

a particular idea with regard to each individual for-itself. Our particular projects, aimed at the realization in the world of a particular end, are united in the global project which we are. But precisely because we are wholly choice and act, these partial projects are not determined by the global project. They must themselves be choices; and a certain margin of contingency, of unpredictability, and of the absurd is allowed to each of them although each project as it is projected is the specification of the global project on the occasion of particular elements in the situation and so is always understood in relation to the totality of my being-in-the-world.

With these few observations we think that we have described the freedom of the for-itself in its original existence. But it will have been observed that this freedom requires a given, not as its condition but for other sound reasons. First, freedom is conceived only as the nihilation of a given (5); and to the extent that it is an internal negation and a consciousness, it participates (6) in the necessity which prescribes that consciousness be consciousness of something. In addition freedom is the freedom of choosing but not the freedom of not choosing. Not to choose is, in fact, to choose not to choose. The result is that the choice is the foundation of being-chosen but not the foundation of choosing. Hence the absurdity (7) of freedom. There again we are referred to a given which is none other than the very facticity of the for-itself. Finally the global project while illuminating the world in its totality can be made specific on the occasion of this or that element of the situation and consequently of the contingency of the world. All these remarks therefore refer us to a difficult problem: that of the relation of freedom to facticity. Moreover we shall inevitably meet other concrete objections. Can I choose to be tall if I am short? To have two arms if I have only one? etc. These depend on the "limitations" which my factual situation would impose on my free choice of myself. It will be well therefore to examine the other aspect of freedom, its "reverse side:" its relation to facticity.

## II. FREEDOM AND FACTICITY : THE SITUATION

THE decisive argument which is employed by common sense against freedom consists in reminding us of our impotence. Far from being able to modify our situation at our whim, we seem to be unable to change ourselves. I am not "free" either to escape the lot of my class, of my nation, of my family, or even to build up my own power or my fortune or to conquer my most insignificant appetites or habits. I am born a worker, a Frenchman, an hereditary syphilitic, or a tubercular. The history of a life, whatever it may be, is the history of a failure. The coefficient of adversity of things is such that years of patience are necessary to obtain the feeblest result. Again it is necessary "to obey nature in order to com-

mand it"; that is, to insert my action into the network of determinism. Much more than he appears "to make himself," man seems "to be made" by climate and the earth, race and class, language, the history of the collectivity of which he is a part, heredity, the individual circumstances of his childhood, acquired habits, the great and small events of his life.

This argument has never greatly troubled the partisans of human freedom. Descartes, first of all, recognized both that the will is infinite and that it is necessary "to try to conquer ourselves rather than fortune." Here certain distinctions ought to be made. Many of the facts set forth by the determinists do not actually deserve to enter into our considerations. In particular the coefficient of adversity in things can not be an argument against our freedom, for it is by us—i.e., by the preliminary positing of an end—that this coefficient of adversity arises. A particular crag, which manifests a profound resistance if I wish to displace it, will be on the contrary a valuable aid if I want to climb upon it in order to look over the countryside. In itself—if one can even imagine what the crag can be in itself—it is neutral; that is, it waits to be illuminated by an end in order to manifest itself as adverse or helpful. Again it can manifest itself in one or the other way only within an instrumental-complex which is already established. Without picks and piolets, paths already worn, and a technique of climbing, the crag would be neither easy nor difficult to climb; the question would not be posited, it would not support any relation of any kind with the technique of mountain climbing. Thus although brute things (what Heidegger calls "brute existents") can from the start limit our freedom of action, it is our freedom itself which must first constitute the framework, the technique, and the ends in relation to which they will manifest themselves as limits. Even if the crag is revealed as "too difficult to climb," and if we must give up the ascent, let us note that the crag is revealed as such only because it was originally grasped as "climbable"; it is therefore our freedom which constitutes the limits which it will subsequently encounter.

Of course, even after all these observations, there remains an unnamable and unthinkable residuum which belongs to the *in-itself* considered and which is responsible for the fact that in a world illuminated by our freedom, this particular crag will be more favorable for scaling and that one not. But this residue is far from being originally a limit for freedom; in fact, it is thanks to this residue—that is, to the brute *in-itself* as such—that freedom arises as freedom. Indeed common sense will agree with us that the being who is said to be *free* is the one who can realize his projects. But in order for the act to be able to allow a realization, the simple projection of a possible end must be distinguished *a priori* from the realization of this end. If conceiving is enough for realizing, then I am plunged in a world like that of a dream in which the possible is no longer in any way distinguished from the real. I am condemned hence-

forth to see the world modified at the whim of the changes of my consciousness; I can not practice in relation to my conception the "putting into brackets" and the suspension of judgment which will distinguish a simple fiction from a real choice. If the object appears as soon as it is simply conceived, it will no longer be chosen or merely wished for. Once the distinction between the simple wish, the representation which I could choose, and the choice is abolished, freedom disappears too. We are free when the final term by which we make known to ourselves what we are is an end; that is, not a real existent like that which in the supposition which we have made could fulfill our wish, but an object which does not yet exist. But consequently this end can be transcendent only if it is separated from us at the same time that it is accessible. Only an ensemble of real existents can separate us from this end—in the same way that this end can be conceived only as a state to-come of the real existents which separate me from it. It is nothing but the outline of an order of existents—that is, a series of dispositions to be assumed by existents on the foundation of their actual relations. By the internal negation, in fact, the for-itself illuminates the existents in their mutual relations by means of the end which it posits, and it projects this end in terms of the determinations which it apprehends in the existent. There is no circle, as we have seen, for the upsurge of the for-itself is effected at one stroke. But if this is the case, then the very order of the existents is indispensable to freedom itself. It is by means of them that freedom is separated from and reunited to the end which it pursues and which makes known to it what it is. Consequently the resistance which freedom reveals in the existent, far from being a danger to freedom, results only in enabling it to arise as freedom. There can be a free for-itself only as engaged in a resisting world. Outside of this engagement the notions of freedom, of determinism, of necessity lose all meaning.

In addition it is necessary to point out to "common sense" that the formula "to be free" does not mean "to obtain what one has wished" but rather "by oneself to determine oneself to wish" (in the broad sense of choosing). In other words success is not important to freedom. The discussion which opposes common sense to philosophers stems here from a misunderstanding: the empirical and popular concept of "freedom" which has been produced by historical, political, and moral circumstances is equivalent to "the ability to obtain the ends chosen." The technical and philosophical concept of freedom, the only one which we are considering here, means only the autonomy of choice. It is necessary, however, to note that the choice, being identical with acting, supposes a commencement of realization in order that the choice may be distinguished from the dream and the wish. Thus we shall not say that a prisoner is always free to go out of prison, which would be absurd, nor that he is always free to long for release, which would be an irrelevant truism, but that he

is always free to try to escape (or get himself liberated); that is, that whatever his condition may be, he can project his escape and learn the value of his project by undertaking some action. Our description of freedom, since it does not distinguish between choosing and doing, compels us to abandon at once the distinction between the intention and the act. The intention can no more be separated from the act than thought can be separated from the language which expresses it; and as it happens that our speech informs us of our thought, so our acts will inform us of our intentions—that is, it will enable us to disengage our intentions, to schematize them, and to make objects of them instead of limiting us to living them—i.e., to assume a non-thetic consciousness of them. This essential distinction between the freedom of choice and the freedom of obtaining was certainly perceived by Descartes, following Stoicism. It puts an end to all arguments based on the distinction between “willing” and “being able,” which are still put forth today by the partisans and the opponents of freedom.

It is nonetheless true that freedom encounters or seems to encounter limitations on account of the given which it surpasses or nihilates. To show that the coefficient of adversity of the thing and its character as an obstacle (joined to its character as an instrument) is indispensable to the existence of a freedom is to use an argument that cuts two ways; for while it enables us to establish that freedom is not invalidated by the given, it indicates, on the other hand, something like an ontological conditioning of freedom. Would it not be reasonable to say, along with certain contemporary philosophers: if no obstacle, then no freedom? And as we can not admit that freedom by itself creates its own obstacle—which would be absurd for anyone who has understood the meaning of spontaneity—there seems to be here a kind of ontological priority of the in-itself over the for-itself. Therefore we must consider the previous remarks as simple attempts to clear the ground, and we must take up again from the beginning the question of facticity.

We have established that the for-itself is free. But this does not mean that it is its own foundation. If to be free meant to be its own foundation, it would be necessary that freedom should decide the existence of its being. And this necessity can be understood in two ways. First, it would be necessary that freedom should decide its being-free; that is, not only that it should be a choice of an end, but that it should be a choice of itself as freedom. This would suppose therefore that the possibility of being-free and the possibility of not-being-free exist equally before the free choice of either one of them—i.e., before the free choice of freedom. But since then a previous freedom would be necessary which would choose to be free—i.e., basically, which would choose to be what it is already—we should be referred to infinity; for there would be need of another prior freedom in order to choose this and so on. In fact we are a freedom

which chooses, but we do not choose to be free. We are condemned to freedom, as we said earlier, thrown into freedom or, as Heidegger says, "abandoned." And we can see that this abandonment has no other origin than the very existence of freedom. If, therefore, freedom is defined as the escape from the given, from fact, then there is a fact of escape from fact. This is the facticity of freedom.

But the fact that freedom is not its own foundation can be understood also in another way which will lead to identical conclusions. Actually if freedom decided the existence of its being, it would be necessary not only that my being not-free should be possible, but necessary as well that my absolute non-existence be possible. In other words, we have seen that in the initial project of freedom the end turns back upon causes in order to constitute them as such; but if freedom is to be its own foundation, then the end must in addition turn back on its existence and cause it to arise. We can see what would result from this: the for-itself would itself derive from nothingness in order to attain the end which it proposes to itself. This existence made legitimate by means of its end would be existence by right but not in fact. And it is true that among the thousands of ways which the for-itself has of trying to wrench itself away from its original contingency, there is one which consists in trying to make itself recognized by the Other as an existence by right. We insist on our individual rights only within the compass of a vast project which would tend to confer existence on us in terms of the function which we fulfill. This is the reason why man tries so often to identify himself with his function and seeks to see in himself only the "Presiding Judge of the Court of Appeal," the "Chief Treasurer and Paymaster" etc. Each of these functions has its existence justified by its end. To be identified with one of them is to take one's own existence as saved from contingency. But these efforts to escape original contingency succeed only in better establishing the existence of this contingency. Freedom can not determine its existence by the end which it posits. Of course it exists only by the choice which it makes of an end, but it is not master of the fact that there is a freedom which makes known to itself what it is by means of its end. A freedom which would produce its own existence would lose its very meaning as freedom. Actually freedom is not a simple undetermined power. If it were, it would be nothingness or in-itself; and it is only by an aberrant synthesis of the in-itself and nothingness that one is able to conceive of freedom as a bare power pre-existing its choices. It determines itself by its very upsurge as a "doing." But as we have seen, to do supposes the nihilation of a given. One does something *with* or *to* something. Thus freedom is a lack of being in relation to a given being; it is not the upsurge of a full being. And if it is this hole of being, this nothingness of being as we have just said, it supposes *all* being in order to rise up in the heart of being as a hole. Therefore it could not determine its existence from the

standpoint of nothingness, for all production from the standpoint of nothingness can be only being-in-itself.

We have proved elsewhere in Part One of this work that nothingness can appear nowhere except at the heart of being. Here we add also the demands of common sense: empirically we can be free only in relation to a state of things and in spite of this state of things. I will be said to be free in relation to this state of things when it does not constrain me. Thus the empirical and practical concept of freedom is wholly negative; it issues from the consideration of a situation and establishes that this situation *leaves me free* to pursue this or that end. One might say even that this situation conditions my freedom in this sense, that the situation *is there in order not to constrain me*. Remove the prohibition to circulate in the streets after the curfew, and what meaning can there be for me to have the freedom (which, for example, has been conferred on me by a pass) to take a walk at night?

Thus freedom is a lesser being which supposes being in order to elude it. It is not free not to exist or not to be free. We are going to grasp immediately the connection of these two structures. In fact, as freedom is the escape from being, it could not produce itself laterally *alongside* being and in a project of "surveying;" one can not escape from a gaol in which one is not imprisoned. A projection of the self on the margin of being can in no way constitute itself as the nihilation of this being. Freedom is the escape from an engagement in being; it is the nihilation of a being which it is. This does not mean that human-reality exists *first*, to be free subsequently. "Subsequently" and "first" are terms created by freedom itself. The upsurge of freedom is effected by the double nihilation of the *being which it is* and of the being in the midst of which it is. Naturally freedom is not this being in the sense of being-in-itself. But by freedom's illuminating insufficiencies in the light of the end chosen, *there is this being which is its own*. Freedom *has to be behind itself* this being which it has not chosen; and precisely to the extent that it turns back upon it in order to illuminate it, freedom causes this being which is its own to appear in relation with the *plenum* of being—that is, to exist in the midst of the world. We said that freedom is not free not to be free and that it is not free not to exist. This is because the fact of not being able not to be free is the *facticity* of freedom, and the fact of not being able not to exist is its *contingency*. Contingency and facticity are really one; there is a being which freedom has to be in the form of *non-being* (that is, of nihilation). To exist as *the fact* of freedom or to have to be a being in the midst of the world are one and the same thing, and this means that freedom is originally a *relation to the given*.

But what is this relation to the given? Are we to understand by this that the given (the in-itself) conditions freedom? Let us look more closely. The given does not cause freedom (since it can produce only the

given) nor is it the reason of freedom (since all "reason" comes into the world through freedom). Neither is it the necessary condition of freedom since we are on the level of pure contingency. Neither is it an *indispensable matter* on which freedom must exercise itself, for this would be to suppose that freedom exists ready-made as an Aristotelian form or as a Stoic Pneuma and that it looks for a matter to work in. The given in no way enters into the constitution of freedom since freedom is interiorized as the internal negation of the given. It is simply the pure contingency which freedom exerts by denying the given while making itself a choice; the given is the plenitude of being which freedom colors with insufficiency and with *négativité* by illuminating it with the light of an end which does not exist. The given is freedom itself in so far as freedom exists; and whatever it does, freedom can not escape its existence. The reader will have understood that this given is nothing other than the in-itself nihilated by the for-itself which has to be it, that the body as a point of view on the world, that the past as the essence which the for-itself was—that these are three designations for a single reality. By its nihilating withdrawal, freedom causes a whole system of relations to be established, from the point of view of the end, between *all* in-itselfs; that is, between the *plenum* of being which is revealed then as the world and the being which it has to be in the midst of this *plenum* and which is revealed as *one* being, as one "this" which it has to be.

Thus by its very projection toward an end, freedom constitutes as a being in the midst of the world a particular *datum* which it has to be. Freedom does not choose it, for this would be to choose its own existence; but by the choice which it makes of its end, freedom causes the *datum* to be revealed in this or that way, in this or that light in connection with the revelation of the world itself. Thus the very contingency of freedom and the world which surrounds this contingency with its own contingency will appear to freedom only in the light of the end which it has chosen; that is, not as brute existents but in the unity of the illumination of a single nihilation. And freedom would never be able to reapprehend this ensemble as a pure *datum*, for in that case it would be necessary that this freedom be outside of all choice and therefore that it should cease to be freedom. We shall use the term *situation* for the contingency of freedom in the *plenum* of being of the world inasmuch as this *datum*, which is there only in order not to constrain freedom, is revealed to this freedom only as *already illuminated* by the end which freedom chooses. Thus the *datum* never appears to the for-itself as a brute existent in-itself; it is discovered always as a cause since it is revealed only in the light of an end which illuminates it. Situation and motivation are really one. The for-itself discovers itself as engaged in being, hemmed in by being, threatened by being; it discovers the state of things which surrounds it as the cause for a reaction of defense or attack. But it can make this discovery

only because it freely posits the end in relation to which the state of things is threatening or favorable.

These observations should show us that the *situation*, the common product of the contingency of the in-itself and of freedom, is an ambiguous phenomenon in which it is impossible for the for-itself to distinguish the contribution of freedom from that of the brute existent. In fact, just as freedom is the escape from a contingency which it has to be in order to escape it, so the situation is the free coordination and the free qualification of a brute given which does not allow itself to be qualified in any way at all. Here I am at the foot of this crag which appears to me as "not scalable." This means that the rock appears to me in the light of a projected scaling—a secondary project which finds its meaning in terms of an initial project which is my being-in-the-world. Thus the rock is carved out on the ground of the world by the effect of the initial choice of my freedom. But on the other hand, what my freedom can not determine is whether the rock "to be scaled" will or will not lend itself to scaling. This is part of the brute being of the rock. Nevertheless the rock can show its resistance to the scaling only if the rock is integrated by freedom in a "situation" of which the general theme is scaling. For the simple traveler who passes over this road and whose free project is a pure aesthetic ordering of the landscape, the crag is not revealed either as scalable or as not-scalable; it is manifested only as beautiful or ugly.

Thus it is impossible to determine in each particular case what comes from freedom and what comes from the brute being of the for-itself. The given in-itself as resistance or as aid is revealed only in the light of the projecting freedom. But the projecting freedom organizes an illumination such that the in-itself is revealed by it as it is (i.e., resisting or favorable); but we must clearly understand that the resistance of the given is not directly admissible as an in-itself quality of the given but only as an indication—across a free illumination and a free refraction—of an inapprehensible *quid*. Therefore it is only in and through the free upsurge of a freedom that the world develops and reveals the resistance which can render the projected end unrealizable. Man encounters an obstacle only within the field of his freedom. Better yet, it is impossible to decree *a priori* what comes from the brute existent and what from freedom in the character of this or that particular existent functioning as an obstacle. What is an obstacle for me may not be so for another. There is no obstacle in an absolute sense, but the obstacle reveals its coefficient of adversity across freely invented and freely acquired techniques. The obstacle reveals this coefficient also in terms of the value of the end posited by freedom. The rock will not be an obstacle if I wish at any cost to arrive at the top of the mountain. On the other hand, it will discourage me if I have freely fixed limits to my desire of making the projected climb. Thus the world by coefficients of adversity reveals to me the way in which I



stand in relation to the ends which I assign myself, so that I can never know if it is giving me information about myself or about it. Furthermore the coefficient of adversity of the given is never a simple relation to my freedom as a pure nihilating thrust. It is a relation, illuminated by freedom, between the *datum* which is the cliff and the *datum* which my freedom has to be; that is, between the contingent which it is not and its pure facticity. If the desire to scale it is equal, the rock will be easy for one athletic climber but difficult for another, a novice, who is not well trained and who has a weak body. But the body in turn is revealed as well or poorly trained only in relation to a free choice. It is because I am there and because I have made of myself what I am that the rock develops in relation to my body a coefficient of adversity. For the lawyer who has remained in the city and who is pleading a case, whose body is hidden under his lawyer's robe, the rock is neither hard nor easy to climb; it is dissolved in the totality "world" without in any way emerging from it. And in one sense it is I who choose my body as weak by making it face the difficulties which I cause to be born (mountain climbing, cycling, sport). If I have not chosen to take part in sports, if I live in the city, and if I concern myself exclusively with business or intellectual work, then from this point of view my body will have no quality whatsoever.

Thus we begin to catch a glimpse of the paradox of freedom: there is freedom only in a situation, and there is a situation only through freedom. Human-reality everywhere encounters resistance and obstacles which it has not created, but these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in and through the free choice which human-reality is. But in order better to grasp the meaning of these remarks and to derive the advantages which they allow, it will be well at present to analyze in the light of them certain specific examples. What we have called the facticity of freedom is the given which it has to be and which it illuminates by its project. This given is manifested in several ways although within the absolute unity of a single illumination. It is *my place*, *my body*, *my past*, *my position* in so far as it is already determined by the indications of Others, finally *my fundamental relation to the Other*. We are going to examine successively and with specific examples these various structures of the situation. But we must never lose sight of the fact that no one of them is given alone and that when we consider one of them in isolation, we are restricted to making it appear on the synthetic ground of the others.

### A. MY PLACE

My place is defined by the spatial order and by the particular nature of the "thises" which are revealed to me on the ground of the world. It is naturally the spot in which I "live" (my "country" with its sun, its climate, its resources, its hydrographic and orographic configuration). It is