

CHAPTER ONE

Being and Doing: Freedom

I. FREEDOM: THE FIRST CONDITION OF ACTION

It is strange that philosophers have been able to argue endlessly about determinism and free-will, to cite examples in favor of one or the other thesis without ever attempting first to make explicit the structures contained in the very idea of action. The concept of an act contains, in fact, numerous subordinate notions which we shall have to organize and arrange in a hierarchy: to act is to modify the shape of the world; it is to arrange means in view of an end; it is to produce an organized instrumental complex such that by a series of concatenations and connections the modification effected on one of the links causes modifications throughout the whole series and finally produces an anticipated result. But this is not what is important for us here. We should observe first that an action is on principle *intentional*. The careless smoker who has through negligence caused the explosion of a powder magazine has not acted. On the other hand the worker who is charged with dynamiting a quarry and who obeys the given orders has acted when he has produced the expected explosion; he knew what he was doing or, if you prefer, he intentionally realized a conscious project.

This does not mean, of course, that one must foresee all the consequences of his act. The emperor Constantine when he established himself at Byzantium, did not foresee that he would create a center of Greek culture and language, the appearance of which would ultimately provoke a schism in the Christian Church and which would contribute to weakening the Roman Empire. Yet he performed an act just in so far as he realized his project of creating a new residence for emperors in the Orient. Equating the result with the intention is here sufficient for us to be able to speak of action. But if this is the case, we establish that the action necessarily implies as its condition the recognition of a "desideratum"; that is, of an objective lack or again of a *négalité*. *The intention* of providing a rival for Rome can come to Constantine only through the

apprehension of an objective lack: Rome lacks a counterweight; to this still profoundly pagan city ought to be opposed a Christian city which at the moment is missing. Creating Constantinople is understood as an act only if first the conception of a new city has preceded the action itself or at least if this conception serves as an organizing theme for all later steps. But this conception can not be the pure representation of the city as possible. It apprehends the city in its essential characteristic, which is to be a desirable and not yet realized possible.

This means that from the moment of the first conception of the act, consciousness has been able to withdraw itself from the full world of which it is consciousness and to leave the level of being in order frankly to approach that of non-being. Consciousness in so far as it is considered exclusively in its being, is perpetually referred from being to being and can not find in being any motive for revealing non-being. The imperial system with Rome as its capital functions positively and in a certain real way which can be easily discovered. Will someone say that the taxes are collected badly, that Rome is not secure from invasions, that it does not have the geographical location which is suitable for the capital of a Mediterranean empire which is threatened by barbarians, that its corrupt morals make the spread of the Christian religion difficult? How can anyone fail to see that all these considerations are *negative*; that is, that they aim at what is not, not at what is. To say that sixty per cent of the anticipated taxes have been collected can pass, if need be for a positive appreciation of the situation such as it is. To say that they are badly collected is to consider the situation across a situation which is posited as an absolute end but which precisely is not. To say that the corrupt morals at Rome hinder the spread of Christianity is not to consider this diffusion for what it is; that is, for a propagation at a rate which the reports of the clergy can enable us to determine. It is to posit the diffusion in itself as insufficient; that is, as suffering from a secret nothingness. But it appears as such only if it is surpassed toward a limiting-situation posited *a priori* as a value (for example, toward a certain rate of religious conversions, toward a certain mass morality). This limiting-situation can not be conceived in terms of the simple consideration of the real state of things; for the most beautiful girl in the world can offer only what she has, and in the same way the most miserable situation can by itself be designated only as it is without any reference to an ideal nothingness.

In so far as man is immersed in the historical situation, he does not even succeed in conceiving of the failures and lacks in a political organization or determined economy; this is not, as is stupidly said, because he "is accustomed to it," but because he apprehends it in its plenitude of being and because he can not even imagine that he can exist in it otherwise. For it is necessary here to reverse common opinion and on the basis of what it is not, to acknowledge the harshness of a situation or the suffer-

ings which it imposes, both of which are motives for conceiving of another state of affairs in which things would be better for everybody. It is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our suffering and that we decide that these are unbearable. A worker in 1830 is capable of revolting if his salary is lowered, for he easily conceives of a situation in which his wretched standard of living would be not as low as the one which is about to be imposed on him. But he does not represent his sufferings to himself as unbearable; he adapts himself to them not through resignation but because he lacks the education and reflection necessary for him to conceive of a social state in which these sufferings would not exist. Consequently he does not act. Masters of Lyon following a riot, the workers at Croix-Rousse do not know what to do with their victory; they return home bewildered, and the regular army has no trouble in overcoming them. Their misfortunes do not appear to them "habitual" but rather *natural*; they are, that is all, and they constitute the worker's condition. They are not detached; they are not seen in the clear light of day, and consequently they are integrated by the worker with his being. He suffers without considering his suffering and without conferring value upon it. To suffer and to be are one and the same for him. His suffering is the pure affective tenor of his non-positional consciousness, but he does not *contemplate* it. Therefore this suffering can not be in itself a *motive*² for his acts. Quite the contrary, it is after he has formed the project of changing the situation that it will appear intolerable to him. This means that he will have had to give himself room, to withdraw in relation to it, and will have to have effected a double nihilation: on the one hand, he must posit an ideal state of affairs as a pure present nothingness; on the other hand, he must posit the actual situation as nothingness in relation to this state of affairs. He will have to conceive of a happiness attached to his class as a pure possible—that is, presently as a certain nothingness—and on the other hand, he will return to the present situation in order to illuminate it in the light of this nothingness and in order to nihilate it in turn by declaring: "I am not happy."

Two important consequences result. (1) No factual state whatever it may be (the political and economic structure of society, the psychological "state," etc.) is capable by itself of motivating any act whatsoever. For an act is a projection of the for-itself toward what is not, and what is can in no way determine by itself what is not. (2) No factual state can deter-

² In this and following sections Sartre makes a sharp distinction between *motif* and *mobile*. The English word "motive" expresses sufficiently adequately the French *mobile*, which refers to an inner subjective fact or attitude. For *motif* there is no true equivalent. Since it refers to an external fact or situation, I am translating it by "cause." The reader must remember, however, that this carries with it no idea of determinism. Sartre emphatically denies the existence of any cause in the usual deterministic sense. Tr.

mine consciousness to apprehend it as a *néгатité* or as a lack. Better yet no factual state can determine consciousness to define it and to circumscribe it since, as we have seen, Spinoza's statement, "Omnis determinatio est negatio," remains profoundly true. Now every action has for its express condition not only the discovery of a state of affairs as "lacking in —," i.e., as a *néгатité*—but also, and before all else, the constitution of the state of things under consideration into an isolated system. There is a factual state—satisfying or not—only by means of the nihilating power of the for-itself. But this power of nihilation can not be limited to realizing a simple *withdrawal* in relation to the world. In fact in so far as consciousness is "invested" by being, in so far as it simply suffers what is, it must be included in being. It is the organized form—worker-finding-his-suffering-natural—which must be surmounted and denied in order for it to be able to form the object of a revealing contemplation. This means evidently that it is by a pure wrenching away from himself and the world that the worker can posit his suffering as unbearable suffering and consequently can *make of it the motive* for his revolutionary action. This implies for consciousness the permanent possibility of effecting a rupture with its own past, of wrenching itself away from its past so as to be able to consider it in the light of a non-being and so as to be able to confer on it the meaning which it has in terms of the project of a meaning which it does not have. Under no circumstances can the past in any way by itself produce an act; that is, the positing of an end which turns back upon itself so as to illuminate it. This is what Hegel caught sight of when he wrote that "the mind is the negative," although he seems not to have remembered this when he came to presenting his own theory of action and of freedom. In fact as soon as one attributes to consciousness this negative power with respect to the world and itself, as soon as the nihilation forms an integral part of the *positing* of an end, we must recognize that the indispensable and fundamental condition of all action is the freedom of the acting being.

Thus at the outset we can see what is lacking in those tedious discussions between determinists and the proponents of free will. The latter are concerned to find cases of decision for which there exists no prior cause, or deliberations concerning two opposed acts which are equally possible and possess causes (and motives) of exactly the same weight. To which the determinists may easily reply that there is no action without a cause and that the most insignificant gesture (raising the right hand rather than the left hand, etc.) refers to causes and motives which confer its meaning upon it. Indeed the case could not be otherwise since every action must be *intentional*; each action must, in fact, have an end, and the end in turn is referred to a cause. Such indeed is the unity of the three temporal ekstases; the end or temporalization of my future implies a cause (or motive); that is, it points toward my past, and the present is the upsurge of the act. To speak of an act without a cause is to speak of an

act which would lack the intentional structure of every act; and the proponents of free will by searching for it on the level of the act which is in the process of being performed can only end up by rendering the act absurd. But the determinists in turn are weighting the scale by stopping their investigation with the mere designation of the cause and motive. The essential question in fact lies beyond the complex organization "cause-intention-act-end"; indeed we ought to ask how a cause (or motive) can be constituted as such.

Now we have just seen that if there is no act without a cause, this is not in the sense that we can say that there is no phenomenon without a cause. In order to be a cause, the cause must be experienced as such. Of course this does not mean that it is to be thematically conceived and made explicit as in the case of deliberation. But at the very least it means that the for-itself must confer on it its value as cause or motive. And, as we have seen, this constitution of the cause as such can not refer to another real and positive existence; that is, to a prior cause. For otherwise the very nature of the act as engaged intentionally in non-being would disappear. The motive is understood only by the end; that is, by the non-existent. It is therefore in itself a *négativité*. If I accept a niggardly salary it is doubtless because of fear; and fear is a motive. But it is *fear of dying from starvation*; that is, this fear has meaning only outside itself in an end ideally posited, which is the preservation of a life which I apprehend as "in danger." And this fear is understood in turn only in relation to the *value which I implicitly give to this life*; that is, it is referred to that hierarchal system of ideal objects which are values. Thus the motive makes itself understood as what it is by means of the ensemble of beings which "are not," by ideal existences, and by the future. Just as the future turns back upon the present and the past in order to elucidate them, so it is the ensemble of my projects which turns back in order to confer upon the motive its structure as a motive. It is only because I escape the in-itself by nihilating myself toward my possibilities that this in-itself can take on value as cause or motive. Causes and motives have meaning only inside a projected ensemble which is precisely an ensemble of non-existents. And this ensemble is ultimately myself as transcendence; it is Me in so far as I have to be myself outside of myself.

If we recall the principle which we established earlier—namely that it is the apprehension of a revolution as possible which gives to the workman's suffering its value as a motive—we must thereby conclude that it is by fleeing a situation toward our possibility of changing it that we organize this situation into complexes of causes and motives. The nihilation by which we achieve a withdrawal in relation to the situation is the same as the ekstasis by which we project ourselves toward a modification of this situation. The result is that it is in fact impossible to find an act without a motive but that this does not mean that we must conclude that the motive

causes the act; the motive is an integral part of the act. For as the resolute project toward a change is not distinct from the act, the motive, the act, and the end are all constituted in a single upsurge. Each of these three structures claims the two others as its meaning. But the organized totality of the three is no longer explained by any particular structure, and its upsurge as the pure temporalizing nihilation of the in-itself is one with freedom. It is the act which decides its ends and its motives, and the act is the expression of freedom.

We cannot, however, stop with these superficial considerations; if the fundamental condition of the act is freedom, we must attempt to describe this freedom more precisely. But at the start we encounter a great difficulty. Ordinarily, to describe something is a process of making explicit by aiming at the structures of a particular essence. Now freedom has no essence. It is not subject to any logical necessity; we must say of it what Heidegger said of the *Dasein* in general: "In it existence precedes and commands essence." Freedom makes itself an act, and we ordinarily attain it across the act which it organizes with the causes, motives, and ends which the act implies. But precisely because this act has an essence, it appears to us as constituted; if we wish to reach the constitutive power, we must abandon any hope of finding it an essence. That would in fact demand a new constitutive power and so on to infinity. How then are we to describe an existence which perpetually makes itself and which refuses to be confined in a definition? The very use of the term "freedom" is dangerous if it is to imply that the word refers to a concept as words ordinarily do. Indefinable and unnamable, is freedom also indescribable?

Earlier when we wanted to describe nothingness and the being of the phenomenon, we encountered comparable difficulties. Yet they did not deter us. This is because there can be descriptions which do not aim at the essence but at the existent itself in its particularity. To be sure, I could not describe a freedom which would be common to both the Other and myself; I could not therefore contemplate an essence of freedom. On the contrary, it is freedom which is the foundation of all essences since man reveals intra-mundane essences by surpassing the world toward his own possibilities. But actually the question is of my freedom. Similarly when I described consciousness, I could not discuss a nature common to certain individuals but only my particular consciousness, which like my freedom is beyond essence, or—as we have shown with considerable repetition—for which to be is to have been. I discussed this consciousness so as to touch it in its very existence as a particular experience—the cogito. Husserl and Descartes, as Gaston Berger has shown, demand that the cogito release to them a truth as essence: with Descartes we achieve the connection of two simple natures; with Husserl we grasp the eidetic structure of consciousness.⁸ But if in consciousness its existence must precede its essence,

⁸ Gaston Berger: *Le Cogito chez Husserl et chez Descartes*, 1940.

then both Descartes and Husserl have committed an error. What we can demand from the cogito is only that it discover for us a factual necessity. It is also to the cogito that we appeal in order to determine freedom as the freedom which is ours, as a pure factual necessity; that is, as a contingent existent but one which I am *not able* not to experience. I am indeed an existent who learns his freedom through his acts, but I am also an existent whose individual and unique existence temporalizes itself as freedom. As such I am necessarily a consciousness (of) freedom since nothing exists in consciousness except as the non-thetic consciousness of existing. Thus my freedom is perpetually in question in my being; it is not a quality added on or a property of my nature. It is very exactly the stuff of my being; and as in my being, my being is in question, I must necessarily possess a certain comprehension of freedom. It is this comprehension which we intend at present to make explicit.

In our attempt to reach to the heart of freedom we may be helped by the few observations which we have made on the subject in the course of this work and which we must summarize here. In the first chapter we established the fact that if negation comes into the world through human-reality, the latter must be a being who can realize a nihilating rupture with the world and with himself; and we established that the permanent possibility of this rupture is the same as freedom. But on the other hand, we stated that this permanent possibility of nihilating what I am in the form of "having-been" implies for man a particular type of existence. We were able then to determine by means of analyses like that of bad faith that human reality is its own nothingness. For the for-itself, to be is to nihilate the in-itself which it is. Under these conditions freedom can be nothing other than this nihilation. It is through this that the for-itself escapes its being as its essence; it is through this that the for-itself is always something other than what can be said of it. For in the final analysis the For-itself is the one which escapes this very denomination, the one which is already beyond the name which is given to it, beyond the property which is recognized in it. To say that the for-itself has to be what it is, to say that it is what it is not while not being what it is, to say that in its existence precedes and conditions essence or inversely according to Hegel, that for it "Wesen ist was gewesen ist"—all this is to say one and the same thing: to be aware that man is free. Indeed by the sole fact that I am conscious of the causes which inspire my action, these causes are already transcendent objects for my consciousness; they are outside. In vain shall I seek to catch hold of them; I escape them by my very existence. I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free. This means that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself or, if you prefer, that we are not free to cease being free. To the extent that the for-itself wishes to hide its

own nothingness from itself and to incorporate the in-itself as its true mode of being, it is trying also to hide its freedom from itself.

The ultimate meaning of determinism is to establish within us an unbroken continuity of existence in itself. The motive conceived as a psychic fact—i.e., as a full and given reality—is, in the deterministic view, articulated without any break with the decision and the act, both of which are equally conceived as psychic givens. The in-itself has got hold of all these “data”; the motive provokes the act as the physical cause its effect; everything is real, everything is full. Thus the refusal of freedom can be conceived only as an attempt to apprehend oneself as being-in-itself; it amounts to the same thing. Human reality may be defined as a being such that in its being its freedom is at stake because human reality perpetually tries to refuse to recognize its freedom. Psychologically in each one of us this amounts to trying to take the causes and motives as *things*. We try to confer permanence upon them. We attempt to hide from ourselves that their nature and their weight depend each moment on the meaning which I give to them; we take them for constants. This amounts to considering the meaning which I gave to them just now or yesterday—which is irremediable because it is *past*—and extrapolating from it a character fixed still in the present. I attempt to persuade myself that the cause is as it was. Thus it would pass whole and untouched from my past consciousness to my present consciousness. It would inhabit my consciousness. This amounts to trying to give an essence to the for-itself. In the same way people will posit ends as transcendences, which is not an error. But instead of seeing that the transcendences there posited are maintained in their being by my own transcendence, people will assume that I encounter them upon my surging up in the world; they come from God, from nature, from “my” nature, from society. These ends ready made and pre-human will therefore define the meaning of my act even before I conceive it, just as causes as pure psychic givens will produce it without my even being aware of them.

Cause, act, and end constitute a continuum, a *plenum*. These abortive attempts to stifle freedom under the weight of being (they collapse with the sudden upsurge of anguish before freedom) show sufficiently that freedom in its foundation coincides with the nothingness which is at the heart of man. Human-reality is free because it is not enough. It is free because it is perpetually wrenched away from itself and because it has been separated by a nothingness from what it is and from what it will be. It is free, finally, because its present being is itself a nothingness in the form of the “reflection-reflecting.” Man is free because he is not himself but presence to himself. The being which is what it is can not be free. Freedom is precisely the nothingness which is *made-to-be* at the heart of man and which forces human-reality to *make itself* instead of to *be*. As we have seen, for human reality, to be is to choose oneself; nothing comes to it either from the outside or from within which it can receive or accept.

Without any help whatsoever, it is entirely abandoned to the intolerable necessity of making itself be—down to the slightest detail. Thus freedom is not a being; it is *the being* of man—i.e., his nothingness of being. If we start by conceiving of man as a plenum, it is absurd to try to find in him afterwards moments or psychic regions in which he would be free. As well look for emptiness in a container which one has filled beforehand up to the brim! Man can not be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all.

These observations can lead us, if we know how to use them, to new discoveries. They will enable us first to bring to light the relations between freedom and what we call the "will." There is a fairly common tendency to seek to identify free acts with voluntary acts and to restrict the deterministic explanation to the world of the passions. In short the point of view of Descartes. The Cartesian will is free, but there are "passions of the soul." Again Descartes will attempt a physiological interpretation of these passions. Later there will be an attempt to instate a purely psychological determinism. Intellectualistic analyses such as Proust, for example, attempts with respect to jealousy or snobbery can serve as illustrations for this concept of the passionate "mechanism." In this case it would be necessary to conceive of man as simultaneously free and determined, and the essential problem would be that of the relations between this unconditioned freedom and the determined processes of the psychic life: how will it master the passions, how will it utilize them for its own benefit? A wisdom which comes from ancient times—the wisdom of the Stoics—will teach us to come to terms with these passions so as to master them; in short it will counsel us how to conduct ourselves with regard to affectivity as man does with respect to nature in general when he obeys it in order better to control it. Human reality therefore appears as a free power besieged by an ensemble of determined processes. One will distinguish wholly free acts, determined processes over which the free will has power, and processes which on principle escape the human-will.

It is clear that we shall not be able to accept such a conception. But let us try better to understand the reasons for our refusal. There is one objection which is obvious and which we shall not waste time in developing; this is that such a trenchant duality is inconceivable at the heart of the psychic unity. How in fact could we conceive of a being which could be *one* and which nevertheless on the one hand would be constituted as a series of facts determined by one another—hence existents in exteriority—and which on the other hand would be constituted as a spontaneity determining itself to be and revealing only itself? *A priori* this spontaneity would be capable of no action on a determinism already constituted. On what could it act? On the object itself (the present psychic fact)? But how could it modify an in-itself which by definition is and can be only what it is? On the actual law of the process? This is

self-contradictory. On the antecedents of the process? But it amounts to the same thing whether we act on the present psychic fact in order to modify it in itself or act upon it in order to modify its consequences. And in each case we encounter the same impossibility which we pointed out earlier. Moreover, what instrument would this spontaneity have at its disposal? If the hand can clasp, it is because it can be clasped. Spontaneity, since by definition it is *beyond reach* can not in turn *reach*; it can produce only itself. And if it could dispose of a special instrument, it would then be necessary to conceive of this as of an intermediary nature between free will and determined passions—which is not admissible. For different reasons the passions could get no hold upon the will. Indeed it is impossible for a determined process to act upon a spontaneity, exactly as it is impossible for objects to act upon consciousness. Thus any synthesis of two types of existents is impossible; they are not homogeneous; they will remain each one in its incommunicable solitude. The only bond which a nihilating spontaneity could maintain with mechanical processes would be the fact that it produces *itself by an internal negation directed toward these existents*. But then the spontaneity will exist precisely only in so far as it denies concerning itself that it is these passions. Henceforth the ensemble of the determined *πάθος* will of necessity be apprehended by spontaneity as a pure transcendent; that is, as what is necessarily *outside*, as what is *not* it.⁴ This internal negation would therefore have for its effect only the dissolution of the *πάθος* in the world, and the *πάθος* would exist as some sort of object in the midst of the world for a free spontaneity which would be simultaneously will and consciousness. This discussion shows that two solutions and only two are possible: either man is wholly determined (which is inadmissible, especially because a determined consciousness—i.e., a consciousness externally motivated—becomes itself pure exteriority and ceases to be consciousness) or else man is wholly free.

But these observations are still not our primary concern. They have only a negative bearing. The study of the will should, on the contrary, enable us to advance further in our understanding of freedom. And this is why the fact which strikes us first is that if the will is to be autonomous, then it is impossible for us to consider it as a given psychic fact; that is, in-itself. It can not belong to the category defined by the psychologist as “states of consciousness.” Here as everywhere else we assert that the state of consciousness is a pure idol of a positive psychology. If the will is to be freedom, then it is of necessity negativity and the power of nihilation. But then we no longer can see why autonomy should be preserved for the will. In fact it is hard to conceive of those holes of nihilation which would be the volitions and which would surge up in the otherwise dense and full web of the passions and of the *πάθος* in general. If the will is nihilation,

⁴ I.e., is not spontaneity. Tr.

then the ensemble of the psychic must likewise be nihilation. Moreover—and we shall soon return to this point—where do we get the idea that the “fact” of passion or that pure, simple desire is not nihilating? Is not passion first a project and an enterprise? Does it not exactly posit a state of affairs as intolerable? And is it not thereby forced to effect a withdrawal in relation to this state of affairs and to nihilate it by isolating it and by considering it in the light of an end—i.e., of a non-being? And does not passion have its own ends which are recognized precisely at the same moment at which it posits them as non-existent? And if nihilation is precisely the being of freedom, how can we refuse autonomy to the passions in order to grant it to the will?

But this is not all: the will, far from being the unique or at least the privileged manifestation of freedom, actually—like every event of the for-itself—must presuppose the foundation of an original freedom in order to be able to constitute itself as will. The will in fact is posited as a reflective decision in relation to certain ends. But it does not create these ends. It is rather a mode of being in relation to them: it decrees that the pursuit of these ends will be reflective and deliberative. Passion can posit the same ends. For example, if I am threatened, I can run away at top speed because of my fear of dying. This passionate fact nevertheless posits implicitly as a supreme end the value of life. Another person in the same situation will, on the contrary, understand that he must remain at his post even if resistance at first appears more dangerous than flight; he “will stand firm.” But his goal, although better understood and explicitly posited, remains the same as in the case of the emotional reaction. It is simply that the methods of attaining it are more clearly conceived; certain of them are rejected as dubious or inefficacious, others are more solidly organized. The difference here depends on the choice of means and on the degree of reflection and of making explicit, not on the end. Yet the one who flees is said to be “passionate,” and we reserve the term “voluntary” for the man who resists. Therefore the question is of a difference of subjective attitude in relation to a transcendent end. But if we wish to avoid the error which we denounced earlier and not consider these transcendent ends as pre-human and as an a priori limit to our transcendence, then we are indeed compelled to recognize that they are the temporalizing projection of our freedom. Human reality can not receive its ends, as we have seen, either from outside or from a so-called inner “nature.” It chooses them and by this very choice confers upon them a transcendent existence as the external limit of its projects. From this point of view—and if it is understood that the existence of the *Dasein* precedes and commands its essence—human reality in and through its very upsurge decides to define its own being by its ends. It is therefore the positing of my ultimate ends which characterizes my being and which is identical with the sudden thrust of the freedom which is mine. And

this thrust is an existence; it has nothing to do with an essence or with a property of a being which would be engendered conjointly with an idea.

Thus since freedom is identical with my existence, it is the foundation of ends which I shall attempt to attain either by the will or by passionate efforts. Therefore it can not be limited to voluntary acts. Volitions, on the contrary, like passions are certain subjective attitudes by which we attempt to attain the ends posited by original freedom. By original freedom, of course, we should not understand a freedom which would be prior to the voluntary or passionate act but rather a foundation which is strictly contemporary with the will or the passion and which these manifest, each in its own way. Neither should we oppose freedom to the will or to passion as the "profound self" of Bergson is opposed to the superficial self; the for-itself is wholly selfness and can not have a "profound self," unless by this we mean certain transcendent structures of the psyche. Freedom is nothing but the existence of our will or of our passions in so far as this existence is the nihilation of facticity; that is, the existence of a being which is its being in the mode of having to be it. We shall return to this point. In any case let us remember that the will is determined within the compass of motives and ends already posited by the for-itself in a transcendent projection of itself toward its possibles. If this were not so, how could we understand deliberation, which is an evaluation of means in relation to already existing ends?

If these ends are already posited, then what remains to be decided at each moment is the way in which I shall conduct myself with respect to them; in other words, the attitude which I shall assume. Shall I act by volition or by passion? Who can decide except me? In fact, if we admit that circumstances decide for me (for example, I can act by volition when faced with a minor danger but if the peril increases, I shall fall into passion), we thereby suppress all freedom. It would indeed be absurd to declare that the will is autonomous when it appears but that external circumstances strictly determine the moment of its appearance. But, on the other hand, how can it be maintained that a will which does not yet exist can suddenly decide to shatter the chain of the passions and suddenly stand forth on the fragments of these chains? Such a conception would lead us to consider the will as a power which sometimes would manifest itself to consciousness and at other times would remain hidden, but which would in any case possess the permanence and the existence "in-itself" of a property. This is precisely what is inadmissible. It is, however, certain that common opinion conceives of the moral life as a struggle between a will-thing and passion-substances. There is here a sort of psychological Manichaeism which is absolutely insupportable.

Actually it is not enough to will; it is necessary to will to will. Take, for example, a given situation: I can react to it emotionally. We have shown

elsewhere that emotion is not a physiological tempest;⁵ it is a reply adapted to the situation; it is a type of conduct, the meaning and form of which are the object of an intention of consciousness which aims at attaining a particular end by particular means. In fear, fainting and cataplexie⁶ aim at suppressing the danger by suppressing the consciousness of the danger. There is an intention of losing consciousness in order to do away with the formidable world in which consciousness is engaged and which comes into being through consciousness. Therefore we have to do with magical behavior provoking the symbolic satisfactions of our desires and revealing by the same stroke a magical stratum of the world. In contrast to this conduct voluntary and rational conduct will consider the situation scientifically, will reject the magical, and will apply itself to realizing determined series and instrumental complexes which will enable us to resolve the problems. It will organize a system of means by taking its stand on instrumental determinism. Suddenly it will reveal a technical world; that is, a world in which each instrumental-complex refers to another larger complex and so on. But what will make me decide to choose the magical aspect or the technical aspect of the world? It can not be the world itself, for this in order to be manifested waits to be discovered. Therefore it is necessary that the for-itself in its project must choose being the one by whom the world is revealed as magical or rational; that is, the for-itself must as a free project of itself give to itself magical or rational existence. It is responsible for either one, for the for-itself can be only if it has chosen itself. Therefore the for-itself appears as the free foundation of its emotions as of its volitions. My fear is free and manifests my freedom; I have put all my freedom into my fear, and I have chosen myself as fearful in this or that circumstance. Under other circumstances I shall exist as deliberate and courageous, and I shall have put all my freedom into my courage. In relation to freedom there is no privileged psychic phenomenon. All my "modes of being" manifest freedom equally since they are all ways of being my own nothingness.

This fact will be even more apparent in the description of what we called the "causes and motives" of action. We have outlined that description in the preceding pages; at present it will be well to return to it and take it up again in more precise terms. Did we not say indeed that passion is the motive of the act—or again that the passional act is that which has passion for its motive? And does not the will appear as the decision which follows deliberation concerning causes and motives? What then is a cause? What is a motive?

Generally by cause we mean the reason for the act; that is, the ensemble

⁵ *Esquisse d'une théorie phénoménologique des émotions*, Hermann, 1939.

In English, *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*. Tr. by Bernard Frechtman. Philosophical Library, 1948.

⁶ A word invented by Preyer to refer to a sudden inhibiting numbness produced by any shock. Tr.

of rational considerations which justify it. If the government decides on a conversion of Government bonds, it will give the causes for its act: the lessening of the national debt, the rehabilitation of the Treasury. Similarly it is by causes that historians are accustomed to explain the acts of ministers or monarchs; they will seek the causes for a declaration of war: the occasion is propitious, the attacked country is disorganized because of internal troubles; it is time to put an end to an economic conflict which is in danger of lasting interminably. If Clovis is converted to Catholicism, then inasmuch as so many barbarian kings are Arians, it is because Clovis sees an opportunity of getting into the good graces of the episcopate which is all powerful in Gaul. And so on. One will note here that the cause is characterized as an objective appreciation of the situation. The cause of Clovis' conversion is the political and religious state of Gaul; it is the relative strengths of the episcopate, the great landowners, and the common people. What motivates the conversion of the bonds is the state of the national debt. Nevertheless this objective appreciation can be made only in the light of a presupposed end and within the limits of a project of the for-itself toward this end. In order for the power of the episcopate to be revealed to Clovis as the cause of his conversion (that is, in order for him to be able to envisage the objective consequences which this conversion could have) it is necessary first for him to posit as an end the conquest of Gaul. If we suppose that Clovis has other ends, he can find in the situation of the Church causes for his becoming Arian or for remaining pagan. It is even possible that in the consideration of the Church he can even find no cause for acting in any way at all; he will then discover nothing in relation to this subject; he will leave the situation of the episcopate in the state of "unrevealed," in a total obscurity. We shall therefore use the term *cause* for the objective apprehension of a determined situation as this situation is revealed in the light of a certain end as being able to serve as the means for attaining this end.

The motive, on the contrary, is generally considered as a subjective fact. It is the ensemble of the desires, emotions, and passions which urge me to accomplish a certain act. The historian looks for motives and takes them into account only as a last resort when the causes are not sufficient to explain the act under consideration. Ferdinand Lot, for example, after having shown that the reasons which are ordinarily given for the conversion of Constantine are insufficient or erroneous, writes: "Since it is established that Constantine had everything to lose and apparently nothing to gain by embracing Christianity, there is only one conclusion possible—that he yielded to a sudden impulse, pathological or divine as you prefer."⁷ Lot is here abandoning the explanation by causes, which seems to him unenlightening, and prefers to it an explanation by motives.

⁷ Ferdinand Lot: *La fin du monde antique et le début du moyen âge*, p. 35. *Renaissance du Livre*, 1927.

The explanation must then be sought in the psychic state—even in the “mental” state—of the historical agent. It follows naturally that the event becomes wholly contingent since another individual with other passions and other desires would have acted differently. In contrast to the historian the psychologist will by preference look for motives; usually he supposes, in fact, that they are “contained in” the state of consciousness which has provoked the action. The ideal rational act would therefore be the one for which the motives would be practically nil and which would be uniquely inspired by an objective appreciation of the situation. The irrational or passionate act will be characterized by the reverse proportion.

It remains for us to explain the relation between causes and motives in the everyday case in which they exist side by side. For example, I can join the Socialist party because I judge that this party serves the interests of justice and of humanity or because I believe that it will become the principal historical force in the years which will follow my joining: these are causes. And at the same time I can have motives: a feeling of pity or charity for certain classes of the oppressed, a feeling of shame at being on the “good side of the barricade,” as Gide says, or again an inferiority complex, a desire to shock my relatives, etc. What can be meant by the statement that I have joined the Socialist party for these causes and these motives? Evidently we are dealing with two radically distinct layers of meaning. How are we to compare them? How are we to determine the part played by each of them in the decision under consideration? This difficulty, which certainly is the greatest of those raised by the current distinction between causes and motives, has never been resolved; few people indeed have so much as caught a glimpse of it. Actually under a different name it amounts to positing the existence of a conflict between the will and the passions. But if the classic theory is discovered to be incapable of assigning to cause and motive their proper influence in the simple instance when they join together to produce a single decision, it will be wholly impossible⁸ for it to explain or even to conceive of a conflict between causes and motives, a conflict in which each group would urge its individual decision. Therefore we must start over again from the beginning.

To be sure, the cause is objective; it is the state of contemporary things as it is revealed to a consciousness. It is objective that the Roman plebs and aristocracy were corrupted by the time of Constantine or that the Catholic Church is ready to favor a monarch who at the time of Clovis will help it triumph over Arianism. Nevertheless this state of affairs can be revealed only to a for-itself since in general the for-itself is the being by which “there is” a world. Better yet, it can be revealed only to a for-itself which chooses itself in this or that particular way—that is, to a for-itself which has made its own individuality. The for-itself must of neces-

⁸ Sartre says “wholly possible” (*tout à fait possible*) which I feel sure is a misprint. Tr.

sity have projected itself in this or that way in order to discover the instrumental implications of instrumental-things. Objectively the knife is an instrument made of a blade and a handle. I can grasp it objectively as an instrument to slice with, to cut with. But lacking a hammer, I can just as well grasp the knife as an instrument to hammer with. I can make use of its handle to pound in a nail, and this apprehension is no less *objective*. When Clovis appreciates the aid which the Church can furnish him, it is not certain that a group of prelates or even one particular priest has made any overtures to him, nor even that any member of the clergy has clearly thought of an alliance with a Catholic monarch. The only strictly objective facts, those which any for-itself whatsoever can establish, are the great power of the Church over the people of Gaul and the anxiety of the Church with regard to the Arian heresy. In order for these established facts to be organized into a cause for conversion, it is necessary to isolate them from the ensemble—and thereby to nihilate them—and it is necessary to transcend them toward a particular potentiality: the Church's potentiality objectively apprehended by Clovis will be to give its support to a converted king. But this potentiality can be revealed only if the situation is surpassed toward a state of things which does not yet exist—in short, towards a nothingness. In a word the world gives counsel only if one questions it, and one can question it only for a well determined end.

Therefore the cause, far from determining the action, appears only in and through the project of an action. It is in and through the project of imposing his rule on all of Gaul that the state of the Western Church appears objectively to Clovis as a cause for his conversion. In other words the consciousness which carves out the cause in the ensemble of the world has already its own structure; it has given its own ends to itself, it has projected itself toward its possibles, and it has its own manner of hanging on to its possibilities: this peculiar manner of holding to its possibles is here affectivity. This internal organization which consciousness has given to itself in the form of non-positional self-consciousness is strictly correlative with the carving out of causes in the world. Now if one reflects on the matter, one must recognize that the internal structure of the for-itself by which it effects in the world the upsurge of causes for acting is an "irrational" fact in the historical sense of the term. Indeed we can easily understand rationally the technical usefulness of the conversion of Clovis under the hypothesis by which he would have projected the conquest of Gaul. But we can not do the same with regard to his project of conquest. It is not "self-explanatory." Ought it to be interpreted as a result of Clovis' ambition? But precisely what is the ambition if not the purpose of conquering? How could Clovis' ambition be distinguished from the precise project of conquering Gaul? Therefore it would be useless to conceive of this original project of conquest as "incited" by a pre-existing motive which would be ambition. It is indeed true that the

ambition is a motive since it is wholly subjectivity. But as it is not distinct from the project of conquering, we shall say that this first project of his possibilities in the light of which Clovis discovers a cause for being converted is precisely the *motive*. Then all is made clear and we can conceive of the relations of these three terms: causes, motives, ends. We are dealing here with a particular case of being-in-the-world: just as it is the upsurge of the for-itself which causes there to be a world, so here it is the very being of the for-itself—in so far as this being is a pure project toward an end—which causes there to be a certain objective structure of the world, one which deserves the name of cause in the light of this end. The for-itself is therefore the consciousness of this cause. But this positional consciousness of the cause is on principle a non-thetic consciousness of itself as a project toward an end. In this sense it is a motive; that is, it experiences itself non-thetically as a project, more or less keen, more or less passionate, toward an end at the very moment at which it is constituted as a revealing consciousness of the organization of the world into causes.

Thus cause and motive are correlative, exactly as the non-thetic self-consciousness is the ontological correlate of the thetic consciousness of the object. Just as the consciousness of something is self-consciousness, so the motive is nothing other than the apprehension of the cause in so far as this apprehension is self-consciousness. But it follows obviously that the cause, the motive, and the end are the three indissoluble terms of the thrust of a free and living consciousness which projects itself toward its possibilities and makes itself defined by these possibilities.

How does it happen then that the motive appears to the psychologist as the affective content of a fact of consciousness as this content determines another fact of consciousness or a decision? It is because the motive, which is nothing other than a non-thetic self-consciousness, slips into the past with this same consciousness and along with it ceases to be living. As soon as a consciousness is made-past, it is what I have to be in the form of the "was." Consequently when I turn back toward my consciousness of yesterday, it preserves its intentional significance and its meaning as subjectivity, but, as we have seen, it is fixed; it is outside like a thing, since the past is in-itself. The motive becomes then that of which there is consciousness. It can appear to me in the form of "empirical knowledge"; as we saw earlier, the dead past haunts the present in the aspect of a practical knowing. It can also happen that I turn back toward it so as to make it explicit and formulate it while guiding myself by the knowledge which it is for me in the present. In this case it is an object of consciousness; it is this very consciousness of which I am conscious. It appears therefore—like my memories in general—simultaneously as *mine* and as transcendent. Ordinarily we are surrounded by these motives which we "no longer enter," for we not only have to decide concretely to accomplish

this or that act but also to accomplish actions which we decided upon the day before or to pursue enterprises in which we are engaged. In a general way consciousness at whatever moment it is grasped is apprehended as engaged and this very apprehension implies a practical knowing of the motives of the engagement or even a thematic and positional explanation of these causes. It is obvious that the apprehension of the motive refers at once to the cause, its correlate, since the motive, even when made-past and fixed in in-itself, at least maintains as its meaning the fact that it has been a consciousness of a cause; i.e., the discovery of an objective structure of the world. But as the motive is *in-itself* and as the cause is objective, they are presented as a dyad without ontological distinction; we have seen, indeed, that our past is lost in the midst of the world. That is why we put them on the same level and why we are able to speak of the causes and of the motives of an action as if they could enter into conflict or both concur in determined proportion in a decision.

Yet if the motive is transcendent, if it is only the irremediable being which we have to be in the mode of the "was," if like all our past it is separated from us by a breadth of nothingness, then it can act only if it is recovered; in itself it is without force. It is therefore by the very thrust of the engaged consciousness that a value and a weight will be conferred on motives and on prior causes. What they have been does not depend on consciousness, but consciousness has the duty of maintaining them in their existence in the past. I have willed this or that: here is what remains irremediable and which even constitutes my essence, since my essence is what I have been. But the meaning held for me by this desire, this fear, these objective considerations of the world when presently I project myself toward my futures—this must be decided by me alone. I determine them precisely and only by the very act by which I project myself toward my ends. The recovery of former motives—or the rejection or new appreciation of them—is not distinct from the project by which I assign new ends to myself and by which in the light of these ends I apprehend myself as discovering a supporting cause in the world. Past motives, past causes, present motives and causes, future ends, all are organized in an indissoluble unity by the very upsurge of a freedom which is beyond causes, motives, and ends.

The result is that a voluntary deliberation is always a deception. How can I evaluate causes and motives on which I myself confer their value before all deliberation and by the very choice which I make of myself? The illusion here stems from the fact that we endeavor to take causes and motives for entirely transcendent things which I balance in my hands like weights and which possess a weight as a permanent property. Yet on the other hand we try to view them as contents of consciousness, and this is self-contradictory. Actually causes and motives have only the weight which my project—i.e., the free production of the end and of the known

act to be realized—confers upon them. When I deliberate, the chips are down.⁹ And if I am brought to the point of deliberating, this is simply because it is a part of my original project to realize motives by means of *deliberation* rather than by some other form of discovery (by passion, for example, or simply by action, which reveals to me the organized ensemble of causes and of ends as my language informs me of my thought). There is therefore a choice of deliberation as a procedure which will make known to me what I project and consequently what I am. And the choice of deliberation is organized with the ensemble motives-causes and end by free spontaneity. When the will intervenes, the decision is taken, and it has no other value than that of making the announcement.

The voluntary act is distinguished from involuntary spontaneity in that the latter is a purely unreflective consciousness of causes across the pure and simple project of the act. As for the motive, in the unreflective act it is not an object for itself but a simple non-positional self-consciousness. The structure of the voluntary act, on the other hand, requires the appearance of a reflective consciousness which apprehends the motive as a quasi-object or which even intends it as a psychic object across the consciousness reflected-on. For the latter, the cause, since it is grasped by the intermediary of the consciousness reflected-on, is as separated. To adopt Husserl's famous expression, simple voluntary reflection by its structure as reflectivity practices the *εποχή* with regard to the cause; it holds the cause in suspense, puts it within parentheses. Thus it can build up a semblance of appreciative deliberation by the fact that a more profound nihilation separates the reflective consciousness from the consciousness reflected-on or motive and by the fact that the cause is suspense. Nevertheless, as we know, although the result of the reflection is to widen the gap which separates the for-itself from itself, such is not its goal. The goal of the reflective scissiparity is, as we have seen, to recover the reflected-on so as to constitute that unrealizable totality "In-itself-for-itself," which is the fundamental value posited by the for-itself in the very upsurge of its being. If, therefore, the will is in essence reflective, its goal is not so much to decide what end is to be attained since in any case the chips are down; the profound intention of the will bears rather on the *method* of attaining this end already posited. The for-itself which exists in the voluntary mode wishes to recover itself in so far as it decides and acts. It does not wish merely to be carried toward an end, nor to be the one which chooses itself as carried toward a particular end; it wishes again to recover itself as a spontaneous project toward this or that particular end. The ideal of the will is to be an "in-itself-for-itself" as a project toward a certain end.

This is evidently a reflective ideal and it is the meaning of the satisfac-

⁹ *Les jeux sont faits*. Sartre has written a novel by this title. Tr.

tion which accompanies a judgment such as, "I have done what I wished to do." But it is evident that the reflective scissiparity in general has its foundation in a project more profound than itself, a project which for lack of a better term we called "motivation" in Part Two, Chapter III. Now that we have defined cause and motive, it is necessary to give to this project which underlies reflection the name *intention*. To the extent therefore that the will is an instance of reflection, the fact of its being placed so as to act on the voluntary level demands for its foundation a more profound intention. It is not enough for the psychologist to describe a particular subject as realizing his project in the mode of voluntary reflection; the psychologist must also be capable of releasing to us the profound *intention* which makes the subject realize his project in this mode of volition rather than in a wholly different mode. Moreover, it must be clearly understood that any mode of consciousness whatsoever may have produced the same realization once the ends are posited by an original project. Thus we have touched on a more profound freedom than the will, simply by showing ourselves to be more exacting than the psychologists; that is, by raising the question "Why?" whereas they limit themselves to establishing the mode of consciousness as volitional.

This brief study does not attempt to exhaust the question of the will; on the contrary, it would be desirable to attempt a phenomenological description of the will for itself. But this is not our goal; we hope simply that we have shown that the will is not a privileged manifestation of freedom but that it is a psychic event of a peculiar structure which is constituted on the same plane as other psychic events and which is supported, neither more nor less than the others, by an original, ontological freedom.

By the same token freedom appears as an unanalyzable totality; causes, motives, and ends, as well as the mode of apprehending causes, motives, and ends, are organized in a unity within the compass of this freedom and must be understood in terms of it. Does this mean that one must view freedom as a series of capricious jerks comparable to the Epicurean clinamen? Am I free to wish anything whatsoever at any moment whatsoever? And must I at each instant when I wish to explain this or that project encounter the irrationality of a free and contingent choice? Inasmuch as it has seemed that the recognition of freedom had as its consequence these dangerous conceptions which are completely contradictory to experience, worthy thinkers have turned away from a belief in freedom. One could even state that determinism—if one were careful not to confuse it with fatalism—is "more human" than the theory of free will. In fact while determinism throws into relief the strict conditioning of our acts, it does at least give the reason for each of them. And if it is strictly limited to the psychic, if it gives up looking for a conditioning in the ensemble of

the universe, it shows that the reason for our acts is in ourselves: we act as we are, and our acts contribute to making us.

Let us consider more closely however the few certain results which our analysis has enabled us to attain. We have shown that freedom is actually one with the being of the For-itself; human reality is free to the exact extent that it has to be its own nothingness. It has to be this nothingness, as we have seen, in multiple dimensions: first, by temporalizing itself—i.e., by being always at a distance from itself, which means that it can never let itself be determined by its past to perform this or that particular act; second, by rising up as consciousness of something and (of) itself—i.e., by being presence to itself and not simply self, which implies that nothing exists in consciousness which is not consciousness of existing and that consequently nothing external to consciousness can motivate it; and finally, by being transcendence—i.e., not something which would first be in order subsequently to put itself into relation with this or that end, but on the contrary, a being which is originally a project—i.e., which is defined by its end.

Thus we do not intend here to speak of anything arbitrary or capricious. An existent which as consciousness is necessarily separated from all others because they are in connection with it only to the extent that they are for it, an existent which decides its past in the form of a tradition in the light of its future instead of allowing it purely and simply to determine its present, an existent which makes known to itself what it is by means of *something other than it* (that is, by an end which it is not and which it projects from the other side of the world)—this is what we call a free existent. This does not mean that I am free to get up or to sit down, to enter or to go out, to flee or to face danger—if one means by freedom here a pure capricious, unlawful, gratuitous, and incomprehensible contingency. To be sure, each one of my acts, even the most trivial, is entirely free in the sense which we have just defined; but this does not mean that my act can be anything whatsoever or even that it is *unforeseeable*. Someone, nevertheless may object and ask how if my act can be understood *neither* in terms of the state of the world *nor* in terms of the ensemble of my past taken as an irremediable thing, it could possibly be anything but gratuitous. Let us look more closely.

Common opinion does not hold that to be free means only to choose oneself. A choice is said to be free if it is such that it could have been other than what it is. I start out on a hike with friends. At the end of several hours of walking my fatigue increases and finally becomes very painful. At first I resist and then suddenly I let myself go, I give up, I throw my knapsack down on the side of the road and let myself fall down beside it. Someone will reproach me for my act and will mean thereby that I was free—that is, not only was my act not determined by any thing or person, but also I could have succeeded in resisting my fatigue

longer, I could have done as my companions did and reached the resting place before relaxing. I shall defend myself by saying that I was too tired. Who is right? Or rather is the debate not based on incorrect premises? There is no doubt that I could have done otherwise, but that is not the problem. It ought to be formulated rather like this: could I have done otherwise without perceptibly modifying the organic totality of the projects which I am; or is the fact of resisting my fatigue such that instead of remaining a purely local and accidental modification of my behavior, it could be effected only by means of a radical transformation of my being-in-the-world—a transformation, moreover, which is possible? In other words: I could have done otherwise. Agreed. But at what price?

We are going to reply to this question by first presenting a theoretical description which will enable us to grasp the principle of our thesis. We shall see subsequently whether the concrete reality is not shown to be more complex and whether without contradicting the results of our theoretical inquiry, it will not lead us to enrich them and make them more flexible.

Let us note first that the fatigue by itself could not provoke my decision. As we saw with respect to physical pain, fatigue is only the way in which I exist my body. It is not at first the object of a positional consciousness, but it is the very facticity of my consciousness. If then I hike across the country, what is revealed to me is the surrounding world; this is the object of my consciousness, and this is what I transcend toward possibilities which are my own—those, for example, of arriving this evening at the place which I have set for myself in advance. Yet to the extent that I apprehend this countryside with my eyes which unfold distances, my legs which climb the hills and consequently cause new sights and new obstacles to appear and disappear, with my back which carries the knapsack—to this extent I have a non-positional consciousness (of) this body which rules my relations with the world and which signifies my engagement in the world, in the form of fatigue. Objectively and in correlation with this non-thetic consciousness the roads are revealed as interminable, the slopes as steeper, the sun as more burning, etc. But I do not yet *think* of my fatigue; I apprehend it as the quasi-object of my reflection. Nevertheless there comes a moment when I do seek to consider my fatigue and to recover it. We really ought to provide an interpretation for this same intention; however, let us take it for what it is. It is not at all a contemplative apprehension of my fatigue; rather, as we saw with respect to pain, I *suffer* my fatigue. That is, a reflective consciousness is directed upon my fatigue in order to live it and to confer on it a value and a practical relation to myself. It is only on this plane that the fatigue will appear to me as bearable or intolerable. It will never be anything in itself, but it is the reflective For-itself which rising up suffers the fatigue as intolerable.

Here is posited the essential question: my companions are in good

health—like me; they have had practically the same training as I so that although it is not possible to compare psychic events which occur in different subjectivities, I usually conclude—and witnesses after an objective consideration of our bodies-for-others conclude—that they are for all practical purposes “as fatigued as I am.” How does it happen therefore that they suffer their fatigue differently? Someone will say that the difference stems from the fact that I am a “sissy” and that the others are not. But although this evaluation undeniably has a practical bearing on the case and although one could take this into account when there arose a question of deciding whether or not it would be a good idea to take me on another expedition, such an evaluation can not satisfy us here. We have seen that to be ambitious is to project conquering a throne or honors; it is not a given which would incite one to conquest; it is this conquest itself. Similarly to be a “sissy” can not be a factual given and is only a name given to the way in which I suffer my fatigue. If therefore I wish to understand under what conditions I can suffer a fatigue as unbearable, it will not help to address oneself to so-called factual givens, which are revealed as being only a choice; it is necessary to attempt to examine this choice itself and to see whether it is not explained within the perspective of a larger choice in which it would be integrated as a secondary structure. If I question one of my companions, he will explain to me that he is fatigued, of course, but that he loves his fatigue; he gives himself up to it as to a bath; it appears to him in some way as the privileged instrument for discovering the world which surrounds him, for adapting himself to the rocky roughness of the paths, for discovering the “mountainous” quality of the slopes. In the same way it is this light sunburn on the back of his neck and this slight ringing in his ears which will enable him to realize a direct contact with the sun. Finally the feeling of effort is for him that of fatigue overcome. But as his fatigue is nothing but the passion which he endures so that the dust of the highways, the burning of the sun, the roughness of the roads may exist to the fullest, his effort (i.e., this sweet familiarity with a fatigue which he loves, to which he abandons himself and which nevertheless he himself directs) is given as a way of appropriating the mountain, of suffering it to the end and being victor over it. We shall see in the next chapter what is the meaning of the word *having* and to what extent *doing* is a method of appropriating. Thus my companion’s fatigue is lived in a vaster project of a trusting abandon to nature, of a passion consented to in order that it may exist at full strength, and at the same time the project of sweet mastery and appropriation. It is only in and through this project that the fatigue will be able to be understood and that it will have meaning for him.

But this meaning and this vaster, more profound project are still by themselves *unselbständig*. They are not sufficient. For they precisely presuppose a particular relation of my companion to his body, on the

one hand, and to things, on the other. It is easy to see, indeed, that there are as many ways of existing one's body as there are For-itself although naturally certain original structures are invariable and in each For-itself constitute human-reality. We shall be concerned elsewhere with what is incorrectly called the relation of the individual to space and to the conditions of a universal truth. For the moment we can conceive in connection with thousands of meaningful events that there is, for example, a certain type of flight before facticity, a flight which consists precisely in abandoning oneself to this facticity; that is, in short, in trustingly reassuming it and loving it in order to try to recover it. This original project of recovery is therefore a certain choice which the For-itself makes of itself in the presence of the problem of being. Its project remains a nihilation, but this nihilation turns back upon the in-itself which it nihilates and expresses itself by a particular valorization of facticity. This is expressed especially by the thousands of behavior patterns called *abandon*. To abandon oneself to fatigue, to warmth, to hunger, to thirst, to let oneself fall back upon a chair or a bed with sensual pleasure, to relax, to attempt to let oneself be drunk in by one's own body, not now beneath the eyes of others as in masochism but in the original solitude of the For-itself—none of these types of behavior can ever be confined to itself. We perceive this clearly since in another person they irritate or attract. Their condition is an initial project of the recovery of the body; that is, an attempt at a solution of the problem of the absolute (of the In-itself-for-itself).

This initial form can itself be limited to a profound acceptance of facticity; the project of "making oneself body" will mean then a happy abandon to a thousand little passing gluttonies, to a thousand little desires, a thousand little weaknesses. One may recall from Joyce's *Ulysses* Mr. Bloom satisfying his natural needs and inhaling with favor "the intimate odor rising from beneath him." But it is also possible (and this is the case with my companion) that by means of the body and by compliance to the body, the For-itself seeks to recover the totality of the non-conscious—that is, the whole universe as the ensemble of material things. In this case the desired synthesis of the in-itself with the for-itself will be the quasi pantheistic synthesis of the totality of the in-itself with the for-itself which recovers it. Here the body is the instrument of the synthesis; it loses itself in fatigue, for example, in order that this in-itself may exist to the fullest. And since it is the body which the for-itself exists as its own, this passion of the body coincides for the for-itself with the project of "making the in-itself exist." The ensemble of this attitude—which is that of one of my companions—can be expressed by the dim feeling of a kind of mission: he is going on this expedition because the mountain which he is going to climb and the forests which he is going to cross exist; his mission is to be the one by whom their meaning will be made

manifest. Therefore he attempts to be the one who founds them in their very existence.

We shall return in the next chapter to this appropriative relation between the for-itself and the world, but we do not yet have at hand the elements necessary to elucidate it fully. In any case it is evident following our analysis that the way in which my companion suffers his fatigue necessarily demands—if we are to understand it—that we undertake a regressive analysis which will lead us back to an initial project. Is this project we have outlined finally *selbständig*? Certainly—and it can be easily proved to be so. In fact by going further and further back we have reached the original relation which the for-itself chooses with its facticity and with the world. But this original relation is nothing other than the for-itself's being-in-the-world inasmuch as this being-in-the-world is a choice—that is, we have reached the original type of nihilation by which the for-itself has to be its own nothingness. No interpretation of this can be attempted, for it would implicitly suppose the being-in-the-world of the for-itself just as all the demonstrations attempted by Euclid's Postulate implicitly suppose the adoption of this postulate.

Therefore if I apply this same method to interpret the way in which I suffer my fatigue, I shall first apprehend in myself a distrust of my body—for example, a way of wishing not “to have anything to do with it,” wanting not to take it into account, which is simply one of numerous possible modes in which I can exist my body. I shall easily discover an analogous distrust with respect to the in-itself and, for example, an original project for recovering the in-itself which I nihilate *through the intermediacy of others*, which project in turn refers me to one of the initial projects which we enumerated in our preceding discussion. Hence my fatigue instead of being suffered “flexibly” will be grasped “sternly” as an importunate phenomenon which I want to get rid of—and this simply because it incarnates my body and my brute contingency in the midst of the world at a time when my project is to preserve my body and my presence in the world by means of the looks of others. I am referred to myself as well as to my original project; that is, to my being-in-the-world in so far as this being is a choice.

We are not attempting to disguise how much this method of analysis leaves to be desired. This is because everything remains still to be done in this field. The problem indeed is to disengage the meanings implied by an act—by every act—and to proceed from there to richer and more profound meanings until we encounter the meaning which does not imply any other meaning and which refers only to itself. This ascending dialectic is practiced spontaneously by most people; it can even be established that in knowledge of oneself or of another there is given a spontaneous comprehension of this hierarchy of interpretations. A gesture refers to a *Weltanschauung* and we sense it. But nobody has attempted a systematic

disengagement of the meanings implied by an act. There is only one school which has based its approach on the same original evidence as we, and that is the Freudian. For Freud as for us an act can not be limited to itself; it refers immediately to more profound structures. And psychoanalysis is the method which enables us to make these structures explicit. Freud like us asks: under what conditions is it possible that this particular person has performed this particular act? Like us he refuses to interpret the action by the antecedent moment—i.e., to conceive of a horizontal psychic determinism. The act appears to him symbolic; that is, it seems to him to express a more profound desire which itself could be interpreted only in terms of an initial determination of the subject's libido. Freud, however, aims at constituting a vertical determinism. In addition because of this bias his conception necessarily is going to refer to the subject's past. Affectivity for Freud is at the basis of the act in the form of psychophysiological drives. But this affectivity is originally in each of us a *tabula rasa*; for Freud the external circumstances and, so to speak, the history of the subject will decide whether this or that drive will be fixed on this or that object. It is the child's situation in the family which will determine in him the birth of the Oedipus complex; in other societies composed of families of another type (such as, for example, among primitive peoples on the Coral Islands in the Pacific) this complex could not be formed. Furthermore it is again external circumstances which will decide whether at the age of puberty this complex will be "resolved" or, on the contrary, will remain the pole of the sexual life. Consequently through the intermediacy of history Freud's vertical determinism remains axised on an horizontal determinism. To be sure, a particular symbolic act expresses an underlying, contemporaneous desire just as this desire manifests a more profound complex and all this within the unity of a single psychic process; but the complex nonetheless pre-exists its symbolic manifestation. It is the past which has constituted it such as it is and in accordance with the classic connections, transfer, condensation, etc., which we find mentioned not only in psychoanalysis but in all attempts at a deterministic reconstruction of the psychic life. Consequently the dimension of the future does not exist for psychoanalysis. Human reality loses one of its ekstases and must be interpreted solely by a regression toward the past from the standpoint of the present. At the same time the fundamental structures of the subject, which are signified by its acts, are not so signified for him but for an objective witness who uses discursive methods to make these meanings explicit. No pre-ontological comprehension of the meaning of his acts is granted to the subject. And this is just, since in spite of everything his acts are only a result of the past, which is on principle out of reach, instead of seeking to inscribe their goal in the future.

Thus we should restrict ourselves to taking the psychoanalytic *method*

as our inspiration; that is, we should attempt to disengage the meanings of an act by proceeding from the principle that every action, no matter how trivial, is not the simple effect of the prior psychic state and does not result from a linear determinism but rather is integrated as a secondary structure in global structures and finally in the totality which I am. Otherwise, in fact, I should have to understand myself either as a horizontal flux of phenomena, each one of which is externally conditioned by the preceding—or as a supporting substance for a flow, a substance deprived of the meaning of its modes. Both these conceptions would lead us to confuse the for-itself with the in-itself.

But if we accept the method of psychoanalysis—and we shall discuss this at length in the following chapter—we must apply it in a reverse sense. Actually we conceive of every act as a comprehensible phenomenon, and we do not admit any deterministic “chance” as Freud does. But instead of understanding the considered phenomenon in terms of the past, we conceive of the comprehensive act as a turning back of the future toward the present. The way in which I suffer my fatigue is in no way dependent on the chance difficulty of the slope which I am climbing or on the more or less restless night which I have spent; these factors can contribute to constituting my fatigue itself but not to the way in which I suffer it. But we refuse to view this as one of Adler’s disciples would, as an expression of an inferiority complex, for example, in the sense that this complex would be a prior formation. That a certain passionate and tense way of struggling against the fatigue can express what is called an inferiority complex we shall not deny. But the inferiority complex itself is a project of my own for-itself in the world in the presence of the Other. As such it is always transcendence, as such again it is a way of choosing myself. This inferiority which I struggle against and which nevertheless I recognize, this I have chosen from the start. No doubt it is indicated by my various “patterns of failure behavior”; but to be exact it is nothing other than the organized totality of my failure behavior, as a projected plan, as a general device of my being, and each attitude of failure is itself transcendence since each time I surpass the real toward my possibilities. To give in to fatigue, for example, is to transcend the path by causing it to constitute in itself the meaning of “a path too difficult to traverse.” It is impossible seriously to consider the feeling of inferiority without determining it in terms of the future and of my possibilities. Even assertions such as “I am ugly,” “I am stupid,” etc. are by nature anticipations. We are not dealing here with the pure establishment of my ugliness but with the apprehension of the coefficient of adversity which is presented by women or by society to my enterprises. And this can be discovered only through and in the choice of these enterprises. Thus the inferiority complex is a free and global project of myself as inferior before others; it is the way in which I choose to assume my being-for-others, the free

solution which I give to the Other's existence, that insuperable scandal. Thus it is necessary to understand my reactions of inferiority and my failure behavior in terms of the free outline of my inferiority as a choice of myself in the world.

We grant to the psychoanalysts that every human reaction is a priori comprehensible. But we reproach them for having misunderstood just this initial "comprehensibility" as is shown by their trying to explain the reaction under consideration by means of a prior reaction, which would reintroduce causal mechanism; comprehension must be otherwise defined. Every project is comprehensible as a project of itself toward a possible. It is comprehensible first in so far as it offers a rational content which is immediately apprehensible—I place my knapsack on the ground in order to rest for a moment. This means that we immediately apprehend the possible which it projects and the end at which it aims. In the second place it is comprehensible in that the possible under consideration refers to other possibles, these to still others, and so on to the ultimate possibility which I am. The comprehension is effected in two opposed senses: by a regressive psychoanalysis one ascends back from the considered act to my ultimate possible; and by a synthetic progression one redescends from this ultimate possible to the considered act and grasps its integration in the total form.

This form which we call our ultimate possibility is not just one possible among others—not even though it be, as Heidegger claims, the possibility of dying or of "no longer realizing any presence in the world." Every particular possibility, in fact, is articulated in an ensemble. It is necessary to conceive of this ultimate possibility as the unitary synthesis of all our actual possibles; each of these possibles resides in an undifferentiated state in the ultimate possibility until a particular circumstance comes to throw it into relief without, however, thereby suppressing its quality of belonging to the totality. Indeed we pointed out in Part Two that the perceptive apprehension of any object whatsoever is effected on the *ground of the world*.¹⁰ By this we meant that what the psychologists are accustomed to call "perception" can not be limited to objects which are strictly "seen" or "understood" etc. at a certain instant but that the objects considered refer by means of implications and various significations to the totality of the existent in-itself from the standpoint of which they are apprehended. Thus it is not true that I proceed by degrees from that table to the room where I am and then going out pass from there to the hall, to the stairway, to the street in order finally to conceive as the result of a passage to the limit, the world as the sum of all existents. Quite the contrary, I can not perceive any instrumental thing whatsoever unless it is in terms of the absolute existence of all existents, for my first being is being-in-the-world.

¹⁰ Part II, chapter III.

Thus we find that for man in so far as "there are" things, there is in things a perpetual appeal toward the integration which makes us apprehend things by descending from the total integration which is immediately realized down to this particular structure which is interpreted only in relation to this totality. But on the other hand if there is a world, it is because we rise up into the world suddenly and in totality. We have observed, in fact, in that same chapter devoted to transcendence, that the in-itself by itself alone is not capable of any unity as a world. But our upsurge is a passion in this sense that we lose ourselves in nihilation in order that a world may exist. Thus the first phenomenon of being in the world is the original relation between the totality of the in-itself or world and my own totality detotalized; I choose myself as a whole in the world which is a whole. Just as I come from the world to a particular "this," so I come from myself as a detotalized totality to the outline of one of my particular possibilities since I can apprehend a particular "this" on the ground of the world only on the occasion of a particular project of myself. But in this case just as I can apprehend a particular "this" only on the ground of the world by surpassing it toward this or that possibility, so I can project myself beyond the "this" toward this or that possibility only on the ground of my ultimate and total possibility. Thus my ultimate and total possibility, as the original integration of all my particular possibles, and the world as the totality which comes to existents by my upsurge into being are two strictly correlative notions. I can perceive the hammer (i.e., outline a plan of "hammering" with it) only on the ground of the world; but conversely I can outline this act of "hammering" only on the ground of the totality of myself and in terms of that totality.

Thus the fundamental act of freedom is discovered; and it is this which gives meaning to the particular action which I can be brought to consider. This constantly renewed act is not distinct from my being; it is a choice of myself in the world and by the same token it is a discovery of the world. This enables us to avoid the perilous reef of the unconscious which psychoanalysis meets at the start. If nothing is in consciousness which is not a consciousness of being, some will say to us by way of objection that then this fundamental choice must of necessity be a conscious choice. They will ask, "Can you maintain that when you yield to fatigue, you are conscious of all the implications which this fact supposes?" We shall reply that we are perfectly conscious of them. Only this consciousness itself must have for its limit the structure of consciousness in general and of the choice which we are making.

So far as the latter is concerned, we must insist on the fact that the question here is not of a deliberate choice. This is not because the choice is less conscious or less explicit than a deliberation but rather because it is the foundation of all deliberation and because as we have seen, a delib-

eration requires an interpretation in terms of an original choice. Therefore it is necessary to defend oneself against the illusion which would make of original freedom a *positing* of causes and motives as objects, then a decision from the standpoint of these causes and these motives. Quite the contrary, as soon as there are cause and motive (that is, an appreciation of things and of the structures of the world) there is already a *positing* of ends and consequently a choice. But this does not mean that the profound choice is thereby unconscious. It is simply one with the consciousness which we have of ourselves. This consciousness, as we know, can be only non-positional; it is *we-as-consciousness* since it is not distinct from our being. And as our being is precisely our original choice, the consciousness (of) the choice is identical with the self-consciousness which we have. One must be conscious in order to choose, and one must choose in order to be conscious. Choice and consciousness are one and the same thing. This is what many psychologists have felt when they declared that consciousness was "selection." But because they have not traced this selection back to its ontological foundation, they have remained on a level in which the selection appeared as a gratuitous function of a consciousness in other respects substantial. This reproach may in particular be leveled against Bergson. But if it has been well established that consciousness is a nihilation, the conclusion is that to be conscious of ourselves and to choose ourselves are one and the same. This is the explanation of the difficulties which moralizers like Gide have met when they wanted to define the purity of the feelings. What difference is there, Gide asked, between a willed feeling and an experienced feeling?¹¹ Actually there is no difference. "To will to love" and to love are one since to love is to choose oneself as loving by assuming consciousness of loving. If the *πᾶσι* is free, it is a choice.

We have remarked sufficiently—in particular in the chapter concerning Temporality—that the Cartesian *cogito* must be extended. In fact, as we have seen, to assume self-consciousness never means to assume a consciousness of the instant; for the instant is only one view of the mind and even if it existed, a consciousness which would apprehend itself in the instant would no longer apprehend anything. I can assume consciousness of myself only as a particular man engaged in this or that enterprise, anticipating this or that success, fearing this or that result, and by means of the ensemble of these anticipations, outlining his whole *figure*. Indeed it is thus that I am apprehending myself at this moment when I am writing; I am not the simple perceptive consciousness of my hand which is making marks on the paper. I am well in advance of this hand all the way to the completion of the book and to the meaning of this book—and of philosophical activity in general—in my life. It is within the compass of this project (*i.e.*, within the compass of what I am) that there are

¹¹ *Journal des faux monnayeurs*. (*The Counterfeiters*.)

inserted certain projects toward more restricted possibilities such as that of presenting this or that idea in this or that way or of ceasing to write for a moment or of paging through a volume in which I am looking for this or that reference, etc. Nevertheless it would be an error to believe that there is an analytical and differentiated consciousness corresponding to this global choice. My ultimate and initial project—for these are but one—is, as we shall see, always the outline of a solution of the problem of being. But this solution is not first conceived and then realized; we are this solution. We make it exist by means of our very engagement, and therefore we shall be able to apprehend it only by living it. Thus we are always wholly present to ourselves; but precisely because we are wholly present, we can not hope to have an analytical and detailed consciousness of what we are. Moreover this consciousness can be only non-thetic.

On the other hand, the world by means of its very articulation refers to us exactly the image of what we are. Not, as we have seen so many times, that we can decipher this image—i.e., break it down and subject it to analysis—but because the world necessarily appears to us as we are. In fact, it is by surpassing the world toward ourselves that we make it appear such as it is. We choose the world, not in its contexture as in-itself but in its meaning, by choosing ourselves. Through the internal negation by denying that we are the world, we make the world appear as world, and this internal negation can exist only if it is at the same time a projection toward a possible. It is the very way in which I entrust myself to the inanimate, in which I abandon myself to my body (or, on the other hand, the way in which I resist either one of these) which causes the appearance of both my body and the inanimate world with their respective value. Consequently there also I enjoy a full consciousness of myself and of my fundamental projects, and this time the consciousness is positional. Nevertheless, precisely because it is positional, what it releases to me is the transcendent image of what I am. The value of things, their instrumental role, their proximity and real distance (which have no relation to their spatial proximity and distance) do nothing more than to outline my image—that is, my choice. My clothing (a uniform or a lounge suit, a soft or a starched shirt) whether neglected or cared for, carefully chosen or ordinary, my furniture, the street on which I live, the city in which I reside, the books with which I surround myself, the recreation which I enjoy, everything which is mine (that is, finally, the world of which I am perpetually conscious, at least by way of a meaning implied by the object which I look at or use): all this informs me of my choice—that is, my being. But such is the structure of the positional consciousness that I can trace this knowledge back to a subjective apprehension of myself, and it refers me to other objects which I produce or which I dispose of in connection with the order of the preceding without being able to perceive that I am thus more and more sculpturing my figure in

the world. Thus we are fully conscious of the choice which we are. And if someone objects that in accordance with these observations it would be necessary to be conscious not of our *being-chosen* but of *choosing* ourselves, we shall reply that this consciousness is expressed by the two-fold "feeling" of anguish and of responsibility. Anguish, abandonment, responsibility, whether muted or full strength, constitute the quality of our consciousness in so far as this is pure and simple freedom.

Earlier we posed a question: I have yielded to fatigue, we said, and doubtless I could have done otherwise but *at what price?* At present we are in a position to answer this. Our analysis, in fact, has just shown us that this act was not *gratuitous*. To be sure, it was not explained by a motive or a cause conceived as the content of a prior state of consciousness, but it had to be interpreted in terms of an original project of which it formed an integral part. Hence it becomes evident that we can not suppose that the act could have been modified without at the same time supposing a fundamental modification of my original choice of myself. This way of yielding to fatigue and of letting myself fall down at the side of the road expresses a certain initial stiffening against my body and the inanimate in-itself. It is placed within the compass of a certain view of the world in which difficulties can appear "not worth the trouble of being tolerated"; or, to be exact, since the motive is a pure non-thetic consciousness and consequently an initial project of itself toward an absolute end (a certain aspect of the in-itself-for-itself), it is an apprehension of the world (warmth, distance from the city, uselessness of effort, etc.) as the cause of my ceasing to walk. Thus this possible—to stop—theoretically takes on its meaning only in and through the hierarchy of the possibles which I am in terms of the ultimate and initial possible. This does not imply that I *must necessarily* stop but merely that I can refuse to stop only by a radical conversion of my being-in-the-world; that is, by an abrupt metamorphosis of my initial project—i.e., by another choice of myself and of my ends. Moreover this modification is always possible.

The anguish which, when this possibility is revealed, manifests our freedom to our consciousness is witness of this perpetual modifiability of our initial project. In anguish we do not simply apprehend the fact that the possibles which we project are perpetually eaten away by our freedom-to-come; in addition we apprehend our choice—i.e., ourselves—as *unjustifiable*. This means that we apprehend our choice as not deriving from any prior reality but rather as being about to serve as foundation for the ensemble of significations which constitute reality. Unjustifiability is not only the subjective recognition of the absolute contingency of our being but also that of the interiorization and recovery of this contingency on our own account. For the choice—as we shall see—issues from the contingency of the in-itself which it nihilates and transports it to the

level of the gratuitous determination of the for-itself by itself. Thus we are perpetually engaged in our choice and perpetually conscious of the fact that we ourselves can abruptly invert this choice and "reverse steam"; for we project the future by our very being, but our existential freedom perpetually eats it away as we make known to ourselves what we are by means of the future but without getting a grip on this future which remains always possible without ever passing to the rank of the real. Thus we are perpetually *threatened* by the nihilation of our actual choice and perpetually threatened with choosing ourselves—and consequently with becoming—other than we are. By the sole fact that our choice is absolute, it is *fragile*; that is, by positing our freedom by means of it, we posit by the same stroke the perpetual possibility that the choice may become a "here and now" which has been made-past in the interests of a "beyond" which I shall be.

Nevertheless let us thoroughly understand that our actual choice is such that it furnishes us with no *motive* for making it past by means of a further choice. In fact, it is this original choice which originally creates all causes and all motives which can guide us to partial actions; it is this which arranges the world with its meaning, its instrumental-complexes, and its coefficient of adversity. The absolute change which threatens us from our birth until our death remains perpetually unpredictable and incomprehensible. Even if we envisage other fundamental attitudes as possible, we shall never consider them except from outside, as the behavior of Others. And if we attempt to refer our conduct to them, they shall not for all that lose their character as external and as transcended-transcendences. To "understand" them in fact would be already to have chosen them. We are going to return to this point.

In addition we must not think of the original choice as "producing itself from one instant to the next"; this would be to return to the instantaneous conception of consciousness from which Husserl was never able to free himself. Since, on the contrary, it is consciousness which temporalizes itself, we must conceive of the original choice as unfolding time and being one with the unity of the three ekstases. To choose ourselves is to nihilate ourselves; that is, to cause a future to come to make known to us what we are by conferring a meaning on our past. Thus there is not a succession of instants separated by nothingnesses—as with Descartes—such that my choice at the instant t can not act on my choice of the instant t . To choose is to effect the upsurge along with my engagement of a certain finite extension of concrete and continuous duration, which is precisely that which separates me from the realization of my original possibles. Thus freedom, choice, nihilation, temporalization are all one and the same thing.

Yet the *instant* is not an empty invention of philosophers. To be sure, there is no subjective instant when I am engaged in my task. At this

moment, for example, when I am writing and trying to grasp my ideas and put them in order, there is no instant for me, there is only a perpetual pursued-pursuit of myself toward the ends which define me (the making explicit of ideas which are to form the basis of this work). And yet we are perpetually threatened by the instant. That is, we are such, by the very choice of our freedom, that we can always cause the instant to appear as the rupture of our ekstastic unity. What then is the instant? In the process of temporalization the instant can not be cut off from a concrete project; we have just shown this. But neither can it be identified with the initial term or with the final term (if it is to exist) of this process. For both of these terms are incorporated in the totality of the process and are an integral part of it. Therefore neither term has the characteristics of the instant. The initial term is incorporated in the process of which it is the initial term in that it is the process' beginning. But on the other hand, it is limited by a prior nothingness in that it is a beginning. The final term is incorporated in the process which it terminates in that it is the process' end; the last note belongs to the melody. But it is followed by a nothingness which limits it in that it is an end. The instant if it is to be able to exist, must be limited by a double nothingness. This is in no way conceivable if it is to be given ahead of time to all the processes of temporalization—as we have shown. But in the very development of our temporalization, we can produce instants if certain processes arise on the collapse of prior processes. The instant will be then both a beginning and an end. In short, if the end of one project coincides with the beginning of another project, an ambiguous, temporal reality will arise which will be limited by a prior nothingness in that it is a beginning and limited by a posterior nothingness in that it is an end. But this temporal structure will be concrete only if the beginning is itself given as the end of the process which it is making-past. A beginning which is given as the end of a prior project—such must be the instant. It will exist therefore only if we are a beginning and an end to ourselves within the unity of a single act.

Now it is precisely this which is produced in the case of a radical modification of our fundamental project. By the free choice of this modification, in fact, we temporalize a project which we are, and we make known to ourselves by a future the being which we have chosen; thus the pure present belongs to the new temporalization as a beginning, and it receives from the future which has just arisen its own nature as a beginning. It is the future alone, in fact, which can turn back on the pure present in order to qualify it as a beginning; otherwise this present would be merely any sort of present whatsoever. Thus the present of the choice belongs already, as an integral structure, to the newly begun totality. But on the other hand, it is not possible for this choice not to determine itself in connection with the past which it has to be. The choice is even, on principle, a decision to apprehend as past the choice for which it is substituted. A

converted atheist is not simply a believer; he is a believer who has for himself rejected atheism, who has made past within him the project of being an atheist. Thus the new choice is given as a beginning in so far as it is an end and as an end in so far as it is a beginning; it is limited by a double nothingness, and as such it realizes a break in the ekstatic unity of our being. However the instant is by itself only a nothingness, for wherever we cast our view, we apprehend only a continuous temporalization which will be in accordance with the direction in which we look: either the completed and closed series which has just passed dragging its final term with it—or else the living temporalization which is beginning and whose initial term is caught and dragged along by the future possibility.

Thus every fundamental choice defines the direction of the pursued-pursuit at the same time that it temporalizes itself. This does not mean that it gives an *initial thrust* or that there is something settled—which I can exploit to my profit so long as I hold myself within the limits of this choice. On the contrary, the nihilation is pursued continuously, and consequently the free and continuous recovery of the choice is obligatory. This recovery, however, is not made from *instant to instant* while I freely reassume my choice. This is because there is no instant. The recovery is so narrowly joined to the ensemble of the process that it has no instantaneous meaning and can not have any. But precisely because it is free and perpetually recovered by freedom, my choice is limited by freedom itself; that is, it is haunted by the specter of the instant. In so far as I *shall* reassume my choice, the making-past of the process will be effected in perfect ontological continuity with the present. The process which is made-past remains organized with the present nihilation in the form of a *practical knowing*; that is, meaning which is lived and interiorized without ever being an object for the consciousness which projects itself toward its own ends. But precisely because I am free I always have the possibility of positing my immediate past as an object. This means that even though my prior consciousness was a pure non-positional consciousness (of) the past while it constituted itself as an internal negation of the co-present real and made its meaning known to itself by its ends posited as “re-assumed,” now at the time of the new choice, consciousness posits its own past as an object; that is, it evaluates its past and takes its bearings in relation to it. This act of objectivizing the immediate past is the same as the new choice of other ends; it contributes to causing the instant to spring forth as the nihilating rupture of the temporalization.

It will be easier for the reader to understand the results obtained by this analysis if we compare them to another theory of freedom—for example, to that of Leibniz. For Leibniz as for us, when Adam took the apple it would have been possible for him not to take it. But for Leibniz as for us the implications of this gesture are so numerous and so ramified that ultimately to declare that it would have been possible