EXISTENCE AND EXISTENTS

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION*

*A first draft of the present translation was prepared by Garth Gillan of Southern Illinois University.

In this book we find elucidations of quite unusual topics: "objects" such as the night, unformed sensuous elements, the light, nutriment, clothing, a face; "subjective" states such as insomnia, sleep, horror, vertigo, appetite, fatigue, indolence. These "objects" and these "subjective states" are subjected to a sort of intentional analysis that endeavors to explicate their essence, taken verbally, that is, their way of being, the internal processes or movements by which they take form and hold together. They are certainly elusive phenomena; it requires an exceptional perceptiveness and descriptive skill to bring out what is happening in them.

What a contrast a book concerned with such amorphous "objects" makes with the philosophy that sets out to elucidate the categorial structures of objective objects What a contrast the study of these states of subjectivity makes with the existential philosophy that not only, like classical transcendental philosophy, opposing the reification of man in objective science, set itself up as a method to discern a spontaneity at the core of the human essence, but argued that the human essence is through and through propulsive, ecstatic, a pure elaboration of a project of itself which throws itself into the world as a venture and an enterprise Is not every consciousness consciousness of something, of some object? Is not the primitive form of consciousness a dealing, if not with the categorialized objects of Kantian epistemology, with implements or gear, that is, entities that gear in with one another, relate or refer to one another? Does not the primitive sense of things lie in this referentiality, and is not every perception of things a perception of the sense of things? Is not then the transcending movement that could follow out a reference the very

movement of the spirit into the world? Is not subjectivity just this movement — ex-istence and not substance?

Transcendental philosophy could take form only as a promotion of the freedom and autonomy of subjectivity. The rational subjectivity, finding itself, its own categories, at the origin of the comprehensive organization of the universe, undertakes to supply everything with a sufficient reason, both making the universe intelligible and committing itself to supply a reason for every being and a reason for every reason, making itself the unfailing source of reasons. Undertaking to answer — to everyone, with an answer valid for anyone, that is, rationally — for everything it posits and for everything posited in the universe, it makes itself absolutely self-responsible. Thus subjectivity comes to appear to itself as a being that posits itself and answers for itself without limit, is absolutely sovereign in unconditioned self-responsibility.

Existential philosophy found the spontaneity of the linking or relating understanding already in pretheoretical, practical life. The gear and implements of everyday life fit together, relate to one another as so many terms of an instrumental complex. Subjectivity then appears as the self-activating power to operate gear, to organize for itself a practical field. The leap from a means to an end, from the actual to the possible, from a palpable configuration to the telos it refers to or relates to or signifies, is the metaphysical thrust that opens a field, that reveals a world. It is constitutive of our existence as being-in-the-world, it makes our existence an ecstatic propulsion. Our being does not close in upon itself and sustain itself, like a substance; it continually projects itself out of itself, simultaneously into the potentialities it elaborates for itself and into a world of possibilities that answer to them. It thus takes over the being that is its own to be, takes on the burden of its being for itself, answers for itself.

This kind of transcendental or existential reflection thus revealed a subjectivity that is ordering or legislative, that is sovereign and self-responsible, that is actively referential and teleological, everywhere actively bringing an end to instrumental chains, bringing ends to the never-ending flow of Being, terminating and thus determining — because continually projecting itself into its own dying, terminating and thus determining itself.

The kind of reflection pursued in this book brings out the processes of unconsciousness, sleep and oblivion which the active and ecstatic subjectivity is backed up against. This sphere of unconsciousness is not simply the reverse or negative of consciousness. Sleep is not a suspension of the existential arc by which one is in the world; it is a mode of being in the world. It is, indeed, existence reduced to taking a position, positing oneself, achieving repose. But this is not equivalent to the inertia of things; it is a positive confiding of oneself to the world, and a relationship with the terrestrial, reservoir of support, prior to every relationship with things. In such preobjective relationships the analysis discovers a process of auto-position in our existence, by which a domain of inwardness and privacy is established, by which a stance is first possible, by which a substance takes form, by which the identity of an existent that is in itself is effected. Consciousness that is for itself a zero-point, that occurs as an awakening to things, a position taken before the world, an ecstatic self-transcendence, consciousness that can identify things — proceeds from this position. Levinas sees in consciousness not so much a work of determining and terminating, of assigning ends and itself having an end, being a movement unto ends in general because it is a movement unto its own end, a dying; he rather takes the generating essence of consciousness to be commencing, instituting a here and a now, awakening.

And he sees the sense of things not so much in their referentiality — in their distinctness — as in their presence, their phosphorescent plenitude — in their clarity — by which they are permeable

to the sensibility, and given. But if the world is a field of things, there is then something else in subjectivity besides being in the world; there is a relationship with the terrestrial, with the light — and with the sensuous element, which, before being taken as so much data for cognition, is savored, is assimilated, nourishes and contents life. There is the *elemental;* and an existence finds itself and rests in the elemental, and thus finds its self, prior to awakening to the world. The elements will be a theme of some of Levinas' most original expositions.

This investigation does not only find the substance of unconsciousness, sleep and oblivion beneath the activity of consciousness, wakefulness, recall and reflection; it seeks to bring to light the very process by which an identity, an entity, an existent, first arises. Being breaks up into beings, into identifiable objects, for a being that identifies itself. The contraction of identity, the formation of an existent, is itself an event. What is the movement effected in it?

An existent, a term or a subject of existence, is not just a segment of the flow of being; it has existence as an attribute, as its own. It does not just exist with its existence; it takes up a position with regard to it. An existent is constituted in a movement of taking on the existing with which it finds itself affected. This movement becomes palpable in the hesitation or aversion before one's own existence which makes up the inner meaning of indolence. One is held to being, held to be. Insomnia is the pure enduring of this charge — a watching where there is nothing to watch. In it there is revealed, within the structure of a constituted existent, some memory of the anonymous current of existing out of which it arose, existing as beginningless, endless continuity, as *apeiron.* Consciousness appears to Levinas as constituted in the horror of the indeterminate. The insomnia that endures the night is the very experience of this gaping and pointless suffering.

If the form of an existent is contracted in horror of the indeterminate, its own being is a burden, and its self-identity a being mired in itself. Indolence reveals the burden of existing, being in its weight. Existing, once contracted, is contracted wholly and irrevocably. Inscription in being is definitive. If our existence has the form of a concern, it is first a concern over the being with which one finds oneself affected — and not a concern over the possible nothingness. There is then also in the core of an existent a nostalgia for escape. If our existing is ecstatic and self-transcending, it is so not in the pursuit of being, but in a flight from being.

Nor is our transcendence a pursuit of non-being and death. Transcendence in us is desire for something else — for alterity.

This alterity is not conceived by it and projected by it in advance. It opens from the outside in the face of another, in the other who faces. Levinas' subsequent work will concentrate on determining this dimension of exteriority and alterity from which another comes, to appeal and to contest us. Our existence will no longer appear in this work as destined for the world.

This inquiry is phenomenological, in the sense that it proceeds by a descriptive effort to get at the essence — the inner process — of phenomena as they show themselves to the mode of subjectivity first receptive to them. And in the sense that those modes of subjectivity themselves have to be elucidated by reliving them attentively. Yet if the reflective work is itself thematizing and objectifying, the preobjective, nocturnal and elemental format of Being will elude it; it will still be available to the constituted consciousness only as a memory of something interrupted and escaped. And if the reflective work is itself a pursuit of self-responsibility, the anonymous vigilance which a subjectivity broke with in order to begin will still be accessible to that subjectivity only in the aversion it feels still with regard to the effort to begin.

Time is the inner structure of subjectivity, that is, of the movement of ex-isting. Levinas' work contains not only wholly new analyses of the forms of time — of the present, the past, the future — but also a new conception of the work of time.

The work of auto-positing, of contracting identity, of taking on existing as one's own and thus becoming an existent, is also the very process that produces presence and the present. But then the present has the form not of a pure punctual line of separation between the infinite extension of the past and that of the future, nor of the Heideggerian field of presence, but of a pulse of existence that disconnects from the transmission of the past, closes in upon itself, and finds itself irrevocably and definitively held in all the absolute weight of its being. It has the form of an instant.

Bearing all the absolute weight of being, the instant is held in itself, and does not, of its own force, conjure up a future. The instant does not only interrupt the transmission of the past, but holds back from the future — it is fatigued by the future. What is radically new in Levinas is that he introduces a contact with alterity at the origin of the process by which a temporal structure is engendered within a life. It is alterity, in the guise of the other, the appeal and the demand of the other that faces, that comes to draw the self-identical existent out of itself — and make it ex-ist, that is, transcend itself and be temporal.

Is the temporal essence of our existence a condemnation? Is it possible for an existence that continually passes away to attain to sense and worth? Are not meaning and value of themselves intemporal or eternal, and unascribable to a being that is temporal, and mortal, of itself, by reason of its own essence? Heidegger set out to establish that it is on the contrary the temporalizing self-transcendence of our existence that alone makes it possible for it to have ends and an end and to signify them with its existing, and that makes the horizons of the world open significantly about it. He set out to show, further, that it is only the temporal, deathbound thrust of our existence that delivers over to a singular existent the existence that is its own to exist, and thus makes its self-affirmation, affirmation of the worth or goodness of its own existence, possible. Thus Heidegger set out to show that it is the temporalizing movement of our existence that brings meaning and worth to the world and to itself. And it is the attraction of the future — of the being possibly to come and the nothingness certainly to come — that temporalizes our existence.

It is essential to the notion of the future that what is to come be not merely a system of possibilities that could derive logically from the actual, and that would be present and simultaneous in the representation that conceives them. The real future is what is to come of itself, and that it escape our grasp even while being sensed is essential to it. The future is what can surprise us. It is then not what we apprehend already, but that of which we are apprehensive, that which threatens and promises.

But it is not only the threat, the approach, the imminence, of nothingness that constitutes the future; not all its surprises are calamities. To act as though *le pire est toujours certain* is not to have a lucid sense of what may come; it is already to entrench oneself in the present against it. It is then not in the paralyzing dread of nothingness, but in the expectation of *something else* that the sense of the future is constituted.

Then the logical or dialectical concept of the possible will no longer suffice to explicate the sense of futurity; the irresistible lure of the future is not constituted by the prospect of being, which of itself tends to subsist, conjoined with the possibility of nothing. For Levinas the lure of the future is essentially the lure of pardon.

Spiro spem, as long as there is time there is hope. Time is a promise and a hope because it is the possibility of beginning anew. The future does not merely devolve out of the actual, out of its own momentum, such that every deed, every guilt, could only continue in the working out of its last consequences. The essential unforeseeability of the future points to a break between the actual and the future; there is discontinuity. An instant is an inauguration, a beginning, and another instant is a new beginning. The sense of the future is hope for the future, and hope is the sense of the possibility of a new beginning.

But the instant to come relates to the now and the past. Existential philosophy recognized that this relationship cannot be one of logical or causal derivation from the present; on the contrary the sense of the past and of the present derives from the sense of the future. It is certainly the approach of what is to come that makes the past past. But in insisting that the past is not what has passed away, the bygone, but what has come to pass, the definitive and the irrevocable, existential philosophy has conceived still the relationship a life has with its past as memory and retention. Yet Nietzsche had already caught sight of forgetting as a positive and not only negative relationship with the past; it alone makes possible innocence. There could be a possibility of deliverance from the spirit of vengeance, and reversal of rancor — Zarathustra's highest hope — only because the happiness of the future could not compensate for — pay for — the mortification of the past, but make one forget it. It could make it be really past.

But for Levinas the happiness that time could bring — and which constitutes the very promise of the future — is not simply the happiness that fills the space created by the obliteration of the guilty past, but that which restores the past pardoned. The future is to come to the whole of one's time; the hope for the future is a hope for what one is and was. It will come then with a retroaction back over the present and the past. It would not only bring it a new meaning. It is I myself, the I that exists now and that existed, that will be, that will begin anew in the time hoped for. Thus the promise of the future is a promise of resurrecting the past, with all its forces, but in such a way that it would begin anew. It is just this that is pardon: redemption of the past itself.

And it is just this that is the positive feeling of time. The sense of being temporal is not just anxiety, the sadness of feeling one's being continually dissipating and with only definitive nothingness ahead of it. A temporal existence is, in the existentialist formula, ecstatic; it projects itself into a temporal itinerary of its own force, and is a power because it temporalizes itself, and feels its temporality as a happiness. This happiness is not the contentment of an entity stabilized into a substance. It is also not the Nietzschean happiness of a power building on itself. For the happiness that a being that knows itself temporal can know is the happiness of a new beginning that the future can bring, a new beginning of the being one is and has been — the strange happiness of the *felix culpa.*

Thus Levinas gives the ancient sense of time as an infinite succession of instants a wholly new existential interpretation. An instant is indeed a commencement, an inauguration, a dawning, and because the present at which a consciousness is is for it an instant, an awakening, an *Augenblick,* consciousness could be origin, beginning, zero-point. The sense of the future is not the sense of the recurrence of the now, nor the sense of its continuation, but the sense of another instant, another beginning possible, another chance for the now. It is the sense of the accomplished, the effected, having another chance, a chance to recommence otherwise. This is the sense of time not as a determinate infinity of instants, but rather of the infinition, the ever recommencing of the definitive, which would be the inner form of our existence.

Alphonso Lingis

PREFACE

The study we present here is a preparatory one. It examines a certain number of broader research topics concerning the problem of the Good, time, and the relationship with the other as a movement toward the Good. The Platonic formula that situates the Good beyond Being serves as the general guideline for this research — but does not make up its content. It signifies that the movement which leads an existent toward the Good is not a transcendence by which that existent raises itself up to a higher existence, but a departure from Being and from the categories which describes it: an *ex-cendence.* But excendence and the Good necessarily have a foothold in being, and that is why Being is better than non-being.

The theme of the present work is limited to this position in Being. Our exposition cannot, however, hide the perspectives within which it is situated, and it constantly anticipates developments reserved for a subsequent work.

These studies begun before the war were continued and written down for the most part in captivity. The stalag is evoked here not as a guarantee of profundity nor as a claim to indulgence, but as an explanation for the absence of any consideration of those philosophical works published, with so much impact, between 1940 and 1945.

Introduction: The Existent and the Relationship with Existence

The distinction between that which exists and its existence itself, between the individual, the genus, the collective, God, beings designated by substantives, and the event or act of their existence, imposes itself upon philosophical reflection — and with equal facility disappears from its view. It is as though thought becomes dizzy poring over the emptiness of the verb to exist, which we seem not to be able to say anything about, which only becomes intelligible in its participle, the existent, that which exists. Thought slips imperceptibly from the notion of Being qua Being, that by virtue of which an existing being exists, to the idea of a cause of existence, a "Being in general," a God whose essence will indeed contain existence, but which will nonetheless be "a being," and not the deed, activity, pure event or work, of Being. This latter will be understood in confusion with beings.

The difficulty of separating Being from beings and the tendency to envisage the one in the other are not accidental. They are due to the habit of situating the instant, the atom of time, outside of any event. The relation between beings and Being does not link up two independent terms. "A being" has already made a contract with Being; it cannot be isolated from it. It is. It already exercises over Being the domination a subject exercises over its attributes. It exercises it in an instant, which phenomenological analysis takes as something that cannot be decomposed.

But we can ask if this adherence of beings in Being is simply given in an instant. Is it not rather accomplished by the very *stance* of an instant? Is not an instant the very event through which, in the pure act, the pure verb, of Being, in *Being in general,* a being is posited, a substantive which masters that Being? Is not an instant a "polarization" of *Being in general?* Beginning, origin and birth present a dialectic in which this event in the heart of an instant becomes visible. For a being which has a beginning not only must a cause which creates it be found, but also what in it

receives existence be explained. Not that birth would be the receiving of a deposit or gift by a preexisting subject; even creation *ex nihilo* which implies pure passivity on the part of the creature, imposes on it, in the instant of its upsurge, the instant of creation, an act over its Being, a subject's mastery over its attribute. Beginning is already this possession and this activity of being. An instant is not one lump; it is articulated. This articulation is what distinguishes it from the eternal, which is simple and foreign to events.

What is the event of Being, Being in general, detached from beings which dominate it? What does its generality mean? It is certainly something else than the generality of a genus. Already the "something" in general, the pure form of an object, which expresses the idea of "a being" in general, is above genuses, since one does not descend from it toward species by adding specific differences. The idea of "a being" in general already deserves the name transcendent, which the medieval Aristotelians applied to the One, Being and the Good. But the generality of Being — of what makes up the existence of an existent — is not equivalent to that transcendence. Being cannot be specified, and does not specify anything. It is not a quality which an object supports, nor what supports qualities. Nor is it the act of a subject, even though in the expression "this is" Being becomes an attribute — for we are immediately obliged to state that this attribute adds nothing to the subject. Are we not, then, obliged to see in the very difficulty we have of understanding the category according to which Being belongs to a being the mark of the impersonal character of Being in general? Does not Being in general become the Being of "a being" by an inversion, by that event which is the present (and which shall be the principal theme of this book)? But if of itself Being refuses the personal form, how then are we to approach it?[1]

[1] The beginning of this introduction, followed by Chapter 3, section 2 of this work, was published in *Deucalion I* under the title "II y a."

This work will be structured as follows: it sets out to approach the idea of Being in general in its impersonality so as to then be able to analyze the notion of the present and of position, in which a being, a subject, an existent, arises in impersonal Being, though a hypostasis. But these issues did not just arise by themselves. They seem to us to ensue from certain positions of contemporary ontology which have made possible the renewal of the philosophical *problematic.*

The renewal of ontology in contemporary philosophy has no thing in common with realism. This inquiry does not presuppose an affirmation of the existence of the external world and of its primacy over consciousness. It affirms that what is essential in human spirituality does not lie in our relationship with the things which make up the world, but is determined by a relationship, effected in our very existence, with the pure fact that there is Being, the nakedness of this bare fact. This relationship, far from covering over nothing but a tautology, constitutes an event, whose reality and somehow surprising character manifest themselves in the disquietude in which that relationship is enacted. The evil in Being, the evil of matter in idealist philosophy becomes the evil of Being.

The preoccupation with this relationship between the self and its existence, existence appearing as a burden to be taken up, becomes particularly poignant in certain situations which philosophical analysis habitually leaves to psychology, but which we shall pay particular attention to: fatigue and indolence.

If at the beginning our reflections are in large measure inspired by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, where we find the concept of ontology and of the relationship which man sustains

with Being, they are also governed by a profound need to leave the climate of that philosophy, and by the conviction that we cannot leave it for a philosophy that would be pre-Heideggerian.

The concept which appears to preside over the Heideggerian interpretation of human existence is that of existence conceived as ecstasy — which is only possible as an ecstasy *toward the end.* It consequently situates the tragic element in existence in this finitude and in the nothingness into which man is thrown insofar as he exists. Anxiety, a comprehension of nothingness, is a comprehension of Being only inasmuch as Being itself is determined by nothingness. A being without anxiety would be an infinite being — but that concept is self-contradictory. The dialectic of being and nothingness continues to dominate Heideggerian ontology where evil is always defect, that is, deficiency, lack of being: nothingness.

We shall try to contest the idea that evil is defect. Does Being contain no other vice than its limitation and nothingness? Is there some sort of underlying evil in its very positivity? Is not anxiety over Being — horror of Being — just as primal as anxiety over death? Is not the fear of Being just as originary as the fear for Being? It is perhaps even more so, for the former may account for the latter. Are not Being and nothingness, which, in Heidegger's philosophy, are equivalent or coordinated, not rather phases of a more general state of existence, which is nowise constituted by nothingness? We shall call it the fact that *there is.* In it subjective existence, which existential philosophy takes as its point or departure, and the objective existence of the old realism merge. It is because the *there is* has such a complete hold on us that we cannot take nothingness and death lightly, and we tremble before them. The fear of nothingness is but the measure of our involvement in Being. Existence of itself harbors something tragic which is not only there because of its finitude. Something that death cannot resolve.

CHAPTER 1 The Relationship with Existence and the Instant

1. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTENCE

Expressions such as "a world in pieces" or "a world turned upside down," trite as they have become, nonetheless express a feeling that is authentic. The rift between the rational order and events, the mutual impenetrability of minds opaque as matter, the multiplication of logical systems each of which is absurd for the others, the impossibility of the I rejoining the you, and consequently the unfitness of understanding for what should be its essential function — these are things we run up against in the twilight of a world, things which reawaken the ancient obsession with an end of the world.

This term when stripped of mythological overtones expresses a moment of human destiny, whose meaning can be brought out by analysis. It is the moment of a limit, and thus singularly instructive. For where the continual play of our relations with the world is interrupted we find neither death nor the "pure ego", but the anonymous state of being. Existence is not synonymous with the relationship with a world; it is antecedent to the world. In the situation of an end of the world the primary relationship which binds us to Being becomes palpable.

But the word relationship is not appropriate here; it implies terms, substantives. It takes them to be coordinated, but also independent. The relationship with Being is only

remotely like that; it is called a relationship only by analogy. For the Being which we become aware of when the world disappears is not a person or a thing, or the sum total of persons and things; it is the fact that one is, the fact that there is. Who or what is does not come into communication with its existence by virtue of a decision taken prior to the drama, before the curtain rises; it takes up this existence by existing already. But it is nonetheless true that in the fact of existing, outside of the thought, affectivity and action which are addressed to things and persons and which constitute the conduct of life, there takes place an incomparable event, prior to the participation in existence, an event of birth. When considered in the context of economic life, where instants are equivalent and compensate for one another, we shall find that this event occurs at each moment.

The conquest of Being continually recommences, as though it took place in Cartesian time, at discrete instants each of which issues out of nothingness.

This is not an artificial and arbitrary hypostasis of two terms of a tautology, where we would have set that which exists to one side, so as to then imagine an act by which an existent takes over its existence. We are not being duped by the verbal repetition. The duality of existence and existents is to be sure paradoxical — since that which exists cannot take over anything if it is not already existing. But the truth of this "duality," the effecting of this takeover, are attested to by certain moments in human existence where the adherence of existence to an existent appears like a cleaving.

The contact with light, the act of opening one's eyes, the lighting up of bare sensation, are apparently outside any relationship, and do not take form like answers to questions. Light illuminates and is naturally understood; it is comprehension itself. But within this natural correlation between us and the world, in a sort of doubling back, a question arises, a being surprised by this illumination. The wonder which Plato put at the origin of philosophy is an astonishment before the natural and the intelligible. It is the very intelligibility of light that is astonishing; light is doubled up with a night. The astonishment does not arise out of comparison with some order more natural than nature, but simply before intelligibility itself. Its strangeness is, we might say, due to its very reality, to the very fact there is existence. The questioning of Being is an experience of Being in its strangeness. It is then a way of taking up Being. That is why the question about Being — What is Being? - has never been answered. There is no answer to Being. It is absolutely impossible to envisage the direction in which that answer would have to be sought. The question is itself a manifestation of the relationship with Being. Being is essentially alien and strikes against us. We undergo its suffocating embrace like the night, but it does not respond to us. There is a pain in Being. If philosophy is the questioning of Being, it is already a taking on of Being. And if it is more than this question, this is because it permits going beyond the question, and not because it answers it. What more there can be than the questioning of Being is not some truth — but the good.

But let us return to the concrete forms of an existent's adherence to existence, in which their separation already begins.

For man is able to take up an attitude with regard to his very existence. Already in what is called the struggle for life, over and beyond the things capable of satisfying our needs which that struggle intends to acquire, there is the objective of existence itself, bare existence, the possibility of pure and simple existence becoming an objective. There is in the struggle for life and in the primacy this concept has acquired for the interpretation of life a break with the traditional conception of the relationship between what exists and its existence. This concept, supported by the development of biological science in the 19th century, has had an incalculable influence on the whole of contemporary philosophy. Now life figures as the prototype of the relationship between an existent and existence. Hitherto a being was taken to have been given existence by divine decree, or to have it by virtue of its very essence; its existence thus was taken to belong to it in a natural and quasi-imperceptible fashion. The new and fundamental idea is that this belongingness is the very struggle for life.

But the notion of the struggle for existence is not enough to grasp the relationship of an existent with its existence as deeply as we would like. When taken at the level of the time of the economic order, as it ordinarily is envisaged, it appears as a struggle for a future, as the care that a being takes for its endurance and conservation. It is the struggle of an already existent being for the prolongation of its existence. It is not a continual birth, understood as a distinct operation by which an existent takes over its existence, apart from what it may do to conserve it. To see the truth of this operation, let us ignore all attitudes toward existence which arise from reflection, attitudes by which an already constituted existence turns back over itself. The attitudes involved in meditation on the "meaning of life," pessimism or optimism, suicide or love of life, however deeply they may be bound up with the operation by which a being is born into existence, take place over and beyond that birth.

We must then try to grasp that event of birth in phenomena which are prior to reflection. Fatigue and indolence, which have never been examined by pure philosophical analysis outside of moral preoccupations, are, in their very occurrence, positions taken with regard to existence. To be sure, they are "mental contents," like thoughts, feelings and volitions. But it is reflection itself that thus characterizes all the events of our history in a purely formal way, laying them out as contents and covering over their dramatic nature as events. When we take fatigue and indolence as contents, we do not see what is effected in them — or of what they are an impotent nonacceptance. Their whole reality is made up of that refusal. To take them as contents of the mind is to start by situating them in the flux of consciousness as "psychic realities," and then to ascribe to them, as a secondary property, as an attribute of their psychic substance, an intention of refusal, a refusing thought. It is to interpret the event of refusal which they are in their very production, the recoil before existence which makes up their existence, as a theoretical refusal.

There exists a weariness which is a weariness of everything and everyone, and above all a weariness of oneself. What wearies then is not a particular form of our life — our surroundings, because they are dull and ordinary, our circle of friends, because they are vulgar and cruel; the weariness concerns existence itself. Instead of forgetting itself in the essential levity of a smile, where existence is effected innocently, where it floats in its

fullness as though weightless and where, gratuitous and graceful, its expansion is like a vanishing, in weariness existence is like the reminder of a commitment to exist, with all the seriousness and harshness of an irrevocable contract. One has to do something, one has to aspire after and undertake. In spite of the false smile of the complete skeptic who, having suspended his judgments, abstains from acting and from aspiring to anything, the obligation of this contract remains incumbent on us like an inevitable "one must." It animates the need to act and to undertake, makes that necessity poignant. Weariness is the impossible refusal of this ultimate obligation. In weariness we want to escape existence itself, and not only one of its landscapes, in a longing for more beautiful skies. An evasion without an itinerary and without an end, it is not trying to come ashore somewhere. Like for Baudelaire's true travellers, it is a matter of parting for the sake of parting.

But the movement we see in weariness by which an existent takes up its existence in the hesitation of a refusal, a movement which thus expresses the peculiar relationship one has with existence — birth as a relationship — must not be confused with a judgment. Weariness does not occur as a judgment about the pain of being, a judgment colored with an affective tonality, with a "content" of lassitude. Prior to every judgment, to be tired of everything and everyone is to abdicate from existence. The refusal is in weariness. Weariness by all its being effects this refusal to exist; it is only in the refusal to exist. It is, we might say, the very way the phenomenon of the refusal to exist can come about, just as in the order of experience, vision alone is the apprehension of light and hearing alone the perception of sound. Indolence is neither idleness nor rest. Like fatigue, it involves an attitude with regard to action. But it is not a simple indecisiveness, a being overwhelmed by the choices to be made. It does not arise from a lack of deliberation, for it is not deliberating over the end. It occurs after the intention has been formulated. As in William James' famous example, it lies between the clear duty of getting up and the putting of the foot down off the bed. But it also is not a material impossibility of performing an action that is beyond our strength, or the consciousness of that impossibility, since it can be overcome, and the certainty of this possibility constitutes the bad conscience of indolence. It is indeed a sort of aversion to effort — but in what sense? Is it the content of unpleasantness or the pain involved in the effort that it foresees and dreads? But indolence is not a fear of pain, nor even a species of that fear. The generic term pain does not express what is specific to the pain associated with effort, and consequently does not enable us to grasp the sense of indolence.

Indolence is essentially tied up with the beginning of an action: the stirring, the getting up. "Oh, don't make them get up That's disaster...," says Rimbaud of "the seated" who breathe essential and desperate indolence. Indolence concerns beginning, as though existence were not there right off, but preexisted the beginning in an inhibition. There is more here than a span of duration, flowing imperceptibility between two moments. Or perhaps the inhibition involved in indolence is also the revealing of the beginning which each instant effects in being an instant.

Indolence is an impossibility of beginning, or, if one prefers, it is the effecting of beginning. It may inhere in the act that is being realized, in which case the performance

rolls on as on a ill-paved road, jolted about by instants each of which is a beginning all over again. The job does not flow does not catch on, is discontinuous — a discontinuousness which is perhaps the very nature of "a job."

Games also begin, but their beginnings lack seriousness. They are levity itself. One can drop them at any moment. A game is made up of gestures, movements, decisions and feelings — so many acts which begin, but its reality qua game is enacted above that basis, and is essentially made of unreality. That is why theatre has always been interpreted as a game — and it is striking that that is never said about a poem or a painting. It is a reality that leaves no traces; the nothingness that preceded it is equal to that which follows it. Its events do not have real time. A game has no history. It is a paradoxical kind of existence which is not prolonged into a having. In a game an instant is, but does not hold on to itself, does not sustain a relationship of possession with itself. It has nothing, and does not leave anything behind after it vanishes; it sinks into nothingness with all its baggage. And it can end so splendidly because it never really began for good. An abandoned temple is still inhabited by its god, an old house falling into disrepair is still haunted by the ghosts of those who lived there, but an empty theater is terribly deserted. We can still sense the presence of Sara Bernhardt or Coquelin who acted in it, but Phaedra or Cyrano de Bergerac have left nothing of their despair or their sorrow. They have dissipated like pale clouds intermingling, affected by that nothingness which constitutes the essential atmosphere of a theater after a performance.

The beginning of an action is not "free as the wind." An impulse is simply present and ready. It begins available and proceeds straightforwardly. It is without anything to lose, is carefree, for it possesses nothing. Or it is like a conflagration where fire consummates its being in consuming itself. But beginning is unlike the freedom, simplicity and gratuitousness which these images suggest, and which are imitated in play. In the instant of a beginning, there is already something to lose, for something is already possessed, if only the instant itself. A beginning is, but in addition, it possesses itself in a movement back upon itself. The movement of an action turns to its point of departure at the same time that it proceeds toward its goal, and thus possesses itself while it is. We are like on a trip where one always has to look after one's baggage, baggage left behind or baggage one is waiting for. An act is not pure activity; its being is doubled up with a having which both is possessed and possesses. The beginning of an act is already a belongingness and a concern for what it belongs to and for what belongs to it. Inasmuch as it belongs to itself it conserves itself, and itself becomes a substantive, a being. And it also necessarily becomes a job. It is concerned with itself. Concern is not, as Heidegger thinks, the very act of being on the brink of nothingness; it is rather imposed by the solidity of a being that begins and is already encumbered with the excess of itself. Instead of being poor and naked, it affirms its incorruptibility in the full possession of itself. It possesses riches which are a source of cares before being a source of enjoyment.

To begin for good is to begin in the inalienable possession of oneself. It is then to be unable to turn back; it is to set sail and cut the moorings. From then on one has to run through the adventure to its end. To interrupt what was really begun is to end it in a failure, and not to abolish the beginning. The failure is part of the adventure. What was

interrupted does not sink into nothingness like a game. This means that an action is an inscription in being. And indolence, as a recoil before action, is a hesitation before existence, an indolence about existing.

But does not indolence, a refusal in face of action, an impossibility of beginning, refer to inaction itself as a state? Lying torpid in our bed, refusing any action, do we not realize indolence as a positive event, in the happiness of being shut up in our own shell? Is not indolence the pleasure of spending the morning in bed?

To the extent that this state is not sleep nor somnolence (we shall consider the ontological significance of sleep below), it is not peace. The injunction "we must try to live" of Valery's "The Graveyard by the Sea" runs through it like a malaise and makes the relationship with existence and with action palpable in the heart of the softest indolence. Indolence makes one prostrate, idleness weighs us down, afflicts us with boredom. The man who gives himself over to pleasure, entertainment and distraction is fleeing indolence as much as work.

Existing involves a relationship by which the existent makes a contract with existence. There is duality in existence, an essential lack of simplicity. The ego has a self, in which it is not only reflected, but with which it is involved like a companion or a partner; this relationship is what is called inwardness. It is never innocently alone, nor innocently poor. The kingdom of heaven is already closed to it. Existence casts a shadow, which pursues it tirelessly. It does not merge with its shadow with the innocence of Narcissus espousing his own image, but through its shadow learns of its want of innocence. Little John the simpleton, simple or innocent, in the Russian folktale, tossed the lunch, which he was to carry to his father at work in the field, to his shadow, so as to slip away from it; but after he had dropped everything his shadow, like a last and unalienable possession, still clings to him.

Existence drags behind it a weight — if only itself — which complicates the trip it takes. Burdened with itself — omnia sua secum portans — it does not have the serene calm of a sage of old. It does not purely and simply exist. Its movement of existence which might be pure and straightforward is bent and caught up in itself, showing that the verb to be is a reflexive verb: it is not just that one is, one is oneself [on s'est].

It is before this enterprise that indolence is indolent. The trouble in acting from which the indolent one holds back is not some psychological content of pain, but a refusal to undertake, to possess, to take charge. Indolence is an impotent and joyless aversion to the burden of existence itself. It is a being afraid to live which is nevertheless a life, in which the fear of the unaccustomed, adventure, the unknown is a repugnance devolving from the aversion for the enterprise of existence. Such is Oblomov's, a radical and tragic indolence before existing told in the famous work of the Russian novelist. From the first page of the novel Goncharov presents his hero supine, and this existential decubitus will be the dominant image of the tale.

What fatigue apprehends and abhors in the very exercise of existence, what it impotently declines to shoulder, indolence refuses in refusing to shoulder its existence. It wants to let existence, "that farce everybody goes through with", as Rimbaud put it, go on without it. But in this negation to the second power, it nonetheless effects being; its bitter essence is due to the fact that it is a desertion which attests to the contract sealed with existence. Here too existence as a relationship with existence.

But what is essential in indolence is its place prior to a beginning of an action, its way of being turned to a future. It is not a thought about the future, followed by a holding back from action. It is, in its concrete fullness, a holding back from the future. The tragedy of being it reveals is then the more profound. It is a being fatigued by the future. Beginning does not solicit it as an occasion for rebirth, a fresh and joyful instant, a new moment; it has already brought it about beforehand as a weary present. It perhaps indicates that the future, a virginal instant, is impossible in a solitary subject.

2. FATIGUE AND THE INSTANT

To clarify the connection we have caught sight of between being and action when we found a "one has to be" at the bottom of the "one has to do," and when the beginning of an action seemed to contain the fundamental structure of existence doubling up into being and having and succumbing under the burden of its having, we have to go further in the analysis of fatigue.

Fatigue — even, and above all, the fatigue that is unthinkingly termed physical — presents itself first as a stiffening, a numbness a way of curling up into oneself. Conceived as muscular exhaustion or toxicity by psychologists and physiologists, it comes to the attention of a philosopher in an entirely different way. A philosopher has to put himself in the instant of fatigue and discover the way it comes about. Not its significance with respect to some system of references, but the hidden event of which an instant is the effectuation and not only the outcome. And to scrutinize the instant, to look for the dialectic which takes place in a hitherto unsuspected dimension, is the essential principle of the method which we have adopted. Our investigations will bring the necessary clarifications of this principle by the application they shall make of it.

The numbness of fatigue is a telling characteristic. It is an impossibility of following through, a constant and increasing lag between being and what it remains attached to, like a hand little by little letting slip what it is trying to hold on to, letting go even while it tightens its grip. Fatigue is not just the cause of this letting go, it is the slackening itself. It is so inasmuch as it does not occur simply in a hand that is letting slip the weight it finds tiring to lift, but in one that is holding on to what it is letting slip, even when it has let it drop but remains taut with the effort. For there is fatigue only in effort and labor. To be sure, there does exist a soft languor of lassitude, but it is already the sleep to which the action in its fatigue clings. We shall show later that this lag that occurs between a being and itself, which we have brought out as the principal characteristic of fatigue, constitutes the advent of consciousness, that is, a power to "suspend" being by sleep and unconsciousness.

What are we attached to when we lift a weight? To the goal of the operation, certainly. It has its place in the system of our occupations of the day. And we are attached to it freely. If we find our suitcase too heavy, we can put it down, enlist the help of a porter who is stronger than ourselves, or give up on the whole undertaking. If there is constraint and servitude in effort, it would seem

that that constraint can only be external to it; it would lie in the extent that the goal to be reached would be incumbent on our will.

And yet, the instant of the effort contains something more; it reveals a subjection which compromises our freedom in another sense, and immediately. In the act of creation the creative word is a guarantee of sovereignty just because it is speech. Speech detaches itself from him that utters it, flies off. The God who is truly God did not fashion creation himself, did not stick his hands in the clay like a demiurge; his activity is magical. But human labor and effort presuppose a commitment in which they are already involved. We are yoked to our task, delivered over to it. In the humility of the man who toils bent over his work there is surrender, forsakenness. Despite all its freedom effort reveals a condemnation; it is fatigue and suffering. Fatigue does not arise in it as an accompanying phenomenon, but effort as it were lunges forward out of fatigue and falls back upon it.

Effort lurches out of fatigue and falls back into fatigue. What we call the tension of effort is made up of this duality of upsurge and fatigue. The creative moment of force is to be sure realized in spite of fatigue, in risk. But this creation *ex nihilo,* as an effort, must in its very instant triumph over fatigue's despair and inclination to "drop everything." The depiction of this duality in the language of physics, as two vectors moving in contrary directions, cannot replace the description of the concrete event of effort and its internal dialectic, in which the creative moment somehow ventures beyond a possession whose limits and onerousness are marked by fatigue, which holds back its thrust. This situation is also not to be described as a simple recording of that play of physical forces by consciousness. Effort is not a cognition; it is an event. In the midst of the advance over oneself and over the present, in the ecstasy of the leap which anticipates and bypasses the present, fatigue marks a delay with respect to oneself and with respect to the present The moment by which the leap is yonder is conditioned by the fact that it is still on the hither side. What we call the dynamism of the thrust is made up of those two moments at the same time and is not constituted by the anticipation of the future, as the classical analyses, which neglect the phenomenon of fatigue, would have it. Effort is an effort of the present that lags behind the present.

But to what is fatigue a condemnation? The goal of effort is freely chosen; we were not made for it. Shall we say that since the resistance of matter is the reason there has to be effort, the condemnation we are speaking of would be but the despair of finite being who is not up to his ambitions and too weak for the world? But effort can be victorious and hence equal to the realities it tackles. And especially, the conception of action which is being presupposed in this image of a struggle with matter is a notion which philosophers have taken as purely and simply given. It is not deduced, that is, its place in the economy of being is not marked out philosophically. We thus cannot account for the concrete human facts of effort and fatigue by bringing in the notion of action and associating it with the equally obscure idea of matter and its resistance. On the contrary, it is by starting with the instant of effort and its internal dialectics that we shall perhaps be able to grasp the notion of activity and its role in human existence.

The meaning of the condemnation which effort bears within itself, that which yokes it to its task, will become clear to us if we uncover its relationship with the instant. Magic is indifferent to duration. It is the chateau built in a night, the sudden appearance of the gilded carriage on a stroke of the magic wand. A wand belongs to a magician like an inalienable attribute. The blow it strikes also marks the limit of the time in which the magician will follow his work. For he is not involved in the instant in which the work is really effected; he follows it from distance. Whereas human labor and effort are a way of following the work being done step by step.

In listening to a melody we are also following its entire duration. Without here undertaking an analysis of complex musical phenomena, we can say that the different instants of a melody only exist to the extent that they immolate themselves in a duration, which in a melody is essentially a continuity. Insofar as a melody is being lived through musically, and is not being scrutinized by a professor listening to his pupil, that is, is not work and effort, there are no instants in the melody. And a melody was, in fact the ideal model from which Bergson conceived pure duration. It is not to be denied that musical duration can be broken up into its elements, which can be counted. But each instant does not count as such; the instants of a melody exist only in dying. A wrong note is a sound that refuses to die. Here the present is not constantly vanishing only for the reflection that declares the present ungraspable; in its very way of being produced in a melody, it is an evanescence, it is stamped with nullity. Unlike the case of real beings, in music there can be no reproduction of it which would not be its very reality, reproduced with its rhythm and duration. Music is preeminently something played. There is no mental image of a melody; to reproduce it is to play it again mentally. An inaptitude for what is nothing but a game is perhaps the principal reason for the deadly boredom of those inveterate adults who frequent concerts out of duty. Duration in which the instant is not self-possessed, does not stop, is not present, is what makes music like a game.

Effort and play are mutually exclusive. Of course there can be effort in sports, but then the game is played as it were over and beyond effort, at a plane where we live out a separation between effort and its goal, where it is possible to enjoy what is disinterested and gratuitous in effort. The effect occurs in a broader psychological system that refers to a history and a temporal horizon. But in its instant, effort, even effort in sports, is a suspending of all play, a serious undertaking, and fatigue. And every labor mystique, which appeals to themes of joy or freedom through labor, can appear only above and beyond effort properly so-called, in a reflective attitude to effort. It is never in the labor itself that joy resides. It is fed with other considerations — the pleasure of duty fulfilled, the heroism of the sacrifice and difficulty involved.

The duration of effort is made up entirely of stops. It is in this sense that it follows the work being done step by step. During the duration of the work, the effort takes on the instant, breaking and tying back together again the thread of time. It struggles behind the instant it is going to take on; it is then not, as in the case of a melody, already freed from the present it is living through, transported and swept away by it. At the same time the effort is already involved in the present, and is not like an impulse bent over an instant to come. It is caught up with the instant as an inevitable present in which it is irrevocably committed. In the midst of the anonymous flow of existence, there stoppage and a positing. Effort is the very effecting of an instant

This will enable us to see the role of activity in man's existence. The classical theme of man or the mind struggling with matter or with the world will not bring us to the notion of action and effort, which that thematics has already presupposed. It is by scrutinizing the primordial event of the present that we shallbe able to articulate the concepts of action, resistance and even matter, as moments of the ontological adventure. To act is to take on a present. This does not amount to repeating that the present is the actual, but it signifies that the present is the apparition, in the anonymous rumbling of existence, which is at grips with this existence, in relationship with it, takes it up. Action is this taking up. Action is then by essence subjection and servitude, but also the first manifestation, or the very constitution, of an existent, a *someone* that is. For the lag of fatigue in the present opens a distance in which a relationship takes form; the present is constituted in a taking charge of the present.

Effort is hence a condemnation because it takes up an instant as an inevitable present. It is an impossibility of disengaging itself from the eternity upon which it has opened. It is because it takes on an instant completely, and in the instant runs up against the seriousness of eternity, that it is a condemnation. This is at the bottom of Baudelaire's profound meditation on skeletons digging. Existence seems to him to be both irremediably eternal and doomed to pain: unceasingly, alas, we shall perhaps have to upturn the stony soil in some unknown land and to push at the heavy spade with our naked and bleeding foot. Effort is then not only the way the master chooses to mark the slave with the stamp of his servitude. There is in the labor most freely consented to, in the most spontaneous effort, an irrevocable, unredeemable commitment. It is not the pain involved in effort that makes it the lot of slaves; effort involves pain because it is an event of subjection in its instant. The ancient curse of labor does not only lie in the necessity of working to feed oneself; it is already wholly to be found in the instant of effort. It is then not in the relationship a man who labors has with the matter he fashions according to his will, nor with the master who forces him to work, that the sense of effort and the stamp of a freedom or a subjection it may manifest is to be sought. What we have especially to do is scrutinize the very instant in which effort is spent, the instant, we can now say, which effort brings about, and in which fatigue already arises. The pain of effort or fatigue is wholly made of this being condemned to the present.

But, if fatigue is a condemnation to being, it is also a stiffening, a withering up, a breaking with the sources of life. The hand does not let go of the weight it is lifting, but it is as it were abandoned to itself, counts only on itself. Here is a peculiar form of forsakenness. It is not the solitude of a being forsaken by the world with which it is no longer in step, but of a being that is as it were no longer in step with itself, is out of joint with itself, in a dislocation of the from itself, a being that is not joining up with itself in the instant, in which it is nonetheless committed for good.

To be weary is to be weary of being. This is so prior to interpretation; the concrete plenitude of fatigue has this form. In the simplicity, unity and obscurity of fatigue, it is like the lag of an existent that is tarrying behind its existing. And this lag constitutes the present. Because of this distance in existence, existence is a relationship between *an* existent and itself. It is the upsurge of an existent in existence. And conversely this almost self-contradictionary [sic] moment of a present that tarries behind itself could not be anything but fatigue. Fatigue does not accompany it, it effects it; fatigue is this time-lag. Here the taking up of existence in the instant becomes directly perceptible. Fatigue is to be sure not a cancellation of one's contract with being. The delay it involves is nonetheless an inscription in existence, but what is peculiar to this inscription, its sort of hesitation, enables us to surprise it, to catch sight of the operation of assuming which the existence that is taken up already always involves.

If the present is thus constituted by the taking charge of the present, if the time-lag of fatigue creates the interval in which the event of the present can occur, and if this event is equivalent to the upsurge of an *existent* for which *to be* means *to take up being*, the existence of an existent is by essence an activity. An existent must be in act, even when it is inactive. This activity of inactivity is not a paradox; it is the act of positing oneself on ground, it is rest inasmuch as rest is not a pure negation but this very tension of a position, the bringing about of a *here.* The fundamental activity of rest, foundation, conditioning, thus appears to be the very relationship with being, the upsurge of an existent into existence, a hypostasis. This entire essay intends only to draw out the implications of this fundamental situation.

But if the active moment of activity, that which makes it actual, is nothing else than the taking up of the present, labor concerned with the objects of the world seems to contain more than this. The taking up realized in labor takes on a new destiny in the world. What does the function activity takes on in the world mean with respect to its ontological function? What is the world in the context of the ontological adventure, whereby an existent arises in existence by hypostasis?

CHAPTER 2 The World

1. INTENTIONS

To take up an instant through effort does not of itself found the relationship between the I and the world.

The most striking difference concerns the very fact that in the world we are dealing with objects. Whereas in taking up an instant we are committing ourselves irreparably to existing in a pure event which does not relate to any substantive, any thing, in the world for the vicissitudes of the activity of being (the *verb* being) substantives bearing adjectives, beings endowed with values offered to our intentions, are substituted. To be in the world is to be attached to things. Theophile Gautier's line "I am one of those for whom the external world exists" expresses that joyous appetite for things which constitutes being in the world.

The concept of intention conveys this relationship quite exactly. But is must be taken not in the neutralized and disincarnate sense in which it figures in medieval philosophy and in Husserl, but in its ordinary meaning, with the sting of desire that animates it. Desire and not care — except the care for the immediate.

The care for existing, this extension into ontology, is absent from intention. In desiring I am not concerned with being but am absorbed with the desirable, with an object that will completely slake my desire. I am terribly sincere. No ulterior references, indicating a relationship of the desirable with the adventure of existence, with bare existence, take form behind the desirable qua desirable. Of course we do not live in order to eat, but it is not really true to say that we eat in order to live; we eat because we are hungry. Desire has no further intentions behind it, which would be like thoughts; it is a good will; all the rest belongs to the level of biology. The desirable is a terminus, an end.

To be sure, *unconsciously* desire presupposes more than its object and can go beyond the desirable; to be sure, *implicitly* we have always understood the meaning of the word "to be" in its bare being, since our objects do exist. But has the fact that all that is unconscious and implicit been fully appreciated? Since the *discovery of the unconscious* — and this contradiction in terms is evidence of a considerable intellectual upheaval — philosophy has been conceiving of the unconscious as another consciousness, failing to recognize the ontological function of the unconscious and its specific relationship with conscious clarity, with sincerity, which separates itself from the obscurity, depth and ambiguity of the unconscious. The unconscious is interpreted in terms of consciousness, or the reverse. The unconscious appears as a possible, a germ, or as

something repressed. In fact, the implicitness referred to in speaking of implicit cognition no longer presents the structure of cognition; the essential event of the world, which is intention and light, no longer means anything here. Consciousness is precisely a sincerity. In taking being-in-the-world as an intention one is above all affirming — and the history of our civilization and our philosophy confirms this — that the world is the field of a consciousness, and the peculiar structure that characterizes consciousness governs and gives meaning to all the infiltrations of the unconscious in the world. It is "before" the world comes about that the unconscious plays its role.

Western philosophy and civilization never gets out of "numbers and beings," remain conditioned by the secular world. Even love is conceived as the attraction of the desirable, and the "young man" and the "beautiful girl" only pretexts. The *orekton* of Book X of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is the supreme being, immobile, loved but never loving, terminus. The problem of the Good is formulated as a problem of ends.

The couple "being and value" is in fact not at all an antithesis. The reality of a thing is indeed constituted by its finality. As the end of an intention, a thing is a goal, a limit, an ultimate. Qua value, end of a desire, an object is a being, the terminus of a movement, the beginning of an impassive state, a calm rest in oneself. It derives its being *in itself* from a movement, which we think of as opposed to it, but which in its unequivocal sincerity confirms it and gives it its significance. *Existing,* in the whole of Western idealism, refers to this intentional movement from inwardness to the exterior. A being is what is thought about, seen, acted on, willed, felt — an object. Consequently existence in the world always has a center; it is never anonymous. The notion of the soul, of an enclosed inwardness, is constitutive of the existence of the world. Realism no more avoids it than idealism seeks to. The world is what is given to us. This expression is admirably precise: the given does not to be sure come from us, but we do receive it. It already has a side by which it is the terminus of an intention.

An intention is not merely headed for an object: the object is at our disposal. In this desire or appetite differ radically from ever restless need. The Platonic theory of negative pleasures, preceded by a lack, fails to recognize the promise of the desirable which desire itself bears within itself like a joy. This is a joy that is not due to the "quality" or "psychological character" of this or that desire, nor to its degree of intensity, nor to the charm of the slight excitement which accompanies it — but to the fact that the world is given. The world, offers the bountifulness of terrestrial nourishment to our intentions — including those of Rabelais; the world where youth is happy and restless with desire is the world itself. It takes form not in an additional quality inhering in objects, but in a destination inscribed in its revelation, in the revelation itself, in the light Objects are destined for me; they are for me. Desire as a relationship with the world involves both a distance between me and the desirable, and consequently a time ahead of me, and also a possession of the desirable which is prior to the desire. This position of the desirable, before and after the desire, is the fact that it is given. And the fact of being given is the world.

The events that break with the world, such as the encounter with the other, can be in it and be included in it by the process of civilization, by which everything and everyone is given to us, with no equivocation.

In the world the other is indeed not treated like a thing, but is never separated from things. Not only is he approached and given in his social situation, not only is respect for a person shown through respect for his rights and his prerogatives, not only do institutions, like the arrangements which make things accessible to us, put us into relationship with persons, collectivities, history and the supernatural, but in the world the other is an object already through his clothing.

Those we encounter are clothed beings. Man is a being that has already taken some elementary pains about his appearance. He looked at himself in a mirror and saw himself. He has washed, wiped away the night, and the traces of its instinctual permanence, from his face; he is clean and abstract. Life in society is decent. The most delicate social relationships are carried on in the forms of propriety; they safeguard the appearances, cover over all ambiguities with a cloak of sincerity and make them mundane. What does not enter into the forms is banished from the world. Scandal takes cover in the night, in private buildings, in one's home — places which enjoy a sort of ex-extraterritoriality in the world.

The bare nudity of a body, which we may encounter, does not affect the universality of clothing. In it nudity loses its significance. For recruiting examiners human beings are treated like so much human material; they are clothed with a *form.* Beauty, perfect form, is form *par excellence;* the statues of antiquity are never really naked.

Form is that by which a being is turned toward the sun, that by which it has a face, through which it gives itself, by which it comes forward. It conceals the nudity in which an undressed being withdraws from the world, and *is* as though its existence were elsewhere, had a "underside," as though it were surprised during the time of "a bare breast glimpsed between gown and gown." This is why the relationship with nudity is the true experience of the otherness of the other — were the term experience not impossible where it is a question of a relationship which goes beyond the world. Social life in the world does not have that disturbing character that a being feels before another being, before alterity. It does involve angers, indignations, hatreds, attachments and loves focused on the qualities and the substance of another, but the basic timidity that affects before the very otherness of the other is taken to be unhealthy and is banished from the world. One has to find something to say to one's companion, exchange an idea, around which, as around a third term, social life necessarily starts.

Social life in the world is communication or communion. To have a falling out with someone is to find that one has nothing in common. It is through participation in something in common, in an idea, a common interest, a work, a meal, in "a third man" that contact is made. Persons are not simply in front of one another; they are along with each other around something. A neighbor is an accomplice. Though it is the term of a relationship the ego loses nothing of its *ipseity* in this relationship. That is why civilization as a relationship between human beings has stayed with the forms of decency and has never been able to go beyond individualism: the individual remains fully *me.*

All the concrete relations between human beings in the world get their character of *reality* from a third term. They are a communion. When these relations begin to circulate from person to person directly, we begin to feel that these persons are inconsistent; they turn into phantasms. When we say of someone that he has character or a nature of his own, that he "is a man," flesh and blood, this relationship with something consistent is what we are talking about. Health, the sincere movement of the desiring toward the desirable, that good will that knows exactly what it wants, gauges the reality and the concreteness of a human being. When the I is the seat of this good will, when thoughts and acts are not the

masks of an I that is incapable of laying itself bare, then a critic upon finishing a novel declares: here are real persons. Otherwise, he is entitled to reproach the novelist for remaining an ideology. Then the doctor — whose language the critic is ready to borrow, for health and sickness do describe the relationship of an intention with its term — will have the last word. He will say that Prince Hamlet is deranged, and will not analyze the personage any further, for one is not obliged to rave along with the mad.

What characterizes, then, being in the world is the sincerity of intentions — the self-sufficiency of the world and contentment. The world is profane and secular. Since Aristotle we conceive of the world as a phenomenon of form cloaking a content completely. The points of an object which make up the illuminated surface are laid out in ordered perspectives and open up for us the way to the object, putting a limit to the risks and fancies. All the unfathomable mystery of a thing shows itself to us and is open to our grasp. By virtue of its forms the world is stable and made up of solids. Objects can be defined by their finitude: form is just this way of coming to an end *[finir]* where the finite *[le fini]* is the definite and is already exposed to being apprehended.

There is then a regrettable confusion in contemporary philosophy when it situated within the world the events which it has the incontestable merit of having discovered and designated by the purely negative term of the unconscious, and when it denounced as a hypocrisy, a fall, as "bourgeois," and evasion of the essential behavior in the world, whose secular nature and contentment are simply counterparts of the very destiny of the world. It is one thing to ask what the place of the world in the ontological; adventure is, and another thing to look for that adventure within the world itself.

Husserl's phenomenological reduction, the famous *epoché*, will here become meaningful for us again. Its significance lies in the separation it indicates between the destiny of man in the world, where there are always objects given as being and works to be done, and the possible suspension this "thesis of the natural attitude" which begins a reflection that is genuinely philosophical, in which the meaning of the "natural attitude" itself — that is, of the world — can be discovered. It is not by being in the world that we can say what the world is.

In the effort to separate the notion of the world from the notion of a sum of objects we certainly see one of the most profound discoveries of Heideggerian philosophy. But in order to describe being-in-the-world, this German philosopher has appealed to an ontological finality, to which he subordinates objects in the world. Seeing objects as "material" — in the sense that we speak of "war material" — he has included them in the care for existing, which for him is the very putting of the ontological problem. But he has thereby failed to recognize the essentially secular nature of being in the world and the sincerity of intentions.

Not everything that is given in the world is a tool. Food is supplies for logistics officers; houses and shelters are a "base." For a soldier his bread, jacket and bed are not "material," they do not exist "for ... ," but are ends. The statement "a house is an implement for inhabiting" is clearly false, and in any case does not account for the exceptional place that home plays in the life of a man belonging to sedentary civilization, the sovereignty it gives the so-called plain man. To say that clothing exists for covering oneself up is not to see how clothing frees man from the humbleness of his naked state. And still less does food fit into the category of "material."

Let us take some time to look at the example of food; it is significant for us because of the place it occupies in everyday life, but especially because of the relationship between desire and its satisfaction which it represents, and which constitutes what is typical of life in the world. What characterizes this relationship is a complete correspondence between desire and its satisfaction. Desire knows perfectly well what it wants. And food makes possible the full realization of its intention. At some moment everything is consummated. Compare eating with loving, which occurs beyond economic activity and the world. For what characterizes love is an essential and insatiable hunger. To shake hands with a friend is to express one's friendship for him, but it is to convey that friendship as something inexpressible, and indeed as something unfulfilled, a permanent desire. *The very positivity of love lies in its negativity.* The burning bush that feeds the flames is not consumed. The trouble one feels before the beloved does not only precede what we call, in economic terms, possession, but is felt in the possession too. In the random agitation of caresses there is the admission that access is impossible, violence fails, possession is refused. There is also the ridiculous and tragic simulation of devouring in kissing and love-bites. It is as though one had made a mistake about the nature of one's desire and had confused it with hunger which aims at something, but which one later found out was a hunger for nothing. The *other* is precisely this objectless dimension. Voluptuousness is the pursuit of an ever richer promise; it is made up of an ever growing hunger which pulls away from every being. There is no goal, no end in view. Voluptuousness launches forth into an unlimited, empty; vertiginous future. It consumes pure time which no *object fills* nor even stakes out. "Satisfaction" is not a remaining in the beyond, but a return to oneself, in a univocal and present world, There is nothing comparable in this fall with satiety, whatever we may say when we put what is involved in love in economic categories, along with appetites and needs. But eating, by contrast, is peaceful and simple; it fully realizes its sincere intention: "The man who is eating is the most just of men."

This structure, where an object concords fully with a desire, is characteristic of the whole of our being-in-the-world. Nowhere in the phenomenal order does the object of an action refer to the concern for existing; it itself makes up our existence. We breathe for the sake of breathing, eat and drink for the sake of eating and drinking, we take shelter for the sake of taking shelter, we study to satisfy our curiosity, we take a walk for the walk. All that is not for the sake of living; it is living. Life is a sincerity. The world, as opposed to what is not of the world, is what we inhabit, where we take walks, lunch and dine, visit, go to school, argue, carry out experiments and investigations, write and read books; it is the world of Gargantua and of Pantagruel and of Master Gaster, first Master of the Arts of the world, but it is also the world where Abraham grazed his flocks, Isaak dug his wells, Jacob set up his household, Epicurus cultivated his garden, and where "each one has the shade of his fig tree and grape arbor."

To be in the world is precisely to be freed from the last implications of the instinct to exist, from all the depths of the ego which never will divest itself of its masks and whose positions are all poses, for whom confession is impossible — and to go sincerely to the desirable and take it for what it is. It is the very possibility of desire and sincerity. There is, according to Heidegger, a circuit which leads each moment of our existence to the task of existing; thus in turning the handle of our door we open up the totality of existence, for beyond the action we have already traversed the intermediaries separating this action from our concern for being itself. But consciousness describes a closed circle in which it stays by effacing every ulterior finality, a circle where there can be *satisfaction* and

avowal. This circle is the world. In it at least the bond with care is relaxed. It is in times of misery and privation that the shadow of an ulterior finality which darkens the world is cast behind the object of desire. When one has to eat, drink and warm oneself in order not to die, when nourishment becomes fuel, as in certain kinds of hard labor, the world also seems to be at an end, turned upside down and absurd, needing to be renewed. Time becomes unhinged.

Desire is no doubt not self-sufficient; it touches on need and the disgust of satiety. But in the ontological adventure the world is an episode which, far from deserving to be called a fall, has its own equilibrium, harmony and positive ontological function: the possibility of extracting oneself from anonymous being. At the very moment when the world seems to break up we still take it seriously and still perform reasonable acts and undertakings; the condemned man still drinks his glass of rum. To call it everyday and condemn it as inauthentic is to fail to recognize the sincerity of hunger and thirst. Under the pretext of saving the dignity of man, compromised by things, it is to close one's eyes to the lies of capitalist idealism and to the evasions in eloquence and the opiate which it offers. The great force of Marxist philosophy, which takes its point of departure in economic man, lies in its ability to avoid completely the hypocrisy of sermons. It situates itself in the perspective of the sincerity of intentions, the good will of hunger and thirst, and the ideal of struggle and sacrifice it proposes, the culture to which it invites us, is but the prolongation of these intentions. What can be captivating in Marxism is not its alleged materialism, but the essential sincerity this proposal and invitation maintain. It is beyond the always possible suspicion that casts its shadow over every idealism which is not rooted in the simplicity and univocity of intentions. One does not attribute to it the second thoughts of deceivers, dupes, or the sated.

As we shall show at once, life in the world is consciousness inasmuch as it provides the possibility of existing in a withdrawal from existence. Sincerity with respect to objects is a hesitation with regard to existence, which appears as a task to be taken up. A subject, an existent to take it up, will arise from that hesitation.

2. LIGHT

The world is the given. The form wedded to an object delivers that object over to us. But are we not confusing the practical structure of activity and desire with the theoretical structure of forms? Were we not victims of an unrepentant intellectualism in having taken the theoretical contemplation of forms to be a condition for practical activity and desire? If we have not taken account of that distinction, it is because in the given which we have taken as our point of departure practice and theory meet. Contemplation is turned to an object as something given. It is hence more than "pure contemplation"; it is already a factor in an action. And not action taken metaphorically only, for contemplation is an intention, that is, a desire, a movement to take hold of something, to appropriate something for oneself — but to take hold of what is given in advance. For the concept of a contemplation that remains completely foreign to contemplated forms, we are thus substituting the notion of an intention that turns to what is given.

The movement proper to intentions, which Husserl analyzes into their various species and in their combinations, have to be described. The given is not ourselves. The ego possesses the given, but it is not overwhelmed by that possession and keeps a distance from the object, an attitude of reserve, which is what distinguishes an intention from enjoyment. This possession at a distance, keeping one's hands free, is what constitutes the intentionality of intentions. The discovery of this concept was certainly heralded, at a time when the ego was conceived outside of the world, as the discovery of our presence in the world, of an engagement in the world contained in the very being of the ego. But the other side of the phenomenon is as important — that through intentions our presence in the world is across a distance, that we are separated from objects by a distance, which can indeed be traversed, but remains a distance. This situation comes to seem less insignificant when we compare it with the relationship between an existent and existence which we started with. That relationship is indeed an event and a relationship, but the duality in the terms of this relation derives its specific character from the fact that existence is not properly speaking a *term*, is not a substantive, and instead of being at a distance adheres to the I. The I does not turn to its existence; it is enthralled by it. One possesses existence, but is also possessed by it. The world as given to intentions leaves the I a freedom with regard to it. What is given is not a weight on our shoulders; it is yonder, put down, a weight put in the baggage room. The exteriority of things is tied up with the fact that we reach for them, that we have to come to them — that an object is given, but awaits us. That is the complete concept *of form.* A form is that by which a thing shows itself and is graspable, what is illuminated in it and apprehendable and what holds it together. A thing is always a volume whose exterior surfaces hold back a depth and make it appear. Reality is made up of elements that are to some extent solids. We can indeed penetrate them; but that penetration does not break up, but slips over the form.

Thus while the I in the world tends toward things it also withdraws from them. It is an inwardness. The I in the world has an inside and an outside.

Another way of speaking of intentionality is to say that it is the very origin of sense. Sense is that by which what is exterior is already adjusted to and refers to what is interior. Sense is not initially the reducibility of a notion or a perception to a principle or a concept For then what would the sense of the irreducible principle consist in? Sense is permeability for the mind, and already characterizes what we call sensation. Or, we can say, it is luminosity.

For we can speak of vision and light wherever there is sensible or intellectual apprehension: we see the hardness of an object, the taste of a dish, the smell of a perfume, the sound of an instrument, the truth of a theorem. Light, whether it emanates from the sensible or from the intelligible sun, is since Plato said to be a condition for all beings. Thought, volition and sentiment, however far they may be from intellection, are first experience, intuition, clear vision or clarity seeking to come about. Care in Heidegger, which is not founded on perception, nonetheless comprises an illumination which makes of it comprehension and thought. And the duality of the exterior and the interior thus recurs within Dasein, as in the whole of traditional ontology, which approaches existence through the world.

Whatever may be the physico-mathematical explanation of the light which fills our universe, phenomenologically it is a condition for phenomena, that is, for meaning. In existing an object exists for someone, is destined for someone, already leans toward an inwardness and, without being absorbed in it, gives itself. What comes from the outside illuminated is comprehended, that is, comes from ourselves. Light makes objects into a world, that is, makes them belong to us. Property constitutes the world: through the light the world is given and apprehended. The apprehension which is at the bottom of all our sensations is the origin of property in the world, a property which is not a burden, having nothing in common with the possessive in expressions like "my cross."

Illuminated space all collects about a mind which possesses it. In this sense it is already like the product of a synthesis. Kant's space is essentially a lit up space; it is in all its dimensions accessible, explorable. It lends itself to the movement which will absorb it, the movement sight effects instantaneously — the model of speed, which it prefigures. Such a movement is what makes sight the preeminent sense. Sight apprehends and situates. The relationship of the object with the subject is given at the same time as the object itself. Already a horizon is open. The obscurity of the other sensations is due to the absence of a horizon about them, to the surprise they are for us when we take them as they are in themselves.

Light makes possible, then, this enveloping of the exterior by the inward, which is the very structure of the cogito and of sense. Thought is always clarity or the dawning of a light. The miracle of light is the essence of thought: due to the light an object, while coming from without, is already ours in the horizon which precedes it; it comes from an exterior already apprehended and comes into being as though it came from us, as though commanded by our freedom. The antithesis of the a priori and the a posteriori, like that of contemplation and desire, is overcome in the moment of light.

The world, whose existence is characterized by light, is not, then, the sum of existing objects. The very idea of totality or of a whole is only intelligible where there is a being that can embrace it. There is a totality because it relates to an inwardness in the light. Here we come to recognize the profundity of Kant's views about the role of the synthesis of apperception and of its unity in the constitution of the world — on condition that we understand it as a synthesis of intuition, sight or light

With the notions of the given, intentions and light, we rejoin the notion of knowing which Western thought uses to interpret consciousness.

Knowing is to be taken in a very broad sense. Western philosophy does indeed know of other forms of consciousness besides the intellect, but even in its least intellectual meanderings, the mind is taken to be *what knows.* The acts of feeling, suffering, desiring or willing belong to the life of the mind by virtue of the fact of being conscious, being experiences, being thoughts in the Cartesian sense. Empiricism, in locating the origin of cognition in sensation, remains faithful to this identification of mentality with knowing. For it conceives of sensation as an element of information, neglecting its peculiar savor and its sort of density qua sensation — all that made it seem obscure and confused to

Descartes and Malebranche, who saw in feeling only something that alerts our attention. In sensation there is, according to the traditional interpretation, no movement more inward that would be prior to the apprehension in it. In sensation the sensible object shall be constituted, but the mind is already constituted; it is already a knowing and apprehending.

Yet, though it tends unambiguously toward an object, knowing is essentially a way of being on the hither side of being. It is a way of relating to events while still being able to not be caught up in them. To be a subject is to be a power of unending withdrawal, an ability always to find oneself behind what happens to us. Kant's thesis that inner sense gives us only a subject transformed by the conditions for all objectivity enables us to grasp just what is essential in a subject, for a subject is never one with the idea it can have of itself; it is already a freedom with regard to all objects, a drawing back, an "as for me ..." In this sense, and contrary to a view of modern philosophy which affirms an autonomy of practice with respect to cognition, knowing is a condition for any free action. But that view presents the relationship between a subject and an object, to which cognition is taken to be reducible, to be effected by an agent that holds back from acting. Then what is essential in contemplation would be that it is only contemplation. The object will appear before the impassive eye of cognition at the very moment that the eye becomes impassive. The moment that action, the natural state of a living being, is paralyzed, the tool presented to the hand appears at a distance the hand no longer crosses. The contemplation that is thus defined by contrast with action is defined only negatively, and in addition the definition presupposes the notion it aims to circumscribe. The ability to hold back could not emerge from activity if action did not already contain it. This power of an agent to remain free from any bond with what remains present to it, of not being compromised by what happen to it, by its objects or even its history, is just what knowing qua light and intention is.

Light is thus the event of a suspension, an *epoché, which* consists in not compromising oneself with the objects or the history with which one relates or which one realizes, in always remaining outside of those objects and that history, even outside of the history of the very being that suspends history. This suspension defines the I, its power to withdraw infinitely, and the "as for me ..." The I is a being that is always outside of being and even outside of itself. Inner perception cannot apprehend it as Kant had claimed.

Existence in the world qua light, which makes desire possible, is then, in the midst of being, the possibility of detaching oneself from being. To enter into being is to link up with objects; it is in effect a bond that is already tainted with nullity. It is already to escape anonymity. In this world where everything seems to affirm our solidarity with the totality of existence, where we are caught up in the gears of a universal mechanism, our first feeling, our ineradicable illusion, is a feeling or illusion of freedom. To be in the world is this hesitation, this interval in existing, which we have seen in the analyses of fatigue and the present. What we will say further about consciousness, about its ability to suspend itself, to sink into unconsciousness and thus accord itself a reprieve, will bring out the role of the world in the ontological adventure in which an existant arises in existence and from then on maintains a relationship with that existence. Our existence in

the world, with its desires and everyday agitation, is then not an immense fraud, a fall into inauthenticity, an evasion of our deepest destiny. It is but the amplification of that resistance against anonymous and fateful being by which existence becomes consciousness, that is, a relationship an existent maintains with existence, through the light, which both fills up, and maintains, the interval.

In discerning in effort the first hesitation over existing, in presenting the world as a never revocable attachment to objects in which the non-commitment in being remains, we have described the first manifestation of an existent rising up in the anonymity of existence. Light, knowing and consciousness appeared to constitute the very event of a hypostasis. But in order to give a more vivid sense of the meaning of this event we must now directly broach the central concept of this study, that of anonymous existence. For that we must approach a situation in which the freedom with respect to being, which, despite their sincerity, intentions and knowing maintain, comes up against the absence of the world, the elemental.

CHAPTER 3 Existence Without a World

1. EXOTICISM

In our relationship with the world we are able to withdraw from the world.

Things refer to an inwardness as parts of the given world, objects of knowledge or objects of use, caught up in the current of practice where their alterity is hardly noticeable. Art makes them stand out from the world and thus extracts them from this belongingness to a subject. The elementary function of art, which we can discover in its primitive manifestations, is to furnish an image of an object in place of the object itself — what Bergson called a view of the object, an abstraction, and which he considers to be something less than the object, instead of seeing in it the more of what is esthetic. Even photography functions in this way. This way of interposing an image of the things between us and the thing has the effect of extracting the thing from the perspective of the world. A situation depicted or an event recounted must first of all reproduce the real situation or event, but the fact that we relate to them indirectly through the intermediary of the picture and the story modifies them in an essential way. This modification is not due to the lighting or the composition of the picture, to the taste of and arrangements made by the narrator, but is first due to the indirect relationship which we have with them — to their exoticism, in the etymological sense of the term. What is called the disinterestedness of art does not only refer to the neutralization of the possibilities of action. Exoticism modifies the contemplation itself. The "objects" are outside, but this outside does not relate to an "interior"; they are not already naturally "possessed." A painting, a statue, a book are objects of *our* world, but through them the things represented are extracted from our world.

Even the most realistic art gives this character of *alterity* to the objects represented which are nonetheless part of our world. It presents them to us in their nakedness, that real nakedness which is not absence of clothing, but we might say the absence of forms, that is, the nontransmutation of our exteriority into inwardness, which forms realize. The

forms and colors of a painting do not cover over but uncover the things in themselves, precisely because they preserve the exteriority of those things. Reality remains foreign to the world inasmuch as it is given. In this sense an artwork both imitates nature and diverges from it as far as possible. That is also why everything that belongs to past worlds, the archaic, the ancient, produces an esthetic impression.

A world is given to us in perception. Sounds, colors, words refer to the objects which they as it were cover. Sound is the noise of an object, color adheres to the surface of solids, a word harbors a meaning and names an object. And through its objective signification perception also has a subjective signification: exteriority refers to inwardness; it is not the exteriority of a thing in itself. The movement of art consists in leaving the level of perception so as to reinstate sensation, in detaching the quality from this object reference. Instead of arriving at the object, the intention gets lost in the sensation itself, and it is this wandering about in sensation, in *aisthesis,* that produces the aesthetic effect. Sensation is not the way that leads to an object but the obstacle that keeps one from it, but it is not of the subjective order either it is not the material of perception. In art, sensation figures as a new element. Or better, it returns to the impersonality of *elements.*

Sensation is not the as yet unorganized quality which Kantian psychology teaches it is. The organization or the anarchy of sensation does not affect its objectivity or subjectivity. Even reduced to pure quality sensation would already be an object inasmuch as it is luminous. The way in which in art the sensible qualities which constitute an object do not lead to an object and are in themselves as the very event of sensation qua sensation, the aesthetic event. We can also call it the musicality of sensation, for in music this way a quality can divest itself of all objectivity — and consequently of all subjectivity — seems completely natural.

A musical sound is no longer a noise. And it may enter into relations and syntheses that no longer have anything in common with the order of objects. Colors, whose bond with things is more intimate, detach themselves from them, especially in the painting that takes itself to be revolutionary. Then they enter in their turn into wholes which are indifferent to the object syntheses in the world. A word cannot be separated from meaning. But there is first the materiality of the sound that fills it, by which it can reduced to sensation and musicality such as we have defined it it is capable of having rhythm, rhyme, meter, alliteration, etc. And a word detaches itself from its objective meaning and reverts to the element of the sensible in still another way inasmuch as it is attached to a multiplicity of meaning through the ambiguity that may affect it due to its proximity with other words. It then functions as the very movement *signifying.* Behind the signification of a poem which thought penetrates, thought also loses itself in the musicality of a poem which has nothing to do with objects and perhaps varies solely in function of what thought sets aside, what it liberates itself from. Modern poetry, in breaking with classical prosody, has nowise given up the musicality of verse, but has sought it a greater depth.

Sensation and the aesthetic effect thus produce things in themselves, but not as objects of a higher power; in sidestepping all objects, they open upon a new element foreign to the distinction of a "without" from a "within," eluding even the category of *the* substantive.

Fink's remarkable analysis of the perception of a painting. (in the *Jahrbuch fur Philosophic und phaenomenologische Forschunt IX)* do not sufficiently take account of this exoticism. The intention is indeed directed to the tree itself across the perception of the painted tree, and we thereby enter into the world of the painting, which is different from the real world. But for Fink this world is unreal, neutralized, suspended. He does not see it deeply stamped with exoticism, and thus extracted from it reference to an "inside" — that is, as having lost its very character of being a world.

Moreover, the very fact that a painting extracts and sets aside a piece of the universe and brings about, in an inwardness, the coexistence of worlds that are mutually alien and impenetrable, has already a positive aesthetic function. The limitation at work in a painting, due to the material necessity of making something limited, constitutes a positive condition for the aesthetic, in the abstract and abrupt lines of its limits. Such are the undifferential blocks which Rodin's statues emerge from. Reality is posited in them in its exotic nakedness as a worldless reality, arising from a shattered world.

Effects of the same kind are obtained in cinema with close-ups. Their interest does not only lie in that they can show details; they stop the action in which a particular is bound up with a whole, and let it exist apart. They let it manifest its particular and absurd nature which the camera discovers in a normally unexpected perspective — in a shoulder line to which the close-up gives hallucinatory dimensions, laying bare what the visible universe and the play of its normal proportions tone down and conceal.

But the exotic reality of art which, though no longer objective, does not refer to our inwardness, appears in its turn as the covering of an inwardness. It is first the very inwardness of things, which in artwork acquires personality. A still life, a landscape, and a fortiori a portrait have their own inner life which their material covering expresses. A landscape is, as we say, a state of mind. But apart from this soul of objects, an artwork as a whole expresses what we call the world of the artist. There is a world of Delacroix and a world of Victor Hugo. Artistic reality is a mind's mean of expression. Through sympathy for this soul of things or of the artist the exoticism of the work is integrated into our world. That will be so inasmuch as the alterity of the other remains an *alter ego,* accessible through sympathy.

We come to understand in this way the quest of modern painting and poetry, which attempt to preserve the exocitism in artistic reality, to banish from it that soul to which the visible forms were subjected, and to remove from represented objects their servile function as expressions. Whence the hostility with regard to the subject, which makes painting into literature, the preoccupation with the pure and simple play of colors and lines destined for sensation in which the represented reality counts for itself, and not for the soul it envelops. Whence also the preoccupation with the correspondence between objects, between the facets and surfaces, inasmuch as it is foreign to the coherence of the

world, and the care taken to merge the different planes of reality by introducing a real object in the midst of painted objects or debris of objects. There is in all that the common intention to present reality as it is in itself, after the world has come to an end.

The investigations of modern painting in their protest against realism come from this feeling of the end of the world and of the destruction of representation which it makes possible. The meaning of the liberties a painter takes with nature are not correctly appreciated when they are taken to proceed from the creative imagination or from the subjectivity of the artist. This subjectivity could be sincere only if it no longer claims to be vision. Paradoxical as it may seem, painting is a struggle with sight. Sight seeks to draw out of the light beings integrated into a whole. To look is to be able to describe curves, to sketch out wholes in which the elements can be integrated, horizons in which the particular comes to appear by abdicating its particularity. In contemporary painting things no longer count as elements of a universal order which the look would give itself, as a perspective. On all side fissures appear in the continuity of the universe. The particular stands out in the nakedness of its being.

In the representation of matter by modern painting this deformation, that is, this laying bare, of the world is brought about in a particularly striking way. The breakup of continuity even on the surface of things, the preference for broken lines, the scorning of perspective and of the "real" proportions between things, indicate a revolt against the continuity of curves. From a space without horizons, things break away and are cast toward us like chunks that have weight in themselves, blocks, cubes, plane triangles, without transitions between them. They are naked elements, simple and absolute, swellings or abscesses of being. In this falling of things down on us objects attest their power as material objects, even reach a paroxysm of materiality. Despite the rationality and luminosity of these forms when taken in themselves, a painting makes them exist in themselves, brings about an absolute existence in the very fact there is something which is not in its turn an object or a name, which is unnameable and can only appear in poetry. Here is a notion of materiality which no longer has anything in common with matter as opposed to thought and mind, which fed classical materialism. Matter as defined by mechanistic laws which sum up its whole essence and render it intelligible is the farthest removed from the materiality in certain forms of modern art. For here materiality is thickness, coarseness, massivity, wretchedness. It is what has consistency, weight, is absurd, is a brute but impassive presence; it is also what is humble, bare and ugly. A material object, in being destined for a use, in forming part of a setting, is thereby clothed with a form which conceals its nakedness. The discovery of the materiality of being is not a discovery of a new quality, but of its formless proliferation. Behind the luminosity of forms, by which being already relate to our "inside," matter is the very fact of the *there is* ...

2. EXISTENCE WITHOUT EXISTENTS

Let us imagine all beings, things and persons, reverting to nothingness. One cannot put this return to nothingness outside of all events. But what of this nothingness itself? Something would happen, if only night and the silence of nothingness. The in-determinateness of this "something is happening" is not the indeterminateness of a

subject and does not refer to a substantive. Like the third person pronoun in the impersonal form of a verb, it designates not the uncertainly known author of the action, but the characteristic of this action itself which somehow has no author. This impersonal, anonymous, yet inextinguishable "consummation" of being, which murmurs in the depths of nothingness itself we shall designate by the term *there is.* The *there is,* inasmuch as it resists a personal form, is "being in general."

We have not derived this notion from exterior things or the inner world — from any "being" whatever. For *there is* transcends inwardness as well as exteriority; it does not even make it possible to distinguish these. The anonymous current of being invades, submerges every subject, person or thing. The subject object distinction by which we approach existents is not the starting point for a meditation which broaches being in general.

We could say that the night is the very experience of the *there is,* if the term experience were not inapplicable to a situation which involves the total exclusion of light.

When the forms of things are dissolved in the night, darkness of the night, which is neither an object nor the quality of an object, invades like a presence. In the night, where we are riven to it, we are not dealing with anything. But this nothing is not that of pure nothingness. There is no longer *this* or *that;* there is not "something." But this universal absence is in its turn presence, an absolutely unavoidable presence. It is not the dialectical counterpart of absence, and we do not grasp it through thought. It is immediately there. There is no discourse. Nothing responds to us, but this silence; the voice of this silence understood and frightens like the silence of those infinite spaces Pascal speaks of. *There is,* in general, without it mattering there is, without our being able to fix a substantive to this term. *There is* is an impersonal form, like in it rains, or it is warm. Its anonymity is essential. The mind does not find itself faced with an apprehended exterior. The exterior — if one insists on the term — remains uncorrelated with an interior. It is no long given. It is no longer a world. What we call the I is itself submerged by the night, invaded, depersonalized, stifled by it. The disappearance of all things and of the I leaves what cannot disappear, the sheer fact of being in which one *participates* whether one wants to or not, without having taken the initiative, anonymously. Being remains, like a field of forces, like a heavy atmosphere belonging to no one, universal, returning in the midst of the negation which put it aside, and in all the powers to which that negation may be multiplied.

There is a nocturnal space, but it is no longer empty space, the transparency which both separates us from things and gives access to them, by which they are given. Darkness fills it like a content; it is full, but full of the nothingness of everything. Can one speak of its continuity? It is surely uninterrupted. But points of nocturnal space do not refer to each other as illuminated space; there is no perspective, they are not situated. There is a swarming of points.

Yet this analysis does not simply illustrate Professor Mosch Turpin's thesis, in the *Tales of Hoffman,* that night is the absence of day. The absence of perspective is not something

purely negative. It becomes an insecurity. Not because things covered by darkness elude our foresight and that it becomes impossible to measure their approach in advance. For the insecurity does not come from the things of the day world which the night conceals; it is due just to the fact that nothing approaches, nothing comes, nothing threatens; this silence, this tranquility, this void of sensations constitutes a mute, absolutely indeterminate menace. The indeterminateness constitutes its acuteness. There is no determined being, anything can count for anything else. In this ambiguity the menace of pure and simple presence, of the *there is,* takes form. Before this obscure invasion it is impossible to take shelter in oneself, to withdraw into one's shell. One is exposed. The whole is open upon us. Instead of serving as our means of access to being, nocturnal space delivers us over to being.

The things of the day world then do not in the night become the source of the "horror of darkness" because our look cannot catch them in their "unforeseeable plots"; on the contrary, they get their fantastic character from this horror. Darkness does not only modify their contours for vision; it reduces them to undetermined, anonymous being, which sweats in them.

One can also speak of different forms of night that occur right in the daytime. Illuminated objects can appear to us as though in twilight shapes. Like the unreal, inverted city we find after an exhausting trip, things and beings strike us as though they no longer composed a world, and were swimming in the chaos of their existence. Such is also the case with the "fantastic," "hallucinatory" reality in poets like Rimbaud, even when they name the most familiar things and the most accustomed beings. The misunderstood art of certain realistic and naturalistic novelists, their prefaces and professions of faith notwithstanding, produces the same effect: beings and things that collapse into their "materiality," are terrifyingly present in their destiny, weight and shape. Certain passages of Huysmans or Zola, the calm and smiling horror of de Maupassant's tales do not only give, as is sometimes thought, a representation "faithful to" or exceeding reality, but penetrates behind the form which light reveals into that materiality which, far from corresponding to the philosophical materialism of the authors, constitutes the dark background of existence. It makes things appear to us in a night, like the monotonous presence that bears down on us in insomnia.

The rustling of the *there is* ... is horror. We have noted the way it insinuates itself in the night, as an undetermined menace of space itself disengaged from its function as receptacle for objects, as a means of access to beings. Let us look further into it.

To be conscious is to be torn away from the *there is,* since the existence of a consciousness constitutes a subjectivity, a subject of existence., that is, to some extent a master of being, already a name in the anonymity of the night. Horror is somehow a movement which will strip consciousness of its very "subjectivity." Not in lulling it into unconsciousness, but in throwing it into an *impersonal vigilance,* a *participation,* in the sense that Levy-Bruhl gives to the term.

What is new in the idea of participation which Levy-Bruhl introduced to describe an existence where horror is the dominant emotion, is in the destruction of categories which had hitherto been used to describe the feelings evoked by "the sacred." In Durkheim if the sacred breaks with profane being by the feelings it arouses, these feelings remain those of a subject facing an object. The identity of each of these terms does not seem compromised. The sensible qualities of the sacred are incommensurable with the emotional power it emits and with the very nature of this emotion, but their function as bearers of "collective representations" accounts for this disproportion and inadequateness. The situation is quite different in Levy-Bruhl. Mystical participation is completely different from the Platonic participation in a genus; in it the identity of the terms is lost. They are divested of what constituted their very substantivity. The participation of one term in another does not consist in sharing an attribute; one term *is the other.* The *private* existence of each term, mastered by a subject that is, loses this private character and returns to an undifferentiated background; the existence of one submerges the other, and is thus no longer an existence of the one. We recognize here the *there is.* The impersonality of the sacred in primitive religions, which for Durkheim is the "still" impersonal God from which will issue one day the God of advanced religions, on the contrary describes a world where nothing prepares for the apparition of a God. Rather than to a God, the notion of the *there is* leads us to the absence of God, the absence of any being. Primitive men live before all Revelation, before the light comes.

Horror is nowise an anxiety about death. According to Levy- Bruhl, primitive peoples show only indifference to death, which they take as a natural fact. In horror a subject is stripped of his subjectivity, of his power to have private existence. The subject is depersonalized. "Nausea," as a feeling for existence, is not yet a depersonalization; but horror turns the subjectivity of the subject, his particularity qua *entity,* inside out. It is a participation in the *there is,* in the *there is* which returns in the heart of every negation, in the *there is* that has "no exits." It is, if we may say so, the impossibility of death, the universality of existence even in its annihilation.

To kill, like to die, is to seek an escape from being, to go where freedom and negation operate. Horror is the event of being which returns in the heart of this negation, as though nothing had happened. "And that," says Macbeth, "is more strange than the crime itself." In the nothingness which a crime creates a being is condensed to the point of suffication, [sic] and draws consciousness out of its "retreat." A corpse is horrible; it already bears in itself its own phantom, it presages its return. The haunting spectre, the phantom, constitutes the very element of horror.

The night gives a spectral allure to the objects that occupy it still. It is the "hour of crime," "hour of vice," which also bear the mark of a supernatural reality. Evil-doers are disturbing to themselves like phantoms. This return of presence in negation, this impossibility of escaping from an anonymous and uncorruptible existence constitutes the final depths of Shakespearean tragedy. The fatality of the tragedy of antiquity becomes the fatality of irremissible being.

Specters, ghosts, sorceresses are not only a tribute Shakespeare pays to his time, or vestiges of the original material he composed with; they allow him to move constantly toward this limit between being and nothingness where being insinuates itself even in nothingness, like bubbles of the earth ("the Earth hath bubbles"). Hamlet recoils before the "not to be" because he has a foreboding of the return of being ("to dye, to sleepe, perchance to Dreame"). In Macbeth, the apparition of Banquo's ghost is also a decisive experience of the "no exit" from existence, its phantom return through the fissures through which one has driven it. "The times have been, that when the Brains were out, the man would dye, and there an end; But now they rise again ... and push us from our stools. This is more strange than such a murther is." "And it is over with" is impossible. The horror does not come from the danger. "What man dare, I dare ... Approach thou like the rugged Russian Bear, ... Take any shape but that, and my firm Nerves shall never tremble ... Hence horrible Shadow, unreal mockery hence ... " It is the shadow of being that horrifies Macbeth; the profile of being takes form in nothingness. The horror of the night, as an experience of the *there is,* does not then reveal to us a danger of death, nor even a danger of pain. That is what is essential in this analysis. The pure nothingness revealed by anxiety in Heidegger's analysis does not consitute the *there is.* There is horror of being and not anxiety over nothingness, fear of being and not fear for being; there is being prey to, delivered over to something that is not a "something." When night is dissipated with the first rays of the sun, the horror of the night is no longer defineable. The "something" appears to be "nothing."

Horror carries out the condemnation to perpetual reality, to existence with "no exists."
The sky, the whole world's full of my forefathers.
Where may I hide? Flee to infernal night.
How? There my father holds the urn of doom ...
Phaedra discovers the impossibility of death, the eternal responsibility of her being, in a full universe in which her existence is bound by an unbreakable commitment, an existence no longer in any way private.

We are opposing, then, the horror of the night, "the silence and horror of the shades," to Heideggerian anxiety, the fear of being to the fear of nothingness. While anxiety, in Heidegger, brings about "being toward death," grasped and somehow understood, the horror of the night "with no exits" which " does not answer" is an irremissible existence. "Tomorrow, alas one will still have to live" — a tomorrow contained in the infinity of today. There is horror or immortality, perpetuity of the drama of existence, necessity of forever taking on its burden.[1]

[1 *Thomas l'Obscure,* by Maurice Blanchot, opens with the description of the *'here is* ... (Cf., in particular Chapter II, pages 13-16). The presence of absence, the night, the dissolution of the subject in the night, the horror of being, the return of being to the heart of every negative movement, the reality of irreality are there admirably expressed.]

When, in the last chapter of *Creative Evolution,* Bergson shows that the concept of nothingness is equivalent to the idea of being crossed out, he seems to catch sight of a situation analogous to that which led us to the notion of the *there is.*

According to Bergson, negation has a positive meaning as a movement of the mind which rejects one being in order to think of another being; but, when applied to the totality of being, it no longer makes sense. To deny the totality of being is for consciousness to plunge into a kind of darkness, where it would at least remain as an operation, as the consciousness of that darkness. Total negation then would be impossible, and the concept of nothingness illusory. But Bergson's critique of nothingness only aims at the necessity of a being, a "something" which exists. It always approaches Being as "a being," and ends up with a residual entity. The darkness into which consciousness plunges, which has put out every glimmering of light in being, is also understood as content The fact that it is a content obtained through the negation of all content remains unconsidered. But this is just what is new in this situation. Darkness, as the presence of absence, is not a purely present content. There is not a "something" that remains. There is the atmosphere of presence, which can, to be sure, appear later as a content, but originally is the impersonal, non-substantive event of the night and the *there is.* It is like a density of the void, like a murmur of silence. There is nothing, but there is being, like a field of forces. Darkness is the very play of existence which would play itself out even if there were nothing. It is to express just this paradoxical existence that we have introduced the term "there is." We want to call attention to this being a density, an atmosphere, a field, which is not to be identified with an object that would have this density, or that would be taken up in the breath of existence or situated within a field of forces. We want to call attention to the existential density of the void itself, devoid of all being, empty even of void, whatever be the power of negation applied to itself. Negation does not end up with being as a structure and organization of objects; that which affirms and imposes itself in the extreme situation we have imagined, and which we approach in the night and in the tragic, is being as an impersonal field, a field without proprietor or master, where negation, annihilation and nothingness are events like affirmation, creation and subsistence, but impersonal events. A presence of absence, the *there is* is beyond contradiction; it embraces and dominates its contradictory. In this sense being has no outlets.

In modern philosophy the idea of death and of anxiety in face of death was opposed to the Bergsonian critique of nothingness. To "realize" the concept of nothingness is not to see nothingness but to die. As death, and an attitude taken with respect to death, the negation of being is not merely an impassive thought. But nothingness is here still conceived independently of the *there is,* without recognizing the universality of the *there is;* the dialectical character of the presence of absence is not taken note of. One starts with being, which is a content limited by nothingness. Nothingness is still envisaged as the end and limit of being, as an ocean which beats up against it on all sides. But we must ask if "nothingness," unthinkable as a limit or negation of being, is not possible as interval and interruption; we must ask whether consciousness, with its aptitude for sleep, for suspension, for *epoché,* is not the locus of this nothingness-interval.[2]

[2] This whole section, preceded by one part of our introduction, was published, with slight modifications, in *Deucalion I,* under the title "*Il y a."*

CHAPTER 4 The Hypostasis

1. INSOMNIA

The impossibility of rending the invading, inevitable, and anonymous rustling of existence manifests itself particularly in certain times when sleep evades our appeal. One watches on when

there is nothing to watch and despite the absence of any reason for remaining watchful. The bare fact of presence is oppressive; one is held by being, held to be. One is detached from any object, any content, yet there is presence. This presence which arises behind nothingness is neither *a being*, nor consciousness functioning in a void, but the universal fact of the *there is*, which encompasses things and consciousness.

The distinction between attention, which is turned to objects, whether they be internal or external, and vigilance, absorbed in the rustling of the unavoidable being, goes much further. The ego is swept away by the fatality of being. There is no longer any outside or any inside. Vigilance is quite devoid of objects. That does not come down to saying that it is an experience of nothingness, but that it is as anonymous as the night itself. Attention presupposes the freedom of the ego which directs it; the vigilance of insomnia which keeps our eyes open has no subject. It is the very return of presence into the void left by absence — not the return of *some thing*, but of a presence; it is the reawakening of the *there is* in the heart of negation. It is an indefectibility of being, where the work of being never lets up; it is its insomnia. The consciousness of a thinking subject, with its capacity for evanescence, sleep and unconsciousness, is precisely the breakup of the insomnia of anonymous being, the possibility to "suspend," to escape from this corybantic necessity, to take refuge in oneself so as to withdraw from being, to, like Penelope, have a night to oneself to undo the work looked after and supervised during the day. The *there is*, the play of being, is not played out across oblivions, does not encase itself in sleep like a dream. Its very occurrence consists in an impossibility, an opposition to possibilities of sleep, relaxation, drowsiness, absence. This reverting of presence into absence does not occur in distinct instants, like an ebb and flow. The *there is* lacks rhythm, as the points swarming in darkness lack perspective. For an instant to be able to break into being, for this insomnia, which is like the very eternity *of* being, to come to a stop, a subject would have to be posited.

We are, thus, introducing into the impersonal event of the *there is* not the notion of consciousness, but of wakefulness, in which consciousness participates, affirming itself as a consciousness because it only participates in it. Consciousness is a part of wakefulness, which means that it has already torn into it. It contains a shelter from that being with which, depersonalized, we make contact in insomnia, that being which is not to be lost nor duped nor forgotten, which is, if we may hazard the expression, completely sobered up.

Wakefulness is anonymous. It is not that there is *my* vigilance in the night; in insomnia it is the night itself that watches. It watches. In this anonymous nightwatch where I am completely exposed to being all the thoughts which occupy my insomnia are suspended on *nothing*. They have no support. I am, one might say, the object rather than the subject of an anonymous thought. To be sure, I have at least the experience of being an object, I still become aware of this anonymous vigilance; but I become aware of it in a movement in which the I is already detached from the anonymity, in which the limit situation of impersonal vigilance is reflected in the ebbing of a consciousness which abandons it. It is necessary to bring out this experience of depersonalization before compromising it through a reflection on its conditions.

Our affirmation of an anonymous vigilance goes beyond the *phenomena*, which already presupposes an ego, and thus eludes descriptive phenomenology. Here description would make use of terms while striving to go beyond their consistency; it stages *personages*, while the *there is* is the dissipation of personages. A method is called for such that thought is invited to go beyond intuition.

We can be more or less close to this limit situation. In certain awakenings of delirium, in certain paradoxes of madness, we can surprise this impersonal "consciousness" into which insomnia sinks. The fatality of these strange states, which it is impossible to recount, is due to the fact that they do not happen to me as their subject. Their stranglehold has already been loosened, in spite of the annoyance or pain which can persist, the moment I can take these states as happening to me, that I catch sight of a subject for them. Their impersonality is the exact contrary of an unconsciousness; it is due to the absence of a master, to being that belongs to no one.

Insomnia thus puts us in a situation where the disruption of the category of the substantive designates not only the disappearance of every object, but the extinction of the subject.

But then what does the advent of a subject consist in?

2. POSITION

Consciousness and the Unconscious

Consciousness appeared to stand out against the there is by its ability to forget and interrupt it, by its ability to sleep. Consciousness is a mode of being, but, in taking up being, it is a hesitation in being. It thus gives itself a dimension of retreat. In the Bible when Jonas, the hero of impossible escapes, invoker of nothingness and death, observes in the midst of the raging elements the failure of his flight and the fatality of his mission, he climbs down into the hold of the ship and goes to sleep.

It is paradoxical to define consciousness by unconsciousness. They do not merge into one. Yet the event of consciousness does not refer to the unconscious just as to its contrary. Consciousness, in its opposition to the unconscious, is not constituted by the opposition, but by this proximity, this communication with its contrary: in its very élan consciousness becomes fatigued and interrupts itself, has a recourse against itself. Its very intentionality can be described as an egress into an underlying depth, as that power which Jules Romains' poet Vorge called the power of "getting the hell out from the inside." It never finds itself up against the wall.

This retreat of consciousness toward unconsciousness and this emergence of consciousness out of the depth of the unconscious do not occur in two different moments. Mental reservations murmur in the very activity of thought, as in a wink, made up of looking and not looking. The present, as we have shown it in the effort which constitutes it, is behind the present. It catches up with itself but with a lag behind itself, or effects a retreat, a rebound, in the simplicity of its stroke.

On the other hand, the unconscious which consciousness broods over is not an intention in its turn, which would prolong the sincerity of the intention turned to the world, integrating it into a still broader system of finality, as though an obscure world, in all respects identical with the daylight world, would continue its existence under the cover of night. Mental reservations are not thoughts which are promised the rank of thought but still waiting promotion. And the way consciousness refers to the unconscious is not an intention in turn. It consists in fainting away at the very focal point of its luminousness. This characterizes the way light is produced, as scintillation.

Here

Thought, which idealism has accustomed us to locate outside of space, is — essentially, and not as the result of a fall or degradation — here. The body excluded by the Cartesian doubt is the body object. The cogito does not lead to the impersonal position: "there is thought," but to the first person in the present "I am something that thinks." The word thing is here admirably exact. For the most profound teaching of the Cartesian cogito consists in discovering thought as a substance, that is, as some thing that is posited. Thought has a point of departure. There is not only a consciousness of localization, but a localization of consciousness, which is not in turn reabsorbed into consciousness, into knowing. There is here something that stands out against knowing, that is a condition for knowing. The knowing of knowing is also here; it somehow emerges from a material density, a protuberance, from a head. Thought, which instantaneously spreads into the world, retains the possibility of collecting itself into the here, from which it never detached itself.

Consciousness is precisely the fact that the impersonal and uninterrupted affirmation of "eternal truths" can become simply a thought, that is, can, in spite of its sleepless eternity, begin or end in a head, light up or be extinguished, and escape itself: the head falls on the shoulders; one sleeps.

The possibility of, sleeping is already seated in the very exercise of thought. It is not first thought and then here. It is, qua thought, here, already sheltered from eternity and universality. This localization does not presuppose space. It is the very contrary of objectivity. It does not presuppose a thought behind it which would have to grasp the here, which is an objective here — in that dialectic by which Hegel's Phenomenology begins. The localization of consciousness is not subjective; it is the subjectivization of the subject. The scintillation of consciousness, the recess it forms in the plenum, does not refer at all to objective space, but is the very phenomenon of localization and of sleep — which is the uneventful event, the inward event. Unconsciousness as sleep is not a new life which is enacted beneath life; it is a participation in life by non-participation, by the elementary act of resting.

Sleep and Place

What does sleeping consist in? To sleep is to suspend physical and psychic activity. But an abstract being, hovering in the air, lacks an essential condition for this suspending: a place. The summoning of sleep occurs in the act of lying down. To lie down is precisely to limit existence to a place, to position.

A place is not an indifferent "somewhere," but a base, a condition. Of course, we ordinarily understand our localization as that of a body situated just anywhere. That is because the positive relationship with a place which we maintain in sleep is masked by our relations with things. Then only the concrete determinations of the surroundings, of the setting, and the ties of habit and of history give an individual character to a place which has become our home [le chez-soi], our home town, our homeland, the world.

When detached from its atmosphere, localization is generally taken to be presence in an abstract extension, like that of a star in the infinity of space. Sleep reestablishes a relationship with a place qua base. In lying down, in curling up in a corner to sleep, we abandon ourselves to a place; qua base it becomes our refuge. Then all our work of being consists in resting. Sleep is like entering into contact with the protective forces of a place; to seek after sleep is to gropingly seek after that contact. Where one wakes up one finds oneself shut up in one's immobility like an egg in its shell. This surrender to a base which also offers refuge constitutes sleep, in which a being, without being destroyed is suspended.

Consciousness comes out of rest, out of a position, out of this unique relationship with a place. Position is not added to consciousness like an act that it decides on; it is out of position, out of an immobility, that consciousness comes to itself. It is commitment to being which consists in maintaining itself in the uncommittedness of sleep. Consciousness "has" a base, it "has" a place. This is the only sort of having that is not encumbering, but is a condition: consciousness is here. That consciousness is here is not in its turn an element of consciousness, a thought, feeling or volition; it is the positing of consciousness. It is not a question of contact with the earth: to take one's stand on the earth is more than the sensation of contact, and more than a knowledge of a base. Here what is an "object" of knowledge does not confront the subject, but supports it, and supports it to the point that it is by leaning on the base that the subjects posits itself as a subject.

The antithesis of position is not the freedom of a subject suspended in the air, but the destruction of the subject, the disintegration of the hypostasis. It is announced in emotion. Emotion is what overwhelms. Physiological psychology, which started with emotional shock and presented the emotions in general as a disruption of equilibrium, seems to us here to have grasped the true nature of affectivity, despite its rudimentary language, more faithfully than the phenomenological analyses, which after all keep something of the character of comprehension, and consequently of apprehension, in emotions (Heidegger), and speak of emotional experience and of objects clothed with new properties (Husserl, Scheler). Emotion puts into question not the existence, but the subjectivity of the subject; it prevents the subject from gathering itself up, reacting, being someone. What is positive in the subject sinks away into a nowhere. Emotion is a way of holding on while losing one's base. All emotion is fundamentally vertigo, that vertigo one feels insinuating itself, that finding oneself over a void. The world of forms opens like a bottomless abyss. The cosmos breaks up and chaos gapes open — the abyss, the absence of place, the there is.

The here that belongs to consciousness, the place of its sleep and of its escape into itself, is radically different from the Da involved in Heidegger's Dasein. The latter already implies the world. The here we are starting with, the here of position, precedes every act of understanding, every horizon and all time. It is the very fact that consciousness is an origin, that it starts from itself, that it is an existent. In its very life as consciousness it always proceeds from its position, from the preexisting "relationship" with a base, a place, which in sleep it embraces to the exclusion of all else. In positioning itself on a base the subject encumbered with being gathers itself together, stands up and masters all

that encumbers it; its here gives to it a point of departure. A subject takes on things. The contents of consciousness are states. A subject's immobility, its steadiness, is not the result of an invariable reference to some coordinates of ideal space, but of its stance, the event of its position, which refers only to itself and is the origin of fixity in general — the beginning of the very notion of beginning.

Place, then, before being a geometric space, and before being the concrete setting of the Heideggerian world, is a base. This is what makes the body the very advent of consciousness. It is nowise a thing — not only because a soul inhabits it, but because its being belongs to the order of events and not to that of substantives. It is not posited; it is a position. It is not situated in a space given beforehand; it is the irruption in anonymous being of localization itself.

This event is not taken into account when, over and beyond the external experience of a body, one insists on its internal experience, on coenesthesis. Coenesthesis is made up of sensations, that is, of elementary bits of information. The body is our possession, but the bond of possession is finally resolved into a set of experiences and cognitions. The materiality of the body remains an experience of materiality. Will it be said that coenesthesis is more than a kind of cognition, that in the internal sensibility there is inwardness that can go as far as identification, that I am my pain, my breathing, my organs, that I do not only have a body, but am a body? But even then the body is still being taken to be a being, a substantive, eventually a means of localization, but not the way a man engages in existence, the way he posits himself. To take it as an event is to say that it is not an instrument, symbol or symptom of position, but is position itself that in it is effected the very transformation of an event into a being.

The body has of course always been taken to be more than a chunk of matter. It was taken to house a soul, which it had the power of expressing. The body might be more or less expressive, and had parts which were more or less expressive. The face and the eyes, those mirrors the soul, were especially the organs of expression. But the spirituality of the body does not lie in this power to express what is inward. By its position it realizes the condition necessary for any inwardness. It does not express an event; it is itself this event. This is one of the strongest impressions we get in looking at Rodin's sculpture. His beings are never set on a conventional or abstract pedestal. The event his statues realize is much more in their relationship with the base, in their position, than in their relationship with a soul, a knowing or thought, which they would have to express.

The Present and the Hypostasis

Through position consciousness participates in sleep. The possibility of resting, of being closed up in oneself, is the possibility of giving oneself over to the base, of going to bed. It is contained in consciousness inasmuch as consciousness is localized. Sleep, a withdrawal into the plenum, takes place in consciousness as position. But position is the very event of the instant as a present. If, with an already ancient philosophical tradition, one envisages the present within time, it appears as the very evanescence of being. Yet we can ask whether the evanescence of the present is not the only way a subject can arise

in anonymous being and be capable of time. We can wonder whether the impossible possession of the present is not linked to the fact that it is only through the evanescence of the present that possession itself becomes possible. For the production of an instant of time cannot come from an infinite series, which it would have to traverse, but shows an indifference to that series; it can cut the Gordian knot of time without untying it. It can be, out of itself. That way for an instant to be is to be present. The present is an ignorance of history. In it the infinity of time or of eternity is interrupted and starts up again. The present is then a situation in being where there is not only being in general, but there is a being, a subject. Because the present refers only to itself, starts with itself, it refracts the future. Its evanescence, its swoon, is something that belongs to its very notion. If it lasted, it would make a legacy of itself. It would already have derived its being from a heritage and not from itself. It thus can have no continuity. Its evanescence is the ransom paid for its subjectivity, that is, for the transmutation, within the pure event of being, of an event into a substantive — a hypostasis. Of itself time resists any hypo-stasis; the images of current and flux with which we explain it are applicable to beings in time, and not to time itself. Time does not flow like a river. But the present brings about the exceptional situation where we can give to an instant a name, and conceive it as a substantive. Not by an abuse of language, but in virtue of an ontological transmutation, an essential equivocation. An instant's "halt" is not to be looked for like an expanse of immobilized time, whose duration a scientific psychology would be able to measure from behind. The present is a halt, not because it is arrested, but because it interrupts and links up again the duration to which it comes, out of itself. Despite its evanescence in time, in which alone it has been envisaged, or rather because of that evanescence, it is the effectuation of a subject. It breaks with the duration in which we grasp it.

The Present and Time

Modern philosophy professes a scorn for the instant, in which it sees only the illusion of scientific time, divested of all dynamism, all becoming. For it an instant seems to exist only as the limit between two times, a pure abstraction. Reality would be composed of the concrete élan of duration, ever turned to, and ever biting into, the future. The chief consideration which permits this degradation of the instant concerns the fact that of itself an instant has no breadth, has no duration, is not duration. This consideration would be legitimate if it is true that the instant has to be understood in function of time, and that the relationship between time and existence is clear by itself.

Indeed, philosophy throughout its history has understood the instant by starting with time. Not that it had imagined in a trivial way time to be composed of instants. Neither Plato nor Aristotle and a fortiori neither Hamelin, Bergson, nor Heidegger committed that error. But whether the instant is taken as a dialectical complement of an interval, a cross-section of duration, or arising in the upsurge toward the future, which already bends under the weight of the past, the instant in all modern philosophy gets its significance from the dialectic of time; it does not have dialectic of its own. It has no ontological function other than that which, in the various doctrines, is given to time.

On the other hand, the relationship between time and existence seems equally evident and simple, throughout the whole of philosophy — with the exception of Heidegger, who makes of just this a problem. The extension of time appears as the very extension of existence. Perennial existence is a higher form of existence. It is true that there is eternity, which time does not gnaw away at, even above perennial existence. But this superiority of eternity is due precisely to the fact that time does not gnaw away at it. The power of eternity is defined by its resistance to the destruction worked by time. But, secured against temporal destruction, eternity does resemble time, as the course of what endures, of what is durable. The instant in which existence is both born and dies is followed by an instant in which existence is born, which inherits its legacy. It is the persistence of an existence throughout duration that imitates eternity, that makes time a moving image of immobile eternity. The classical notion of eternity has no other positive meaning. Every attempt to grasp it ends up in a negative theology, in that "I do not understand it very well myself" with which Theodore, in Malebranche's Metaphysical Dialogues, comments what he has to say about the eternity of divine action. In the classical conception the instant of itself could not imitate eternity, since it is essentially an evanescence; it is even the negation of eternity. It is the continual laying down of the following instant, which is always assured, that assumes this function. Existence is conceived as a persistence in time; the "stance" of an instant does not suffice for classical philosophy to conceive eternal, that is, complete, existence. Existence is something which traverses that stance, bypasses it and effects a duration. And this conception shows that we habitually envisage an instant in its relationship with other instants, and that we do not seek in an instant anything else than the very dialectic of time.

The theory of continuous creation in Descartes and Malebranche refers, on the phenomenal level, to the incapacity of an instant to join up itself with the following instant. Unlike in the theories of Bergson and of Heidegger, here it is devoid of the power to be beyond itself. An instant is in this specific sense without dynamism. But what is profound in Malebranche's views is that instead of situating the true dependence of creation on the Creator in its origin and in its liability to be reduced to nothingness by a new decree of the Creator, Malebranche places it in its inability to preserve itself in existence, in its need to resort to divine efficacity at each instant. Here Malebranche catches sight of the drama inherent in an instant itself, its struggle for existence, which mechanism fails to recognize when it takes an instant to be a simple and inert element of time. Malebranche brings out a happening in an instant which does not consist in its relationship with other instants.

The insubordination of the instant to time is due to the fact that it is considered just anywhere in the "space of time," whose different points are only distinguished from each other by their order, and, other than that, are equivalent.

We too agree with the criticism which, since Bergson, have been made of the confusion of abstract time with concrete time. But the two have to be distinguished not because abstract time is spatialized and homogenous, and concrete time is a duration inseparable from its heterogenous contents, continually renewed and unpredictable, but because in

abstract time there is an order of instants, but no central instant; there is not that instant par excellence which is the present.

To understand the function of an instant we must begin within its peculiar relationship with existence, which shall make us think that it is really the instant that is the accomplishment of existence.

Before linking up with the instants that precede or follow it, an instant contains an act by which existence is acquired. Each instant is a beginning, a birth. Keeping to the strictly phenomenal level and leaving aside the transcendent relationship that Malebranche perceives in the instant, it remains that of itself an instant is a relationship, a conquest, although this relationship does not refer to any future or past, nor to any being or event situated in that past or future. An instant *qua* beginning and birth is a relationship *sui generis*, a relationship with and initiation into Being.

One is first struck by the paradoxical nature of this relationship. What begins to be does not exist before having begun, and yet it is what does not exist that must through its beginning give birth to itself, come to itself, without coming from anywhere. Such is the paradoxical character of beginning which is constitutive of an instant. And this should be emphasized. A beginning does not start out of the instant that precedes the beginning; its point of departure is contained in its point of arrival, like a rebound movement. It is out of this withdrawal in the very heart of the present that the present is effected, and an instant taken up.

The occurrence of an instant, and its paradoxical duality, could escape philosophical analysis, for which the problem of origin has always been a problem of causality. It was not seen that, even in the presence of a cause, that which begins must bring about the event of beginning in an instant, at a point after which the principle of contradiction (A is not, in the same instant, non-A), will hold, but for whose constitution it does not yet hold. In addition to the mystery of creation a parte creatoris, there is, in the instant of creation, the whole mystery of the time of a creature.

This movement, of coming to oneself without having left from anywhere, is not to be confused with that which spans an interval of time. It comes to pass in an instant itself, where something as it were precedes the instant. The essence of an instant, its effectuation, consists in spanning that inner distance.

Duration does not affect the contact with being brought about by an instant. Duration is not to be taken as the measure of existence, and the present denied its plenary contact with being, simply because an instant has no duration, and in its contact with being its detachment from it is already presaged. The evanescence of an instant constitutes its very presence; it is the condition for the fullness of a contact with being, which is in no way a habit, is not inherited from a past, but is in point of fact present. The absolute character of the present is not the negation of the destruction which time brings about, nor the affirmation of something durable.

The Present and the "I"

The description of this absolute can then not be put in terms of sovereignty and blissful freedom, with which the notion of the absolute is characterized in the philosophical tradition. What is absolute in the relationship between existence and an existent, in an instant, consists in the mastery the existent exercises on existence, but also in the weight of existence on the existent.

Nothing could annul the inscription in existence which commits the present. The cup of existence is drunk to the dregs, is drained, nothing is left over for the morrow. All the acuteness of the present is due to its engagement in being, without reserve and as it were disconsolate. There is nothing more to accomplish, there is no more distance to cross; the instant will vanish. But that simply means that it does not endure. The evanescence of the present makes possible this absolute character of the engagement The relationship with being in the present is not effected on the level which leads from one instant to another in duration. There is in the present taken in itself only its exceptional relationship with being; there is nothing kept back for later. The present is the terminus, and in this sense a stop. What is essential is an instant is its stance. Yet this stop harbors an event.

The evanescence of the present does not destroy the definiteness and the actual infinity of the effectuation of being which constitutes the very function of the present. Evanescence is the condition for it: because of it being is never inherited but always won in the heat of struggle. The evanescence could not abolish the absolute character of the present. Not because a reflection on the duration traversed, and an abstract judgment — that the past is inviolable — would discover the absolute character of what had been present. The absolute character of the present is in the very presence of the present; it gives an appearance of being to the past and defies the future, which cannot reduce it to nothingness. The contact which the present has had with it would prevent this nothingness from being equal to the nothingness which preceded it: the ever-present menace of death does not put a stop to the "farce of life"; it is part of it. If death is nothingness, it is not nothingness pure and simple; it still has the reality of a chance that was lost. The "nevermore" hovers about like a raven in the dismal night, like a reality in nothingness. The incompleteness of this evanescence is manifest in the regret which accompanies it. The melancholy over the eternal course of things, which is attached, paradoxically, to what in the instant is the supreme guarantee of the freedom of its origin and which (in Ecclesiastes) inscribes the evanescence of the instant in an ideal record of plays lost, bears witness to the fact that the present contains a knot which its fading out will not untie, that the present in its inevitable return upon itself does not allow for its annihilation.

The present is subjected to being, bonded to it. The ego returns ineluctably to itself; it can forget itself in sleep, but there will be a reawakening. In the tension and fatigue of beginning one feels the cold sweat of the irremissibility of existence. The being that is taken up is a burden. Here what is called the tragic in being is grasped in its very origin. It is not simply the sum of misfortunes and deceptions which await us and occur to us in the course of our existence because it is finite. It is, on the contrary, the infinity of

existence that is consumed in an instant, the fatality in which its freedom is congealed as in a winter landscape where frozen beings are captives of themselves. Time, far from constituting the tragic, shall perhaps be able to deliver us from it.

The presence of the present is due to its irremissibility, its inevitable return to itself, its inability to detach itself from itself. That is not to define the present by the present, but to catch sight of a relationship with itself in the present. The present refers only to itself, but this reference, which should have dazzled it with freedom, imprisons it in an identification. The present, free with respect to the past, but a captive of itself, breathes the gravity of being in which it is caught up. For there is a gravity in the heart of the present, despite its break with the past. The fatality which bears down upon the present does not weigh it down like heredity, and is not imposed on it because it was born without having chosen its birth. The present is pure beginning. But in its initiating contact, an instantaneous maturity invades it; it puts its pin in itself and is caught in its own game. It weights itself. It is a being and not a dream, not a game. An instant is like a breathlessness, a panting, an effort to be. The freedom of the present finds a limit in the responsibility for which it is the condition. This is the most profound paradox in the concept of freedom: its synthetic bond with its own negation. A free being alone is responsible, that is, already not free. A being capable of beginning in the present is alone encumbered with itself. The definitiveness which comes to pass in the present is not then initially connected with time; it is an intrinsic mark of the present. We have examined the present outside of the dialectic of time, some of whose characteristics we shall point out below.

The return of the present to itself is the affirmation of the already riveted to itself, already doubled up with a self. The tragic does not come from a conflict between freedom and destiny, but from the turning of freedom into destiny, from responsibility. The present — the occurrence of an origin — turns into a being. From there results the essential ambiguity of the "I"; it is, but remains unclassifiable as an object. It is neither a thing, nor a spiritual center from which radiate the acts of consciousness, given to the consciousness of a new "I" which would apprehend it in a new move of withdrawal.

The "I" has to be grasped in its amphibological mutation from an event into an "entity," and not in its objectivity. It consists in this original possession of being, in which the I nevertheless reverts ineluctably to itself. The identity of the present, like the identity of the "I", does not presuppose the identity proper to logical terms. The "present" and the "I" are the movement of self-reference which constitutes identity.

The Cartesian cogito, with its certainty of existence for the "I," rests on the absolute effectuation of being by the present. The cogito, according to Descartes, does not prove the necessary existence of thought, but its own indubitable existence. It does not contribute any teaching about the mode of existence proper to thought Like extension, thought, which is a created existence, would risk falling into nothingness if God, the sole being whose essence implies existence, would withdraw from it. In this sense the evidence of the cogito is supported on the evidence for divinely existence. But what is the exceptional certainty of the cogito due to? To the present.

The certainty of the cogito in the past is not enough. Against the always possible failings of memory, it is necessary to have recourse to God. But at the same time the personal form of the cogito, the "I" of the "I think," imposes that certainty. The cogito is not a meditation on the essence of thought, but the inward relationship between the ego and its act, the unique relationship of the “I” with a verb in the first person form. In the end it is the act of doubting, that is, the negative act, the exclusion of any position outside of the instant, that is privileged situation in which the existence of the present and of the "I" is irresistibly accomplished. The "present," the "I" and an "instant" are moments of one and the same event.

The Present and Position

This self-reference of the present instant is possible through a stance taken at a site. The "halt" of the present is the very effort of taking a position, in which the present joins with itself and takes itself up. Effort and labor, in which, at the beginning of this study, we caught sight of the articulation of an instant, catching up with themselves across a lag behind themselves, refer to the effort and tension of position which functions as their basis. Maine de Brian only saw the effort directed at the world; in analyzing it he came upon the experience of a subject, but not its very effectuation. Taking position is something quite different from all action and labor directed at the world. While in Maine de Brian’s concept of effort the will and the resistance are coordinate or determine one another, the spot trampled in a subject's taking position sustains the effort not only as a resistance, but also as a base, as a condition for the effort. A subject does not exist before the event of its taking position. The act of taking a position does not unfold in some dimension from which it could take its origin; it arises at the very point at which it acts. Its action does not consist in willing, but in being. In an action directed at the world, to the fatigue is added a surging toward the future, whether to fabricate an object or to produce a modification in ourselves; action transcends itself. The act of taking position does not transcend itself. This effort which does not transcend itself constitutes the present or the "I". To the notion of existence, where the emphasis is put on the first syllable, we are opposing the notion of a being whose very advent is a folding back upon itself, a being which, contrary to the ecstaticism of contemporary thought, is in a certain sense a substance.

Care, in Heidegger, completely illuminated by understanding (even though understanding itself is presented as care) is already determined by the "inside-outside" structure which characterizes light. Without being cognition, temporality in Heidegger is an ecstasy, a "being outside of oneself." This is not the transcendence characteristic of theory, but it is already the leaving of an inwardness for an exteriority. In Heidegger existence remains a movement of the inside toward the outside; indeed it is he who has grasped, in its deepest form, the ultimate and universal essence of this play of inwardness and exteriority, beyond the "subject-object" play to which idealist and realist philosophy reduced it. What is new in this conception is that this ecstasy is seen to be more than a property of the soul; it is taken to be that through which existence exists. It is not a relationship with an object, but with the verb to be, with the action of being. Through ecstasy man takes up his existence. Ecstasy is then found to be the very event of existence. But then existence is

"contemporaneous" with the world and with light. In starting with position, we question whether ecstasy is in fact the original mode of existence, whether the relationship currently called a relationship between the ego and being is a movement toward an outside, whether the ex is the principle root of the verb to exist.

The Meaning of Hypostasis

Through taking position in the anonymous there is a subject is affirmed. It is affirmation in the etymological sense of the term, taking a position on solid ground, on a base, fulfilling the conditions, foundation. We have not sought, in the subject that pulls itself up from the anonymous vigilance of the there is, a thought, a consciousness, or a mind. Our investigation did not start with the ancient opposition of the ego to the world. We were concerned with determining the meaning of a much more general fact, that of the very apparition of an existent, a substantive in the heart of this impersonal existence, which, strictly speaking, we cannot give a name to, for it is a pure verb. A verb is not simply a name for an action like a noun is a name for a thing. The function of a verb does not consist in naming, but in producing language, that is, in bringing forth the seeds of poetry which overwhelm "existents" in their position and their very positivity.

The impersonality of the there is has been described in the most radical terms: it was not only a question of impersonality in the sense, for example, that the God of Spinoza is impersonal, or that the world and inanimate things, an object in opposition to the subject, or extention in opposition to thought, or matter in opposition to mind are impersonal. All these beings are already personal, for they are existents; they already presuppose the category of substantive under which they fit. We are looking for the very apparition of the substantive. To designate this apparition we have taken up the term hypostasis which, in the history of philosophy, designated the event by which the act expressed by a verb became a being designated by a substantive. Hypostasis, the apparition of a substantive, is not only the apparition of a new grammatical category; it signifies the suspension of the anonymous there is, the apparition of a private domain, of a noun. On the ground of the there is a being arises. The ontological significance of an entity in the general economy of Being, which Heidegger simply posits alongside of Being by a distinction, will thus be deduced. By hypostasis anonymous being loses its there is character. An entity — that which is — is a subject of the verb to be, and thus exercises a mastery over the fatality of Being, which has become its attribute. Someone exists who assumes Being, which henceforth is his being.

But although we have looked for the hypostasis and not consciousness, we have found consciousness. Hypostasis, an existent, is a consciousness, because consciousness is localized and posited, and through the act without transcendence of taking a position it comes to being out of itself, and already take refuge in itself from Being in itself. Another moment of the same situation is that consciousness is present, that is, again, comes to Being out of itself. The present is not a segment of duration; it is a function of it: it is this coming out of a self, this appropriation of existence by an existent, which the "I" is. Consciousness, position, the present, the "I," are not initially — although they are finally

— existents. They are events by which the unnameable verb to be turns into substantives. They are hypostasis.

Freedom and Hypostasis

But this boundary of unconsciousness at which consciousness abides, and which defines the ontological event of consciousness, is not the boundary of negation. Sleep is a modality of being, in which a being withdraws from itself, and is delivered of its own self-control. This freedom does not involve nothingness; it is not a "nihilation," in the contemporary expression. But, on the other hand, this freedom is only a "thought." We must not fail to recognize the event in sleep, but we must notice that into this event its failure is already written. Fragile sleep, soft-winged sleep, is a second state.

If an existent arises through consciousness, subjectivity, which is a preeminence of the subject over being, is not yet freedom. In the hypostasis of an instant — in which a subject's mastery, power, or virility are manifested as being in a world, in which intention is the forgetting of oneself in light and a desire for things, in the abnegation of charity and sacrifice — we can discern the return of the there is. The hypostasis, in participating I in the there is, finds itself again to be a solitude, in the definitiveness of the bond with which the ego is chained to its self. The world and knowledge are not events by which the upsurge oft existence in an ego, which wills to be absolutely master of being, absolutely behind it, is blunted. The I draws back from its object and from itself, but this liberation from itself appears as an infinite task. The I always has one foot caught in its own existence. Outside in face of everything, it is inside of itself, tied to itself. It is forever bound to the existence which it has taken up. This impossibility for the ego to not be a self constitutes the underlying tragic element in the ego, the fact that it is riveted to its own being.

The freedom of consciousness is not without conditions. In other words, the freedom which is accomplished in cognition does not free the mind from every fate. This freedom itself is a moment of a deeper drama which does not play itself out between a subject and objects — things or events — but between the mind and the fact of the there is, which it takes up. It is enacted in our perpetual birth.

The freedom of knowledge and intention is negative; it is non-engagement. But what is the meaning of non-engagement within the ontological adventure? It is the refusal of the definitive. The world offers me a time in which I traverse different instants, and, thanks to the evolution open to me, I am not at any moment definitive. Yet I always carry along my past whose every instant is definitive. But then there remains for me, in this world of light, where all is given but where everything is distance, the power of not taking anything or of acting as though I had not taken anything. The world of intentions and desires is the possibility of just such a freedom. But this freedom does not save me from the definitive character of my very existence, from the fact that, I am forever stuck with myself. And this definitive element is my solitude.

The world and light are solitude. These given objects, these clothed beings are something other than myself, but they are mine.

Illuminated by light, they have meaning, and thus are as though they came from me. In the understood universe I am alone, that is, closed up in an existence that is definitively one.

Solitude is accursed not of itself, but by reason of its ontological significance as something definitive. Reaching the other is not something justified of itself; it is not a matter of shaking me out of my boredom. It is, on the ontological level, the event of the most radical breakup of the very categories of the ego, for it is for me to be somewhere else than my self; it is to be pardoned, to not be a definite existence. The relationship with the other is not to be conceived as a bond with another ego, nor as a comprehension of the other which makes his alterity disappear, nor as a communion with him around some third term.

It is not possible to grasp the alterity of the other, which is to shatter the definitiveness of the ego, in terms of any of the relationship which characterize light Let us anticipate a moment, and say that the plane of eras allows us to see that the other par excellence is the feminine, through which a world behind the scenes prolongs the world. In Plato, Love, a child of need, retains the features of destitution. Its negativity is the simple "less" of need, and not the very movement unto alterity. Eros, when separated from the Platonic interpretation which completely fails to recognize the role of the feminine, can be the theme of a philosophy which, detached from the solitude of light, and consequently from phenomenology properly speaking, will concern us elsewhere. Phenomenological description, which by definition cannot leave the sphere of light, that is, man alone shut up in his solitude, anxiety and death as an end, whatever analyses of the relationship with the other, it may contribute, will not suffice. *Qua* phenomenology it remains within the world of light, the world of the solitary ego which has no relationship with the other *qua* other, for whom the other is another me, an alter ego known by sympathy, that is, by a return to oneself.

3. ON THE WAY TO TIME

We think — and this is the fundamental theme of conception of time which runs through these investigations — that time does not convey the insufficiency of the relationship with Being which is effected in the present, but that it is called for to provide a remedy for the excess of the definitive contact which the instant effects. Duration, on another plane than that of being, but without destroying being, resolves the tragic involved in being. But, if the development of this theme goes beyond the limit which the present study has set for itself, we cannot hold back from sketching out, if only in a very summary way, the perspective in which the themes concerning the "I" and the "present," which we have just laid out, have their place.

Cognition and the Ego as a Substance

In the flow of consciousness which constitutes our life in the world the ego maintains itself as something identical across the changing multiplicity of becoming. Whatever be the traces which life imprints upon us by modifying our habits and our character in constantly changing all the contents that form our being something invariable remains. The "I" remains there to tie the multicolored threads of our existence to one another.

What does this identity signify? We are inclined to take it the identity of a substance. The "I" would be an indestructible point, from which acts and thought emanate, without affecting it by their variations and their multiplicity. But can the multiplicity of accidents not fail to affect the identity of the substance? The relationship of the substance with the accidents are them-f selves so many modifications of that substance, such that the idea of substance is going to enter in an infinite regression. It is there that the concept of knowing makes it possible to maintain the identity of substance under the variation of accidents. Knowing is a relation with what above all remains exterior, it is relationship with what remains outside of all relationships, an action which maintains the agent outside of the events he bring about. The concept of knowing — a relationship and an action of a unique kind — makes it possible to fix the identity of the "I," to keep it enclosed in its secrecy. It maintains itself under the variations of the history which affects it as an object, without affecting it in its being. The "I" is then identical because it is consciousness. The substance par excellence is the subject Knowledge is the secret of its freedom with respect to all that which happens to it. And its freedom guarantees its identity. It is thanks to the freedom of knowledge that the "I" can remain as a substance beneath the accidents of its history. The freedom of the "I" is its substantiality; it is but another word for the fact that a substance is not engaged in the variation of its accidents. Far from going beyond the substantialist conception of the ego, idealism promotes it in a radical form. The I is not a substance endowed with thought; it is a substance because it is endowed with thought.

The Ego as an Identification and as a Bond with Oneself

But the idealist interpretation of the identity of the “I” makes use of the logical idea of identity, detached from the ontological event of the identification of an existent. For identity is something that belongs not to the verb *to be,* but to that which is, to a noun which has detached itself from the anonymous rustling of the *there is.* Identification is in fact the very positing of an entity in the heart of the anonymous and all-invading being. One can then not define a subject by identity, since identity covers over the event of the identification of the subject

This event is not brought about in thin air; we have shown that it is the work of taking position and the very function of the present, which in time (in terms of which it is habitually envisaged) is the negation or ignorance of time, a pure self-reference, a hypostasis. As a self-reference in a present, the identical subject is to be sure free with regard to the past and the future, but remains tributary of itself. The freedom of the present is not light like grace, but is a weight and a responsibility. It is articulated in a positive enchainment to one's self; the ego is irremissibly itself.

To take the relationship between the I and itself to constitute the fatality involved in a hypostasis is not to make a drama out of a tautology. Being me involves a bond' with oneself, an impossibility of undoing oneself. To be sure, a subject creates a distance from itself, but this stepping back is not a liberation. It is as though one had given more slack rope to a prisoner without untying him.

The enchainment to oneself it the impossibility of getting rid I of oneself. It is not only an enchainment to a character or to instincts, but a silent association with oneself in which a duality is discernible. To be an ego is not only to be for oneself; it is also to be with oneself. When Orestes says "Save me from myself each day!" or when Andromacus cries: "O captive, ever sad, wearisome to myself!" the relationship with oneself which these words speak of goes beyond metaphor. They do not express an opposition of two faculties in the soul, will and passion, or reason and feeling. Each of those faculties contains the ego completely. The whole theatre of Racine is in that. A character in Corneille is already a master of himself and of the universe; he is a hero. His duality is overcome by the myth to which his character conforms: that of honor or virtue. The conflict is outside of him; he participates in it by the choice he will make. But in Racine the veil of myth is torn away, the hero is overwhelmed by himself. Therein lies what is tragic in him: a subject is on the basis of himself, and is already with or against himself. While being a freedom and a beginning, a subject is the bearer of a destiny which already dominates this very freedom. There will be nothing gratuitous in him. The solitude of a subject is more than the isolation of a being or the unity of an object. It is, as it were, a dual solitude: this other than me accompanies the ego like a shadow. It is the duality of boredom, which is something different from the social existence we know in the world, to which the ego turns in fleeing its boredom; it is also something different from the relationship with the other which detaches the ego from itself. This duality awakens the nostalgia for escape, but no unknown skies, no new land can satisfy it, for we bring ourselves along in our travels.

Time and the Concept of a Freedom

But for this burden and this weight to be possible as a burden, the present must also be the conception of a freedom — a conception, and not freedom itself. One cannot derive out of the experience of servitude the proof of its contrary, but the thought of freedom would suffice to account for it. Thought by itself lacks power over being — which shows how metaphorical the expression "act of thought" is. The concept or the hope of freedom explains the despair which marks the engagement in existence in the present It comes in the very scintillation of subjectivity which pulls back from its engagement without undoing it. And this is the concept of freedom, which is only a thought: a recourse to sleep, to unconsciousness, and not an escape, the illusory divorce of the ego from its self which will end in a resumption of existence in common. Here freedom does not presuppose a nothingness to which it casts itself; it is not, as in Heidegger, an event of nihilation; it is produced in the very "plenum" of being through the ontological situation of the subject. But as there is only a hope of freedom and not a freedom of engagement, this thought knocks on the closed doors of another dimension; it has a presentiment of a

mode of existence where nothing is irrevocable, the contrary of the definitive subjectivity of the "I." And this is the order of time.

The distinction we have set up between liberation and the mere thought of liberation excludes any sort of dialectical deduction of time starting with the present The hope for an order where the enchainment to oneself involved in the present would be broken still does not of itself have the force to effect what it hopes for. There is no dialectical exorcism contained in the fact that the "I" conceives of a freedom. It is not enough to conceive of hope to unleash a future.

The Time of Redemption and the Time of Justice

But in what sense does hope aim at time even though it cannot unleash it? As it is turned to the future, is it the expectation of fortunate events which can come to pass in the future? But the expectation of fortunate events is not of itself hope. An event can appear as possible by virtue of reasons positively perceivable in the present; in that case one expects an event with more or less certainty, and there is hope only to the extent that it is uncertain. What produces the thrust of hope is the gravity of the instant in which it occurs. The irreparable is its natural atmosphere. There is hope only when hope is no longer permissible. What is irreparable in the instant of hope is that that instant is a present The future can bring consolation or compensation to a subject who suffers in the present, but the very suffering of the present remains like a cry whose echo will resound forever in the eternity of spaces. At least it is so in the conception of time which fits our life in the world, and which we shall, for reasons we shall explain, call the time of economy.

For in the world time itself is given. The effort of the present lifts off the weight of the present. It bears in itself the echo of desire, and objects are given to it "for its trouble." They do not release the torsion of the instant upon itself; they compensate for it The underlying exigencies of the trouble are nullified. The world is the possibility of wages. In the sincerity of intentions which excludes all equivocation, the ego is naive. It is disinterested in its definitive attachment to itself. Time, in the world, dries all tears; it is the forgetting of the unforgiven instant and the pain for which nothing can compensate. Everything caught up in the ego, all its anxieties for itself, the whole masquerade where its face never succeeds in stripping itself of its masks, lose their importance.

The alternation of effort with leisure, when we enjoy the fruit of efforts, makes up the time of the world. It is monotonous, for its instants are equivalent. It moves toward a Sunday, a pure leisure when the world is given. The Sunday does not sanctify the week, *but* compensates for it. The situation, or the engagement in existence, which is effort, is repressed, compensated for, and put to an end, instead of being repaired in its very present. Such is economic activity.

The economic world then includes not only our so-called material life, but also all the forms of our existence in which the exigency for salvation has been traded in, in which Esau has already sold his birthright. The world is the secular world, where the "I" accepts wages. Religious life itself, when it is understood in terms of the category of wages, is economic. Tools serve this yearning for objects as wages. They have nothing to do with ontology; they are subordinate to desire. They not only suppress disagreeable effort, but also the waiting time. In modern civilization they do not only extend the hand, so that it could get at what it does not get at of

itself; they enable it to get at it more quickly, that is, they suppress in an action the time the action has to take on. Tools suppress the intermediary times; they contract duration.

Modern tools are machines, that is, systems, arrangements, fittings, coordinations: light fixtures, telephone lines, railroad and highway networks. The multiplicity of organs is the essential characteristic of machines. Machines sum up instants. They produce speed; they echo the impatience of desire.

But this compensating time is not enough for hope. For it is not enough that tears be wiped away or death avenged; no tear is to be lost, no death be without a resurrection. Hope then is not satisfied with a time composed of separate instants given to an ego that traverses them so as to gather in the following instant, as impersonal as the first one, the wages of its pain. The true object of hope is the Messiah, or salvation.

The caress of a consoler which softly comes in our pain does not promise the end of suffering, does not announce any compensation, and in its very contact, is not concerned with what is to come with *afterwards* in economic time; it concerns the very instant of physical pain, which is then no longer condemned to itself, is transported "elsewhere" by the movement of the caress, and is freed from the vice-grip of "oneself," finds "fresh air," a dimension and a future. Or rather, it announces more than a simple future, a future where the present will have the benefit of a recall. This effect of compassion, which we in fact all know, is usually posited as an initial datum of psychology, and other things are then explained from it But in fact it is infinitely mysterious.

Pain cannot be redeemed. Just as the happiness of humanity does not justify the mystery of the individual, retribution in the future does not wipe away the pains of the present There is no justice that could make reparations for it. One should have to return to that instant, or be able to resurrect it To hope then is to hope for the reparation of the irreparable; it is to hope for the present It is generally thought that this reparation is impossible in time, and that eternity alone, where instants distinct in time are indiscernible, is the locus of salvation. This recourse to eternity, which does not seem to us indispensable, does at any rate bear witness to the impossible exigency for salvation which must concern the very instant of pain, and not only compensate for it. Does not the essence of time consist in responding to that exigency for salvation? Does not the analysis of economic time, exterior to the subject, cover over the essential structure of time by which the present is not only indemnified, but resurrected? Is not the future above all a resurrection of the present?

Time and the "I"

We believe that time is just that What is called the "next instant" is an annulment of the unimpeachable commitment to existence made in the instant; it is the resurrection of the "I." We believe that the "I" does not enter identical and unforgiven — a mere, avatar — into the following instant, where it would undergo new experience whose newness will not free it from its bond with itself — but that its death in the empty interval will have been the condition for a new birth. The "elsewhere" which opens up to I it will not only be a "change from its homeland" but an "elsewhere than in itself," which does not mean that it sank into the impersonal or the eternal. Time is not a succession of instants filing by before an I, but the response to the hope for the present, which in the present is the very expression of the "I," and is itself equivalent to the present. All the acuteness of hope in the midst of despair comes from the exigency that the very instant of despair be

redeemed. To understand the mystery of the work of time, we should start with the hope for the present, taken as a primary fact. Hope hopes for the present itself. Its martyrdom does not slip into the past, leaving us with a right to wages. At the very moment where all is lost, everything is possible.

There then is no question of denying the time of our concrete existence, constituted by a series of instants to which the "I" remains exterior. For such is the time of economic life, where the instants are equivalent, and the "I" circulates across them to link them up. There time is the renewal of the subject, but this renewal does not banish tedium; it does not free the ego from its shadow. We ask then whether the event of time cannot be lived more deeply as the resurrection of the irreplaceable instant In place of the "I" that circulates in time, we posit the "I" as the very ferment of time in the present, the dynamism of time. This dynamism is not that of dialectical progression, nor that of ecstasy, nor that of duration, where the present encroaches upon the future and consequently does not have between its being and its resurrection the indispensable interval of nothingness. The dynamism of the "I" resides in the very presence of the present, in the exigency which this presence implies. This exigency does not concern perseverance in being, nor, properly speaking, the impossible destruction of this presence, but the unraveling of the knot which is tied in it, the definitive, which its evanescence does not undo. It is an exigency for a recommencement of being, and a hope in each recommencement of its non-definitiveness. The "I" is not a being that, as a residue of a past instant, attempts a new instant It is this exigency for the non-definitive. *The "personality" of a being is its very need for time* as for a miraculous fecundity in the instant itself, by which it recommences as other. But it cannot endow itself with this alterity. The impossibility of constituting time dialectically is the impossibility of saving oneself by oneself and of saving oneself alone. The "I" is not independent of its present, cannot traverse time alone, and does not find its recompense in simply denying the present In situating what is tragic in the human in the definitiveness of the present, and in positing the function of the I as something inseparable from this tragic structure, we recognize that we are not going to find in the subject the means for its salvation. It can only come from elsewhere, while everything in the subject is here.

Time and the Other

How indeed could time arises in a solitary subject? The solitary subject cannot deny itself; it does not possess nothingness. If time is not the illusion of a movement, pawing the ground, then the absolute alterity of another instant cannot be found in the subject, who is definitively himself. This alterity comes to me only from the other. Is not sociality something more than the source of our representation of time: is it not time itself? If time is constituted by my relationship with the other, it is exterior to my instant, but it is also something else than an object given to contemplation. The dialectic of time is the very dialectic of the relationship with the other, that is, a dialogue which in turn has to be studied in terms other than those of the dialectic of the solitary subject The dialectic of the social relationship will furnish us with a set of concepts of a new kind. And the nothingness necessary to time, which the subject cannot produce, comes from the social relationship.

Traditional philosophy, and Bergson and Heidegger too, remained with the conception of a time either taken to be purely exterior to the subject, a time-object, or taken to be entirely contained in the subject. But the subject in question was always a solitary subject. The ego all alone, the monad, already had a time. The renewal which time brings with it seemed to classical philosophy to be an event which it could account for by the monad, an event of negation. It is from the indetermination of nothingness, which the instant which negates itself at the approach of the new instant ends up in, that the subject was taken to draw its freedom. Classical philosophy left aside the freedom which consists not in negating oneself, but in having one's being pardoned by the very alterity of the other. It underestimated the alterity of the other in dialogue where the other frees us, because it believed there existed a silent dialogue of the soul with itself. In the end the problem of time is subordinate to the task of bringing out the specific terms with which dialogue has to be conceived.

With Another and Facing Another

The social relationship is not initially a relationship with what goes beyond the individual, something more than the sum of individuals, in the Durkheim's sense, higher than the individual. Neither the category of quantity nor even that of quality describes the alterity of the other, who does not simply have another quality than me, but as it were bears alterity as a quality. Still less does the social order consists in the imitation of the similar. In those two conceptions of sociability what one is looking for is an ideal of fusion. One thinks that my relationship with the other tends to identify me with him by immersing me in a collective representation, a common ideal or a common action. It is the collectivity which says "we" that feels the other to be alongside of oneself, and not facing one. And a collectivity is necessarily set up around a third term which serves as intermediary, which supplies what is common in the communion. Heidegger's Miteinandersein also remains a collectivity of the with, and it is around truth that its authentic form is found. It is a collectivity formed around something common. And like in all philosophies of communion, in Heidegger sociality is completely found in the solitary subject. The analysis of Dasein, in its authentic form, is carried out in terms of solitude.

To this collectivity of comrades we contrast the I-you collectivity which precedes it. It is not a participation in a third term — intermediate person, truth, dogma, work, profession, interest, dwelling, or meal; that is, it is not a communion. It is the fearful face-to-face situation of a relationship without intermediary, without mediations. Here the interpersonal situation is not the of itself indifferent and reciprocal relationship of two interchangeable terms. The other as other is not only an alter ego. He is what I am not: he is the weak one whereas I am the strong one; he is the poor one, "the widow and the orphan." There is no greater hypocrisy that that which invented well tempered charity. Or else the other is the stranger, the enemy and the powerful one. What is essential is that he has these qualities by virtue of his very alterity. Intersubjective space is initially asymmetrical. The exteriority of the other is not simply an effect of space, which keeps separate what conceptually is identical, nor is there some difference in the concepts which would manifest itself through spatial exteriority. It is precisely inasmuch as it is

irreducible to these two notions of exteriority that social exteriority is an original form of exteriority and takes us beyond the categories of unity and multiplicity which are valid for things, that is, are valid in the world of an isolated subject, a solitary mind. Intersubjectivity is not simply the application of the category of multiplicity to the domain of the mind. It is brought about by Eros, where in the proximity of another the distance is wholly maintained, a distance whose pathos is made up of this proximity and this duality of beings. What is presented as the failure of communication in love in fact constitutes the positive character of the relationship; this absence of the other is precisely his presence qua other. The other is the neighbor — but proximity is not a degradation of, or a stage on the way to, fusion. In the reciprocity of relationships characteristics of civilization, the asymmetry of the intersubjective relationship is forgotten. The reciprocity of civilization — the kingdom of ends where each one is both end and means, a person and personnel[1] — is a levelling of the idea of fraternity, which is an outcome and not a point of departure, and refers back to everything implicated in eros. For the intermediary of a father is required in order that we enter into fraternity, and in order that I be myself the poor one, the weak and pitiful. And in order to postulate a father, who is not simply a cause or a genus, the heterogeneity of the I and the other is required. This heterogeneity and this relationship between genders, on the basis of which society and time are to be understood, brings us to the material to which another work will be devoted. To the cosmos, the world of Plato, is opposed the world of the spirit, where the implications of eros are not reducible to the logic of genera, where the I is substituted for the same and the Other [autrui] for the other. The peculiar form of the contraries and contradictions of eros has escaped Heidegger, who in his lectures tends to present the difference between the sexes as a specification of a genus. It is in eros that transcendence can be conceived as something radical, which brings to the ego caught up in being, ineluctably returning to itself, something else than this return, can free it of its shadow. To simply say that the ego leaves itself is a contradiction, since, in quitting itself the ego carries itself along — if it does not sink into the impersonal. Asymmetrical intersubjectivity is the locus of transcendence in which the subject, while preserving its subject, has the possibility of not inevitably returning to itself, the possibility of being fecund and (to anticipate what we shall examine later) having a son.

[1] In Maurice Blanchot's *Aminadab*, the description of this situation of reciprocity is pushed to the point of the loss of personal identity.

CHAPTER 5 Conclusion

To have a time and a history is to have a future and a past We do not have a present; it slips between our fingers. Yet it is in the present that we are and can have a past and a future. This paradox of the present — all and nothing — is as old as human thought. Modern philosophy has tried to resolve it by asking if indeed it is in the present that we *are* — and in contesting this evidence. The original fact would be existence where past, present and future would be caught up at once, and where the present does not have the privilege of harboring this existence. The pure present would be an abstraction: the concrete present, pregnant with all its past, already leaps toward the future; it is before and after itself. To take human existence as something having a date, placed in a present, would be to commit the gravest sin against the spirit, that of reification, and to cast it into the time of clocks made for the sun and for trains.

The concern to avoid the reification of the spirit, to give it a place of its own in being independent of the categories that are valid for things, animates, all of modern philosophy from Descartes to Heidegger. But in this concern the present, with what it suggests of the static, was included in the dynamism of time, and defined by an interplay of past and future from which it could no longer be separated, so as to be examined apart And yet human existence does contain a element, of stability; it consists in being the *subject* of its own becoming. One can say that modern philosophy has been little by little led to sacrifice for the sake of the spirituality of the subject its very subjectivity, that is, it substantiality.

It is henceforth impossible to conceive of substance as the persistence under the current of becoming of an invariable *substratum.* For then one could no longer understand the relationship between this *substratum* and becoming, a relationship which would affect its subsistence — unless that substance were situated outside of time, like a noumenon. But in that case time would cease to play an essential role in the economy of being.

How then are we to understand subjectivity without situating it outside of becoming? In returning to the fact that the instants of time do not take form out of an infinite series, in which they would appear, but that they can also be out of themselves. This way for an instant to be out of itself, to break with the past from which it comes, is the fact that it is present.

The present instant constitutes a subject which is posited both as the master of time and as involved in time. The present is the beginning of *a being.* The expressions which constantly recurred in this exposition, such as "the fact of ...," "the event of ...," "the effecting of ...," aim to convey this transmutation of a verb into a substantive, and to express beings at the instant of their hypostasis, in which while still in movement they are already substances. Such expressions are consonant with a general method of dealing with states as events. The true substantiality of a subject consists in its *substantivity:* in the fact that there is not only, anonymously, being in general, but there are beings capable of bearing names. An instant breaks the anonymity of being in general. It is the event in which, in the play of being which is enacted without players, there arise players in existence, existents having being as an attribute — an exceptional attribute, to be sure, but an attribute. In other words, the present is the very fact that there is an existent. The present introduces into existence the preeminence, the mastery and the very virility of the substantive. They are not what is suggested by the notion of freedom. Whatever be the obstacles existence presents to an existent and however powerless it may be, an existent is master of its existence, as a subject is master of its attribute. In an instant an existent dominates existence.

But the present is neither the point of departure nor the point of arrival of philosophical meditation. It is not the point of arrival; it does not express an encounter between time and the absolute, but rather the constitution of an existent, the taking up of a position by a subject. It is capable of bearing a further dialectic which time would bring about, and it calls for that dialectic. For the engagement in being on the basis of the present, which breaks, and then ties back, the thread of infinity, contains a tension and a contracting. It is an event. The evanescence of an instant which makes it able to be a pure present, to not receive its being from a past, is not the gratuitous evanescence of a game or a dream. A

subject is not free like the wind, but already has a destiny which it does not get from a past or a future, but from its present. If commitment in being thereby escapes the weight of the past (the only weight that was seen in existence), it involves a weight of its own which its evanescence does not lighten, and against which a solitary subject, who is constituted by the instant, is powerless. Time and the other are necessary for the liberation from it.

And the present is not the point of departure. This tension, this event of a position, this *stance* of an instant is not equivalent to the abstract position of the idealist ego, nor to the engagement in the world of Heidegger's *Dasein,* which always goes beyond the *hic et nunc.* It is the fact of putting oneself on the ground, in that inalienable *here* which is a base. It makes it possible to account for both the substantiality and the spirituality of a subject. In position, in the relationship which it effects with a place, in the *here,* we will find the event by which existence in general, anonymous and inexorable, opens to leave room for a private domain, an inwardness, the unconscious, sleep and oblivion, which consciousness, always wakefulness, recall and reflection, is back to back with. The event of an instant, substantivity, involves the possibility of existing at the threshold of a door behind which one can retire, and which modern thought has caught sight of behind consciousness. Consciousness is not just incomplete without its background of the unconscious, sleep and mystery. The very event of its being conscious consists in *being* by arranging for itself an escape hatch, in already drawing back as it were into those interstices in being where the Epicurean gods lurked, and in thus extracting itself from the fatality of anonymous existence. It is a scintillating light, whose very flash consists in extinguishing itself, a light which at the same time is and is not.

In insisting on the notion of taking position, we are not opposing to the *cogito,* which is essentially a thought and a cognition, some will, feeling, or care which would be more fundamental than thought On the contrary, we believe that the phenomena of light and clarity, and of freedom which is at one with them, dominate will and feeling. We think that feelings are constituted according to the "inside-outside" model and could be, to a degree rightly, taken by Descartes and Malebranche as "obscure thoughts," as "information" about the exterior which affects our body; and we think that the will in movement from the inside to the outside already presupposes the world and light. Feelings and will come after the *cogito.* It is in the perspective of the *cogito* that will and feeling have been considered from Descartes to Heidegger. One always looked for their object, the *cogitatum;* they were analyzed as acts of apprehension.

But behind the *cogito,* or rather in the fact that the *cogito* leads back to "a thinking thing," we discern a situation which precedes the scission of being into an "inside" and a "outside." Transcendence is not the fundamental movement of the ontological adventure; it is founded in the non-transcendence of position. The "obscurity" of feelings, far from being a mere negation of clarity, attests to that antecedent event.

The affirmation of the ego as a subject has led us to conceive of existence according to a different model from that of ecstacy. To take up existence is not to enter into the world. The question "what is it to exist?" truly distinguished from the question "how is the

object which exists constituted?" — the ontological problem — arises before the scission of being into an inside and an outside. Inscription in being is not an inscription in the world. The way that leads from the subject to the object, from the ego to the world, from one instant to the next, does not pass through the position in which a being is placed in existence, and which is revealed in the disquietude which his own existence awakens in man, the strangeness of the hitherto so familiar fact that he is there, the so ineluctable, so habitual, but suddenly so incomprehensible necessity of taking up that existence. There lies the true problem of man's destiny, which eludes all science and even all eschatology or theodicy. It does not consist in asking what are the "complications" which could happen to man, nor what are the acts conformable to his nature, nor even what is his place in reality. All these questions are already formulated in terms of the given cosmos of Greek rationalism, in the theater of the world, where there are places already to receive existents. The event which we have been inquiring after is antecedent to that placing. It concerns the meaning of the very fact that in Being there are beings.