, there is a Kantian insight here which seems correct. This is that if I imagine something, for example a pair of events, such as some snow melting and the resultant flooding, then I imagine these events as they would appear to me were I perceiving them. This is an empirical constraint on the imagination. (It is also the truth contained in the Kantian doctrine that we can only have knowledge of possible objects of experience and not of those things as they are in themselves).

If this empirical constraint on the imagination exists then Merleau-Ponty is right in his view that the imagination of events tacitly presupposes an observer of those events, even if such an observer need only be imaginary.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

This follows just on the assumption, which Merleau-Ponty endorses, that all perceiving is perceiving from a 'point of view' or, from somewhere. This is a logical consequence of his thesis that subjects are embodied; a consequence that he emphasises. 'A certain spot in the world' (PPT 411) ('Une certaine place dans le monde' PP 470) is the point of view the tacitly assumed observer adopts in the perception of the events we imagine. This observer is where we would be were we to be perceiving those events we imagine.

The claim that in imagining a pair of events both ordered by the before/after relation and causally related 'I am comparing his (the tacit observer's) successive views' (PPT 411) ' ' is ambiguous. This is because 'views' ('vues' PP 470) is ambiguous between 'what is viewed' and 'the viewing of what is viewed'. (In Husserlian phenomenological vocabulary it is ambiguous between denoting an intentional content and denoting an intentional act, or between noema and noesis).

Now, from the fact that in imagining some events I am tacitly assuming the standpoint of an observer it does not logically follow that those events are subjective or subject-dependent. This is because it is coherent to maintain that what I imagine, and what the tacitly assumed observer perceives, is those events as they realistically are. Some events are imagined or perceived 'as they realistically are' if both the perceiving or imagining of them is veridical and if the imagining or perceiving of them does not cause them to be, nor causes them to be what they are. There is no contradiction in the supposition that some events predate, endure through, and postdate the imagination and/or the perception of them and remain intrinsically unaltered by being the intentional objects of such imagining and/or perceiving. The quasi-Kantian thesis that imagining an object consists in thinking of it as it would be if one were perceiving it is logically consistent with both realism and idealism about perception (as Kant, but not Merleau-Ponty, sees). We do not need to make the additional assumptions that the events imagined idealistically depend upon the tacit observer's perception of them, or on our imagining of them, in order to uphold the quasi-Kantian thesis.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Merleau-Ponty does however have the makings of an argument for such idealism. He says we are really comparing the successive views of the tacit observer when we think we are comparing events in the objective world. Now, if 'views' here means 'the viewing of what is viewed' then Merleau-Ponty's conclusion goes through because the viewing of what is viewed is ideal or subjectdependent because a mental event. If, however 'views' means 'what is viewed' then Merleau-Ponty's subjectivism does not follow because what is viewed may be either subjectdependent or subjectindependent.

On the first construal Merleau-Ponty is advancing a suggestion analogous to Hume's subjectivism about causation. Hume argues that we mistake our subjective expectation that one impression will be followed by another for an objective and necessary causal relation between the two events those two impressions are impressions of. Merleau-Ponty maintains that we mistake the views of a pair of events by a tacit observer for that pair of events ordered both causally and by the before/after relation. Both Hume and Merleau-Ponty are providing a psychological explanation of how thinking about causally related events is possible. It is part of the theses of both Hume and Merleau-Ponty from the fact that a particular psychological explanation of our causal thinking is true, it does not logically follow that there are objective causal relations. Merleau-Ponty, and as I interpret him, Hume, also deny that there are such objective causal relations.

Now, from the fact that E1 is imagined to occur at t1 and E2 is imagined to occur at t2, and E1 is imagined to be the or a cause of E2 it does not logically follow that E1 occurs at t1 and E2 at t2, nor does it follow that E1 is the cause of E2 either subject dependently or subject independently. It follows that Merleau-Ponty requires additional argument to show that any eventpair that is thought or perceived is subjectdependent.

A premise that Merleau-Ponty advances as a possible constituent of such an argument is this;

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

'Les <<Evenements>> sont decoupees par un observateur fini dans la totalite spatiotemporelle du monde objectif' (PP 470).

'The 'events' are shapes cut out by a finite observer from the spatiotemporal totality of the objective world' (PPT 411).

Merleau-Ponty does not in fact say that the events are 'shapes', he only says they are 'cut out' ('decoupees') by the observer. This is logically consistent with an event, or an event pair, being selected from a possible totality of events with which the perceiver or thinker could in principle be acquainted. Merleau-Ponty, of course, must reject this suggestion because it contradicts his thesis that there exist no events in the external world. To rule this out, however, he needs to advance another premise. This is;

'Si je considere ce monde luimeme, il n'y a qu'un seul etre indivisible et qui ne change pas' (PP 470)

'If I consider the world itself, there is simply one indivisible and changeless being in it' (PP 411).

(
The two words 'in it' do not translate anything in the original French.)
Clearly, Merleau-Ponty's intention is to identify the one indivisible and changeless being with the world.

Now, this rather Parmenidean picture of objective reality may be true and Merleau-Ponty does advance some evidence in its favour. However, prima facie it is logically inconsistent with the claim he made above that the objective world is a 'spatiotemporal totality' (PPT 411) ('Totalite

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

spatiotemporelle' PP 470). If x is spatiotemporal then x is temporal and if x is temporal then, logically, x changes. Also, if y is changeless then it follows that y is not temporal (and if y is not temporal, then y is not spatiotemporal). It follows from that, by Leibniz's law, $(Ax), (Ay), (x=y) \iff (Fx \iff Fy)$, that $(x=y)$, or, x is not y . It follows from that that the spatiotemporal world cannot be coherently identified with Merleau-Ponty's Parmenidean world.

It is best, I think to read 'totalite spatiotemporelle' as a slip, or else give it a much weaker construal, for example; 'the objective world which may be thought of as a spatiotemporal totality by an observer'. This construal is clearly consistent with the Parmenidean thesis Merleau-Ponty wishes to endorse.

The evidence that Merleau-Ponty advances in favour of the Parmenidean thesis is this;

'Change presupposes a certain position which I take up and from which I see things in procession before me: there are no events without someone to whom they happen and whose finite perspective is the basis of their individuality'. (PPT 411).

The kind of presupposition Merleau-Ponty has in mind here cannot possibly be logical entailment because the existence of change does not logically presuppose the perception of that change, nor a fortiori the perception of that change from anywhere.

Suppose change is this; x changes if and only if either x lacks a property, F , at t_1 and x has that property at t_2 , or, x has a property, F , at t_1 but x lacks that property at t_2 . In either case it logically follows that x has changed

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

between t_1 and t_2 and if x has not gained or lost any properties between t_1 and t_2 then x has not changed between t_1 and t_2 . If x changes between t_1 and t_2 it follows that an 'event' has happened between t_1 and t_2 because if anything happens an event happens and if something either gains or loses a property then something happens.

This analysis of change is logically consistent with motion being a kind of change. (Many of Merleau-Ponty's examples of changes are motions). Suppose motion is this; x is in motion if and only if at t_1 x is at some place (part of space) P_1 and at t_2 x is at some other place P_2 but x occupies, and never does not occupy, every place between P_1 and P_2 at every time between t_1 and t_2 .

It follows from this analysis of 'motion' that if x is in motion then x changes, because if x is not at P_2 at t_2 but is at P_2 at t_2 and not at P_1 at t_2 then x has gained and lost a property, and either of those is sufficient for change. If x is in motion then x changes places and if x changes places then x changes.

Now, Merleau-Ponty offers no analysis of 'change' and no analysis of 'motion'. Had he done so then he would have seen, perhaps, that the existence of both is logically independent of the existence of the observing subject.

Although from the existence of change the perception of change does not follow logically, it is clear that the existence of an observer follows analytically from the existence of the perception of change. At least, this follows logically with just one additional premise: if there is perception then there is an observer or perceiving subject. This premise is plausible. It is the phenomenological assumption that all perceiving is perceiving by some subject or other; a thesis Merleau-Ponty endorses, and which, perhaps, it does not make much sense to deny.

'Perception' is however ambiguous between 'what is perceived' and 'the perceiving of what is perceived'. Merleau-Ponty needs perception in the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

first of these two senses to be subject dependent, in order to prove his Parmenidean thesis. If that kind of perception could be shown to be subject dependent then Merleau-Ponty's Parmenidean thesis is proven, because; if what is perceived is subject dependent and if change is perceived then change is subject dependent. It follows that change is not subject independent and so not part of the objective world. It follows that the objective world is changeless, or Parmenidean.

However, although perception in the sense of 'the perception of what is perceived' is clearly subject dependent, it is much less clear that perception in the sense of 'what is perceived' is also subject dependent. The ambiguity here is between perceptual act and perceptual content. Perceptual acts are subject dependent because they are mental and, plausibly, being mental is sufficient for being subject dependent. However, being a perceptual content is logically consistent with being either subject dependent or subject independent. Although if C is some perceptual content then it logically follows that C is the object of some actual (or perhaps possible) perception it does not follow from that that C cannot or does not exist unperceived, or that when being perceived C would not exist if not perceived. Of course, qua perceptual content C is subject dependent but C's properties may well not be exhausted by those constituting or constituted by C's subject dependence. There is nothing to suggest that any content is essentially or necessarily subject dependent except in cases of self-perception.

Certainly the fact that something is perceived is not logically sufficient for the subject dependence of what is perceived. This is true even if events are perceptually 'cut out' (PPT 411) ('Decoupees' PP 470) by a subject.

Merleau-Ponty is right, however, to suggest that the event pairs that preoccupy us in the contemplation of causal relations are typically and paradigmatically event pairs that we have selected for scrutiny according to some tacit or explicit order of priorities governed by our pragmatic interests, or perceived pragmatic interests. This is an empirical claim that is by and large true.

Merleau-Ponty says 'time presupposes a view of time' (PPT 411) ('Le temps suppose? une vue sur le temps' PP 470) and concludes from this that 'It is,

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

therefore, not like a river, not a flowing substance' (PPT 411) ('Il n'est donc pas comme un ruisseau, il n'est pas une substance fluente' PP 470).

If we raise the question of how much of time is subject dependent then Merleau-Ponty's answer is; all of it. This is a logical consequence of his view that '(the very notion of) event has no place in the objective world' (PPT 411). Events are subjective, not objective. Time logically depends on events, or things that happen. In general, if x is subjective then what logically depends on x is also subjective because 'depends on' is a transitive relation; if A depends on B and if B depends on C then A depends on C. It follows that if events are subjective then the whole of time is subjective.

Although logically valid it is not clear that this argument is sound. This is because the first premise, 'events are subjective', may well be false.

What I shall try to do now however is advance an argument which shows that at least part of time is subject dependent.

A premise is extracted from this familiar thought;

'It is often said that, with things themselves, the future is not yet, the past is no longer, while the present, strictly speaking, is infinitesimal, so that time collapses'. (PPT 412).

Views like these are discussed by Hobbes, Bergson, McTaggart and, as Merleau-Ponty says, St. Augustine and Leibniz (PPT 412).

Now, suppose we endorse the thesis about the past and the future but reject the thesis about the present.

Then we have;

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

1.The past did exist but does not exist.

2.The future will exist but does not exist.

but

3.The present exists now so does exist.

Merleau-Ponty gives no analysis of 'past', 'present', and 'future' so I suggest these;

1.'Past' means 'before me' (or 'before now')

.

2.'Future' means 'after me' (or 'after now')

.

3.'Present' means 'when I am' (or 'now').

To see that this is what these words mean consider, that 'past; does not mean just 'before' and 'future' does not mean just 'after'. For example a pair of events ordered as before and after may occur in the past or the future.

Now, logically, if 'past' means 'before me' and 'future', 'after me' and 'present', 'when I am' then all of past, present and future are subject dependent. I do not mean to imply that there are no events without subjects that is Merleau-Ponty's view. But an event's being a past event, a present event, or a future event is a property that event has only in temporal relation to a subject. If an event happens when I am then it is present, if it

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

happens before when I am then it is past, if it happens when I am then it is future.

Merleau-Ponty does not see this because he assimilates too closely together the concepts of before and after and the concepts of past present and future. He fails to see that although 'before' and 'after' are needed to define 'past' and 'future', 'past' and 'future' are not needed to define 'before' and 'after' and a world of objective events could, and arguably does, exist without thereby being objectively (subject independently) ordered into past, present and future events.

If the argument I have advanced is sound then Merleau-Ponty's subjectivism about time is too extreme when he says

'Time is, therefore, not a real process, not an actual succession that I am content to record' (PP 412)

(*Le temps n'est donc pas un processus réel, une succession effective que je me noterai à enregistrer* Phen 471).?????????

I hold that change; including beginning and ending, is mainly objectively real, as is duration. The only components of time for which I can see sound arguments for holding to be subjective are past, present and future. Merleau-Ponty, however, advances no separate argument for their subjectivity. It is entailed by his view that all of time is subjective.

Merleau-Ponty says, about time; 'It arises from my relation to things' (PPT 412) (*Il naît de mon rapport avec les choses* PP 471). As with most varieties of neoKantian conceptual idealism, it is not clear what 'things; ('les choses') we can be related with. I should say the component of truth in Merleau-Ponty's subjectivism about time is that past, present and future do arise from our relations with 'things'. Those things, are however, events and the relations are temporal relations.

Merleau-Ponty says

'past, present and future exist only too unmistakably in the world, they exist in the present' (PPT 412).

Now, it is an interesting philosophical question how we may have the concepts of past and future if we are only ever acquainted with the present and if past and future are only present. However, past and future cannot possibly be present, so Merleau-Ponty is just wrong here. Of course an event that was future may become present and then past but this is not what Merleau-Ponty has in mind. He is thinking of one event being past, present and future nonconsecutively. But it is logically impossible for 'x was', 'x is' and 'x will be' to be true of an event nonconsecutively even though they may be true consecutively. Even though it may be true of an event at any time, that it was past, is present and will be future it cannot be true of any event at any time that it is all of past present and future. This is because past present and future are not only collectively exhaustive but mutually exclusive temporal categories.

THINGS

In this chapter I shall examine Merleau-Ponty's concept of a physical object. He is interested in the question of how it is possible for there to be physical objects for us, or, to put it another way, how it is possible for us to be perceptually presented with physical objects. Merleau-Ponty conceives of this question as part of the wider question 'comment il y a de l'objectif?' (PP 346) 'how can there be objectivity?' (PPT 300).

He says 'meme si elle ne peut etre definie par la, une chose a des <<characteres>> ou des <proprietes>> stables' (PP 345) 'a thing has "characteristics" or "properties" which are stable, even if they do not entirely serve to define it' (PPT 299). I shall not distinguish between characteristics and properties but stipulate that x has at least one property, F, if and only if at least one proposition is true of x (leaving aside 'x exists'). A property of x is 'stable' if and only if some proposition, P, is true of x over some relatively long time period (t1....t2); the limiting case of x possessing a 'stable'property, F, being when x possesses F during all and only (t1....t2)

and x exists during all and only $(t_1 \dots t_2)$. We could call this 'absolute' stability.

Merleau-Ponty talks of the possibility or impossibility of properties 'defining' objects. Merleau-Ponty often confuses use and mention but this can usually be cleared up without damage to his position. Here he needs a distinction between 'predicate' and 'property'. A property (as defined above) is not (or is not paradigmatically) a word but a predicate is a word or sequence of words that may be used to define a property. Because definitions are (analytic) propositions and propositions are expressed by sentences we may say that predicates may be used in definitions. It also confuses use and mention to talk of defining things but here we may avoid the difficulty by adopting the simple expedient of writing defining 'thing' or 'physical object'.

Construed this way, Merleau-Ponty may be understood as claiming something both coherent and true. He is claiming that some physical object, x , may possess some stable property, F , but from this it does not logically follow that ' F ' may be significantly employed in the definition of ' x '. This is right, because from the fact that x is F , and even that x is F whenever x is, it does not logically follow that x is essentially F because from these facts alone it cannot be established that it would be contradictory to assert that x is not F . So, it does not follow either that ' F ' should feature in the definition of ' x '. To put it another way, x may be contingently F even if x is F whenever x is.

In '*même si elle ne peut être définie par la...*' 'even if they do not entirely serve to define it...' above, Merleau-Ponty does not use any expression translatable as 'entirely'. Nevertheless, it is worth asking whether the opposite entailment holds. Although from ' x is always F ' it does not follow that ' x is essentially F ' and so does not follow either that ' F ' is part of the definition of ' x ', it does not follow from this that from the fact that x is essentially F or ' F ' features in the definition of ' x ' that F is not an absolutely stable property of x : that x is F whenever x is. Indeed, this reverse entailment does hold because it would be contradictory to affirm both that x is essentially F and that there is at least one time when x is but x is not F . If x is essentially F then it logically follows that x is always F when x is, or, what is logically equivalent; if ' F ' features in the definition of ' x ' then F is an absolutely stable property of x ; x is F whenever x is.

Merleau-Ponty says '*une chose a d'abord sa grandeur et sa forme propres sous les variations perspectives qui ne sont qu'apparentes*' (PP 345) 'a thing

has in the first place its size and its shape throughout variations of perspective which are merely apparent' (PP 299).

'D'abord' ('in the first place') can be read in different ways here. One fruitful reading is this: the truth of 'x has size' and 'x has shape' are each a necessary condition for 'x is a physical object'. It seems to me not true that the truth of 'x has shape' and 'x has size' are singularly, or even jointly, sufficient for the truth of 'x is a physical object'. Clearly, for example, pools of water, gases and shadows may have sizes and shapes yet none of these is a physical object.

What is needed here is a distinction between being physical in general and being a physical object in particular. The truth of 'x has shape' and 'x has size' are jointly sufficient for 'x is physical' but not for 'x is a physical object'. 'x has size' is not sufficient for 'x is physical' so a fortiori not sufficient for 'x is a physical object' unless 'size is physical' is made analytic. I see little good ground for doing this. Think for example of large or small numbers, or achievements.

'x has shape' is sufficient for 'x is physical' but not for 'x is a physical object' (think of holograms, reflections). Arguably 'x has shape' is not even sufficient for 'x is physical' if we allow that the contents of mental images may have shape. Clearly, however, it would be contradictory to maintain that x is a physical object and yet deny that x has shape or size. It follows from this that that x has some shape and some size is a necessary condition for being a physical object. Equally clearly it would not be contradictory to maintain that x has size and shape but is not a physical object. It follows from that that that x has shape and size is not a sufficient condition for x's being a physical object.

Another construal of 'd'abord' is this. Unless it were true that a physical object has some determinate shape and size it could not be true that 'variations' in the perception of it are possible. This is to make two properties of a physical object foundational in the sense that being F and being G is a necessary condition for x's possessing further properties. Now, if having shape and size are necessary conditions for being a physical object then Merleau-Ponty is right that having shape and size are necessary conditions for any physical object's being perceived in a perspectival way. This clearly follows because a prerequisite for the perception of a physical object (perspectival or otherwise) is the existence of that physical object and size and shape are in turn prerequisites for that existence of the physical object. If A is a necessary condition for B and if B is a necessary condition for C then

it logically follows that A is a necessary condition for C because of the transitivity of 'necessary condition.

It does not follow from the fact (which Merleau-Ponty accepts) that size and shape are stable (or absolutely stable) properties of a physical object that size and shape are necessary conditions for perspectival perceptions of that physical object. This is because from the bare fact that x is F, or x is both F and G between (t1....t2), and even if x exists always and only between (t1....t2), it does not logically follow that being F and G are prerequisites of any kind of perception of x, including perspectival perception. It is the additional fact that being F and being G are necessary for being x that makes this conclusion go through.

Another argument may be adduced here for the view that having a determinate shape and size are necessary conditions for being perceived in a perspectival way. Arguably, x could not be perceived at all unless x could, at least in principle, be perceived as having some shape and size and this is partly because perceiving that shape and size would not count as perceiving x unless it was the shape and size of x that was perceived. It is also partly because a physical object could only present the appearance of various shapes and sizes from numerically and qualitatively distinct viewpoints if there is some determinate shape and size that object is. This would rest on the assumption that it is only meaningful to talk of a 'real' size and shape if it is meaningful to talk of an 'apparent' size and shape. 'x is a physical object but x has only an apparent size and shape' would then be a putative proposition that makes no sense.

Perspectival Perception

Merleau-Ponty says

'Nous convenons de considerer comme vraies la grandeur que nous obtenons a distance de toucher ou la forme que prend l'objet quand il est dans un plan parallele au plan frontal' (PP 345)

'It is conventional to regard as true the size which the object has when within reach, or the shape which it assumes when it is in a plane parallel to the frontal elevation' (PPT 299)

but crucially adds:

'Elles ne sont pas plus vraies que d'autres' (PP 345)

'These are no truer than any other' (PPT 299)

Prima facie it appears that Merleau-Ponty has initially retained the requisite semantic contrast between 'real' or 'true' shape and size in his claim that it is 'conventional' to make this distinction. (He construes the distinction as epistemological and not semantic). However, the distinction is instantly jettisoned when he says that this shape and this size are no more 'true' than any other.

There is a sense in which this is right. If an object within reach is felt, or if an object is seen from the front, it is true that the way that the object appears is partly dependent upon facts about the subject and not wholly dependent upon facts about the object. Merleau-Ponty emphasises this when he says that both views are 'definies a l'aide de notre corps' (PP 345) 'evolved with the help of our body' (PPT 299). This is not just a reiteration of his thesis that being a bodily subject is a necessary condition for perceiving the physical world. It also suggests that the way an object feels depends partly on the size and shape of the subjects hand and perhaps the strenght of hir or her grip. The way an object appears visually 'from the front' depends partly upon facts about the location and orientation of the eyeballs and, more generally, on the neurobiology of the optical system. Seeing the object, so to speak, 'as it is' depends upon subjective facts just as much as seeing it only as it appears.

Clearly, then, perceiving an object from a point of view is logically consistent with that object thereby appearing as it is. More generally, an object appearing is consistent with that object appearing as it is. From 'x appears' we cannot validly derive 'x does not appear as it is'. Merleau-Ponty, however, attaches no more sense to 'as it is' than 'how it typically appears' or 'how we conventionally believe it to be'. Felt size and visual appearance from the front are both 'typical' (PPT 299) ('typique' PP 345) and

'Nous avons toujours le moyen de les reconnaitre, et elles nous fournissent ellesmemes un repere par rapport auquel nous pouvons enfin fixer les apparence fuyantes, les distinguer les unes des autres et en un mot construire une objectivite' (PP 345)

'We can always recognise them, and so they themselves provide us with a standard for fixing and distinguishing between fleeting appearances, for constituting objectivity, in short' (PPT 299)

Merleau-Ponty has no account of why we may 'always' recognise this size and this shape in the object. I suggest here that realism about physical objects provides an explanation; a realism that Merleau-Ponty eschews. It could be that the diamond shaped visual presentation of, say, a book seen from one of its corners is just how an oblong book would look seen from one of its corners. In general, if an object, *x*, presents an aspect in a way that is 'perspectival' in Merleau-Ponty's sense this is caused by its being the shape it is. Its presenting an aspect is how it looks from a perspective. We might, for example, expect circular discshaped objects to look elliptical as we rotate them an object that is not round will not present the same elliptical aspect as one that is round.

Merleau-Ponty emphasises that a physical object has 'sa grandeur et sa forme' (PP 345) 'its size and its shape' (PPT 299), and says this is true despite perspectival presentations of it. This is not just the proposition that a minimal realism about the shape and size of physical objects is held conventionally or prephenomenologically. It is also the claim that shape and size, as properties of a physical object, are properties of something. It is Merleau-Ponty's considered view that the properties of a physical object are not properties of a nonempirical substance but, rather like Ayer and the Logical Positivists, he holds that what makes a set of properties properties of a single physical object is their relation to one another; not any relation to a putative substratum. In particular, the properties of a physical object are properties of one another.

Nevertheless, there is a way of construing Merleau-Ponty's position here as a logical or analytic truth that is neutral vis a vis competing ontologies of physical objects. Suppose some subject, *A*, perceives some physical object, *x* and thereby perceives some properties of *x*, or, conversely, suppose *x* perceives some properties of *x* and thereby perceives *x*. On either account, a necessary condition of *A*'s perception of *x* is that the properties perceived by *A* be properties of *x*. 'If *A* perceives the properties of *x* then those properties belong to *x*' is analytic and holds whatever the ontological truth about the relations between a physical object and its properties.

Merleau-Ponty addresses a question which he regards as even more fundamental than the issues of whether a physical object has a real shape and

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

size and what the properties of a physical object are properties of. This is: how is it possible for the properties of a physical object to be presented in perception at all ? Partly acknowledging the essentially Kantian nature of his phenomenology he says 'Kant a raison de dire que la perception est, de soi, polarisee vers l'objet' (PP 3478) 'Kant is right in saying that perception is, by its nature, polarized towards the object' (PPT 301) but according to Merleau-Ponty, what cannot be explained by Kant is 'l'apparence comme apparence' PP 348) 'appearance as appearance' (PPT 301). Merleau-Ponty is right to suggest that both he and Kant endorse a version of the scholastic doctrine of the intentionality of perception. I leave aside whether Kant explains appearance qua appearance and turn to the possibility of there being physical objects for us.

The Supplement of Time

How is a phenomenology of time possible ? Merleau-Ponty argues that time may only be described phenomenologically if time constitutes itself, that is, if time makes itself be what it is. Also, a phenomenology of time would be impossible if time could per impossibile be understood from a nontemporal point of view:

'Le surgissement du temps serait incomprehensible comme creation d'un supplement de temps qui repousserait au passe toute la serie precedente. Cette passivite n'est pas concevable' (VI 237).

'The upsurge of time would be incomprehensible as the creation of a supplement of time that would push the whole preceding series back into the past. That passivity is not conceivable' (VIT 184).

Merleau-Ponty deploys the concept 'supplement' to dispell a pervasive and compelling view of how any philosophy of time is possible. In thinking of time as a whole one tacitly assumes one's own existence as an atemporal spectator of time, especially perhaps of the past, as though, so to speak, temporal events were arranged before one or perhaps behind one.

The supplement of time is the putatively nontemporal subject apprehending time. This is a 'supplement' to time in many senses. It is *prima facie* something extra added on to time: the putative possibility of the

nontemporal intelligibility of time from a nontemporal 'position'. The supplement has, however, paradoxical features. It is not just a supplement because if it were possible it would in a sense constitute time. Time would be its 'creation' (VIT 184) 'creation' (VI 237). To see this, consider that the image of the past as a sequence of events 'behind' one is just an image: a present creation of the subject one is. Clearly, however, if something makes what it supplements what it is then this cannot be just or straightforwardly a supplement.

The supplement has the further paradoxical feature of being putatively or *prima facie* nontemporal yet entailing a kind of temporality. It is seemingly nontemporal because it is or occupies a site that is outside time: putatively something to which temporal predicates do not truly apply. Yet, the supplement is active in the constitution and the intelligibility of time. The supplement, if it were possible, 'would push' (VIT 184) 'repousserait' (VI 237) the time series into the past. It follows that the supplement would be engaged in constitutive activities like those of a Husserlian transcendental ego and those are themselves temporal activities. The idea of nontemporal constitution by the supplement of time would is then paradoxical.

Merleau-Ponty takes it that these paradoxes in the concept of supplement cannot be overcome and so the whole model of time as viewed by an atemporal spectator has to be rejected. So too must the idea of of a spectator who is both temporal and atemporal.

In this Merleau-Ponty eliminates two metaphysical possibilities which should be preserved. Firstly, sense might be made of the nontemporal intelligibility of time by an observer who understood time, so to speak, all at once. Although what it understands takes time its understanding of that takes no time. Although temporal predicates truly apply to what the observer finds intelligible they do not truly apply either to the observer or its intelligibility. Secondly, although it is true that nothing can be globally both temporal and nontemporal there is no incoherence in supposing that something should be in some respects temporal and in other respects nontemporal: that some temporal predicates truly apply to it and some do not (for example, perhaps before and after apply to it but not past, present and future. That is not a contradictory supposition). Here, as so often, phenomenological description does not close the metaphysical possibilities it seems to.

Suppose however that Merleau-Ponty is right in his view that the paradoxes of the supplement show that any atemporal view of time is incoherent. He is then certainly right to draw the following inferences about

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

any such view: 'Le surgissement du temps serait incompréhensible' (VI 237) 'The upsurge of time would be incomprehensible' (VIT 184) and 'Cette passivité n'est pas concevable' (VI 237) 'That passivity is not conceivable' (VIT 184). This is not only because the incoherence of any thesis is a sufficient condition for its inconceivability or (vel) incomprehensibility but also because time being fixed in the gaze of the atemporal supplement is inconsistent with one of the essential properties of time: its 'flow' ('surgissement' VI 237).

Merleau-Ponty is suggesting that it is incoherent to hold that time both flows and is passive or static and he is probably right in this. If so he is right about the unintelligibility of the conjunction of these two ideas too.

Despite his critique of the supplement there is, ironically, nevertheless a sense in which time needs a supplement according to Merleau-Ponty:

'Par contre toute analyse du temps qui le survole est insuffisante' (VI 237).

'On the other hand every analysis of time that views it from above is insufficient' (VIT 184).

He means that any thesis according to which the whole of time may putatively be made intelligible by a nontemporal observer or from a nontemporal point of view is inadequate. However, the necessary supplement of time must be a temporal supplement of time: a supplement of time that is a 'supplement de temps' not just in the sense of a 'supplement of time' but also in the sense of a 'temporal supplement', a supplement of time to which temporal predicates apply:

'Il faut que le temps se constitue, soit toujours vu du point de vue de quelqu'un qui en est' (VI 237).

'Time must constitute itself be always seen from the point of view of someone who is of it' (VIT 184).

Merleau-Ponty's strategy, then, is to endorse one part of the constitutive spectator view of the phenomenology of time, but to temporalise it. The constitution of time is a temporal process.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

However, Merleau-Ponty still worries that the temporalisation of the subject and the subject's constituting activity may not escape the incoherence of the idea of a supplement of time:

'Mais cela parait contradictoire, et ramenerait a l'un des deux termes de l'alternative precedente' (VI 238).

'But this seems to be contradictory, and would lead back to one of the two terms of the preceding alternative' (VIT 184).

The two terms of the preceding alternative are these: Either there is a spectator of time who is not temporal or there is a temporal spectator who is not a spectator of time but not both. There was no method of reconciling these two theses on the nontemporal supplement of time thesis. Merleau-Ponty needs to find a way of reconciling them on his temporal supplement of time thesis. His solution is this:

'La contradiction n'est levee que si le nouveau present est luimeme un transcendant' (VI 238).

'The contradiction is lifted only if the new present is itself a transcendent' (VIT 184).

SEXUALITY

Merleau-Ponty's philosophical motivation in devising a phenomenology of sexuality is to prove his thesis that *beingintheworld* is the primordial fact of human existence. He hopes to show that over cognitive conceptions of the human person are damagingly reductionist, and parasitical upon the truth of his own phenomenology for their formulation. For there records he says: 'let us try to see how a thing or a being begins to exist for us through desire or love and we shall thereby come to understand better how things and beings can exist in general' (PP 154).

According to Merleau-Ponty the existence of sexual desire presupposes some central tenets of his phenomenology. Notably, sexual desire would be impossible without intentionality, the body subject and the *beingintheworld*

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

of that subject. Now, the nature of this presupposition is not made clear by Merleau-Ponty, but argument may be provided for the existence of the presupposition. Suppose A desires B sexually, then A stands in an intentional relation to B because it would be incoherent to suppose that A desires B sexually but has no awareness of B. If awareness is an intentional relation, then, so is sexual desire. Arguably, too, A may only sexually desire B if A and B are physical and if at least A is a physical subject. This is because the criteria for the individuation of the object of sexual desire are unclear if that object is not physical, or, minimally spatiotemporal. Also, if the having of sexual desire presupposes the actually or the possibility of bodily sexual sensations then sexual desire presupposes bodily subjectivity. Only physical subjects may feel sexual desire. Also, arguably, sexual desire, presupposes being-in-the-world in Merleau-Ponty's sense, or something very much like it, because if A desires B sexually then A and B share a world and there exists at least the conceivability of sexual relations within it.

Merleau-Ponty thinks that once we are persuaded of these presuppositions we will give up any over cognitive conception of sexuality and will endorse this view;

'Erotic perception is not a cogitatio which aims at a cogitatum : through one body it aims at another body, and takes place in the world, not in a consciousness' (PP 157).

The perception of the other as an object of sexual desire is not simply the relation of a known to a known. The relationship is not only intellectual but involves the whole person or is a 'perception' in Merleau-Ponty's broad sense. The subject desires the other with his or her own body. This is not just the fact that desiring another sexually entails desiring bodily sexual relations with the other. It is that, but it is also the claim that the body subject is the subject of desire: I use my body to desire the other, or, better, qua my body I desire the other. For this reason sexual desire 'takes place in the world' ('Elle se fait dans le monde' Phen 183) and 'not in consciousness' ('Non pas dans une conscience' Phen 183). Erotic perception ('La perception erotique' Phen 183) entails sexual desire, so if sexual desire presupposes bodily subjectivity and being-in-the-world then so

does erotic perception. I take it that A perceives B erotically if and only if A perceives B but thereby desires to have sexual relations with B. The desire to have sex with the other is, so to speak, 'read into'. The other as object of perception. The perception and the sexual thought are not separate. Better, the perception is a sexual perception:

'This objective perception has within it a more intimate perception: the visible body is subtended by a sexual schema, which is strictly individual, emphasising the erogenous areas, outlining a sexual physiognomy' (PP 156).

Merleau-Ponty calls this perception an 'emotional totality' (PP 156) ('Totalite affective' Phen 182). When he says the body of the other is subsumed under a 'sexual schema' ('Soustendu par un schema sexuel' Phen 182) this implies that sexual perception is partly the selective perception of the sexual zones of the other. It is not just this, it is also the perception of the whole person or, more accurately, the perception of the other as a whole person. However, it is a perception that emphasises the bodily sexuality of the other.

Merleau-Ponty also says sexual perception is 'strictly individual' ('Strictement individuel' Phen 182). This should not be taken to mean that the sexual perception of one object of desire logically or otherwise precludes the perception of another. Rather, Merleau-Ponty is saying that the sexual perception of an individual is partly sexual desire for that individual qua that individual.

Because sexual perception exhibits these phenomenological structures 'a body is not perceived merely as any object' (PP 156) ('Un corps n'est pas seulement percu comme un objet quelconque' Phen 182). Rather, the other is perceived as a physical subject. The perceived body of the other is the exteriority of the other's subjectivity.

Merleau-Ponty claims that erotic perception is prior to what he calls 'understanding' (PP 157) under 'comprehension' (PP 157) ('Comprehension' Phen 183). 'Understanding', as Merleau-Ponty defines it, denotes the subsumption of some experience (or, more precisely, some experiential content) under an idea. 'Comprehension', in contrast, is not

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

mediated by ideas and is therefore not intellectual. The thesis that sexual perception is not a kind of understanding, but understanding, in sexual contexts, presupposes comprehension is intended as a substantiation of his general thesis that the engagement of the body subject in the world is a condition for perception as a kind of consciousness. As he puts it:

'There is an erotic 'comprehension' not of the order of understanding, since understanding subsumes an experience, once perceived, under some idea, while desire comprehends blindly by linking body to body' (PP 157).

Merleau-Ponty is not denying that a certain amount of imaginative projection is required to constitute the other as an object of sexual desire. I take it that is part of what is involved in sexual perception not taking its intentional object as just 'any object'. But intellectual reflexion upon the object of desire, and one's relation to that object, requires 'erotic comprehension'. This is why he says 'sexual life is one more form of original intentionality' (PP 157) ('Une intentionalite originale' Phen 184). Some intentional relation is an original relation if it makes other intentional relations possible. Original intentionality is an 'intentional arc' ('Arc intentionel' Phen 184) which makes possible perceptual representations.

Sexuality, then, for Merleau-Ponty is a manner of being in the world. It is a primordial existential relation and only derivatively a cognitive or intellectual one. This thesis gives rise to two questions, the answers to which Merleau-Ponty thinks form a disjunction:

'When we generalise the notion of sexuality, making it a manner of being in the physical and interhuman world, do we mean, in the last analysis, that all existence has a sexual significance of that every sexual phenomenon has an existential significance?' (PP 159).

It seems to me that affirmative answers to both questions are not mutually exclusive. Merleau-Ponty denies outright that all existence has a sexual meaning. His ground is that such a claim would be senseless, the term 'sexuality' would just be another name for existence. He says 'there is now

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

no sense in saying that all existence is understood through the sexual life'. This would be a 'tautology', and, he assumes, tautologies are senseless. I think Merleau-Ponty is not right to hold that the claim that all existence has sexual significance is a tautology. It is a claim genuinely capable of truth or falsity, which if true, would give new information about existence. Merleau-Ponty fails to see this because he fails to make a distinction between sense and reference. Because (as he rightly holds) 'existence' and 'sexuality' would have a single referent he falsely concludes that 'existence' and 'sexuality' would have the same sense. That however is invalid. Merleau-Ponty, however, should not be charged with mistakingly concluding that 'all existence is sexual' is false on the ground that the sentence is senseless. That would be a mistake but he need not be construed as making it. We can just construe him as saying that it is not true that all existence is sexual on the grounds that the sentence is senseless. That is right because nonsensical sentences are neither true nor false and if they are neither true nor false then they are not true.

Because the claim that all existence is sexual is not meaningless Merleau-Ponty should have evaluated its truth value more closely. It seems to me a more cautious claim may in fact be true: any portion of existence may (in principle) be of sexual significance. This is because there is no a priori obstacle to any portion of existence being the object of sexual desire. The meaningfulness of this thought, is however, parasitic upon the idea of sexual relations between living beings.

Merleau-Ponty next examines the converse possibility that every sexual phenomenon may have an existential significance. Strangely, he does not attempt to deploy the same kind of 'tautology' argument even though, on his own terms, if 'existence is sexual' is tautologous then so is 'sexuality is existential'. Ironically this is to his advantage as neither sentence is a tautology.

In this context something has 'existential significance' if it is a structure of being in the world. Essentially that is what sexuality is for Merleau-Ponty so, essentially, sexuality does have existential significance. In a passage marking the extent of his agreement with what he takes to be Freudianism he says:

'In so far as a man's sexual history provides a key to his life, it is because in his sexuality is projected his manner of being towards the world, that is, towards time and other men' (PP 158).

Notice that Merleau-Ponty's unconscious sexism in this passage not only excludes women from his analysis but also makes male homosexual relations existentially primordial. (The sexism is in the original French: 'l'homme', 'des autres hommes' Phen 185). Leaving aside the ironic possibility of an unconsciously expressed thesis that might have appealed to both Socrates and Michel Foucault we can read Merleau-Ponty's intended answer as affirmative. All sexuality has existential significance.

In fact, the relationships between sexuality and existence (in his sense of the fundamental structures of beingintheworld) is close and subtle for Merleau-Ponty. He says 'It is at all times present there like an atmosphere' (PP 168) ('Elle y est constamment presente comme une atmosphere' Phen 196), and 'as an ambiguous atmosphere, sexuality is coextensive with life' (PP 169) ('Comme atmosphere ambiguë, la sexualité est coextensive à la vie' Phen 197).

Lived sexuality may be accurately described only in metaphorical and poetic terms, that is why sexuality is an 'atmosphere'. The thought is, so to speak, that sexuality pervades human relations. It informs speech, perception and bodily movement in a way that is present in them. Sexuality is not an addition to human life but a primordial structure of beingintheworld that is expressed through human life. As he puts it 'existence permeates sexuality and vice versa' PP 169). ('Si l'existence diffuse dans la sexualité, réciproquement la sexualité diffuse dans l'existence' Phen 197).

When he calls sexuality an 'ambiguous atmosphere' he means sexuality is open to numerous interpretation. As we have seen, it is a recurrent Leitmotif of Merleau-Ponty's thought that anything can be interpreted. Nothing has only one, perennial meaning. This ambiguity, or amenability to multiple interpretation, is part of what is involved in being human. For this reason he says ambiguity is of the essence of human existence, and everything we live or think has always several 'meanings' (PP 169). He

holds this true in different ways. Human beings are essentially interpretative beings and human beings and their mutual relations are essentially open to human interpretation.

Merleau-Ponty also argues that sexuality cannot be wholly or appropriately explained in behaviourist and scientific terms. He of course does not deny the biological facts about sexual life, what he denies is that the phenomenology of sex may be captured in any purely scientific description.

The natural sciences treat their subject matter as only 'other'. What escapes analysis is the subjectivity of the subject, the subjectivity of the other, and the lived existential relations between them. For example he says 'modesty, desire and love .. are incomprehensible if man is treated as a machine governed by natural laws' (PP 166). It is also inadequate to regard a person as 'a bundle of instincts' (PP 166).

There is a number of claims here that need separating out. The idea that a person is a machine implies that a person is both physical and objective and also has no subjectivity. The idea that a person is governed by natural laws implies that a person is causally determined in his or her own actions. The claim that a person is, or essentially is, a set of instincts also implies that but further entails that the determining causes are biological and innate.

Merleau-Ponty argues that, on the contrary, sexuality may only be understood when a person is regarded as 'a consciousness and a freedom' (PP 166) ('Conscience et ... liberte' Phen 194). It might prima facie appear that there are conditions only for human sexuality; the kind of selfconscious sexuality we in fact have. We should remember however that for Merleau-Ponty freedom and self consciousness are necessary for the constitution of the empirical world and because sexuality as characterised is part of the empirical world it follows that that two presupposed freedom and consciousness.

It is clearly also Merleau-Ponty's thesis that the phenomenology of sex what it is like to experience sexual desire and other sexual relations cannot be captured in only a scientific description. A reasonably precise reason for this may be adduced in Merleau-Ponty's favour. The sentences of science treats its subject matter only as 'other'. Describing human sexuality,

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

however, requires the use of firstperson sentence; in particular sentences making first person singular and first person plural psychological ascriptions. This captures Merleau-Ponty's insight that sex has a phenomenology. Now, as a matter of logic, no first person sentence or set of first person sentences may be logically derived from any set of thirdperson sentences (no matter how numerous, lengthy, and semantically complex). It follows from that that Merleau-Ponty is correct to maintain that there can be no complete natural scientific description of sexuality.

Merleau-Ponty thinks that the reduction of the human person to a scientific object is dehumanising and unethical. What makes us most fully a distinctively human is just what science cannot explain about us. There is another way, however, in which persons may be treated only as objects. Merleau-Ponty, like Sartre, endorses a neoHegelian view of human sexual relations. He speaks of 'a dialectic of the self and the other which is that of master and slave' (PP 167) ('Une dialectique du moi et d'autrui qui est celle du maître et de l'esclave' Phen 194). In the 'master and slave' chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel describes the struggle for mutual recognition between two putative self-consciousness in which each seeks the servitude of the other, but each ultimately accepts the self-defeating nature of victory. In applying this antagonistic structure to human sexual relations Merleau-Ponty says:

'In so far as I have a body, I may be reduced to the status of an object beneath the gaze of another person, and no longer count as a person for him, or else I may become his master and, in my turn, look at him' (PP 167).

This is straight Hegelianism but Hegelianism with the bodily subject. Nothing (in my view) precludes Merleau-Ponty giving the central chapter of *Genel's Phenomenology* that context: Hegel's writing there is deliberately abstract so as to be consistent with many contents (or models). By using 'in so far as' ('En tant que' Phen 194), however, Merleau-Ponty is suggesting that physical subjectivity is a necessary condition for the existence of master and slave power relations (and a fortiori master and slave sexual relations) This thought may be right. This is because Master and Slave may arguably be individuated if they are physical, and that master and slave individuate each other is a necessary condition for the power struggle

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

between them. I am thinking of the possibility that only spatiotemporal (or perhaps only spatial) items may be individuated and then only through spatial properties. If that is right then Hegel's master and slave dialectic conceptually presupposes Merleau-Ponty's notion of the body subject, or something very much like it.

Finally, it should be noted that Merleau-Ponty's view of sexual relations is ultimately optimistic and Hegelian rather than ultimately pessimistic and Sartrean. Like Hegel Merleau-Ponty says

'This mastery is self-defeating, since, precisely when my value is recognised through the other's desire, he is no longer the person by whom I wished to be recognised' (PP 167).

If Hegel and Merleau-Ponty are right then we may look forward to a time when sexual relations are no longer power struggles and persons do not regard each other only as means to their sexual ends.

OTHER MINDS

The problem of other minds is the problem of whether, and if so, what, other people think. Sometimes it is presented in a rather different form. It is assumed we know that and what other persons think and the question then becomes how we know that (given, that we do know that).

Problems that are closely logically related are the questions of whether inanimate machines, notably computers, can or could think and the question of the extent to which we may successfully reconstruct say historically the mentality and life style of a culture that is not our own. I mention these further problems because they show that something like a version of the problem of other minds is faced by intellectual disciplines outside the mainstream of metaphysics and epistemology in these cases Artificial Intelligence and History respectively.

The Epistemology of Self and Other

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Merleau-Ponty correctly sees that if the problem of other minds cannot be solved then solipsism is difficult to refute. Solipsism is an extreme version of idealism. Idealism is the doctrine that only minds (and their contents) exist. Solipism is the doctrine that only my mind (and its contents) exists.

Merleau-Ponty formulates the problem of other minds in a traditional and uncontroversial way:

'This is precisely the question: how can the word "I" be put into the plural, how can a general idea of the I be formed, how can I speak if an I other than my own, how can I know that there are other I's ? (PPT 348).

Merleau-Ponty tackles the problem first by suggesting there are respects in which I am not certain of the nature of my own existence and then proceeds to argue that we may be more certain than we believe of the nature of someone else's existence. There is a sound methodological reason for this procedure.

The problem of other minds is frequently presented through this stark contrast: I am certain beyond any possible doubt that my own mind exists and I am certain beyond any possible doubt what I am thinking when I am thinking. In the case of any other mind, or putative mind, exactly the opposite is true. I can have no certainty that other people have minds and, if they do, I can have no certainty what they think.

Merleau-Ponty's strategy is to undermine the contrast from both sides to say one is both more certain of the existence and nature of other people's minds than one may suppose and less certain of the existence and nature of one's own mind than one may suppose.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

He points out that past states of one's own mind may be as epistemologically inaccessible to one as states of another person's mind. In particular

'Je ne peux jamais être sûr de comprendre mon passé mieux qu'il vécu se comprenait lui même quand je l'ai vécu' (PP 398).

'I can never be sure of reaching a fuller understanding of my past than it had of itself at the time I lived through it' (PPT 346).

and this is so even if Merleau-Ponty tries to imaginatively reconstruct the phenomenology of his childhood in the present, even if 'I take myself back to those years as I actually lived them' (PPT 346) ('Si je me reporte à ces années, telles que je les ai vécues' PP 398).

I take it Merleau-Ponty is saying that our knowledge of the existence and nature of minds may admit of degree, so scepticism about minds may therefore also admit of degree. Even where the object of knowledge is one's own mind 'my hold on the past and the future is precarious' (PPT 346) ('Mes prises sur le passé et sur l'avenir sont glissantes' PP 399).

The problem of other minds may be given a construal that is more or less empiricist and a construal that is more or less rationalist.

Empirically, the problem is that one has no experience of any mind other than one's own. Empiricism is the doctrine that all knowledge is acquired through experience, so if there is no knowledge of other minds by experience it follows on empiricism that we have no knowledge of other minds.

The rationalist construal is this: from the fact that one has knowledge of (the existence and nature of) one's own mind it does not logically follow that any other mind exists, or that such a putative mind has a particular content. To put it more bluntly, the existence and nature of other minds does not follow logically from the existence and nature of one's own mind. Given that, any putative inference from one's own mind to other minds may at best be inductive. (Notice that as an inductive inference it is very weak.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Strong inductive inferences are many one inferences, but this is a one many inference).

It follows that there can be no rationalist proof of the existence and nature of other minds.

Merleau-Ponty always tries to avoid the stark alternatives; empiricism or rationalism. It is an important alleged feature of being in the world that it is existentially primordial and so prior to the empiricist/rationalist distinction. Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty's claim about his past mental states may be given a rationalist or an empiricist construal.

The empiricist construal is this: He has no present experience of his earlier mental states and if only the present content of experience may with certainty be known to exist then it logically follows that he cannot know with certainty that his past mental state existed.

Construed rationalistically, the claim is that from the existence and nature of his present mental states nothing logically follows about the existence and nature of his past mental states.

I see no reason to doubt that there are coherent formulations of epistemological scepticism about one's past mental states, despite Merleau-Ponty's attempts to undermine the rationalist/empiricist distinction.

The Defferal of SelfPresence

Interestingly, and more controversially, Merleau-Ponty seeks to demonstrate that one's knowledge of the content of one's present experience is not indubitable. Merleau-Ponty argues that there is no such thing as absolute selfpresence:

'The transcendence of the instants of time is both the ground of, and the impediment to, the rationality of my personal history: the ground because it opens a totally

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

new future to me in which I shall be able to reflect upon the element of opacity in my present, a source of danger in so far as I shall never manage to seize the present through which I live with apodeictic certainty, and since the lived is thus never entirely comprehensible, what I understand never quite tallies with my living experience, in short, I am never quite at one with myself' (PPT 347).

Here Merleau-Ponty deconstructs time, selfpresence, and the empiricismrationalism distinction. By 'deconstructs' here (not a term Merleau-Ponty uses) I mean A deconstructs x if and only if A both shows the possibility of x, and it is a critique of x (for example in the sense of exhibiting the difficulties in distinguishing x from nonx, or in showing the putative definition of 'x' to be incoherent).

It follows that deconstruction is an essentially Kantian enterprise and in this respect Merleau-Ponty, like Derrida after him, does not escape the fundamentally Kantian assumptions of modern philosophy.

For example Merleau-Ponty characterises 'the transcendence of the instants of time' (PPT 347) ('La transcendence des moments du temps' (PP 39899) in two ways. He says, this is both 'the ground of' (PPT 347) ('Fonde' PP 399) and 'the impediment to' (PPT 347) ('comproment' PP 399) 'the rationality of my personal history' (PPT 347) 'La rationalite de mon histoire' (PP 399).

The two components of deconstruction as I have defined it are both present.

If x grounds y then x makes y possible or, to put it another way, x grounds y if and only if if not x then not y, or, x is a necessary condition for y and (which is logically entailed by this) if y then x (or, x is sufficient for y).

Also, if x is an impediment to y then either x exhibits the incoherence of the definition of 'y' or x exhibits the difficulties in drawing a ynony distinction that is, in individuatingl y, or both.

On this analysis, Merleau-Ponty's deconstruction is not an incoherent concept because there is no contradiction in the supposition that one and the same value for 'x' here the transcendence of the instants of time both

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

makes y (here selfdescription) possible and is invoked in a critique of a precise formulation of which y (here such selfdescription), consists in.

There are two senses in which the instants of time are 'transcended'. Merleau-Ponty thinks he has an explanation of how it is possible for there to be instants of time for oneself, and an explanation of why one's understanding of an instant of time may never be complete.

I interpret the content of my own experience and this is facilitated by my conceptually dividing it into discrete temporal units. Merleau-Ponty does not have an argument for this. However, suppose my awareness of my own mental content is an awareness of a set of thoughts or experiences (or both). Then, thought T_1 is either wholly simultaneous with thought T_2 or T_1 wholly predates T_2 or T_2 wholly predates T_1 or T_1 and T_2 are only partly simultaneous. If T_1 and T_2 are only partly simultaneous then either T_1 partly predates T_2 or T_2 partly predates T_1 . In any of these cases it is logically presupposed (entailed) that if T_1 and T_2 stand in some temporal relation then there exist numerically distinct times. Of course, in the one case where T_1 and T_2 are wholly simultaneous then T_1 happens at all and only the time T_2 happens and so that entails only that there exists one time. However, in every other case it follows that there exists some number of times greater than one on the plausible assumption that we may individuate times through thoughts that occur at them in this context. This is plausible because it is an application of the more general principle that times are to be individuated through what happens at them: at least when at least two nonsimultaneous events occur that is a sufficient condition for the existence of at least two times.

Taking these facts as premises we may logically derive a one-to-one mapping of nonsimultaneous events onto times such that for every thought $T_1 \dots T_n$ there exists a time $t_1 \dots t_n$. Given this, Merleau-Ponty is right in so far as the awareness of one's own mental states presupposes the existence of numerically distinct times, or 'instants of time' (PPT 347) ('moments du temps' PP 399). (Notice that the English translation, but not the original French carries the connotation of a durationless time past).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

What does not logically follow is that when I am aware of my own mental states I am aware of the times at which they happen if this entails that I am aware that they happen at those times. If I am aware of $T_1 \dots T_n$, and I am aware of $t_1 \dots t_n$ in the minimal and truncated sense that I am aware of temporal events, events at times that I am aware of.

Nothing stronger follows however about my awareness of time here. It does not even follow that I am aware of those mental events as temporal events if this implies that I think of them as temporal events. This is not implied by my being aware of events that are in fact temporal (nor is it implied by the fact, if it is a fact, that my awareness of those temporal events is itself temporal).

However, if I am aware of my mental events as temporal events then this does presuppose that I judge them to be temporal events. This is, however, quite neutral as to whether they are idealistically constructed as temporal or whether they are, so to speak, passively judged to be temporal.

Any such understanding of the temporality of one's own mental states can, however, never be complete, or can never be quite accurate. Merleau-Ponty deploys the concept 'postponement' (PPT 346) ('Differee' PP 398) to undermine the idea that I may be fully present to myself in selfunderstanding:

'La possession par moi de mon temps est toujours differee jusqu'au moment ou je me comprendrais entierement, et ce moment la ne peut pas arriver' (PP 398)

'My possession of my own time is always postponed until a stage when I may fully understand it, yet this stage can never be reached' (PPT 346).

'Differee' is open to several translations, including 'differed', 'deffered' and 'postponed'. On these readings, which are complimentary not mutually

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

exclusive, Merleau-Ponty is saying variously that selfunderstanding can never quite achieve the complete selfpresence that that concept seems to require, that such selfpresence is perpetually deffered or perpetually postponed.

The postponement or defferal must be perpetual because the moment of full selfunderstanding 'can never be reached' (PPT 346). The translation's 'never' has no linguistic equivalent in the French text. However, this is not a philosophically illegitimate insertion as Merleau-Ponty's 'ce moment la ne peut pas arriver' (PP 398) logically entails that that moment can never be reached, on the plausible assumption that if some event cannot happen it will not ever happen.

Notice too, in the French, that Merleau-Ponty is claiming that he will not entirely understand himself (me) and not his own time 'it' as the translation has it (even though the two impossibilities are mutually dependent).

We need to know now the the sense in which the transcendence of the instants of time is an impediment to one's self understanding. What Merleau-Ponty is ruling out is the possibility that one be in a mental state (call it 'MS' which is an awareness of one of one's mental states (one of T1 ... Tn) such that Ms exists all and only during one of T1 ... Tn, and such that the nature of that member of T1 .. Tn is wholly grasped in its apprehension by MS.

Now, this seems to me not a contradictory supposition but Merleau-Ponty is probably nevertheless right that this does not happen. It may be, as Ryle thinks, it is simply not the case that a subject is in two numerically distinct yet wholly simultaneous mental states, one of which is the awareness of the other. Merleau-Ponty certainly sees no phenomenological grounds for postulating a double mental life one life of mental states and another which is the awareness of these.

Ironically and paradoxically it is in the nature of the present never to be fully present. This is why 'I never manage to seize the present through which I live' (PPT 347) ('Je ne pourrais? jamais saisir le present que je vis' PP 399). ('I could never seize the present that I live' would be a better translation'). In so far as my present is intrinsic to what I am it follows that my own certainty of my own nature is undermined.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In particular, Merleau-Ponty says I cannot grasp my lived present 'with apodeictic certainty', (PPT 347) ('Avec une certitude apodictique' PP 399). I take it some proposition, P, is apodeictic if and only if P is necessary. Here the putative value of P is some first person singular psychological ascription. Merleau-Ponty's claim is then logically equivalent to the claim that no first person singular psychological ascription is a necessary truth. Whether this is right or not is a complex and piecemeal matter to decide. It may be, for example, that 'I am thinking' may be formulated just on condition that it is true but then much rests on just what is formulated. If, for example, it is a thought that is thus formulated then the inference clearly goes through.

Not only is P not necessary on Merleau-Ponty's view if P is a first person singular psychological ascription, but P is not certain either. It follows that one has no certainty of the existence and nature of one's own mind.

In a striking reversal of a fundamental Cartesian tenet, Merleau-Ponty says 'I am never quite at one with myself: (PPT 347) 'Je ne suis? jamais un avec moimeme' (PP 399). This could be interpreted in many ways but two are these: my consciousness of myself is never numerically identical with myself as the object of that consciousness, and, when I am conscious of myself I either ascribe some property to myself that I lack or I fail to ascribe some property to myself that I possess (even where self ascriptions are partly accurate; say possess the minimal accuracy to make them still count as firstperson singular psychological ascriptions).

On either reading it remains true for Merleau-Ponty that my judgements about my own mental stages lack 'certainty' (PPT 347) ('Certitude' PP 399). If P is not certain if and only if P is dubitable and if P is dubitable if and only if it is psychologically possible to disbelieve P, then Merleau-Ponty is committed to the view that it is psychologically possible to disbelieve one's own firstperson singular psychological ascriptions.

In this sense one side of the problem of other minds is undermined. It is not true that one is certain of the existence and nature of one's own mind but uncertain of the existence and nature of other minds because one is not certain of the existence and nature of one's own mind. This in turn is because of Merleau-Ponty's critique of 'selfpresence.

The Trace and the Presentation of Absence

In a parallel way, I am more certain of the existence and nature of other people's minds than the philosophical sceptic would have us believe. Crucial to understanding Merleau-Ponty's strategy here is the concept of the 'trace'.

Merleau-Ponty says:

'When I turn towards perception, and pass from direct perception to thinking about that perception, I reenact it, and find at work in my organs of perception a thinking older than myself of which those organs are merely the trace. In the same way I understand the existence of other people. Here again I have only the trace of a consciousness which evades me in its actuality' (PPT 3512).

The idea of the 'trace' here is designed to show up the shortcomings of a simple and clean distinction between the physical exterior and psychological interior of another person. The trace bridges the gap between interior and exterior, mental and physical.

It is because he rejects this distinction, or does not start by assuming it, that Merleau-Ponty rules out the possibility that one infers the existence and nature of other minds, either from the existence and nature of one's own mind or from facts about the physical exterior of the other. As he puts it

'Il n'y a rien là comme un raisonnement par analogie' (PP 404)

'There is nothing here resembling "reasoning by analogy" (PPT 353)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

The trace of the other consciousness is partly what impedes the actuality of the other's consciousness for me and for the other. That is why Merleau-Ponty says

'Je n'ai que la trace d'une conscience qui m'echasse? dans son actualite'
(Phen 404).

It follows that consciousness is not only not fully selfpresent but also not fully present to the consciousness of another.

The central phenomenological ground for the rejection of the clear mental interior/physical exterior distinction is the postulation of the body subject. Crucially, 'the body of another, like my own, is not inhabited' (PPT 349) ('Le corps d'autrui, comme mon propre corps, n'est pas habite' PP 401).

This is not just a repudiation of Cartesian mind body dualism (though it is that) it is also the thesis that there is nothing mental that, so to speak, occupies the body. It is not as though finding out that and what other people think could take the form of making discoveries about a mind that is hidden inside a body, or hidden 'behind' the physical exterior of a body. On the contrary, the body is a physical subject, that is, a psycho physical whole that cannot be reduced to the mechanical object of materialist and behaviourist psychology, yet which does not resist this reduction through being 'occupied' by a Cartesian consciousness.

Merleau-Ponty modestly says 'what we have said about the body provides the beginning of a solution to this problem' (PPT 349) ('A ce probleme, ce que nous avons dit sur le corps apporte un commencement de solution' PP 401). I think the problem of other minds is still unsolved but one promising strategy is to reject, as Merleau-Ponty has done, the clean distinction between the obvious physical exterior of the other and the inscrutable mental interior. Because of this it is worth exploring further Merleau-Ponty's remarks on the body.

He says:

'At the same time as the body withdraws from the objective world, and forms between the pure subject and the object a third genus of being, the subject loses its purity and its transparency' (PPT 350).

The pure subject ('Le pur sujet' PP 402) is the putative Cartesian consciousness; that which is always subject but never object, always mental but never physical. This is here contrasted with the Cartesian object ('L'objet' PP 402) which is always objective and never subjective and always physical and never mental.

Merleau-Ponty postulates the body-subject as both subjective and objective, both physical, and mental. The reason why 'the subject loses its purity' (PPT 350) ('Le sujet perd sa pureté' PP 402) is that the subject is also an object, but not in the reductionist sense of materialism or behaviourism. The subject is not (incoherently) just an object. The body subject is a psychophysical whole that is also an object.

Similarly, 'the body withdraws from the objective world' (PPT 350) ('Le corps se retire du monde objectif' PP 402) in the sense that the body subject cannot be adequately characterised by any set of thirdperson singular physical ascriptions, no matter how large or complete. Again, this is not because the body subject is inhibited by an extra being, a Cartesian mind or consciousness. It is because the body is not only an object but also a subject. It is not (incoherently) just a subject but, again, the body-subject is a psychophysical whole.

It is sometimes pointed out I have in mind Mary Warnock for example that there are interesting parallels between Merleau-Ponty and Gilbert Ryle

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

on what people are. I think this is right. Both are concerned to repudiate mindbody dualism in a way that both does not commit them to reductionist materialism and does justice to the reality of our mental lives. I should say, however, that in the last resort Ryle is a Logical Behaviourist he thinks our psychological vocabulary takes on meaning through reference to overt and covert (occurrent and dispositional) bodily behaviour.

Merleau-Ponty rejects this and the contrast can be pointed out in this way: Logical Behaviourism is the reduction of the subjective to the objective but phenomenology is the reduction of the objective to the subjective. Ryle and Merleau-Ponty would doubtless resist this stark contrast but I think it is true nonetheless.

Logical Behaviourism is, essentially, the doctrine that any sentence or set of sentences about minds (or mental states) may be translated without loss of meaning into a sentence or set of sentence about overt or covert bodily behaviour. Phenomenology (say, for the purposes of Husserl's transcendental reduction) is the doctrine that any sentence or set of sentence about physical objects (or events) may be translated without loss of meaning into a sentence or set of sentence about intentional states and their contents. It is an interesting philosophical question whether, formulated these ways, Logical Behaviourism and phenomenology are mutually inconsistent doctrines or, pace their practitioners, logically equivalent. This latter thought is prompted by the question: what is translated in each case? Ryle would resist my formulation because he does not wish to be taken as denying well known facts about our mental lives. Merleau-Ponty would resist it because the body is both subject and object subject of its own perceptions and object of the perceptions of others (and, to an extent, the object of its own perceptions too).

Merleau-Ponty says the body forms 'a third genus of being' (PPT 350) ('Un troisieme genre d'etre PP 402) that is, a type that is both subject and object and neither only subject nor only object.

Now, it could be objected that this procedure is question begging vis a vis the stark formulation of the problem of other minds. On this, the onus is on Merleau-Ponty to provide independent argument for the existence of the body subject. I take it this is what he has done in the chapter on the body in *Phenomenologie de la Perception*.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Similarly, however, the onus is on the theorist who advocates the stark formulation of the problem of other minds to provide independent arguments for the conclusion that we have knowledge of our own mind but do not (or may not have) knowledge of other minds.

Neither is *prima facie* more intuitive that the other (even though either may appear intuitively right until the other is suggested). For example it seems to me that sometimes one does know what other people are thinking and at other times one does not (and, that, by and large one knows that other people have minds).

The Artefacts of the Other

Merleau-Ponty presents a number of supplementary arguments for the existence of other minds. He describes some structural features of being in the world, for example: 'natural time is always there' (PPT 347) ('Le temps naturel est toujours là' PP 398) and says one is surrounded by natural objects, and then he says:

'Not only do I have a physical world, not only do I live in the midst of earth, air and water, I have around me roads, plantations, villages, streets, churches, implements, a bell, a spoon, a pipe. Each of these objects is moulded into the human action which it serves' (PPT 347).

The sceptic about other minds will argue that from the existence of the putative artefacts itemised by Merleau-Ponty it does not logically follow that the existence and the nature of those putative artefacts are the product

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

of any mind: a fortiori, it does not follow that they are the product of other minds. Also, if they are mental products then that is logically consistent with their being produced by one's own mind. In other words, the existence of artefacts is not logically inconsistent with solipsism.

However, Merleau-Ponty rejects the strict distinction between an artefact and the mind of its producer. The existence of what one might like to call 'mentality' partly consists in the existence of artefacts, or, better, a human-manipulated world.

Merleau-Ponty's characterisations of mentality as in the world are partly poetic and partly Hegelian. For example of artefacts he says 'each one spreads round it an atmosphere of humanity' (PPT 347) ('Chacun émet une atmosphère d'humanité' PP 399-400) and the acts of humans on the world are 'deposited like some sediment' (PPT 348) ('Se déposent-elles?' PP 400). The Hegelianism of the rejection of a clear mental-physical distinction is evident in his claim that in 'the cultural world' (PPT 348) ('Le monde culturel' PP 400) there is 'an Objective Spirit' (PPT 348) ('Un esprit objectif' PP 400).

The rejection of the presuppositions of the stark formulation of the problem of other minds is entailed by Merleau-Ponty's view that mentality, in this rather Hegelian way, does not exist in abstraction from its expression. Merleau-Ponty is not making any inductive inference from the existence of the artefact to the existence of minds when he says:

'I feel the close presence of others beneath a veil of anonymity. Someone uses the pipe for smoking, the spoon for eating, the bell for summoning, and it is through the perception of a human act and another person that the perception of a cultural world could be verified' (PPT 348).

Rather the grasp of the mentality of the other is very direct. In perceiving artefacts, in perceiving the cultural world I am perceiving mentality. This idea only appears contradictory if we reject Merleau-Ponty's thesis that the products of human expression are partly constitutive of mentality. Merleau-Ponty holds that human mentality may, so to speak, be read off or seen in human artefacts. Other minds are not something wholly other than their objective expression.

Merleau-Ponty's Hegelian allusion is apposite here. Part of what Hegel means by 'objective spirit' is the observable manifestations of consciousness or spirit, ('Geist'), not only in the visible attitudes and actions of human beings but also in the manipulations of nature through agriculture, industry, painting, sculpture and so on. Hegel, like Merleau-Ponty, rejects mindbody dualism and rejects any theory on which mentality may exist independently of its expression. On both philosophies, mind is essentially expressive. We could call this view of mind 'expressionism' and note that it is an alternative to that assumed by the formulations of the problem of other minds on which other minds are 'hidden', and it nevertheless does not consist in a behaviouristic reduction of mind to observable behaviour, nor a materialist reduction of mental processes to physical processes.

Another strategy Merleau-Ponty adopts is to assume that the body is expressive and claim that this notion is prior to the idea of the body as mere object. This is a version of his theory of bodily subjectivity and is broadly analogous to Strawson's idea of the person as logically primitive (vis a vis the mind body distinction).

Merleau-Ponty is discussing the other:

'In order to think of him as a genuine I, I ought to think of myself as a mere object for him, which I am prevented from doing by the knowledge I have of myself. But if another's body is not an object for me, nor mine an object for him, if both are manifestations of behaviour, the positing of the other does not reduce me to the status of an object in his field, nor does my perception of the other reduce him to the status of an object in mine' (PPT 352).

Here Merleau-Ponty begins with a concept that he holds is primitive to the self-other distinction; the concept of the body as manifestation of behaviour. We should bear in mind that the relationship between the body and behaviour is very close—it is not as though behaviour could, logically, exist in abstraction from bodily subjectivity—and bear in mind too that Merleau-Ponty's concept of behaviour is phenomenological and not behaviourist. Behaviour, in this sense, is largely the expression of mentality.

Now, it follows logically from this account that 'another's body is not an object for me' (PPT 352) ('Le corps d'autrui n'est pas un objet pour moi' PP 405) so long as this means not only a physical object and not only an intentional object, because clearly although being expressive of behaviour (in Merleau-Ponty's sense) logically rules out being an object in either of those senses tout court, it is not logically inconsistent with the body of the other being at least a physical object and at least an intentional object.

It also logically follows from Merleau-Ponty's postulation of the body as manifestation of behaviour (in his expressivist sense) that my body is not an object for the other, so long, again, as this means 'not only' an object for the other and does not logically preclude my being at least a physical

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

object and at least an intentional object in the minimal sense of featuring in the content of the other's perceptual states.

If we start from the idea of the whole person as an expressive being who has both subjective and objective, both mental and physical properties, and if we then maintain that both self and other are people in this sense, then the problem of other minds, arguably, need not arise. This strategy is common to Strawson and Merleau-Ponty. If we are considering people as psychophysical wholes then Merleau-Ponty is right to suggest that we should think of the cases of self and other as ontologically symmetrical. With this background assumption, if one is sceptical about the existence of other minds, one should be as sceptical about the existence of one's own mind. In both cases one is being sceptical about the view that persons have minds.

Whether this strategy may be made to work in a way that is not questionbegging against the sceptic about other minds depends largely on the soundness of arguments that may be addressed for the conclusion that the bodily subject is a psychophysical whole, and the conclusion that the concept of the bodily subject is prior (logically, epistemologically, or ontologically) to the self/other distinction.

Merleau-Ponty may be usefully read as advocating a kind of identity theory not a reductionist or a materialist identity theory, but a subjectivity/objectivity identity theory. Although the living conscious human body is the subject of its own perceptions and the object of others' perceptions, there are not two numerically distinct entities: a subject and an object. Indeed, the self that one is is the self that is perceived:

'Le moi que perçoit n'a pas de privilege particulier qui rend impossible un moi percu. Tous deux sont, non pas cogitationes enfermees dans leur immanence' (PP 405).

'The self which perceives is in no particularly

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

privileged position which rules out a perceived self: are not?? cogitationes shut up in their own immanence' (PPT 352).

The fact that a self perceives does not rule out the possibility that that same self is perceived. This is the kernel of Merleau-Ponty's solution to the problem of other minds. In perceiving another person we are not failing to perceiving a Cartesian entity, a hidden mind. We are perceiving another person: perceiving another perceiver.

Physical Subjects and Physical Objects

Merleau-Ponty is interested in how a physical object may present any aspect to a perceiver, apparent or real. He answers this question within the framework of the two central tenets of his phenomenology: the body as subject and being in the world. Baldly expressed, his thesis is that it is possible for us to perceive physical objects because we are physical subjects:

'Il y a des formes determinees, quelque chose comme <<un carre>>, <<un losange>>, une configuration spatiale effective, parce que notre corps comme point de vue sur les choses et les choses comme elements abstraits d'un seul monde forment un systeme ou chaque moment est immediatement significatif de tous les autres' (PP 347).

'There are determinate shapes like "a square" or "a diamond shape", or any spatial configuration because our body as a point of view upon things, and things as abstract elements of one single world, form a system in which each moment is immediately expressive of every other' (PPT 301).

It is not clear what force Merleau-Ponty has given to 'parce que' ('because') here. Prima facie, it could be at least logical, causal or constitutive. It seems to me not to logically follow from the fact that there exist perceptions of the properties of physical objects that the subject of those perceptions is embodied or that that subject is 'in the world'. This is not just because it might be coherent to maintain that there might be perceptions without a

subject but because even if such perceptions were those of a subject it is not contradictory to maintain that that subject is purely mental or spiritual, or at least, has only a contingent relation to some body. Also, it is by no means incoherent to suppose that such a putative subject does not exhibit those features of participating in the world entailed by 'beingintheworld' but rather is presented perceptually with properties of physical objects by being a spectator of the world. If we try to deny this by making it analytic that perceivers of physical objects are participants in the world then we blur the distinction between participant and spectator in a way that is not useful.

If this argument is sound then it logically follows that neither being a bodily subject nor beingintheworld is logically necessary for being perceptually presented with the properties of physical objects. However, this is logically consistent with Merleau-Ponty being right in his three central claims here: we are bodily subjects, we exhibit 'beingintheworld' as our primordial existential location, and we are perceptually presented with properties of physical objects. It is also logically consistent with bodily subjectivity and beingintheworld being causally or constitutively necessary for the perceptual presentation of the properties of physical objects.

It is not clear, either, that being a bodily subject or beingintheworld are logically sufficient for being perceptually presented with the properties of physical objects. From the fact that some subject of experience is physical it does not logically follow that the contents or objects of the perceptions of that subject are physical. It could be that they are wholly mental or otherwise nonphysical (for example, abstract or mathematical). Similarly, unless it is stipulatively made analytic that beingintheworld is being in the physical world and being a perceiver of physical objects in that physical world then beingintheworld is not sufficient for being perceptually presented with properties of physical objects.

Merleau-Ponty says we may perceive a square or a diamond shape because our body is a 'point de vue' (PP 347) 'point of view' (PPT 301). Now, clearly, shape may be detected through two (and only two) sensory modalities: sight and touch, and although a body-subject sees from a point of view it is less clear that it makes much sense to talk about a subject as 'touching from a point of view'. However, Merleau-Ponty may be construed as making a different point here. Arguably, the difference between a shape and a diamond cannot be detected only by touch; if a diamond is a rotated square (or vice versa) then they are the same shape in their intrinsic geometry. The trouble with this is that similar criteria seem to apply in both the visual and

the tactile distinction between a diamond and a square: If two corners are presented as top and base it is a diamond. If two sides are presented as top and base it is a square. If that is right then the diamond/square distinction, as made by us, does not depend very closely upon our bodies being 'points of view'. It seems to me, however, that in the visual case alone the dependency on a point of view is strong because logical. It is hard to make sense of vision that is not from a point of view, and 'If A sees A sees from some point of view' may be analytic.

Perhaps uncontroversially, Merleau-Ponty talks of 'la chose intersensorielle' (PP 366) 'the thing as an intersensory entity' (PPT 317). On any theory of physical objects that captures our prephilosophical intuitions it makes sense to speak of touching, seeing, hearing, tasting and smelling one and the same physical object (which is of course not to say, for any one physical object, that it could be detected through all the sensory modalities, even in principle). Merleau-Ponty, presents a phenomenological explanation of how physical objects may be intersensory objects:

'La chose visuelle (le disque livide de la lune) ou la chose tactile (mon crane tel que je le sens en le palpant)....pour nous se maintient la meme a travers une serie d'experiences' (PP 366).

'The thing as presented to sight (the moon's pale disc) or to touch (my skull as I can feel it when I touch it)....stays the same for us through a series of experiences' (PPT 317).

If one and the same physical object is perceived through a number of qualitatively distinct experiences then, on Merleau-Ponty's view, something is experienced as the same through those experiences. If this is to be accepted then it can only be through an appeal to experience because from the fact that some physical object, x , is the object of some series of experiences, $E_1 \dots E_n$, it does not logically follow that $E_1 \dots E_n$ have some qualitatively similar content common to them all. This inference does not go through except, arguably, where $E_1 \dots E_n$ are experiences through just one sensory modality, but Merleau-Ponty clearly has in mind the case where $E_1 \dots E_n$ are experiences through qualitatively distinct sensory modalities. But if a subject sees, smells and tastes, for example, the same physical object it does not follow that there is thereby some phenomenologically presented content common to $E_1 \dots E_n$.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Merleau-Ponty says something consistent with this when he rejects the idea that the constant in the perception of a physical object is 'un quale qui subsiste effectivement' (PP 366) 'a quale genuinely subsisting' (PPT 317). The putative common content is not a given quality, like a colour, sound or shape so clearly no straightforward empirical account is possible of such a content.

Merleau-Ponty rejects a rationalist account of it too when he insists it is not 'la notion ou la conscience d'une telle propriete objective' (PP 366) 'the notion or consciousness of such an objective property' (PP 317). This is right because the putative content is a perceptual content and it does not make much sense to talk of perceiving notions or acts of consciousness. The content is not the thought of the content.

Rather, the objective content is 'ce qui est retrouve ou repris par notre regard ou par notre mouvement' (PP 366) 'what is discovered or taken up by our gaze or our movement' (PPT 317). If 'retrouve ou repris' is just what is entailed by 'perceived' here then the analysis is questionbegging. What Merleau-Ponty has in mind, however, is the point that the physical object is grasped as a perceptual whole in each perception of it. This perceptual whole is qualitatively similar in each perception of the same object, even across qualitatively distinct sensory modalities. He says, for example, 'l'objet...s'offre au regard ou a la palpation' (PP 366) 'the object...presents itself to the gaze or the touch' (PPT 317). This implies not just that it is in fact numerically the same physical object that is perceived through E1...En but also that E1...En present that object as numerically the same physical object through E1...En.

Merleau-Ponty concludes;

'Si les constantes de chaque sens sont ainsi comprises, il ne pourra pas etre question de definir la chose intersensorielle ou elles s'unissent par un ensemble d'attributs stables ou par la notion de cet ensemble' (PP 367).

'If the constants of each sense are thus understood, the question of defining the intersensory thing into which they unite as a collection of stable attributes or as the notion of this collection, will not arise' (PPT 317).

Merleau-Ponty by Stephen Priest: Alterations for the paperback edition.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Insert one new prelims page after iv and before v.

Recto to read:

‘To Kerry’

Verso to read:

‘Etre corps, c’est etre noue a un certain monde...’

Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenologie de la Perception*
(p. 173)

‘To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world...’

Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*
(p. 148)

p. ix second para. l. 4 Insert immediately after ‘Body for that election.’:

‘I thank the President and the Fellowships and Membership Committee for my continued membership of the college and use of its excellent research facilities.

[new para] I am also grateful to Dr. Fergus Kerr OP, Dr. Richard Finn OP and my other colleagues at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford for providing such a stimulating environment in which to think, teach and write.’ [new para]

Third para l. 6 For ‘Merleay’ write ‘Merleau’.

Fourth para. l. 12 Insert ‘of’ after ‘gave’ and before ‘their’.

l. 4 Insert ‘,Kerry Smallman’ after ‘Honderich’ [a comma should now follow ‘Honderich’].

l. 20 & 21 Delete ‘Department of Philosophy’. Delete ‘University of Edinburgh’. Insert ‘Oxford’ immediately below ‘Stephen Priest’.

p. 3 second para. line 6 insert ‘substances’ after ‘physical’ and before ‘presupposes’.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

p. 6 Fourth para. 1. 4 Insert '(‘Je suis mon corps’ PP, 175)’ after ‘body’ and before ‘. His’.

Fifth para. 1. 3 Insert '(‘le corps propre’ PP, 528) after ‘own’ and before ‘, but’.

p. 7 Sixth para. 1. 1 For ‘Transcendence’ write ‘Transcendance’.

p. 8 Second paragraph. 1. 6 Insert acute accent on ‘inactivite’. Insert second ‘i’ in ‘visit’. Fourth para. Insert full stop after ‘France?’.

p. 35 Fourth para. last line. Insert '(‘sujet incarné’ PP, 515)’ after ‘physical subject’ and before full stop.

p. 43 Third para. last line. Delete ‘a part of’ after ‘What a is a part of is’ and before ‘what b is a part of’.

p. 55 1. 3 Insert ‘as ‘le corps propre’ (PP, 528)’ after ‘phenomenologically’ and before ‘leaves’.

p. 56 1. 2 Insert ‘ ‘Je suis mon corps’ (PP, 175)’ after ‘I am my body’ and before full stop.

p. 57 Eighth para. 1. 3 Insert '(‘le corps propre’ PP, 528)’ after ‘one’s own body’ and before ‘and that of another’.

p. 61 Third para. 1. 7 For ‘Abshattungen’ write ‘Abschattungen’.

p. 66 Fourth para. 1. 2 Insert ‘substantial’ after ‘regard to the’ and before ‘distinction between’. 1. 3 Insert ‘such a’ after ‘our drawing’ and before ‘a mentalphysical’. 1. 45. Insert ‘metaphysical’ after ‘The’ and before ‘mentalphysical’. Last line insert ‘metaphysical’ after ‘makes the’ and before ‘employment of’.

p. 67 First para. 1. 4 Insert ‘as separable’ after ‘physical’ and before full stop. Fifth para. 1. 4 After ‘the subject is’ and before ‘body’, for ‘the’ write ‘its’. Fifth para. 1.4 Insert '(‘le sujet est son corps’ SNS, 125)’ after ‘body’ and before colon.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

p. 73 l. 16 For 'argee' write 'agree'.

p. 75 Fourth para. l. 11 For 'reflective' write 'reflexive'.

p. 80 Third para. l. 5 Insert '('sujet incarné' PP, 515)' after 'physical subject' and before full stop.

p. 92 First para. l. 6 For '(PPT, 208)' write '(PPT, 2078)'.

p. 100 l.1 Delete square brackets.

p. 102 Fifth para. For 'opposite' write 'apposite'.

p. 104 Third para. l. 1 For 'essential' write 'essentially'.

p. 107 Third para. l. 3 Insert '('sujet incarné' PP 515)' after 'bodily subject' and before full stop and closing inverted comma.

p. 109 Third para. l. 9 For '(PPT, 250)' write '(PPT, 24950)'.

p. 112 Second para. l. 6 For '(PPT, 252)' write '(PPT, 253)'.

Second para. l. 10 For '(PPT, 257)' write '(PPT, 253)'.

Fourth para. l. 7 For '(and not spatial)' write '(and not nonspatial)'.

p. 121 Fourth para. Insert '('le sujet est son corps' SNS, 125)' after 'body-subject.' and before 'The body-subject'.

p. 142 Fifth para. l. 3 For 'the conscious of a self' write 'the consciousness of a self'.

p. 160 Second para. For 'inextrability' write 'inextricability'.

p. 174 First para. l. 4 For 'temorally' write 'temporally'.

p. 186 Fourth para. l. 6 Insert '('objet pour lui' PP, 123 fn.) after 'an object' and before full stop.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

- p. 187 l. 1 Insert '(‘sujet incarné’ PP, 175)’ after ‘body-subject’ and before ‘is not’.
- p. 189 Second para. l. 5 For ‘sculture’ write ‘sculpture’.
- p. 190 Fifth para. l. 10 For ‘(PPT, 352)’ write ‘(PPT, 353)’.
- p. 198 Fourth para. l. 12 For ‘ ‘real’ ’ write ‘ ‘apparent’ ’. l.13 For ‘ ‘apparent’ ’ write ‘ ‘real’ ’.
- p. 201 Third para. l. 1 Insert '(‘sujet incarné’ PP, 515)’ after ‘body subject’ and before ‘or’.
- p. 211 Fifth para. l. 9 For ‘of movement on’ write ‘between movement and’.
- p. 213 Third para. Insert ‘only’ between second occurrence of ‘world’ and ‘mental’.
- p. 219 Second para. l. 8 Insert '(‘sujet incarné’ PP, 175)’ after ‘body subject’ and before ‘that one is’. l. 1011 Insert '(‘corps propre’ PP, 528) after ‘body’ and before ‘but any’.
- p. 221 Fourth para. l. 6 For ‘(VIT, 137)’ write ‘(VIT, 1367)’.
- p. 242 Note 11. l. 6 Insert ‘necessarily’ between ‘do not’ and ‘exhibit’.
- p. 249 Note 35. l. 2 Delete full stop and insert question mark after ‘merken’.
- p. 260 Note 10. l. 3 Insert ‘or ‘something rational’ ’ after ‘ ‘a rational being’ ’ and before full stop.
- p. 267 Note 8. For ‘a forthcoming volume of Royal Institute of Philosophy lectures about German philosophy since Kant’ write ‘Anthony O’Hear (ed.) German Philosophy Since Kant Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement: 44’.

Merleau-Ponty by Stephen Priest: Alteration for the paperback edition.

p. 1 Second para. l. 3 Insert 'from' after 'Superieure' and before '1926'.

LANGUAGE

Merleau Ponty hopes that his phenomenology of language will overcome a number of dualisms. As we have seen, he thinks of the body as 'a unity distinct from that of the scientific object' (PPT 174) 'une unite distincte de celle de l'object scientifique'(PP 203). He argues that the human person is essentially an expressive being and that the use of language is just one part of this expression. He hopes in particular that this holistic view will enable him to dispense with 'the traditional subject object dichotomy' (PPT 174) 'la dichotomie classique du sujet et de l'objet' (PP 203) and provide an phenomenological understanding of how language functions that is neither behaviourist, nor empiricist, nor rationalist.

The Phenomenology of Language

One obstacle to understanding Merleau-Ponty's targets is that he assimilates, or treats as one theory, empiricism and behaviourism. There are in fact logically distinct, even if mutually consistent, philosophical positions.

Empiricism is the theory that all knowledge is acquired through experience (or, sometimes, more narrowly, through sense experience) but behaviourism is the thesis that any sentence or set of sentences about minds may be translated into a sentence or set of sentences about overt or covert bodily behaviour (or, more crudely, the view that the best explanation of minds is the explanation of behaviour). They may even, interestingly, turn out to be logically inconsistent, if empiricism avails itself of a notion of 'experience' that resists behavioural analysis.

The view that Merleau-Ponty roughly characterises as 'empiricist', 'behaviourist', or sometimes 'mechanist' is really a cluster of views about meaning. It includes the doctrine, for example, that 'there is no "speaking subject"' (PPT 174) 'il n'y a pas de <<sujet parlant>> (PP 203).

Now, the idea that there is no subject of speech is indeed common to behaviourism, some versions of empiricism and various structuralist and

poststructuralist positions adopted by Foucault and Derrida. One way of constraining behaviourism is as the reduction of the subject to the object, or the translation of sentences of first person grammatical form into sentences of third person grammatical form. For this reason Merleau-Ponty is right to say that within the behaviourist framework 'speech occurs in a circuit of third person phenomena' (PPT 175) 'la parole prend place dans un circuit de phenomenes en troisieme personne' (PP 2034).

If the subject is that which is characterised essentially in first person singular grammatical terms, and if the views Merleau-Ponty characterises are right that there is no subject, then a fortiori they are right both that there is no speaking subject and that there is nothing essentially characterisable in first person grammatical terms.

Arguably, on Humean grounds, any consistent empiricism must also be a philosophy without a subject. If any possible object of knowledge is a possible object of experience according to empiricism, and if the subject is not a possible object of experience, then for empiricism the subject cannot be known to exist. It does not follow from this that there is no subject but it does follow that empiricism, like behaviourism, has no logical room for the subject and, a fortiori, no room for a speaking subject. (I do not wish to deny the historical truth that some prominent empiricists, Locke and Berkeley for example maintain that there exists a (speaking) subject).

Merleau-Ponty says that on the behaviourist or empiricist view 'There is no speaker, there is a flow of words set in motion independently of any intention to speak' (PPT 175) 'il n'y a personne qui parle, il y a un flux de mots qui se produisent sans aucune intention de parler qui les gouverne' (PP 204). From the fact that there is no subject it does not follow that there are no intentions, and empiricism is consistent with the thesis that intentions are partly or wholly constitutive of meaning. If intentions may be given a behavioural analysis then behaviourism too presents no logical obstacle to understanding meaning in terms of intending to mean.

We may, however, understand Merleau-Ponty stipulatively here, as outlining the view that language is itself the vehicle or repository of meaning. Meaning is internal to the rules of language and not a psychological addition to language contributed by a subject. This thesis may be found in Hegel, Nietzsche, Saussure, Wittgenstein, Derrida and other thinkers and, before all these, in Vico and Kant.

Merleau-Ponty next considers the view that:

'The meaning of words is considered to be given with the stimuli or with the states of consciousness which it is simply a matter of ?..ning' (PPT 175).

Again, behaviourisms and empiricisms need separating here. On one version of behaviourism, meaning may indeed be identified with the external stimulus or input which causes the organism to speak. On another kind of behaviourism, however, meaning could be the disposition to use language or behave linguistically. Distinct from both of these is the empiricist view that the meaning of a word is to be identified with some state of consciousness of the speaker. (An empiricist is not however logically compelled to take this view of meaning).

Clearly, the behavioural and empiricist views are logically independent; one may be true while the other is false.

Merleau-Ponty also suggests that on the behaviourist empiricist view meaning is atomistic and speech is 'an entity of rational origin' (PPT 175) 'un etre de raison' (PP 204). The concept of rationality is an obscure one that is best dropped from philosophy. In common with many other users Merleau-Ponty does not define the word 'rational' so I will not pursue the prima facie meaningless claim that speech is rational. (Notice that 'origin' has no justification in the French here).

More interestingly Merleau-Ponty says:

'Since language can disintegrate into fragments, we have to conclude that it is built up by a set of independent contributions' (PPT 175).

There is a distinction between holism and atomism about meaning and, clearly, disagreement is possible about what the minimal unit of meaning can be; the word (Locke and Saussure), the proposition (Frege, Russell, the early Wittgenstein), the whole of a language or science (Quine). Clearly, too, on the theory of meaning known as Logical Atomism canvassed by Russell and the early Wittgenstein meaning is atomistic because truth

functional; the truth values of compound propositions are logically determined by the truth values of their constituent atomic propositions.

Now, Merleau-Ponty is saying that if language may be analysed into parts then it must be built up out of those parts. He says 'Le langage peut se desagreger par fragments' and it follows from this that 'il se constitue par une serie d'apports independents' (PP 204).

To decide whether this is right we need a distinction between analysis and synthesis (an ancient distinction partly revived by Hegel and Sartre). Suppose some nonatomic unit of language, M, may be analysed into $m_1 \dots m_n$ such that M means $m_1 \dots m_n$, then there is no a priori obstacle to the reverse practice of exhibiting $m_1 \dots m_n$ as jointly constitutive of the meaning of M. This reverse process is synthesis.

Merleau-Ponty is clearly right that if language may be analysed into parts it logically follows that language is composed of those parts. He is also right that no a priori obstacle is thereby shown to the synthesis of language out of those parts.

Both empiricism and behaviourism are logically consistent with either atomism or holism about meaning. Suppose holism is the view that a language is the minimal unit of meaning and suppose atomism is the view that components of the language are the minimal units of meaning, then either of those views could be true and meaning could be either empirical or behavioural.

Merleau-Ponty characterises rationalism (or 'intellectualism') about meaning this way: 'language is but an external accompaniment of thought' (PPT 177) 'le langage n'est qu'un accompagnement exterieur de la pensee' (PP 206). This view is not clearly distinct from the empiricist view that meaning is a mental state of the speaker. (Merleau-Ponty perhaps realises he has painted himself into a corner when he says 'intellectualism is hardly any different from empiricism' PPT 177).

What is needed here is a clearer distinction between thought and experience. Then Merleau-Ponty's term 'intellectualism' may be reserved for the view that the meaning of language is the thoughts of the speaker and 'empiricism' may be the view that the meaning of language is the experiences of the speaker. Merleau-Ponty is clearly right to maintain that on all three views: empiricism, behaviourism and intellectualism meaning is external to the language. Experience, stimuli, or thought, respectively, have to be added to language to make language meaningful.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Merleau-Ponty says 'we refute both intellectualism and empiricism by simply saying that the word has a meaning' (PPT 177) 'on depasse donc aussi bien l'intellectualisme que l' empiricisme par cette simple remarque que le mot a un sens' (PP 206). This means that meaning is not bestowed on language but is internal to it. (I do not construe Merleau-Ponty's words as expressing the obviously false thesis that on both theories words are senseless).

Merleau-Ponty has boldly stated a position logically inconsistent with the theories he rejects but in the absence of proof this is not yet a refutation.

Before we look for a proof in Merleau-Ponty's text we need to be clearer on the relation between word, thought and meaning on his view.

Thought and Language

Merleau-Ponty says 'we present our thought to ourselves through internal or external speech' (PPT 177) 'nous nous donnons notre pensee par la parole interieure ou exterieure' (PP 207), but it is clear that for him thought does not exist in abstraction from such presentation, inward or outward.

Writing in an idiom strikingly reminiscent of Kant's doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception, Merleau-Ponty claims:

'A thought limited to existing for itself, independently of the constraints of speech and communication, would no sooner appear than it would sink into the unconsciousness, which means that it would not exist even for itself' (PPT 177).

Like Kant's putative thought which could not even in principle be an object of self-consciousness, Merleau-Ponty's thought that could not be expressed in speech, either would be nothing to the subject or nothing tout court. The ambiguity is in both Kant and Merleau-Ponty.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Merleau-Ponty also affirms in this passage the thesis common to Kant and Wittgenstein that thought is necessarily public in the sense of communicable.

Although a cornerstone of the neoKantianism of both the 'analytical' and so called 'continental' philosophical traditions, the doctrine that thought depends upon language and communication seems unlikely to be true. There are empirical grounds for supposing that thought predates language (both in evolution and in the development of the child), and if it is right that thought is chronologically prior to language then it is right that thought is logically independent of language.

Also, it seems to be me at least not a selfcontradictory supposition that a person be capable of a thought that could not even in principle be communicated. If that is right then the communicability of thought is at best a contingent matter.

Merleau-Ponty also holds that there is no thought that is not expressed. He means that there is no thought that is not expressed either inwardly or outwardly. The first disjunct here is probably analytic if 'expressed inwardly' means 'thought' because it then amounts to the uncontroversial tautology that there is no thought that is not thought.

More controversially, however, Merleau-Ponty is arguing that all thought is expressed in language. The argument is: all thought is expressed, language is the vehicle or medium of expression, therefore, all thought is expressed through language. This is valid if language is the only medium of expression, or at least the only medium of expression for thought.

Unfortunately Merleau-Ponty himself rejects the premise that language is the only vehicle of expression (the body itself, and the work of art are also expressive media). In that case more argument is needed to show that thought depends on language.

Merleau-Ponty says

'Le mot, loin d'être le simple signe des objets et des significations, habite les choses et est??vehicule ?les communications' (PP 207).

'the word, far from being the mere sign of objects and meanings, inhabits things and is the vehicle of meanings' (PPT 178).

A kind of conceptual idealism is at work here. Merleau-Ponty thinks empirical objects being what they are to us partly depends upon the language

we use to characterise them. This is the familiar neoKantian doctrine that the empirical world is presented to us as constituted by our conceptual apparatus. Merleau-Ponty draws an important conclusion from this however: if we recognise things this is because they are partially linguistically constituted, so the recognition of things requires language. We do recognise things, therefore recognition presupposes language. He says 'the most familiar thing appears indeterminate so long as we have not recalled its name' (PPT 177) 'l'objet le plus familier nous paraît indetermine tant que nous n'en avons pas retrouve le nom' (PP 206).

The soundness of this argument is enough to show that thought presupposes language, but it is not sufficient to tie thought to language in the close, expressive way that Merleau-Ponty seeks. It is for example logically consistent with thought presupposing language that although if a thinker is a language user?? not all thought is language use.

Merleau-Ponty says 'we present our thought to ourselves through internal or external speech' (PP 177) 'nous nous donnons notre pensee par la parole interieure ou exterieure' (PP 207). Again, in a neoKantian idiom, he claims 'it is through expression that we make it our own (PPT 177) 'c'est par l'expression qu'elle devient notre' (PP 207). This is more than a vacuous tautology; he is claiming that only if a subject expresses a thought is that thought a thought of that subject.

We lack precise criteria for the ascription of numerically distinct thoughts to numerically distinct subjects, and that is partly because we lack precise criteria for the individuation of thoughts. Merleau-Ponty thinks that a thought has to be something to a subject in order to be a thought by that subject. It is clear too that Merleau-Ponty thinks that the expression of a thought is at least a necessary condition for that thought's being a selfconscious thought. It is not clear whether he also thinks it sufficient.

He says 'the thinking subject himself is in a kind of ignorance of his thoughts so long as he has not formulated them for himself' (PPT 177) 'le sujet pensant luimeme est dans une sorte d'ignorance de ses pensees tant qu'il ne les a pas forumlees pour soi' PP 206).

I think, conversely, if a person expresses his or her thoughts (in such a way as to be conscious of having them or not) then that is a sufficient condition of those thoughts being that person's thoughts). Pace Merleau-Ponty, it is not clear that it is necessary. It seems to me not contradictory, and so coherent, to suppose that there are unexpressed thoughts. Whether these exist such thought is a difficult because not wholly empirical matter.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Merleau-Ponty, in a strikingly Wittgensteinian turn of phrase, says:

'Je commence a comprendre le sens des mots par leur place dans une contexte d'action et en participant a la vie commune' (PP 209).

'I begin to understand the meaning of words through their place in a context of action, and by taking part in a communal life' (PP 179).

As for Wittgenstein, for Merleau-Ponty meaning is both pragmatic and social. The idea of meaning as a mental process, or as a psychological accompaniment of language, is an illusionary abstraction from the lived reality of the human world.

Merleau-Ponty thinks the pragmatic and social conditions for language learning become clear when I learn a foreign language in the country where it is spoken. Learning the new language takes the form of learning how to speak or write it and Merleau-Ponty thinks thinking in the language depends on this. If he is right then I think this dependence can only be an empirical dependence.

To capture the idea that thought is not prior to language Merleau-Ponty introduces the concept of 'thought in speech' (PPt 179) 'une pensee dans la parole' (PP 209). 'In' is obscure here. The spatial metaphor hides an unclarity about what the exact relation is between thought and speech if speech is the expression of thought, and cannot exist independently of that expression.

Two notions, mutual dependency and numerical identity, seem inadequate. If x and y are mutually dependent then x is a necessary condition for y and y is a necessary condition for x and, what follows logically, y is a sufficient condition for x and x is a sufficient condition for y . It is at least true on Merleau-Ponty's account that language and thought are necessary and sufficient for each other. It seems to me however that he falls short of saying that language and thought are the same. X and y are numerically identical if and only if x is y and, what is entailed logically, y is x .

However, if x is the expression of y that would seem to conceptually preclude ' x is y ', just because it seems incoherent or barely sensible to talk about something's being its own expression, so I think the best analysis is mutual dependence without numerical identity.

'To express' can mean 'to represent' but Merleau-Ponty explicitly rules this interpretation out. He says 'thought in the speaking subject, is not a representation' (PPT 180) 'la pensee, chez le sujet parlant, n'est pas une

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

representation' (PP 209), and the reason he gives for this is that thought in its expression 'in' speech 'does not expressly posit objects or relations' (PPT 180). 'ne pose pas expressement des objets ou des relations' (PP 209).

I take it the relation between thought and speech is not close enough if speech represents thought. What that close relationship is Merleau-Ponty does not say.

Chapter 13 Art

1 'finalement, nous devons renoncer a traiter la peinture comme un langage' (PM 66)

2 'le parallele est un principe legitime' (PW 66)

3

(1) 'La meme transmutation' (PM 67).

(2) 'La meme migration d'un sens epars dans l'experience' (PM 67)

(3) 'La meme operation expressive fonctionne ici et la' (PM 67).

4 'l'operation active de signification qui definirait la conscience' (PP vi)

5

(1) 'La science manipule les choses et renonce a les habiter' (OE 9)

(2) 'Elle [...] ne se confronte que de loin en loin avec le monde actuel' (OE 9)

The translation has 'real world' not 'actual world' for 'monde actuel'. For Merleau-Ponty 'real world' and 'actual world' have the same referent but differ in sense.

(3) 'Elle est [...] ce parti pris de traiter tout etre comme <<objet en generale>>, c'est a dire a la fois comme s'il ne nous etait rien et se trouvait cependant predestine a nos artifices' (OE 9)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

6 '[...] elle se voit comme construction sur la base d'un monde brut ou existant' (OE 11)

The translation's 'must' has no equivalent in the French. Merleau-Ponty is pointing out a necessary condition for science's understanding itself.
(delete****?)

7 'Il faut que la pensée de science pensée de survol, pensée de l'objet se replace dans un <<il y a>> préalable, dans le site, sur le sol du monde sensible et du monde ouvert tels qu'ils sont dans notre vie, pour notre corps' (OE 12)
(delete****?)

8 '[...] l'art et notamment la peinture puisent à cette nappe de sens brut dont l'activisme ne veut rien savoir. Ils sont même seuls à le faire en toute innocence' (OE 13)

9 'À l'écrivain, au philosophe, on demande conseil ou avis, on n'admet pas qu'ils tiennent le monde en suspens' (OE 13/14)

10 'La musique [...] est trop en deca du monde et du désignable pour figurer autre chose que des épures de l'Être, son flux et son reflux, sa croissance, ses éclatements, ses tourbillons' (OE 14)

11 'Le peintre est seul à avoir droit de regard sur toutes choses sans aucun devoir d'appréciation' (OE 14)

12 'Quelle est donc cette science secrète qu'il a ou qu'il cherche ? Cette dimension selon laquelle Van Gogh veut aller <<plus loin>> ? Ce fondamental de la peinture, et peut-être de toute la culture ?' (OE 15)

13 '[...] on ne voit pas comment un Esprit pourrait peindre. C'est en prêtant son corps au monde que le peintre change le monde en peinture. Pour comprendre ces transsubstantiations, il faut recouvrir le corps opérant et actuel, celui qui n'est pas un morceau d'espace, un faisceau de fonctions, qui est un entrelacs de vision et de mouvement' (OE 16)

14 'Mon corps mobile compte au monde visible, en fait partie, et c'est pourquoi je peux le diriger dans le visible' (OE 16/17)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

15 '[...] la vision est suspendu au mouvement. On ne voit que ce qu'on regarde. Que serait la vision sans aucun mouvement des yeux [...] ?' (OE 17)

16 '[...] comment leur mouvement ne brouillerait-il pas les choses s'il était lui-même réflexe ou aveugle ?' (OE 17)

17 'la carte du visible' (OE 17)

18 'la carte du <<je peux>>' (OE 17)

19 'Chacune des deux cartes est complète' (OE 17)

20 'Le monde visible et celui de mes projets moteurs sont parties totales du même Être' (OE 17)

Art and Science

In *L'Oeil et L'Esprit* Merleau-Ponty argues for two main conclusions: art is phenomenologically prior to science and only an embodied being may be an artist. These are themselves putative substantiations of his theses that science presupposes but does not explain the lived world, and a subject of thought and action is a subject with a body.

Merleau-Ponty ascribes certain properties to science which art allegedly lacks. Notably:

- (1) 'Science manipulates things and gives up living in them'
- (2) 'It comes face to face with the real world only at rare intervals'
- (3) '[Science's] fundamental bias is to treat everything as though it were an object in general as though it meant nothing to us and yet was predestined for our own use' (EMT 159).

I shall take each of these in turn.

'Science manipulates things' is either elliptical for 'science makes possible the technology which physically manipulates things' (or some logically equivalent proposition) or entails that the conception of the world by science is itself a kind of manipulation: a kind of intellectual construal. The two interpretations are mutually consistent and nothing logically forces us to choose one over the other.

The idea that science 'gives up living' in things is logically consistent with Merleau-Ponty's thesis that science essentially proceeds by ignoring the subject. Indeed, a world without the subject is not a world that can be 'lived in': subjectively inhabited, so to speak, from the inside. It follows that something like Merleau-Ponty's subjectless view of science is a logical prerequisite for the impossibility of a scientific account of being in the world. The argument is this: If something is an account of being in the world then it must postulate a subject (If not Q then not P). Science postulates no subject (Not Q). Science cannot provide an account of being in the world (Not P):

- (1) Not Q \supset not P
- (2) Not Q
- (3) Therefore not P.

This argument is not only valid it is sound because not only does the conclusion logically follow from the premises but it is true that science has no depiction of the subject and a depiction of the subject is a necessary condition for an account of being in the world.

Art, in contrast, neither manipulates things nor gives up living in the world. €512512512× 13

ART

1 Is Art a Language ?

Merleau-Ponty's considered view is that 'we must refrain finally from treating painting as a language' (PW 47)(1) but he says nonetheless that 'the parallel is in principle legitimate' (PW 47).(2) How may these two claims be reconciled ?

The ground for the claim that painting should be treated as a language is ambiguous between the claim that painting is a language and painting is like a language. That painting is like a language does not entail that painting is a language but that painting is a language does entail that painting is like a

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

language because it would be incoherent to maintain that something is qualitatively distinct from something with which it is numerically identical.

The translation has 'in principle' (PW 47) but the original French is 'un principe' (PM 66) which should be rendered 'a principle' so then we have 'the parallel is a legitimate principle'. However, the translation is here more philosophically perspicuous than the French original. It implies that it is in principle possible for painting to either be or be like a language. In other words, there is no contradiction in either the identification of painting with a language or a comparison between painting and language on which it turns out that painting is like a language. By 'like' here we may mean this; a is like b if and only if a and b share more properties than they do with some further object c. This reading may be extracted from the original French if for 'legitime' ('legitimate') we read 'logically legitimate'. Understood this way, Merleau-Ponty has said something meaningful and true.

The following partial ascriptions of common properties to painting and language may be extracted from Merleau-Ponty's text:

- (1) 'the same transmutation' (PW 48).
- (2) 'The same migration of meaning scattered in experience' (PW 48).
- (3) 'The same expressive function is at work in both cases' (PW 48).(3)

I shall discuss each in turn.

A transmutation is a change of form or nature so if a is a transmutation of b then a does not cause b to cease to be but changes b qualitatively by translating b into a different medium. Both painting and language operate on their subject matter so that certain intrinsic properties of that subject matter remain unchanged, yet that subject matter is in the one case translated onto canvas and, in the other, into writing or speech. On this analysis, if some painting or language, PL, is a transmutation of some subject matter, x, then x has at least one property, F, and PL comes to be F by being caused to be F by x's being F.

The analysis of 'transmutation' can be used to read 'migration' in (2) but (2) says more than (1). (2) reports the special case where F is a 'sens' (PM 67) 'meaning' (PW 48) and 'meaning' cannot only mean 'linguistic meaning'.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Suppose, on the analysis of 'transmutation' or 'migration' x is some experience (other than that involved in understanding PL) and F is a meaning, then, as in (1), x is F and x causes PL to be F but F is known empirically and PL has (at least one) meaning in virtue of being caused to be F by x .

On this analysis it has to make sense to talk of meanings as (at least part of) the subject matter of painting or language where this means something other than: the painting or the language is meaningful. Merleau-Ponty allows, indeed elsewhere emphasises, such a use of 'meaning'. For example, he speaks of 'the active meaninggiving operation which may be said to define consciousness' (PPT xi).(4) Consciousness bestows a 'meaning' on some (partially or wholly intrinsically indeterminate) subject matter ' x ' if and only if consciousness (partly or wholly) makes x be what x is. This analysis gives rise to several issues. One I shall not address is the sense that may be given to ' x ' if x is wholly indeterminate; especially the question of whether such a putative subject matter could be individuated. Another is the question of what x is when x is made what it is by consciousness. Here I would say that x is only what it is under a possible description. Merleau-Ponty eschews that linguistic idiom so I say x is what x is in virtue of that which would make some description of x true. That is bestowed by consciousness. It is meanings in this sense of 'meanings' that migrate from experience into both painting and language. I suggest as examples: a painting of x and a definition of ' x '. These have something in common: a depiction of x .

Both painting and language 'express'. 'Express' is not clarified by Merleau-Ponty but 'express' has the literal sense of 'emit' or 'exude' or 'symbolise'. The first two senses may be taken as denoting the causal relation between x and PL and those relata, when x causes PL to be F in virtue of being F . The sense in which 'express' can mean 'to represent by symbols' (as, for example, in the notations of mathematical logic) captures a new similarity between painting and language. It is an unsolved philosophical problem what it consists in for one portion of what is to represent another portion of what is (despite the currency of the concept) but the appearance of the word suggests 'to present more than once (at least twice)': to 'represent'. We may take the first presentation just as the presentation of x . If PL 'represents' x , then, PL presents x without being x . Again, it follows that PL acquaints us with what x is without thereby directly acquainting us with x .

It follows from this account too that both language and painting either are or contain 'symbols'. I shall understand by 'symbol' just whatever it is in the

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

ontology of painting or language in virtue of which painting and language represent. It follows that PL's being or containing a symbol is both necessary and sufficient for PL's being or containing a representation.

We are in a position now to see how Merleau-Ponty's two claims may be reconciled. Clearly, from the fact that it is not a contradictory supposition that painting is or is like a language it does not logically follow that that claim is true. It follows that Merleau-Ponty may consistently reject it even if he sees no logical ground for its negation.

Arguably, whether painting is like, or sufficiently like to be, a language are in principle undecidable questions. This does not mean it is philosophically uneducative to try to answer them. The problem is that questions of the form 'Is x (qualitatively) similar to y ?' always logically invite the question 'In what respect ?'. Then we need criteria for counting respects and the task becomes infinite. In this particular case the difficulty is compounded because it is not obvious that there exist necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being a language and necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being a painting. Evaluating Merleau-Ponty's comparison requires solving these prior problems in the philosophy of language and aesthetics.

5/31/97 5/31/97 515515art of the wider question 'how can there be objectivity ?' (PPT 300).(1)

He says 'a thing has "characteristics" or "properties" which are stable, even if they do not entirely serve to define it' (PPT 299).(2) I shall not distinguish between characteristics and properties but stipulate that x has at least one property, F, if and only if at least one proposition is true of x (leaving aside 'x exists'). A property of x is 'stable' if and only if some proposition

2 Art and Science

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Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

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This argument is not only valid, but sound because it is true that science has no depiction of the subject and a depiction of the subject is a necessary condition for an account of being in the world.

Art, in contrast, neither manipulates things nor gives up living in the world.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

/31/97 5/31/97 "517517existence of what one might like to call 'mentality' partly consists in the existence of artefacts, or, better, a human-manipulated world.

Merleau-Ponty's characterisations of menta

'...l'art et notamment la peinture puisent a cette nappe de sens brut dont l'activisme ne vuet rien savoir. Ils sont meme seuls a le faire en toute innocence.' (OE 13)

'A l'ecrivain, au philosophe, on demande conseil ou avis, on n'admet pas qu'ils tiennent le monde en suspens.' (OE 1314)

'La musique...est trop en deca du monde et du designable pour figurer autre chose que des epures de l'Etre, son flux et son reflux, sa croissance, ses eclatements, ses tourbillons.' (OE 14)

'Le peintre est seul a avoir droit de regard sur toutes choses sans aucun devoir d'appréciation.' (OE 14)

'Quelle est donc cette science secrete qu'il a ou qu'il cherche ? Cette dimension selon laquelle Van Gogh veut aller <<plus loin>> ? Ce fondamental de la peinture, et peutetre de toute la culture?' (OE 15)

'...On ne voit pas comment un Esprit pourrait peindre. C'est en pretant son corps au monde que le peintre change le monde en peinture. Pour comprendre ces transsubstantiations, il faut retrouver le corps operant et

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

actuel, celui qui n'est pas un morceau d'espace, un faisceau de fonctions, qui est un entrelacs de vision et de mouvement.' (OE 16)

'le peintre change le monde en peinture' (OE 16)

'Mon corps mobile compte au monde visible, en fait parties, et c'est pourquoi je peux le diriger dans le visible.' (OE 1617)

'...la vision est suspendue au mouvement. On ne voit que ce qu'on regarde. Que serait la vision sans aucun mouvement des yeux...?' (OE 17)

'Comment leur mouvement ne brouillerait-il pas les choses s'il était lui-même réflexe ou aveugle...?' (OE 17)

'chacune des deux cartes est complète' (OE 17) 'each of these two maps is complete' (OET 162)

'Le monde visible et celui de mes projets moteurs sont des parties totales du même Être.' (OE 17)

3 Painting and the Body

Art for Merleau-Ponty is, in a sense, the opposite of science. While science is formal and universal, art, especially painting, depicts content and the particular:

'...art, especially painting, draws upon this fabric of brute meaning which activism [or operationalism] would prefer to ignore. Art and only art does so in full innocence.' (OET 161)(8)

Science, in so far as it treats of individuals, describes them qua occupiers of a functional role, not in virtue of their intrinsic perceptible properties. Art

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

shuns this means to thinking in order to depict the individual as it is given to consciousness. Art, like phenomenology, is concrete and immediate but science is abstract and mediated.

While science can tell no one how to live literature and philosophy suggest an ethic. When Merleau-Ponty says:

'From the writer and the philosopher...we want opinions and advice. We will not allow them to hold the world suspended' (OE 161).(9)

he is implicitly presenting a critique of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology which 'suspends' the world by the epoche. As we have seen, p. above, Merleau-Ponty eschews the epoche and substitutes for it the structures of his 'existential' phenomenology, notably being in the world. At this point in Merleau-Ponty's text Husserl's phenomenology is subject to the same critique as the natural sciences. It does not tell us how to live.

Although music is the most formal of the arts, science fails where music succeeds in describing the structure of being:

'Music...is too far beyond the world and the designatable to depict anything but certain outlines of Being its ebb and flow, its growth, its upheavals, its turbulence.'
(OET 161).(10)

While it makes sense to say that a painting or a sculpture is of something this does not make much sense in the case of music. At least in the case of realist paintings it can be seen what the painting is a painting of (whether or not the object of depiction is something that exists). In music this is far more difficult and Merleau-Ponty thinks the reason is that music has a generality which painting lacks. Music depicts the changes in what is as they might be given to a subject, almost irrespective of what is.

Art is paradigmatically painting for Merleau-Ponty and for two reasons. Painting is revelatory of the visibility of what is, the visibility of what is revelatory of what is, so painting is revelatory of what is. Secondly, painting uncovers the role of the body in the constitution of what is.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Painting is revelatory of the nature of being not only because what is is paradigmatically visible and painting depicts the visible qua visible, but also because

'Only the painter is entitled to look at everything without being obliged to appraise what he sees.' (OET 161)(11)

Painting exhibits an objectivity which not only the sciences but even the other arts lack. Here Merleau-Ponty turns the table on a widely held assumption: art is in some broad sense 'subjective' and science is in some broad sense 'objective'. 'Subjective' and 'objective' are useless words in philosophy unless they can be disambiguated but one sense of subjective is: x is subjective if and only if x is wholly or partly constituted by the psychology of the subject, and one sense of 'objective' is 'x is objective if and only if x is and x wholly is what it is irrespective of the psychology of any subject'. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty thinks science is a 'construction' (OET 160) and this means not only that the theories and the experiments of science are human artefacts but also the world as depicted by science is itself a human artefact. Its coming, so to speak, to be that world, is a contrivance of human intelligence, human ingenuity. It follows logically that science is subjective in the sense defined above. Of course science might not be thus subjective because some of Merleau-Ponty's premises might be false. They are certainly philosophically contentious. However, the derivation is valid.

Now, art cannot be objective in the sense of 'objective' that contrasts with 'subjective' above. This is because it could not with any plausibility be argued that art is not a 'construction'. Works of art are products of the human world just as much as the theories and experiments of science. But that is not what Merleau-Ponty is claiming. He is claiming that the artist is passive and nonevaluative in the face of his subject matter and that subject matter itself belongs to the lived world. So long as he paints well, then, the painter paints the world as we experience it, as we live through it. There is a profound sense in which it follows that the painter paints the world as it is: the world 'as it is' can only mean 'as it is for us'. This is not a kind of subjectivism, *prima facie* appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, because we have no conception of any world as it is unless this means as it is for us.

Painting is phenomenologically prior to science. Unless the world is as depicted in painting there could be no science. This is because painting is

painting of the lived world and the lived world grounds science. Without the lived world there could be no scientists and no scientific subject matter.

Merleau-Ponty calls painting 'this secret science' perhaps because it contains an objectivity that is usually assumed only to pertain to the strict or natural sciences. Perhaps also because it is a fundamental enquiry into the universe, a more profound inquiry than any scientific inquiry.

Merleau-Ponty asks whether there is anything that grounds painting, anything that makes even painting possible:

'What, then, is this secret science which he [the painter] has or which he seeks? That dimension which lets Van Gogh say he must go "further on" ? What is this fundamental of painting, perhaps of all culture ?' (OET 161).
(12)

Merleau-Ponty is establishing a hierarchy of dependencies: Science depends on the lived world. The lived world could not be what it is unless it were a visible world. The lived world qua visible world could not be what it is unless it could at least in principle be painted. Now he is asking what has to be the case for something to be a possible object of painting, what the necessary conditions for depiction by painting are.

If this hierarchy seems shocking or provocative it is because it is phenomenological rather than commonsensical or positivist. Nonphenomenologically we would assume that unless the world is as described by science then there could be no painters, no canvases, no paint or brushes and no empirical world to depict by painting. But Merleau-Ponty would say that this hierarchy, however psychologically compelling, however much we think it must be right, is an abstraction. It is an abstraction because it is derived from thinking about the world not from experiencing it. In the background again are the old dualisms Merleau-Ponty seeks to overcome: rationalism and empiricism, idealism and realism. Here the commonsensical and positivist hierarchy is rationalist and ideal. The phenomenological hierarchy is empiricist and real. If we think in terms of what we experience, if we so to speak, pause to look and see, it is possible to see the plausibility in Merleau-Ponty's hierarchy. Unless we were acquainted with a world of everyday physical things it is hard to see how we could make sense of the postulates of science or so-called common sense.

Merleau-Ponty finds a clue to what makes painting possible in the physical activity of painting:

e cannot imagine how a mind could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations we must go back to the working, actual body not the body as a chunk of space or a bundle of functions but that body which is an intertwining of vision and movement' (OET 162).(13)

It is perhaps too strong to say that we cannot imagine how a mind could paint he means a mind without a body. I can imagine this. Suppose one never perceived one's body, for example, suppose one's body never entered one's visual field so that one 'saw' objects which would normally be concealed by one's body. Suppose further that one is aware of one's thoughts and some of these thoughts are intentions and willings to paint parts of a picture. Suppose further, by the mere thinking of these thoughts and the exerting of these acts of will a brush suspended in mid air were to leave paint on the canvas in accordance with one's intention and will. This would be imagining a mind painting.

It is important to separate the idea that this happens from the idea that this can be imagined: the implausibility of its happening is not the impossibility of its being imagined. (Although, its being imagined without contradiction removes all logical obstacles to its happening). If one balks at the idea of imagining psychophysical causal connections, think of the relation between one's own intentions and one's own bodily movements. They are as mysterious or as uncontroversial as moving objects in the external world by mere acts of will.

However, a more modest claim does go though: the painter uses his body to paint. It is then a phenomenologically legitimate project to describe the role of the body in making painting possible: empirically possible or phenomenologically possible. By 'phenomenologically possible' here I mean: x makes y phenomenologically possible if and only if y could not have the phenomenology it has unless x has the phenomenology it has. We could allow an additional sense: x makes y phenomenologically possible if and only if x allows y to be a possible object of experience. Before turning to that, however, we should examine Merleau-Ponty's claim that '*le peintre change le monde en peinture*' (OE 16) 'the artist changes the world into paintings' (OET 162). ('The painter changes the world into painting' would be a more accurate translation.)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

One way of taking this is to consider that a painting is itself, in a sense, a part of the world. A painting is a manipulation of matter and changing of the spatiotemporal location of innumerable physical items. Matter is wrought into a new form. In this sense, part of the world is changed into a painting. Wood, paint and canvas are changed into a painting.

Another interpretation is this: painting the world enables us to perceive the world as like a painting. For Merleau-Ponty this, in some respects, means perceiving the world as it is; that is, as we directly experience it to be as opposed to how we believe it to be.

Now, paintings are produced by the painter qua body subject, not qua physical object. In the body subject there is a mutual dependence between vision and movement which painting both reveals and depends upon. According to Merleau-Ponty we would not see what we see unless we could move as we do and we could not move as we do unless we could see as we see. This is why he says there is 'an intertwining of vision and movement'. Notably, the world appears visually like a world through which I could travel and the world I travel through feels like the world I see. Here is an interdependence between movement and vision:

'My mobile body makes a difference in the visible world, being a part of it; that is why I can steer through the visible.' (OET 162)(14)

The visible world would not look how it does unless I could take a mobile route through it, but unless it looked to me how it does I could not take any route through it. Here is a dependence of vision on motion:

'Vision is attached to movement. We see only what we look at. And what would vision be without eye movement ?'
(OET 162)(15)

However, the bare movement of the eyes qua physical objects is not sufficient for vision, they have to be the functioning eyes of a conscious body subject:

'How could the movement of the eyes bring things together if the movement were blind ? If it were only a reflex ?'
(OET 162).(16)

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

If only a thirdperson singular physiological description of the eye were possible then we could not conclude from this that the eye sees. It is the the eye's being part of a body subject engaged in the world that is further necessary for vision.

The visible world and the world of my movements are in fact one and the same world, describable either in terms of possible routes or in terms of what can be seen. Each of us has both what Merleau-Ponty calls 'the map of the visible' (OET 162)(17) and 'the map of the "I can"' (OET 162)(18): not only the idea of what I can see but the idea of the totality of my possible projects. He says

'chacune des deux cartes est complete' (OE 17) 'each of these two maps is complete' (OET 162) but adds that although there are two 'maps' there are not two worlds. What they depict is so mutually dependent that we can only talk of one world:

'The visible world and the world of my motor projects are each total parts of the same Being.' (OET 162)(20)

Merleau-Ponty thinks that the philosophical implications of this mutual dependence have been underestimated (at least, this is how I read his claim that we do not think sufficiently about 'cet extraordinaire empiement' (OE 17) 'this extraordinary overlapping' (OE 163). Notably, the numerical identity of the world of motor action and the world of vision prevents our correctly conceiving the world as only a picture or a representation. Merleau-Ponty does not spell out the philosophical implications of this but they may be conjectured.

We may use Merleau-Ponty's identification of the world as a set of routes for my travelling with the visible world to combat a pervasive and recurrent tendency in the philosophy of mind and perception. This is the view, or the sceptical possibility, that the world we experience is only a representation, or, if not that, then in some sense just mental: a set of ideas, impressions, sense data, phenomena and so on. The viability of this view derives from neglecting the fact that the world is one I may travel through and privileging the fact that the world is a visible world. We may use Merleau-Ponty's identification of the motorworld with the visible world to place the onus on the idealist or the sceptic to argue for the privileging of vision over movement; of contemplation over action.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Suppose Merleau-Ponty is right that the world could not have its visible properties unless it was a set of routes for my travels and vice versa. If the world is a visual world then that will then turn out to be a sufficient condition for the world being a motor world.

The idealist and the sceptic accept that the world is a visual world, but a necessary condition for the world's being visual is that it be a motor world. But then the world is a motor world and that is inconsistent with idealism and scepticism about the world. This is because it makes no sense to say that I travel through a world that is not physical or is a part of me. If the world is not motor then the world is not visible. The world is visible. Therefore, the world is motor.

If this argument is sound then Merleau-Ponty's exhibition of the dependence of the visual on the motor may be used to solve two long standing and conceptually interrelated problems in philosophy: Is there an external world? and Is the external world only mental? The answers are, respectively, 'yes' and 'no'.

e. It may be, for example like Merleau-Ponty's subjectless view of science is a logical prerequisite for the impossibility of a scientific account of being in the world. The argument is this: If something is an account of being in the world then it must postulate a subject. Science postulates no subject. Science cannot provide an account of being in the world:

Time Constitutes Itself

Having putatively shown the impossibility of an atemporal constitution of time and having advanced the idea of a temporal subject as the right 'supplement' of time, Merleau-Ponty tries to show that this temporal constitution of time is consistent with the thesis that time constitutes itself, that, with regard to time; 'Il se constitue' (PP 244).

To evaluate this purported consistency we need to know what it is for time to constitute itself. In phenomenology if a constitutes b then a makes b be what b is, so, if something constitutes itself it makes itself be what it is. It follows that if time constitutes itself then time makes itself be what it is.

Merleau-Ponty discusses the selfconstitution of time in the context of a critique of Husserl's phenomenology of internal time consciousness. In particular Merleau-Ponty is sceptical about the role of receptivity in Husserl because it seems to presuppose the existence of an ultimately

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

nonconstituting element within the subject that constitutes time. Merleau-Ponty agrees with Husserl that time constitutes itself but thinks this truth is inconsistent with Husserl's postulation of receptivity. Here is the agreement;

'H. a raison de dire que ce n'est pas moi qui constitue le temps, qu'il se constitue, qu'il est un Selbsterscheinung' (VI 244).

'H. is right to say that it is not I who constitute time, that it constitutes itself, that it is a Selbsterscheinung' (VIT 190).

But when Merleau-Ponty raises this question

'Qu'est que l'element <<receptif>> de la conscience absolue ?' (VI244)

'What is the "receptive" element of the absolute consciousness?' (VIT 190)

he provides only this answer

'Le terme de <<receptivite>> est impropre justement parce qu'il evoque un Soi distinct du present et qui le recoit' (VI 244).

'The term "receptivity" is improper precisely because it evokes a self distinct from the present and who receives it' (VIT 190).

Merleau-Ponty thinks it is false both that the subject is distinct from the present and that the subject receives the present.

Although, as we have seen, Merleau-Ponty thinks it false that the subject exists at all and only the same time as the present it constitutes, nevertheless there is a sense in which the present of the subject's constitution is partly the same time as the present of the time that is constituted: acts of constitution are partly simultaneous with constituted temporal items.

Crucially, however, Merleau-Ponty thinks Husserl's use of 'receptivity' commits him to the existence of a subject that is not temporal at all, or at least, not present.

Now, from the fact that some subject is passive or receptive with regard to time it does not logically follow that that subject is not itself temporal nor,

indeed, present. There is no incoherence in the idea of temporal predicates, including the predicate 'is present' truly applying to a subject who passively apprehends or registers the present and in no way constitutes it in a quasi Husserlian or Kantian manner. It follows from this that Husserl is not logically committed to the position that Merleau-Ponty criticises. (It does not follow, of course, that Husserl is not independently committed to this position).

Merleau-Ponty has the makings of a refutation of the position in his thesis that the putatively constituting subject is partly simultaneous with the present it constitutes: If something is present then whatever is simultaneous with that thing is also present so if the putatively constituted items are present and if the subject is simultaneous with those items then the subject is present. The trouble with this refutation is that it proves too much. Its conclusion is inconsistent with Merleau-Ponty's own thesis that the present of the subject does not coincide exactly with the present of the constituted present. The price of proving that the constituting subject is temporal is that it is simultaneous with what it constitutes if both are present.

Merleau-Ponty also thinks it is false that the subject 'receives' the present and, again, ascribes this view to Husserl. Husserl insists that time is actively constituted by the subject but thinks this is logically consistent with the obtaining of a kind of receptivity. Merleau-Ponty's repudiation of receptivity is not only inconsistent with that view but also with any view on which time is not actively constituted but only 'received'. Two issues arise: whether there is a sense in which the subject is cognitively passive in respect to time and if so, whether this is logically consistent with the thesis that that subject is cognitively active with respect to time.

There is a clear empirical sense in which one is passive with respect to time. One apprehends the order in which events in time happen and notes them as before, after, simultaneous, partly simultaneous, beginning, ending. These orderings are experienced as not dependent upon their being apprehended even though theses in physics and phenomenology show the appearance of independence to be naive. Nevertheless, the ordinary experience of passivity is a kind of passivity that must be recognised as such. We could call this 'surface' passivity.

This surface passivity, which in the *Notes de Travail*, Merleau-Ponty is logically committed to rejecting, is consistent with the complex constitution of time in *The Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time*

Consciousness. We may read Husserl as providing an explanation of the possibility of surface passivity.

The receptivity in Husserl that Merleau-Ponty is seeking to refute is more profound. It is a putative property of absolute consciousness ('la conscience absolue' VI 244). Despite Husserl's detailed characterisations of the subject's active constitution of time and despite his ascription of temporal properties to those constitutive acts it is true that Husserl thinks there is an ultimate nontemporal ground of time. This is not the transcendental ego because that has the temporal property of enduring as long as the subject endures. It is absolute consciousness. Absolute consciousness includes an awareness of time but is not itself temporal.

This idea seems to me not ultimately incoherent, but the receptivity could not be a sequence of events: absolute consciousness would have to apprehend temporal items all at once and not consecutively. Absolute consciousness would have to be the kind of atemporal apprehension of time that is sometimes ascribed to God.

Could time constitute itself? Merleau-Ponty is clearly right that time's self constitution is inconsistent with its constitution by an atemporal subject, whether an a temporal supplement, a Husserlian absolute consciousness or a nontemporal God. This clearly follows because if time is wholly or partly constituted by something nontemporal then time is constituted by something other than itself. (I leave aside the objection that it makes no sense to say that time is temporal and treat the claim as analytic).

The questions now remain of whether Merleau-Ponty's thesis that time is constituted by the temporal constitutive acts of a temporal subject may be accurately called 'time constituting itself' and whether the thesis could be true.

The designation seems to me appropriate if we take it to mean that that which makes objective time what it is is itself temporal and not nontemporal. By 'objective time' here I mean those properties of time that are *prima facie* subject independent.

The thesis Merleau-Ponty has advanced is largely internally coherent so there is no a priori or logical obstacle to its essential truth. However, his account only functions as an explanation of objective time. It does not function as an account of the possibility of time as a whole. It is unlikely that time as a whole could be selfconstituting: make itself be what it is. If we wish to know how time is possible we have to look outside time.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

PHENOMENOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

PSYCHOANALYSIS

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psychoanalysis, philosophy of. Although psychoanalysis was founded by the Moravianborn Viennese doctor Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) as a cure for neuroses, it has become a **Weltanschauung* putatively explanatory of human thought and **action*. Actions are expressions of libido and childhood trauma and are products of the power struggle between ego, superego and id. The psychoanalytical thesis that my actions are caused by mental states of mine of which I am unaware is inconsistent with the **Cartesian* doctrine that if I am in a mental state then I know I am in that state. Philosophical problems raised by psychoanalysis include: What does a mental state's being mental consist in if it is unconscious? Could I be in a mental state without being aware of that state? Could a physical event have mental causes? How could bringing a neurosis to consciousness cure it (given that bringing a physical ailment to consciousness does not cure that)? Are psychoanalytical explanations genuinely scientific or spurious? **Lacan's* work is a synthesis of **structuralism* and psychoanalysis informed by **Hegel*. **Marcuse's* *Eros and Civilisation* (1955) is a synthesis of **Marxism* and psychoanalysis critical of technocratic capitalism and influenced by Freud's *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (*Civilisation and Its Discontents*) (1930). Norman O. Brown draws on the later Freud and **Nietzsche* in *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959) to argue that unconscious repression characterizes not only the individual but, disturbingly, the historical process as a whole. The most overtly philosophical of Freud's own works are those on metapsychology: *Das Unbewusste* (*The Unconscious*) (1915), *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) (1920) and *Das Ich und das Es* (*The Ego and the Id*) (1923).

XII PSYCHOANALYSIS

The Viennese doctor Sigmund Freud (1856-1938) designed psychoanalysis as a scientific cure for neurotic disorders through the patient talking to a trained 'analyst'. It has become a *Weltanschauung* whose scientific status is controversial. Psychoanalysis entails the antiCartesian tenet that I may be in mental states of which I am wholly or partly unaware. My actions are the product of a power struggle between ego, superego and id and are the expression of libido and childhood trauma. Cure or explanation entails making the unconscious conscious.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Sartre invents a kind of explanation called 'existential psychoanalysis' even though he insists that the unconscious does not exist because the idea of an unconscious mental state is contradictory. Part of a state's being mental is its being conscious. How is this psychoanalysis without the unconscious possible?

To decide this, we need to examine what Sartre endorses and repudiates in classical or Freudian psychoanalysis. Sartre and Freud agree that the explanation of human action has to be holistic not atomistic. Any piece of behaviour, no matter how trivial, is revelatory and symbolic of the person as a totality, in terms of whom it has to be deciphered. A person cannot be understood as an aggregate of empirical components. Nevertheless, both Sartre and Freud reject any fixed, a priori view of human nature whether biological, historical or theological. A person cannot be usefully studied in abstraction from their life, including their lived situations.

Sartre's rejection of the unconscious is not so Cartesian as might appear. From the fact that my mental states are conscious it does not follow that I know what they are. Even if my attitudes towards my hopes, fears and intentions are conscious I may misunderstand or be ignorant of their contents.

Sartre replaces the Freudian concept of libido with his own concept of the project. Existential psychoanalysis entails the disclosure of a person's fundamental or original project. Sartre knows that each of us has many empirical aims, hopes and fears. Indeed, the possible projects of an individual form an infinite set. By the fundamental or original project Sartre means the unity of my deeds that fuses them into my biography. My original project does not predate my biography. Sartre denies that my actions are inwardly or mentally rehearsed before I perform them. Indeed, there is no unconscious mind or noumenal realm where this could be executed. My original project is who I am making myself through living. Sartre says the original project is the project of being. It is the desire to be. What is the desire to be?

Sartre partly means the desire to live rather than die. He also means the desire of being-for-itself to be someone, to be something. Ultimately, the original project is the inevitably frustrated desire of being-for-itself to be a synthesis of being-for-itself and being-in-itself, the desire, in fact, to be God. Existentially, it is the pattern of the uncomfortable exercise of free selfdefinition. If there is an a priori (but not chronologically prior) tenet of existential psychoanalysis it is the original project.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Because the being of beingfor itself is not distinguishable from choice, existential psychoanalysis must uncover what Sartre calls ‘the original choice’. In a fashion reminiscent of Hindu and Buddhist doctrines of karma (kama) Sartre holds that who I am here and now is a direct consequence of my previous subjective choices. Existential psychoanalysis explains why I am who I am through bringing to knowledge the choice original to my present condition. As in classical psychoanalysis, I can in principle psychoanalyse myself but this is difficult because it requires the detachment involved in treating oneself as another. Whether selfadministered or not, existential psychoanalysis like classical analysis aims at a therapeutic selfknowledge.

Sartre deploys the techniques of existential psychoanalysis with increasing sophistication in his biographies of Baudelaire (1947), Jean Genet (1952) and Flaubert (1972). His ambition in writing the Flaubert is to totally explain another human being. *The Idiot of the Family* is a methodological culmination of Sartre’s work, drawing on the phenomenology of *The Psychology of the Imagination*, the Marxist existentialism of *Search for a Method and Critique of Dialectical Reason* as well as the existential psychoanalysis of *Being and Nothingness*. The title is taken from Gustave Flaubert’s father’s judgement on his young son; ‘You will be the idiot of the family’.

Sartre’s biography seeks to uncover Flaubert’s selfconstitution as a writer within his lived historical situation. Although in *Being and Nothingness* Sartre only claims to have shown the possibility of existential psychoanalysis and admits that the discipline has not yet found its Freud, Sartre thought that in the concrete case of his writing on Flaubert one person had wholly explained another.

Two extracts follow, one from *Sketch For a Theory of the Emotions*, the other the chapter called *Existential Psychoanalysis* from *Being and Nothingness*. In *Sketch For a Theory of the Emotions* we see the Sartre of 1939 distancing himself from classical psychoanalysis through the example of emotion. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre argues the merits of psychoanalysis over empiricist and positivist psychology and then argues the merits of his own psychoanalysis over Freud’s.

Freud

Derrida's second acknowledgement is to Freud. Freud is not a

philosopher. We should take him at his word when he says he is a psychoanalyst. This is not to deny that psychoanalysis may be of great philosophical interest or that it may provide explanations of philosophical motivations. For psychoanalysis be philosophy, there would have to be psychoanalytical solutions to philosophical problems. Derrida says he is not engaged in a psychoanalysis of philosophy. But what is the psychoanalytical status of this direct disavowal? Derrida is concerned with what philosophy represses, philosophy's other, what philosophy is afraid of, that which shows itself in the margins of philosophy.

In so far as Derrida represents Freud's ontology of the subject accurately, it is essentially Kantian. Derrida says there is a "Freudian critique of selfpresence, that is, the critique of consciousness, of the subject, of selfidentity and of selfproximity or selfpossession (du sujet, de l'identité a soi, de la proximité ou de la propriété a soi)" (6) Derrida's use of 'critique of selfpresence' and 'critique of the subject' entails the thesis essential to psychoanalysis that a person is never directly acquainted with themselves psychologically just as they really are. Prior to analysis, much of the content of consciousness is opaque to introspection and the nonintrospectible faculty of the psyche called the 'unconscious' largely determines the content of 'consciousness' which is introspectively available.

Freud's theory of the self is Kantian. Roger Scruton points out that Kant's account of the self 'has provided the cornerstone of many subsequent philosophies of the self, from that of Schopenhauer to those of Husserl, Heidegger and Wittgenstein'. I conjecture that Scruton might allow at least Hegel, Freud, Sartre and Derrida onto his list. (7) For example, Kant thinks that in self-consciousness (including introspection) a person never knows or perceives himself just as he really is, but only as he appears to himself. I can never know myself noumenally only phenomenally. (Noumenon, in its etymology, derives from ● //▼ ? : 'mind'.) The categories constitute the subject in introspection or 'inner sense' as they constitute the objects of outer sense. In so far as I cannot know myself I have freedom but in so far as I can know myself I am not free but causally determined, The Kantian picture leaves conceptual room for the free 'play' of the Freudian unconscious but an inevitability of the contents of 'surface' consciousness being what they are. Kant is therefore engaged in a critique of selfidentity, selfpresence or selfpossession. I am never fully present to myself. I cannot 'own' myself in the sense of fully place the self that I know under my own control. I am not kn/own/ed by myself. My self is not myself.

Derrida's expression 'critique of [...] selfpresence' could be used to accurately denote Kant's paradox of subject-object dualism: "The whole difficulty is as to how a subject can inwardly intuit itself; and this is a difficulty common to every theory." (8) because "[...] it then intuits itself not as it would represent itself if immediately selfactive but as it is affected by itself, and therefore as it appears to itself, not as it is." (9) The subject is in its own way. Being in its own way stops it being, in its own way. It affects itself in trying to know itself. Being it is an obstacle to knowing it. It is common to Kant and Freud that the structures of the psyche itself are a barrier to its own selfknowledge. Whenever 'I' is used, it has a single referent but this referent falls under (at least) two distinguishable descriptions: of the self as it is and of the self as it appears to itself. On the Freudian and Kantian account, the content of the appearance is determined by the content of the hidden, and it is difficult for the self to know the content of the hidden. Indeed, where Kant is consistent, this is according to him impossible.

Kant sometimes speaks as though the phenomena/noumena distinction were a causal one. This is inconsistent of Kant on two counts: firstly, causal relations (because categorial) only obtain in the empirical world and, secondly, it is at variance with his considered antirealist view of noumena. In so far as he does subscribe to the causal view, however, noumena are at least a condition of phenomenal existence, possibly also of what they are so, on that reading: I as I really am am a causal condition of myself as I appear to myself. In so far as this can be extracted from Kant, his view is more than just consistent with Freud's doctrine that the unconscious determines the conscious. It is entailed by it.

This appearance/reality distinction also captures 'critique of self identity'. Kant would not wish to say I differed from myself because, logically, there could not be something that is not what it is, whatever it is. However, he accepts at least these complications about the self: I exist as subject, as that which experiences. I exist as object, for my own or others' experiences. I exist as both subject and object in so far as I perceive or know myself (even if this is just an appearance). Derrida, following Sartre and Hegel, is prepared to say the subject is not 'self identical' to describe this structure. Even though Kant shuns the Hegelian vocabulary his paradoxical subject-object dualism entails the same the ontology of the self.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

To criticise metaphysics is to engage in it. Speaking of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Freud, Derrida says “Now all these destructive discourses and all their analogues are trapped in a sort of circle (Or tous ces discours destructeurs et tous leurs analogues sont prises dans une sorte de cercle).” (11) The problem is: “There is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics (il n’y a aucun sens à passer des concepts de la métaphysique pour ébranler la métaphysique)” (12)

Derrida says of his own efforts to erase the difference between signifier and signified: “The paradox is that the metaphysical reduction of the sign needed the opposition it was reducing. The opposition is part of the system, along with the reduction.” (19) Derrida is right and Kant would have agreed when he says: “[...] what I am saying here about the sign can be extended to all the concepts and all the sentences of metaphysics.” (20) and “[...] every particular borrowing drags along with it the whole of metaphysics.” (21) Derrida thinks this accounts for the fact that diverse philosophers (two of whom, I should say, are centrally within the critical paradigm) accuse each other of metaphysics:

“This is what allows these destroyers to destroy each other reciprocally – for example, Heidegger considering Nietzsche, with as much lucidity and rigor as bad faith and misconstruction, as the last metaphysician, the last “Platonist”. One could do the same for Heidegger himself, for Freud, or for a number of others. And today no exercise is more widespread.” (22)

One could do the same for Derrida himself. Derrida is one of these quelques autres. Derrida desires to give ‘logocentrism’, *différance* (which is neither a word nor a concept), ‘trace’, ‘the metaphysics of presence’, the status of not being privileged but thereby gives them the privilege of not being privileged. Derrida massively privileges *différance*:

“[...] the movement of *différance*, as that which produces different things, that which differentiates, is the common root of all the oppositional concepts that mark our language, such as [...] sensible/intelligible, intuition/signification, nature/culture. As a common root, *différance* is also the element of the same (to be distinguished from the identical) in which

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

these oppositions are announced. [...] and différance [...] is the condition for any signification and any structure.” (23)

we can read Kant’s ‘noumenal self’ as a Lacanian unconscious on three counts: It is not aware of itself as it really is, it is oneself as one really is, it is only a structured and determinate object in so far as it is categorically organized.

The subject, for Lacan, and to an extent for Foucault, is linguistically constituted as it is for Kant, even though Kant leaves room for a noumenal, autonomous self-in-itself: Something is linguistically constituted.

From Kant, and the transcendental constitution of the ego, through Hegel and the subject as an aspect of Geist, to Barthes's 'codes', from Lacan's linguistic unconscious to Derrida's poststructuralist 'deconstruction' of the subject, there has been a revolt against the idea that the individual human subject is an autonomous generator of 'meanings' which we, as others, discover by some quasipsychological inquiry or, still less, which is disclosed transparently through presence to the subject or in the subject's selfpresence. Rather, there are transcendental conditions for the subject's ability to speak, to find his environment intelligible, and even to be, whether these conditions be Kant's categories, Hegel's Geist, Marx's class structures, the structuralists' 'signs' or the grammar of Wittgenstein's public language. It is the role of critical philosophy in its various manifestations, its appearance and its protest, to discover, reveal, and make explicit such transcendental conditions.

SEXUALITY

Merleau-Ponty's philosophical motivation in devising a phenomenology of sexuality is to prove his thesis that being-in-the-world is the primordial fact of human existence. He hopes to show that over cognitive conceptions of the human person are damagingly reductionist, and parasitical upon the truth of his own phenomenology for their formulation. For there records he says: 'let us try to see how a thing or a being begins to exist for us through desire or love and we shall thereby come to understand better how things and beings can exist in general' (PP 154).

According to Merleau-Ponty the existence of sexual desire presupposes some central tenets of his phenomenology. Notably, sexual desire would be impossible without intentionality, the body subject and the being-in-the-world of that subject. Now, the nature of this presupposition is not made clear by Merleau-Ponty, but argument may be provided for the existence of the presupposition. Suppose A desires B sexually, then A stands in an intentional relation to B because it would be incoherent to suppose that A desires B sexually but has no awareness of B. If awareness is an intentional relation, then, so is sexual desire. Arguably, too, A may only sexually desire B if A and B are physical and if at least A is a physical subject. This is because the criteria for the individuation of the object of sexual desire are unclear if that object is not physical, or, minimally spatiotemporal. Also, if the having of sexual desire presupposes the actuality or the possibility of bodily sexual sensations then sexual desire presupposes bodily subjectivity. Only physical subjects may feel sexual desire. Also, arguably, sexual desire, presupposes being-in-the-world in Merleau-Ponty's sense, or something very much like it, because if A desires B sexually then A and B share a world and there exists at least the conceivability of sexual relations within it.

Merleau-Ponty thinks that once we are persuaded of these presuppositions we will give up any over cognitive conception of sexuality and will endorse this view;

'Erotic perception is not a cogitatio which aims at a cogitatum : through one body it aims at another body, and takes place in the world, not in a consciousness' (PP 157).

The perception of the other as an object of sexual desire is not simply the relation of a known to a known. The relationship is not only intellectual but involves the whole person or is a 'perception' in Merleau-Ponty's broad sense. The subject desires the other with his or her own body. This is not just the fact that desiring another sexually entails desiring bodily sexual relations with the other. It is that, but it is also the claim that the body subject is the subject of desire: I use my body to desire the other, or, better, qua my body I desire the other. For this reason sexual desire 'takes place

in the world' ('Elle se fait dans le monde' Phen 183) and 'not in consciousness' ('Non pas dans une conscience' Phen 183). Erotic perception ('La perception erotique' Phen 183) entails sexual desire, so if sexual desire presupposes bodily subjectivity and being in the world then so does erotic perception. I take it that A perceives B erotically if and only if A perceives B but thereby desires to have sexual relations with B. The desire to have sex with the other is, so to speak, 'read into'. The other as object of perception. The perception and the sexual thought are not separate. Better, the perception is a sexual perception:

'This objective perception has within it a more intimate perception: the visible body is subtended by a sexual schema, which is strictly individual, emphasising the erogenous areas, outlining a sexual physiognomy' (PP 156).

Merleau-Ponty calls this perception an 'emotional totality' (PP 156) ('Totalite affective' Phen 182). When he says the body of the other is subsumed under a 'sexual schema' ('Soustendu par un schema sexuel' Phen 182) this implies that sexual perception is partly the selective perception of the sexual zones of the other. It is not just this, it is also the perception of the whole person or, more accurately, the perception of the other as a whole person. However, it is a perception that emphasises the bodily sexuality of the other.

Merleau-Ponty also says sexual perception is 'strictly individual' ('Strictement individuel' Phen 182). This should not be taken to mean that the sexual perception of one object of desire logically or otherwise precludes the perception of another. Rather, Merleau-Ponty is saying that the sexual perception of an individual is partly sexual desire for that individual qua that individual.

Because sexual perception exhibits these phenomenological structures 'a body is not perceived merely as any object' (PP 156) ('Un corps n'est pas seulement percu comme un objet quelconque' Phen 182). Rather, the other is perceived as a physical subject. The perceived body of the other is the exteriority of the other's subjectivity.

Merleau-Ponty claims that erotic perception is prior to what he calls 'understanding' (PP 157) under 'comprehension' (PP 157) ('Comprehension' Phen 183). 'Understanding', as Merleau-Ponty defines it, denotes the subsumption of some experience (or, more precisely, some experiential content) under an idea. 'Comprehension', in contrast, is not mediated by ideas and is therefore not intellectual. The thesis that sexual perception is not a kind of understanding, but understanding, in sexual contexts, presupposes comprehension is intended as a substantiation of his general thesis that the engagement of the body subject in the world is a condition for perception as a kind of consciousness. Its he puts it:

'There is an erotic 'comprehension' not of the order of understanding, since understanding subsumes an experience, once perceived, under some idea, while desire comprehends blindly by linking body to body' (PP 157).

Merleau-Ponty is not denying that a certain amount of imaginative projection is required to constitute the other as an object of sexual desire. I take it that is part of what is involved in sexual perception not taking its intentional object as just 'any object'. But intellectual reflexion upon the object of desire, and one's relation to that object, requires 'erotic comprehension'. This is why he says 'sexual life is one more form of original intentionality' (PP 157) ('Une intentionalite originale' Phen 184). Some intentional relation is an original relation if it makes other intentional relations possible. Original intentionality is an 'intentional arc' ('Arc inentionel' Phen 184) which makes possible perceptual representations.

Sexuality, then, for Merleau-Ponty is a manner of being in the world. It is a primordial existential relation and only derivatively a cognitive or intellectual one. This thesis gives rise to two questions, the answers to which Merleau-Ponty thinks form a disjunction:

'When we generalise the notion of sexuality, making it a manner of being in the physical and interhuman world, do we mean, in the last analysis, that all existence has a sexual significance of that every sexual phenomenon has an existential significance?' (PP 159).

It seems to me that affirmative answers to both questions are not mutually exclusive. Merleau-Ponty denies outright that all existence has a sexual meaning. His ground is that such a claim would be senseless, the term 'sexuality' would just be another name for existence. He says 'there is now no sense in saying that all existence is understood through the sexual life'. This would be a 'tautology', and, he assumes, tautologies are senseless. I think Merleau-Ponty is not right to hold that the claim that all existence has sexual significance is a tautology. It is a claim genuinely capable of truth or falsity, which if true, would give new information about existence. Merleau-Ponty fails to see this because he fails to make a distinction between sense and reference. Because (as he rightly holds) 'existence' and 'sexuality' would have a single refutant he falsely concludes that 'existence' and 'sexuality' would have the same sense. That however is invalid. Merleau-Ponty, however, should not be charged with mistakingly concluding that 'all existence is sexual' is false on the ground that the sentence is senseless. That would be a mistake but he need not be construed as making it. We can just construe him as saying that it is not true that all existence is sexual on the grounds that the sentence is senseless. That is right because nonsensical sentences are neither true nor false and if they are neither true nor false then they are not true.

Because the claim that all existence is sexual is not meaningless Merleau-Ponty should have evaluated its truth value more closely. It seems to me a more cautious claim may in fact be true: any portion of existence may (in principle) be of sexual significance. This is because there is no a priori obstacle to any portion of existence being the object of sexual desire. The meaningfulness of this thought, is however, parasitic upon the idea of sexual relations between living beings.

Merleau-Ponty next examines the converse possibility that every sexual phenomenon may have an existential significance. Strangely, he does not attempt to deploy the same kind of 'tautology' argument even though, on his own terms, if 'existence is sexual' is tautologous then so is 'sexuality is existential'. Ironically this is to his advantage as neither sentence is a tautology.

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

In this context something has 'existential significance' if it is a structure of beingintheworld. Essentially that is what sexuality is for Merleau-Ponty so, essentially, sexuality does have existential significance. In a passage marking the extent of his agreement with what he takes to be Freudianism he says:

'In so far as a man's sexual history provides a key to his life, it is because in his sexuality is projected his manner of being towards the world, that is, towards time and other men' (PP 158).

Notice that Merleau-Ponty's unconscious sexism in this passage not only excludes women from his analysis but also makes male homosexual relations existentially primordial. (The sexism is in the original French: 'l'homme', 'des autres hommes' Phen 185). Leaving aside the ironic possibility of an unconsciously expressed thesis that might have appealed to both Socrates and Michel Foucault we can read Merleau-Ponty's intended answer as affirmative. All sexuality has existential significance.

In fact, the relationships between sexuality and existence (in his sense of the fundamental structures of beingintheworld) is close and subtle for Merleau-Ponty. He says 'It is at all times present there like an atmosphere' (PP 168) ('Elle y est constamment presente commen une atmosphere' Phen 196), and 'as an ambiguous atmosphere, sexuality is coextensive with life' (PP 169) ('Comme atmosphère ambiguë, la sexualité est coextensive à la vie' Phen 197).

Lived sexuality may be accurately described only in metaphorical and poetic terms, that is why sexuality is an 'atmosphere'. The thought is, so to speak, that sexuality pervades human relations. It informs speech, perception and bodily movement in a way that is present in them. Sexuality is not an addition to human life but a primordial structure of beingintheworld that is expressed through human life. As he puts it 'existence permeates sexuality and vice versa' PP 169). ('Si l'existence diffuse dans la sexualité, réciproquement la sexualité diffuse dans l'existence' Phen 197).

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

When he calls sexuality an 'ambiguous atmosphere' he means sexuality is open to numerous interpretations. As we have seen, it is a recurrent Leitmotif of Merleau-Ponty's thought that anything can be interpreted. Nothing has only one, perennial meaning. This ambiguity, or amenability to multiple interpretations, is part of what is involved in being human. For this reason he says ambiguity is of the essence of human existence, and everything we live or think has always several 'meanings' (PP 169). He holds this true in different ways. Human beings are essentially interpretative beings and human beings and their mutual relations are essentially open to human interpretation.

Merleau-Ponty also argues that sexuality cannot be wholly or appropriately explained in behaviourist and scientific terms. He of course does not deny the biological facts about sexual life, what he denies is that the phenomenology of sex may be captured in any purely scientific description.

The natural sciences treat their subject matter as only 'other'. What escapes analysis is the subjectivity of the subject, the subjectivity of the other, and the lived existential relations between them. For example he says 'modesty, desire and love .. are incomprehensible if man is treated as a machine governed by natural laws' (PP 166). It is also inadequate to regard a person as 'a bundle of instincts' (PP 166).

There is a number of claims here that need separating out. The idea that a person is a machine implies that a person is both physical and objective and also has no subjectivity. The idea that a person is governed by natural laws implies that a person is causally determined in his or her own actions. The claim that a person is, or essentially is, a set of instincts also implies that but further entails that the determining causes are biological and innate.

Merleau-Ponty argues that, on the contrary, sexuality may only be understood when a person is regarded as 'a consciousness and a freedom' (PP 166) ('Conscience et ... liberte' Phen 194). It might prima facie appear that there are conditions only for human sexuality; the kind of self-conscious sexuality we in fact have. We should remember however that for Merleau-Ponty freedom and self-consciousness are necessary for the constitution of the empirical world and because sexuality as characterised is

part of the empirical world it follows that that two presupposed freedom and consciousness.

It is clearly also Merleau-Ponty's thesis that the phenomenology of sex what it is like to experience sexual desire and other sexual relations cannot be captured in only a scientific description. A reasonably precise reason for this may be adduced in Merleau-Ponty's favour. The sentences of science treats its subject matter only as 'other'. Describing human sexuality, however, requires the use of firstperson sentence; in particular sentences making first person singular and first person plural psychological ascriptions. This captures Merleau-Ponty's insight that sex has a phenomenology. Now, as a matter of logic, no first person sentence or set of first person sentences may be logically derived from any set of thirdperson sentences (no matter how numerous, lengthy, and semantically complex). It follows from that that Merleau-Ponty is correct to maintain that there can be no complete natural scientific description of sexuality.

Merleau-Ponty thinks that the reduction of the human person to a scientific object is dehumanising and unethical. What makes us most fully a distinctively human is just what science cannot explain about us. There is another way, however, in which persons may be treated only as objects. Merleau-Ponty, like Sartre, endorses a neoHegelian view of human sexual relations. He speaks of 'a dialectic of the self and the other which is that of master and slave' (PP 167) ('Une dialectique du moi et d'autrui qui est celle du matire et de l'escalve' Phen 194). In the 'master and slave' chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel describes the struggle for mutual recognition between two putative self-consciousness in which each seeks the servitude of the other, but each ultimately accepts the self-defeating nature of victory. In applying this antagonistic structure to human sexual relations Merleau-Ponty says:

'In so far as I have a body, I may be reduced to the status of an object beneath the gaze of another person, and no longer count as a person for him, or else I may become his master and, in my turn, look at him' (PP 167).

This is Hegelianism with the bodily subject. Nothing precludes Merleau-Ponty giving the central chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology* that content:

Stephen Priest *Problems in Phenomenology* (2011 Draft)

Hegel's writing there is deliberately abstract so as to be consistent with many contents (or models). By using 'in so far as' ('En tant que' Phen 194), however, Merleau-Ponty is suggesting that physical subjectivity is a necessary condition for the existence of master and slave power relations (and a fortiori master and slave sexual relations) This thought may be right. This is because Master and Slave may arguably be individuated if they are physical, and that master and slave individuate each other is a necessary condition for the power struggle between them. I am thinking of the possibility that only spatiotemporal (or perhaps only spatial) items may be individuated and then only through spatial properties. If that is right then Hegel's master and slave dialectic conceptually presupposes Merleau-Ponty's notion of the body subject, or something very much like it.

Merleau-Ponty's view of sexual relations is ultimately optimistic and Hegelian rather than pessimistic and Sartrean. Like Hegel, Merleau-Ponty says

'This mastery is self-defeating, since, precisely when my value is recognised through the other's desire, he is no longer the person by whom I wished to be recognised' (PP 167).

If Hegel and Merleau-Ponty are right, then we may look forward to a time when sexual relations are no longer power struggles and persons do not regard each other only as means to their sexual ends.

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