THE SELF AND THERAPY

Self: Illusion or our One Certainty?

Phenomenology, Existentialism, and Process

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20th-Century Version

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Part 2: Phenomenology, Existentialism, and Process

In our discussion of self, we must indeed be careful not to say what cannot be (meaningfully) said and to be aware that that which cannot be said can perhaps be shown. Wittgenstein's analysis of the limits of language and of the world placed the self outside of it. In a strange way, his view of self coincides with that of our next thinker about self, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the founder of phenomenology.

Husserl's *transcendental ego* is also outside of the world and, in some sense, constitutes that world. Like Wittgenstein, Husserl's initial interest was in the foundations of logic, and only later did he become concerned with "philosophical" issues per se. The language analyst's and the phenomenologist's views of self have much in common, but Husserl finds a way to say a great deal about that which we must remain silent. He does this by "bracketing" the world and holding in suspension any judgment about the reality of that world as we experience it. In his elucidation of our experience of the world, whatever the ontological status of that world may be, Husserl elucidates the structure of the self. At least he believes he does so.

Husserl studied under Brentano, and phenomenology owes a great deal to Brentano's doctrine of the intentionality of consciousness, the doctrine that the essence of consciousness is its being directed toward an object that may or may not objectively exist. We have met Brentano before, as Freud's philosophy professor who almost made religious belief an intellectually respectable option for the adolescent atheist and whose theory of intentionality was transmogrified into Freud's theory of libidinal investment (cathexis) of objects. According to Brentano, consciousness intends in three ways: by grasping objects without intellectual judgment so they appear in consciousness without judgment of their truth or falsity or external reality or lack of it; by acts of intentionality in which an intellectual judgment is made about the object of consciousness; and by acts of intentionality in which an affective judgment is made. In other words, consciousness intends objects neutrally, with judgments of truth or falsity, or with judgments of goodness or badness. This schema was intended as the basis for an empirical psychology whose evidence would be both experimental and introspective. However, Brentano put the emphasis on introspection, on *acts* of consciousness, perceiving, judging, and experiencing, not on the correlatives of consciousness. That is, he was interested in exploring what we are actually aware of, not whether

anything corresponds to it in the world; he was interested in mentation rather than in judgment. Brentano is an introspectionist. Husserl was to turn this way of psychologizing into something quite different.

Husserl's first book was on the philosophy of arithmetic. It gave a primarily psychological account of mathematics; that is, it described the mental processes by which mathematics is done. Brentano's influence pervaded Husserl's account of the foundations of arithmetic from a purely "psychological" point of view, yet Husserl did devote attention to the mathematical objects intended by mathematical consciousness. Nevertheless, his emphasis was on the mental activity of the mathematician, not on numbers and operations. Gottleib Frege, the German mathematical logician who sent Wittgenstein to Russell, criticized Husserl's psychological account of mathematics. Husserl listened to these criticisms and for a while took the position that all acts of consciousness intended "real" objects. Like the early Russell, Husserl became a Platonic realist, that is, one who believed that mathematical objects were real, that "two" for example, exists somewhere, and that we "see" it and its relations with our mind's eye. However, Husserl did not long remain a Platonic realist. His interests shifted back to consciousness and its intentionality, an interest that evolved into his mature philosophy, which he called *phenomenology*. Husserl's first explication of this point of view was in his *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology*, but my comments below are based on his late work, *The Cartesian Meditations* (1931), which were originally lectures delivered at the Sorbonne.

Phenomenology, especially the phenomenology of *The Cartesian Meditations,* is important to our inquiry because it puts the self, here called the transcendental ego, at the center of a system of thought and makes it the central datum of philosophy. The philosophical analysts, however reluctantly, all wound up discussing the self, but for them it is tainted by a history of metaphysical (i.e., meaningless) speculations about it, and they either reduce self to body or give a linguistic account of how we use the word *self*. Not so Husserl; the transcendental ego, the thinking (in Descartes's sense of thinking: judging, willing, or feeling) I, is the one certainty, and the logically necessary basis for any *apodictically certain* knowledge. Husserl's phenomenology is the explication of the I (ego) and its consciousness in all its modalities and ramifications. Husserl's starting point is Cartesian radical doubt, a radical doubt that leads to the *cogito,* the self as thinker, as consciousness, as the only possible starting point for philosophical knowledge. Husserl embraces the Cartesian methodology but believes that Descartes missed an

opportunity to build a science of consciousness that his procedure of radical doubt made possible.

In his lectures, Husserl enjoined his audience to engage in Cartesian radical doubt, to, like Descartes, doubt all that can be doubted until a foundation for knowledge that cannot itself be doubted be found, if there is any to be found. As Husserl engages in the Cartesian attitude with its attendant anxiety, he, like Descartes before him, comes to see that the existence of the external world, of his body, and of his mind as an object of scientific study—as the psychologists envision it—are all not indubitable. On the contrary, they could be the product of illusion, a dream, a hallucination, a fantasy, or a distortion.

So far, Husserl and Descartes are in precise agreement. They remain so in the next step, the discovery that doubting implies a doubter—that thinking, in the sense of consciousness now, is indubitable. So is the thinking self. This raises several questions. Why the need for certainty? Why not the tentative, the probable, the likely, the approximate? In general, Anglo-American empiricists tend to be willing to settle for less than certainty, while the continental rationalists seek it. John Dewey, the American pragmatist, wrote a book called *The Quest for Certainty* (1929) which critiques that quest for making an impossible demand and rejecting the actual in search for the ideal, while Husserl, positioning himself as the heir of the founder of rationalism, insists on certainty whether in his philosophy of logic and mathematics or in his phenomenological psychology. Several thinkers, including Alfred North Whitehead, have pointed out that mathematical deduction in its apparent certainty may be the wrong model for philosophy and speculative thought in general. Be that as it may, Husserl started out as a philosopher of mathematics and, although not a great mathematician like Descartes, remained entranced by its apparent certainty. There is an irony here; modem philosophers of mathematics tend to believe that mathematics is certain because it tells us nothing about the world, that it is tautological, to use Wittgenstein's term, and in a sense, Husserl achieves certainty by suspending all judgment about the world and what is in (or not in) it.

The second question raises a more fundamental issue. Both Descartes and Husserl go from the indubitable datum "thinking (consciousness) now" to thinker, transcendental ego, and believe that the latter is as certain as the former. As I said in the case of Descartes, this is not a valid inference, its legitimacy being particularly in question if thinker is interpreted as thinking substance. Husserl's way of handling this is different from Descartes's. Descartes is simply certain that thinking implies thinker, and

for all the radicalness of his doubt, he does not question it or argue for it. It is his first principle. Not so Husserl. Rather, he argues that consciousness is consciousness *of,* and consciousness of consciousness of (i.e., awareness of being conscious of), and that unless there is an ego, or I, a consciousness that is a consciousness of being conscious of, we would be in an infinite regress in which there would have to be a conscious conscious of being conscious of being conscious *ad infinitum.* So he postulates a transcendental ego, an I beyond, in the sense of being logically prior to, experience, experience always being experience of being conscious of. It is the transcendental ego, the beyond-I, that does phenomenology, that is the phenomenological investigator. The transcendental ego is strikingly similar to Wittgenstein's self as the limit of the world. For both thinkers, the world is my world but the my is not in it.

Husserl emphasizes the difficulty in truly engaging in radical doubt. The habits of a lifetime, biological survival mechanisms, psychological defense mechanisms, common sense, and the need for security (however illusionary) all mitigate against sticking with it. Radical doubting engenders too much anxiety. Try it. What may start out as an intellectual exercise can quickly transmute into an intensely affective experience. But with Descartes's example before us, it can be done. In Husserl's version, this is not a one-time activity; quite the contrary, it is an ongoing enterprise that requires constant effort. The endpoint of radical doubting, the bedrock that cannot be doubted, is radical doubting itself and the transcendental ego.

Husserl makes radical doubting the foundation of his phenomenology. He does that by institutionalizing it, by making it the *sine qua non* of philosophy and philosophizing. He does this by suggesting that "we put the world in brackets," that is, make no judgment about its ontological status, its reality or irreality, its substantiality or phantasmagorality. When we do this, we assume the attitude of *phenomenological reduction,* which Husserl also calls *phenomenological epoche.* To maintain an attitude of phenomenological reduction, of suspension of judgment, is counterintuitive and meets resistance. We are intrinsically naive ontologists, and to refrain from ontological judgment is a far from easy task. The injunction for the phenomenologist to maintain an attitude of epoche has been compared with the fundamental rule of psychoanalysis: to free associate, to speak whatever comes to mind without regard for its sense or nonsense or the embarrassment or anxiety it entails. Just as the analyst analyzes the patient's resistance to free association, the phenomenologist recalls the thinker (who may be himself) to the attitude of epoche.

Once the world is in brackets, we see that there is always consciousness (thinking) and that consciousness is always consciousness of. We can now describe either pole of consciousness of—the consciousness or the object of consciousness—and we can do it with what Husserl calls apodictic certainty (i.e., the same level of certainty one would have of the truth [validity] of a logical or mathematical proof)- This is reminiscent of Kant's analysis of the transcendental aesthetic and the categories as a priori (i.e., as requisite to any possible thought), but Husserl thinks that he is not making an a priori argument, a transcendental deduction in Kant's terms, but is simply describing consciousness without judging the ontological status of the objects of consciousness. Given Husserl's understanding of what he is doing when engaging in phenomenological epoche and describing that which appears to consciousness, it is not surprising that the slogan of phenomenology as a movement became "back to the things themselves," the things as experienced rather than as judged or prejudged.

In Husserl's view, Descartes had been on the verge of founding phenomenology, but didn't see the implications of his *cogito.* It remained an abstraction, and after establishing the certainty of his clear and distinct ideas—those as clear and distinct as the *cogito*—by "proving" the existence of a good God who would not deceive him, Descartes left off radically doubting and went on, to his satisfaction, to establish his dualistic metaphysics. Husserl thinks Descartes missed the boat. The *cogito* is not an abstract thinker about whom nothing can be said beyond his activity as a cogitator. On the contrary, once we establish the *cogito,* there is an enormous amount we can say about the self as thinker and about that thinking. As long as we maintain the attitude of phenomenological epoche, of bracketing the world, what we say about the structure and activity of the *cogito* as cogitator will be as apodictically certain as my existence as a thinker is certain. The activities of the *cogito* are not necessarily clear and distinct; they may or may not be, and Descartes's use of clearness and distinctness as an epistemological standard misled him. It was perhaps the major reason Descartes missed the opportunity to found phenomenology. Such is Husserl's view. Descartes, however, was not interested in founding phenomenology; he was looking to secure a place, epistemologically and politically, for physics and mechanistic psychology. Husserl is aware of this, and in no way minimizes its value, but believes that the historical mission of Cartesianism as originally conceived has been and is being fulfilled by the "positive" sciences, and that now is the time to actualize the potential for a descriptive phenomenology that is implicit in Descartes' procedure and conclusion.

What is the enormous, indeed virtually infinite, descriptive phenomenology of the Cartesian *cogito*

—of "consciousness of"—of which we can be apodictically certain? What things do we find when we go back to the "things themselves" ? We can look at "consciousness of" from the side of consciousness or from the side of what which is intended, the object. The first Husserl calls a *noetic* description, the second a *noematic* description; they are, respectively, descriptions of experiencing and of the experienced. As long as we stick to descriptions of our consciousness and the objects of consciousness (i.e., maintain the phenomenological attitude of parenthesizing the world and the psychophysical self), we can describe with apodictic certainty the structure of knowing, doubting, willing, affirming, perceiving, and feeling, regardless of whether or not these cognitions are "about" what they name, about what the naive (pre-epoche) ego would regard as physical objects, mental objects, our own consciousness, or the consciousness of others. For example, if we analyze any act of perceiving, we "discover" as a pure description of how one perceives that any act of perception entails an anticipation of further perception; that when I perceive red, I expect to continue seeing red if I divert my gaze, or if I see the front of an object, I anticipate that I can see its side by moving my position. As Husserl puts it, perception always has horizons, and moves toward those horizons. This is now known to be true a priori, and will be true for any possible perception of a "physical object," quite apart from the objective existence of physical objects, if there be such; or the hallucinatory nature of physical objects, if they be such; or the constitutive nature of physical objects, if they be such. All of this sounds Kantian to me, although Husserl does not think it is; it seems to come down to my being only able to perceive the world in the way in which I perceive it, in this case as having horizons, regardless of what the thing - in-itself may be. Husserl wishes to avoid splitting reality into the phenomenal and the noumenal, and thinks that he is describing the phenomenal. It is Kant without the thing-in-itself, belief in metaphysical ultimates having been suspended.

Further phenomenological analysis, descriptive of the consciousness of, of the transcendental ego, reveals that all acts of consciousness have temporal horizons, look toward the future. The anticipation of the horizons already implies this. Husserl's program for phenomenology is that of an exhaustive analysis of the structure of each form of cogitating. Thus, there would be a phenomenological description of willing, desiring, affirming, objecting, believing, doubting, and so forth. So far this seems to be more program than substance, and Husserl doesn't get much beyond methodology. It is his program, not his findings, that are of interest.

The transcendental ego is transcendental because it is not in, but logically prior to, any experience of the world, and that experience of the world is always my experience of the world. Husserl is surely right in maintaining that the world is always my world—it could hardly be otherwise—and that the self as transcendental ego, as the I beyond (logically prior to) any possible experience has to be the starting point for any epistemology—of any endeavor to explain how we know and experience. Husserl's return to subjectivity is salutary in an ambience of behavioristic denial of the possibility of saying anything about consciousness. With the rise of cognitive psychology in academia during the past two decades, Husserl's corrective is less needed. However, historically it has been extremely important.

The notion that the self (transcendental ego) that constitutes my world, the only world that exists for me, is not in that world is uncanny. Although apparently true in some sense, there is not much you can do with it. Husserl's program notwithstanding, it remains rather abstract. Although there is no intrinsic reason that the phenomenological description of the ego states of the transcendental ego cannot include states of affectivity (Brentano's doctrine of intentionality included affectivity) Husserl does little in that direction.

The *Cartesian Meditations* led Husserl to an awareness that he was in danger of being interpreted as a solipsistic idealist, and he is anxious to avoid this. He does this by describing the way in which any subjectivity (his or anyone else's transcendental ego) is conscious of another subjectivity. He thus establishes a "bracketed" intersubjectivity. We experience others as other subjectivities, just as we experience some objects of consciousness as physical objects, and the phenomenologist can describe the structure of intersubjectivity just as well as he can describe the structure of perception of a physical object. Other subjectivities are just as real intentional objects as any others, and as long as we suspend our naive faith in their objective (i.e., objectively subjective) existence, we are on safe, indeed certain, ground in describing how we are conscious of them.

For all his disclaimers, Husserl winds up a metaphysician of sorts. In his discussion of intersubjectivity, he invokes Liebniz's notion of monads: self-contained nodal points with a greater or lesser degree of awareness (i.e., greater or lesser degrees of consciousness). The Husserl of the *Cartesian Meditations* comes across as a philosophical idealist. For him, ideas and consciousness of them are the ultimate reality. This is hardly surprising. Brentano's most popular course was a seminar on Bishop

Berkeley, who demonstrated that Locke's primary qualities were in the same boat as Locke's secondary qualities, and that both had reality only as ideas. Berkeley concluded, "To be is to be perceived." Husserl never quite says this, but there is a strong tendency inherent in his position to see conscious ness and its ideas as the ultimate reality. As soon as he makes consciousness of his starting point, it is hard for him not to wind up as a philosophical idealist, a philosophical idealist being one who believes that the ultimately real is thought. To maintain a metaphysical position including the idealistic one is to cease to be a phenomenologist, and Husserl did not want to do that. There is a tension in him between the phenomenologist and the metaphysician.

The elucidation of the complex structure of the self as transcendental ego was mostly left to Husserl's disciples. There are phenomenological psychoanalysts and psychological theorists who "describe" pathological states without offering dynamic or mechanistic explanations of those states. *Dynamic* here refers to Freudian explanations of pathological states in terms of drive derivatives, instincts, and conflicts between elements of the structural self. Rather, they strive to present without judgment or preconception the subjective experience of those suffering from these pathological conditions. In psychiatry in general, phenomenology has come to mean a description of the disease without consideration of etiology.

American descriptive psychiatry, although it does not totally ignore affect and cognition, tends to be behavioristic in its descriptions of various pathological syndromes, while the phenomenological psychiatrist or psychoanalyst is exclusively concerned with the subjective experience of the patient. Phenomenological psychologists have elucidated such phenomena as the experience of space and time in various pathological states, although they might be loath to use the word *pathological.* Rather they would simply say they were describing alternate modes of being conscious. For example, in depression the experience of time is slowed down, and it was a phenomenological psychoanalyst who first brought this to our attention.

The most influential of Husserl's disciples was and is Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's task was to fill in the details, to make the transcendental ego concrete rather than abstract. Whether or not he did so is up for grabs. Before we turn to Heidegger, it is worth relating a perhaps apochryphal story about a visit of Gilbert Ryle to Husserl. While Ryle was waiting to see the master phenomenologist himself, Husserl's wife

engaged him in conversation. During the course of the discussion, she turned the conversation toward Husserl's reputation in England. Ryle was silent so she asked, "Is my husband regarded as a worthy successor of Descartes?" Ryle said nothing. "Of Kant?" Ryle still said nothing. "Of Hegel?" "Oh yes," said Ryle, "your husband is regarded as every bit the intellectual equal of Hegel and as of equal importance as a philosopher." Mrs. Husserl beamed as English tact had its day.

HEIDEGGER AND DASEIN

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a thoroughly despicable human being. Character aside, his philosophy is intriguing. Some believe that Heidegger was basically a charlatan who hid behind obscurity and pomposity and was pseudo-profound. There is certainly that aspect to him, but some things he has to say about self are worth looking at.

To start with the man: Heidegger was born into a peasant family in the Black Forest and retained a love for the region and the soil throughout his life. In later life, he withdrew to a hut in the Black Forest to ponder and to philosophize. Heidegger studied philosophy at the University of Freiburg under Husserl, becoming his disciple and the leading phenomenologist of his generation. Husserl was Jewish; so was Hannah Arendt, the political and social philosopher with whom Heidegger had a long affair, and so was one of Heidegger's most brilliant colleagues, who converted to Catholicism and became a nun. She was dragged from her convent by the Nazis and murdered in a concentration camp. In spite of, or perhaps because of, his close links to Jewish intellectuals, including the man who was his philosophical mentor, Heidegger became a Nazi. With the advent of National Socialism, Husserl lost his post and the right to teach in Germany. Heidegger succeeded him as Professor of Philosophy at Freiberg. He was soon appointed rector of the university, on the occasion of which he gave a speech embracing Nazism as the fulfillment of his philosophy. It is true that he soon resigned his rectorship and played no further political role during the Third Reich, but he never resigned from the party and never repudiated his Fascist leanings. Considerable evidence has recently come to light that Heidegger never relinquished his Nazi beliefs and that he held them long before Hitler came to power. It is, to say the least, difficult to take his writings on authenticity and truth, published during the Nazi regime, seriously. His supporters say, by way of extenuation, that his embracing of Nazism was merely opportunistic. Aside from the fact that this is apparently not true, it puts forward the thesis that it is all right to advance one's career by

complicity in murder. Such "excuses" have been made for Herbert von Karajan and others; I don't find them persuasive. In addition to his complicity in Nazism, Heidegger's Greek etymologies, upon which he bases much of his late philosophizing, are at best fanciful, or ignorant, which is not likely, and so, at worst, dishonest.

Be this as it may, we will ignore the messenger and look at the message. What follows is based on *Sein Und Zeit (Being and Time),* Heidegger's 1927 tome. *Sein Und Zeit* is dedicated to Edmund Husserl, "in friendship and admiration." In it, Heidegger says that he is interested in elucidating Being, but that before he can do so, he must elucidate our experience of Being. Being is to be distinguished from beings, the individual things that are, and that presumably arise out of and are grounded in Being itself. Exactly what this might mean is not clear. Perhaps Being is one of those things about which we cannot speak. After the War, Heidegger published a volume called *"An Introduction to Is Metaphysics"* (1953/1961) in which he asks, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" —a question that evokes emotion but is unanswerable; Heidegger proposes no answers in his book.

Heidegger's entire career has been seen as an attempt to elucidate Being, but he can say but little about it. This seems a long way from the phenomenological injunction to return to the things themselves. Presumably the things themselves are beings and not Being. It is significant that Heidegger doesn't use phenomenology in a subtitle, and his book is usually classified as part of the existential tradition. Heidegger has said that he isn't an existentialist. As a preliminary to his discussion of Being, which never occurs, Heidegger gives a phenomenological description of what he calls Being-there, or *Dasein. Dasein* is Heidegger's term for the concretely existing human being. To be human is to be there: to be a part of a surround, to already be part of a world. For *Dasein*, there is no subject-object dichotomy.

For our purposes, *Dasein* is a self. The essence of this self is that it has a world. In no way is it a disembodied, solipsistic subjectivity. Such a subjectivity is an abstraction; the concrete lived reality is always the reality of connectedness, of emergence in, of being a part of. To be a self is to be-there, and to be-there is to be in the world. It is only upon analysis that the distinction between subject and object arises. This notion of *Dasein* obviously owes something to Husserl and to Brentano. Just as there is no consciousness devoid of an object, there is no existence devoid of a world. So far, so good. Heidegger is right. Nobody experiences himself as a Cartesian *cogito* unless he is philosophizing. *Dasein* would

appear to be a psychological notion, but Heidegger wants to make it an ontological one. Human existence is Being-there because Being is primary. Being and beings stand in the relation of figure and ground.

Another way of conceptualizing *Dasein* is as the center of a field in the same way a magnet is the center of a field. This is an imperfect analogy, because the fields of force of *Dasein* and of the world are mutual. They emanate both ways; their interconnectedness is intrinsic. *Dasein* is the field of force or, better yet, a nodal point within it. The world is already "at hand" ; there is no isolate of a self that builds or perceives or needs to connect with a world; the self is *Dasein*, is already in and of a world. Subject and object are abstractions, the result of analysis of the concrete reality of the human situation. *Dasein* and *cogito* are polar opposites. More divergent concepts of self would be hard to imagine, and indeed Heidegger is self-consciously criticizing Descartes, whom he believes to have been totally mistaken.

According to Heidegger, the first fateful decision in Western thought occurred when the ancient Greeks lost or greatly attenuated their contact with Being and focused on beings, on things rather than the source of things, on figure rather than ground. That decision was a corollary of an antecedent "decision" about the nature of truth. According to Heidegger, the etymological root meaning of the Greek word for truth is "unconcealing." He also says that the root meaning of truth is "standing forth." Truth is noninvasive and non-manipulative. It is an allowing of Being to be present, and to be unconcealed, rather than a correspondence in which truth is the agreement of a proposition with a state of affairs. Put differently, we in the Western tradition pursue truth through the use of scientific inquiry and experiment, which involves aggression, separation, and experimental manipulation, while truth as unconcealment, as allowing to stand forth, has much more to do with a state of receptivity, a kind of passive creativity that allows that which is to manifest itself.

Heidegger believes that the shift in the meaning of truth, already implicit in the pre-Socratic nature philosophers, was carried further by the Pythagoreans with their mathematization of nature (the ultimate reality is number), and completed in certain epistemological doctrines of Plato adumbrated in the *Theaetetus* and parts of the *Republic*. This shift in the meaning of truth reflects or perhaps actualizes a shift from Being to beings. This shift made the development of science, the defining characteristic of Western culture, possible, but only at the cost of losing contact with Being. Descartes completed and exacerbated this process by his bifurcation (into extended substance and thinking substance) and further

mathematization of nature. Again, a gain for science entailed a further loss of contact with Being. Now the ultimate becomes beings, regarded as extended substance in motion described by mathematical equations: intellectualization and abstraction, rather than lived emergence and embeddedness. Man came to live in a world of concrete things that he sought to control and manipulate, rather than to experience himself as a part of the totality of things, as grounded in Being itself. We no longer listen to the silent, awesome reverberations of Being itself; instead we are lost in a sea of objects.

Elsewhere, Heidegger says that in our era "God is absent." Unlike Nietzsche, he does not say that God is dead, merely absent. Our loss of contact with Being itself is loss of contact with the absent God. At least that is a reasonable reading of Heidegger. It is difficult to know what to make of Heidegger's notion of Being. It seems to be something antecedent to rationality, with which direct contact is possible. Although Heidegger would not like the label, it seems to me to be a mystical notion. However, unlike the experience related in most mystical traditions, there is no experience of fusion with the totality of things, the one and ultimate reality, but rather a quiet sensing of its omnipresent reality as the source and ground of all that exists.

There is a connection between Heidegger's obsessive languishing for Being and his welcoming the rise of Fascism, between his ontology and his politics. Heidegger's critique of rationality harkens back to the German counter-Enlightenment and its espousal of the irrational, the mystical, and the primitive community. In his inaugural speech as rector of the University of Freiberg, Heidegger welcomed the New Order as an incarnation of the mystical German folk, as a return from beings to Being. There is something about Heidegger's style of irrationality—he would deny that he is an irrationalist, rather maintaining that he is seeking the ground of both rationality and irrationality in his search for Being—that is exceedingly dangerous. It all too easily becomes confused with the archaic emotionality of mass movements: the primitive and precivilized. To return to Being becomes a return to bestiality.

Heidegger does not really argue his account of the forgetting of Being and the pursuit of the control of beings in Greek thought, nor does he justify his account of the change in the meaning in the concept of truth in Greek thought with any sort of scholarly presentation. He is not at all clear on what it would mean to return to the thinking of the pre-pre-Socratic Greeks. Presumably, it would involve some sort of un-self-conscious, prescientific state of receptivity of the awesomeness of the created universe. How that

notion with its implication of a state of awe and wonder became confused, as it does in his inaugural speech, with the hyper-emotionality of a nationalistic regression is difficult to understand, yet that confusion seems to exist in Heidegger.

I return to Heidegger's discussion of *Dasein*, which we are interpreting as self. Self as *Dasein* is embedded and interrelated, rather than a solitary, unconnected thinker. Heidegger's *Dasein* is reminiscent of the ethological concept of the *Umwelt*, the around world, or surround. For the ethologist, the animal is understood not as a biological isolate, but as a creature embedded in the environment as a part of his *Umwelt*.

The European school of psychoanalysis called *Daseins Analytics,* or sometimes existential psychoanalysis, derives from Heidegger. This school is mainly associated with Ludwig Binswanger, a Swiss psychoanalyst who maintained a lifelong friendship with Freud in spite of their total disagreement about human nature and therapeutics. One suspects that the friendship lasted because Freud did not take Binswanger's theories seriously. Binswanger elaborated on Heidegger's conceptualization of *Dasein* and described three dimensions or aspects of Being-there as a person: namely, relatedness to the *Umwelt*, the *Mitwelt*, and the *Eigenwelf,* the surround, the with-world, and the value-world. These are not external relations, but rather are intrinsic to *Dasein*. The first is the relation to the encompassing natural world; the second the relationship with other *Daseins,* with people; and the third *Dasein's* relationship with itself. There is no human existence apart from relationship to nature, people, and self. To be a self in the sense of being a *Dasein—a* concrete, real existence—is to be a part of and apart from nature, a part of and apart from a human community, and to have a reflexive and reflective relationship with self. The ways in which these three aspects of human existence, of selfhood or *Dasein*, get played out determines the life of that particular human existence and its unique mixture of health and pathology.

(Another philosopher, whom we will shortly meet, who also talks about an experience of Being is Alfred North Whitehead. His language and style of philosophizing is completely alien to that of Heidegger; yet, when in his theory of perception he talks about a mode of knowing that is pre- or nonverbal and non-propositional, which he calls *causal efficacy,* the silent awareness of the power of the surround, he is alluding to something strikingly similar to Heidegger's call of Being.)

After Heidegger's preliminary discussion of Being, the rest of *Sein Und Zeit* is devoted to the elucidation of human Being-there—of the existential situation of the self. This is why Heidegger is so frequently classified as an existentialist, his protests notwithstanding. Most of what he wrote is descriptive of human existence. Like all the existentialists, he maintains that existence precedes essence, so there should be no human nature to describe, no essence of *Dasein.* Heidegger resolves this dilemma, to his satisfaction at least, by saying that he is going to give a description of the *Existentialia* of *Dasein,* of the conditions of existence of human Being-there, of the intrinsic modalities of selfhood. So to speak, the dimensions of human Being-there are describable and are the same for all, while the way they are lived is unique to each self. We are what we become; there is no preformed essence that gets actualized in human existence, but the lines, or *existentialia,* along which we become what we become are the same for all. The self is what it becomes, but it can only become that in certain ways that are ontological and intrinsic to *Dasein.*

For Heidegger, the existentialia are Mood, Understanding, Speech, Anxiety, Care, Truth, Finitude, Temporality, and Historicity. Each of these existentialia can be lived authentically or inauthentically. Heidegger's emphasis on the centrality of Anxiety and Finitude also puts him in the existential camp. Let us take a brief look at each of Heidegger's existentialia. For Heidegger, Mood, the German word also meaning attunement, is intrinsic to *Dasein.* There is no human existence or moment of existence that is not characterized by a mood. One's Mood may be quiet and low key, subliminal so to speak, yet there always is one, one that sets the tone of our experience of nature, people, and self. Of course, one Mood may come to the forefront and become painftilly and unignorably present, but mostly we do not attend to our moods. To characterize self as intrinsically moody, in the sense of always having a mood, is to come a long way from the self as cogitator, or indeed from any of our previous characterizations of self.

Understanding is also intrinsic to *Dasein.* There is no human existence, or a moment of human existence, that does not entail or is not, in part, constituted by Understanding. Understanding, like Mood, is intrinsic to Being-there, to human existence. The self is a self that is engaged in Understanding, the unconcealment, the standing forth, the revelation of Being. Acts of intellectual understanding, of propositional knowledge, are derivatives, particularizations of the existentialium of Understanding. The same is true of Speech. To have a self is to have language. To exist as a human being who is already there in the world is to have Speech. Heideggerian speech is there before particular words; it is the intrinsic,

linguistic communicability of *Dasein.* It exists before, in both the logical and temporal senses, language acquisition.

To be a self is to have Mood, Understanding, and Speech. Coming from a very different perspective and philosophical stance, Noam Chomsky's *generative grammar,* the innate substrate, the template, of all speech and all language acquisition, is a notion close in content if not in spirit to Heidegger's *Reade* —speech as an existentialium.

Mood, Understanding, and Speech stand in relation to particular moods; acts of understanding, comprehension, or knowledge; and acts of verbal communication in a manner parallel to the relationship of Being to beings. There is no moment of human existence that is not perfused by a mood, by some level of comprehension, and by some sense of being in communication.

Dasein is intrinsically anxious. *Angst* is an existentialium. Human existence, the self as *Dasein,* is ontologically anxious; that is, anxiety is built into the very self-structure itself. There is no way to be and no moment when the self is not anxious, because it is constituted by Anxiety, just as it is constituted by Mood, Understanding, Speech, and the other existentialia. It isn't that the self as *Dasein* is anxious; rather, it *is* Anxiety and the rest of the existentialia. The existential theologian and philosopher, Paul Tillich (1952), made a distinction between neurotic anxiety and ontological anxiety. Neurotic anxiety is a product of psychological conflict, particularly of unconscious conflict between desire and prohibition. It is the anxiety Freud elucidated in his second theory of anxiety when he said we repress because we are anxious, and drive thoughts and feelings from conscious ness because they are too threatening, even though they reappear as inhibitions, acting out, and symptoms, all of which are manifestations of the ineluctable return of the repressed. Neurotic anxiety can be "cured," or at least radically attenuated, by making the unconscious conscious, by integrating the repudiated, defended against, rejected aspects of self. Not so ontological anxiety; it is built in (ontological), and arises out of human finitude, the limits of existence, particularly our mortality. According to Tillich, ontological anxiety has three facets: the anxiety of fate and death; the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness; and the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. The anxiety engendered by the brute facticity of life and of death; the ineluctable feeling that life is "a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing"; and the inexorable guilt and self-condemnation consequent on the aggression inherent in living are all givens, all woven into the very

structure of human existence, of Being-there. The self *is* ontological anxiety—among other things. Tillich maintains that neurotic anxiety is exacerbated by defenses against ontological anxiety that repress, reject, or deny it. Neurotic anxiety is not only caused by unconscious Freudian conflict; it is caused by failure to withstand, in the full light of consciousness, ontological anxiety and to come to terms with it in whatever way we can. Neurotic anxiety arises from a failed attempt to cheat, to escape the ontological anxiety that is inescapable. All such attempts at cheating are doomed to failure, and those who engage in them get paid back in spades—or in symptoms. To take nothing away from Tillich, or the creativity of his analysis of anxiety, all of this is quintessentially Heideggerian.

According to Heidegger, angst is ontological because Nothingness is part of Being, including human Being-there. Nothingness is part of our very selves, and there is an experience of Nothingness. Understanding encompasses Nothingness just as it does Being: as Heidegger puts it, "*Das Nicht nichts,*" the Nothing nothings. You can imagine what the verification people—the positivistic and analytic philosophers—did with that one, but that doesn't make Heidegger wrong. There *is* an experience of Nothingness, of feet walking on my grave, of uncanniness. Nothingness is the source of ontological anxiety with its three components of death anxiety, dread of meaninglessness, and dread of condemnation.

Another way of conceptualizing the self as angst—angst intrinsic to the intrinsicality of Nothingness, the Nothingness within the self and within the universe—is to see the self as finite, and Finitude is another existentialium. *Dasein is* Finitude, and the realization of my Finitude, my limitations, and my certain termination; of the Finitude that is me engenders, triggers, awareness of the angst that is also me. There is another aspect of Finitude: not only will my existence as a self-end, it has a beginning, and that beginning is *utterly arbitrary.* It is radically contingent, and that contingency is a part of my Finitude. Heidegger's name for the contingency of *Dasein* is *Geworfenheit*: "thrownness." Why I was born here and now, rather than there and then, indeed why I was born at all, is utterly contingent. There is no sufficient reason for me to have been born, let alone to have been born here and now. I have simply been thrown into existence here and now, and the experience of this thrownness, or the defense against it, engenders, or actually constitutes, part of the angst that constitutes, or partly constitutes, me.

My encounter with Nothingness, with my Finitude, and with Anxiety over whelms me, and I

ineluctably defend against those awarenesses; I defend by a flight into *Everydayness*, an attempt to get lost in anonymity by becoming one of the crowd, by becoming *Das Mann*, The One, one like all the others, living daily life with the least possible awareness. When I experience myself as The One, as impersonally as possible, as one among rather than one as a finite, anxious, contingent self, I am in a state of *Fallenness.* Fallenness, too, is an existentialium. Every *Dasein* experiences Fallenness; it is an ontological aspect of self, a mode of Being there that is unavoidable because the full consciousness of angst is not possible, at least not on an ongoing basis. The most powerful drive to Fallenness, its primordial source, is the depersonalization of and loss of anxiety about death when I realize, as an abstract proposition, a bit of intellectual awareness, that "Mandies." That is not threatening, in the way that the emotional experience of my Finitude, *my* death, and of footsteps walking on my grave is anxiety-provoking—anxiety-provoking in the highest degree. The knowledge that everyone dies is the polar opposite of the realization that my death lies within me as a facet of my intrinsic Finitude. It is not that I will die some day: it is the stark realization that the death within me can become actual, now, at this very moment—that Nothing ness confronts me now and always. The experience of Nothingness is captured by Hemingway (1933/1970, p. 32) in *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place:*

> Turning off the electric light, he continued the conversation with himself. . . What did he fear ? It was not fear or dread. It was nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and a light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never filled it but he knew it was all nada y pues nada y nada v pues nada. Our nada who is in nada, nada be thy name, thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas, and nada us nada into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee.

Or as Samuel Beckett put it, "Nothing is more real than nothing!"

It is interesting that Heidegger, who was himself attracted to a mass movement that incarnated and epitomized the flight into the anonymity of the one, *Das Mann,* so acutely analyzed the mechanism of such flights. It is almost as if he had read Erich Fromm's *Escape From Freedom* (1941), which was published 20 years after *Sein Und Zeit.* In *Escape,* Fromm analyzes the appeal of totalitarian movements in terms of the avoidance of the anxiety of human contingency with its precariousness, and fatedness, and, on the flip side of the coin, its radical impossibility of grounding decisions in rationality, and its termination and death, along with the responsibility of being free and making choices in the face of that radical contingency. That is, Fromm is saying that people are so overwhelmed by the responsibilities of freedom,

which flow out of the radical contingency of human life, that they flee into the certainties of Fascism and Communism or other dogmatic belief systems. There is, however, an important difference between Heidegger and Fromm. Fromm's analysis is political and psychological; Heidegger's is phenomenological and ontological. One is talking about concrete, human historical reality in the 20th century, the other is talking about the very nature of self and of Being.

Heidegger's analysis of Finitude as my death, with the possibility of its actualization now, as within me, also has parallels with Freud's theory of the death instinct, Thanatos, which is also within the self, within me. It is noteworthy that both Freud and Heidegger wrote immediately after the carnage of World War I. Again, if there are similarities in concept, there are also differences. Freud's is a tragic view of internal conflict and of the eternal struggle between love and death, Eros and Thanatos, while Heidegger's vision is a metaphysical one of the worm of nothingness in the apple of Being, of the yawning abyss within that I strive not to see. As we will see, Heidegger also has a concept, care, that is somewhat parallel to Freud's eros, yet very different from it. The antithesis of Fallenness is *Resoluteness*, and the antithesis of flight into the anonymity and depersonalization of The One is *Sein Zum Tod, Being-toward-death,* in which I own the death within me, feeling the nothingness within and without, and fully feel my Finitude. It is only through Being-toward-death that *Authenticity* becomes possible. Being-toward death is Authenticity; Fallenness is *Inauthenticity*. Heidegger is not writing ethics here, is not being moralistic, and is not maintaining that Authenticity is a "better" state of being than Inauthenticity. On the contrary, he is being descriptive, elucidating the structure of *Dasein,* the structure of the Heideggerian self. Fallennness and Being-toward-death and Authenticity and Inauthenticity are equally existentialia. Since they are structural, they are not to be avoided. That man partakes of Fallenness and Inauthenticity is a facet of and consequence of Finitude. Any particular *Dasein*—you and I—oscillates between Authenticity and Inauthenticity; the balance varies, but tension between the two poles is always there for everybody. One wonders about Heidegger's disclaimer of doing ethics. Fallenness suggests the Biblical Fall and is in its way Heidegger's version of original sin; or perhaps his abjuration of the ethical and his focus on the inevitability of Inauthenticity is somehow implicit in his political amorality.

Heidegger is certainly right in highlighting the dialectical tension within *Dasein* between acceptance and denial of death. I have often thought that our insane destruction of the environment is motivated and driven by more than rapacity, greed, and political stupidity. Our behavior is too irrational.

It is so in denial of reality that I believe its underlying motivation is an unconscious, magical conviction that science and technology can confer immortality. To acknowledge the limitations of technology is to see that this God isn't omnipotent. It is to be made anxious, because such acknowledgment carries with it the (unconscious) realization that science isn't magical and can't confer immortality. During the past decade, things have become so bad that some reality has seeped through, and the current revival of fundamentalist, dogmatic religion has something to do with replacing this failed God.

Sorge, or Care, is the existentialium of commitment to and involvement with other *Dasein.* It too is structural. We cannot help but be intrinsically intertwined with the being of others and to take some kind of responsibility for them. This involvement with the *Mitwelt* is structural. There is no human Being-there that is not so related. Care comes out of the awareness of the Finitude of others, but I have *Sorge* toward myself as well as toward others. I defend against Care by detachment and distancing, and both Care and defenses against it are structural components of self.

The self is intrinsically temporal. Time too is within *Dasein.* Every moment of lived time has three *ex-tases,* three *standing outs:* that of the past, that of the present, and that of the future. There is no experience of *Dasein,* of the self, that is not temporal, and that temporality always involves the pastness of the past, the nowness of the present, and the futurity of the future. I am always pushed by the past and pulled by the future. The pastness of the past and futurity of the future are interpretations and anticipations, respectively, and are not passively received givens, but lived choices. I am always constructing a living and lived past out of the facticity of what has occurred, which then either pulls me back toward it or, as is more usual, propels me forward. Similarly, my projections onto the future, my anticipations, pull me forward, and the present is always permeated by them. I cannot help but do this; the temporality of existence, with its three *ex-tases,* is within me. Augustine anticipated Heidegger in his account of time in the *Confessions.*

The injunction to "stay in the now" is futile; I cannot sustain doing so. The now is not an isolated, detached moment; it is a dynamic fusion and tension between past, present, and future. To be a self is to live in time so conceived. *Dasein's* temporality is not the same as public time, or scientific time, the time we measure by natural regularity, with our clocks, watches, calendars, and chronometers. Public time, the objectively measured flow of uniform duration, is derivable from the temporality of *Dasein;* it is a kind of

"fallen," "everyday" representation of that temporality, flattened out, spatialized, and homogenized.

Heidegger owes something here to another Jewish thinker, Henri Bergson, and his distinction between *temps* and *duree*—measured time and experienced time—but Heidegger, with the exception of his references to the Greeks, Descartes, and Kant, gives no credit to anyone as the sources of his analysis of *Dasein*, unless his dedication to Husserl be taken as such an acknowledgment. This is odd in a thinker who makes Historicity one of his existentialia. *Dasein* is intrinsically, structurally historical. He is permeated by Historicity, the awareness that he is part of a community of *Daseins* who have a past and that that past is part of him. The self cannot help but experience itself as a part of human history. Positive history, the kind we read in textbooks and study in school, is derivative from and only possible because of the Historicity of *Dasein.* The existentialium of Historicity is what allows *Dasein* to write history.

One might say that Heidegger has only elaborated in a ponderous and pseudo-profound way the obvious, that men die and that they know it, and that that knowledge makes them anxious; in a sense this is true. However, Heidegger does more than that; he delineates the structure of the self as embedded, encompassed, attuned, comprehending, linguistic, in contact with the unconcealed and the hidden, anxious, finite, concerned, thrown, contingent, dialectically authentic and inauthentic, temporal, and historical. Heidegger would not accept this characterization; to say that he elucidates the structure of the self is too essentialistic for him. Rather he would say that he is naming the existentialia of human Being-there. This, however, is a distinction without a difference (to me), and the Heideggerian self is a highly structured self, a complex self, a real as opposed to an abstract self. Heidegger succeeds in saying something about the self that none of our previous thinkers about the self have done. His self is the Kierkegaardian self, systematized, extended, enriched, secularized, and updated.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: THE COGITO GROWS MORE ANXIOUS

The literary and philosophical movement of existentialism is closely identified with Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980). The existentialist movement was a post-World War II European phenomenon that emphasized the radical contingency of human life, the absence of ultimate sources of value and rationality, and extreme conditions of human existence. It focused on the dark side of human life, on death, anxiety, meaninglessness, and despair. It dwelt on the "absurdity" of the human situation and of

human existence and on the irrationality of life and the choices entailed by life. Although its content was surely depressing, the response to its insights was not necessarily despair. On the contrary, it was often heroic defiance. Sartre's philosophy was such a heroic defiance. Although there are religious existentialists, such as Buber, Tillich, and Marcel, existentialism is identified with atheism and its two leading exponents, Sartre and Camus, were atheists. Although the postwar existentialist movement has historical antecedents and there are existential elements in much of literature and philosophy, even in such a rationalistic philosophy as Plato's, the modern variety has a unique urgency and poignancy. It speaks to us with a directness and power that its ancestors lacked. Existentialism's remote ancestor is the philosophical and logical doctrine that "existence precedes essence," which goes back at least as far as Aristotle. This doctrine underwent further development in Dun Scotus and other medieval nominalists and continues to find support in nominalistic versions of positivism. More directly relevant than its logical and ontological predecessors are the persistently reoccurring strands of irrationalism in Western thought. Tertullian, an early church father and philosopher, who wrote *"Credo ad absurdum"* ("I believe because it is absurd"); Lucretius' vision of a universe consisting of atoms in motion without value, meaning, or purpose; Pascal's "These immense spaces terrify me" ; Luther's "Reason is a whore" ; and Kierkegaard's entire output come to mind, as do Schopenhauer's view of reality as blind striving and Nietzsche's analysis of morality as the irrational, unconscious manifestation of the will to power. We have encountered these modes of thought before. Of even more immediate import in the development of existentialism is European phenomenology, with its methodology for the descriptive analysis of consciousness, and the work of Martin Heidegger just reviewed. Sartre was heavily indebted to Heidegger and his analysis of the existentialia of *Dasein,* and since Heidegger so well dealt with these existentialia, I will not go into Sartre's but slightly different statement of them. Sartre, however, is not Heidegger, and his notion of self is radically different from the notion of *Dasein.* Perhaps the greatest influence on existentialism, especially Sartre's, was not intellectual but historical and political. Sartre's existentialism came out of the experience of the collapse of European liberalism, the moral and military bankruptcy of France, the rise of Fascism, the triumph of Hitler, the Holocaust, and the dropping of the atomic bomb. Sartre was profoundly affected by the position of the French during the Occupation. He wrote:

> We were never more free than during the German Occupation. We hail lost all our rights, beginning with the right to talk. Every day. we were insulted to our faces and had to take it in silence. Under one pretense or

> another, as workers, Jews, or political prisoners, we were deported *en masse*. Everywhere, on billboards, in the newspapers, on the screen, we encountered the revolting and insipid picture of ourselves that our suppressors wanted us to accept. Because of all of this, we were free. Because the Nazi venom seeped into our thoughts, every accurate thought was a conquest. Because an all-powerful police tried to force us to hold our tongues, every word took on the value o f a declaration of principles. Because we were hunted down, every one of our gestures had the weight o f a solemn commitment. . . .
>
> Exile, captivity, and especially death (which we usually shrink from facing at all in happier days) became for us the habitual objects of our concern. We learned that they were neither inevitable accidents, nor even constant and inevitable dangers, but they must he considered as our lot itself, our destiny, the profound source of our reality as men. At every instance we lived up to the full sense of this commonplace little phrase: ' Man is mortal!'' And the choice that each of us made of his life was an authentic choice because it was made face to face with death, because it could always have been expressed in these terms: "Rather death than . . . "and here I am not speaking of the elite among us who were real Resistants, but of all Frenchmen who, at every hour of the night and day throughout four years, answered "No." (1945, as cited in Barrett, 1958)

The philosophy of extreme situations grew out of an extreme situation. The self, for Sartre, is pure consciousness and consciousness is nothingness: no-thingness, pure negativity. Sartre's understanding of self is ontological, a concomitant of his metaphysical schema. The subtitle of *Being and Nothingness* (1950) is *An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology.* By *phenomenological ontology,* Sartre means a description of what exists, of what is real, insofar as we experience it. So Sartre is describing phenomena, not noumena, at least formally, and is taking a Husserlian stance of epoche, of bracketing our experience of reality, of "merely" describing it. But the epoche doesn't play much of a role in *Being and Nothingness,* and Sartre's phenomenological ontology is presented as if it were a metaphysical (ontological) ontology, as if he were describing the things-in-themselves. So to speak, he forgets his Husserlian qualifications. Perhaps Sartre feels that it really doesn't matter, that for us phenomenological ontology is a description of the ultimately real, or at least the only ultimately real that we will ever know. Although Sartre's language is Hegelian, he is a modem Cartesian. There are two kinds of stuff in the world: *en soi,* being-in-itself, and *pour soi,* being-for-itself. This terminology is derived from, indeed directly borrowed from, Hegel, but used somewhat differently, and there is no Hegelian dialectical synthesis of being-in-itself and being-for-itself. On the contrary, Sartre's ontology is radically dualistic.

In the Hegelian dialectic, Nothingness is the antithesis of Being. Being being unarticulated solidity, without Nothingness Being would be the One of the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Parmenides, whose One is a plenum, a One forever fixed and static. In Parmenides, change and process are reduced to illusion. But for Hegel, process is, in a sense, the ultimate reality. The Absolute may have been pure Being when it existed only as potentiality, but it only becomes actual—real—in its unfolding. So to speak, the

initial great ball of wax articulates itself by generating its antithesis, Nothing, and their synthesis is Becoming, the reality of process and development, the unfolding and actualization in history of that which was implicit and potential. Hegel's is a sort of Big Bang theory without the bang.

My metaphorical analog of the big ball of wax or of the Big Bang are, in an important way, misleading. The ultimately real, potentially and actually, for Hegel is thought, not stuff; idea, not material. As we have seen, Heidegger has beings emerging from the ground of Being with Nothingness intrinsic to both Being and human Being-there. Sartre's version of the Hegelian categories of Being and Nothingness and of their dialectical relationship is neither Hegelian nor Heideggerian, neither idealism nor an attempt to reconnect with Being. On the contrary, Sartre's analysis is quintessentially existential. It is totally rooted in the analysis of human existence. Heidegger has said he is not an existentialist, he is a philosopher of Being, and he is right. Sartre has no place for the search for Being; he is wholly absorbed in the concrete experience of human beings.

To return to Sartre's phenomenological ontology, being-in-itself is solid, self-consistent, dense, and totally without awareness. It is thingness. It is stonelike. Being-for-itself is no-thing. It is consciousness. Consciousness negates. Consciousness creates distance, distinctions, articulations, categories, and types. It says no. It is not consistent with itself. Neither has it solidity. Nothingness came into the world with consciousness. "Man is the being through which Nothingness came into the world" (Sartre, 1956, p. 241). This is an extraordinary notion, radically different from anything we have encountered before. Nothingness is here not a logical category (Hegel), nor a part of reality, nor an experience, but rather a creation of human consciousness. Consciousness is negation: emptiness, vacuity, and insubstantiality. Is this consciousness that is no-thing, that is negation, the Sartrian self? Yes and no. What he calls the ego is my awareness of the states of my consciousness. It is reflexive and it is a synthesis. That ego is Sartre's version of the empirical self, which is in many ways thing-like, although not material. It is not the for-itself. The self-for-itself is not in the world, is not thing-like. On the contrary, it is pure freedom, always trying to transcend itself. It is this self as pure freedom, as radical contingency, as choosing and creating, as negating and denying that is the uniquely Sartrian self. My relationship to my body is much like my relationship to my ego. It too is a thing in the world, but that is not how I experience my body. I am not that body, or my experience of it. So the self, although it has aspects as ego—the product of self-reflection and synthesis and of body as object and as synthesis—is neither of these, but rather pure negativity. The

self is no-thing; the self both *is*, and is the source of, Nothingness.

Consciousness is always reflexive. It is never simply, or at least for long, conscious of anything without being aware of being conscious of it. This makes for a special kind of alienation, an inability to be what one is even for a moment. This contributes to the insubstantiality of consciousness. Sartre's example is of being sad, then being aware of being sad, which is not the same as being sad. He calls this the *metastability of consciousness.* The for-itself is forever oscillating between experience and awareness of experiencing. Consciousness is not only no-thing, it is not even self-consistent awareness of, but only awareness of awareness alternating with awareness. This is another aspect of its pure negativity.

At one level, the Sartrian no is the no of the Resistance fighter who refuses to speak to the Gestapo. In his short story *The Wall* (1948), Sartre depicts a political prisoner about to be shot. Even in the moment of execution, the protagonist remains free, and his freedom lies in his potential to refuse affirmation of his oppressor, to say no. Sartre is right. The ability to say no is the basis of human freedom. Usually a child's first word is *no*\ It is the assertion of individuality and autonomy. But Sartre is doing more than pointing to the possibility of heroic—or even more ordinary—resistance to the will of others. He is identifying the self with negation and the ability to negate. Conceptual thought depends on negation—on discrimination and separation. Language is negation. The political and the psychological have become ontological. The resistance no and the child's initial no have become the no of consciousness and part of the structure of what is.

For Sartre, there is no dialectical synthesis of Being and Nothing, no reconciliation of being-in-itself and being-for-itself. For him, this is impossible because it is self-contradictory. To be the thing that knows it is a thing cannot be—things do not know; and to be a consciousness that has solidity, substantiality, also cannot be—consciousness is nothing. Yet the desire to be the thing that is conscious that it is a thing, or to be a thing-like consciousness, is intrinsic to human life. We are free to be or do anything, but we are not free to become the thing-in itself-for-itself: the consciousness that is a thing, the thing that knows it is a thing. How we attempt to actualize this impossibility is our *project.* All of human culture and of human history, all personal relationships, all individual accomplishments, and all psychological conflicts are derivatives of our projects. Since the most basic human drive is to bring about a synthesis that cannot be, Sartre concludes, "Man is a useless passion" (1956, p. 615). The Cartesian bifurcation of nature into

extended substance and thinking substance is reconstituted as a tragic tension: a dualistic metaphysics becomes the preeminent and ineluctable human impossibility. Ontological bifurcation results not, or not only, in an interior psychological split; it is on the basis of an alienation that cannot be healed. The self as futile passion trying to be a thing when it is not a thing yet unable to do so and the self as pure freedom and pure negativity are new in our considerations of theories of the self.

Sartre is every bit as much a psychologist of conflict as Freud; it is simply that the conflicts are seen differently. Being a futile passion is intolerable or nearly so, so human beings engage in all sorts of deceptions to escape that futility. They attempt to reduce other consciousnesses—other for-selves—to objects, to things, to in-itselves. If you are an in-itself to my for-itself, I have in some sense become the thing-in-itself, for-itself. But this is not possible because the Other can only be an Object of my consciousness by choosing to be such an Object, and such choosing is an act of consciousness. Similarly, I cannot solve my dilemma by becoming an object of another's consciousness because I can only do so by an act of consciousness. As the sadist said to the masochist who asked to be beaten, "I refuse." Man is a futile passion. And women too. All of the maneuvers and manipulations, all of the attempts at domination or submission (Sartre can't seem to conceive of an interpersonal relationship that doesn't have such a dynamic), all of the self-deceptions in the service of becoming the thing-in-itself-for-itself, are acts of *bad faith*. Bad faith is Sartre's version of inauthenticity. It too is ontological, intrinsic to human existence.

Although Sartre cannot give any reason why it is better not to be in bad faith, and indeed bad faith is unavoidable, he is clearly being a moralist whether or not he wishes to be. Even if one cannot escape bad faith, one can cop to it. The ultimate act of good faith is to acknowledge one's bad faith, one's attempts to become the in-itself-for-itself, or one's attempts to fool oneself into thinking one has realized one's project.

Sartre, unlike Heidegger, is an existentialist, and self-consciously so. Existence precedes essence, and self is what self becomes. "Existentialism is a humanism." Since God would be the thing-in-itself-for-itself, there can be no God (presumably, God is bound by the laws of logic and cannot be self-contradictory), and man is alone in the universe. That makes man responsible. There are no external ultimates, no divinely given guidelines, indeed no logically necessary reasons for our actions or choices and no grounding in rationality of our moral choices. This is the sense in which man is "condemned to

freedom." It is absurd that we live, that we exist; there is no rational reason for our being here. It is we who give meaning or attempt to give meaning to our lives through our however futile projects. Here we are as far from Hegelian rationalism as it is possible to get. If for Hegel, "the real is rational and the rational real," for Sartre (human) existence is irrational (has no ultimate justification or sufficient cause), and that irrationality is the essence (pardon the word) of (human) existence.

Sartrian freedom does not ignore or deny the causal nexus of the world. What Sartre calls my *facticity,* the givenness of my situation and of my body, is "real" enough, but in no way diminishes my freedom. In a sense, the givens of my life are contingent, have no sufficient reason, or simply are, and in that sense, self is radical contingency. But neither the facticity nor the contingency of human existence changes the fact that I choose, choose a project however unconsciously (Sartre doesn't believe in the unconscious, saying this is a self-contradictory notion; however, he does say that consciousness is not necessarily awareness which seems to me a distinction without a difference) and makes moral choices that cannot be justified, let alone be entailed by universal norms. Sartre's example of the son with a sick mother who wants to join the Resistance and who tries to apply Kant's categorical imperative to make a decision illustrates perfectly the uselessness of looking outside the self for moral justification. Using Kant's criterion, can I choose fighting tyranny for all humans? Yes. Can I choose protecting sick mothers for all humanity? Yes. The categorical imperative doesn't help. So here is another sense in which the self is condemned to be free. Moral choice has no ultimate, external justification and is not determined by the "moral law within." There are no moral laws. The consciousness that is no thingness cannot escape its freedom, although it can, in an infinite variety of acts of bad faith, attempt to do so. In a sense, Sartre's analysis of the radical freedom of the self that gives meaning to facticity and contingency is not very different from Kant's assertion that "man as phenomenon is determined, while man as noumenon is free," yet they are utterly disparate. Kant is writing from an Enlightenment perspective that the world is intelligible, that its rationality can be understood by the human mind, however unknowable the thing-in-itself. The freedom of the self as noumena makes morality possible and makes human beings responsible, but in no way lessens the objectivity, the reality, of the moral law within. Sartre is writing during a total eclipse of the moral law, during the glorification of irrationality and brute force and in the face of torture and murder, and whatever his technical philosophical reason for describing the freedom of the self as he does, it is a self living in the midst of hideous evil and constant crisis. Sartrian freedom has a grandeur

that also has a quality of desperation. It is a magnificent no to the Gestapo, to the torturers, to the murderers, to the collaborators, and to bourgeois complacency; it is also a cosmically lonely, intrinsically frustrated, interpersonally conflicted awareness of the impossibility of knowing why we are here, what we should do, and who we should be by appeal to anything—religion, ideology, or love—outside of self. It is indeed a self *condemned* to be free.

Sartre also wrote of an existential psychoanalysis that would not analyze in a deterministic way the forces driving patients into symptoms and pathological behavior, but rather would try and make the patients aware of their bad faith and of their avoidance and denials of their radical freedom and the responsibility that that entails, as well as to bring to full awareness the patient's basic project. It is a psychoanalysis that does not recognize a structural unconscious, but that acknowledges that all is not in awareness. On its more psychological side, the in itself is presented as a viscous, sticky stuff that envelops and engulfs. For Sartre, it seems identified with femininity, while the for-itself is illumination, penetration, space, and openness and is identified with masculinity. Here the impossibility of the in-itself-for-itself becomes the impossibility of successful union of man and woman, which is also implied in the dialectic of the struggle to turn the other into an in-itself for one's for-itself. Sadomasochism is the human lot, and denial of it is bad faith.

One cannot help but wonder how Sartre negotiated the developmental stage of separation-individualization (see Chapter 12). Is the radical disjunction of in-itself and for-itself and the radical freedom of for-itself a theorization of a phobic fearwish for a (re-)fusion experience? Is there hidden in Sartre, under all that forbidding Hegelian language, a terror of the seductive pull of merger and a defense against it? The psychoanalyst in me wants to say, "Tell me more about your mother." Of course, the truth value of a theory is not to be judged by its emotional origins, but still the man does protest too much, and one wonders why.

In the famous passage in Sartre's novel *Nausea* (1938/1964), the hero Roquentin is gazing at the gnarled, twisted, overly elaborated roots of a giant tree and becomes nauseated at its sheer excess; it is *de trop—ioo* much. All this messy organicity, all this viscosity, may trap me. The organic world is like quicksand, and my reaction to it is nausea. This is "the world is too much with us" with a vengeance.

Sartre had an ambivalent and highly conflicted lifelong relationship with the Communist party, and his late technical philosophy tried to reconcile Marxism and existentialism. Sartre's Marxism is the search of the for-itself for connectedness, for human solidarity in the face of its ineluctable need to reduce others to objects. The closest to good faith that human beings can come is through "engagement" in the human struggle to be (externally) free. There is no reason to engage rather than to be disengaged, and it would be bad faith to pretend that there is. But to be engaged is to have a project that is freely chosen. I recall Raymond Kablansky, one of my philosophy professors at McGill University in the 1960s, telling his ethics class of a friend who voluntarily returned to occupied Europe to help others escape. He was caught by the Gestapo, tortured, and killed. Professor Kablansky, who was a European refugee, asked, "Who was more free, he who returned to die or I who did not and am sitting here?" Who indeed? The professor's friend was engaged.

Although I am not competent to judge the matter, most critics feel that Sartre failed in his attempt to reconcile Marxism and existentialism. After a period of being the leading intellectual in France, Sartre fell out of fashion. Old and ill, he remained independent and courageous in politics, breaking with the Communist party over the Soviet occupation of Hungary, criticizing the French involvement in Algeria, and attempting to enter into some sort of alliance with the student rebels of the 1960s. He was supported to the end by his lifelong companion, Simone de Beauvoir. Theirs was a relationship marked by spectacular mutual infidelities that did not seem to interfere with a more basic fidelity. Sartre felt that marriage was a bourgeois hypocrisy and, for this reason alone, would not have married.

Sartre left us a new notion of the self, a notion of self as almost unbearably responsible, as tragically unfulfilled, as without essence or justification, as radically contingent, as inevitably and ineluctably free, as a giver of meaning to absurdity, and as unavoidably in flight through acts of bad faith from these realities. It is a self not without nobility. More than any of our other theorists about self, Sartre, with whatever romantic adolescent posturing, pinpoints the ultimate aloneness of the self, with its essence consciousness (including self consciousness) separating and alienating it from the world, from itself, and from others.

RONALD (R. D.) LAING:
THE ONTOLOGICALLY INSECURE SELF

R. D. Laing (1927-1989) was a Scottish psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who became a student counterculture hero in the 1960s and 1970s. While difficult to classify, Laing was deeply influenced by Continental thought, in particular by Sartre's existentialism and by phenomenological psychiatry, yet he was clearly part of the English object relations school of psychoanalysis. Laing's interest was largely in psychosis. He came to see the madness in what is usually called sanity and the sanity in some forms of madness. He was exquisitely sensitive to the ways in which people are driven mad and pioneered the study of the family dynamics of psychotics. Although in danger of romanticizing mental illness, he saw some things that are clearly true. When he asks who is crazier, the mental patient who believes that the atom bomb is within her or the statesman who prepares to drop the bomb and the societies who support atomic saber-rattling, we cannot ignore his question. Laing founded a refuge for seriously disturbed young people called Locksley Hall. It was a cross between a crash pad, a half-way house, and a commune. Its residents tried to talk out their conflicts in an atmosphere of total acceptance.

The sanity in madness lies both in the unexpected insights the "mad" sometimes have and in the "sense" that their madness makes in the context of their lives. They are psychotic because their psychosis is the only way they can protect whatever residual sense of self they have. The relatives (usually parents) of Laing's young patients described their descent into illness as a progression from "sad to bad to mad." They could not understand their children's madness or their part in causing it, nor could they see the desperate attempt at vitality in their children's "badness." Laing could and did. His treatment essentially consisted in affirmation of the sense of the patients' world view. He saw psychiatry as all too frequently the agent of a crazy society rather than as an ally of the patient's struggle for affirmation, transcendence, and ecstasy. In an era where psychosis is officially understood as genetically transmitted neurochemical deficit, Laing's exploration of the inner world of his patients and of the relationship between their experience with others, particularly in the family early in life, and those inner worlds is salutary. Even if the organicists are right and psychosis is a neurological and neurochemical illness, the people who become psychotic grow up in families, and the dynamics of those families profoundly affect

the manifestation of that neurochemistry.

Laing is very much a self theorist. For him, psychopathoplogy is self pathology. Illness is the outcome of the self's struggle to preserve its autonomy in a situation that would deny and destroy that autonomy. Unfortunately, the lifesaving (in the sense of the psychic life) defense itself self-limits, deforms, and diminishes the very self it is invoked to save. Laing is the first of our theorists about self who is frankly normative, who distinguishes between the healthy and the pathological self. For Freud, illness and health are on a continuum, and the neurotic self differs merely in the degree of conflict, dissociation, and repression from the healthy self. Structurally they are the same. Not so for Laing. The schizoid self is structurally different from the neurotic or healthy self. The essential differences lie in *ontological security* or the lack of it. The ontologically secure self is certain of its existence, of its differentiation from the world and from others, of its aliveness, of its realness, and of its embeddedness in the body. The ontologically secure self is a bodily self. The ontologically insecure are not like this at all. Their existence is in question; their autonomy, continuity, and identity are precarious; their hold on reality is tenuous; and their experience of emptiness and deadness is of the essence of their selfhoood. More saliently, they experience themselves as disembodied. Their selves are not coextensive or importantly coextensive with their bodies; they are not who they seem. The experience of disembodiment and of having a "real" self that is different from the self that speaks, acts, and behaves is more than an extreme of a "normal" self experience, although the normal self-experience can encompass all of the above states; rather, it is a structurally different self. To have a self that is disembodied is to be ontologically insecure in a way that the embodied self that has an "out-of-body" experience is not. It is to live in a state of perpetual fear of engulfment, implosion, and petrification. Engulfment is fear of losing self in other; implosion is fear growing out of the sensation of inner emptiness, fear of shattering, of breaking into pieces; while petrification, which Laing adopted from Sartre, is fear of being turned into a thing by the gaze of the other. The ontologically insecure person cannot win. The dreads of engulfment, implosion, and petrification lead to schizoid defenses of detachment, distancing, posturing, posing, isolation, and avoidance. The result is estrangement, alienation, and cosmic loneliness. There is no possibility of "being alone together" as the best human relationships make possible; there is only "being alone alone." The ontologically insecure self is caught between the terror of being destroyed by the other and the terror of absolute aloneness. Whether or not one is ontologically secure or ontologically insecure is largely

determined by one's experience with other people. That is why Laing's theory of self is an object-relational as well as an existential theory of self, object relations being the internal representations of interpersonal relations. Some childhoods lead to the formation of a false self to protect the real self, which goes into hiding or is "dead." Those are the childhoods that result in ontologically insecure selves. Laing took the concept of the false self from Winnicott, an English psychiatrist whom we shall meet in the next chapter.

Now for the first time we have a theory of self that does not describe a self that has certain lineaments, certain characteristics, certain properties that are invariant, and that are the same for all selves. Each of the philosophical, metaphysical, phenomenological, or psychological selves adumbrated by the earlier self-theorists was abstract in this sense. Even in developmental theories, that development of self was described in universal terms. Not so for Laing. The Laingian self is concrete; its structure and its subjective experience of itself are the products of its particulars, unique and individual interactions with parents and siblings. The kind of self that results makes sense in light of the particular person's struggle to maintain psychic aliveness in a particular environment. This is a new notion in the history of self-theory. Laing does, of course, delineate the broad categories of the ontologically secure and the ontologically insecure self (a theorist cannot help but abstract), but he never loses sight of the concrete experience of particular lives developing securely or insecurely. He keeps his vision concrete rather than abstract by listening to his patients and trying to see things as they must see them, to see them from their unique standpoint. His is a clinical rather than a theoretical theory, and that is why he can see that not every self is constituted in the same way.

WHITEHEAD AND THE SELF AS PROCESS: THE SELF AS ORGANISM

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) did not write about the self as such, nor does he comfortably fit into our positivist-analyst/phenomenologist-existentialist dichotomy of 20th-century philosophy. Whitehead does not use the term *self,* rather the self for him is a metaphysical entity within his exceedingly complex cosmological schema, rather than an aspect (physical, mental, or experiential) of, or the totality of, personhood. Whitehead does not fit into the analytic-existential rubric because his mature philosophy is an attempt to give an extremely general account of the universe—of the totality of reality.

He variously calls this cosmology and metaphysics. Cosmology is the study of the cosmos (literally of the world) and, by extension, of the universe. Metaphysics is an attempt to describe the "ultimate" nature of reality. It is roughly interchangeable with ontology, but its connotation is of something broader. An old Elaine May-Mike Nichols routine comes to mind. She plays an awed ingenue attending a lecture by the learned Herr Doktor Professor. He says, "Today I vil speak upon the universe," upon which she asks, "Why the universe, Professor?" He replies, "Vat else is there to talk about?" The term *metaphysics* is an artifact of the arrangement of Aristotle's lecture notes by his pupils after his death. The lectures on ultimates were placed after the lectures on nature *(phusis*), hence *metaphysics,* after or beyond the nature lectures. The exact order of the lectures has been forgotten, but the notion of metaphysics, that which is beyond physics, antecedent to that science, has remained. Whitehead is very much a metaphysician in this sense. A mathematician, he had a consummate knowledge of mathematical physics and used that knowledge to construct a conceptual scheme of the maximum generality that would be able to account for the data and constructs of not only physics, but also of history, aesthetic experience, and religion. Plato wrote in the first comprehensive cosmology, the *Timaeus* (1961c), that the function of such a cosmology was to "save the phenomenon" (i.e., to give an account of, an explanation of, that which appears). That is exactly what Whitehead tries to do. As a metaphysician in an antimetaphysical era, Whitehead, his technical work in mathematical logic excepted, is out of the mainstream of 20th-century philosophy. In fact, his influence has been far greater on theologians than on professional philosophers.

Why, then, include a cosmologist among our thinkers about self? There are several reasons: first, Whitehead's analysis of two errors in thought which he calls the *fallacy of misplaced concreteness* and the *fallacy of simple location* has great relevance to the clarification and possible resolution of the paradoxes of the self and the discrepant accounts of self we have encountered. Furthermore, his account of perception in what he calls a "mode of causal efficacy" illuminates our experience of the agency of the self; and perhaps most important, his notion that the "process is the reality" and his elaboration and specification of it in what he calls "the philosophy of organism" may give us a way of understanding our sense of ongoingness and continuity in the face of mutability and flux and a way to give an account of a self that is not the same self from moment to moment, yet remains the same self. Whitehead is a difficult author who eludes summary, but I shall try to give a reasonably clear rendering of those of his notions that are relevant to self theory.

Whitehead was born into a clerical family in a peaceful, backwater town replete with a medieval church and town green not far from the Thames. It was an environment of Victorian respectability and rectitude. The Whiteheads were solidly upper middle class, and it was assumed that Alfie would take his place in the upper clergy or in the professions. Although Whitehead was born shortly after Freud and lived through the same period, two less similar lives, sets of assumptions or environments would be hard to imagine. The Whiteheads were apparently not warm. If Alfred had strong feelings toward his mother, he left us no record of them; his relationship with his father and brothers was warmer and closer. There was a conservative side to Whitehead's character, beliefs, and values that separated him from his early collaborator, Bertrand Russell, and is reflected in his return to a theistic metaphysics, albeit a highly unorthodox one.

Whitehead left his stable and secure, if emotionally tepid, world to attend a 1,200-year-old public (i.e., private) school. Again, he was in a highly provincial setting that paradoxically had direct ties to the world of power. As he comments, he knew men who became the rulers of the British Empire or the leaders of its professional class at a time when the sun didn't set on that empire. It was a world that was to cease to exist by the time Whitehead developed his philosophy of organism. The same was true of his intellectual world: the seemingly immutable truths of Newtonian physics that he learned were to prove totally inadequate as ultimate explanations of the nature of things during his lifetime. The collapse of these "certainties" profoundly influenced him. At school, Whitehead excelled at mathematics and sports. He became the head prefect, the student leader of the school. A kindly man, he wrote half a lifetime later how upset he had been, in his capacity as head prefect, to have to flog a student who had committed theft. Whitehead went on to Cambridge University, eventually joining the faculty as a mathematics tutor—again, a part of a parochial yet highly privileged and influential society. He married a woman whose flamboyant, sometimes histrionic, and sometimes hypochondriacal behavior complemented his staid, placid temperament. His union with Evelyn was a happy one. Although Whitehead published well-regarded mathematical works, his work was not earth-shattering. His collaboration with his erstwhile student, Bertrand Russell, changed that. Together they produced the *Priticipia,* already discussed in our examination of Russell, in which they were able to deduce all of arithmetic and algebra from a few simple notions, such as conjunction, disjunction, and implication. The reduction of mathematics to logic had philosophical as well as mathematical implications. Its enduring influence on Whitehead resided in the

notion that science requires a foundation—that there is something more ultimate. Just as the *Principia* founded mathematics on logic, the philosophy of organism provided physics and science in general with such a foundation—at least such was Whitehead's intention. During his years at Cambridge, Whitehead had accumulated an extensive library of theology, which he ultimately sold, deciding that it was all worthless gibberish. Thus, in his middle years, he shared Russell's atheism—however, without Russell's passion and polemical verve.

Whitehead's middle years were troubled ones; he suffered from chronic insomnia and apparently a considerable degree of neurotic conflict and depression. Since Whitehead was reticent and not in the least self-revealing, we can't be sure what his midlife crisis was about: perhaps the loss of religious faith, along with the collapse of what seemed a certain account of the physical world with the discoveries of relativity and quantum mechanics, had shattered a basic security. His mature thought as expressed in his philosophy of organism can be seen as an attempt to reconcile, by encompassing both in a broader synthesis, science and religion. The God Whitehead returned to was certainly the "God of the philosophers" rather than the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," but a God nevertheless.

Although Whitehead was a liberal—active in politics and a courageous supporter of women's rights at a time when that was not fashionable—and greatly admired Russell's intellect, he did not share Russell's political and social radical ism, or his pacifism. Some biographers think that Russell had an affair with Whitehead's wife, but if that is so, Whitehead managed not to know it. Whitehead was in his 40s by the time the third volume of the *Principia* appeared, and by then a professor. For reasons somewhat similar to Wittgenstein's a generation later, Whitehead resigned his post. Both men found Cambridge too insular and ultimately stultifying. Undoubtedly there were also personal reasons that remain a mystery.

Whitehead moved to the University of London, where he became an educational administrator pioneering in what we would now call adult education. Instead of participating in the education of an elite, he was one of the leaders of an institution serving the lower middle and working classes. An educational theorist as well as educator, he was in a way returning to the family tradition of the clergyman-educator. His experiences in London broadened him. Whitehead lost a son, an aviator, in World War I. It profoundly saddened him, and it is said that his wife never recovered from the loss. He

may have had this son in mind when he wrote that one of the difficulties of youth is that it has "no memory of disaster survived." Whitehead was in his 60s when he left London to become a professor of philosophy at Harvard. It was there that he publisheand *Science in the Modern World* (1925), *Process and Reality* (1929), and *Adventures of Ideas* (1933), the works for which he is remembered. Whitehead was highly successful at Harvard; a beloved teacher, he died a revered wisdom figure. His reputation has suffered greatly since his death, and except for the *Principia*, which is not much read, he tends to be dismissed by academic philosophy. That is unfortunate. Suspicious of "final truths" and of dogmas of all sorts, Whitehead characteristically stated, "The universe is vast." His system is an attempt at a tentative illumination of that vastness. It rejects nothing and attempts, in the face of Whitehead's knowledge that it is not possible, to encompass everything.

Let us start with his analysis of perception. Characteristically, his approach is historical, looking at attempts to understand perception in the philosophical tradition, seeking out the limitations and blind spots, and only then developing what he hopes is a more adequate account. In this sense, Whitehead's method of philosophizing is a dialogue with his great predecessors—in this case, with Hume and with Kant. In Whitehead's reading of them, both Hume and Kant see only one mode of perception, one that Whitehead denoted *presentational immediacy,* and mistakenly regard it as primary when in fact it is a symbolization, not a direct cognition. Presentational immediacy gives us a *display,* almost in the sense of a computer display. It is vivid, colored, sharply defined, at a distance, and representational. It is also cold, empty, and intrinsically meaningless. It is a projection of a bodily state. Sight is a paradigmatic exemplification of presentational immediacy. There are no internal connections, no necessary connections between the bright bits of color or the sounds or the smells of presentational immediacy. Causal connections are not part of the display. Both Hume and Kant, and their 19th- and 20th-century heirs, take presentational immediacy as primary and ask, Where do the connections come from? Each, in his own way, put the connection inside us, made it subjective, Hume, by the appeal to custom and habit, and Kant, by the categories of the understanding. According to Whitehead, both Hume and Kant and the philosophical traditions emanating from them erred in taking a highly specialized, high-level phenomenon—presentational immediacy—as primary, when in fact it is the privileged possession of higher level organisms in their moments of maximum consciousness. Presentational immediacy is never so effective as in a state of alertness. It has been built into the higher organisms in the course of evolution

because its symbolizations and their interpretations, although fallible, have, on the average, survival value. It is an instrument of great practical utility but not necessarily the best source of insight into the ultimate nature of things, not the best tool with which to do metaphysics. If we limit ourselves to presentational immediacy, the events of the world have only external connections, if any; it reveals no intrinsic linkages or causal sequences. It simply displays that which is contemporaneous. Not so for what Whitehead calls *causal efficacy.* Causal efficacy is just as much a mode of perception as is presentational immediacy. In fact, it is more basic in the sense that it characterizes lower grade organisms and dimmer states of consciousness. It is causal efficacy, not presentational immediacy, that is the preeminent mode of perception in the sense that it gives us our experience of the causal nexus, which is the world. It is the source of our sense of the power of things, of their ability to impinge on us, of their agency and activity. As such, it has great survival value, and it too was built in by the evolutionary process. We get our experience of causal efficacy by defocusing; it is vaguer, more premonitory, more likely to be felt in the dark, in states of semi-consciousness as upon awakening, or in the hypnagogic state preceding sleep. It is the sensation that there are powers around us, and that they can act on us, that they have causal efficacy. The paradigmatic case of causal efficacy is the sense of the brooding presence of things in a dimly lit room as we emerge from sleep. Somewhere Whitehead says that the data of philosophy, at least of cosmological metaphysics, must include all of our experiences, waking and sleeping, going to sleep and awakening, rational and insane, scientific and religious, ill and well, sharply focused and dimly perceived, highly abstract and irredeemably concrete, and brute fact and flight of fancy. All are grist for the philosopher's mill. To ignore any aspect of human experience is to philosophize with less than a full deck, and Whitehead implicitly criticizes philosophers for having done so. The notion of a mode of perception like causal efficacy comes from attention to these philosophically neglected aspects of experience. Whitehead points out that if the causal nexus were to be found in the mode of presentational immediacy, it should be revealed by the highest magnification and the most intense illumination, but the opposite is the case. The vivid is the most disconnected; it provides (potentially) aesthetic pleasure but not a demonstration of the power of events to affect one another. That is only revealed in the philosophically disavowed, vague, dim, unfocused, lower level experience of the power of things to affect us. Whitehead's turning to the philosophically disreputable is reminiscent of Freud's and psychoanalysis's attention to the "sordid" details of life, and to such "unscientific" data as dreams and jokes. Is Whitehead right? Do we perceive in the mode of causal efficacy? His appeal is to direct experience. Have you had such sensations of the

power of your surround to act on you? If so, there is no reason to make any mode of perception privileged and to discard and ignore this one. If we take into account all of our direct experience, the problem of causality, in the sense that necessary connection is nowhere to be found in "objective" experience and must be supplied subjectively, disappears.

The mode of causal efficacy makes us aware of the *withness of the body*, that I see with my eyes, hear with my ears, smell with my nose, and taste with my palate. The withness of the body is primordial, given in direct experience. Is that true? Are you in contact with seeing with your eyes when you see? Is that a direct experience? I think it is, at least when I make an effort to focus on something, but does that direct experience validate the existence of a mode of perception in which the causal efficacy of things, events, and powers is a given? I am not sure, but be that as it may, Whitehead has put the proprioceptive sensations of our sense organs in action (presumably the source of the direct experience of the withness of the body) at the center of our experience of causal power. Perhaps he is not talking about proprioceptive perceptions, of movement of the eye muscles, and so forth, but of some other direct experience. If so, it is difficult to conceptualize. One is reminded of William James's (who greatly influenced Whitehead) self of selves as the subliminal sensation of the glottal movements of the muscles between the head and the body. Both James's self of selves and Whitehead's withness of the body suggest, in somewhat different senses and in a different way than Freud, that "the ego [self] is first and foremost a bodily ego [self]." Furthermore, the entire notion of the perceptual mode of causal efficacy has implications for self-theory. The self in the mode of presentational immediacy has aspects of the Cartesian *cogito*\ the *cogito*'s cognitions are in the realm of presentational immediacy, albeit, in the initial stage of radical doubt, without symbolic reference to an external world. It is also a spectator in the Humeian theater that doesn't exist, the data of presentational immediacy being the show in that theater. While on the contrary, the self in the mode of causal efficacy is an interactive self, having direct experience of its power to causally affect (act on) its own body and the world and of the world's power to causally affect (act on) it. It is a self that is a part of the stream that is the process that is the universe. It is radically different from the *cogito* as thought "bifurcated," to use Whitehead's word, from the world of extension. Whitehead's entire analysis of perception (and indeed his metaphysics) is importantly shaped and determined by his critique of Descartes's bifurcation of nature into thinking substance and extended substance, a bifurcation partly resultant from solely focusing on the vacuous display in the

mode of presentational immediacy of the realm of extension (if there be one) in the cognition of the solipsistic subject to the neglect of the mode of causal efficacy, which would reveal in direct experience the connectedness, even perhaps the oneness in manyness, of thought, thinker, and world. As we shall see, the Whiteheadian self itself is a living organic unity whose flow is interactive with the flow that is the reality of the other real things in the universe. This way of looking at self has complex derivatives in Whitehead, but his analysis of perception is one of them.

Perception is not the exclusive property of higher organisms like man, although the perceptual mode of presentational immediacy is. Perception in the mode of causal efficacy is the property of all "actual occurrences," the ultimate "real objects" of the universe. Whitehead's universe is a universe of organisms interactive with one another. Such perception does not necessarily involve consciousness. There are grades of awareness and of self-consciousness in the *real entities,* or *real events* that are Whitehead's *ontos on* (ultimate being). This will be further elucidated, I hope, in our discussion of Whitehead's metaphysics, but for now I would like to point out, as Whitehead himself does, the similarity of his notion to Liebniz's (the 17th-century philosopher and mathematician) concept of *monads,* the ultimate real entities that constitute reality for him. Liebniz's monads are also organic unities, although more immaterial substance than process and strikingly similar to Whitehead's ultimates, events. They too have different levels of aware ness (consciousness). They differ by being substances rather than events and by being "windowless." They are not interactive, but coordinate because God has created their "pre-established harmony." In a sense, each is a clock wound up and set to run in harmony, in coordination with each other. They do not "perceive" each other; they only act as if they did. Whitehead's events do have windows, and the model for those windows is human perception, especially perception in the mode of causal efficacy.

Perhaps a more interesting parallel, and one that neither man was aware of, is that between Whitehead's modes of perception and the psychoanalytic developmental psychologist Rene Spitz's distinction between *co-enesthetic sensing* and *diacritic perception.* Spitz is best known for his work on *hospitalism.* Babies removed from London during the B-2 attacks in World War II and raised in institutions where their physical needs were met, but where they were not held or fondled, sickened and even died. Love turns out to be a biological as well as a psychological need, and without it, the symptoms of *marasmus,* the loss of vitality and even of life itself, develop. Spitz (1965) went on to

conduct some of the first infant observational research and concluded, among other things, that the earliest mode of perception was co-enesthetic sensing, or sensing with (cf. Whitehead's the withness of the body)—experiencing on a level of deep, primarily visceral, global, or totalistic sensibility, which is largely superseded in adult life by the mode of diacritic perception, which is perception at a distance through the specialized sense organs of discrete sensa—colors, sounds, tastes, and smells. The "vague" (a word used by both Spitz and Whitehead) intimations of co-enesthetic sensing (sensing with the mother and with the surround), the vague but powerful awareness of presence, is clearly a close relative of Whitehead's causal efficacy, and diacritic perception is clearly a close relative of presentational immediacy. Spitz believes that those adults who retain the greatest capacity for co-enesthetic sensing are the artists and creative thinkers of the race. Co-enesthetic sensing is the basis of intuition and of feelings of connectedness and interaction—of causal efficacy. It is preeminently an affective mode of perception, while the diacritic is preeminently a cognitive mode. Feelings rather than high-level abstract thinking give us our most intimate and veridical experience of the ultimate nature of things, that experience being grounded in the experience of connectedness, indeed, of oneness with mother, as well as apartness and separation from her. Whitehead could not agree more with the importance of this vague affective sensing as a guide to ultimates. The bridge between the co-enesthetic and the diacritic is the experience of being held on the breast with nipple in mouth and looking at Mother's face. The vague, richly affective sensations of tactile merging with Mother are coordinated with the more cognitive presentation at a distance through sight of Mother's face. Affect is the bridge. Whitehead too writes of the interaction of the two modes of perception, but it was Spitz who found the biological, developmental linkage in the nursing experience. Thus, Whitehead's bimodal theory of perception finds support in psychoanalytic developmental psychology.

Whitehead also wrote of two cognitive errors characteristic of much of Western thought. He called them the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" and the "fallacy of simple location," respectively. In a sense, both stem from the naive and uncritical assumption that the subject-predicate syntax of the Indo-European languages is isomorphic to, and an adequate guide to, reality and its ultimate nature. Like Wittgenstein, but with a different emphasis, Whitehead is trying to free us from "the bewitchment of language." The subject-predicate distinction imported from grammar to logic and metaphysics at least as far back as Aristotle has been the basis of Western philosophical thinking until the recent past.

Aristotelian logic has been under assault in various ways at least since Hegel's development of a triadic dynamic logic. Whitehead's immediate predecessors in this regard were William James in such works as "Does Consciousness Exist?" and Henri Bergson. Subject-predicate syntax and its philosophical derivatives see reality as comprising some sort of solid stuff—substance—that has enduring qualities, attributes, or characteristics that somehow adhere in that enduring substance. Substances and their accidents, (i.e., individual characteristics) are the ultimate. The idea of an underlying substance that is the permanent substrate of the surface flux of things stems from the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Thales's statement that "all things are water," water being the permanent underlying substrate. Thales's water becomes Anaxamander's air; Empedocles' air, earth, water, and fire; and Democritus's atoms. In one way or another, the basic model of underlying stable stuff of some sort having qualities that endure "beneath" or "behind" the ever-changing surface resurfaces repeatedly in the history of philosophy, each time having weathered intermittent criticisms until the late 19th century, when new developments in physics made it a more dubious "account of what appears." Whitehead is concerned to lay it to rest once and for all.

Aristotle understood process as the resultant of four forces or causes, which he called the material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause. Western scientific thought and its philosophical derivates largely dispense with final causes, with the teleological, with the idea that things happen because of some ultimate purpose or design, God's plan or what have you, but retain the other Aristotelian causal entities in one form or another. In our thinkers about self, only Jung incorporated final causes as a part of his ontological description of self. Whitehead retains the notion of final cause in his metaphysics, but radically reinterprets material and formal cause. Aristotle's material causes, underlying permanent stuffs, become events and energy undergoing transformation, while Aristotle's formal causes —the universals embedded and embodied in particulars, which is his version of the Platonic forms— become Whitehead's *eternal objects,* permanent potentialities that exist nowhere until they appear in actual occurrences. They are omnipossible but only actual when they occur, unlike Platonic ideas or forms, which always and everywhere exist and from which particular things take their reality. Efficient causes are causes in the ordinary sense of cause (A causes B), ubiquitously present in scientific explanation and uncritical common sense. Naive realism, Hume's devastating critique notwithstanding, is very much alive. Whitehead is to preserve the notion of efficient cause, invoking as evidence the

perceptual mode of causal efficacy as a source of direct experience of that causality. Hume's critique becomes irrelevant, since it is based on the assumption that presentational immediacy is the only mode of perception. Of course Whitehead is aware that the subject-predicate mode of construing reality has great pragmatic utility, that it is a rough-and-ready yet adequate guide to action, and that is why it is incarnated in the syntax of ordinary language. Like Newtonian physics, it is not so much untrue as true only under restricted circumstances; it is adequate for many purposes, but is of insufficient generality to be a useful tool in metaphysics, the most general account of what is. The Newtonian physics that Whitehead learned in his youth turned out not to be an eternal verity as had been thought, but the description of a special case, albeit one of great practical import to humans. Ordinary language, with its simultaneous imprecision and overgeneralization, also turns out to be a veridical guide to a special case, again one of great practical utility, but not a veridical guide to insight into the ultimate nature of things. The *Principia,* the chief work of Whitehead's youth, is an implicit critique of language for its imprecision and an attempt to derive a more precise mathematical language, while the philosophical work of Whitehead's maturity can be understood as a critique of language for the misleading consequences of its generalizations to a description of the universe. In this prelude to my discussion of Whitehead's analysis of linguistic fallacies, I have virtually summarized his metaphysics, which must seem odd. But it is not; rather, it is a consequence of the seamless web of Whitehead's thought. If one understands his analysis of perception and of language, one already understands his metaphysics. The ultimate connectedness of the universe is reflected in the connectedness of his thought.

The fallacy of misplaced concreteness is the error of eating the menu instead of the steak (or these days, the menu instead of the sushi). It is mistaking our abstractions for the individual concrete existents, or mistaking conceptual analyses for the realities. One of Whitehead's examples is the empirical tradition from Hume on, mistakenly taking discrete *quala* (individual sense experiences) for the givens of perception, when they are not. To the contrary, they are the products of high-level intellectualization, of the conceptual analyses of perceptual givens, and of then wondering how these discrete *quala* can mean anything or be interactive or inter connected in any way and reaching a skeptical conclusion. The whole problem is a pseudo-problem, arising from an error of misplaced concreteness. The same is true of the whole question of how qualities adhere in substances. We take substance, either naively from the grammatical structure of our language, or sophisticatedly, from the high-level abstract reasoning of

philosophy as a given, as a concrete reality when it is not. In Whitehead's view, a good deal of philosophical error and puzzlement comes from taking our abstractions from the concrete givens of experience as the concrete things themselves. Symbol systems are not the symbolized. To abstract is to take away from, to strip down. Accordingly, abstractions tend to be bare, and a metaphysics based on mistaking abstractions for direct experiences ineluctably results in a picture and understanding of reality that lacks meaning and in which connectedness and causal sequence is problematical.

In the case of the self, the self as a static, substantial "thing," an entity, is an abstraction—the product of extensive intellectual analysis, not a given. To mistake this abstraction for the reality lands us in the pseudo-quandary of how the ever-changing, evolving, mutable self can be the same self. There is no same self; that is our abstraction. There is only the self in flux. The self is that flux, albeit with relatively enduring patterning that itself changes. We look at the self "cross-sectionally," as a slice in the temporal flow, and wonder how the succession of such slices relate to one another. There are no such slices; they are products of thought, thought that freezes process and turns it into a thing. It is a case of misplaced concreteness, of eating the menu. Looking at our usual notion of self to determine if we are mistaking abstraction for experience frees us to see that the self is flow, is process, and that our experience of ongoingness is just as primordial as our experience of change. Neither requires a "substantial" self in any of its variations to account for either the ongoingness or the mutability. Both are primordially given.

The fallacy of simple location is the error of assuming that events are things that exist only at a place specifiable by a system of coordinates, when the reality is that events are field phenomena in the same way in which electromagnetic events are field phenomena. They are in fact emanating throughout the universe. It is the pebble-in-the-pond phenomenon. Its waves radiate asymptotically throughout space time. Not only, as in Heidegger's concept of self as *Dasein,* do I have the world at hand, I am the energy radiating from my epicenter into that world. Seen in the light of the error of simple location, the dilemma of how self interacts on world and world on self becomes a pseudo-dilemma. I am my interactions with the universe and the universe's interactions with me. Skin is no longer a boundary of self. Self is energy and patterns of energy emanating from a center that can be specified in a coordinate system, but is not, or not simply or only, that epicenter. Whitehead is not saying that boundaries are not important, or do not have pragmatic utility or some sort of reality, but rather that boundary phenomena are restricted special cases, abstractions, of a concrete reality that is the emanation of patterned energy. Just as Whitehead's

category of misplaced concreteness illuminated and to some extent dissolved the paradox of sameness amidst change across time, giving us a new way of looking at the temporality of *Dasein,* his category of simple location gives us a new way of understanding *Dasein*'s relationship to its surround. The Whiteheadian self is self as flow of relatively but not permanently enduring patterns, and self as not so much embedded as it is interactive energy exchanges. Since for Whitehead space and time are not different "things," not anything apart from events, it is more accurate to say that the self is one of the events comprising space time. From a more restricted, less general standpoint, the self is both a temporal flux and a spatial flow. The latter is a more abstract account than the former; it is further removed from the concrete actual entity.

This brings us to a discussion of Whitehead's metaphysics per se. His is an exceedingly complex system, and I will not attempt to present that complexity but only those aspects of it most salient for a theory of self. According to Whitehead, metaphysics is not a deductive procedure in which truth is inferred from a few apodictically certain premises. That is the way in mathematics, which has seduced and deceived philosophers. What metaphysics should do is to give an extremely general account of experience. "Speculative philosophy is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted" (Whitehead, 1929, p. 4). Such a system must "save the phenomenon" by giving an account or an interpretation of "brute fact" in which individual brute facts are given context. Since he is not reaching any deductive conclusions that go beyond experience, the trashing of metaphysics by Hume, Kant, and the positivists should not invalidate his procedure.

Whitehead's ultimately real are "actual occurrences," also called "actual entities" and "actual events." Such "a real individual is an organizing activity fusing ingredients into a unity, so that this unity is the reality." Events are interdependent—mutually immanent. Events come into being and then perish. One is reminded of Locke's statement that "time is perpetual perishing," and Whitehead tells us that his philosophy of organism owes much to Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding.* But in perishing, actual occasions are preserved by being "prehended" by other actual occurrences, by new events. The living are alive in virtue of incorporation of the dead. Whitehead calls this *objective immortality.* But all is not determined by the past; there is a "creative advance" of the universe; novelty is real. Shades of William James. The universe strives for vividness and value. What is, is the "consequent nature of God" ; the

creative advance in novelty is the "primordial nature of God." Whitehead's distinction between the consequent and primordial nature of God is reminiscent of Spinoza's distinction between nature natured and nature naturing, nature natured being the actual, individual, real entities and nature naturing being their ground and their totality. The parallel is inexact. Spinoza is a strict determinist, and Whitehead is not, so his primordial God is the source of creativity and novelty.

An actual occasion is the prehension of its real antecedents, and of *eternal objects:* permanent possibilities waiting to be actualized in actual occurrences. This coming together of antecedents and eternal objects in actual occurrences Whitehead calls *concrescence.* Eternal objects are Whiteheadian, disembodied universals; they do not exist anywhere until they are actualized. Actual occurrences or events prehend each other, so that the universe is a mutual grasping of the contemporaneous, a mutual immanence, and a successive incorporation of those events that are perishing. Thus there is a causal push and a teleological pull.

Self is a "society" of actual occurrences, a patterning of those that are contemporaneous and a patterning of those that are successive. The creative advance of the self is that of coming into being by reaching back and grasping—prehending—that which is perishing, thereby making the dead part of the living. In so doing, the actual occasions that constitute the society that is the self both change (perish) and endure. Thus the self can be the same yet different. The process is the reality. In the course of emergence of new actual occasions, permanent possibilities of organization and of quality come into being as part of that which is prehended by those actual events. Experience is experience of an enduring organism in a world of organisms. Our most immediate environment is constituted by our body, hence the withness of the body. Experience is activity, and Whitehead's self is activity: activity initially aware of its own organism and sequentially of the organisms that constitute the universe. The self is a society of actual occasions, or societies of societies of actual occasions, depending on the level of complexity from which we view it. The self is a real individual and a real individual is an organizing activity fusing ingredients into a unity.

What I find most convincing in this admittedly most animistic metaphysic is the notion of the uptake of the perishing past by the living present so that the paradox of endurance admist change is resolved; the centrality of bodily experience in self experience; and the patterning that is that which endures in

the evolving society of actual occurrences that is self. No longer cut off in schizoid isolation or solipsistic splendor, the self is a monad with windows, wide-open windows, through which the mutuality of the contemporaneous is fully as constitutive as is the unique strand of successive patterned events that is the creative advance—that is us.

Is all this too poetical? Perhaps. Whitehead's metaphysical system with its implicit account of self is almost ineffable; language can't quite catch it. Is the whole thing an old man's attempt to reconstitute the secure world of his youth - secure in its scientific notions, secure in its social relations, and secure in its religious beliefs—in a vague, wordy, barely understandable "system" ? Is it an old man's attempt to give himself some solace from the pain of loss so intense that he said that the words of his beloved romantic poets trivialized his feelings after his son's death through a doctrine of objective immortality? Probably all true. White head's system does suffer from vagueness, over-complexity, wishful thinking, and a yearning and a desire to bring back meaning and significance into a universe where they may not exist. Yet, somehow it *feels* right. The process is the reality. Although the theistic aspects of Whitehead's system are less than convincing, his allover vision of the ongoing process of the individual entities, the actual real events, organized into societies and societies of societies, incorporating, prehending, and radiating their vibratory energetic patterns to each other, makes some kind of sense. The evolving self perpetually perishing and perpetually incorporating that which has perished resonates. It has affinities to William James's stream of consciousness and Freud's ego as the precipitate of abandoned object cathexes. Whitehead's system is a high-level intellectualization derived from his analysis of relativity theory, quantum theory, and the history of philosophy. In the next chapter, I look more microcosmically at the developing human being, seen through the microscope of psychoanalytic scrutiny, and see how the poles of oneness and separateness, of ongoingness and of fragmentation, have been seen by the theorists of the psychoanalytic experience.