HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO

Freedom as Self-determination: A More Moderate Reading of Early Sartre's Radical Freedom

Matti Niskanen
Master's Thesis
Practical Philosophy
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Helsinki

Supervisor:
Kristian Klockars

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Author: Matti Niskanen
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Abstract: The question of human freedom has been a central topic in different philosophical debates and traditions over time. Many of the different debates are either metaphysical or political in nature; they try to either answer the question, what do we mean by human freedom in more general or, on the other hand, they try to compare the freedom of differently situated individuals in certain social and political context. What has been perhaps lost in many debates is the role of the individual itself in the whole process of exercising this freedom. The role of this missing first-person perspective in these debates is what Jean-Paul Sartre tried to re-establish in his early philosophy. Sartre's early philosophy is a phenomenological ontology about human freedom and especially about how individuals experience their freedom through their choices. It is an investigation of the structures of our conscious experience and an effort to locate what might be called a self which he argues to be absolutely and radically free. Although common sense experience of our freedom often considers it as severely restricted, Sartre argues that the paradox of freedom is that there is only freedom in situation, and situation through freedom. Freedom can only appear as restricted because, according to Sartre, freedom is a choice.

This thesis presents a short overview of some of the key arguments Sartre gives in defense of his view of human freedom. His view has also gained a significant amount of criticism, and some of this criticism is also taken into examination. Although there are some issues in Sartre's early philosophy, which he himself considered as failures later in his career, and which he carried on working with in his later philosophical thought. This thesis argues that much of the criticism fail because it is based on picking out single arguments from the whole complex theory. Some of the misunderstandings and misinterpretations are also based on different understandings of the concept of freedom itself. This thesis also argues that Sartre's conception of human freedom still gives an important individual perspective to the whole discussion of human freedom in philosophy. It is not a comprehensive account, as Sartre himself points out, but "the technical and philosophical concept of freedom". It is a descriptive account of how we experience freedom and how this experience is made possible by the ontological structures of the self. Other accounts and perspectives of human freedom are obviously possible.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) presents his hyperbolic argument for absolute freedom of human being in a magnum opus of his early philosophy, *Being and Nothingness* (1992), [orig. *L'Être et le Néant* (1943)]. According to Sartre, we are absolutely and complitely free, condemned to be free, and that there is no difference between ”being of a man and his *being-free”,* freedom and ”human reality” cannot be distinguished (Sartre 1992, 60). Though being absolute, for Sartre, freedom is never restrictionless and it always encounters resistance. This is also what he calls ”the paradox of freedom” (ibid., 629); freedom is by nature ambiguous and it is always realized in situation. ”I am absolutely free and absolutely responsible for my situation. But I am never free except *in situation.*” (ibid., 653)[1].

Sartre's approach examining the question of human being and freedom is ontological concerning the structure of human being, and phenomenological, in how it is experienced. The way Sartre addresses the question and explains his arguments is also descriptive, avoiding normative judgements of any kind. This differs from more traditional ways of defining freedom e.g. in social and political philosophy, in which freedom is often concidered as a social concept and particularily connected to obtaining and achieving a desired goal. Sartre himself denies the importance of obtaining a desired end to freedom, and according to his view, to be free is to choose freely and take some action based on this choice. We are always free to choose because of the nature of our consciousness being at distance of its objects and consciousness also being outside the causally deterministic laws of nature.

Sartre divides his theory of human freedom into two different conceps; *ontological freedom* [freedom to chooce] and *practical freedom* [freedom to obtain][2]. The former is

[1] *L'Être et le Néant,* 554. The concept of situation means consciosnesses way of understanding the facticity as somehow meaningful. Situation is comprised of both facticity and how the for-itself accepts and acts upon this facticity. Facticity and situation are considered more carefully in Chapter 3.

[2] *Autonomy of choice* and *freedom to obtain* as concepts used, by Sartre, are roughly the same used in social and political philosophy as *freedom of will* and *freedom of action.*

”the technical and philosophical concept of freedom” and the latter, in contrast, ”the empirical and popular concept of ’freedom’”; ontological freedom means only the autonomy of choice. Practical freedom, on the other hand, means freedom to obtain chosen ends (Sartre 1992, 621-624)[3]. Ontological freedom is the free consciousness making autonomous choices; and practical freedom, in contrast, is actually referred to as restrictions to freedom, by Sartre. The paradox of freedom is that freedom is absolute in reference to choosing, and restricted when it comes to obtaining desired ends.

A short review and contextualization of Sartre’s philosophy is in place, in order, to locate it within the philosophical literature and debate. Sartre’s work includes both works of literature and philosophical works, and his literary works are highly infuenced by his philosophical concerns. He probably also concidered himself more a writer than a philosopher. Both, literature and philosophy, however developed hand in hand throughout his career. The literary work is neglected in this thesis though and the concentration is in his relevant philosophical work, and more specifically in the philosophical contribution of *Being and Nothingness.* Sartre’s thinking and writing went through different phases and his philosophical writings can be divided quite conveviently into three main periods; the phenomenological period, the existential period and the Marxist period. The first two phases serve as the philosophical focus of the work in hand and the Marxist period is left for the most part untouched, althougt there is a separate debate whether Sartre departed from his early philosophy in his Marxist period or not.

The first period can be called the phenomenological period, in which the writings were, under the influence of Husserl, phenomenological in orientatrion. The main works of the period *The Trascendence of the Ego* (1936), *The Imagination* (1936), *The Emotions: Outline of A Theory* (1939) and *The Imaginary* (1940) form the basis of his phenomenological thought also present in the later periods. The works dealt with themes like the nature of consciosness, self-awareness and the nature of the self, and psychology,

[3] In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre is mainly using freedom to obtain, but summarizes it as equivalent with the empirical and popular concept of freedom to ”the ability to obtain the ends chosen” and ”which has been produced by historical, political, and moral circumstances” (Sartre 1992, 621-622). All the concepts mentioned above are used in the paper interchangeably for contextual reasons and because of particular references used in the context.

regarcing the question of human beings' peculiar ability to imagine and put themselves in some kind of relation to things, which 'don't exist'.

The second period is what can be called Sartre's existential period, a period during which he wrote the main work of his early philosophical work *Being and Nothingness* (orig. 1943). The work is a study of the question of what it is to be human, and the method used by Sartre is what he calls phenomenological ontology or, put otherwise, an examination of the structures of our conscious experience. The other philosophically important work of the period is *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), originally a lecture held by Sartre in Paris, in order, to correct some misconceptions about his earlier thought. Also worth mentioning is essay *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946), an essay that amounts to a kind of case study of self-deception or "bad faith" as Sartre calls the phenomenon.

In the last period, Sartre moved to a more social approach concerning the question of human being and especially, in reference, to the question of the Other's infuence and relation to the for-itself. This period is often referred as a Marxist period, but Sartre refused to be called Marxist, for the reason, that he could not accept Marxist materialism as a base for human consciousness[4]. The most influential work of this last period is *Critique of Dialectical Reason* vol. 1 (1960), the second volume was published only posthumuosly (1985). Many interpretations have taken place whether Sartre repudiated in *Critique* from his earlier thought presented in *Being and Nothingness* or whether *Critique* was just a continuation of the thought that was left unfinished in his early thought. The disagreement on this is worthy of notice but will not be taken into examination in this thesis. The emphasis of the examination in the thesis is also mostly in early Sartre (the first two periods) and especially in *Being and Nothingness* and the later Sartre is referred only anecdotally.

The aspiration to write about Sartre's conception of human freedom is manifold. Many other concepts of freedom in philosophy are either political and social concepts or concepts cropped into short analytical phrases which are wholly negative. Sartre's effort is to present a view of human freedom which puts the individual back in the center of

[4] Marx argued that "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness." Marx (1977, preface) *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (orig. 1859). Progress Publishers, Moscow.

one's activities and he insists that we experience freedom directly as situated in the world. Sartre's philosophy of individual freedom is not only metaphysical analysis of the concept of freedom. It is an investigation of how we experience the world outside of us meaningful, and about the structures of the self and our conscious experience. And more precicely, an examination of the structure of this self, which Sartre argues to be free.

1.1 Concepts, Translations and Structure

The aim of this thesis is to desribe Sartre's conception of freedom in somewhat blunt manner considering the vast nature of the topic itself and the amount of pages available for this description. Sartre's conception of human freedom has also been widely criticized from many different perspectives; to be contradictory, too radical, or not leaving much room for individual freedom in the first place. Some of this criticism is examined throughout the thesis and the the validity of the critique is evaluated and analysed. The concepts used in the thesis, originating from Sartre, are being explained and analysed in the order they first appear in the text. This choice is an effort to avoid writing a whole separate chapter about the concepts used alone and to use them in a context in which also Sartre himself presents them with his numerous case-studies, often also called as vignettes (e.g. the waiter, the gambler, the mountain walker, Pierre in a Café). The concepts used in English are mainly equivalent with the ones used in translations of Sartre's original works, and if not, it will be notified at least in the footnote. The original French concepts used by Sartre are also presented in cases of their originality and their importance to the question in hand.

The structure of the thesis follows approximately the same path as does *Being and Nothingness.* It starts with more abtract ontological argumentation and progresses to more concrete and particular towards the end. Chapter 2 begins with describing Sartre's conception of the structures of the self and the structures of conscious experience, which serves as a starting point in understanding his arguments for freedom of consciousness. Chapter 3 presents Sartre's main arguments for freedom to choose, restrictions to freedom and some selected critique of Sartre's conception. In Chapter 4, some additional arguments on are examined, concerning the actual realization or unrealization of human freedom. Concluding remarks and contemplation finalises the thesis in Chapter 5.

2. SARTRE'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

2.1 Modalities of Being

Sartre's choice of concepts is of often quite obscure when talking about being divided into being *in-itself* , being *for-itself* and being *for-others,* which together form a synthetic unity, a unity which the for-itself constantly escapes from (Sartre 1992, 99; 103; 564). Before going to Sartre's conception of the essential role of consciousness for one's freedom, a closer look into these concepts is necessary. The ontological structures of the self cover the first two parts of *Being and Nothingness* and are probably also the most opaque parts of his philosophy. Different modalities of being are however a necessary part of understanding the ontological structure of the self, and then also his argument for the freedom of consciousness.

2.1.1 Being In-itself

Being in-itself [fr. *l'être en-soi*] can be concidered as non-conscious empirical and historical being which is, in temporal terms, always in present[5]. It is a plenitude, it is what it is, but as a phenomenon it is also transphenomenal. Although the being is coextensive with its own appearance, it is not limited to it; it always overflows our knowledge of it. What this overflowing means is that our experience of the object goes always beyond of just a series of appearances which manifest it. (Sartre 1992, 3). Being is, according to Sartre, neither passivity nor activity because both designate human conduct, or instruments of this conduct. Concerning activity then, *being* is prior to means or an end. And it must *be,* in order, to be passive. Being is also immanent in a way that it can not realize, affirm or negate itself and it can not be in connection with itself. ”*Being is itself”* (Ibid., 27). Being is ”filled with itself” and forbidden from all transition, becoming or anything that can be called as 'not yet existing'. It is full positivity and knows no otherness. *”Being is what it is”* (ibid., 28-29). The third character of the in-itself is its contingency; it can not be deriverd from another existent or possibility because what is possible is a structure of the for-itself. ”*Being-in-itself is”* (Ibid., 29). As Rae presents a sophisticated and compressed description of Sartre's in-itself by stating that the ontological category of being in-itself ”describes the ontological characteristics a

[5] Actually, this present is the precence of the for-itself to being-in-itself (Sartre 1992, 121).

particular being has: namely, that particular being is ontologically solid, undifferentiated, passive, and lacks the capacity for self-nihilation" (Rae 2011, 24). In addition to the three charasteristics mentioned above, what is important to note is that the in-itself, according to Sartre, has "ontological priority" over the for-itself (Sartre 1992, 622-623)[6]. [Human] being has then, according to Sartre, a material base, but it is not causally deterministic because of the nature of consciousness. This nature of consciousness will be addressed in more detail repeatedly throughout the thesis.

2.1.2 Being For-itself

Being for-itself [fr. *l'être pour-soi*], on the other hand, is conscious being that e.g. desires, nihilates, imagines and wants, gives meaning to objects of consciousness, and sets goals and projects. The for-itself is founded in the facticity of the in-itself through the nihilating act of consciousness, and this in-itself is an object of consciousness as well as all other objects external to consciousness.[7] (Sartre 1992, Part Two)

The being-for-itself is also temporally different to being-in-itself; the for-itself disperses its being in all three temporal dimensions, [past, present, future], by nihilating itself (Sartre 1992, 202). The past is a structure of the for-itself, for it exists only as a nihilating surpassing; the for-itself is a nihilated for-itself in the past. Secondly, the for-itself projects itself into future and apprehends itself as a lack, as something 'not-yet'. The for-itself is then "precence to being" between the nihilated past and the future 'not-yet' present. (ibid., 197-202)

As described above, the two fundamental concepts of Sartre's phenomenolocical ontology divide being into conscious and non-conscious being. The relationship between consciousness and the for-itself [or being-for-itself] though is not explicily pronounced, by Sartre, and he uses both terms interchangeably in different contexts. According to Barnes (1992, 17), the for-itself is a being that supports the nihilating activity of consciousness, and that consciousness is associated with the realization of the lack of being, which forces the for-itself to make itself be. The relation between the two is then quite dubious, but what may be argued is that they necessarely do not exist separately

[6] This ontological priority of the in-itself over the for-itself will become more clear in Chapters 3 and 4.

[7] More about the nihilating act in next chapter and about facticity in Chaprer 3.

from each other. The next chapter desrcibes the role of consciousness in relation to its objects, and why this relation is essential for Sartre's argument for ontological freedom of consciousness and, following that, for freedom to choose.

2.1.3 Being For-others

The first two modalities are presented as fundamental modalities of being in Sartre's ontology. The being in-itself, which is full positivity, lacks consciousness itself, and can be taken as an object and given meaning only by consciousness, which are acts of the for-itself. The self's being as in-itself is also embodied, as the in-itself is the way and through which the for-itself exists and operates. The for-itself is conscious being which is always based on the ontological priority of the in-itself; the for-itself is always supported and maintainded by its objets. There is also a third modality of being, a modality, which Sartre calls being for-others; the for-itself's relation to other people (Sartre 1992, Part Three).

The all three modalities are then different ways of being of one and the same self and all three modalities are dependent on each others existence. Here is what Sartre says about this multifaceted relationship: ”Thus the nature of my body”, as being in-itself, ”refers me to the existence of others and to my being-for-others.” (1992, 298); the for-itself's relation to the other is ”a perpetual game of escape from the for-itself to the for-others and from the for-others to the for-itself.” (ibid., 100); and that ”the presence of the for-itself as for-others is even the necessary condition for the constitution of the for-itself as such.” (ibid.,146).

Each modality, and the relations between all three, hopefully become clearer when taken under examination later throughout the thesis. At this point, it is enough to have a conceptual understanding of what Sartre means by them with further contemplation of them in mind. Consciousness and its relation to the for-itself is examined in the next chapter. The other as a limitation, and as a necessary part of the for-itself's freedom, is considered in Chapter 3.2.3.

2.2 Consciousness

Sartre's argument for ontological freedom is based on his conception of freedom of consciousness, which arises in a connection between consciousness and negativity;

through its power for nihilating acts, and its power of withdrawing from its objects and being at distance to them (Sartre 1992, 58). Whereas objects of consciousness represent full positivity[8], consciousness itself is pure nothingness, temporally between *what is* and that is *not yet*. a separation also referred in the title of *Being and Nothingness.*

The argument for the absolute freedom of consciousness is based on two premises concerning the nature of consciousness. At first, *consciousness is not what it is*; consciousness is not a substance or an ego, and it is also always independent and separate from its objects. Secondly, *consciousness is what it is not*; consciousness is characterized by its negating activities resulting from its nihilating power, [i.e. imagining, questioning, denying, doubting] (Sartre 1992, 66). The nihilating power of consciousness is then also something which enables the for-itself to emerge as a ”real subjectivity”[9], condemned to be free. I will come to Sartre’s conception of the self later, after looking more closely to the two arguments concerning the nature of consciousness.

The first of the two seemingly paradoxical arguments, *consciousness is not what it is,* is an argument according to which all the objects of consciousness are external to it. This externality of its objects, whether mental or physical, means also, according to Sartre, emptiness of the consciousness itself. Consciousness is not a container of things because all its objects are necessarely outside of it. Sartre’s conception of consciousness is a radical interpretation of Husserl’s *doctrine of intentionality*; consciousness is necessarely consciousness of something; and consciousness is always directional towards some object other than itself; this is what Sartre calls *the ontological proof.* (Sartre 1992, 21-22) By being always directed at somehing other than itself, consciousness is also intentional. It should not be viewed as confronting or assimilating other things though, but by being intentional, consciousness reveals their possibility (Detmer 1988, 8-9).

Sartre departs from Cartesian cogito by arguing in favour of priority of existence before substance, and from Husserl, in priority of existence before essence. According to Sartre, Cartesian cogito assumes some kind of substance or a ’thing’ in consciousness, and he

[8] Full positivity is the in-itself’s being what it is. It ”knows no otherness” and can be negated only by for-itself (Sartre 1992, 37).

[9] Real subjectivity refers to subjectivity of consciousness as positioned, not to subjectivity of an ego or an ”I”. (Sartre 1992, 22)

also rejects Husserl's trancendental ego, in which an ego stands 'behind' all conscious acts and would be then an 'inhabitant' of consciousness. After rejecting both Cartesian cogito and Husserlian trancendental ego, Sartre defines the role of the ego, or "I" followingly; because consciousness is always outside and at distance of its object, consciousness is not the ego, or the ego is not an inhabitant of consciousness (Sartre 1992, 156). Ego is rather only a unity of the psychic residue of earlier experiences, and consciousness makes this unity possible (Barnes 1992, 28). For Sartre, then, ego is an object in the world just as any other object of consciousness; it is "*in the world"* and appears to us only in the world of reflection (Sartre 1992, xi). The relevance of Sartre's conception of consciousness as 'empty' of all content in reference to the question of absolute freedom, is to argue that there is no predetermined human nature or an ego which would determinine or limit one's freedom to choose in a situation. According to Sartre, "the Ego does not belong to the domain of the for-itself" and that "as a unifying pole of *Erlebnisse* the Ego is in-itself, not for-itself." and then an object of consciousness as any other object. Ego appears to consciousness as a transcendent in-itself, "as an existent in the human world", not as something of the nature of consciousness (Ibid., 155-156)[10].

Objects of consciousness, according to Sartre, are also transphenomenal and the phenomenon of being requires this transphenomenality. This means that being is never limited to the appearance we have of it, "it surpasses our knowledge which we have of it and provides the basis for such knowledge" (Sartre, 1992, 9). The appearing being, then, does not exist only in so far it appears, but there is always more to it. And this, for Sartre, is an indication of a for-itself; there is always a new side to be discovered and the object always appears to us differently. Transphenomenality of the object then points to their independent real existence (Detmer 2009, 53).

Whether Sartre is right in denying the Cartesian substance in consciousness, or the Husserlian essence, is too big of a question to address here. For purposes of the thesis later on it is enough to view Sartre's conception of consciusness as empty, always intentional towards some object other than itself; towards an object that keeps on giving new appearances of itself. As already mentioned, *consciousness is what it is not,* refers to its negative activities by its power to nihilating behaviour. According to Sartre, "nihilation is precisely the being of freedom"; nihilation is a withdrawal from a state of affairs as it

[10] Translation of German *Erlebnisse* = experiences.

is, by isolating the current state and concidering it in light of an end, an end, which is a non-being [or not-yet existing] (Sartre 1992, 571). There must be a being then, by which nothingness comes to things; and this, for Sartre, is consciousness. Consciousness reveals this nothingness, the not-yet existing. This nothingness is not something missing from the object of consciousness, [because the object as an in-itself just is], but something posited by consciousness as a lack or as experience of absence (ibid., 279). To phrase this differently − if consciousness were unable to imagine its objects differently without any possibilities, it would lose itself to a level of perception and it would be unable to of give meaning and value to it. It would, then, also lack the ability for reasons-responsive action. Sartre describes the relationship between the for-itself, the in-itself, consciousness and the nihilating act followingly; but also quite vaguely:

> ”The for-itself is the in-itself losing itself as in-itself in order to found itself as consciousness. Thus consciousness holds within itself its own being-as-consciousness, and since it is its own nihilation, it can never refer only to itself; but that which is annihilated in consciousness−though we cannot call it the foundation of consciousness−is the contingent in-itself.” (Sartre 1992, 130)

Trying to put this in other words would be something like this. When the for-itself nihilates itself as not being the object it is consciousness of, it interprets the object as meaningful, as something not-yet existing and useful in reference to the for-itself’s ends. This is the surpassing of the for-itself into the future and actually an effort to build up the for-itself. And this building up of the for-itself is the difference between what already is and is not-yet. It is perpetual surpassing of what just is, and this surpassing can be done only in reference to objects of consciousness, by consciousness giving meaning to its objects.

Because consciousness is always consciousness of something and, more precisely, something other than itself, consciousness is based on this facticity [of its objects], but not determined by it. Consciousness is based on facticity, but it surpasses this facticity by giving it a meaning in reference to something not-yet existing. Two conclusions result:

> ” (1) No factual state whatever it may be … is capable by itself of motivating any act whatsoever. For an action is a projection of the for-itself toward what is not, and what is can in no way determine by itself what is not.

> (2) No factual state can determine consciousness to apprehend it as a *négatité* or as a lack." (Sartre 1992, 562)

The above is what is called Sartre's *trancendental argument* against determinism, and which concludes that consciousness cannot be wholly determined by being in the mode of in-itself; and consequently, consciousness "cannot be necessitated by any factual state of affairs" (Eshleman 2011, 32). To phrase the two points above differently, one is and remains free in a given situation in the way that any factual state is unable to motivate one to act in any way. Reasons for action depend on how one understands or gives meaning to the factual state one is in, and one does this in reference to ends which one considers desirable. Secondly, factual states are unable to posit meanings to consciousness. This is because giving meaning is an act of consciousness and is done with respect to ends one considers desirable. Sartre himself goes even further arguing that there is a factual state of affairs only "by means of the nihilating power of the for-itself" (Sartre 1992, 564). This is not to deny the reality of objects of consciousness as they are (as in percieving an object), or that their being is somehow dependent or created by consciousness. As mentioned earlier, in-itself is logically prior to for-itself. It is rather to say that the objects are understood as meaningful from the point of view of a situated consciousness. And, as Wilkerson (2010, 209) interprets Sartre, consciousness is the source for our interpretation and the meaning we give to the world, not that the world determines it. Consciousness of the situatedness of the for-itself is, for Sartre, not only the for-itself's situation in relation to spatio-temporal objects but rather, more generally, the for-itself is situated in what he calls "human space" (Sartre 1992, 373). In this human space one is situated as a European in relation to Asians, as an old person in relation to young, as a bourgeois in relation to workers. Sartre seems to avoid the claims of a solipsisistic view of the self then because he offers multiple explanations of how the for-itself is a *situated* consciousness and socially related to other beings and objects of consciousness.[11]

Wilkerson (2010) also presents critique against Sartre's conception of the ontological freedom of consciousness, previously also argued by Merleau-Ponty. According to it, Sartre's cannot adequately account the temporality, or time, in his conception of

[11] Questions concerning the role of social context and the Other are addressed in more detail in Chapter 3.2.3.

consciousness because ”Consciousness of facticity and experience requires an acquisition that Sartre cannot explain” (ibid., 217). The point of the critique is that Sartre does not acknowledge all the presuppositions necessary for consciousness to apprehend and give meaning to its objects. These background conditions are a necessary part of the experience through which I make judgments of the objects and their meaning. The critique has at least a partial force because Sartre’s point is exactly in consciousness as free in the present, and the presuppositions which I have unarguably have, at least, some influence on the meaning how I experience different objects which I am conscious of. What is missing in the critique, however, is an argument about how these presuppositions could determine or motivate situated consciousness. But, if Sartre is right in claiming the consciousness being empty of all content, ”there is never a motive in consciousness; motives are only for consciousness.” (Sartre 1992, 71). What is the difference then, whether motives are in or for consciousness? What Sartre means by this, hopefully, comes clearer when examining what he means by the abilily of consciouness for nihilating act, and by reflective consciousness.

2.2.1 Nihilation, Imagination and Temporality

What is this nothingness that Sartre is talking about, and how does the act of nihilation reveal this experience nothingness which, according to Sartre, is ”in the heart of being”? (Sartre 1992, 56) Sartre has often been concidered as arguing in favour of some form of all-encompassing nihilism, denying the possibility of knowledge, morality and value. This is a common misinterpretation though. All he is arguing is, that because of the intentionality of consciousness, we experience the object of consciousness as nothingness that is ”not-yet”. Consciousness is characterized by its negative activities, such as imagining, doubting, questioning, denying, and though the act of nihilation reveals nothingness because it is intentional; it reveals being that it intends. As Sartre presents it; ”the nothingness which is made-to-be by the in-itself is not a simple emptiness devoid of meaning. The meaning of the nothingness of the nihilation is to-be-made-to-be, in order, to found being.” (Ibid., 788). Consciousness as empty of all content is its own nothingness and reveals the nothingness of its objects by intending these objects. This means that, by intending, consciousness revelas the meaning of its object as temporal; intended as something ”not yet”. Nothingess then also reveals possibility, a possibility of a future world to be [an expectation] − and by this future possible, also present gets its meaning as a meaningful totality of the present (Ibid., 251). The conceptual relation of *possibility*

to *meaning* is that they cannot be understood separately from each other. Meaning cannot be understood separated from possibility and on the other hand, possibility cannot be understood as a function of the being of actuality, as a function of the being in-itself. An ontological account of meaning requires an account of nothingness and non-being, and so also negation (Crowell 2012, 208).

A famous example highlighting the experience of nothingness, and the intentional consciousness, is presented, by Sartre, in a form of a case example of Pierre in a café[12]. The following lengthy quote gives a view of the basics of the situation:

> ”I have an appointment with Pierre at four o'clock. I arrive at the cafe a quarter of an hour late. Pierre is always punctual. Will he have waited for me? I look at the room, the patrons, and I say, "He is not here." Is there an intuition of Pierre's absence, or does negation indeed enter in only with judgment? At first sight it seems absurd to speak here of intuition since to be exact there could not be an intuition of nothing and since the absence of Pierre is this nothing. Popular consciousness, however, bears witness to this intuition. Do we not say, for example, "I suddenly saw that he was not there." Is this just a matter of misplacing the negation?” (Sartre 1992, 40-41)

The situation in the café is meant to highlight many aspects and abilities of our consciousness, and how we experience and create the world as meaningful. First of all, the intentional act of consciousness of looking for Pierre in a café, and more specifically the project of finding Pierre, sets up a situation in which all objectively positive features of the room, [such as tables, chairs, smoky atmosphere and sounds of voices], are experienced as ”not Pierre” rather than as objects. The intention of looking for Pierre, as a project, is the reason for the whole experience of tis experience of absence in the situation, not any of the objective features of the situation. As Sartre explains this; ”No one object, no group of objects is especially designed to be organized as specifically either ground or figure; all depends on the direction of my attention.” (Sartre 1992, 41).

Intentional consciousness then, in a form of projects, comprises the situation into ”my view” of the totality of the situation and how I experience it. It also reveals nothingness,

[12] Pierre in a café is character used in many examples Sartre presents in *Being and Nothingness,* but Pierre appears already for example in *The Imaginary.*

which is not nihilistic lack of meaning of all things, but rather something intended and then experienced as lacked, or not yet present. Secondly, Pierre's absence as a negative value, and as a feature of the world, is different in character in comparison to ”Wellington is not in this café, Paul Valéry is no longer here, *etc*.” (Sartre 1992, 42), because their ”absence does not order Sartre's perception of the café in the way that Pierre's absence does.” (Butler 2015, 99). What the former means is that it is not only the project that establishes the meaning of the situation as Pierre's absence, but also that the objects present in the situation lack the efficacy to ascribe meaning to the situation. The situation is also a result of what Sartre calls ”double nihilation” (1992, 42); at first, Pierre is expected in the cafe, just in order to his absence being affirmed a moment later. Both acts, the expectation and the affirmation of absence, are both dependent on the project established by the intentional consciousness.

Sartre's intending Pierre in the café, expecting him to be there and him perceiving Pierre present or absent, are obviously quite different forms of conscious activities and calls for a clarification of their differences. The difference between percieving and imagining is at great importance in understanding Sartre's conception of consciousness, as well as its capabilities and acts. Imagination as a power of consciousness, and as distinct from percieving, is something Sartre had already examined earlier in *The Imaginary* (2010, orig. 1940) before *Being and Nothingness*. Imagination as a power of consciousness is also crucial for Sartre's conception of freedom of consciousness, because imagination plays a pivotal role in between determined and different possible futures; and more specifically a future one can call ”my future”. The ability to imagine different possible futures is arguably important also for reasons-responsive action, and then also precondition for intentionality and reasons-responsive choice.[13]

In *The Imaginary* Sartre take up a task of defining consciousness and its ability to imagine by positing questions about the essence of consciousness. He asks; “what are the characteristics that can be attributed to consciousness on the basis of the fact that it is consciousness capable of imagining?”; and “can we conceive of a consciousness that would never imagine and that would be entirely absorbed in its intuitions of the real” — “or rather, as soon as we posit a consciousness, must it be posited as always able to imagine?” (2010, 179). According to Sartre, the problem can be grasped only from a

[13] More about the for-itself and reasons-responsiveness in Poellner (2012, 225-230).

phenomenological point of view. And he answers these questions by stating that "imagination is not an empirical power added to consciousness but is the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom" (ibid., 186). A more specific explanation goes as follows.

At first, "The thesis of imaging consciousness is radically different from the thesis of a realizing consciousness", which means that "the type of existence of the imaged object *in so far it is imaged* differs in nature from the type of existence of the object grasped as real." (Sartre 2010, 180). Sartre clearly makes a sharp distinction between perceiving and imagining a certain object, and the distinction is that the image involves absence, a certain nothingness to it (Sartre 1992, 562; 2010, 180). Image is also presented "as to some degree under the free control of consciousness, unlike the perceived object, which resists such control" (Detmer 1986, 26-27). If this would not be so, and images were produced by strict causality of perception, the two would be indistinguishable from each other. And more strictly, as Sartre argues, "the imaging act is the inverse of the realizing act" (2010, 181), because in perception the object is passively given by the world, whereas in the imaging act the object is spontaneously generated. It is by the imaging act then that consciousness always transcends what can be grasped in perception of the given situation. The essential condition for consciousness to imagine is that "it must have the possibility of positing a thesis of irreality" (Ibid., 182). Again, about the case of Sartre looking for his frien Pierre in the café; the café's objective features are not the ones Sartre notices and they "serve only to denominate the absence of this friend for whom he is searching", and all the objective features of the room are "immediately encountered as 'not Pierre' rather than as objects" (Butler 2015, 99). Sartre's intention, a project of finding Pierre, is the way the whole situation, and the objects he perceives in the café, get their meaning. The objects perceived are relative to the project of finding Pierre. Following this, Sartre argues that "in perception there is always the construction of a figure on a ground. No one object, no group of objects is especially designed to be organized as specifically either ground or figure, all depends on the direction of my attention" (Sartre 1992, 41). In short, the objects in a situation are inefficient in respect to ones freely chosen projects and, quite the opposite, they are experienced and given value and meaning through the project[14].

[14] Sartre's conception of *a project* and *the fundamental project* is examined more in Chapter 3.

Secondly, the connection of the irreal to real needs an explanation. Sartre argues that even if there is not any specific image produced at present, every apprehension of the real tends to end up with the production of the irreal objects (something not-yet), because it is a free nihilation of the world done *from a particular point of view*. Reciprocally, ”an image, being a negation of the world from a particular point of view, can appear only *on the ground of the world* and in connection with the ground.” (Sartre 2010, 185). There is a clear difference between imagining and *dreaming* in Sartre’s view; in imagining, I imagine the world differently on the ground where I am situated, but I can only dream of what it would be like to be the President of Ukraine, to be an Alaskan inuit or to live in The Shire, the land of hobbits. By imagining[15], consciousness posits the world as somehow different *in a situation* and *from a particular point of view*.[16] ”Being-in-the-world” is then a necessary condition of imagination; consciousness lives its relation to the real *situation,* and surpasses it by positing the irreal (Ibid., 186).

The imagining consciousness then, by positing the irreal in a situation it is in, gives rise to what is *possible*. A closer look into the concept is needed, in order, to understand what Sartre actually means by *possible,* and what could be called *my* possibilities. Here is what he writes:

> “The possibility which I make my concrete possibility can appear as my possibility only by raising itself on the basis of the totality of the logical possibilities which the situation allows. But these rejected possibles in turn have no other being than their "sustained-being;" it is I who sustain them in being, and inversely, their present non-being is an "ought-not-to-be-sustained." No external cause will remove them.“. (Sartre 1992, 67)

My possibilities arise in a situation based on logical possibilities, but my possibilities cannot be redused to only logical possibilities. At the same time, imagination makes possible the positing of the irreal. This entails that what is possible is something in between a predetermined future and a future choice of action which is unconditioned, but not random (Eshleman 2011, 34). Sartre also makes a conceptual differentiation between possibility and probability, which serves to highlight the importance of the

[15] Sartre uses imaging consciousness and imagining consciousness interchangeably.

[16] More about *situation* in Chapter 3.2.1.

phenomenological perspective he uses. In short, the problem of randomness often results from methods used when employing a third-person perspective on an essentially first-person experience; an experience which dependent upon self-awareness. Secondly, “randomness does not apply to individual actions, but only to groups of actions and to life taken as a whole” (ibid., 36), which means that an individual action or a choice appears random only in a larger context, and this ’random’ choice is the way people modify and organize multiple possibilities into a particular way of life. Possibility arises then as the for-itself is capable of reflecting nihilating act of its given reality. This nihilating act itself, the witdrawal from a situation, is not an act of solipsism but an act of withdrawal in relation to it, to create one’s relation in fererence to it and, in order, to determine oneself in its presence (Sartre 1992, 506). The possible, distinguished from the probable, will be rerurned to many times subsequently in the thesis.

2.2.2 Reflection and the Self

According to Sartre, ”Reflection is the for-itself conscious *of* itself” (1992, 212); but if reflection is first concieved as ”an autonomous consciousness” it is then impossible ”to reunite it later with the consciousness reflected-on” (1992, 213). Reflection is also knowledge is sense that one is aware there being consciousness of the object. This implies, not only, that the object of consciousness must exists, but also, ”a separation in being” because ”to the extent that reflection is *knowledge*, the reflected-on must be the object for the reflective” (Ibid.). But, in terms of experience, it seems inandequate only to know that there is consciosness of an object, because our experience of an object has also a phenomenal quality of ”what is it like” or ”how it feels” to have a certain experience[17]. Knowledge is then not an adequate link between reflection and the reflected-on, but it is recognition; ”Reflection is a recognition rather than knowledge. It implies as the original motivation of the recovery a pre-reflective comprehension of what it wishes to recover.” (Ibid., 219). Sartre summarizes the relation between the two by stating that: ”the reflected-on is an appearance for the reflective without thereby ceasing to be witness (of) itself, and the reflective is witness of the reflected-on without thereby ceasing to be an appearance to itself” (Ibid., 214). Reflection is the way for-

[17] The question about this ”what is it likeness” is addressed for example in a well known paper by Thoman Nagel, which, among other things, examines the phenomenological features of subjective experience. Nagel (1974), “What is it like to be a bat?”. *Philosophical Review*, 83(4), 435–50.

itself exist, but Sartre distinguishes between different types of reflection, and this plays an important part in, not only undestanding his conception of the relation between consciousness and the object consciousness, but also in understanding his conception of the structures of the self and first-person experience. The important concepts distinguished are firstly pre-reflective and reflective consciousness; and secondly, impure and pure reflection.

Pre-reflective cosciousness can be described as the consciousness of our everyday activities. According to Sartre, pre-reflective consciousness also ”defines the very being of consciousness” (1992, 123). It is consciousness of objects in the world when we write a book, run to catch a bus or play tennis. Pre-reflective consciousness is also non-positional self-consciousness, because every pre-reflective consciousness is also non-positional consciosness of itself (Sartre 1991, 45[18]). In pre-reflective mode of consciousness consciousness is postitionally aware of its object and non-positionally aware of itself (Crowell 2012, 207), in which, by the non-positional is meant that pre-reflective consciousness does not define itself in relation to its objects (Sartre 1992, 17). It is rather that prereflective consciousness is what makes reflection possible; pre-reflective consciousness then ”accompanies all forms of reflection” (Rae 2011, 14), or, according to Sartre (1992, 13) ”renders the reflection possible”. In pre-reflective level of conscious experience there is neither Ego nor I present, and the Ego is only constituted by and appears through reflective consciousness (Sartre 1991, 36).

In *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre presents an example of pre-reflective and non-positionally self-aware consciousness; in being late and running after a streetcar:

> ”There is consciousness of the streetcar-having-to-be-overtaken, etc., and non-positional consciousness of consciousness. In fact, I am then plunged into the world of objects; it is they which constitute the unity of my consciousnesses; it is they which present themselves with values, with attractive and repellant qualities— but me, I have disappeared; I have annihilated myself. There is no place for me on this level. And this is not a matter of chance, due to a momentary

[18] Sartre (1991). *The Transcendence of the Ego* (trans. F. Williams & R. Kirkpatrick). Hill and Wang.

> lapse of attention, but happens because of the very structure of consciousness." (1991, 49)

The experience of an object directly in pre-reflective level, as Sartre explains in the quote above, is similar in affective mental states such as love, hate and attraction (1992, 772). The experience of an object is a direct experience of attraction in presence of an object, but in which, the experience of attraction is not reducible to the properties or the 'essense' of the object, or anything that might be called as a content in consciousness as an ideal correlate of attractive. The value in pre-reflective experience comes, as a result, of a reflective act of consciousness. More precisely, the direct pre-reflective experience is taken as the object of reflection by the reflective consciousness; as a result, two things are accomplished by reflective consciousness. At first, the experience reflected on "is posited in its nature as lack, and value is disengaged as the out-of-reach meaning of what is lacked". Secondly, reflective consciousness can not arise "without at the same moment disclosing values". According to Sartre, this means also that "I remain free in my reflective consciousness to direct my attention on these values or to neglect them" (Ibid., 146).

Sartre explains the condition of the for-itself to be a consciousness existing in three ekstatic dimensions (Sartre 1992, xxxiii): The first ekstasis is the "ever renewed internal negation of the In-itself by the For-itself", in which the for-itself experiences its objects in a pre-reflective level of consciousness based on its original nihilation, the original choice of itself in terms of a value, or, simply put, a perspective through which it exists in terms of the values chosen. In the second dimension the for-itself reflects on its previous original nihilation by a process, which Sartre calls *pure reflection*; and on its experiences (psychic states) by *impure reflection* (Ibid., 218). The difference between pure and impure is that in impure reflaction the for-itself reflects on its pre-reflective experiences, and in pure it reflects its values in terms of its original choice of itself. Impure reflection also appears only on foundation of the pure. The third dimesion, on the other hand, is the for-itself discovering it has a being for-others (a social self); it has a self "which exists for the other and which it can never know" (Ibid. 667).[19]

[19] More about the relation between the for-itself and the Other in Chapter 3.2.3.

What is it then what Sartre is trying to discover by what is described above about the structure of conscious experience? The first effort obviously is to argue against the view of a transcendental ”I”. For Sartre, there is no I behind all conscious acts, and as argued above, in pre-reflective consciousness there is only self-awareness of conscious experience. The self appears only in reflection in terms of values reflected on and in respect to the projects it chooses. What Sartre calls the Ego can be described as my conscious experiences brought together by conscious self-awareness. When it comes to freedom then, and human freedom especially, Sartre’s effort is to try to locate and specify the self which he argues to be free. Only after this is an analysis of the nature of this freedom possible.

3. ONTOLOGICAL FREEDOM AND PRACTICAL FREEDOM

There are two important observations Sartre makes about being in general that serve as the base also for his argument for absolute freedom of consciousness (Sartre 1992, xvi-xvii); existence is contingent and unjustifiable and therefore absurd, lacking reason itself; and secondly, the importance of the revelation of the facticity of one’s inescapable connection to one’s body [being-in-itself]. In this ambiguity of being ”man continually makes himself. Instead of being, he ’has to be’; his present being has meaning only in the light of the future toward which he projects himself.” (Sartre 1992, xix). The dualist ambiguity of being, the human condition, is that one escapes from his natural condition, by giving it meanings, without being able to free oneself from it. One is always entangled to present moment, which is nothing ”between the past which no longer is and the future which is not yet” (de Beauvoir 2018, 6).

> ”It is because freedom is condemned to be free−i.e., can not choose itself as freedom−that there are things; that is, a plenitude of contingency. It is by the assumption of this contingency and by its surpassing that there can be at once a choice and an organization of things *in situation,* and it is the contingency of freedom and the contingency of the in-itself which are expressed *in situation* by the unpredictability and the adversity of the environment. Thus I am absolutely free and absolutely responsible for my situation. But I am never free except *in situation.*” (Sartre 1992, 653)

The quote above highlights many different aspects and concepts Sartre uses to describe his concept of absolute freedom. Freedom, for Sartre, is always realized in situation that

is a full positivity of objects of consciousness (Sartre 1992, § 4, Chapter 2)[20]. This full positivity of in-itselfs is where freedom is, able to emerge through the ability of consciousness for nihilating acts, [doubting, imagining, interrogating, percieving], giving then meaning to its objects, and to the whole situation the for-itself finds itself in (ibid., § 1). The situation, in which one finds oneself, is always a situation of abandonment where one is ”abandoned in the world” and responsible for one’s situation (ibid., 653).

What must be addressed here shortly, is this different approach Sartre takes in his description of human reality and human freedom in comparison to other concepts of freedom presented in philosophy, both, before and after his own contribution. Because of situatedness and differences in people’s fundamental projects, freedom, according to Sartre, is always subjective in quality [in a way of situated consciousness] and realized in a situation in relation to a fundamental project. This fundamental project gives meaning to objects of consciousness as the facticity, through which freedom can be realized altogether. What Sartre means by this fundamental project is not a particular project, which we are able to accomplish, or certain goals obtained and achieved. It is not a way I am in relation to objects, but my total being-in-the-world where the fundamental project is ”a relation to being which the for-itself wills to adopt” (Sartre 1992, 617). The fundamental project can then be interpreted as a project of building up a self, a self which the for-itself perpetually lacks. In practice, this is done by giving meaning to things outside consciousness; valuing them as desirable or undesirable, useful or useless; rejecting the undesirable and useless, and accepting what is desirable and useful.

Sartre has been criticized for being inconsistent with his arguments claiming ontological freedom being absolute and practical freedom limited (Landau 2012a). According to the criticism, Sartre’s absolute freedom is counterintuitive and runs against empirical reality and how we commonly understand freedom; and to claim that the slave is as free as his master, and absolutely free, is to diminish the freedom to a mere wish[21].

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[20] Full positivity is the in-itself’s being what it is. It ”knows no otherness” and can be negated only by for-itself (Sartre 1992, 37).

[21] Sartre is using a master-slave dialectic, already used by Hegel before him, to highlight the relationship between two consciousnesses (Sartre 1992, 109).

3.1 Freedom to Choose

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre argues that we are ablolutely free to choose and the only thing we are not free of is not to choose; we are condemned to choose and then condemned to be free (Sartre 1992, 186; 567; 707). We are absolutely free to choose and take ”some action” to enhance our projects, but relatively unfree to obtain chosen ends (ibid., 621-622). This freedom to choose is based on what is called Sartre’s two arguments against determinism concerning the nature of consciousness; first, consciousness is not a substance, and it is always separate and at distance from its objects; **s**econdly, consciousness is characterized by its negating activities resulting from its nihilating power (ibid., 86; 571-572)[22]. No factual state in a situation is by itself capable of motivating one to act in this or that way, but it is up to the agent to interprete the situation, to give meaning to it and then also reasons for action (ibid., 562).

Sartre’s conception of freedom as absolute has been criticized quite extensively throughout the literature. Some of the criticism argues that Sartre’s arguments and claims on freedom are contradictory, and that Sartre’s freedom is strongly against our common sense how we understand human freedom as a concept in general. According to *the common sense view*[23] of freedom, not only our freedom to obtain, but also freedom to choose, is often severely limited (Landau 2012a).

It has also been argued that not only the contingent facticity limits our freedom, but that meaning in general is culturally constituted, limiting then our freedom to reasons-responsive choice of our own; ”we already live in a meaningful world” (Levy 2002, 112). According to this, what could be called *a social construction view*, people enjoy some freedom only within the limits of a certain cultural sphere they are in. Levy also

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[22] See Chapter 2 for nihilating power of consciousness. As a result of this nihilating power consciousness is in ”a continual game of mirror and reflection, a perpetual passage from the being which is what it is, to the being which is not what it is and inversely from the being which is not what it is to the being which is what it is.” (Sartre 1992, 110)

[23] *The common sense view* is not any particular critique presented by an author but it consists of many different kinds of critical arguments against Sartre’s theory. What they share, is an intuitive experience of our freedom severely limited in many ways. Sartre himself talks about common sense but argues against a common sense view of freedom.

argues that the original choice and the fundamental project chosen by the agent restrict freedom to choose also inside this cultural sphere.[24]

This chapter presents Sartre's view of freedom to choose, which he argues to be absolute, and some of the criticism confronted to it. I modestly argue, that Sartrean view is capable to answer the criticism in some parts and that some of the criticism rests in picking out single arguments out of the whole set of arguments which Sartre presents. Secondly, the critique is not treating the Sartrean view as it is designed for, a technical and philosophical concept of freedom (Sartre 1992, 621-622)[25]. A lot of the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Sartre's conception of freedom has to do with the textual ambiguity in *Being and Nothingness.* Sartre's absolute freedom is not only misunderstood though, but also genuinely criticized that freedom as a concept cannot be reduced only to a concept that is techincal and philosophical. This means that the concept itself is at some level connected to obtaining, acquiring and success.

The proposition of this paper is that we should not treat Sartre's conception of freedom only as a view about how people experience freedom in some single instants of their lives, but rather as a description of action and choices where the world is experienced as a field of reasons in more general. These reasons are invitations, demands and proscriptions that result from our original choice and the projects we choose. But, according to Sartre, our freedom to choose is not located in these kinds of situations, but moreover in choices in which there are no reasons, demands or invitations present. Choices the self, in the face of the future, in a level in which any choice is as unjustified as the other. Our everyday choices mostly result from the choice of ourselves in the level of the original choice.

Restrictions to freedom, and the question of the importance of obtaining to concept of freedom, will be examined more closely in Chapter 3.2. This chapter examines Sartre's ontological freedom [freedom to chooce], although it is impossible to to avoid

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[24] *The original choice* is a choice of ourselves. It is our choice of a future (Sartre 1992, 598-599). Choosing oneself as an atheist or a believer, a vegan or an omnivore, a police office or a radical activist is a choice which polarizes the world for one in terms of possibilities and experience of freedom.

[25] Sartre distinguishes between different kinds of concepts of freedom, but highlights that the one he is concerned with is "the technical and philosophical concept", which only means "the autonomy of choice" (Sartre 1992, 622).

examining it in total separation from the other two important questions. There are a few main questions to be examined in this chapter. At first, the alledged contrdiction in Sartre's argumentation between freedom as both absolute and restricted. Secondly, the question of the scope of freedom Sartre argues to be absolute. What exactly is it, which Sartre argues to be free, in his conception of freedom? Thirdly, the question of the origin of meaning and value is a matter of great importance to freedom to choose.

3.1.2 Sartre's Freedom to Choose

The ontological freedom [freedom to choose], which Sartre presents, is the free consciusness (in Chapter 2.2) giving meaning to its objects in a situation in which one finds oneself, and the situation is defined both by the facticity of the objects of consciousness and by the fundamental project. This fundamental project is not some particular doing or a goal acchieved, but it is the for-itself's choice of the way of its being in relation to future (Sartre 1992, 600-601). Freedom to choose arises in situation combined of the facticity of the given and one's fundamental project, which are both given meaning by the for-itself by nihilating the current facticity, and projecting towards future not-yet existing.

> Thus we begin to catch a glimpse of the paradox of freedom: there is freedom only in a situation, and there is a situation only through freedom. Human-reality everywhere encounters resistance and obstacles which it has not created, but these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in and through the free choice which human-reality *is*. (Sartre 1992, 629)

According to Sartre, ”freedom is the apprehension of my facticity” in a way that our conciousness is free to interpret this facticity and its meaning in a situation (Sartre 1992, 635). Freedom is then not conditionned by the given, but rather freedom as a concept is ”a relation to the given”; the given is neither a cause nor a reason of freedom since ”all 'reason' comes into the world through freedom” (Ibid., 625-626) [26] . Because consciousness is always consciousness of something other than itself, freedom is actually based on this facticity, which it often posits as its limitation. It is our freedom then, according to Sartre, which reveals obstacles it suffers from, but which it has not itself

[26] The use of word 'reason' in the quote should be interpreted as *reason for action* in motivational sense, not as reason in a rational sense.

created (Ibid., 629). To be a free for-itself in the world means also engaging in a resisting world.

> ”Consequently the resistance which freedom reveals in the existent, far from being a danger to freedom, results only in enabling it to arise as freedom. There can be a for-itself only as engaged in a resisting world. Outside of this engagement the notions of freedom, of determinism, of necessity lose all meaning.” (Sartre 1992, 621)

There seems to be a clear temporal structure in Sartre’s thougth concerning the relation between a project and limitations to freedom. It seems that, for Sartre, there are no limitations to freedom in the absolute sense, and that limitations arise as limitations only after the free choice is made in situation. Freedom is however always necessarely situated. People are not free to choose anything they please, but always free to chooce in a situation. This kind of argumentation has been criticized for shrinking the scope of freedom so small that it is far from *the common sense view* how people usually understand freedom (Landau, 2012a). According to the critique, external factors and the facticity of the situation[27] also, prior to any choice, drastically limit our freedom to choose. It is not obvious though whether the critique is successfull or not, because it often refers to freedom to obtain and uses comparisons between the freedom of differently situated individuals.

To be clear about Sartre’s main argument made in the paper; absolute freedom refers to freedom to choose. According to Sartre, no matter what the situation or the facticity in situation is, we are free to choose and, also, condemned to do so. Stripped of all normative connotations, the slave’s freedom arises in the facticity of the situation the slave is in, but also in how the slave interprets this facticity in relation to his projects. The normatively brutal facticity the slave is in, is the facticity, which only the slave is able to give meaning to, by nihilating the facticity and projecting towards future. Sartre explains this in this lengthy quote[28]:

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[27] External factors prior to a choice are often referred as the facticity or the given facticity by Sartre.

[28] It is unclear why Sartre would choose this kind of a provocative case example to showcase his point about freedom and the experience of reasons for action. The master-slave dialectic (lord-bondsman

> ” −just because of all this, the situation of the slave can not be compared with that of the master. Each of them in fact takes on its meaning only for the for-itself in situation and in terms of the free choice of its ends. A comparison could be made only by a third person and consequently it could take place only between two objective forms in the midst of the world; moreover it could be established only in the light of a project freely chosen by this third person. There is no absolute point of view which one can adopt so as to compare different situations, each person realizes only one situation−*his own.*” (Sartre 1992, 703)

According to Sartre, freedom can never be undetermined; but it is rather determined through a free choice in a situation where the meaning of the restrictions appear in reference to an end one has chosen (Sartre 1992, 703). This highlights the problematic nature of comparing and evaluating the freedom of individuals from a third-person point of view**.** To say from a third-person perspective that ‘the master is more free to X than the slave’, is to complitely ignore [both] their points of view and the facticity, in which their individual freedom arises altogether. It is also a comparison made in light of a propable outcome of obtaing an end, which is posited externally. All this seems to highlight Sartre’s conception on freedom as situated, arising in free interpretation of the facticity made by the individual in a situation, in light of the ends chosen. And this choice is made in situation where the meanings of different choices are valued against each other. ”Every choice, as we shall see, supposes elimination and selection; every choice is a choice of finitude. Thus freedom can be truly free only by constituting facticity as its own restriction.” (ibid., 636).

The problematicts mentioned above result also from more general ambiquity of the concept of freedom in more general. Sartre’s conception should not be taken as all-embracing or comprehensive concept of freedom. This is because he does distinguis between different concepts and types of freedom. Secondly, he explicitly presents his conception as *the technical and philosophical concept of freedom,* which is necessarely situated, and then experienced and excercized from a first-person perspective. Sartre’s conception of freedom of the for-itself can also be considered as a somewhat realist

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dialectic in Hegel) is originally presented by Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) as a battle for recognition between two self-aware consciousnesses. Many different forms and interpretations have been presented since, e.g. the class struggle by Marx.

view, as it is situated, but also embodied, existing necessarely as engaged among other contingent beings (Sartre 1992, 408). It is also a misreading to interprete what Sartre calls ”nothingnesses” as objects that lack meaning or objects that are meaningless. They rather get their meaning through our choice of ourselves and our projects, and in terms of our choice of a future end. This also means that to nihilate an object of consciousness is not to deny its existence independently of our consciousness of the world, The object really exists, but it is given meaning as something ”not-yet” through our choice of an end. (Sartre 1992, 615; Webber 2011a, 327)

3.1.3 The Common Sense View

Sartre’s *absolute freedom to choose* and *relative unfreedom to obtain* chosen ends seems intuitively not much of a freedom at all. *The common sense view* of freedom argues against Sartre’s conception of freedom as absolute, total or equal between individuals. At first, Sartre’s argument for absolute freedom seems to be against empirical evidence and common experience how we commonly experience freedom. According to this view, freedom is at least to some degrees dependent on people’s success in relation to goals they decide to pursue. People are neither absolutely nor equally free, but rather enjoy different degrees of limited or restricted freedom. Secondly, the argument also conflict and is contradictory to other argumets Sartre presents, such as the multiple restrictions he presents limiting people’s freedom. (Landau 2012a)

It has also been argued against the possibility of absolute freedom based on the limitedness of our capabilities and lack of power. The concept of absolute freedom would require the impossibility of human omnipotence and Grossmann argues that Sartre’s conception of absolute freedom is that ”nothing whatsoever restricts (human) freedom” (Grossmann 1984, 262). Desan (1965, 170) argues that our choice is never unlimited and then absolute, but it rather happens between restricted number of choices available; such like A or B and A, B, C, D, E… or X. Also Sartre’s argument for equal freedom to chooce has been argued against by Herbert Marcuse (1948, 322); considering the persecuted Jew and the victim of the executioner absolutely free and ”masters of a self-responsible choice” would mean that these philosophical concepts would have ”declined to a level of mere ideology”.

All of the criticisms presented above roughly fall under the so-called common sense view of freedom, and what they jointly share is an understanding of Sartre's view either not offering restrictions to freedom or these restrictions contradicting with his argument about absolute freedom. This is a misinterpretation of Sartre, because he expicitly presents and distinguishes between many kinds of different restrictions to freedom and argues that "… freedom can exist only as *restricted* since freedom is a choice. Every choice, as we shall see, supposes elimination and selection; every choice is a choice of finitude" (Sartre 1992, 636). Sartre not only presents multiple restrictions to freedom, but also makes the distinction between freedom to choose and freedom to obtain, often also referred as ontological freedom and practical freedom (e.g. Whitford 1982, Detmer 1986, Wilkerson 2010**).** Detmer (1986) and Santoni (2008), for example, argue that it is not contradictory to make a claim, at first, concerning freedom of consciousness and autonomy of choice in the ontological level; and secondly, about relative unfreedom in the practical level of restrictions and obtaining ends. Even if one accepts distinguishing the two seemingly different claims about people's freedom, the question, still, remains whether Sartre's claims about ontological and practical freedom are reconcilable.

Landau argues that the criticism presented is valid, and even making the distinction between ontological and practical freedom does not sufficiently answer the criticism. Landau's main argument then is that Sartre's claim that all people have absolute and equal freedom is problematic not only in reference to practical freedom, but also in reference only to ontologial freedom alone (2012a, 466). People not only lack freedom to obtain, but also absolute freedom to choose, and there is considerable empirical evidence in support of people not being free decide on their projects and assign meanings to the situations they are in. In many situations individuals are not only unfree to choose certain projects, but the project and meaning is rather imposed on them externally by the situation. "The obstacle is not constituted by the project, but the project is constituted by the obstacle" (ibid.), unlike what Sartre argues by claiming that "our freedom creates the obstacles from which we suffer" (1992, 635) and "There is no obstacle in an absolute sense, but the obstacle reveals its coefficient of adversity across freely invented and freely acquired techniques. The obstacle reveals this coefficient also in terms of the value of the end posited by freedom." (ibid., 628).

Landau (2012a, 466) argues that there is considerable evidence that people, not only lack absolute freedom to obtain, but also absolute freedom to choose; to choose projects and assign meanings to situations they are in. He highlights his point with a case example of 'torturer red hot pincers' originally presented by Sartre. According to Sartre, "even the red hot pincers of the torturer do not exempt us from being free"; "To be free is to-be-free-to-change"; "Freedom implies therefore the existence of an environment to be changed: obstacles to be cleared, tools to be used."; "To be free is to-be-free-to-do, and it is to-be-free-in-the-world" (Sartre 1992, 649-650).

This, according to Landau, however, runs against the face of reality (Landau 2012a, 466). Most people in a similar situation have no freedom to choose between projects when being tortured with red hot pincers. A person tortured has no freedom to choose between different projects of life and has also no freedom to choose between minimizing or not minimizing the pain. In situations like this, the obstacle constitutes the project and the distincion between ontological and practical freedom disappears since there is no absolute freedom in either sphere. Put into context of Sartre's 'master and slave' example, the slave has some limited freedom to choose between being a submissive or a resentful slave, or even try to escape. Nevertheless, the slave's freedom is severely limited in reference to both practical and ontological freedom (ibid.). Contrary to Sartre's claim, the slave is not absolutely and equally as free as his master in either obtaining or choosing (ibid., 467).

According to Landau then, it seems quite clear that the situation limits the projects available for one to choose. The slave will not be able to obtain the same level of wealth as his master, also Sartre realizes this (Sartre 1992, 703). In addition to this, we often lack power to obtain our goals, in a given situation. Our freedom is then being limited by both the facticity of the given instrumental objects in hand and our lack of power to obtain the end chosen (ibid., 648-649)[29]. But this is not all. Situatedness also limits our choices even if it had to do with intentions or attitudes, in a way of e.g. our limited knowledge when it comes to options available for choosing a project (Landau 2012a, 467).

[29] Lack of power to obtain has often been referred as "the omnipotence objection" against Sartrean conception of freedom. (Detmer 1986, 80)

How should we asses Landau's argument against Sartre then? Landau does not seem to take the situatedness of each different person Sartre presents seriously and seems to be equating freedom to choose to probability in obtaining chosen ends. Sartre argued that the experience of our freedom is situated because it is the result of our choice of future ends made in situation. To be free, according Sartre, is to choose oneself in a situation, which opens up the possibilities and restrictions in relation to chosen ends. Freedom to choose is then equal and absolute for both master and the slave, but only separately, choosing themselves in a situation they are in. Sartre is clear making the distinction between choosing and obtaining by saying that; ”When we declare that the slave in chains is as free as his master, we don't mean to speak of a freedom which would remain undetermined”; and ”Of course the slave will not be able to obtain the wealth and the standard of living of his master; but these are not the object of his projects; he can only dream of the possession of these treasures”. (Sartre 1992, 703)

In reference to intentions and attitudes, and in the situation the slave is in, it is hard to distinguish between intentions and attitudes, and mere wishes and fantasies. Sartre nonetheless is clear on making the distinction between wishing and fantasizing, and quite obscurely ”determining oneself to wish” as a metaphor for choosing (Sartre 1992, 621). If we accept that free choice is possible in the relevant sense of the concept of choice, there remains a considerable problem of explaining the role and an adequate amount of action necessary for a choice to be considered as a real choice and not a mere wish about desired future to come. As Merleau-Ponty makes the point (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 508); ”The very notion of freedom demands that our decision should plunge into the future, that something should have been *done* by it, that the subsequent instant should benefit from its predecessor and, though not be necessiated, should be at least required by it” (Detmer 1986, 86). Without credible explanation of action, which is argued to be missing in cases like presented above, Sartre's freedom to choose seems purely ”inner and ineffective” (Wilkerson 2010, 211).

There is also an important question about the scope of freedom to chooce in reference to different types of choices people make. These different types of choices possibly make it more difficult to make sense of the scope of freedom to choose, and they also reveal the ambiguous nature of the two types of freedom. According to Landau, many of our everyday choices fall under the category of practical freedom or freedom to obtain,

whereass freedom to choose is a technical term referring to a set of general choices about one's basic projects (2012a, 463).

Eshleman (2011, 46), on the other hand, suggests that there are three general forms of choice when people make choices. At First, cases of continuity are ones in which our past reasons and motives, with no need for futher considerations, lead us into the future. Secondly, there are cases of indifference, where the cost of the decision is low and "none of the future possibilities outweigh one another", for example the choice of a restaurant to eat lunch at. The last, and the most important ones, are choices of "existential indecision" where the cost to the actions is high and many would be unwilling to flip a coin. These are also often cases in which choices of different projects collide and one experiences that some projects and choices are imposed on us.

Sartre explains the last kind of case, the case of indecision, by using an anecdote of his former student's dilemma during World War II (Sartre 2007, 30-32)[30]. The Frech student's brother was killed by Germans in the war and his father nonetheless chose to abandon his family later to collaborate with the rival Germans. The student had to decide whether to stay and comfort his mother, who found her comfort in him, or to leave and join the fight against the German occupation with the Free French Forces. The student faced a dilemma between moral principles; the obligation to care for his mother and the obligation to a nation and to avenge his brother's death. According to Sartre there is no right anwer to the question, and what the student is able to do is to weigh up his values and make a decision of his own because "no code of ethics on record answers the question" (ibid., 31). The case highlights many aspects of both the concept of freedom Sartre presents and the sphere and scope of it. It is a choice made in limitation, because the student is unable to do both. It is a choice made by weighing the meaning and value of both alternatives. Both choices appear to him, as a result, of an original choice of himself as a responsible son and citizen. It is also a choice he feels he is condemned to do. It is a choice of himself, but also a choice which Landau would call 'a project constituted by the obstacle'.

In addition to different types of decisions, some of them seem to be more fundamental than others and there seems to be degrees of fundamentality in our choices. Detmer

[30] *Existentialism Is a Humanism* 2007, Orig. 1946.

(1986, 73) argues that there is an extremely limited range of fundamental choices and an infinite number of secondary choices, and these together form a kind of hierarchical structure. This means that my situated freedom depends not only on the *quantity* of choices available, but more importantly but also on their *quality* (ibid. 74). Whether the quality of choices available should be assessed either in objective or subjective terms is a matter of great importance and deserves a much more detailed consideration in some other account. It nevertheless highlights that the problematics in arguments claiming that number of choices available is equivalent to the amount of freedom we have in each situation.

If Sartre is right that meaning and reason comes to us by our original choice and our choice of projects, does this mean that people would be unable to change or modify their project? Sartre denies this by claiming that abandoning a project could be done ”only in the light of a more fundamental project” because ”a cause is apprehended by the motivating-consciousness which is itself a free choice of an end” (Sartre 1992, 649). According to Landau, the notion of some projects being affected by the environment, even if there are more primary ones, does not show that our ontological freedom, freedom to choose, is absolute. Following that, Sartre’s different levels of fundamentality does not show that we enjoy absolute freedom to choose (Landau 2012a, 468). This also applies to the question about the extensiveness of the range of options avalilable (ibid., 469). Sartres distiction between two types of freedom then fails to show that people have absolute freedom to choose, because it seems that, not only practival freedom but also our freedom to choose comes in degrees. According to Landau, it would be more accurate to call people as ”partially free” or ”somewhat free” (ibid., 470).

Sartre has also been taken to hold a view of some kind of staccato voluntarism (Smith 1970). This would mean that at each moment in time people would find themselves having to decide afresh how to respond to world that confronts them. One would then have to decide and confirm the previous choice to get up from bed every morning and go to work, decide the diet to follow every time before having lunch or dinner. This obviously is a misreading and carefully spelled out by Sartre in a case of a young man expecting to become a great writer (Sartre 1992, 689-690). The young man is so desperate of becoming a writer that all the meaning he assigns to objects of

consciousness is highly dependent and result from his choice of himself as a great writer in the future. But it would be wrong to say that his everyday choices are voluntary and continuous, and at each moment, he is forced to choose again of becoming a great writer or choose to write everyday instead of some other activity. The question about the freedom of our everyday choices will be returned in the next chapter, where a different kind of critique to Smith's view will be presented by Levy (2002), who argues that our everyday choices are not choices at all.

It is fair to say that there is a genuine disagreement between views of Sartre and Landau. Landau seems to be supporting a view where obtaining chosen ends is somehow also determninig the choices available to choose, by comparing freedom to choose between differently situated individuals. Landau for example argues that a person suffering from acute agoraphobia has no option of becoming a tour guide, and one's freedom is then more limited than a freedom of a person who suffers somewhat lesser agoraphobia (Landau 2012a, 469). Sartre rejects this kind of comparisons, and comparisons like this does not seem to take the situatedness seriously. They are also comparisons made in comparing the probabilities in obtaining the chosen end. There is not much freedom in reducing the concept of choice only to a level where the probalility of obtaining ends is equivalent to the freedom of a choice. There, still, remains a question about the scope of absolute freedom to choose Sartre argues people have, and this will be taken to closer examination in the following chapter.

3.1.4 Origin of Meaning and the Fundamental Project

Neil Levy (2002)[31] presents a critical view of Sartre's conception of absolute freedom to choose. According to Levy, people are not absolutely free to choose, but rather enjoy only limited freedom, and the sphere and the scope of this freedom is culturally both given and restricted. He argues that, afrer the original choice of ourselves is made, we only live and experience the world according to this choice; "I choose a framework in which the world is presented to me". After the original choice, there is no freedom within the boundaries of a single project. This is because the original choice is also a choice of the projects available to choose, and altering the significance of any of my

[31] Levy, N. (2002). "How free is the for-itself?" In *Sartre* (99–115). Oneworld Publications.

experience is impossible without at the same time modifying the entire project. (Ibid., 103)

This of cource is against an intuitive conception of freedom one could call radical or absolute. In our everyday activities we often experience at least some of our actions as freely chosen. But when examining them in a broader context, they often seem only as consequences of, and perfecty in line with, our original choice. An example would be something like this: Before the original choice, my option to choose are A, B, C, D, … X; I make the original choice of myself and my goals, and this reduces the options available to only those I consider possible, say for example A, B or C. After making this original choice, the only choices available for me to choose in everyday life are choices of A, B or C. Where is the free choice in everyday situations like this?

According to Levy (2002, 102), it is nowhere. ”I experience the world through the lens of meanings I confer upon it”; ”have already had their meaning decided – at least implicitly – before they arise for me”; and then, ”They simply arise for me as causes and motives, and they are causes and motives for me because my fundamental project bestows this force upon them.” Choices arise for me, as a result, of my project, and my experience of weighing the alternatives is not exactly weighing the meaning and value of different alternatives, but the meaning and value comes to them from my fundamental project or the original choice of myself. So, these choices are not only relatively trivial, but ”they are not choices at all” (ibid., 104). This is perhaps quite confusingly also noticed by Sartre; ”The result is that a voluntary deliberation is always a deception. How can I evaluate causes and motives on which I confer their value before all deliberation and by the very choice which I make of myself?” (Sartre 1992, 581); and ”When I deliberate, the chips are down. And if I am brought to the point of deliberating, this is simply because it is a part of my original project to realize motives by means of deliberation rather than by some other form of discovery” (ibid.). Levy then concludes that; I am not free, within the bounds of a single project; and, if there is any freedom for the for-itself to choose, it consists only in an ability to choose a fundamental project (Levy 2002, 105).

If all meaning and value of in experiences then appear to me from the original choice of myself and the fundamental project, and I choose my projects according to the original choice, my experience is then always filtered through the project. For this reason,

according to Levy, nothing motivates me to change my fundamental project, or nothing can provide me reasons to reject it. Even on the contrary, every experience and perception only confirm its validity. The meanings, which my fundamental project imposes upon the world, form ”a closed system”, which nothing is able to intrude or disturb. The world is avalilable to us only through the lens we have chosen in the original choice, the world ”can never provide me with reasons to reject my fundamental project”. (Levy 2002, 107). So according to Levy, Sartre’s absolute freedom is irrational, because; the collapsing of our project can result only from an ”inexplicable catastrophe” disrupting our world without our consent.And, if rejection of a fundamental project is possible only due to such a catastrophe, we are not free to choose it (ibid., 108-109).

If I somehow would be able to reject my project, it would mean a confrontation with a meaningless in-itself, which would be a state which is unable to motivate me or to give any reasons to choose in one way or another. If a choice in state like this would be possible, it would be made with no background to deliberate and weigh the reasons against. In this case the choice would be arbitary, not free (Levy 2002, 109).

According to Levy, we have no reasons to reject our fundamental project because it is itself based on meanings and values of the original choice and, on the other hand, the world provides no reasons for me to reject it because the reasons come to my project through the exact same original choice. And, if it would be possible, it would be a choice made against a background of nothing and without deliberation, and then purely arbitary. We are then unable to freely choose, reject or modify our fundamental project (Ibid., 110-111). Therefore, there is no freedom in Sartre’s conception, and we simply live the consequences of our original choice. The only reasons we have are reasons to act in accordance with our fundamental project. Every modification or rejection of the project happens without our consent or without our willing it, and is then arbitary (ibid., 111). Levy concludes Sartre’s project as a failure then. After the original choice, there is no freedom within the bounds of a project. We are also unable to both reject or modify our project, because our reasons are given by the original choice of ourselves.

Levy however offers an alternative explanation. To really be free, I must be able to find myself in a position between two extremes [*inside a project* with meanings posited by the original choice – *outside the project* without any meanings to deliberate reasons

against]. I must find my self in an already meaningful world. But in order to be free I also must be able to ”distance myself from these meanings, to evaluate them, to weigh them up”. And this is because free choice has place ”only within an already significant world” (Levy 2002, 112).

It is not clear, what Levy exactly means by ”distancing myself” to ”evaluate them” because he does not explicitly explain it. It however seems that it is exactly an attribute by which Sartre describes consciousness. The for-itself is a being, always at distance to its objects and itself, by temporalizing itself (Sartre 1992, 584); and a being capable of the nihilating acts which characterize its being (ibid., 72; 165). Sartre explains the temporalization of the for-itself followingly: ”As Present, Past, Future−all at the same time−the For-itself dispersing its being in three dimensions is temporal due to the very fact that it nihilates itself. No one of these dimensions has any ontological priority over the other; none of them can exist without the other two.” (ibid., 202**).**

Already meaningful world, according to Levy, might mean that the origin of meaning comes through the forces of biology and shared human nature. This kind of explanation is something like an Aristotelian telos-explanation of human beings naturally aiming at some end[32]. Levy rejects this kind of explanation though and proposes that it is through human culture that values and meanings come to the world. Cultures constitute the background against which each of us deliberates and ”makes our own way”. It is the precondition, which opens up a sphere for one to act on, while at the same time closing some possibilities. It does not determine our actions or behaviour, but rather opens up ”a space in which free action is possible”. (ibid., 113-114)

The difference in Sartre’s and Levy’s views seems to originate from differing conceptions of some of the key concepts, such as the original choice; the fundamental project and the temporality of the for-itself. To begin with the original choice, the interpretation is not that different. According to Sartre, ”it is this original choice which originally creates all causes and all motives which can guide us to partial actions; it is this which arranges the world with its meaning, its instrumental-complexes, and its coefficient of adversity.”; and ”Even if we envisage other fundamental attitudes as

[32] One example of telos as a shared end is that all people are aiming at living a virtuous life. The problem is though that inside the purpose there are multiple different ways of living virtuous life, and these different ways are in many cases confictual and dependent on how the concept is defined.

possible, we shall never consider them except from outside, as the behaviour of others" (Sartre 1992, 598-599). This seems to confirm Levy's inrerpretation of the original choise as a source of all reasons but excluding all reasons to change or modify the fundamental project.

But when it comes to the question of the fundamental project, which for Levy is closed because of lack of reasons and motives to modify it, there seems to be a difference in conceptions:

> "Now the meaning of the past is strictly dependent on my present project. This certainly does not mean that I can make the meaning of my previous acts vary in any way I please; quite the contrary, it means that the fundamental project which I am decides absolutely the meaning which the past which I have to be can have for me and for others. I alone can in fact can decide the bearing of the past. I do not decide it by debating it, by deliberating over it, and in each instance evaluating the importance of this or that prior event; but by projecting myself towards my ends, I preserve the past with me, and by action I decide its meaning." (Sartre 1992, 640)

The lengthy quote implies several key points. The fundamental project, according to Sartre, is not any specific project or a goal to be obtainde or pursued. The for-itself *is* the project, because consciousness always nihilates not only the in-itself, but also itself, and projects itself to the future. And this nihilation is the nihilation of the past and it is made in a form of desire and by action projecting to future (Sartre 1992, 508). This desire is not something that comes to consciousness externally, accroding to Sartre, but consciousness chooses itself as desire. What is the motive for this choice then, because we don't desire just anything at any time. Sartre explains this motive to be a raised in terms of the past by consciousness "*turning back* upon it" and giving the motive its value and weight. What Sartre means by this desire is that it is not the object in the world, which is desired, but rather different kind of being of the for-itself (ibid.).

A case example might be helpful to better understand what Sartre might mean. A religious man turned and self-transformed into ahteism is obviously an atheist who once was religious or a believer. The past cannot be undone or given any meaning whatsoever. The past remains fixed. But, a choice or a present action can be constituted differently, "by weavin it into different futures", and it still remains non-arbitarely tied

to this fixed past (Eshleman 2011, 45). For Sartre this would be free choice in a form of an upsurge from current being into future not yet existing. Levy would deny the freedom of these kind of choices as arbitary, because they are based on an inexplicable catastrophe in life and not on deliberation against a background.

The consciousness choosing itself as a form of desire then is what Sartre calls ”the free upsurge” of the for-itself into the future (Sartre 1992, 628). The for-itself is the in-itself losing itself as in-itself, and to the world, to found itself as consciousness (ibid., 130). This is to say that we choose and define ourselves by acting and engaging in the world. It is a choice of the self, the way of being one wants to adopt. The upsurge itself, although based on desire, is free activity, according to Sartre. The fundamental project also has to be constatntly renewed, because otherwise, ”I should fall into the pure and simple existence of the in-itself” (ibid., 617)[33]. This all of course is an opposite view to how Levy interprets the fundamental project as a closed system. The difference lies in the interpretation of the actions, which do not seem to be in accordance with our projects, and are then made without reason and deliberation. These choices are rather made based on desire for different kind of being not yet existing.

3.1.5 Contemplation

Concluding and trying to answer some of the questions presented earlier in this chapter goes as follows. Concerning the first question about the contrdictory claims about our freedom as both restricted [situated] and absolute, one reading could be that Sartre’s claim about our absolute freedom is made after first presenting the restrictions. We remain absolutely free to choose ourselves and the way of our being, but only in situation. This original choice opens up the possibilities for us to act and enjoy some freedom inside the original choice. Levy’s interpretation is that choices ’inside’ the original choice are not choices at all, but only a result of the original choice because there is no deliberation involved. Concerning the scope of our freedom, the free choice of ourselves is possible through consciosnesses ability to nihilate the given [the in-

[33] Falling into this existence of the in-itself means roughly the same thing what e.g. Husserl calls ”the natural attitude” or ”the natural theoretical attitude”. Husserl (2002, 101-106), *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Orig. (1931) New York: Routledge. Edited by William Ralph Boyce Gibson.

itself], and by action also the contingent for-itself. But this action is based on desire and not reason derived from the original choice and our current projects. Whether this desire for different kind of being is free and then deriving from the agent itself, is another question.

Levy argues that meanings and values are culturally constituted, and that deliberation of a choice happens always in terms of this cultural background. The difference in Sartre's and Levy's view is then about the concept of fundamental project. For Levy, the fundamental project seems to be a project, which can be modified freely only inside and after the original choice, and against the background of culturally constituted meaning. Whereass, for Sartre, the for-itself is the fundamental project, a project which has to be constantly renewed because of the temporal structure of the consciousness. The disagreement between Sartre's view and *the common sense view* is about definitions of concepts of choice and freedom in more general. For that reason, it also departs quite drastically from Sartre's view. It treats the concept of freedom in normative ways between different individuals often used in political philosophy.

The proposition is that Sartre's description of human freedom should be read more as a description of the way we think and, also, experience our surroundings in more general. And, as Webber (2011a, 328) puts it; "action responds to aspects of the world that reflect the structures of our awareness of our surroundings". Not as a description of freedom as probabilities in obtaining or succeeding in pursuing chosen ends.

3.2 Limitations to Freedom

As absolute freedom, according to Sartre, refers to freedom to choose; practical freedom or freedom to obtain is, for Sartre, freedom which is always limited. Freedom is never restrictionless and it always comes in degrees. He also states that "success is not important to freedom" (Sartre 1992, 621). There are different kinds of limitations to freedom he introduces in *Being and Nothingness.* All these limitations together form a whole individual reality and a point of view for an individual to experience and to act in. This is what Sartre calls human condition (ibid., 542). Also, relations with others limit one's freedom (Ibid., § 3, ch. III). Sartre considers relations with other people, not that much potentially enhancing our freedom, but rather limiting it. One is constantly surronded by other people inscribing meaning to things, but also and more severely, one's freedom is

limited by others by conferring meanings on oneself (Detmer 1988, 54). One is then not only influenced by what other people concider meaningful, but one is also made into an object by other people.

All the limitations mentioned above restrict one's freedom to obtain chosen ends. This is also often argued against Sartre's conception of absolute freedom; one obviously is not absolutely free in reference to freedom to obtain. And, if absolute freedom is only about freedom to choose, then freedom is not absolute at all, and Sartre is inconsistent with his premises in favour of his argument (Landau 2012a). After this short introduction to some limitations to freedom, which Sartre presents, a closer examination to some of concepts is needed, in order, to understand how they appear as limitations, constrains or restrictions to freedom.

3.2.1 Facticity and Situation

Facticity (fr. *facticité*), which Sartre often calls "the given", is the set of facts already present to consciousness in all of its acts. Facticity is then "my place, my body, my past, my position" as a relation to the Other as my fundamental relation to this Other, whether the Other is conscious or non-conscious (Sartre 1992, 489). Facticity then creates a certain kind of context out of which freedom is able to operate. My facticity is a combination of not only what can be called my properties, such as time and place of my birth, sex, height and weight, my past acts, but also my position and relation to others − my socio-economic status and the attitudes others have towards me (Detmer 1988, 40). Sartre also argues that the relation between facticity and freedom is a relation of interdependence. "Without facticity freedom would not exists – as a power of nihilation and of choice − and without freedom facticity would not be discovered and would have no meaning." (Ibid., 495-496). This refers to Sartre's conception of the self and consciousness as nothingness, dependent on this facticity (the in-itself) as ontologically prior to consciousness. Consciousness is always supported by facticity because consciousness is always consciousness of something outside of itself, which is the facticity of its objects.

Facticity has also been considered as a limitation to freedom, as already argued in *the common sense argument* against freedom (Sartre, 1992, 619; also in Landau 2012a). In many cases I am impotent or lack power to change these facts according to how I would

want things to be. It seems quite clear that our own finiteness is an obvious reason we can not have everything at once and, on the other hand, facticity emerges as an obstacle in reference to our freely chosen project. The facticity of *the slave in chains* is that the slave is cuffed to the chains and the practical freedom of the slave is limited drastically if the slave's project is something by which this being in chains emerges as a limitation to the slave's freedom. The relationship between freedom and facticity is also ambiguous, for it seems apparent that facticity both makes freedom possible and limits it. But Sartre does not argue that facticity does not limit freedom to obtain ends. He only denies that facticity determines how one chooses in a situation. What common sense view then argues is that some aspect of facticity − in the case of the slave or in a case of intense bodily pain – "can exert an overriding, all-things-considered valuational and normative force, such that I am compelled by it to adopt a specific end ('cessation of pain') and try to act accordingly." (Poellner 2012, 231). Sartre denies this, because "the For-itself has to be radically its own nothingness" and no values can be imposed on consciousness as overriding by the for-itself's facticity (Sartre 1992, 253-245; 561). And, as Poellner interprets Sartre, "no past or present reality external to consciousness can impose conclusive, all-things-considered normative demands on the for-itself." This is beacuase all the values the for-itself encounters in the world, values that it in some sense can envisage as objective, can be experienced and judged as non-ultimate, [contingtent], by it (Poellner 2012, 233). One "can not therefore employ his transcendence to fix an ultimate limit to his surpassings, nor can he employ his freedom to captivate itself." (Sartre 1992, 484). In other words, one cannot liberate the self from choosing again.

It must be remembered that Sartre's effort is to describe freedom as a concept that is wholly descriptive and non-normative – to describe *the technical and philosophical concept of freedom*[34]. The slave in chains as an example must be seen as a provocative move to highlight the normative aspect of freedom in how we use it in everyday life and in the common sense view of freedom. According to Sartre, it is possible to argue that the slave is absolutely free to choose, and relatively unfree to obtain the chosen ends. At

[34] As Sartre specifies in *Being nd Nothingness* (1992, 622), "The technical and philosophical concept of freedom, the only one which we are considering here, means only the autonomy of choice. It is necessary, however, to note that the choice, being identical with acting, supposes a commencement of realization in order that the choice may be distinguished from the dream and the wish.".

the same time, we can condemn the master for limiting the slave's freedom and hope for the master to release the slave or hope for the slave being able to escape.

Sartre's use of the concepts *facticity* and *situation* might still be somewhat vague and entangled, some clarification about the relation between the two would be preferable then. All the objects of my consciousness together, and separately, are my facticity. But, by projects as the end towards which I surpass, this facticity arises as a meaningful totality of my being. This meaningful totality is the way I experience the world through the choice of my projects. Situation then is the for-itself experiencing the world through its values, but at the same time understanding the values as contingent and non-ultimate.

3.2.2 Coefficient of Adversity

There is a varying amount of resistance we experience in our lives when pursuing our goals through our projects. It seems that the objects of my consciousness are not only indifferent to my pursuing of my goals, but they also appear to resist my efforts in obtaining the desired outcome. The amount of resistance faced is what Sartre calls "coefficient of adversity" of things (*coefficient d'adversité*), a term originally presented by Gaston Bachelard (1942)[35]. It is also a fact that external objects and states of affairs actually resist my freely chosen projects. Sometimes this resistance is less efficient, but in many occasions it quite radically limits my obtaining the ends, which I have chosen to pursue. "The coefficient of adversity of things is such that years of patience are necessary to obtain the feebles result." (Sartre 1992, 619).

To make the point more specific, with the help an example presented again by Sartre, goes as follows. I might have a project of climbing to a mountain, but the route I take, in its part, defines the coefficient of adversity; I might take a trail to get on the top or I can choose to climb straight to the top using a route with the steepest slope. It is also that my amputated leg adds up to this adversity. The amount of adversity I face is clearly, not only dependent on my own disabilities, but also dependent on the choice of the goal and the way I decide to implement my effort. Facticity and coefficient of adversity are then clearly limitations to my freedom, but also always in reference to the project I have

[35] Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams* (1942, 139). Orig. *L'Eau et les Rêves: Essai sur l'imagination de la matière* (Paris: Librarie José Corti, 1942).

chosen. But it is *my* freedom which reveals the resistance and the obstacle with its coefficient of adversity; ”Man encounters an obsacle only within the field of his freedom.”. The projecting freedom then reveals whether the given obstacle is revealed as resistance or as aid (Sartre 1992, 627-628). It is only afrer I have freely created a relation between myself and the mountain, as something to be climbed, that the resistance, and its coefficient of adversity, is revealed. Secondly, the obstacle also reveals its coefficient in terms of a value of the posited end, and in this case the posited end being the success in climbing to the top of the mountain. The mountain is no obstacle for me if I choose to get to the top ”at any cost”, and on the other hand, the obstacle will discourage me, if I have freely fixed limits to my desire of making the climb. Value then appears as revealed by this adversity. This adversity ”reveals to me the way in which I stand in relation to the ends which I assign myself” and it is an ambiguous relation because I can never know for shure whether the resistance is telling something about the mountain or about myself (ibid., 628).

Many would probably argue that it is my incapabilies in relation to the mountain and its coeffient of adversity, that define my freedom. Sartre denies this by saying; ”Is it not I who decide the coefficient of adversity in things and even their unpredictability by deciding myself?” (Sartre 1992, 708). It is I who deside the meaning of the mountain top to be climbed as diserable or unbearable, and at the same time reveal its coefficient of adversity by how I value it. As facticity, [being in-itself as an object for consciousness], in my situation is what it is, coefficient of adversity, on the other hand, is a relative concept, admitting degrees; degrees that are relative to my freedom (Detmer 1988, 44).

3.2.3 The Other

Although Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness,* begins his ontological examination of the structures self by examining the connection between the in-itself and the for-itself, the third modality of being, being for-others, is at great importance in understanding the self as a social being, and as even being dependent on the Other’s being. His analysis includes the for-itself’s being for others, and conversely, the Other’s being for the for-itself. He even goes as far as saying that there is ”for human reality another mode of existence as fundamental as being-for-itself…”, which is being for-others (Sartre 1992, 298). Some conceptual clarification is in place, in order, to understand what we are

referring to when talking about the Other. It must be noted that the Other (or being for-others) is not a part of the ontological structure of the self, in the same sence as the in-itself and the for-itself are, although our existence is both being for-itself and for-others simultaneously (Ibid., 376). What is meant by the Other is a being, which I am conscious of, as other and separate from myself, and this being is an entity with its own subjectivity.

The Other brings forth the social existence of the for-itself, a social existence which is a relation of asymmetry and conflict. Here is what Sartre says about this conflictual relation between the for-itself and the Other:

> ”Everything which may be said of me in my relations with the Other applies to him as well. While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the Other, the Other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me. We are by no means dealing with unilateral relations with an object-in-itself, but with reciprocal and moving relations. The following descriptions of concrete behavior must therefore be envisaged within the perspective of conflict. Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others.” (Sartre 1992, 474-475)

The relationship between two consciousnesses is then conflictual in many ways because my being for others is not controlled by me. As the Other becomes an object for me, I also become aware of my being objectified by the Other, as in my being for-others. The conflictual nature of the social being between consciousnesses is not only a relation which appears in bad intentions, as it is often described for example in the master-slave dialectic, but also in relationships based on love, in which the loved one is at first taken as an object in the world, in order, to found one’s own desired being (Sartre 1992, 474;484).

The social self, nevertheless, arising in an encounter between two subjects, creates a conflictual relation between the subjects, and this relation is asymmetrical because whenever the self is an object, the Other is a subject, and vice versa. ”Two consciousnesses can *never* both be subjects for each other or objects to one another”, this is what Schroeder (1984, 237) calls the ”asymmetry claim” and which he argues to be the first truly relational claim Sartre gives in his theory; it is a transition from different modes of being to asserting a relation between two entities. The Other exists

for the self then either as an object or as a subject, and these two modes of experience are the only ones possible for the self to be able to experience the Other. Social life is a perpetual ”oscillation”, [transition between], of these modalities (ibid.). Although the Other is at first percieved and realized as on object for the self, one’s social self cannot be reduced to, or derived from, the self’s own consciousness. It is then the Other as subject, which is a necessary condition for the social self’s existence. And, as Sartre puts it; ”Thus Hegel's brilliant intuition is to make me depend on the Other in my being. I am, he said, a being for-itself which is for-itself only through another. Therefore the Other penetrates me to the heart. I can not doubt him without doubting myself since ’self-consciousness is real only in so far as it recognizes its echo (and its reflection) in another.’" (Sartre 1992, 321). The for-itself is dependent on the Other’s recognition for its own existence as a for-itself, and as a subject. There is an important notice though to be made about the temporal order of these experiences. At first, the Other appears to me as a body and then as an object for my consciousness. After this, I also get a sense of my embodied objectivity being reflected in the eyes of the Other (Detmer 2008, 92). A closer look into both occasions is needed, in order, to understand what Sartre means by *the Other-as-object* and *the Other-as-subject*, and the relation between the two.

The Other-as-object as a problem is not a question of knowing the Other, for Sartre, as it is in more traditional ways of positing the epistemological question of *the problem of other minds,* in which knowledge of other minds is always indirect. Rather, Sartre argues that the self is connected to the Other with an original relation in its everyday reality, and this relation can be constanty pointed to and is consequently revealed to me without any reference to any unknown (Sartre 1992, 341). He gives an example to highlight his point[36]. A shorter version of the example goes as follows; I am in a public park looking at the lawn, trees and benches. I percieve the objects in the park as instruments which mirror my aesthetic purposes of the park as enjoyable and relaxing place. My organization of the world is currently filled with my aesthetic enjoyment of the park consisting of all the instruments it contains for my purposes.

[36] The whole explanation is given in *Being and Nothingness* (1992, 340-347). Also, a modification of the example is given by Schroeder (1984, 180-182).

There is a change in my totality when a person passes by the benches. The other person becomes an object for me among other things, such as the bences and the lawn. I understand the person in terms of the same categories as the ones nearby. ”He exists in the field of my conscious awareness in the order that my point of view imposes on him.” (Detmer 2008, 93). Because I apprehend the person only as an object for me, I concequently don’t percieve any subject-object relationship between the person and other objects present. My solitary apprehension of the totality is compromised when I see the person walking aroud the park looking and measuring the objects. As a result of my seeing the Other, ”a new set of properties, meanings, and relations emerge” and these relations are the correlates of *the Other persons* potential purposes (Schroeder 1984, 181). I see the person encountering the same objects I see, and the objects are being organized differently than I organize them in my world.

> ”Everything is in place; everything still exists for me; but everything is traversed by an invisible flight and fixed in the direction of a new object. The appearance of the Other in the world corresponds therefore to a fixed sliding of the whole universe, to a decentralization of the world which undermines the centralization which I am simultaneously effecting.” (Sartre 1992, 343)

The Other person, although referred as a person, Sartre insists, is still only an object for me in my organized totality of objects in the park (Sartre 1992, 343). But this all changes, when I come aware of being seen by the Other. It is not that the Other appears to be as a subject, when I see the Other; but conversely, it is only through my awareness of being seen by the Other that the Other becomes a subject for me. (Detmer 2008, 93) The relation between the Other-as-object and the Other-as subject is a relation of interconnectedness; here is what Sartre argues:

> ”if the Other-as-object is defined in connection with the world, as the object which sees what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of being seen by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject.” (Sartre 1992, 344)

A second kind of example highlight this relation, presented by Schroeder (1984, 182-183), a modification of Sartre's keyhole example[37]. An adolescent, called F, has secretly slipped into his older sister's room and is engrossed in reading her personal diary. F's whole attention is in the reading, the sentences, the meaning. F if immersed in his reading and so into the process of reading that the only self-awarenes F has is the registration of the reading process. He is sucked into the process of reading the diary. At this case, F being an adolescent, he's action is performed "with a naive innocense that precedes the experience of good and evil" (Ibid., 182). F is so immersed with reading that he does not percieve himself as located, his sense of time and space is lost and his "present is only his presence to the diary, his collusion with its self-revelation." (Ibid., 183). F is the master of the situation; at any point, he is able decide he has had enough reading and abandon the diary. Now, suddenly, the door opens and F's sister walks in and caught's her brother in the act. At this moment, F only experiences himself *only* through the social self, and as an object for-others, in this case F experiences *only what she sees*.

The example reveals several consequences about our social self, and, also, about the subject-object relation. The dicovery of the social self is revealed by being caught in the act. At first, the being in pre-reflective mode of being focused only to the process of reading the diary suddenly changes to a pre-reflective mode of seeing oneself through the eyes of the Other; intruder, spy, traitor. What one experiences immediately is the social self, a new dimension one's being, and this transformation can be motivated only by the Other-as-subject. The person is then presented to consciousness "*in so far as the person is an object for the Other*", which means that the foundation of the self is not in my own nothingness, but outside myself. I can be for myself only in reference to the Other (Sartre 1992, 349). The social self is continually reawakened in essentially social emotions such as shame, pride and fear (Schroeder 1984, 183). The social self, according to Sartre, is given to me in being objectified by the Other, like a shadow or a burden; and it is something which is out of one's control (1992, 351). But it is also a direct experience of the Other as the Other-as-subject.

[37] The look of the Other and shame are, for Sartre, types of becoming aware of not only the Other's, but also our own subjectivity.

What also happens is that F's original project of reading the diary is lost and the past totalily of the order of things no longer provide options for him. F exists now merely in the mode of objectivity (Schroeder 1984, 184). Experience of his sister's subjectivity also means for him, as an adolescent, a loss of certain innocence in becoming an object of moral judgement. Once the Other's subjectivity is experienced, one's acts will always have a public side, a side which one experiences with a varying degree of clearness. Though being displaced from one's subjectivity into objectivity, and into the discovery of the social self, one begins to recover by escaping from being defined and objectified. The validity of the definiton can be experienced, but not its finality (Ibid.).

Sartre's effort is to present an alternative response to the problem of other minds. For him, it is not a question of knowledge through which we become aware of the Other's existence; We become aware of the Other by direct experience, and to experience our social self is to experience the subjectivity of others (1992, 289-390). Secondly, the problem of the traditional project of knowing the Other conceals the Other by totally objectifying the Other in search for expressions as signs of consciousness, but one can apprehend the subjectivity of the Other only by turning the attention to the transformations of one's own experience (Schroeder 1984, 185)[38]. According to this, F's experience of shame and the experience of his social self is possible as the result of his sister's being as the Other-as-subject, and without any reference to *knowing* her [as an object of knowledge].

The ontology of persons is then that each person is dependent on Others in one's being. The social self (being for-others) is a being controlled by Others, and one's personal relations are the way one tries to solve this problem; the problem which the social self poses for the for-itself, and which it can only perpetually struggle to control. There are also only two strategies for the struggle; one can either objectify the Others, in order, to prevent the emergence of the social self or try to control the Other's subjectivity by

[38] "If the Other-as-object is defined in connection with the world as the object which sees what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of being seen by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject." (Sartre 1992, 344-345)

persuading and inducing the Other to see oneself, as one prefers to be seen (Schroeder 1984, 186).

What does this, what has been said about the Other, mean for the freedom of the for-itself then? The Other clearly poses a threat and different kind of limitations to for-itself's freedom. The Other does so only by using the freedom the Other has and is also capable of making the limiting of freedom of others as a conscious choice of activity, a project. It is not only though that the Other's existence is only a limitation for one's freedom, but it is also a necesary condition for my being, because ”finally in my essential being I depend on the essential being of the Other, and instead of holding that my being-for-myself is opposed to my being-for-others, I find that being-for-others appears as a necessary condition for my being-for-myself.” (Sartre 1992, 321-322). The Other also plays a crucial role in how I become aware of my own objectivity; without the other, ”I am trapped within the confines of my own subjective perspective.” The Other plays a role of a mediator between myself and me, and is able to ”force me to confront what I would prefer to ignore”, to see myself as the Other sees me (Detmer 2008, 96).

4. Realizing and Denying of Freedom

If we suppose that Sartre is right about his main argument about the radical freedom of our consciousness, based on the nature of consciousness without any content itself or without a self within consciousness or 'behind' it, it still does not intuitively follow that we experience ourselves free to choose. Actually, quite the opposite. Many people experience their lives in general, and their choices in particular, relatively restricted and limited. Some of these restrictions were already described earlier in Chapter 3.2. There seems to be a drastic contradiction between Sartre's ontological claim concerning the freedom of our consciousness, and his trancendental claim about practical restrictions to our freedom in reference to both choosing and obtaining chosen ends. If we are free to choose, as Sartre argues, we should also at least at some level be capable of realizing ourselves free. This would mean that we should be somehow able to recognize multiple different choices as possible for us to choose in a situation and, also, that the choice one ultimately makes should be distinguished, in some relevant sense, as one's own. Otherwise, the claim about our freedom to choose seems only like a tautological *ex*

nihilo kind of argument. Sartre explains this experienced contradiction by introducing two key concepts of his early philosophy; *anguish* and *bad faith* (1992, Part One).[39]

4.1 Anguish

It is at this point, at the latest, that Sartre's conception of consciousness' freedom to choose takes also an ethical turn. The revelation of our freedom reveals also our responsibility for our choices, because of the absence *a priori* rules or ethical standards to follow or to lean on. What this means is that consciousness is in an unenviable situation of having to choose its way of doing or being with no reference to any standards, and by realizing the past standards and choices as ineffective in the current situation. If consciousness is always free, its should be able to "stare its own freedom right in the face through an act of reflection" (Detmer 2008, 71); in other words, it should always be aware of its own freedom by being able to adopt a mode of [self] reflection. The reality of this reflecive consciousnees of our freedom, according to Sartre, is anguish (fr. *l'angoisse*) − "it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question of itself." (Sartre 1992, 65). Some clarification concerning the concept of anguish is deeded, in order, to understand what Sartre means by 'freedom revealing itself in anguish'. This is because, quite paradoxically, we should probably expect to feel joyed and happy, when experiencing freedom, not aguished. Anguish arises, as a result, of reflective experience of consciousness of its absolute freedom (Rae 2011, 35). Anguish results from nihilating ability of consciousness; it refuses the given to announce its own meaning, or to motive any action, and it also has a constant need to go beyond, [to surpass or to escape], what is present to it in the field of its attention (Detmer 2008, 70). Sartre's analysis of anguish is highly influenced by both Kierkegaard and Heidegger. Whereass for Kierkegaard anguish is a sense of lack, Heidegger considers anguish as the

[39] Both concepts [anguish and bad faith] quite surprisingly appear already in Part One in *Being and Nothingness.* According to Eshleman the chapter on bad faith should be located at the end of the book. The chapter is a fracture in otherwise coherent way of examination from abtract to more particular. Eshleman (2008), "The Misplaced Chapter on Bad Faith, or Reading 'Being and Nothingness' in Reverse". *Sartre Studies International*, *14*(2), 1–22.

apprehension of nothingness[40]. The two are not contradictory, but instead the one implies the other.

Sartre starts his analysis of anguish by distinguishing anguish from fear. I am fearful in respect to external force or a threath from without and, on the other hand, I am in anguish when concerned about my own conduct and choice of action. And, as Sartre explains the difference, ”anguish is distinguished from fear in that fear is fear of beings in the world whereas anguish is anguish before myself (Sartre 1992, 65). In many cases fear and anguish are also exclusive of one another ”since fear is unreflective apprehension of the transcendent and anguish is reflective apprehension of the self; the one is born in the destruction of the other” (ibid., 66).

The difference between fear of the external and anguish before myself is highlighted and further explained by Sartre in the example of a mountain walker finding oneself at the edge of an abyss (Sartre 1992, 66-69). With help of the same example, he also presents a futrher analysis concerning the temporal nature of our consciousness of our own being and anguish, this is what he calls *anguish in face of the future.* The mountain walker’s fear of the external is presented by the precipice on a narrow path without a guard rail, where the precipice is something to be avoided because it represents a danger of death. There are also other *probable* causes to be avoided like a sudden gust of wind, slipping on a stone and falling and the crumbling earth of the path beneath my feet. According to Sartre, fear appears to me as an anticipated future based on these external possibilities, which come to me from without. Through these anticipations, I am given to my self as a thing and an object in the world and, more importantly, an object which is passive in relation to these possibilities. At the moment when fear appears in this situation, I apprehend my self as a trancendental object among the other objects. I react to this situation with reflection; I pay attention to the rocks on the path and keep myself away from the edge of the path to keep myself away from the threatening situations. At the same time, I project a certain number of future conducts before me to keep these

[40] More on Kierkegaard’s anguish in Kierkegaard (1980), *The Concept of Anxiety*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; and on Heidegger’s (2010) anguish [”angst”] in Heidegger (2010), *Being and Time* (transl. Stambauch J.). Albany: State University of New York Press.

threaths away and, by doing this, I escape the fear by changing the trancendent probabilities to my own possibilities (Ibid., 67).

A couple of important points to make arise. Some would argue that Sartre adopts some kind of solipsism in the transition from trancendent probabilities to agents own possibilities. This claim fails though, because Sartre explicitly states that ”The possibility which I make *my* concrete possibility can appear as my possibility only by raising itself on the basis of the totality of the logical possibilities which the situation allows.” (Sartre 1992, 69). The rejected possibles then, for Sartre, have no other being than their sustained being, and it is the agent who sustains them. The second question is, where is the I who makes it possible for the agent to say that the possibilities in a situation are one’s own? And more precicely, what is the difference between a trancendent probability and my possibility as an agent? Sartre’s aswer is that it is I who sustains these possibles and other possibilities as to nihilate them as not possible in terms of myself in the future. The question is then about how I stand in relation to the future. Determinism implies that the future is closed; my possibilities then, and my suspension of these possibilities, would be then without force and ineffective, according to it.

The data of our experience, according to Detmer (2008, 72), speak powerfully against determinism. Rather, ”anguish reveals an open future that we not only can, but must, continually make through our actions.”. The temporal structure of the I, causes also ambiguity in reference to future choice of possible action, and whether this choice is really mine. In situation of the mountain walker then. If I could be the one to determine the future conduct of the mountain walker, there would be no place for anguish in any relevant sense. But when I realize that the mountain walker is exactly me, not someone else, the worries about my future conduct arise. It is then about how I surpass the situation towards my anticipated future which polarizes the future choices to non-possible and possible, but only in suspension. And, as Sartre describes the relation between the I and the future; ”I am the self which I will be, in the mode of not being it”, and that ”anguish is my consciousness of being my own future, in the mode of not being it” (1992, 68). In other words, my choice is then dependent on the future self. Many people consider their self as being quite cultivated and stable, and they also often base their choice on past and present self, in order, to explain their choice of action as either

free or restricted by this self. This would mean that if one is able to rely on past in terms of present and future conduct there would be no need for anguish in face of the future (Detmer 2008, 72).

This leads us to another question concerning the self's relation to its past, which Sartre calls *anguish in the face of the past* (1992, 69). As it has already become evident, Sartre's phenomenical description of anguish deals not only with self's relation to transcendent [objects of consciousness], but also, and especially, with for-itself's relation to the past self. Sartre, again, offers a polemic and provocative description of anguish in the face of past about a gambler who has freely and sincerely decided not to gamble any more. But when confronting a gaming table, all the gambler's past resolutions seem to melt away and present themselves ineffiecient. The earlier resolution of not gambling anymore is still there when the gambler turns to it in belief for it to help, but only to recognize in anguish its total inefficacy. What happens is that the gambler recognizes the past resolution as part of the self only to the extent that it is an object for consciousness. The former understanding of the past situation is no more than a memory or an idea, and the gambler has to remake the situation ”*ex nihilo* and freely”; the not-gambling is as much one of the gambler's possibilities as is gambling. Nothing prevents the gambler in anguish from gambling, because both options are again free for the gambler to choose. In order, for the option of not-gambling to be effective and to motivate action, the gambler must rediscover the fear of finacial ruin or of disappointing others and re-create it as experienced fear. (Ibid., 69-70)

Sartre's main argument concerning the relation between freedom and anguish is that we directy experience our freedom, and it is not only some speculative metaphysical theory. Rather, as has been said already earlier, he is offerin a descriptive and phenomenological account of freedom. We directly experience for example the inability of the factual givens to dictate their meaning to us or our own motives to determine our actions. As Detmer explains, the objects in one's perceptual field ”do not organize themselves into a situation for one's benefit” but they rather become meaningful and ”comprise a situation only in the light of my surpassing them in reaching toward some end” (Detmer 2008, 74). Anguish is then experienced when I desperately want to escape my freedom and responsibility to nihilate the given and instead allow my past self, or resolutions, or situation to determine my future actions (ibid.). This fleeing of anguish,

by denying one's freedom, is what Sartre calls *bad faith,* and, according to him, we do it most of the time (Sartre 1992, 711).

4.2 Bad Faith

As consciosness acts intentionally by choosing its projects, the world then reveals itself to the for-itself as opportunities or as chances. The self lacks stability because it is always in between the past, which is no longer, and future, which is not-yet. This condition is what Sartre calls ”transcendence-facticity” (Sartre 1992, 99); the world appears as opportunities, but the for-itself lacks the ultimate reason to choose one way or another. This is also the source of anguish described in the last chapter. Anguish also gives rice to a peculiar phenomenon of bad faith (fr. *mauvaise foi)* which, according to Sartre, is essential to human reality; it is an attitude, in which ”consciousness instead of directing its negation outward turns it toward itself.” (Ibid., 87).

Bad faith, according to Sartre, is a psychological phenomenon of self-deception and self-denial (Sartre 1992, 86-88). It can also be charachterized as a failure in exercising integrity and autonomy in one's basic life choices or choices of one's projects. All people are probably common with the phenomenon of getting caught by trying to hide the truth by denying something one knows to be true. People often tell themselves comforting truths which they att the same time know to be false. Common household categories for such behaviour in psychology are such as ”rationalization” and ”denial” (Detmer 2008, 78). Bad faith as self-deception is paradoxical and contradictory at the same time because I am at the same time both the deciever and the possessor of the truth: ”I must know the truth very exactly in order to conceal it more carefully”, ” I deliberately and cynically attempt to lie to myself, I fail completely in this undertaking…” (Sartre 1992, 89). To be in bad faith is then also conscious and active choice because conceiling the truth presupposes consciousness of it, and it is not then something one suffers from[41]. Bad faith, according to Sartre, is not about the duality of the deciever and decieved however, but rather implies ”in essense the unity of a single consciousness” (Ibid.). This unity of a single consciousness is also compatible and in

[41] More specifically, according to Sartre (1992, 89), bad faith does not come to human reality from outside, and bad faith is not something on undergoes or is infected with. It is not a state or a condition one is in.

line with his view of counsciousness as always self-aware, as he rejects the idea of an unconscious part of a self, unlike Freud, who cut the psychic whole into two (*ego* and *id*). Sartre's concept of bad faith then, denies any existence of the unconscious, [unlike Freud who presented his view of unconscious drives of the self], and presents bad faith as a conscious effort to conceal what is present to it, or rather the meaning of the objects, present to it[42]. How is bad faith as a form of self-deception possible then? It is, according to Sartre, because consciousness conceals bad faith as a permanent risk in its being, and the origin of this risk is the nature of consciousness to simultanously "be what it is not and not to be what it is" (Ibid., 116). And put otherwise, the for-itself has to be its own past [in a form of facticity] and at the same time something that it is not yet [in a form of trancending the facticity]. A closer look into the concept is necessary because bad faith as a phenomenon seems both undeniable and impossible at the same time; undeniable, because we often not only see it excercised by other people but also catch ourselves from the very same activity; and impossible, because of the contradiction of having to be both the deciever and the decieved at the same time.

To be in bad faith is then to lie to oneself and decieve oneself with this lie. But how is this possible? Bad faith, as a concept, is disinguished from lying in general on the basis that lying is a negative attitude aimed, not towards consciousness itself, but towards the transcendent. To lie also essentially means that the liar is in possesion of the truth, which is aimed at as something to be hidden. One cannot lie about something one is ignorant of (Sartre 1992, 87). Whereas the negative attitude, the lie, towards the trancendent is dependent on the 'truth' of the transcendent which the attitude negates, the "inner disposition" of the liar, on the other hand, is positive; "The liar intends to decieve and he does not seek to hide his intention from himself" (Ibid., 88). The lie does not involve, or put into play, the inner structure of present consciousness, but it is in perfect regulatory control of all attitudes and these attitudes are always pointed outside of itself. In a lie consciousness also affirms itself existing as "*hidden from the Other*", and it thereby utilizes the ontological duality of *myself of myself* and *myself in the eyes of the Other* (Ibid., 88-89); for example by hiding one's intentions from the Other.

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[42] Also, John Searle has presented critique agains Freud's conception of the unconscious as incoherent. Searle (1992), *The Rediscovery of the Mind.* Cambridge: MIT Press.
More on Freud in Freud (2004), *The Unconscious*. London: Penguin Classics. Orig. (1915).

This can not be the case though concerning bad faith because the deciever and the decieved exist in a form of a single consciousness. In bad faith then, ”the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as thuth a pleasing untruth”; bad faith then has a structure of falsehood in appearance, but it is from oneself from whom one hides the truth. This all, happening within a single consciousness means, according to Sartre, that bad faith ”does not come from outside to human reality”, but ”There must be an original intention and a project of bad faith”; In this duality ”I must know in my capacity as deciever the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one decieved. Better yet I must know the truth very exactly, *in order,* to conceal it more carefully” (Sartre 1992, 89). What follows from this translucency of consciousness is that one in bad faith must be consciouss of being so. This also implies that, in order, to be consciouss of one’s bad faith one must also be in good faith to be able to recognize oneself in bad faith, because one exactly knows the truth which one tries to hide (Ibid.). Bad faith is, acconding to Sartre, an evanescent phenomenon which ”vacillates continually between good faith and cynicism”. One can then choose to live in bad faith and embrace it as a constant lifestyle, but this does not mean that one does not have any awakenings to good faith or cynicism every now and then (Ibid., 90).

How are human beings capable of bad faith then, and what are the conditions and different patterns of bad faith? What ultimately makes bad faith possible is what Sartre calls ”transcendence-facticity”, the double property of human being; existing in a mode of the non-conscious in-itself (facticity) and, at the same time, in a mode of conscious for-itself (transcendence). The two aspects ougth to be in valid coordination [in reflection], but, according to Sartre, ”bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them or to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences.” (Sartre 1992, 98). Bad faith is then an effort to hide the truth by using different patterns with which, consciousness is capable of escape the truth into both directions by denying either one’s facticity or one’s transcendence.

Sartre describes in many examples, different forms and patterns of bad faith, in order, for one to be able to escape one’s present condition with the help of bad faith. In an example of *a serious man* one escapes transcendence to facticity by taking an attitude of a serious man. This attitude is contrasted with attitudes such as play and desire, [attitudes of transcending the situation]. According to Sartre, ”The serious attitude

involves starting from the world and attributing more reality to the world than to oneself; at the very least the serious man confers reality on himself to the degree to which he belongs to the world.” (Sartre 1992, 741). The serious attitude is then an extreme version of what Husserl calls the natural attitude. The serious man is ”of the world” and do not possess any potentiality in himself. ”Everything is a consequence for him and there is no beginning” and ”Man is serious when he takes himself for an object” (Ibid.). Every choice, situation and condition, is interpreted by him as being externally determined, and the man has no power or potentiality in the face of these external powers. He is in bad faith and his bad faith aims at presenting himself to himself only as a consequence.

Conversely, one has the ability of denying one’s facticity, for example, when being ashamed of one’s past or one’s present facticity and respond to it by entirely identifying oneself in terms of trancendence (Detmer 2008, 82). Example of this kind of denials could be such as denying a shameful past of having a criminal youth or of being inclined to differents addictions. In many cases one can even pick out more than just one thing to be hidden and exploit both facticity and transcendence as an escape, in effort to deny different things. Detmer (Ibid., 76-77) argues that many of the techniques used by advertisers, public relation personel and political propagandists are also the ones which we use ourselves to decieve ourselves in bad faith; by using misleading or partially true statements instead of true ones; by converting attention to desired facts with help of omission and emphasis; and by exploiting vagueness and ambiguity in communication because it is more difficult to refute vague and ambiguous claims than clear ones. In many cases bad faith exploits also not only the temporal past-future duality, but also the duality between reflective and pre-reflective consciousness. The continual game of mirror and reflection is excerciced by the for-itself when it sincerily adopts a mode of reflection. The goal of bad faith is then to ”cause me be what I am, in the mode of ’not being what one is’, or not to be what I am in the mode of ’being what one is’.” (Sartre 1992, 110). By staying in a mode of pre-reflective consciousness one denies one’s ability trancend the situation by concentrating on *what is,* and by adopting a mode of reflection one is capable of denial of one’s facticity as an effort to escape the current self towards what it is not yet. Dermer explains this kind of behaviour as a particular skill some people learn over the time; they learn skillfully to slide from

prereflective to reflective consciousness in highly selective manner (Detmer 2008, 84). An many times this skill is something they also fail to notice.

Some conceptual clarifications are still needed, in order, to undestand the concept of bad faith and how it relates to what Sartre calls *good faith*, or sincerity. In the ideal of sincerity, sincerity ”does not assign to me a mode of being or a particular quality, but in relation to that quality it aims at making me pass from one mode of being to another mode of being” (Sartre 1992, 110). In other words, one authentically recognizes what one is and what one is not yet and establishes one’s relation (give’s meaning) to this existing difference.

The faith *in bad faith* in many cases operates quite conversely to the ideal of sincerity. It does not hold the norms or the criteria of the truth as they are accepted in good faith; rather, ”What it decides first, in fact is the nature of the truth.” (Sartre 1992, 113). According to Sartre, the problem results from the nature of faith, because ”faith is decision and that after each intuition, it must decide and *will what it is.*”; bad faith is then a primitive project in which it, before reflecting, decides first the nature of requirements of the evidence. It often decides ”not to demand too much” (Ibid.). Most people are probably familiar with different explanations from other people, and maybe from ourselve also, in which any evidence is being treated as non-persuasive. For example, any evidence argued in favour of the benefits of excercicing some sports to one’s health might be considered as non-persuasive, if one has already decided the way of one’s own being as a person ’not fit to do any sports’. In bad faith then, many of us already have chosen a way of being and any evidence conflicting with the original choice of ourselves appears only non-pursuasive. In cases like this one is in free control over the decision about one’s being and, also, over the evidence, which is already beforehand chosen as non-persuasive. According to Sartre, we do not only exploit bad faith occasionally, but are capable of choosing it as a type of being in the world; ”This original project of bad faith is a decision in bad faith on the nature of faith.”, which is chosen already before any reflective or voluntary decision (Ibid.).

If one’s choice of the self then polarizes how one’s world as a totality is arranged, it seems that our choices lead necessarely to bad faith, because the choice of the self seems lead to using different techniques of bad faith, in order, to escape our freedom. This is quite similar with Levy’s (2002) view already presented earlier in Chapter 3.1.4;

after the original choice of oneself is made, what remains are the choices which get their meaning from the original choice, and the projects chosen then only follow from the original choice. In other words, there are no reasons that support any other choices than the ones that align with the original choice. How is it possible to escape bad faith then?

Sartre argues that the way out of bad faith is authenticity, or conversion to authenticity, (Sartre 1992, 116; 333-334). The human condition is to be always in the middle of past and future, between past which it is not anymore and future which it is not yet; bad faith is the escape from this condition by denying either one's facticity or one's abitily to transcend the situation. The condition is also permanent in a way that one can not free oneself from it but can only escape the current condition into self-recovery, which Sartre calls authenticity (Ibid., 116). What makes bad faith possible is the inner disintergration between the in-itself and the for-itself in one's being. Consciousness escapes this disintegration in a form of bad faith by denying this very disintegration. Sartre argues that we can radically escape bad faith, but does not expicitly argue how it is done, rather, different explanations are dispersed throughout *Being and Nothingness.* What Sartre means by authenticity is something in between losing oneself into the world of objects and trancending the situation in sopisism. It is authentic being in the world, which allows for both the facticity of the for-itself in the world and its ability to give meaning to its current condition, and by that trancend its situation. As already noted in Chapter 2, Sartre argues that the in-itself is ontologically prior to the for-itself. This means that authenticity can only be achieved by engaging in the world, engaging in the world *with* other people (Ibid., 334). The Other does not only limit my freedom, but also raises possibilities, possibilities of new ways of thinking and giving meaning. One's freedom is to "determine oneself to wish" (Ibid., 621), in other words, create a relation to things, a relation which one can call *mine* (Ibid., 746). To authentically exist is then to 'interiorize' the current facticity as one finds it meaningful (Ibid., 626), and as it has been constructed also by the Other, "within the ambit of my projects, which does not require any explicit decision to do so." (Webber 2011b, 187). Autheticity also means that one understands the contingency of one's being. Contingency, which appears only in light of the end one has chosen (Sartre 1992, 626). The present self is then contingent and the past is always in suspense in term of meaning and value because human reality, according to Sartre, is "perpetually expecting" (Ibid., 644). Bad faith is then an effort to unite the for-itself and the in-itself into in-itself-for-itself, which Sartre calls desire to be

God (Ibid., 723-724). What Sartre means by this can be understood as a desire of a state where one is in total control of identifying and defining one's ultimate and fundamental project. This, of course, is a hopeless effort in bad faith.

Sartre's view of authenticity as a refuge from bad faith has been also criticized by Santoni (2020) for not solving the problem of bad faith or being only a temporary help in the process of turning from one being in bad faith to another. The critique presented has at least a partial force because Sartre never explicitly explain how it could even be a permanent solution. According to Santoni (2020, 44), ”we can only suspend temporarily this project by readily affirming our freedom and responsibility (with no excuses) and thus be in accord with ourselves in “moments” of authenticity.”; it is because of the ontological structure of the self that we are not able to permanently recover from our condition of bad faith, and the recovery through authenticity is at best partial. It can be questioned though, whether Sartre means a permanent recovery from bad faith, because he argues that people flee anguish in bad faith ”most of the time”, and he clearly acknowledges the ontological separation between the in-itself and the for-itself (Sartre 1992, 711). This is because the whole project of *Being and Nothingness* and all the arguments rely on this ontological separation. The best way to read what Sartre means by authenticity is then to view it as an *attitude* of contingency and reflection in reference to one's current being, not as a mode of being which could be fully embraced or adopted.

4.4 Value

Value and meaning have been shortly addressed already in Chapter 3.1., but it is still necessary to take a couple of questions into examination, in order, to understand what kind of existence do values in Sartre's view, have. Sartre seems to hold *a subjectivist position* in respect to the 'reality' *of values* (ontological position) and, also, *a subjectivist position* in respect *to value judgements*. Detmer presents critique against Sartre for failing to adequately distinguish between the two positions and argues that subjectivity of values does not necessary entail subjectivity of value judgements. This is to say that there is no necessary connection between the two, and that there is a possibility that ”certain value judgements are 'objectively' true.” (Detmer 1986, 137).

Here is whats Sartre says about values: ”Values in actuality are demands which lay claim to a foundation” (Sartre 1992, 76); ”Value is always and everywhere the beyond of all surpassings” (Ibid., 144); Values are calls of something ”which does not yet exist” (Ibid., 615); ”In all cases of lack value is ’the lacked’ (Ibid., 144). And also in a longer passage: ”Possibility and value belong to the being of the for-itself. The for-itself is defined ontologically as a lack of being, and possibility belongs to the for-itself as that which it lacks, in the same way that value haunts the for-itself as the totality of being which is lacking.” (Ibid., 722). Value arises then for the for-itself as something lacked that is not-yet. What constitutes the experience of lack is the original choice of the self, a choice of oneself in terms of future. All of the expectations confronted as calls or demands in the real everyday life ”derive their meaning from an original projection of myself which stands as my choice of myself in the world.” (Ibid., 77).

But, as also noted before, free choices are also always made *in situation,* and ”every choice is the choice of a concrete change to be bestowed on a concrete given. Every situation is concrete.” (Sartre 1992, 652). One’s condition is to choose the meaning of one’s situation and give rise to the for-itself as the foundation of itself in situation, but it can not choose its position (Ibid., 131). ”The for-itself does not arise with a wholly given end, but by ’making’ the situation, the for-itself ’makes itself’ − and conversely.” (Ibid., 704).

Now, according to what has been said above, concerning the case of the experienced absence of Pierre in a cafe. The absence appears as a value lacked and this lack is a consequense of a project of meeting Pierre, it is then an expectation in terms of a valued goal. Despite the fact, that Pierre is also factually absent, the experienced absence is due to the project constituted by the for-itself. It is then because of the project constituted by the for-itself that Pierre is experienced as a lack. Using a similar analogy, a vegan person in a grocery store searching for a separate section dedicated to vegan food experiences it, not only factually absent, but also as something lacked; and this lack is based on the original choice of the self. The original choice, and particular projects especially, polarize one’s world into a totality, a view of the world based on values and one’s choice of the self in terms of the future; a totality which one pre-reflectively experiences in one’s everyday activities. But this is not to say that we just choose the values according to which we act for good, quite the contrary. Our values are constanly

challenged by the Other and, also, questioned by ourselves when examining the meaning and value of our project when facing restrictions and adversity. But, even if we were always capable of 'standing back' from the situation in a mode of reflection, it is still in many situations not enough to guide us in our choices in any way. Many situations force us to choose our actions not in a reflective mode, but rather in a level of choice of ourselves and our values.

What about value judgements then; not only about whether subjective experience of something as lacked as a value is possible, but also about the possibility of 'objective' value judgements. According to Detmer, our experience suggests the compability of *the subjectivity of values* and *the objectivity of value judgements* (1986, 137). He demonstates it with a case originally presented by Rachels (1981, 150)[43]: "We think that some things are *really* good, and other *really* bad, in a way that does not depend on how we feel about them. Hitler's concentration camps really were evil…", then "to say that the concentration camps were evil is to state a fact…". It is easy to agree and grant an objective status to this value judgement and I think only few people would disagree with it. Sartre would probably also agree, as he was a fierce defender of many oppressed minorities throughout his career. Sartre would probably also argue that this is not how value appears to us in our everyday life, because he insists that values appear to us, as a result, of our freely chosen projects; and secondly, abstract value judgements about the rightness or wrongness are formed in reflective level of consciousness in pure reflection, when one reflects one's own relation to different values and value judgements. In addition to this, it is the original choice of self, which the values are weighted up against.

Some contemplation, with the help of case example, is in place to make explicit what Sartre means. The ambiguos situation comprises of both subjectively experienced value and objective value judgements, in order, to highlight the efficacy [or inefficacy] of demands, which they present in terms of motivation and free choice of trancending the situation. What started from Rachels proposition for the objective wrongness of concentration camps in Nazi Germany can be contemplated with the help of Adolf

[43] Rachels, J. (1981). "John Dewey and the Truth about Ethics". In Cahn S.M., *New Studies in the Philosophy of John Dewey*. Hanover N.H.: The University Press of New England.

Eichmann's case. The case, and Eichmann's denial for the responsibility for his actions and choices in the trial in Jerusalem, has been widely debated and analyzed since; most famously by Hannah Arendt (1963)[44] who analyzed it, for example, from perspective of human capability to banalize evil acts. Eichmann was a high rank officer in Nazi Germany and he was in charge of the organization of the concentration camps as 'the final solution' to the Jewish question. When being questioned during the trial, Eichmann claimed *not* to be an anti-semite, and said that he was interested enough in Jews to have bought *Encyclopedia Judaica* into his bookshelf and that he even had not read *Mein Kampf.* He also considered himself only as an obedient bureucrat who only carried out the duties assigned to him. He maintained not to have broken any laws and denied taking any responsibility for the mass killings. He even described the personal discomfort of hearing the working of a gassing equipment and explained himself as having been so horrified by it that he even could not look inside. How should Eichmann's sayings in the hearings, and his choices in more general, be interpreted in terms of how Sartre presents his view of freedom of consciousness to choose.

At first, he clearly experienced the wrongness of his actions in pre-reflective level of consciousness when explaining himself being horrified enough not to be able to look inside. By denying responsibility for his actions, he clearly not only freely chose not to embrace a reflective mode of consciouss but also evasively drew attention to other evidence to defend his actions, such as his responsibility to act according to duties assigned. He obviously failed to take responsibility because he freely chose to act in bad faith, denying his freedom to act otherwise. He knew the wrongness of his acts but chose to look the other way. He also chose to deny some evidence in favour of his own free interpretation of his situation. He probably also chose not to reflect because of his project of being a responsible and honourable servant of the country and because of the fear of possible consequences to him, and possibly to his family, were experienced too demanding and powerful in terms of value and meaning.

An interpretation of this in terms of how Sartre defines freedom to choose calls for a reminder of what was presented of Sartre's view in Chapter 3.1.2. At first, as Sartre argued that there is only freedom in situation and situation through freedom (1992,

[44] Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. New York: Viking Press.

629). It was Eichmann's responsibility to freely organize his interpretation of the situation in terms of value and meaning, in order, for himself to trancend the situation. Secondly, as we remember Sartre arguing that ”every choice is a choice of finitude” (ibid., 636); this means that in many situations 'objective' value judgements are weighted not only against many other subjective values, which arise for one as calls for action, but also against other 'objective' value judgements. This highlights the inefficacy of 'objective' value judgements to motivate choices in a situation, in which they conflict either with the original choice of the self or with a project established by the self. 'Objective' value judgements present then only one possible way of trancending the situation and they appear as objects of reflection just as well as other possible choices of actions do.

The kind of subjectivism presented above obviously comes with consequences, and Sartre then argues that our existence itself is meaningless and absurd. Any single choice of a project over another is unjustified in objective terms.

> ”I do not have nor can I have recourse to any value against the fact that it is I who sustain values in being. Nothing can ensure me against myself, cut off from the world and from my essence by this nothingness which I am. I have to realize the meaning of the world and of my essence; I make my decision concerning them − without justification and without excuse.” (Sartre 1992, 77-78)
>
> ”It is absurd in this sense – that the choice is that by which all foundations and all reasons come into being, that by which the very notion of the absurd receives a meaning. It is absurd as being beyond all reasons.” (Sartre 1992, 616)

The absurdity of existence has recieved plenty of qritique over time, so it is useful to specify what Sartre means by that. At first, Landau (2012b, 6) for example argues that ”it is unclear why knowing that our values have no objective foundation must make us accept that our lives are absurd”, and that even if we accept Sartre's presuppositions that our choices lack foundation and <one can not justify a particular choice over another, ”there is no need to accept Sartre's view that life is absurd” (Ibid., 5). A reply to this has two explanations. At first, Sartre does not think that our lives or the world are meaningless or absurd and he actually ”credits phenomenology with restoring to the world the rich array of meanings and values”, which we encounter in our everyday lives (Detmer 2008, 55). To experience something as meaningful is to experience it *as*

something and this is different to just seeing something merely existing. And, as has been argued before in Chapter 2, this emergence of meaning to things is possible only by means of a focusing activity, excercised by intentional consciousness. Meaning to present comes in terms of future, a choice of future intended differently than it currently is (Sartre 1992, 641). Sartre's view then distinguishes between sheer existence and life experienced as meaningful, as a result, of our choices. Meaninglesness or absurdity of existence is manifest only when intentionality and the focusing activity of consciousness is absent (Detmer 2008, 56). Secondly, and more trivially, existence is meaningles because it can not possibly be explained because it defies rational explanation (ibid., 57). And put otherwise, all explanations presuppose existence, so existence can not be explained by any of one's choices.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion of what has been examined in the thesis, some viewpoints and observations are brought up and highlighted. At first, Sartre's conception of human freedom differs from many other theories of freedom, in that, it places the question of locating and examining the individual who is argued to be free to be the central question when talking about human freedom in any sense. This means that we must at first identify the structures of the self, and the way the self experiences its surroundings, in order, to understand intentional behaviour and motivational choice. This is the task, by which, Sartre also strarts the whole investigation in *Being and Nothingness,* by examining the conscious experience and the structures of the self. If freedom would be explained only by how well one succeeds in the projects one has chosen, the necessary link to the self is clearly missing. And followingly, comparisons between differently situated individuals, without an adequate link to their perspective of the world, are more about comparing probabilities in succeeding and these comparisons present only a limited view of human freedom, because in these comparisons the first-person perspective seems to be always missing.

Secondy, and paradoxically, in Sartre's phenomenological ontology, the self is nowhere to be found in introspection, or by any effort, which tries to locate it in or behind conscious acts, because the self is which ascapes the contingent and transcends the situation by giving it a meaning. The self nihilates what is, in order, to found its being as someway different, a being which is lacked in terms of a value. This means that the self

in constinuously in a state of instability, and this instability is produced by the self by realizing itself and being self-aware of its temporal structure.

Thirdly, the Other plays a crucial role in one's freedom in two ways. It is a necessay part of revealing and confirming both the self's being-as-subject and being as-object. This is because the for-itself can not found itself. It founds itself in relation to the in-itself and in relation to the Other. Freedom is then a relation; it is a relation which is often conflictual in nature, but it is not only that. One needs the Other's recognition, in order, to confirm one's own subjectivity. But this means that at the same time the Other holds similar freedom of objectification as oneself. On the other hand, the Other is a mediator between oneself and 'the world' by being capable of helping oneself out of being trapped by oneself's own subjective perspective.

Fourthly, the question of the importance of obtaining comes only after one has 'determined oneself to wish'; in other words, reflectively chosen one pursued end instead of another as a way of transcending the situation into the future. Sartre agrees that we are not able to succeed in everything we chooce to pursue, and our freedom is restricted in practical level in many ways; we are only free to modify our surroundings in terms of our freely chosen ends. The common sense view rightly raises up the importance of obtaining to individual freedom. But it also converts the discussion into something Sartre himself does not take up to be the object of his examination.

There is a considerable amount of ambiguity in examining one's free choices between everyday choices and the original choice of oneself. According to Sartre, meaning appears to us always at first from more fundamental choices of the self. But this does not mean that they are fixed to be so for good, because ultimately one is not able to escape the condition of being always in between the past and the future, or one can escape it only in bad faith. Sartre's emphasis is on meaning and value, and how we experience them. This leads him to examine not just human freedom, but more accurately, how motivation arises for us in a form of value. The motivational part in our being, regarding our choice of projects, is what is totally missing in for example in *the common sense view* of freedom.

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