

PART TWO

*Being-for-Itself*

## CHAPTER ONE

# Immediate Structures of the For-Itself

### I. PRESENCE TO SELF

NEGATION has referred us to freedom, freedom to bad faith, and bad faith to the being of consciousness, which is the requisite condition for the possibility of bad faith. In the light of the requirements which we have established in the preceding chapters, we must now resume the description which we attempted in the Introduction of this work; that is, we must return to the plane of the pre-reflective *cogito*. Now the *cogito* never gives out anything other than what we ask of it. Descartes questioned it concerning its functional aspect—"I doubt, I think." And because he wished to pass without a conducting thread from this functional aspect to existential dialectic, he fell into the error of substance. Husserl, warned by this error, remained timidly on the plane of functional description. Due to this fact he never passed beyond the pure description of the appearance as such; he has shut himself up inside the *cogito* and deserves—in spite of his denial—to be called a phenomenalist rather than a phenomenologist. His phenomenism at every moment borders on Kantian idealism. Heidegger, wishing to avoid that descriptive phenomenism which leads to the Megarian, antidialectic isolation of essences, begins with the existential analytic without going through the *cogito*. But since the *Dasein* has from the start been deprived of the dimension of

consciousness, it can never regain this dimension. Heidegger endows human reality with a self-understanding which he defines as an "ekstatic pro-ject" of its own possibilities. It is certainly not my intention to deny the existence of this project. But how could there be an understanding which would not in itself be the consciousness (of) being understanding? This ekstatic character of human reality will lapse into a thing-like, blind in-itself unless it arises from the consciousness of ekstasis. In truth the *cogito* must be our point of departure, but we can say of it, parodying a famous saying, that it leads us only on condition that we get out of it. Our preceding study, which concerned the conditions for the possibility of certain types of conduct, had as its goal only to place us in a position to question the *cogito* about its being and to furnish us with the dialectic instrument which would enable us to find in the *cogito* itself the means of escaping from instantaneity toward the totality of being which constitutes human reality. Let us return now to description of non-thetic self-consciousness; let us examine its results and ask what it means for consciousness that it must necessarily be what it is not and not be what it is.

"The being of consciousness," we said in the Introduction, "is a being such that in its being, its being is in question." This means that the being of consciousness does not coincide with itself in a full equivalence. Such equivalence, which is that of the in-itself, is expressed by this simple formula: being is what it is. In the in-itself there is not a particle of being which is not wholly within itself without distance. When being is thus conceived there is not the slightest suspicion of duality in it; this is what we mean when we say that the density of being of the in-itself is infinite. It is a fullness. The principle of identity can be said to be synthetic not only because it limits its scope to a region of definite being, but in particular because it masses within it the infinity of density. "A is A" means that A exists in an infinite compression with an infinite density. Identity is the limiting concept of unification: it is not true that the in-itself has any need of a synthetic unification of its being; at its own extreme limit, unity disappears and passes into identity. Identity is the ideal of "one," and "one" comes into the world by human reality. The in-itself is full of itself, and no more total plenitude can be imagined, no more perfect equivalence of content to contain-

er. There is not the slightest emptiness in being, not the tiniest crack through which nothingness might slip in.

The distinguishing characteristic of consciousness, on the other hand, is that it is a decompression of being. Indeed it is impossible to define it as coincidence with itself. Of this table I can say only that it is purely and simply *this* table. But I can not limit myself to saying that my belief is belief; my belief is the consciousness (of) belief. It is often said that the act of reflection alters the fact of consciousness on which it is directed. Husserl himself admits that the fact "of being seen" involves a total modification for each *Erebnis*. But I believe that I have demonstrated that the first condition of all reflection is a pre-reflective *cogito*. This *cogito*, to be sure, does not posit an object; it remains within consciousness. But it is nonetheless homologous with the reflective *cogito* since it appears as the first necessity for non-reflective consciousness to be seen by itself. Originally then the *cogito* includes this nullifying characteristic of existing for a witness, although the witness for which consciousness exists is itself. Thus by the sole fact that my belief is apprehended as belief, it is *no longer only belief*; that is, it is already no longer belief, it is troubled belief. Thus the ontological judgment "belief is consciousness (of) belief" can under no circumstances be taken as a statement of identity; the subject and the attribute are radically different though still within the indissoluble unity of one and the same being.

Very well, someone will say, but at least we must say that consciousness (of) belief is consciousness (of) belief. We rediscover identity and the in-itself on this level. It was only a matter of choosing the appropriate plane on which we should apprehend our object. But that is not true: to affirm that the consciousness (of) belief is consciousness (of) belief is to dissociate consciousness from belief, to suppress the parenthesis, and to make belief an object for consciousness; it is to launch abruptly on to the plane of reflectivity. A consciousness (of) belief which would be only consciousness (of) belief would in fact have to assume consciousness (of) itself as consciousness (of) belief. Belief would become a pure transcending and noematic qualification of consciousness; consciousness would be free to determine itself as it pleased in the face of that belief. It would resemble that impassive regard which, according to Victor Cousin, consciousness casts

on psychic phenomena in order to elucidate them one by one. But the analysis of methodological doubt which Husserl attempted has clearly shown the fact that only reflective consciousness can be dissociated from what is posited by the consciousness reflected-on. It is on the reflective level only that we can attempt an ἐποχή,<sup>1</sup> a putting between parentheses, only there that we can refuse what Husserl calls the *mit-machen*.<sup>2</sup> The consciousness (of) belief, while irreparably altering belief, does not distinguish itself from belief; it exists *in order* to perform the act of faith. Thus we are obliged to admit that the consciousness (of) belief is belief. At its origin we have apprehended this double game of reference: consciousness (of) belief is belief and belief is consciousness (of) belief. On no account can we say that consciousness is consciousness or that belief is belief. Each of the terms refers to the other and passes into the other, and yet each term is different from the other. We have seen that neither belief nor pleasure nor joy can exist *before* being conscious; consciousness is the measure of their being; yet it is no less true that belief, owing to the very fact that it can exist only as *troubled*, exists from the start as escaping itself, as shattering the unity of all the concepts in which one can wish to inclose it.

Thus consciousness (of) belief and belief are one and the same being, the characteristic of which is absolute immanence. But as soon as we wish to grasp this being, it slips between our fingers, and we find ourselves faced with a pattern of duality, with a game of reflections. For consciousness is a reflection (*reflet*), but *qua* reflection it is exactly the one reflecting (*réfléchissant*), and if we attempt to grasp it as reflecting, it vanishes and we fall back on the reflection. This structure of the reflection-reflecting (*reflet-reflétant*) has disconcerted philosophers, who have wanted to explain it by an appeal to infinity—either by positing it as an *idea-ideae* as Spinoza did, who calls it an *idea-ideae-ideae*, etc., or by defining it in the manner of Hegel as a return upon itself, as the veritable infinite. But the introduction of infinity into consciousness, aside from the fact that it fixes the phenomenon and obscures it, is only an explicative theory expressly designed to reduce the being of consciousness to that of the in-itself. Yet if we accept the objective existence of the reflection-reflecting as it is given, we are obliged to conceive

<sup>1</sup> Tr. Correction for ἐποχή, 'an obvious misprint.

<sup>2</sup> Tr. "To take part in," "to participate."

a mode of being different from that of the in-itself, not a unity which contains a duality, not a synthesis which surpasses and lifts the abstract moments of the thesis and of the antithesis, but a duality which *is* unity, a reflection (*reflet*) which *is* its own reflecting (*reflection*). In fact if we seek to lay hold on the total phenomenon (*i.e.*, the unity of this duality or consciousness (of) belief), we are referred immediately to one of the terms, and this term in turn refers us to the unitary organization of immanence. But if on the contrary we wish to take our point of departure from duality as such and to posit consciousness and belief as a dyad, then we encounter the *idea-ideae* of Spinoza and we miss the pre-reflective phenomenon which we wished to study. This is because pre-reflective consciousness is self-consciousness. It is this same notion of *self* which must be studied, for it defines the very being of consciousness.

Let us note first that the term in-itself, which we have borrowed from tradition to designate the transcending being, is inaccurate. At the limit of coincidence with itself, in fact, the self vanishes to give place to identical being. The *self* can not be a property of being-in-itself. By nature it is a reflexive, as syntax sufficiently indicates—in particular the logical rigor of Latin syntax with the strict distinctions imposed by grammar between the uses of *ejus* and *sui*. The *self* refers, but it refers precisely to the *subject*. It indicates a relation between the subject and himself, and this relation is precisely a duality, but a particular duality since it requires particular verbal symbols. But on the other hand, the *self* does not designate being either as subject or as predicate. If indeed I consider the "se" in "il s'ennuie,"<sup>3</sup> for example, I establish that it opens up to allow the subject himself to appear behind it. It is not the subject, since the subject without relation to himself would be condensed into the identity of the in-itself; neither is it a consistent articulation of the real, since it allows the subject to appear behind it. In fact the *self* cannot be apprehended as a real existent; the subject can not *be self*, for coincidence with self, as we have seen, causes the self to disappear. But neither can it *not be* itself since the self is an indication of the subject himself. The *self* therefore represents an ideal distance within the immanence of the subject

<sup>3</sup> Tr. Literally the "self" in "he bores himself" (*il s'ennuie*), a familiar construction in the many French reflexive verbs. Cf. English "he washes himself."

in relation to himself, a way of *not being his own coincidence*, of escaping identity while positing it as unity—in short, of being in a perpetually unstable equilibrium between identity as absolute cohesion without a trace of diversity and unity as a synthesis of multiplicity. This is what we shall call presence to itself. The law of being of the *for-itself*, as the ontological foundation of consciousness, is to be itself in the form of presence to itself.

This presence to itself has often been taken for a plenitude of existence, and a strong prejudice prevalent among philosophers causes them to attribute to consciousness the highest rank in being. But this postulate can not be maintained after a more thorough description of the notion of presence. Actually *presence to* always implies duality, at least a virtual separation. The presence of being to itself implies a detachment on the part of being in relation to itself. The coincidence of identity is the veritable plenitude of being exactly because in this coincidence there is left no place for any negativity. Of course the principle of identity can involve the principle of non-contradiction as Hegel has observed. The being which is what it is must be able to be the being which is not what it is not. But in the first place this negation, like all others, comes to the surface of being through human reality, as we have shown, and not through a dialectic appropriate just to being. In addition this principle can denote only the relations of being with the *external*, exactly because it presides over the relations of being with what it is not. We are dealing then with a principle constitutive of *external relations* such that they can appear to a human reality present to being-in-itself and engaged in the world. This principle does not concern the internal relations of being; these relations, inasmuch as they would posit an otherness, do not exist. The principle of identity is the negation of every species of relation at the heart of being-in-itself.

Presence to self, on the contrary, supposes that an impalpable fissure has slipped into being. If being is present to itself, it is because it is not wholly itself. Presence is an immediate deterioration of coincidence, for it supposes separation. But if we ask ourselves at this point *what it is* which separates the subject from himself, we are forced to admit that it is *nothing*. Ordinarily what separates is a distance in space, a lapse of time, a psychological difference, or simply the individuality of two co-presents—in short, a *qualified*

reality. But in the case which concerns us, *nothing* can separate the consciousness (of) belief from belief, since belief is *nothing other* than the consciousness (of) belief. To introduce into the unity of a pre-reflective *cogito* a qualified element external to this *cogito* would be to shatter its unity, to destroy its translucency; there would then be in consciousness something of which it would not be conscious and which would not exist in itself as consciousness. The separation which separates belief from itself can not be grasped or even conceived in isolation. If we seek to reveal it, it vanishes. We find belief once more as pure immanence. But if, on the other hand, we wish to apprehend belief as such, then the fissure is there, appearing when we do not wish to see it, disappearing as soon as we seek to contemplate it. This fissure then is the pure negative. Distance, lapse of time, psychological difference can be apprehended in themselves and include as such elements of positivity; they have a simple negative *function*. But the fissure within consciousness is a nothing except for the fact that it denies and that it can have being only as we do not see it.

This negative which is the nothingness of being and the nihilating power both together, is *nothingness*. Nowhere else can we grasp it in such purity. Everywhere else in one way or another we must confer on it being-in-itself as nothingness. But the nothingness which arises in the heart of consciousness is *not*. It is *made-to-be*. Belief, for example, is not the contiguity of one being with another being; it is *its own* presence to itself, its own decompression of being. Otherwise the unity of the for-itself would dissolve into the duality of two in-itself.<sup>4</sup> Thus the for-itself must be its own nothingness. The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* as a presence to itself, and this empty distance which being carries in its being is Nothingness. Thus in order for a *self* to exist, it is necessary that the unity of this being include its own nothingness as the nihilation of identity. For the nothingness which slips into belief is *its* nothingness, the nothingness of belief as belief in itself, as belief blind and full, as "simple faith." The for-itself is

<sup>4</sup>Tr. *Deux en-soi*. Ungrammatical as the expression "in-itself" admittedly is, it seems to me the most accurate translation. "In-themselves" would have a different meaning, for it would suggest a unity of two examples of being-in-itself, and Sartre's point here is their duality and isolation from each other.

the being which determines itself to exist inasmuch as it can not coincide with itself.

Hence we understand how it was that by questioning the pre-reflective *cogito* without any conducting thread, we could not find nothingness anywhere. One does not *find*, one does not *disclose* nothingness in the manner in which one can find, disclose a being. Nothingness is always an *elsewhere*. It is the obligation for the for-itself never to exist except in the form of an elsewhere in relation to itself, to exist as a being which perpetually effects in itself a break in being. This break does not refer us elsewhere to another being; it is only a perpetual reference of self to self, of the reflection to the reflecting, of the reflecting to the reflection. This reference, however, does not provoke an infinite movement in the heart of the for-itself but is given within the unity of a single act. The infinite movement belongs only to the reflective regard which wants to apprehend the phenomenon as a totality and which is referred from the reflection to the reflecting, from the reflecting to the reflection without being able to stop. Thus nothingness is this hole in being, this fall of the in-itself toward the self, the fall by which the for-itself is constituted. But this nothingness can only "be made-to-be" if its borrowed existence is correlative with a nihilating act on the part of being. This perpetual act by which the in-itself degenerates into presence to itself we shall call an ontological act. Nothingness is the putting into question of being by being—that is, precisely consciousness or for-self. It is an absolute event which comes to being by means of being and which, without having being, is perpetually sustained by being. Since being-in-itself is isolated in its being by its total positivity no being can produce being and nothing can happen to being through being—except for nothingness. Nothingness is the peculiar possibility of being and its unique possibility. Yet this original possibility appears only in the absolute act which realizes it. Since nothingness is nothingness of being, it can come to being only through being itself. Of course it comes to being through a particular being, which is human reality. But this being is constituted as human reality inasmuch as this being is nothing but the original project of its own nothingness. Human reality is being in so far as within its being and for its being it is the unique foundation of nothingness at the heart of being.

## II. THE FACTICITY OF THE FOR-ITSELF

YET the for-itself is. It *is*, we may say, even if it is a being which is not what it is and which is what it is not. It *is* since whatever reefs there may be to cause it to founder, still the project of sincerity is at least conceivable. The for-itself *is*, in the manner of an event, in the sense in which I can say that Philip II *has been*, that my friend Pierre is or exists. The for-itself *is*, in so far as it appears in a condition which it has not chosen, as Pierre is a French bourgeois in 1942, as Schmitt was a Berlin worker in 1870; it *is* in so far as it is thrown into a world and abandoned in a "situation"; it *is* as pure contingency inasmuch as for it as for things in the world, as for this wall, this tree, this cup, the original question can be posed: "Why is this being exactly such and not otherwise?" It *is* in so far as there is in it something of which it is not the foundation—its *presence to the world*.

Being apprehends itself as not being its own foundation, and this apprehension is at the basis of every *cogito*. In this connection it is to be noted that it reveals itself immediately to the *reflective cogito* of Descartes. When Descartes wants to profit from this revelation, he apprehends himself as an imperfect being "since he doubts." But in this imperfect being, he establishes the presence of the idea of perfection. He apprehends then a cleavage between the type of being which he can conceive and the being which he is. It is this cleavage or lack of being which is at the origin of the second proof of the existence of God. In fact if we get rid of the scholastic terminology, what remains of this proof? The very clear indication that the being which possesses in itself the idea of perfection can not be its own foundation, for if it were, it would have produced itself in conformance with that idea. In other words, a being which would be its own foundation could not suffer the slightest discrepancy between what it is and what it conceives, for it would produce itself in conformance with its comprehension of being and could conceive only of what it is.

But this apprehension of being as a lack of being in the face of being is first a comprehension on the part of the *cogito* of its own contingency. I think, therefore I am. What am I? A being which is not its own foundation, which qua being, could be other than it is to the extent that it does not account

for its being. This is that first intuition of our own contingency which Heidegger gives as the first motivation for the passage from the un-authentic to the authentic.<sup>5</sup> There is restlessness, an appeal to the conscience (*Ruf des Gewissens*), a feeling of guilt. In truth Heidegger's description shows all too clearly his anxiety to establish an ontological foundation for an Ethics with which he claims not to be concerned, as also to reconcile his humanism with the religious sense of the transcendent. The intuition of our contingency is not identical with a feeling of guilt. Nevertheless it is true that in our own apprehension of ourselves, we appear to ourselves as having the character of an unjustifiable fact.

Earlier, however, we apprehended ourselves as consciousness—that is, as a “being which exists by itself.”<sup>6</sup> How within the unity of one and the same upsurge into being, can we be that being which exists by itself as not being the foundation of its being? Or in other words, since the for-itself—in so far as it is—is not its own being (*i.e.*, is not the foundation of it), how can it as for-itself, be the foundation of its own nothingness? The answer is in the question.

While being is indeed the foundation of nothingness as the nihilation of its own being, that is not the same as saying that it is the foundation of its being. To found its own being it would have to exist at a distance from itself, and that would imply a certain nihilation of the being founded as of the being which founds—a duality which would be unity; here we should fall back into the case of the for-itself. In short, every effort to conceive of the idea of a being which would be the foundation of its being results inevitably in forming that of a being which, contingent as being-in-itself, would be the foundation of its own nothingness. The act of causation by which God is *causa sui* is a nihilating act like every recovery of the self by the self, to the same degree that the original relation of necessity is a return to *self*, a reflexivity. This original necessity in turn appears on the foundation of a contingent being, precisely that being which is *in order* to be the cause of itself. Leibniz' effort to define necessity in terms of possibility—a definition taken up again by Kant—is undertaken from the point of view of knowledge

<sup>5</sup>Tr. I have corrected what must surely be a misprint. “From the authentic to the authentic,” as the text actually reads, would make no sense.

<sup>6</sup>*Cf. Introduction, Section III.*

and not from the point of view of being. The passage from possibility to being such as Leibniz conceives it (the necessary is a being whose possibility implies its existence) marks the passage from our ignorance to knowledge. In fact since possibility precedes existence, it can be possibility only with respect to our thought. It is an external possibility in relation to the being whose possibility it is, since being unrolls from it like a consequence from a principle. But we pointed out earlier that the notion of possibility could be considered in two aspects. We can make of it a subjective indication. The statement, “It is possible that Pierre is dead,” indicates that I am in ignorance concerning Pierre's fate, and in this case it is a witness who decides the possible in the presence of the world. Being has its possibility outside of itself in the pure regard which gauges its chances of being; possibility can indeed be given *to us* before being; but it is *to us* that it is given and it is in no way the possibility of this being. The billiard ball which rolls on the table does not possess the possibility of being turned from its path by a fold in the cloth; neither does the possibility of deviation belong to the cloth; it can be established only by a witness synthetically as an external relation. But possibility can also appear to us as an ontological structure of the real. Then it belongs to certain beings as *their* possibility; it is the possibility which they are, which they have to be. In this case being sustains its own possibilities in being; it is their foundation, and the necessity of being can not then be derived from its possibility. In a word, God, if he exists, is contingent.

Thus the being of consciousness, since this being is in itself *in order* to nihilate itself in for-itself, remains contingent; that is, it is not the role of consciousness either to give being to itself or to receive it from others. In addition to the fact that the ontological proof like the cosmological proof fails to establish a necessary being, the explanation and the foundation of my being—in so far as I am a *particular being*—can not be sought in necessary being. The premises, “Everything which is contingent must find a foundation in a necessary being. Now I am contingent,” mark a desire to find a foundation and do not furnish the explicative link with a real foundation. Such premises could not in any way account for *this* contingency but only for the abstract idea of contingency in general. Furthermore the question here is one

of value, not fact.<sup>7</sup> But while being in-itself is contingent, it recovers itself by falling into for-itself. It *is*, in order to lose itself in a for-itself. In a word being *is* and can only be. But the peculiar possibility of being—that which is revealed in the nihilating act—is of being the foundation of itself as consciousness through the sacrificial act which nihilates being. 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 refer only to itself; but *that which is annihilated*<sup>8</sup> in consciousness—though we can not call it the foundation of consciousness—is the contingent in-itself. The in-itself can not provide the foundation for anything; if it founds itself, it does so by giving itself the modification of the for-itself. It is the foundation of itself in so far as it is *already no longer* in-itself, and we encounter here again the origin of every foundation. If being in-itself can be neither its own foundation nor that of other beings, the whole idea of foundation comes into the world through the for-itself. It is not only that the for-itself as a nihilated in-itself is itself given a foundation, but with it foundation appears for the first time.

It follows that this in-itself, engulfed and nihilated in the absolute event which is the appearance of the foundation or upsurge of the for-itself, remains at the heart of the for-itself as its original contingency. Consciousness is its own foundation but it remains contingent *in order that there may be* a consciousness rather than an infinity of pure and simple in-itself. The absolute event or for-itself is contingent in its very being. If I decipher the givens of the pre-reflective *cogito*, I establish, to be sure, that the for-itself refers to itself. Whatever the for-itself may be, it is this in the mode of consciousness of being. Thirst refers to the consciousness of thirst, which it *is*, as to its foundation—and conversely. But the totality “reflected-reflecting,” if it could be given, would be contingency and in-itself. But this totality can not be attained, since I can not say either that the consciousness of thirst is consciousness of thirst, or that thirst is thirst. It is there as a nihilated totality, as the evanescent unity of the phenomenon. If I apprehend the phenomenon as plurality, this plurality indicates itself as a total unity, and hence its

<sup>7</sup> This reasoning indeed is explicitly based on the *exigencies* of reason.

<sup>8</sup> Tr. Sartre says “annihilated” here, but I feel that he must have meant “nihilated” since he has told us earlier that being can not be annihilated.

meaning is its contingency. That is, I can ask myself, “Why am I thirsty? Why am I conscious of this glass? Of this Me?” But as soon as I consider this totality in in-itself, it nihilates itself under my regard. It *is not*; it *is* in order not to be, and I return to the for-itself apprehended in its suggestion of duality as the foundation of itself. I am angry because I produce myself as consciousness of anger. Suppress this self-causation which constitutes the being of the for-itself, and you will no longer find anything, not even “anger-in-itself”; for anger exists by nature as for-itself. Thus the for-itself is sustained by a perpetual contingency for which it assumes the responsibility and which it assimilates without ever being able to suppress it. This perpetually evanescent contingency of the in-itself which, without ever allowing itself to be apprehended, haunts the for-itself and reattaches it to being-in-itself—this contingency is what we shall call the *facticity* of the for-itself. It is this facticity which permits us to say that the for-itself *is*, that it *exists*, although we can never *realize* the facticity, and although we always apprehend it through the for-itself.

We indicated earlier that we can be nothing without playing at being.<sup>9</sup> “If I am a café waiter,” we said, “this can be only in the mode of *not being* one.” And that is true. If I could *be* a café waiter, I should suddenly constitute myself as a contingent block of identity. And that I am not. This contingent being in-itself always escapes me. But in order that I may freely give a meaning to the obligations which my state involves, then in one sense at the heart of the for-itself, as a perpetually evanescent totality, being-in-itself must be given as the evanescent contingency of my *situation*. This is the result of the fact that while I must *play at being* a café waiter in order to be one, still it would be in vain for me to play at being a diplomat or a sailor, for I would not be one. This inapprehensible *fact* of my condition, this impalpable difference which distinguishes this drama of realization from drama pure and simple is what causes the for-itself, while choosing the *meaning* of its situation and while constituting itself as the foundation of itself in situation, *not to choose* its position. This part of my condition is what causes me to apprehend myself simultaneously as totally responsible for my being—inasmuch as I am its foundation—and yet as totally unjustifiable. Without facticity consciousness could choose its

<sup>9</sup> Part One, Chapter Two, Section II.



attachments to the world in the same way as the souls in Plato's *Republic* choose their condition. I could determine myself to "be born a worker" or to "be born a bourgeois." But on the other hand facticity can not constitute me as *being* a bourgeois or *being* a worker. It is not even strictly speaking a *resistance* of fact since it is only by recovering it in the sub-structure of the *pre-reflective cogito* that I confer on it its meaning and its resistance. Facticity is only one indication which I give myself of the being to which I must reunite myself in order to be what I am.

It is impossible to grasp facticity in its brute nudity, since all that we will find of it is already recovered and freely constructed. The simple *fact* "of being there," at that table, in that chair is already the pure object of a limiting-concept and as such can not be grasped. Yet it is contained in my "consciousness of being-there," as its full contingency, as the nihilated in-itself on the basis of which the for-itself produces itself as consciousness of being there. The for-itself looking deep into itself as the consciousness of being there will never discover anything in itself but *motivations*; that is, it will be perpetually referred to itself and to its constant freedom. (I am there in order to . . . *etc.*) But the contingency which paralyzes these motivations to the same degree as they totally found themselves is the facticity of the for-itself. The relation of the for-itself, which is its own foundation qua for-itself, to facticity can be correctly termed a factual necessity. It is indeed this factual necessity which Descartes and Husserl seized upon as constituting the evidence of the *cogito*. The for-itself is necessary in so far as it provides its own foundation. And this is why it is the object reflected by an apodictic intuition. I can not doubt that I am. But in so far as this for-itself as such could also not be, it has all the contingency of fact. Just as my nihilating freedom is apprehended in anguish, so the for-itself is conscious of its facticity. It has the feeling of its complete gratuity; it apprehends itself as being there *for nothing*, as being *de trop*.

We must not confuse facticity with that Cartesian substance whose attribute is thought. To be sure, thinking substance exists only as it thinks; and since it is a created thing, it participates in the contingency of the *ens creatum*. But it is. It preserves the character of being-in-itself in its integrity, although the for-itself is its attribute. This is what is called Descartes' substantialist illusion. For us, on the other

hand, the appearance of the for-itself or absolute event refers indeed to the effort of an in-itself to found itself; it corresponds to an attempt on the part of being to remove contingency from its being. But this attempt results in the nihilation of the in-itself, because the in-itself can not found *itself* without introducing the *self* or a reflective, nihilating reference into the absolute identity of its being and consequently degenerating into *for-itself*. The for-itself corresponds then to an expanding de-structuring of the in-itself, and the in-itself is nihilated and absorbed in its attempt to found itself. Facticity is not then a substance of which the for-itself would be the attribute and which would produce thought without exhausting itself in that very production. It simply resides in the for-itself as a memory of being, as its unjustifiable *presence in the world*. Being-in-itself can found its nothingness but not its being. In its decompression it nihilates itself in a for-itself which becomes qua for-itself its own foundation; but the contingency which the for-itself has derived from the in-itself remains out of reach. It is what *remains* of the in-itself in the for-itself as facticity and what causes the for-itself to have only a factual necessity; that is, it is the foundation of its *consciousness-of-being* or *existence*, but on no account can it found its *presence*. Thus consciousness can in no case prevent itself from being and yet it is totally responsible for its being.

### III. THE FOR-ITSELF AND THE BEING OF VALUE

ANY study of human reality must begin with the *cogito*. But the Cartesian "I think" is conceived in the instantaneous perspective of temporality. Can we find in the heart of the *cogito* a way of transcending this instantaneity? If human reality were limited to the being of the "I think," it would have only the truth of an instant. And it is indeed true that with Descartes the *cogito* is an instantaneous totality, since by itself it makes no claim on the future and since an act of continuous "creation" is necessary to make it pass from one instant to another. But can we even conceive of the truth of an instant? Does the *cogito* not in its own way engage both past and future? Heidegger is so persuaded that the "I think" of Husserl is a trap for larks, fascinating and ensnaring,