This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

BEYOND BEING AND NOTHINGNESS:
A DESCRIPTION OF AN EXISTENTIAL FREEDOM ETHIC

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

____Ph.D.____ degree in __Philosophy__

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Date *Dec. 23, 1998*

BEYOND *BEING AND NOTHINGNESS*:
A DESCRIPTION OF AN EXISTENTIAL FREEDOM ETHIC

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Philosophy

1999

ABSTRACT

BEYOND *BEING AND NOTHINGNESS*:
A DESCRIPTION OF AN EXISTENTIAL FREEDOM ETHIC

By

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My aim has been to develop a defensible existential
freedom ethic. To do this, I distinguish between being-free
and its modes, develop an existential freedom ethicist's
conception of generosity, argue that the existential freedom
ethicist's method of decision making is situationalist, and
use Sartre's *Notebooks for an Ethics* as my beacon for seeing
the relationship between the phenomenological ontology of
Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and the theoretical history
of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1.

In the first chapter, I explain why the existential
freedom ethicist can consistently maintain that, even when a
person is oppressed, the only limits to human freedom is
human freedom; why the existential freedom ethicist can
coherently hold that, even though we are being-free, freedom
is the end of all ethical action; why the existential free-
dom ethicist can condemn and adequately account for oppres-
sion, even though she maintains we are always being-free;
and why, even if alienated freedom constitutes something
like a human nature, the existential freedom ethicist can
without embarrassment rightly claim we can do what we ought.

In the second chapter, I show that alienated freedom
constitutes something like a human nature, thus that this

existential freedom ethic's ideal to will oneself and other people morally free is not vacuous. I show that oppression is contingent and arises from alienated freedoms, thus how and that oppression can be overcome. I show that historically the only limit to human freedom is human freedom, thus that the existential freedom ethic is coherent. I show that historically conversion to moral freedom is possible, thus that the existential freedom ethic is practically efficacious. And I show that historically human freedoms are intertwined, thus why if one wills oneself morally free, one must will other people morally free, as well as will freedom as the world's foundation.

In the third chapter, I develop an existential freedom ethicist's conception of generosity, argue that through generosity we can transcend oppressive relationships with other persons and create the world's foundation in terms of freedom, and argue that generosity is humanly possible.

In the fourth chapter, I show that the situationalist method is not antinomian, because it does not entail that anything goes, and I show that it is not legalist, because it does not entail applying rules to a situation. I then illustrate the situationalist method by discussing the issues of assisted suicide, institutionalized punishment, lying, and environmental destruction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

My aim is to develop a defensible existential freedom ethic that is based on, yet goes beyond, the phenomenological ontology of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. I go beyond *Being and Nothingness* in the sense that I shall develop the freedom ethic to which Sartre alludes in the closing pages of that text though never himself completed. The fundamental tenet of such an ethic is that human freedom is both the beginning and end of all ethical action. Human freedom is the beginning of all ethical action, because human beings are the creators of values. And human freedom is the beginning of all ethical action, because human freedom is a necessary condition for ethics. Consequently, the ethic I develop presupposes a metaphysics of possibility; however, I do not treat this as a dogmatic presupposition, because I present Sartre's, as well as my own, reasons for believing we are free. Explaining what it means to say 'freedom is the end of ethical action' and demonstrating why freedom should be taken as the end are my primary aims.

I go beyond *Being and Nothingness* also in the sense that I make use of subsequent Sartrean texts, as well as Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, to develop an existential freedom ethic. The other Sartrean texts from which I extensively draw are the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1 and the posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics*. I use the *Notebooks* because, even though the ethic

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discussed there is cursory, the notes are laced with clues concerning the relationship between Sartre's phenomenological ontology and projected existential freedom ethic. As a consequence, I use the *Notebooks* as my beacon for seeing how to develop an existential freedom ethic. And I use the *Critique* because I believe a theoretical history is essential to the development of a plausible and defensible existential freedom ethic.

And I go beyond *Being and Nothingness* in the sense that my development of such an ethic entails more than an interpretation of Sartre's works. I shall develop where Sartre or Beauvoir has been cursory, silent, unclear, or in error about what a defensible existential freedom ethic should be like. For example, I shall develop the concept of generosity, which I take to be the "heart" of such an ethic, but which Sartre in the *Notebooks for an Ethics* wrote only some suggestive notes. I also distinguish between ethically relevant modes of human freedom, which I believe is essential to a defensible existential freedom ethic, though Sartre seems unaware of such distinctions and Beauvoir suggests but never fully develops them. I shall develop my own argument for why freedom is the end of all ethical action by drawing from Sartre's *Critique*. And I shall entertain objections to an existential freedom ethic that are subsequent to Beauvoir's ethics.

At this point I wish to mention why I believe my efforts here are important. First, though there have been

important attempts at describing, defending, or critiquing an existential freedom ethic, e.g., Hazel Barnes' *An Existentialist Ethics*, Linda Bell's *Sartre's Ethics of Authenticity*, David Detmer's *Freedom as a Value*, Thomas C. Anderson's *The Foundation and Structure of Sartrean Ethics* and *Sartre's Two Ethics*, George Kerner's *Three Philosophical Moralists: Mill, Kant and Sartre*, and Francis Jeanson's *Sartre and the Problem of Morality*, I believe my description and defense of such an ethic differs in crucial respects from that of those mentioned. For examples, although Linda Bell briefly discusses generosity, neither she nor any other Sartrean commentator develop it as a technical concept or as the positive side of an existential freedom ethic; no Sartrean scholar distinguishes modes of human freedom from freedom as our very being, though this is, I believe, essential for creating a defensible existential freedom ethic; and no Sartrean commentator makes use of Sartre's *Critique* to develop an existential freedom ethic, though some have used it to develop a non-existentialist ethic based upon needs, e.g., Thomas C. Anderson in *Sartre's Two Ethics*.

Second, I believe the existential freedom ethic I develop is a viable alternative to mainstream deontological and consequentialist normative theories. Unlike deontological theories, this freedom ethic's normative principle is not a categorical imperative. And unlike consequentialist theories, this freedom ethic's normative principle does incorporate the means used to achieving the projected end.

Third, I believe that during this time, when essentialist views of race, gender, and sexual preference are ubiquitous both in the academy and U.S. culture and when scientific discoveries of genetic predispositions for particular human behaviors are given a deterministic interpretation, an ethical theory of this kind is vital, because it is non-essentialist, humanist, and opposed to a deterministic metaphysics.

Because I shall describe, develop, and defend an existential freedom ethic based on the phenomenological ontology of *Being and Nothingness*, the theory of human history in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, and the ethical ruminations in the *Notebooks*, I shall discuss now what I take to be the relationship between these texts and how I will be using them.

I've mentioned that I will be using the *Notebooks* as my beacon for constructing an existential freedom ethic. In the *Notebooks* Sartre writes,

> Existential ontology is itself historical. There is an initial event, that of the appearance of the For-itself through a negation of being. Ethics must be historical: that is, it must find the universal in History and must grasp it in History. (1992a, p. 6)

Given Sartre's use here of the ontological language of *Being and Nothingness* and of the relevance of history to ethics, it seems to me Sartre believed his ontology needed to be supplemented with a theory of human history to develop his projected existential freedom ethic. Elsewhere in the *Notebooks* he implies an understanding of human history is

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essential to the construction of an ethics. He says,

>   . . . even though the possible, and therefore the
> universal, is a necessary structure of action, we must
> return to the individual drama of the finite series
> "Man" when the deepest of ends of existence are at
> issue. To the finite and historical source of
> possibilities. (1992a, pp. 6-7)

In other words, an understanding of human history is neces-

sary to an existential freedom ethic, because human possi-

bilities are not *a priori*. Due to these and other passages

in the *Notebooks*, I believe a project like Sartre's *Cri-

tique*, rather than necessarily signifying a decision to

forego developing an existential freedom ethic, actually

lays some of the groundwork for, and is consonant with,

Sartre's projected existential freedom ethic. Even in the

Critique, vol. 1, Sartre speaks of "the ethical affirmation

that freedom is the basis of values". (1991, p. 591)

Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* lays out the funda-

mental categories of human reality, argues we are neces-

sarily free, and argues we are the origin of value. Beyond

this ontological text, Sartre in the *Critique* theorizes

about the collective and historical actions of human beings

and about the relations created through such actions. In an

introductory section of the *Critique* Sartre says,

>   . . . we are dealing with neither human history, nor
>   sociology, nor ethnography. To parody a title of
> Kant's we would claim to be laying the foundations for
> "Prolegomena to any future anthropology". (1991, pp. 65-66)

And in the *Notebooks* Sartre says,

>   As soon as there is a plurality of others, there is a
>   society. Society is the first concretion that leads
>   from ontology to anthropology. (1992a, p. 117)

These two passages--and others--suggest to me that Sartre's *Critique* can be viewed as a meta-anthropological supplement to the ontology of *Being and Nothingness*.

Passages in *Being and Nothingness* suggest to me that Sartre's meta-anthropological work can be seen also as a "metaphysical" supplement to *Being and Nothingness*. In the ontological work Sartre holds that ontology describes the structures of being; it cannot explain human history. (1956, p. 620) To do the latter, we must engage in "meta-physical" inquiry. Sartre says,

> We, indeed, apply the term "metaphysical" to the study of individual processes which have given birth to *this* world as a concrete and particular totality. In this sense metaphysics is to ontology as history is to sociology. (1956, p. 619)

In other words, ontology like sociology only <u>describes</u> the phenomena under scrutiny, and metaphysics like history <u>explains</u> how or why the phenomena under study came in to being. Although Sartre's ontological descriptions precluded such an explanation, Sartre suggests near the end of *Being and Nothingness* the direction metaphysical inquiry should take. He says,

> After having decided the question of the origin of the for-itself and of the nature of the phenomena of the world, the metaphysician will be able to attack that of action. Action in fact is to be considered simul-taneously on the plane of the for-itself and on that of the in-itself, for it involves a project which has an immanent origin and which determines a modifi-cation in the being of the transcendent. (1956, p. 625)

In the next chapter, I refer to this action as the worlding of being-in-itself. For now note that Sartre indicates our primordial activity of worlding being results in its

modification, which is nothing other than a world. I contend Sartre's *Critique*, vol. 1 explicates the modifications of the in-itself brought about by our ancestors and does so in terms compatible, yet beyond, the ontological categories of *Being and Nothingness*, because it theorizes about our ancestors' worlding activity of being. As a consequence, I believe Sartre's *Critique* is a "metaphysical" supplement to the ontology of *Being and Nothingness*.

Early on in the *Critique*, Sartre says,

> . . . the epistemological starting point must always be *consciousness* as apodictic certainty (of) itself and as consciousness *of* such and such an object. But we are not concerned, at this point, with interrogating consciousness about itself: the object it must give itself is precisely the *life*, the objective being, of the investigator, in the world of Others, in so far as this being totalizes itself from birth and will continue to totalize itself until death. (1991, p. 51)

Note that what Sartre says here about the "epistemological starting point" is in full accord with the claims made in *Being and Nothingness*. This suggests that Sartre, in the *Critique*, does not reject the existential approach of the earlier work. And the remainder of the passage supports my metaphysical supplement thesis. Moreover, Sartre's secondary title to the *Critique*, vol. 1, which is "Theory of Practical Ensembles", lends support to my metaphysical supplement thesis. 'Ensemble' refers to a collection of human beings and their relationships; a "practical" ensemble refers to the actions of human beings along with the products created by their actions. This suggests that Sartre's *Critique* does aim to explain our ancestors' worlding of

being. And since an existential freedom ethicist would want to supplement her ontology with a metaphysics to understand why our world is as it is, e.g., why oppression exists, Sartre's *Critique* is a necessary supplement to Sartre's phenomenological ontology.

This brings me to a fundamental difference between my project and Thomas C. Anderson's *Sartre's Two Ethics*. Though Anderson makes extensive use of the *Notebooks* to develop an existential freedom ethic, he holds the *Critique* presents an "ontology" opposed to the ontology of *Being and Nothingness* and that the "ontology" of Sartre's *Critique* supports an ethics distinct from the existential freedom ethic supported by the phenomenological ontology. As a proponent of the radical break thesis, Anderson holds there are two philosophically incompatible periods of Sartre's writings, one including Sartre's work prior to his *Critique* and the other including the *Critique* and subsequent texts. Although Sartrean scholars who hold the radical break thesis support it in different ways, they all maintain the *Critique* connotes a departure from the existentialist outlook of *Being and Nothingness*. With my supplement thesis I have contended otherwise. Even Sartre, when asked in a 1975 interview about the change in his ontology, said, "No it has not changed. *L'Etre et le Néant* deals with ontology, not the *Critique de la raison dialectique*. (Schilpp 1981, p. 41)

Here I have given a *prima facie* case that Sartre's *Critique* is compatible with *Being and Nothingness*, is an

essential supplement to Sartre's ontology, and is necessary to the development of a defensible existential freedom ethic. I believe the text that follows will substantiate these somewhat controversial claims. Moreover, in the text that follows, I hope to demonstrate what an existential freedom ethic is. By weaving together the ethically relevant threads of the three Sartrean texts mentioned and of Beauvoir's ethics, I hope to demonstrate that an existential freedom ethic can be coherent, consistent, adequate, and practically efficacious--in short, viable.

CHAPTER ONE
ROAD TO AN EXISTENTIAL FREEDOM ETHIC

In this chapter I pave, so to speak, the road to an existential freedom ethic. I discuss and argue for my interpretation of Sartre's conception of human freedom; I discuss and present arguments for believing human beings are free; I entertain and reply to objections to the feasibility of an existential freedom ethic; and I describe the nature and content of the normative principles of this ethic. All in all, I hope to make a *prima facie* case for the internal consistency and coherency, as well as the practical efficacy, of this existential freedom ethic.

Interpretation and Defense of Human Freedom

Because my characterization and defense of an existential freedom ethic is founded on the ontology Sartre sets forth in *Being and Nothingness*, I shall begin there. For Sartre, ontology is concerned with the question of being, i.e., what are the fundamental categories of reality, what characteristics can be ascribed to these categories, and what are the relations between them. And since Sartre's philosophical method here is phenomenology, consciousness is his point of departure. He begins with two questions: What is the being of the phenomenon? What is the being of consciousness? In reply to the first question, Sartre says, the being of the phenomenon is in-itself, and with regard to the second, he says, the being of consciousness is

for-itself. But what do these neologisms mean?

To say that the being of the phenomenon is in-itself means it is what it is. This means it is inert and perfectly coincides with itself. The law of its being is identity. It also means that being-in-itself is uncreated and is without reason; yet, it is. And its existence is contingent; yet, it does exist. In other words, being-in-itself's existence is a fact and the fact of its existence is inexplicable. In short: it is the given.

To say that the being of consciousness is for-itself means it is what it is not and is not what it is. This means the being of consciousness is an activity, not a state. It means a for-itself reaches out from the present to the past, which no longer is, and to the future, which is not yet. And it means a for-itself is necessarily transcending. Through the act of transcending, the for-itself creates a relation with being-in-itself that is nothing other than a world. Or metaphorically put: a for-itself illumines the otherwise colorless being-in-itself and lights up value, meaning, structure, instrumentality, possibility, and differentiation. In so doing, a for-itself discovers **and** creates a world.

A world, then, is a structured, meaningful, practical, conceptual, and textured background and foreground made for and by any for-itself. And because the being of a for-itself is an activity and because creating a world out of being-in-itself is a for-itself's most primordial activity,

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I call this activity 'worlding'.[1]

A for-itself cannot create a world *ex nihilo*. This
means that, though the existence of being-in-itself is not
in itself necessary, it is necessary in order for a for-
itself to create a world. Moreover, since the very exis-
tence of the for-itself arises only through its worlding of
being-in-itself, being-in-itself's existence is necessary
relative to the existence of being-for-itself. Consequently,
I shall refer to being-in-itself as 'being'. And since a
world arises only through the for-itself's worlding of
being, the existence of a for-itself, though in itself
contingent, is necessary relative to the existence of a
world. Lastly, since the existence of a for-itself erupts
only if it worlds being, the being of a for-itself is cor-
relative to the being of its world. Therefore, the being of
the for-itself--that is, the being of consciousness--is
necessarily being-in-a-world.

The original contingency of the existence of a for-
itself, together with its necessary relatedness to being, is
what Sartre calls 'facticity'. Among other things, facti-
city also signifies the historical character of the being of
a for-itself.[2]

In summary, the being of consciousness is being-in-a-
world. Its being is a process and its most primordial
activity is worlding the inert and indifferent in-itself.
And since the being of consciousness is dependent on, yet is
not caused by, being, the existential phenomenologist steers

clear of Berkeleyan idealism and of Hobbesian materialism. She also steers clear of Berkeleyan idealism and Hobbesian materialism, because the being of the world is not solely conceptual, nor is it solely material. And since both being and consciousness are in themselves contingent, this ontology represents a metaphysics of possibility, not a metaphysics of necessity.

Now, to understand how and why Sartre's phenomenological ontology demonstrates we are free, I shall interpret the following passage from *Being and Nothingness* in relationship to that ontology.

> Man's relation with being is that he can modify it. For man to put a particular existent out of circuit is to put himself out of circuit in relation to that existent. In this case he is not subject to it; he is out of reach; it can not act on him, for he has retired beyond nothingness. Descartes following the Stoics has given a name to this possibility, . . . it is freedom. But freedom here is only a name. . . . It is not yet possible to deal with the problem of freedom in all its fullness.[15] In fact the steps which we have completed up to now show clearly that freedom is not a faculty of the human soul to be envisaged and described in isolation. What we have been trying to define is the being of man in so far as he conditions the appearance of nothingness, and this being has appeared to us as freedom. . . . there is no difference between the being of man and his *being-free*. (1956, pp. 24-24)

Starting from the end, what have we learned about human freedom?[3] Freedom is our very being, because, in my words, we transcend being when we world it, and we can transcend being, because our being is for-itself. Take note, though, of the specific type of argument Sartre here employs to demonstrate that our being is being-free. It is a transcendental argument. He begins with actual human behaviors

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and asks what would be necessary for such behaviors to be possible. Freedom is the condition for the possibility of asking a question, for the possibility of expecting a future, for the possibility of remembering a past, for the possibility of effecting a phenomenological epoché, etc. Therefore, since such human behaviors are actual, we are free. And since our very being is freedom, Sartre calls our being 'being-free'. Yet, since our existence is for-itself, which is necessarily in-a-world, our being is also being-in-a-world.

Finally, we have learned being-free is necessarily situated, because "freedom is not a faculty of the human soul to be envisaged and described in isolation". But why is this so? It is so because our being-free is being-in-a-world. Moveover, since our being is being-in-a-world, our existence is necessarily perspectival. This being so, our being is necessarily bodily, because having a perspective requires that one have a body. Even so, it is purely contingent each of us has the body and perspective we do. Sartre adds,

> This point must be will understood. For this necessity appears between two contingencies; on the one hand, while it is necessary that I be in the form of being-there, still it is altogether contingent that I be, for I am not the foundation of my being; on the other hand, while it is necessary that I be engaged in this or that point of view, it is contingent that it should be precisely in this view to the exclusion of all others. This twofold contingency which embraces a necessity we have called the *facticity* of the for-itself. (1956, p. 308)

Due to the facticity of our being, we cannot exist as a

disembodied view from nowhere. But why doesn't facticity destroy our freedom? Or, in other words, why is being-in-a-world compatible with being-free?

To answer this question, I shall explain the relationship between the facticity and transcendence of our existence. Facticity is internally related to our transcendence. An internal relation is one in which the terms of the relation cannot exist independently of that very relation. Now, since in a causal relationship the cause exists necessarily independently of its effect, internal relatedness is a sufficient condition for a non-causal relationship. Therefore, if I can prove that facticity and transcendence are internally related, then the relationship is a non-causal one. And if that is so, then facticity, rather than undercutting freedom, is actually an essential aspect of our being-free.

Here's how it works: one's past is related to one's future as means are to end. When projecting an end, one illuminates the means. The future, as the projected end, necessarily illuminates the past, which will constitute the means to achieving the projected end. And the past, as the means to an end, only comes into being when we project an end. Sartre explains further,

> the very contingency of freedom and the world which surrounds this contingency with its own contingency will appear to freedom only in the light of the end chosen; that is, not as brute existents but in the unity of illumination of a single nihilation. . . . We shall use the term *situation* for the contingency of freedom in the *plenum* of being of the world inasmuch as this *datum*, which is there only in order not to

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constrain freedom, is revealed to this freedom only as
already illuminated by the end which freedom chooses.
(1956, p. 487)

The contingency to which Sartre refers is our facticity.

Facticity, then, is not to be equated with uninterpreted

facts, since transcendence gives rise to facticity. There-

fore, the relationship between transcendence and facticity

is an internal relationship, because the relationship of a

projected end to its means is an internal relation, just as

the relationship of a projected future to the past is inter-

nal.

This internal relation between transcendence and

facticity is one's **situation** or world, since situation

refers to the product of the particular way in which each of

us worlds being. 'Situation' incorporates the notion that

one's relationship to being is dependent on one's particular

manner of worlding it and that one's particular manner of

worlding being is also dependent on being. In other words,

> The given in-itself as *resistance* or as aid is revealed
> only in the light of the projecting freedom. . . .
> Therefore it is only in and through the free upsurge of
> freedom that the world develops and reveals the resis-
> tance which can render the projected end unrealizable.
> Man encounters an obstacle only within the field of his
> freedom. . . . What is an obstacle for me may not be so
> for another. There is no obstacle in an absolute
> sense, but the obstacle reveals its coefficient of
> adversity across freely invented and freely acquired
> techniques. The obstacle reveals this coefficient also
> in terms of the value of the end posited by freedom.
> (1956, p. 488)

So, how one worlds being will reveal either a hostile or a

hospitable personal situation. And what Sartre calls the

'coefficient of adversity or assistance' arises from the

interplay of transcendence and facticity.

While it is true that the transcendence of being-free refers to our projected end as an autonomous choice, the facticity of being-free refers to the context illuminated by that choice. Thus, one's particular facticity is not random, since it arises within the scope of a projected end; nor is one's transcendence a boundless power to get whatever one wants, since the act of projecting an end necessarily reveals a structured and meaningful aspect of being.

In summary our very being is freedom, but being-free is Janus-like. If one looks at it only from the aspect of transcendence, it appears as a power to do whatever one likes, and if one looks at it only from the aspect of facticity, it appears as an ineffectual power. The truth, however, is: being-free is both transcendence and facticity. Being-free entails one's choice of an end is undetermined, yet when an end is projected, the means to that end are illuminated and are partially constitutive of the achieved end. And that our being-free is ambiguous also means that our being is both situated and always beyond its situation--that is, we both create and discover a world.

Up to his point I have not discussed the relationship between my being-free and the being-free of other persons, because that there is more than one person is a contingent fact, not an ontological necessity. Sartre explains,

> There is no doubt that my belonging to an inhabited world has the value of a *fact*. It refers to the original fact which, as we have seen, can not be deduced from the ontological structure of the for-itself. And

although this fact only makes our facticity more deep-rooted, it does not evolve from our facticity in so far as the latter expresses the necessity of the contingency of the for-itself. (1956, p. 512)

And commenting on the relevance of the existence of other persons in relationship to one's freedom, Sartre says,

> We must recognize that we have just encountered a real limit to our freedom--that is, a way of being which is imposed on us without our freedom being its foundation. . . . by the fact of the Other's existence, I exist in a situation which has an outside and which due to this very fact has a dimension of alienation which I can in no way remove from the situation any more than I can act directly upon it. (1956, pp. 524-525)

In other words, since it is through for-itselfs that meaning arises--that being is worlded--and since other for-itselfs have existed before we have, as well as exist contemporaneously with us, each of us has arisen in an already-made world, in a world in which meaning is already ascribed to each of us, and in a personal situation that has an objective form, i.e., an "outside". As a consequence, each of us has arisen in a world not of our own making, has characteristics not of our own choosing, and has a personal situation seen by other for-itselfs. All of this raises the question of whether one's being-free is undercut by the being-free of other for-itselfs. Yet Sartre claims it is not. He says,

> This limit to my freedom is, as we see, posited by the Other's pure and simple existence--that is, by the fact that my transcendence exists for a transcendence. Thus we grasp a truth of great importance: we saw earlier, keeping ourselves within the compass of existence-for-itself, that only my freedom can limit my freedom; we see now, when we include the Other's existence in our considerations, that my freedom on this new level finds its limits also in the existence of the Other's freedom. Thus, on whatever level we place ourselves, the only limits which a freedom can encounter are found in freedom. (1956, p. 525)

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But is Sartre's reasoning here correct?

I've argued that facticity does not destroy one's being-free, because one's facticity is internally related to one's transcendence. But another person's transcendence is not internally related to one's own facticity, since the objective form of one's own situation, which is created by another person's transcendence, is external to one's own transcendence and, thus, is external to one's own facticity, which arises only with one's own transcendence. So, Sartre is equivocating on the phrase 'limits to freedom', since 'limits to freedom' on the level of one's being-for-itself refers to the **self-limiting** aspect of one's own being-free and 'limits to freedom' on the level of being-for-others refers to one's own being-free as **limited by another's being-free**. As a result, Sartre has not shown that one's freedom, which is limited by another person's freedom, is not thereby undercut; however, what Sartre says in the passages cited indicates why one's freedom is not undercut.

Another person's choice of a projected end cannot causally determine one's own choice of a projected end, because one's own being is being-free, which means one's own choice of a projected end is necessarily undetermined. In other words, the transcendence of another person's being-free cannot, so to speak, butt up against the transcendence of one's own of being-free. And since it cannot, the transcendence of one's own being-free cannot be undercut. However, since one's choice of a particular end reveals the

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means to the achievement of that end and since this reveals one's objective form and the already-made world, it is true that, though one's facticity is distinct from the existence of other persons, the existence of other persons makes one's own facticity "more deep-rooted". This means that just as the facticity of one's own being-free gives rise to a coefficient of adversity or assistance, so too does one's being-for-others, which is the "facticity" of one's being in an already inhabited and made world, give rise to a **human** coefficient of adversity or assistance. In addition to this, the fact of the existence of other for-itselfs creates the possibility for other for-itselfs to **intentionally** help or hinder one's achievement of his or her autonomously chosen goal. So although the existence of other persons does not destroy one's own being-free, another person's being-free does, in the sense described, limit one's own being-free.

As an illustration of how the existence of other persons limits, but does not destroy, one's own being-free consider the following possibility. Suppose I have chosen to become a physician, and let's further suppose I was born in a world in which women, as well as Blacks, are prohibited from going to medical school. Note first: I have been born in a world in which going to medical schools is a possibility, because other persons have brought this possibility into being. And though my choice of going to medical school is autonomous, this choice is a possibility because other persons have created a world where medical schools exist.

But, if I am Black or a woman or both, then my choice to go to medical school is a possibility made impossible in such a world. Thus, the being-free of other persons limits one's own being-free by expanding or contracting the horizon of one's being-in-the-world.

Even so, Sartre's characterization of our being-free often seems to concern itself only with autonomy of choice and, thus, seems unrelated to the issue of how other persons can in fact limit one's own being-free. For example consider the following passage. Sartre says,

> . . . it is necessary to point out to "common sense" that the formula "to be free" does not mean "to obtain what one has wished" but rather "by oneself to determine oneself to wish" (in the broad sense of choosing). In other words, success is not important to freedom. The discussion which opposes common sense to philosophers stems here from a misunderstanding: the empirical and popular concept of "freedom". . . is equivalent to "the ability to obtain the ends chosen". The technical and philosophical concept of freedom. . . means only autonomy of choice. It is necessary, however, to note that choice, being identical with acting, supposes commencement of realization in order that the choice may be distinguished from the dream and the wish. Thus we shall not say that a prisoner is always free to go out of prison. . . nor that he is always free to long for release. . . but that he is always free to try to escape (or get himself liberated). . . (1956, pp. 483-484)

From this passage one might infer we cannot even acknowledge that other persons can in fact limit one's being-free, since "success is not important to freedom" and since a prisoner in a world with prisons, or a woman in a sexist world, or a Black person in a racist world, or a homosexual in a homophobic world, or a laborer in a capitalist world, etc., is "free". And all of this suggests to critics that Sartre's

conception of human freedom is abstract, i.e., freedom is conceived by Sartre to be unsituated, so his conception leaves no room for acknowledging, let alone condemning, oppression.

To answer this objection, I want to make several points why I believe this objection is without teeth. First, when Sartre says "success is not important to freedom", I contend he is only saying lack of success does not prove one's choices are not autonomous. The inability to achieve one's end does not, in other words, prove one is not being-free.

Second, "philosophical" freedom exists only if it is practically oriented, since choosing, for Sartre, is necessarily doing. The choice of an end entails the adoption of means to that end. A choice, then, is really only a choice when one takes into account the facticity that will enable or impede the realization of one's autonomously chosen end.

Third, being-free is meaningful only if failure to achieve one's autonomously chosen end is possible, since being-free is not the power to get and do whatever one likes. Just prior to the passage under discussion, Sartre says,

> There can be a free for-itself only as engaged in a resisting world. Outside of this engagement the notions of freedom, of determinism, of necessity lose all meaning. (1956, p. 483)

In other words, what Sartre calls 'philosophical' freedom is necessarily "practical", because 'philosophical' freedom, i.e., our being as being-free, is necessarily situated.

Fourth, rather than hiding the possibility of

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oppression, Sartre's "philosophical" characterization of freedom makes oppression visible and open to moral condemnation. As Sartre says in the *Notebooks*,

> If we pretend that man is not free, the very idea of oppression loses all meaning. In the first place, the oppressor not being free is assimilable to natural forces whose efficacy against man is borrowed from freedom itself. Next, the oppressed, not being free, can only change states. A stone does not oppress, one does not oppress a stone. (1992a, p. 327)

As a consequence, Sartre's "philosophical" concept of human freedom is the condition for the possibility of oppression. And since this account of oppression holds that oppression arises from being-free, rather than from purely structural or so-called "natural" sources, an oppressor is open to ethical condemnation.

In summary, our being-free is necessarily practical. And since being-free is our very being, no person is more or less being-free than any other person. Yet, since one's choice of a particular end will reveal a non-human and human coefficient of adversity or assistance, the ease with which one achieves that end is relative to her or his personal situation--that is, to the particular interplay between one's facticity and transcendence, one's being-for-others and autonomously chosen end, and one's being-free and the being-free of other persons. And although the existence of other persons does not destroy one's own being-free, the existence of other persons is what makes oppression possible and subject to moral condemnation.

This characterization of human freedom as limited has

been viewed by some Sartrean commentators as inconsistent with claims that our freedom is total and absolute. Anderson in *Sartre's Two Ethics*, for example, says,

> I believe Sartre's assertions about human freedom being total, absolute, unlimited and wholly free. . . mean just what they say, namely, that freedom is not limited or conditioned at all by its facticity or situation because it escapes, transcends, nihilates, denies, and disengages itself from it. Such statements are, I submit, simply incompatible with others in which he recognizes some limits to human freedom. (1993, p. 177)

And although Detmer in *Freedom as a Value* does not hold to Anderson's inconsistency thesis, Detmer's answer to the apparent contradiction differs from mine. Detmer argues that Sartre employs two distinct senses of freedom, and that Sartre's claims about freedom's absoluteness and unlimitedness refer solely to what Detmer calls our 'ontological freedom', whereas Sartre's claims about freedom's limits refer solely to what Detmer calls our 'practical freedom'. Yet I have just argued that being-free, which Detmer calls 'ontological' freedom, is not existentially distinguishable from our practical freedom. Consequently, I shall not argue the apparent contradiction can be resolved by arguing Sartre employs two existentially distinct senses of freedom. Rather, I shall explain why and in what sense our being-free is unlimited. I shall explain, then, how and why it is limited. In the process of doing this, I shall show that the apparent inconsistency arises from the irreducible ambiguity of our being-free. Whether our being-free is unlimited or limited depends on which aspect of our being-free we illuminate.

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First, our being-free is unlimited in the sense that it
is absolute. It is absolute in the sense that if a for-
itself exists, its being is necessarily being-free. This
means that one's choice of an end is not causally deter-
mined. Thus, our freedom is unlimited in the sense that
one's choice of an end is uncaused. Second, our being-free
is unlimited in the sense that, so long as one exists at
all, one's being-free is indestructible regardless of one's
personal situation. In other words, regardless of the human
and non-human coefficient of adversity or assistance re-
vealed through one's choice of an end, the choice of that
end is uncaused. Note however: neither sense of unlimited
precludes the possibility of limits to being-free and nei-
ther sense implies our being-free is omnipotent. The unlim-
ited aspect of our being-free need not be inconsistent with
its limited aspect. Moreover, there is a third sense of
unlimited that implies a limit. Sartre says,

> We have established that the for-itself is free. But
> this does not mean that it is its own foundation. If
> to be free meant to be its own foundation it would be
> necessary that freedom should decide the *existence* of
> its being. . . . it would be necessary that freedom
> should decide its being-free; that is not only that it
> should be a choice of an end, but that it should be a
> choice of itself as freedom. This would suppose there-
> fore that the possibility of being-free and the possi-
> bility of not-being-free exist equally before the free
> choice of either of them--i.e., before the free choice
> of freedom. . . . In fact we are a freedom which choos-
> es, but we do not choose to be free. We are condemned
> to freedom, as we said earlier, thrown into freedom or,
> as Heidegger says, "abandoned". (1956, pp. 484-485)

When Sartre says, "we are condemned to be free", he implic-
itly implies our being-free is both unlimited and limited.

Our being-free is unlimited, because it is absolute in the senses previously discussed; but our being-free is limited, because we did not choose our being. If one is a for-itself, then one's being is necessarily being-free. And although we do have a say in the way in which we play out our being-free, our freedom is not unlimited in the sense Anderson contends. Our being-free is not a god-like omnipotence.

Not only is our being-free not unlimited in the sense Anderson would have us believe, it is in fact necessarily limited in the sense he would have us not believe. Consider the following passage from *Being and Nothingness*:

> A freedom which would produce its own existence would lose its very meaning as freedom. Actually freedom is not a simple undetermined power. If it were, it would be nothingness or in-itself; and it is only by an aberrant synthesis of the in-itself and nothingness that one is able to conceive of freedom as a bare power pre-existing its choices. It determines itself by its very upsurge as a "doing". But as we have seen, to do supposes the nihilation of a given. One does something *with* or to something. Thus, freedom is a lack of being in relation to a given being; it is not the upsurge of a full being. (1956, p. 485)

Here Sartre flatly denies our being-free entails the lack of limits and denies it entails the power to create *ex nihilo*. Just as one's choice of an end reveals the means to that end, so likewise does one's adoption of the means to that projected end reveal the achieved end. And since the choice of an end is only really a choice when one illumines means, the means act as a constraint on the end to the extent that the choice of the end acts as a constraint on the means.

Another reason our being-free is necessarily limited

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follows from Sartre's analysis of choice. Sartre explains,

> . . . freedom can exist only as restricted, since
> freedom is choice. Every choice as we shall see,
> supposes elimination and selection, every choice is a
> choice of finitude. (1956, p. 485)

So, although our being-free guarantees the choice of an end
is uncaused, the choice of an end necessarily entails limi-
tation. Our being-free is necessarily self-limiting. Each
time we choose an end we do so to the exclusion of other
possible ends.

In summary, the senses in which our being-free is
unlimited in no way contradict the senses in which it is
limited. In fact, Sartre's characterization of our being-
free as "absolute" and "total", and as necessarily con-
strained follow from the ambiguity inherent to being-free.
We world being-in-itself, yet ontologically require the
existence of being-in-itself; we create facticity, yet we
passively receive facticity's coefficient of adversity or
assistance. We autonomously choose an end, yet passively
receive the human coefficient of adversity or of assistance.
Being-free entails the non-determination of choice, yet
choice entails limitation. Thus, Sartre's characterization
of our being-free reveals the non-equivalence of
unlimitation and non-determination. This is a radical
departure from the more "parochial" understanding of human
freedom as the power to do or to get whatever one wants,
whenever one wants. But this "parochial" freedom is nothing
other than a god-like freedom; whereas, being-free is a mere
mortal's freedom.

The Preliminary Description and Defense of the Existential
Freedom Ethic

That our being is being-free signifies value comes into

being through us. And it signifies we are always being-free

regardless of our situation. But having said this, it seems

I have removed the possibility of creating a freedom ethic,

since a freedom ethic is an ethics in which freedom is both

the beginning and end of all ethical action. Freedom is the

beginning of all ethical action, since our being-free is the

origin of value; but if being-free is a given, then it seems

to make no sense to choose freedom as an end.

To overcome the apparent vacuity of the freedom ethic,

I take my lead from Beauvoir who, in *The Ethics of Ambi-*

guity, responds to this objection. She says,

> This objection would mean something only if freedom
> were a thing or a quality naturally attached to a
> thing. Then, in effect, one would either have it or
> not have it. . . . To will oneself free is to effect
> the transition from nature to morality by establishing
> a genuine freedom on the original upsurge of our exis-
> tence. (1948, pp. 24-25)

Although Beauvoir believes she has answered the objection by

pointing out that freedom is not a property or a thing and

by distinguishing between a "genuine" freedom, and the

"original upsurge" of our being as freedom, one might ask

why these points meet the objection. Why does it matter

that freedom is not a property? And why isn't the distinc-

tion between "genuine" and "original" freedom in name only?

First, our being-free is neither a property, nor an

essence, nor a faculty of the human being, because it is an

activity. Unlike a property or essence, an activity is not something one has; it is doing. So, when Beauvoir refers to a transition from "nature to morality", she is implicitly suggesting possible modes of our being-free, as well as explicitly pointing out that willing oneself free entails the adoption of one mode of being-free over another mode of being-free. Yet Beauvoir fails to clearly distinguish, in this passage, being-free from its modes. Even so, I interpret "the original upsurge of our existence" to refer to our being-free. In addition, I shall refer to two possible modes of how we live our being-free as 'alienated freedom' and 'moral freedom'.[4] With these distinctions on hand, I shall explain why this freedom ethic is not, at this stage in its development, self-aborting—that is, why willing freedom as the end of all ethical action is not vacuous.

In the *Notebooks*, Sartre suggests that:

> We need to invert the terms of the Kantian problem and say that there is never heteronomy when one is on the plane of psychological determinism. If this determinism were to exist, there would be neither heteronomy nor autonomy but only the necessary unity of interconnected processes. Heteronomy can only affect a freedom and can only do so through another freedom. (1992a, p. 255)

In other words, since people's choices of an end are never causally determined by external factors, heteronomy of the will is a choice, too. And since one's choice of an end is always autonomous, because one is always being-free, Sartre uses 'autonomy' and 'heteronomy' in senses different from that of Kant. I interpret 'autonomy' to mean choosing moral freedom as one's mode of being-free; I interpret

'heteronomy' to mean choosing alienated freedom as one's mode of being-free.

Moral freedom, which wills itself free, acts in accord with being-free, and, in so doing, moral freedom worlds being in terms of opportunities and wills freedom as the world's foundation. The morally free person, by acting in accord with her being-free, assumes and wills her primordial activity of worlding being, which is nothing other than creating a world founded on freedom. By contrast, alienated freedom, which attempts to flee its being-free, acts in disaccord with being-free, and, in so doing, alienated freedom worlds being in terms at odds with being-free. The alienatedly free person, by acting in disaccord with being-free, evades or hides his primordial activity of worlding being and wills unfreedom as the world's foundation. The alienatedly free person creates or maintains a world based on impossible possibles. In any case, since being-free is the ground for the possibility of both alienated, and moral, freedom, one can and does choose how one's being-free shall be played out. Thus, this freedom ethic is not vacuous, for, though one's being is being-free, to will freedom as the end of all ethical action is to will oneself morally free and to will freedom as the world's foundation.

With this preliminary description of two different modes of being-free before us, I shall now argue that the main thrust of *Being and Nothingness* is a description of being-free in the mode of alienated freedom. Alienated

freedom is nothing other than bad faith and the spirit of
seriousness. (The spirit of seriousness involves maintain-
ing that values are objective facts. Bad faith involves a
lie to oneself and makes the spirit of seriousness possi-
ble.) What bad faith does is to emphasize only one aspect
of our ambiguous being-free, or to treat one aspect as if it
were the other aspect. Sartre says,

> These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be
> capable of valid coordination. But bad faith does not
> want either to coordinate them or to surmount them in a
> synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity
> while preserving their differences. It must affirm
> facticity as *being* transcendence and transcendence as
> *being* facticity, in such a way that at the instant when
> the person apprehends the one, he can find himself
> abruptly faced with the other. (1956, p. 56)

So, bad faith just is alienated freedom, because the person
acting in bad faith acts in disaccord with his or her being-
free. And due to the fact that the ambiguity of our being-
free also stems from the facticity of our being-for-others,
there are, as Sartre explains, more avenues of bad faith.

> . . . although this metastable concept of "transcen-
> dence-facticity" is one of the most basic instruments
> of bad faith, it is not the only one of its kind. We
> can equally well use another kind of duplicity derived
> from human reality which we will express roughly by
> saying that its being-for-itself implies complementari-
> ly a being-for-others. Upon any one of my conducts it
> is always possible to converge two looks, mine and that
> of the Other. (1956, p. 57)

In other words, people in bad faith might choose to
objectify their being-free. For example, one might choose
to identify solely with the facticity of her or his being-
for-others; or one might try to evade her or his being-for-
others and live in the fantasy world of a solipsist. In

either case, the person attempts to hide or mask the ambiguity of her being-free. She thereby acts in disaccord with her being-free, and thus, her mode of being-free just is alienated freedom.

Acting in the mode of alienated freedom not only bears on one's relationship to oneself, it also bears on one's concrete relations to other for-itselfs. Sartre describes such relations in *Being and Nothingness* and *No Exit*. For example, Estelle, whose choice is to be her being-for-others, gets lost in the loop of trying to be, for Garcin, other than what she is and, then, tries to make Garcin be, for her, other than what he is. Thus, alienated freedom is not to be equated with the fact of the existence of other persons, nor is it to be equated with the fact of one's being-for-others. Alienated freedom is one's active attempt to flee one's being-free. Although one way to attempt to hide one's being-free is to identify solely with the facticity of one's being-for-others, alienated freedom does not arise because of the facticity of one's being-for-others. Alienated freedom is the decision to live one's being-free in the presence of other persons as not one's own. Alienated freedom is, also, the decision to see other persons as what they are not--that is, to see other persons as things. And as a consequence of these decisions, human relations will be conflictual. So, when Sartre asserts in *Being and Nothingness* that our fundamental relations with other persons is necessarily conflictual, I believe this is true only

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if people enact their freedom alienatedly.

In addition to describing, in *Being and Nothingness,* one's relations to other persons when one's mode of being-free is alienated, Sartre also describes the relations one has with the world. In the section on "Doing and Having", Sartre concludes that our relations to the world can be reduced to either the will to be or the will to have. When one's relationship to the world is based on the will to be or the will to have, rather than the will to do, one takes the world as absolute and essential, not one's own being-free. When the world, which is really the product of the for-itself's worlding of being, is viewed as if it were essential and absolute, one is acting in disaccord with her being-free, because the world is viewed as an immutable given instead of an ongoing creation. Alienated freedom inverts the relationship between ends and means. The alien-atedly free person takes herself as a mere means while tak-ing the given world as causally determining her ends. For this reason, the world produced and sustained by alienated freedom is what Sartre rightly calls a 'fake world'. Such a world is fake, because it is founded on the untruths that the given world is absolute and essential and one's being-free is inessential and relative to circumstances.

My interpretation of *Being and Nothingness* as primarily describing being-free in the mode of alienated freedom is supported by passages in the *Notebooks*, which was written after the publication of *Being and Nothingness*. In the

Notebooks Sartre says,

> By alienation, we mean a certain type of relations that man has with himself, with others and the world, where he posits the ontological priority of the Other. The Other is not some specific person but a category or, if you will, a dimension, an element. . . . In a conception of the world based exclusively on the Other, the subject derives all his projects and every thing about his existence from *what he is not* and from what does not exist as he does. (1992a, p. 382)

In other words, alienation signifies living one's life as if one is not a for-itself, as if one is an in-itself, or a for-others, or a pure transcendence; as if one does not have autonomy of choice, as if one's choices are determined by the given world; as if meaning does not come from oneself, as if meaning is given; as if subjectivity is not the origin of value, as if objectivity is the origin of value; as if one's freedom is not limited, as if one's freedom is omnipotent; as if one does not world being, as if the world is an immutable given. And all of these untruths arise from nothing other than alienated freedom, which corresponds to Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* descriptions of bad faith and the spirit of seriousness.

Also in the *Notebooks*, Sartre says, "In alienated action one acts in order *to be* or one acts in order *to have*". (1992a, p. 512) And in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre contended that our fundamental relation with the world is either to be or to have. Consequently, I believe I am justified in viewing Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* descriptions of our relations with the world as descriptions of relations arising from alienated freedom. And perhaps

most importantly, Sartre also says in the *Notebooks*,

> The very fact that *Being and Nothingness* is an ontology
> before conversion takes for granted that a conversion
> is necessary and that as a consequence, there is a
> natural attitude. (1992a, p. 6)

I interpret this to mean that *Being and Nothingness* primarily describes being-free in the mode of alienated freedom and that this mode of being-free is something like a "natural attitude". Conversion, then, is the adoption of moral freedom in place of alienated freedom. And this interpretation is supported by the following passage in the *Notebooks*.

> The meaning of conversion: rejection of alienation. . .
> To give a foundation to one's being by creating some-
> thing outside oneself. The absolute goal: to give
> human freedom as the foundation of the world's being.
> But this goal is not given, it is *willed*. (1992a, p.
> 470)

So, conversion is what I have suggested; it is the transition from alienated freedom to moral freedom, since it is alienated freedom that wills unfreedom, and moral freedom that wills freedom, as the world's foundation.

Now, although Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness,* does not explicitly develop the possibility of converting to moral freedom, he does suggest, in several places, that conversion is possible. In a note he says,

> If it is indifferent whether one is in good faith or in
> bad faith, because bad faith reapprehends good faith
> and slides to the very origin of the project of good
> faith, that does not mean that we can not radically
> escape bad faith. But this supposes a self-recovery of
> being which was previously corrupted. This self-recov-
> ery we shall call authenticity, the description of
> which has no place here. (1956, p. 70, f9)

And with regard to our "hellish" relations with others, Sartre says,

> These considerations do not exclude the possibility of
> an ethics of deliverance and salvation. But this can
> be achieved only after a radical conversion, which we
> can not discuss here. (1956, p. 412, f14)

And finally, in the section concerning our relations with

the world where Sartre argues that all activities can be

reduced to either having or being, he says of the project of

doing,

> This particular type of project, which has freedom for
> its foundation and its goal, deserves a special study.
> It is radically different from all others in that it
> aims at a radically different type of being. . . . But
> such a study can not be made here; it belongs rather to
> an *Ethics* and it supposes that there has been a pre-
> liminary definition of the nature and the role of puri-
> fying reflection (our descriptions have hitherto aimed
> only at *accessory* reflection.) (1956, p. 581)

Note, on my interpretation, moral freedom corresponds to

what Sartre calls 'authenticity' and, thus, conversion to

moral freedom will require a "purifying" reflection. But

why is this so?

First, reflection of any kind involves throwing into

relief one's situation and is an action because reflection

is intentional. Second, unlike the non-reflective act, the

reflective act questions what one is doing. However, in

questioning what one is doing, one can engage in two radi-

cally different types of reflection. One can merely reflect

on the means to alienated freedom's end; or one can call

that end into question. In the former case, one is engag-

ing in accessory reflection; in the latter case, one is

engaging in non-accessory reflection. Third, one earmark of

non-accessory reflection is the experience of anguish,

because when anguished one has an explicit awareness of her

or his freedom. And since having an explicit awareness of one's freedom is a necessary condition for the possibility of acting in accord with one's being-free, only non-accessory reflection illuminates the door to moral freedom.

But, since the anguished person's mode of reflection is non-accessory, we must ask whether anguished reflection is correlative to being-free in the mode of moral freedom. There are reasons to think yes and to think no.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre says,

> Anguish is opposed to the mind of the serious man who apprehends values in terms of the world and who resides in the reassuring materialistic substantiation of values. (1956, p. 39)

Sartre's comment seems to imply that anguished reflection, which is necessarily non-accessory, is correlative to moral freedom, since, if one is to act in accord with one's being-free, one must recognize oneself as the foundation of values and as a being whose being is freedom. But moral freedom involves more than the explicit recognition of one's being as being-free; it also entails that one **will** oneself free. And since the anguished person does not necessarily do this, non-accessory, anguished reflection cannot be correlative to being-free in the mode of moral freedom.

Even so, anguished reflection is not in bad faith and, thus, is not correlative to alienated freedom. And if one's mode of being-free must be either alienated, or moral, freedom, then my account of modes of being-free cannot adequately account for non-accessory, anguished reflection. And if it cannot account for non-accessory, anguished reflection,

which I have shown is a necessary condition for the possibility of conversion to moral freedom, then this ethic, even though it is not vacuous, will be incoherent unless there is another ethically relevant mode of being-free.

Given the correctness of Sartre's phenomenological description of anguished reflection, there is, then, an ethically relevant mode of being-free correlative to anguished reflection that is neither alienatedly free nor morally free. The person who is anguished has suspended her alienatedly free ways, but has not willed herself morally free. Metaphorically put: Her mode of being-free is at the crossroads of alienated, and moral, freedom. Her mode of being-free is neither alienated, nor moral, freedom, rather it is **anguished freedom.** Anguished freedom is, then, correlative to non-accessory reflection and can either fall back into alienated freedom or give rise to moral freedom.

But now there seems to be a new problem for this ethic. If alienated freedom's mode of reflection is accessory and anguished freedom's mode is non-accessory, what is moral freedom's mode of reflection? It is non-accessory, but non-accessory reflection appears to be correlative to anguished freedom. In other words, moral freedom cannot be correlative to non-accessory reflection simpliciter; for then moral freedom would be identical to anguished freedom, but that cannot be. The reflection correlative to moral freedom must be, however, a modification of anguished freedom's non-accessory reflection, since anguished freedom is a necessary

condition for moral freedom. And this is what Sartre right-
ly suggests in the *Notebooks*. He says,

> Pure, authentic reflection is a willing of what I will.
> It is the refusal to define myself by what I am (Ego)
> but instead by what I will. . . (1992a, p. 479)

Unlike anguished, non-accessory reflection, which recognizes
and reflects one's being as being-free, **authentic**, non-
accessory reflection goes one step farther, since it wills
to act in accord with what anguished reflection has expli-
citly unveiled. Therefore, authentic, non-accessory reflec-
tion is correlative to moral freedom; yet, anguished, non-
accessory reflection is a necessary, but not a sufficient,
condition for authentic, non-accessory reflection.

I have explained what conversion is and what it, to
some extent, involves, and have shown that it is a theore-
tically coherent notion, but I have not as yet proven it to
be possible. And if conversion is not possible, then this
ethic is self-abortive. And since there are at least two
reasons for believing conversion is not possible, the end of
this ethic, while theoretically coherent, is in practice
unachievable.

One reason conversion might not be possible is Sartre's
position in *Being and Nothingness* that "man is a useless
passion" and his position that bad faith, which is alienated
freedom, constitutes something like a nature. These claims
seem to imply our mode of being-free is necessarily alien-
ated. And if we necessarily must play out our being-free
alienatedly, then the end of this ethic is unachievable.

Another reason for believing conversion is not possible is what Wilkinson calls 'the existentialist paradox of conversion'. The paradox arises because anxiety, which reveals one's being as being-free, is supposed to arise from a person in bad faith, but a person in bad faith is avoiding anxiety; furthermore, since anxiety unveils one's being as being-free, it seems as though one must already be acting in accord with being-free if anxiety is to arise. In other words, it seems as though authenticity is a necessary condition for the eruption of anxiety, but the eruption of anxiety arises from a person in bad faith--that is, a person who is not authentic. In short, alienated freedom must already be moral freedom, but this is paradoxical.

To respond to these objections to the possibility of conversion, I shall appeal to Sartre's phenomenological ontology to show that conversion is possible. First, even when one lives one's being-free alienatedly, one must be aware implicitly of one's being as being-free, because implicit awareness of one's being as being-free is a necessary condition for the very possibility of bad faith, i.e., for the very possibility of alienated freedom. Second, even the alienatedly free person is necessarily being-free, since alienated freedom is a mode of being-free. Given these two necessary conditions for the possibility of alienated freedom, I shall show that these very conditions are also individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for the possibility of conversion to moral freedom.

Being-free is a necessary condition for the possibility of conversion to moral freedom, because, if one's being were not being-free, one could not act in accord with what one was not. In addition, implicit awareness of one's being as being-free is a necessary condition for the possibility of conversion to moral freedom, because, if one were not aware implicitly of one's being as being-free, one could not will oneself to act in accord with what one did not know one was. Finally, these two conditions are jointly sufficient for the possibility of conversion to moral freedom, because all that is required for the possibility--not the probability--of conversion is that conversion be ontologically possible.

Conversion is ontologically possible if it is not ontologically impossible. Conversion would be ontologically impossible only if one's being were not being-free or one were not aware, at least, implicitly, of one's being as being-free, because adopting a mode of an activity is impossible only if the activity proper is an impossibility or projecting a mode of that activity is an impossibility. Therefore, adopting a mode of an activity is possible if the activity is both possible and can be seen as possible. It follows, then, that conversion to moral freedom is possible, since, even when we are in the mode of alienated freedom, our being is being-free and we are aware implicitly of our being as being-free.

However, while showing that conversion to moral freedom is ontologically possible demonstrates that the end of this

ethic is theoretically achievable, it does not demonstrate that the end of this ethic is practically achievable. In other words, I have shown only the ontological possibility of conversion and not its concrete possibility. And if conversion to moral freedom is not concretely possible, then this ethic is unrealistic.

To show that conversion to moral freedom is concretely possible, I shall show what makes conversion to moral freedom probable. Conversion to moral freedom is likely if there is a situation common to alienatedly free persons that would make conversion to moral freedom likely or if there is something inherent to alienated freedom that would make conversion to moral freedom likely.

To begin, failure is a common theme of the situation of each alienatedly free person. And in the *Notebooks*, rightly noting the relevance of failure to the likelihood of conversion to moral freedom, Sartre says,

> conversion may arise from the perpetual failure of every one of the For-itself's attempts to be. Every attempt of the For-itself to be In-itself is by definition doomed to fail. . . . Even though this failure may be indefinitely covered over, made up for, by itself it tends to reveal the world as a world of failure, and it can push the For-itself to ask itself the pre-judicial question of the meaning of its acts and the reason for its failure. The problem gets posed as follows: Why is the human world inevitably a world of failure, what is there in the essence of human effort such that it seems doomed in principle to failure? This question is a solicitation for us to place ourselves on the plane of reflection and to envisage human action reflectively in terms of its maxims, its means, and its goals. (1992a, p. 472)

Consequently, failure might make conversion to moral freedom likely, since failure might motivate questioning, which

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itself entails reflection. And if one reflects, then one is more likely to convert from alienated freedom to anguished freedom, which in turn makes conversion to moral freedom more likely.

All in all, it is the likelihood of engaging in reflection about one's situation that makes conversion to moral freedom likely. And there are many common situations, other than those in which failure is recognized, that make such reflection likely. For example, Wilkinson brought to my attention that meaningless work or the endless planning engaged in by "serious" folks makes engaging in reflection about one's situation likely. Wilkinson says,

> Camus suggests anxiety can arise also with a weariness from repetitive labor; mechanical routine can lead one finally to ask "Why?" and the question expresses "weariness tinged with amazement". But then for a moment the grip of bad faith is broken.
> Again, one could argue that in order to succeed in many actions, serious people must plan carefully; but the ability to plan carefully is all one needs to envision one's responsibility for one's own future, so one is thrown by seriousness itself into a crack in bad faith. (Note on draft H97D, Nov. 25, 1997)

Since the situations involving repetition are common to the proletariat, and seriousness is common to the bourgeois and capitalist, conversion to moral freedom is not only ontologically possible, it is also concretely possible.

In summary, even if alienated freedom constitutes something like a "nature", alienated freedom does not preclude conversion to moral freedom, because alienated freedom is a mode of being-free and because the alienatedly free person is aware implicitly of her or his being as being-free.

Moreover, the failures, or the repetitive acts, or the seriousness of alienated freedom, sets the stage for the likelihood of conversion to moral freedom. To paraphrase Sartre: Ethics is born from the atmosphere of failure.

The Nature, Content, and *Prima Facie* Justification of the Fundamental Principles of the Existential Freedom Ethic

I've argued that this existential freedom ethic is not vacuous, because, though one's being is being-free, there are different modes of being-free. As a consequence of there being different modes of being-free, the fundamental tenet of this ethic, which is that freedom is the end of all ethical action, means that one must will oneself morally free and will freedom as the world's foundation. Moreover, the former entails the latter and vice versa, because, in this freedom ethic, a person's being is both being-free and being-in-a-world. In other words, the way in which one worlds being depends on the mode of one's being-free, and the mode of one's being-free depends on the way in which one worlds being. In short, the mode of one's being-free is correlative to one's manner of worlding being.

Now the end of this freedom ethic is, as Sartre correctly says, not given, but must be willed. (1992a, p. 6) This means that the end of this ethic cannot be deduced from some fact about the world or persons; rather, the end is an ideal. On the other hand, ideals, or values, are not free-floating or arbitrary, since they arise from the interplay of transcendence and facticity. An ideal concerns what is

observed to be lacking in the world; it represents what ought to be, but is not. So, one projects an ideal relative to a given situation. Now since ideals are possible only if one's being is being-free, if one projects an ideal, one must act, for the sake of pragmatic coherency, in accord with her or his being-free. Therefore, projecting an ideal, any ideal, entails that one will oneself morally free, since only moral freedom acts in accord with being-free. And since the projection of any ideal entails that one will oneself morally free, the fundamental ideal of this ethic is that one will oneself morally free. And since willing oneself morally free entails that one will freedom as the world's foundation, the other fundamental ideal of this ethic is that one will freedom as the world's foundation.

Now, with regard to the formal characteristics of this ethic, firstly, it is goal-based. Secondly, because it is goal-based, its two fundamental ideals are not based on a categorical imperative. Thirdly, these fundamental ideals should not even be thought of as based on a categorical imperative, because action based on a categorical imperative necessarily arises from freedom acting in disaccord with itself. Sartre explains,

> The unconditioned will becomes abstract and each person, to the extent that he negates his concrete situation, in order to obey, constitutes himself as impersonal. This **alienated freedom** [my emphasis] that makes itself impersonal in itself, negating everything about itself in order to realize an abstract and unconditioned will that is revealed to it by others who are impersonal bearers, is *duty*, that absolute obligation each one of us can demand from the Others. (1992a, p. 267)

In other words, the person trying to act from an unconditioned will acts in disaccord with her or his being-free, because being-free cannot be unsituated. And since a categorical imperative requires one to act in such a way as to try to realize an unconditioned will, a categorical imperative is a law of being-free in the mode of alienated freedom. And since moral freedom is the mode of being-free that acts in accord with being-free, as well as wills freedom as the world's foundation, the morally free person will not act on a categorical imperative. Fourthly, since this ethic is goal-based, its fundamental ideals can be likened to hypothetical imperatives. Therefore, whatever general types of actions or requirements will bring about these ideals are also ideals. In other words, as Kant rightly held, whoever wills the end must also will the means.

My intention now is to set forth several other ideals of this ethic that follow from the two fundamental ideals. And since in this freedom ethic ends and means are necessarily internally related, the means to its ideals must be consonant with them.

First, if one wills freedom as the world's foundation, then one must world being in terms of opportunities, not in terms of demands and not in terms of impossible possibles. And since willing freedom as the world's foundation dovetails with willing oneself free, if one wills oneself free, then one must create a world in which one's own possible is a possible for others. Sartre explains,

> If we were in a world of freedom, each act of each
> person would indicate a possible direction of my trans-
> cendence. . . . I would choose my own possibles on the
> basis of the concrete and finite set of possibles of my
> historical society. In a society of oppression, the
> original situation is analogous. The concrete set of
> possibles determines my freedom's field. Except *at the
> same time* this field is blocked by prohibitions. . . .
> It (my freedom) is negatively determined by possibles
> that outline a concrete geography of freedom and that
> are, at the same time, not its possibles. (1992a, p.
> 329)

In other words, a world founded on freedom is a world in
which each person's possible is also a possible for every
other person. Consequently, if one will's freedom as the
world's foundation or wills oneself morally free, one must
also will that one's own possible be a possible for every
other person.

Second, if one wills freedom as the world's foundation
or wills oneself morally free, then one must also will the
moral freedom of other persons. This is so because the
world is an on going creation and product not only of one's
own being-free, but also of other persons' being-free. Now
since only the morally free person creates a world where her
possible can be another person's possible, if my ideal end
is that freedom become the world's foundation, then I must
will the moral freedom of other people too.

Third, as a consequence of this ideal, one must also
will that oneself, as well as other persons, be neither
oppressor nor oppressed, since oppression occurs when one
person's possible is another person's impossible possible.[5]
For example, before voting rights in the United States were
extended to women and black men, the right to vote was an

impossible possible for women and black men. And that the
right to vote was an impossible possible for women and black
men demonstrates other people had (in one way or another)
effectively barred women and black men from attaining what
was a possible for white men. It also demonstrates that
freedom was not the foundation of the world--not the foun-
dation of the country of the "free and the brave", since
some people's possible was other people's impossible possi-
ble.

Fourth, since willing freedom as the world's foundation
requires that one will oneself and other people morally
free, one will also will that oneself and other persons be
both transcendence and facticity. It follows then that if
freedom as the world's foundation is one's ideal end, then
one will assume and make use of his or her facticity. And
since one's facticity includes one's being-for-others and
the fact of other persons, one's being-for-others and other
persons will figure in as means to the ideal end. And since
means and end are internally related, other people figure in
as ends as well. For these reasons, another ideal of this
ethic is that one treat other people as means to the same
extent that one treats them as ends and one treat other
people as ends to the same extent one treats them as means.[6]

From these ethical ideals it follows that an existen-
tial freedom ethic, though it has been charged with quiet-
ism, in fact condemns it. This charge seems to originate,
in part, from Sartre's claim in *Being and Nothingness* that

there is no ethical difference between the leader of nations and the solitary drunk. (1956, p. 627) However, on my interpretation of this passage, the passage is not about morally free persons; rather, it concerns the alienatedly free person. In the passage in question, the leader of nations and the solitary drunk are morally equivalent, because neither embraces moral freedom. Both the leader and the drunk have chosen to act in disaccord with their being-free, because both take as their ideal of being the in-itself-for-itself. Moreover, anyone who wills freedom as the world's foundation must engage in concrete acts to bring about this end, but quietism entails just the opposite.

Another consequence of the ideals of this freedom ethic is that it is not solipsistic. I understand solipsistic, here, to mean justifying or allowing action undertaken by an individual without concern for other people or for its impact on other people. Given this meaning, this ethic is clearly not solipsistic, since the means to achieving its ideals, which are its secondary ideals, require the morally free person to be concerned with the impact of her or his action on others. And because this freedom ethic is not solipsistic, Beauvoir in the *Ethics of Ambiguity* rightly condemns the actions of the "adventurer". (1948, p. 63)

This brings me to the "authentic" torturer objection. This objection contends that as long as a person who engages in torture takes full responsibility for his or her actions, then she or he cannot be judged unethical by an existential

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freedom ethic. Detmer explains,

> A torturer who candidly says, "I have freely chosen to
> kidnap and torture you, and I take full responsibility
> for my choice," is apparently above criticism according
> to Sartre's theory. . . . The difficulty with Sartre's
> theory, then, is it fails to find any basis for distin-
> guishing between the authentic torturer's pro-torture
> choices and our anti-torture choices. (1988, p. 165)

Contrary to Detmer's contention, this existential freedom
ethic does provide a basis for condemning the "authentic"
torturer. The "authentic" torturer uses torture to get what
he or she wants by reducing another person to her or his
facticity. In so doing, the torturer, whether "authentic"
or not, treats the his or her victim as a mere means. But
as I have shown, if one wills freedom as the world's founda-
tion, then one must treat other persons as ends to the same
extent that one treats them as means. This the "authentic"
torturer does not do. Therefore, the "authentic" torturer
is by no means authentic if by 'authentic' we mean a person
whose end is that freedom become the world's foundation. In
short, the phrase 'authentic torturer' is an oxymoron.

Although I believe this ethic requires one to will the
moral freedom of all people, Anderson in *Sartre's Two Ethics*
contends that an existential freedom ethic can at most re-
quire one to will the moral freedom of those with whom one
is directly involved. Anderson's view is based on an argu-
ment Sartre gives in *Existentialism is a Humanism*, which
Anderson refers to as the 'interdependency argument':

> In willing freedom, we discover that it depends entire-
> ly upon the freedom of others and the freedom of others
> depends on our own. Obviously, freedom as the defini-
> tion of man does not depend upon others, but as soon as

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there is engagement I am obliged to will the freedom of others at the same time as mine. (1973, pp. 51-52)

According to Anderson's interpretation of this argument, the interdependence of freedoms is sociopolitical and psychological, not ontological, and, as Anderson argues, neither one's sociopolitical dependence nor one's psychological dependence extends to all people. Anderson reasons as follows:

> if my sociopolitical dependency on others is small (and I suspect there is little that many human beings can do to enhance or restrict my freedom), my obligation to will their freedom is also minimal. Thus, while Sartre's appeal to interdependency does establish an obligation for me to promote others' freedoms as ends, it appears that this obligation does not extend nearly as far as he wants it to, namely, to the most wretched of the earth and to the promotion of a worldwide classless society and city of ends. (1993, p. 77)

Therefore, concludes Anderson, Sartre's argument does not prove what Sartre, or any other existential freedom ethicist, needs it to prove.

For the sake of argument, let us assume, with Anderson, that one's psychological and sociopolitical dependence on other people is small. Even granting this, I believe Anderson's interpretation of the interdependency argument is misguided. Anderson's error lies in his conception of one's relationship to other people and to the world. For Anderson the world and other people are inessential to one's freedom unless one has established explicit relations with another. Yet, I have argued that people are necessarily interdependent, since each person's being-free is also being-in-the-world. This means each person is both worlding and worldly,

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both for-itself and for-others. As a consequence, if one wills freedom as the world's foundation, then, as I have argued, one must also will the freedom of all people. Granted it is practically impossible to fight for every cause, so one must choose. Nevertheless, moral freedoms create a world in terms of opportunities, and, in so doing, they at the very least indirectly promote the freedom of all people. For these reasons, though Sartre's argument may not have made it clear why one is required to will the freedom of all people, I believe I have clarified why we are; therefore, Anderson's objection is empty.

At this point, I want to stress that the ideal of this ethic is not an aggregate freedom. Moral freedoms world being into a highly differentiated mosaic, because the actions of morally free individuals can and should manifest themselves in different ways. The latter follows from acting in accord with being-free, which is necessarily limited and situated. The morally free person assumes and wills the conditionality of her or his **particular** project. As a consequence, what moral freedoms ought to do specifically to bring about freedom as the world's foundation will depend, and ought to depend, on their own facticities and personal situations.

Having said this, we can see that the particular content of the end sought in this ethic is conditional, concrete, and relative to individual choice. Even so, this ethic does condemn torture, oppression, quietism,

indifference, and solipsism, because, even at this relatively formal level, this ethic is based on an ontology in which means and ends are intertwined. This means that for this existential freedom ethic the end only justifies means consonant with the its end and the means used to achieve its end are often intermediate ends.

Summary of "Road to an Existential Freedom Ethic"

I have given my interpretation of Sartre's conception of human freedom, have presented Sartre's arguments for human freedom and have buttressed his arguments with my own. On my interpretation of Sartre's conception of human freedom, freedom is our very being. Even so, human freedom is both limited and unlimited, because it is irreducibly ambiguous. It is irreducibly ambiguous because being-free is both transcendence and facticity.

I have also entertained objections to the coherency, consistency, and practical efficacy of an ethic founded on Sartre's phenomenological ontology. I have met the vacuity objection by explicitly revealing and characterizing two distinct modes of being-free. I have answered the paradox of conversion objection and related objections to the theoretical and practical coherency of an existential freedom ethic. In addition, I have refuted several of the perennial objections to the coherency and adequacy of an existential freedom ethic, e.g., I have shown that this ethic is not solipsistic and does condemn oppression.

Finally, I have given the formal characteristics and fundamental ideals of this ethic. Now, although I have described and argued for the fundamental ideals of this ethic, the descriptions here are incomplete and the arguments are *prima facie.* In the next chapter, I shall buttress the arguments, and in the third chapter, I shall more fully describe the morally free person, her ways of worlding being and her ways of interacting with other persons.

1. In the *Notebooks* Sartre refers to "man's worlding project" while discussing our relationship to Being. (1992a, p. 503) Sartre, however, does not develop the verb 'to world' as a technical concept.

2. Sartre says, "This contingency of the for-itself, this weight surpassed and preserved in the very surpassing--this is Facticity". (1956, p. 118)

3. Sartre's footnote 15 refers the reader to part four, chapter one, in which Sartre describes human freedom in more detail and explicitly argues that human freedom is necessarily limited. After discussing this passage, I shall turn to part four of *Being and Nothingness*, which has been neglected or decontextualized by many Sartrean scholars.

4. Although I here discuss only two possible modes of being-free, I don't mean to imply that these are the only possible modes of being-free. And since I have mentioned the possibility of other modes, I want to say I discuss another ethically relevant mode later.

5. Neither utilitarianism nor Kantianism in theory condemns oppression. Granted the Kantian must not treat another in his/her person as a mere means, but the Kantian is not required to act against oppression, because the Kantian has only an imperfect duty to help others. For example, I imagine many German Kantians during Hitler's reign acted in compliance with Nazi demands, since the Kantian has a perfect duty to tell the truth but only an imperfect duty to help others. So the Kantian might very well act in complicity with the oppressor. As far as the utilitarian is concerned, oppression, in theory, is not ruled out as unethical, because means to the utilitarian end are morally neutral. If the maximization of aggregate happiness is achieved by oppressing some people, then oppression is permissible. For example, I imagine slave-owners used this reasoning to rationalize the institution of slavery.

6. Neither the utilitarian nor the Kantian have our understanding of the means-end relationship, because neither views our being as being-in-the-world. The utilitarian does not see our being as being-in-the-world, because, for the utilitarian, the self does not create itself while it creates the world and the world is not created when one makes the self, rather the self and the world are distinct, aggregate consequences of mechanical causation. And the Kantian does not see our being as being-in-the-world, because the "true" self is a transcendental ego.

In the previous chapter, I argued conversion to moral freedom is possible even if alienated freedom constitutes something like our nature; I argued oppression arises from alienated freedom; I argued only freedom limits freedom; and I argued we ought to will freedom as the world's foundation, as well as will ourselves and other persons morally free. Although I believe my characterization of being-free at the ontological level gives *prima facie* evidence for the truth of these conclusions, my primary task in this chapter is to bolster the arguments for these conclusions by moving to a "metaphysics" of our world. I also hope my discussion of freedoms' legacy, which is nothing other than the world created by our predecessors, will motivate conversion to moral freedom, for Sartre's metaphysics of our world demonstrates what happens when being-free is played out alienatedly.

Metaphysics of Our World

In the Introduction, I argued Sartre's ontology describes the fundamental categories of Being, whereas his metaphysics explains why we have the world we do. And since the world is the product of the way in which for-itselfs world being-in-itself and since we have arisen in an already-made world, I believe a Sartrean metaphysics explains the way in which our predecessors created the already-made

world into which we arise as being-free.

In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, Sartre reveals that the fundamental modification in being brought about by our predecessors' worlding of being is practico-inert being. Practico-inert being was not "there in the beginning" and, therefore, is not of an ontological order. On the other hand, it is with us now and is the most fundamental modification of being brought about by the worlding activity of our predecessors; therefore, practico-inert being is of a metaphysical order, and it is of an anthropological order, because it is a human creation.

Practico-inert being is the product of the particular way in which our predecessors have worlded being. It encompasses all practical, material constructions, e.g., bridges, dams, buildings, machines, computers, clothing, and streets. And because practical constructions constitute our predecessors' most fundamental manner of worlding being, Sartre calls this modification of being 'practico'. He calls it 'inert', because this modification of being is the product, not the activity itself, of our predecessors' worlding of being. In addition, it is inert, because this human product weighs down the descendants of this already worlded aspect of being.

Sartre also characterizes this weighty product of human praxis as ossified praxis, because it constitutes the "remains" of human action. For example, the Mackinac Bridge is ossified praxis, because it is the result of the practical

worlding activity of for-itselfs; whereas, the Mackinac
Bridge in the making is praxis itself. While the bridge was
being made, the bridge was itself a human end; but once the
bridge was completed it became a human remains and means.
Big Mac was not "there in the beginning", but it exists now
and is a means by which we can drive or walk across the
Straits of Mackinac. This shows why practico-inert being is
ossified praxis, because it is a consequence of intentional,
goal-directed action.

Continuing with the Big Mac example, the bridge is not
only the tangible remains of human action, it also is
"haunted" with meaning and significance, because it points
beyond itself to a particular use, to those who built it,
and to those who planned it.[1] Therefore, the bridge, or any
ossified praxis, has a human meaning and significance inde-
pendent of any personal meaning that I or any other person
might attribute to it. As a consequence ossified praxis is
also socialized matter.

Although Sartre alludes to ossified praxis when, in
Being and Nothingness, he discusses instrumental-complexes,
his characterization of practico-inert being in the *Critique
of Dialectical Reason* goes beyond his *Being and Nothingness*
descriptions of instrumental-complexes.[2] We learn from his
Critique that human action on practico-inert being gives
rise to the further modifications of being: counter-finali-
ties, exigencies, and interests.

Let's begin with a look at what a counter-finality is.

First, a finality is a human end set by one's own being-free and brought about through praxis. Second, a finality becomes counter when it turns back on itself. In other words, a counter-finality takes place when one's action destroys the very goal that one was attempting to attain by that action. Third, there are three conditions necessary for the possibility of a counter-finality. Sartre says,

> The first thing that is necessary for a counter-finality to exist is that it should be adumbrated by a kind of *disposition* of matter. . . . Second, human *praxis* has to become a fatality and to be absorbed by inertia, taking on *both* the strictness of physical causation *and* the obstinate precision of human labour. . . . Last, and most important, the activity must be carried on *elsewhere* . . . . These actions, which are legion and, as actions, both *identical* and *irreducible*, are united by the matter they unify. (1991, pp. 162-163)

I shall now illustrate how these three conditions give rise to a counter-finality.

Consider the use farmers made of DDT to kill insects in order to increase the yield of their crops. The finality, in this case, is increased crop yield. But the actual result is a counter-finality: crop yields were decreased, because resistant insects came into being as a result of DDT use.[3] The first condition was fulfilled: insects have a fast rate of reproduction and a concomitant genetic responsiveness to changes in the environment; therefore, there was a foreshadowing of insect strains resistant to DDT. The second condition was fulfilled because DDT use was treated as a necessity of efficient farm practices. And the third condition was fulfilled because DDT use was carried on at many times and places--that is, DDT use was repeated on the

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same farm and occurred on more than one farm.

Although one might be tempted to think a counter-finality is to be identified with the coefficient of adversity—since both concern impediments to achieving one's finality—I believe this view is incorrect, because a counter-finality is the **result** of human actions and a coefficient of adversity arises with the **commencement** of human action. Consider now the pesticide example. Although the use of DDT resulted in a counter-finality, there was no experienced resistance commencing with the application of DDT. This suggests that the coefficient of adversity approached zero. (In fact, it may be because the coefficient of adversity approached zero that DDT use became legion.) And since this demonstrates that an action can result in a counter-finality even when the coefficient of adversity approaches zero, this fact suggests that a counter-finality is—in addition to being conceptually distinct from the coefficient of adversity—practically distinct from the coefficient of adversity. Therefore, a counter-finality is distinct from the coefficient of adversity.[4]

Another modification of being is an exigency. Like a counter-finality, an exigency arises from practico-inert being; however, unlike a counter-finality, which is a result of human praxis that **undercuts** the aims of one's very praxis, an exigency is a result of human praxis that **prescribes** future action. An exigency is a "command" arising from the practico-inert. A "command" arises from the practico-inert

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when the practico-inert appears unchangeable and intransigent. And when this occurs, people must yield to the practico-inert demand. For examples, the woman must change herself to work on the machine, rather than changing the machine, since the machine requires that she work at a particular speed and not one of her choosing, and the computerization of university data demands departments put a cap on the number of times a course can be taken. In fact, pesticide use in the United States is currently an exigency of agri-business. In addition, the demand for the creation of new pesticides to stay ahead of those resilient, reproductively prolific insects is another type of exigency.

This brings me to another modification of being of metaphysical import: interest. Explaining this modification of being, Sartre says,

> As soon as an objective ensemble is posited in a given society as the definition of an individual in his *personal* particularity and when *as such* it requires this individual to act on the entire practical and social field, and to *preserve it* (as an organism preserves itself) and *develop it at the expense of the rest* (as an organism feeds itself by drawing on its exterior milieu), the individual *possesses an interest*. (1991, p. 199)

For example, the head of Dow chemical and the scientists employed by Dow have an interest in maintaining pesticide use, since they are objectively defined by the agri-business complex and, as a consequence, have an interest in encouraging pesticide use, even at the expense of those who apply it, even at the expense of poisoning the environment.

An interest is actually a species of exigency, since it

too is a command arising from practico-inert being. But one is motivated to obey an exigency, proper, because the practico-inert appears intransigent; whereas, the motivation to obey an interest is that an interest feeds one's ego. One's ego is what Sartre holds it to be, i.e., it is one's objective being; therefore, an interest is "objective". (As a result, this existential freedom ethic's conception of an interest runs counter to those ethical theories that maintain an interest is subjective.)

The upshot, however, of whether a person obeys an interest or an exigency is the same: in either case, the person maintains the status quo and claims to have no choice in the matter. Yet, "it is by and through men that these exigencies arise, and they would disappear if men did", because it is our being-free that creates and sustains exigencies and interests. (1991, p. 191) So people who claim they have no choice but to maintain the status quo have in fact made the choice to do just that. And notice that such a choice, though autonomous since our being is being-free, is the choice of alienated freedom, since the person's decision is based on the view that values are given. Sartre suggests as much in his *Critique* when he says,

> . . . the very *praxis* of individuals or groups is
> altered in so far as it ceases to be the free organiza-
> tion of the practical field and becomes the re-organi-
> zation of one sector of inert materiality in accordance
> with the exigencies of another sector of materiality.
> (1991, p. 191)

When people choose their ends by giving in to the practico-inert demands of exigency or interest, their praxis is

altered, because their ends are Other-determined and thereby are based on the choice of alienated freedom. But since it is their being-free, albeit in the mode of alienated freedom, that is responsible for the existence and efficacy of exigencies and interests, the only limit to freedom here is freedom itself.

By taking an exigency, whether or not it is an interest, as the reason for an action, one makes being-free a handmaid to practico-inert being. Whether one is a worker, a boss, a citizen, etc., if one's actions play the practico-inert game of exigency and interest, one has chosen to play the game of the serious. If you doubt me, consider Sartre's characterization of seriousness. He says,

> Man pursues being blindly by hiding from himself the free project which is this pursuit. He makes himself such that he is *waited for* by all the tasks placed along his way. Objects are mute demands, and he is nothing in himself but the passive obedience to these demands. (1956, p. 626)

This is exactly what the person who solely acts from an exigency or an interest does. Practico-inert being is her haunted house and she does everything to keep the spirits alive. Her actions betray passivity and the inertness of practico-inert being reveals an activity. Rather than viewing practico-inert being as what it is, namely, a non-conscious product of our being-free, the person mesmerized by the spirit of seriousness views the practico-inert as what it is not: an intentional region of being that was "there in the beginning" and exists independently of human thought and action. (Note: Sartre's elucidation of

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practico-inert being reinforces his contention in *Being and Nothingness* that our world is infused by the "serious".)

From my discussion of human action handed over to practico-inert being, we can begin to get a picture of the type of sociality created when one's actions are in allegiance to the practico-inert. Relations between persons when founded on the practico-inert will be non-reciprocal and anonymous. For example, workers will be related to one another via the exigencies of the work place and their common experience of the machine's demands unite them in their objective being. The bond that unites such workers treats each worker alike; all must obey regardless of physical, cultural, and attitudinal differences.

Because the social bonds arising from an allegiance to practico-inert being are based on anonymity and lack of reciprocity, Sartre refers to this type of sociality as a series, which is suggestive of the mathematical conception of a set. A set is a series of numbers externally related and defined by a rule. Similarly, the social ensemble based upon practico-inert bonds is a series in this mathematical sense. (I use the word 'ensemble', rather than 'group', because a group is a type of social ensemble distinct from a series and 'ensemble' is neutral with regard to how a collection of people are related.)

So, when playing exclusively to practico-inert being, practitioners are related externally, and a set of such practitioners is defined by a practico-inert rule, e.g., a

common interest or exigency. And since the rule which binds the practico-inert players is external to each player, the bonds are based on alterity. And since alterity signifies Otherness, we can see that the serial ensemble is based on alienated freedom.

When sociality is based on an interest or exigency, it is practico-inert being that is essential, not the individual. The interest must be upheld and the exigency must be heeded regardless of the impact they have on people. And this is just what happens in a serial ensemble. So though a serial ensemble, like practico-inert being, was not "there in the beginning", it is--at this point in human history--a very real way in which the human ensemble is united.[5]

In summary, I have shown practico-inert being is contingent, because it is a human product. And I have argued the existence of exigencies and interests reveal alienated freedom as their source. And since we have invested exigencies and interests with the power to control our lives, we are responsible for the power they exert. Moreover, with alienated freedom as a founding mode of our relationship to one another and with this mode of being-free perpetuated through the ages, practico-inert being has evolved into a tangled web of exigencies and interests. As a consequence, our being-free is everywhere enchained, yet present. And since being-free, albeit in the mode of alienated freedom, is the source of these chains, even in the haunted hell of the practico-inert, freedom is the only limit to freedom.

Theory of the Origin and Perpetuation of Oppression

In this section I shall theorize about the origin and perpetuation of oppression by drawing from the ontology and ethics set forth in the previous chapter and from the metaphysics of our world set forth in the previous section of this chapter. I shall argue here that the evolution of practico-inert being along with its correlative serial ensembles supports the fundamental implications of this existentialist ontology and freedom ethic that oppression is contingent, is produced by alienated freedoms and is possible only if one's being is being-free.

To begin, for this freedom ethic,

> There is a climate of oppression when my free subjectivity gives itself out as inessential, my freedom as an epiphenomenon, my initiative as subordinated and secondary, when my activity is directed by the Other and takes the Other as its end. (1992a, p. 366)

We find that the "climate" of oppression is indeed present when social relations are mediated by practico-inert being. Serial ensembles fulfilling its demands have, as I have argued, made the choice of alienated freedom. By obeying exigencies, without questioning, or by allowing one's actions to be determined by one's interests, people have (perhaps, unwittingly) set the stage for oppression. What this means is that alienated freedom creates the climate of oppression and makes it possible. And since alienated freedom, which is contingent, is a necessary condition for the possibility of oppression, oppression, too, is contingent.

But when does alienation give way to oppression? It

does when fate appears in human affairs. In the *Notebooks*,

Sartre correctly says,

> There is fate when man is free in a fake world; that
> is, when he enjoys a limited freedom *within another's
> project*. He is free to choose among several ways. But
> they are already arranged in such a way that, whatever
> my choice, they will realize the project. What is un-
> foreseeable is the *choice of means*, the way. . . . But
> whatever decision gets taken, it is the result that is
> blocked.
>   So in oppression man is fate for man. (1992a, p.
> 338)

First, in the previous chapter I explained that the world is

fake when it is not explicitly founded on our being-free.

The world is not an immutable given, but when interests and

exigencies are allowed to rule, the world is taken as if it

were an immutable given. When this happens, our being-free

is taken as inessential and the world's foundation is un-

freedom. Second, once we live in a fake world fate, which

is a predetermined future at odds with a person's projected

and chosen future, can appear. Fate can appear in a fake

world, because interests upheld and sustained by a parti-

cular serial ensemble can represent, for another serial

ensemble, a fate. And the interests upheld and sustained by

a particular serial ensemble represents that serial ensem-

ble's destiny, which is a predetermined future that is one

with a person's projected and chosen future.[6]

Let's consider, now, Sartre's example in his *Critique*

of how the interest of factory employers creates a fate for

factory workers. Sartre says,

> the employers, by introducing new machines within the
> framework of capitalism and appropriating them *as their
> interest*, constitute the destiny [fate] of the workers

> as the *interest of the Other, controlling them in the form of counter-interest* [fate]. (1991, p. 210)

The point here is that the machine, contrary to the contentions of some Marxists, is not the interest of workers; rather the machine is the interest and destiny of the employers, but the workers' "counter-interest" and fate. This is so because employers define themselves in their personal being by the machine and the machine represents the employers' power to control their own future; whereas the machine defines workers in their anonymity and it represents the workers' impotence to control their future. The machine, then, is the worker's "counter-interest", because it impersonally defines the worker; and the machine is the worker's fate, because it determines in advance what the worker's task is, as well as the manner in which the task will be done. Moreover, it is the worker's fate and counter-interest, because it is the employer's interest and destiny. My point is that the machine in its pure materiality is not a fate and is not a counter-interest for the worker. Rather it is the machine in its practico-inert being, as an interest of the employer, that creates a fate and counter-interest for the worker. So, we have before us an example of how an interest upheld by some creates a fate for others and, therefore, how alienated freedoms give rise to oppression. However, with this example of how alienated freedoms give rise to oppression, I do not want to give the impression that only workers *qua* workers are oppressed.

Consider for example agri-business practitioners'

interest in continuing to make or to use pesticides--that is, even at the expense of the health and well-being of others. At the same time that their interest in promoting and using pesticides rules, those of us who do not share their interest--but are nonetheless exposed to the health dangers of pesticides--have a fate. We have a fate, because regardless of what we do--e.g., protest pesticide use, buy only organically grown produce--pesticides are in our water, air, and soil. We, who do not share the agri-businesses' interest, have a fate.

Similarly, consider the delivery of health care in the United States. At this time in our history, not all citizens have access to health care and in many cases this is because the cost is prohibitive. The Clinton Administration's talk of making health care universally available in this country has insurance companies, hospitals, physicians, etc. banging on the doors of the White House. Why? Insurance companies, hospitals, physicians, etc. have an interest in keeping things as they are. And, as long as their interests are upheld, those without medical access have a fate. Although this may be a little talked about instance of oppression (in fact, some people may think it a dubious example of oppression), with the coming into being of interests, fate comes into existence. And note: fate comes into existence by the actions of people, not the actions of gods and not the causal processes of nature.

Having shown that oppression is contingent and that it

exists due to the world's web of ruling interests, I shall turn to discussing five ontological conditions that Sartre suggests in the *Notebooks* are necessary for the possibility of oppression. I shall discuss these conditions in light of what I have thus far established with regard to the possibility and actuality of oppression, and I shall reject and modify those I believe either are not implied by the metaphysics of our world or are not implied by the existentialist ontology and freedom ethic set forth in the previous chapter.

The ontological conditions Sartre suggests are necessary for the possibility of oppression are

> 1st, oppression comes from freedom. The oppressor and the oppressed must be free. 2nd, oppression comes from the multiplicity of freedoms. Each freedom has to be an outside of every other freedom. . . . 3rd, oppression can come to one freedom *only* through another freedom. . . . 4th, oppression implies that neither the slave nor the tyrant fundamentally recognizes their own freedom. . . . 5th, there is complicity of the oppressor and oppressed. (1992a, p. 325)

To begin, I am interpreting 'freedom' here to refer to our being-free. On this interpretation conditions one through three follow directly from the ontology established in the previous chapter. (Moreover in the previous chapter, I explained why conditions one and three are necessary for the possibility of oppression.) But I do not believe the last two conditions, as stated, are implied by that ontology. While the first three conditions are of an ontological nature in that they suggest what must be true for the ontological possibility of oppression, the fourth condition

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explicitly suggests only an implication, not an ontological condition, of oppression, and the fifth condition makes sense only if it is interpreted as an empirical hypothesis. Consequently, I will treat the last two conditions as hypotheses to be tested and refined in light of the evidence supplied by the metaphysics of our world; whereas, I plan to show that the first three conditions are corroborated by that evidence.

With regard to the first ontological condition for oppression, even within the fake world one is being-free whether one is oppressor or oppressed. One's being is being-free if one is capable of transcending what is given. The oppressor transcends the given when he or she projects a destiny for himself or herself; therefore, the oppressor's being is being-free. And the oppressed person's being is being-free, because "praxis remains a transcendence of material being towards a future reorganization of the field". (1991, p. 235) This means, for example, that a maid's being is being-free, because she transcends the filth and chaos of a room when she cleans and organizes such a room. Moreover, the oppressor must implicitly believe that the oppresseds' being is being-free, since the oppressed person is not a machine and can transcend the given toward what is not yet, e.g., the oppressor wants his cotton picked and his slaves transcend the field of cotton toward a future when the cotton is picked. In other words, the being of the oppressed person must be being-free, because it is the very

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means by which oppressors achieve their projected end. So, the first ontological condition of oppression is supported by the metaphysics of our world.

The second ontological condition that "each freedom must be an outside for every other freedom" is fulfilled at the ontological level of our being-for-others, since the facticity of our being-for-others is an objective form of each person's situation. However, my aim here is to show how this ontological condition has been played out historically and, in particular, how it has been played out in the practico-inert realm. The practico-inert realm is, as I have shown, correlative with serial ensembles in which sociality is founded on the Other, because members of a serial ensemble are held together by exigencies, interests, a destiny, or a fate. In all these cases, the outside of being-free reigns. Therefore, serial sociality correlative to practico-inert being corroborates the presence of the second ontological condition of oppression.

With regard to the third condition that only freedom can limit freedom, I have already demonstrated that this condition is supported by the metaphysics of our world. To reiterate, the practico-inert does not in itself oppress, since it is product of our worlding of being. Granted exigencies, interests, and counter-interests limit our being-free, but they do so only by having been **produced and sustained by** being-free, albeit in the mode of alienated freedom. So it is not nature or structural characteristics

of our world that in and of themselves limit freedom, rather it is freedom itself. And in the case of oppression, I have shown that it is being-free in the mode of alienated freedom that limits freedom.

This leads to the so-called fourth condition of oppression, which I contend is not necessarily implied by the existential ontology. Whether or not this condition is implied by that ontology depends on how we interpret the logic and meaning of the condition. Consequently, before discussing whether this condition is supported by the metaphysics of our world, I shall give my interpretation of the meaning and logic of this implication of oppression. First, given my discussion of being-free and its modes, I interpret 'the lack of recognizing one's being as being-free' to mean 'failing to live one's being-free morally', i.e., 'living one's being-free alienatedly'. But now the problem is whether Sartre is claiming:

    1. It is true that oppressors do not live their being free morally **and** oppressed people do not live their being-free morally. In other words, both oppressors and oppressed people live their being free alienatedly.

<div align="center">OR</div>

    2. It is false that both oppressors and oppressed people live their being-free morally. In other words, either oppressors or oppressed people live their being-free alienatedly.

If Sartre is claiming that the existence of oppression implies the first alternative, then the condition does not follow from the existential ontology and freedom ethic established in the previous chapter.[7] All that follows from

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the existential ontology and freedom ethic is that at least

one of the persons, either the oppressor or the oppressed,

lives his or her being-free alienatedly, because, while

alienated freedom is a necessary condition for the possibi-

lity of oppression, oppression is a dyadic relationship, so

at least one person in such a relationship needs to have

made the choice of alienated freedom. For example, as I

argued in the previous chapter, the torturer, who is an

oppressor, lives his being-free alienatedly, but it does not

follow that the person being tortured, who is being oppres-

sed, lives her being-free alienatedly. The torturer or

oppressor treats another person as a mere means and, there-

fore, fails to live his being-free morally; but it is pos-

sible to be treated as a mere means without even tacitly

agreeing to such treatment--that is, without living one's

being-free alienatedly. After all, the very fact that some-

one resorts to torture or severe physical punishment to get

another to say or do something makes sense only if the tor-

turer's, or oppressor's, victim has not agreed to be a mere

means. Thus, it is not true that the existence of oppression

implies oppressed people play out their being-free alien-

atedly, but it does imply oppressors do not fundamentally

recognize their own being-free--that is, it implies oppres-

sors play out their being-free alienatedly. Consequently,

the existence of oppression does imply the second statement,

not the first. As a result, I will now consider whether the

second is supported by the metaphysics of our world.

It seems clear from my discussion of how fate arises that oppressors play out their being-free alienatedly, because oppressors hold they have no choice but to maintain their interests, which we know is not true. And it seems clear that many oppressed people do play out their being-free alienatedly, because many oppressed people give in to exigencies and the demands of their oppressors. All in all then, the hypothesis--that if oppression exists, then either oppressors or oppressed people do not fundamentally recognize their being as being-free--is supported by the metaphysics of our world. Moreover, the metaphysics of our world supports a derivative hypothesis: If oppression exists, then oppressors do not fundamentally recognize their being as being-free. And isn't this what we have always really suspected?

This brings us to the fifth so-called condition for oppression. If the justification for this "condition" is that the existential ontology and freedom ethic presented in the previous chapter entails all oppressed people are complicit with their oppressors, then my discussion of the previous condition shows this is not an implication of that ontology and ethic. Moreover, my discussion of the metaphysical support for the fourth condition also shows that not all oppressed people are complicit with their oppressors, yet oppression exists; so this hypothesis, as it is currently stated, is not required by the existential ontology and is not supported by the metaphysics of our world.

Let's consider, however, this revised hypothesis: The vast majority of oppressed people are complicit with their oppressors, and they, thereby, perpetuate oppression. Is this revised hypothesis plausible, given the metaphysics of our world? Yes, it seems to be, because people help the oppressor to oppress when they give in to the demands of the practico-inert and many people do just that. Without a majority of oppressed carrying out the demands of the op-pressor or of exigencies, the demands would be ineffectual. For example, if workers refused to apply pesticides, pesti-cide use would be no more. Or if consumers refused to buy pesticide "produced" produce, then pesticide use would become history. The oppression of women perpetuates itself through the complicit actions of women. A woman reinforces the oppression of women when she does as "the Man" would have her do. For example, when women work slavishly for minimum wage at a high class motel, they help to perpetuate the oppression of not only themselves, but of other women as well. Such women might complain, but complaining does not amount to refusal. Yes, women who work as maids have their reasons: "I can't do anything else." "Minimum wage is what my work is worth." "That's all anyone pays." "Money is money." What the reasons really amount to in most cases though are excuses made from the voice of the choice of heteronomy. In such cases, complicity is actual due to alienated freedom's stranglehold on being-free. So it does seem that insofar as oppressed people refuse to refuse the

demands of the oppressor or of exigencies, they either help to create or to maintain oppression. Therefore, the revised hypothesis is supported by the metaphysics of our world.

On the other hand, one might point out that the way Africans were enslaved and the way Native Americans were oppressed shows the existence of oppression does not necessarily involve the complicity of those who are oppressed. The objector rightly says, "It's not as though Africans agreed to come on the slave ships to the United States, and it's not as though they agreed to their bondage. And it's not as though Native Americans, in general, agreed to go to reservations. The oppression of Africans and of Native Americans in this country became a reality through the oppressor's weapons of torture, murder, imprisonment, and genocide. Africans fought back against their oppressors, as did Native Americans, but both groups are oppressed. So it is false that complicity of would-be oppressed persons with their would-be oppressors is necessary for the existence of oppression."

My response to this point is that the objector has misunderstood the revised hypothesis. The revised hypothesis only concerns the perpetuation of oppression. The hypothesis holds that oppression is perpetuated only if a majority of oppressed people are complicit with their oppressors. And this seems to be true, for without a majority of complicit servants, the oppressor cannot effectively uphold his interests. Thus, oppressors' continued existence

relies on the complicity of those who are their handmaid.

Although complicity appears to be the reality of the practico-inert process of oppression, is pointing this out a case of "blaming the victim"? Such is not my intention; my aim is to understand how and why oppression arises, though our being is being-free, to understand how and why oppression perpetuates itself, though our being is being-free, and to understand how oppression can be overcome. I've argued the metaphysics of our world supports the hypothesis that the existence of oppression implies that some people agree, in some sense, to being oppressed. What is murky, however, is the extent to which any oppressed person who has been brutalized can be said to be complicit. When "complicity" of oppressed persons comes about only because they have been physically or mentally tortured, it is double-speak to call such persons "complicit". On the other hand, by seeing that oppression's perpetuation requires complicity of oppressed people, oppressed people can catch a glimpse of how to dethrone the oppressor: Revolt.

But at this point, someone might say, "Your theory of oppression is inconsistent. How can you maintain that freedom exists when the oppressed have a fate? How can you coordinate the claims that freedom exists and, yet, both the oppressor and the oppressed experience necessity? After all, we all know that freedom and necessity are contradictory. Kant, recognizing the incompatibility between freedom and necessity, yet believing that humans are free but part

of the causal series, distinguished between the intelligible world and the empirical world and between the phenomenal self and the noumenal self. But you are claiming that freedom and necessity exist together. Granted Kant's way of trying to preserve human freedom is rather strained, if not downright ridiculous, but at least the old German had respect for logic."

My response to this objection relies on the distinction Sartre makes between analytical necessity and dialectical necessity. In his *Critique*, Sartre says, "dialectical necessity is by definition different from the necessity of analytical reason". (1991, p. 40) Necessity which arises in human affairs is dialectical. I shall now explain why and how this distinction between types of necessities allows for the co-existence of freedom and necessity and thereby rebuts the objection.

Necessity, in the dialectical sense, is a product or consequence of subjectivity--that is, of our being-free; whereas necessity, in the analytical sense, is objectivity-- that is, a given. Dialectical necessity arises from possibility and possibilities arise with human subjectivity. Dialectical necessity first arises in human affairs as an **experience** of impossibility, or of the negation of possibility. Thus, dialectical necessity is not first a linguistic, a propositional, a physical, or a logical necessity. Dialectical necessity is phenomenological, experiential, and historical.

The oppressed individual's experience of necessity is the experience of the impossibility of achieving her particular goals, or is the experience of the impossibility of doing things other than how she has, in fact, done them. Sartre describes this situation in the following passage from the *Notebooks*.

> The man who does not know how to read for example, who sees others reading and cannot learn to do so himself (a black slave in Louisiana), is struck at the very heart of his freedom because it is a question here of an impossible possible. Directly impossible *to him*--he is intended by this possible which for him becomes a *lack* because it defines at the same time a form of human and historical freedom in general and, negatively, his own freedom in chains. His impossible is someone else's possible. (1992a, pp. 329-330)

The experience of impossibility, then, arises from the conjuncture of one's own being-free, which in this case takes reading as a possibility, and the oppressor's being-free, which in this case has barred this possibility from those in slavery. Impossibility, then, arises from the interplay of freedoms correlative to practico-inert being. And it is precisely from the experience of a fate or an exigency that impossibility, i.e., dialectical necessity, is experienced. Granted the slave-owner will most likely argue it is impossible for the black slave to read, because it is not the black person's "nature". But here the slave-owner appeals to an analytical necessity in the form of a natural necessity, which is not a result of the contingent and historical setting. For the slave-owner, the slave's essence precedes the slave's existence, but for us existence precedes essence and only alienated freedom presents a

dialectical necessity as if it were an analytical necessity.
I do not deny that analytical necessity exists in the form
of a concept, since the slave-owner makes use of this con-
cept to rationalize his oppressive ways. But the truth of
the matter is that necessities arising in human affairs are
dialectical and, therefore, are contingent.

Dialectical necessities are contingent not only because
they are the product of human freedom, but also because,
unlike analytical necessities, it is possible to rise
against them. This possibility is, in fact, an historical
actuality and one which Sartre describes in his *Critique*.
The oppressed break out of serial ensembles and form groups
to overcome the dialectical necessities arising from the
practico-inert processes of oppression; yet when doing so
they bring into existence another form of a dialectical
necessity. Sartre says,

> This new structure of the investigation presents itself
> as the inversion of the practico-inert field: that is
> to say the nerve of *practical unity* is freedom, appear-
> ing as the necessity of necessity--in other words, as
> its inexorable inversion. (1991, p. 341)

This is Sartre's initial description of the fused group.
Members within a fused group, unlike members of a serial
ensemble, work together for a common aim. And the specific
aim of a fused group is the destruction of the oppressive
processes that had given rise to dialectical necessities
experienced as impossible possibles. These individuals
experience the necessity of overcoming the necessities they
are subject to at the level of the practico-inert. Fate

must be transcended. Impossible possibles **must** be turned into possible possibles. Thus, Sartre's doubling of necessity refers to necessity, first, as the experience of fate, or of impossible possibles, and, second, to necessity as the experience of the impossibility of allowing fate to continue to rule one's future. In both cases, though, the experience of necessity is that of a dialectical necessity and therefore, in both cases, is contingent. However, the experience of necessity in the latter case seems to imply a conversion to moral freedom, since freedom is willed.

In summary, I have argued that necessities in human affairs are produced by human freedom and, therefore, are dialectical necessities. If this is true, then there is no logical incompatibility between the co-existence of freedom and necessity. However, that some human beings (oppressors) have produced necessities in the form of impossible possibles, which others (oppressed people) experience as fate, indicates that the producers of impossible possibles are playing out their being-free alienatedly. On the other hand, that some human beings revolt against their fate indicates their being-free has always been present, and it indicates conversion from alienated freedom to moral freedom is not only possible, but also actual--even if brief.

The Evolution and Ethical Significance of the Fused Group

The sociality arising from the tangled web of practico-inert processes is a serial ensemble of alienated freedoms

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who perpetuate the status quo. The sociality of group action, by contrast, arises when individuals come together to challenge the practico-inert processes of oppression. The initial appearance of group praxis is the fused group. Individuals within the fused group are no longer related serially--that is, through anonymity and alterity; rather they are related to one another through a group praxis that aims to transcend the impotence and fate correlative to the ensemble from which they have come.

The sociality created within the fused group is not based on simple reciprocity or on the look of a transcendent Other; rather, relations between members are based on each member viewing herself or himself as being both inside and outside the group.[8] This means that each fused group member takes the group as her facticity and as her transcendence. Each member is inside the group insofar as the group is the member's means, and each member is outside the group insofar as the member projects beyond the givenness of the group. As a result, the unity of the group is not static or a given substantial unity; rather the unity is action. This means that the unity of the fused group exists only insofar as the members of the group engage in a common praxis, which is action in which individuals share the same formal goal and work together to achieve that goal. All in all then, the members within the fused group treat one another as an end to the same extent that they treat one another as a means. As a consequence, members within a fused group realize a

unity compatible with being-free acting in accord with itself. And since their shared formal end is to overcome some form of oppression, they seem to be willing freedom as the world's foundation. In short, a fused group seems to be founded on moral freedom.

Historically, however, fused groups either have dissolved back into serial ensembles or have transformed into what Sartre calls 'pledged groups'. In the former case, individuals will be subject to or complicit with the same or different oppressive processes. In the latter case, the individuals take as their end the continuance of the group. In this case, the original goal and praxis of the fused group becomes secondary to the new goal and praxis of maintaining the group's existence. This group is now called a 'pledged group', because group members must give a vow to keep the group "alive" come what may.

But why must a pledge be given? Sartre suggests, "The origin of the pledge, in effect, is fear (both of the third party and of myself)". (1991, p. 430) But why would group members fear themselves? Apparently due to lack of trust. But why wouldn't they trust themselves? Perhaps because, once they "cool down", they direct their sights toward the group itself and its members. In so doing, the members of the fused group explicitly realize that the group's existence is tenuous, because it exists only through a shared praxis, which is dependent on each member's being-free and, as a consequence, any member might, at best, leave the fused

group and, at worst, intentionally undermine its goal. So, through this change in focus, members of the fused group realize the group's existence is not a given. And due to the unwillingness to trust one another or to take a risk, the members of the group require one another to make a pledge. The pledge expresses the members' willingness to accept the group's continuance unconditionally.

In the serial ensembles correlative to practico-inert being, we saw how being-free in the mode of alienated freedom gave in to demands arising from the practico-inert. Now we see members of a fused group explicitly creating a demand, which is the pledge. So, in contrast to the demands arising from practico-inert being, this demand is explicitly agreed to and created by those who will be subject to it. Even so, this demand is not compatible with being-free in the mode of moral freedom, because it is a demand--that is, it commands unconditionally. In other words, it is a categorical imperative, which, as I argued in the previous chapter, arises from alienated freedom. As a consequence, fused group members, who originally came together in the name of revolt, have, by requiring that members take a pledge, explicitly chosen alienated freedom as their mode of being-free. In other words, moral freedoms might constitute a fused group, but alienated freedoms constitute a pledged group.[9] In any case, we have not as yet seen oppression arise within group action--that is the next step: the institution.

A pledged group transforms into an institution when the individual members of the group become inessential, by being replaceable, and the group in and of itself is taken as essential. Sartre says,

> The institutional moment, in the group, corresponds to what might be called the systematic self-domestication of man by man. The aim is, in effect, to create men who (as common individuals) will define themselves, in their own eyes and amongst themselves, by their fundamental relations (mediated reciprocity) with institutions. More than half of this task is carried out by circular seriality: everyone systematically acting on himself and on everyone else through all, resulting in the creation of the strict correlate of the man-institution, that is to say the institutionalized man.
> (1991, p. 606)

So, although we have moved beyond the inertia of practico-inert being where individuals were mediated by "haunted" matter, we have, with the formation of the institution, individuals mediated by "hallowed", "haunted" halls.

The relationship between the state and its citizenry is a good example of how an institution constitutes a return to the alterity and anonymity of serial ensembles. Each citizen is related to every other citizen via the state through the Other. For example, when we go to sports events the national anthem is played and we are all expected to put our hands on our hearts. This expectation and demand does not arise from the flag, but from people who have chosen to play out their being-free alienatedly. (Have you ever pointedly **not** put your hand on your heart and not stood during one of these "events'? I have and the looks I received from other people are quite revealing.) Thus, at the institutional level we meet again with exigencies, but they now come

directly from us, not from the Thing. The pledging allegiance to the flag, by putting our hands on our hearts, reveals being-free in the mode of alienated freedom, for the pledge represents an unconditional demand. We pledge our allegiance to our country "right or wrong".

Dialectical necessity first emerged from the practico-inert as fate; it then emerged from the fused group as the necessity of transcending one's fate; it then surfaced from the pledged group as the necessity of maintaining the group; now, in the group as institution, we find necessity arising with the Janus face of fate coupled with the necessity of maintaining the institutions. Referring to the institutional moment, Sartre says,

> In this moment freedom is completely hidden or else appears as the inessential and ephemeral slave of necessity. Necessity, on the other hand, is absolute in the sense that its free, practical form (necessity produced by freedom) merges with its form as serial alienation. (1991, pp. 605-606)

In other words, with the creation of the institution, group action has created what it had set out to transcend, because it has created a fate for its members. And Sartre says,

> Freedom at the moment of the Apocalypse and its disappearance in the institutional moment when the Other reigns. An institution is what you wanted become a will turned back on itself and imposing itself upon you. The institution is your destiny [and fate]. (1992a, p. 469)

Although this and the previous passage seem to suggest that our being-free disappears with the formation of the institution, I believe this is a misinterpretation. I interpret 'freedom at the moment of the Apocalypse' to refer to the

historical moments when moral freedom erupts, e.g., the formation of a fused group, and I interpret 'its disappearance' to refer to the reversion of moral freedom to alienated freedom; however, in either case being-free is present.

In summary, group action arises in revolt against oppression; however, historically groups often dissolve back into a series or, before doing so, evolve into a group from which oppression arises anew. In any case, we see here, at the level of group action, that alienation precedes oppression and makes it possible. We see that even at the level of group praxis the only limit to freedom is freedom itself. And, perhaps most importantly, we see that the historical reality of revolt demonstrates conversion to moral freedom is possible--even if, it is short-lived.

Summation: "Freedoms' Legacy" Supports the Existential Freedom Ethic

Alienated freedoms have worlded being in terms at odds with our being-free. Their creation, the world, is one in which unfreedom reigns. Exigency and interest predetermine one's choices when one has made the choice of alienated freedom. This already-made world in which we have been born is enlivened by haunted matter and hallowed, haunted halls. Although group action arose to overcome oppression, we have seen that it often is ultimately unsuccessful.

I have argued that the failures of group action and the failures of individual action are a result of playing out our being-free alienatedly. This shows that our "essence"

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is alienated freedom. 'Essence', however, does not mean some *a priori* nature; rather it means the historical and contingent way in which being-free has, for the most part, been played out in human history. As Sartre says in *Being and Nothingness*, "Essence is what has been". (1956, p. 35) And he also says there,

> The essence of an existent is no longer a property sunk in the cavity of this existent; it is the manifest law which presides over the succession of its appearances, it is the principle of the series. (1956, p. xlvi)

In other words, if human beings have an essence, it will reveal itself through an "historical" study like that put forth in Sartre's *Critique*. The essence will be the principle garnered from the variety of ways in which the object under study (in our case, the object is human praxis) reveals itself. Alienated freedom fits this requirement, since I have shown through Sartre's metaphysics of our world that human beings have for the most part made the choice of worlding being alienatedly.

However, does this undercut the possibility of conversion from alienated freedom to moral freedom and, therefore, make this existential freedom ethic nothing more than a mere fancy? No, I believe the contrary. First, even if we have discovered a human "essence", our being as being-free has nonetheless always been present. And the fact of revolt is evidence of this.

Second, the failures enumerated here concerning historical praxis might act as a motivation for conversion. Sartre's metaphysics of our world demonstrates that by

living our being-free in the mode of alienated freedom, we end up in chains. By revealing this is so not only through an ontological understanding of human beings, but also through a metaphysical understanding of human beings, I have given corroborating evidence that alienated freedoms are the source of oppression. Such knowledge might motivate revolt.

Third, by showing that alienated freedoms are the source of our chains, I am calling upon each of us to make use of our being-free on the reflective plane, because conversion to moral freedom remains more remote if we do not question our historical situation. Sartre rightly says,

> In so far as man is immersed in the historical situation, he does not even succeed in conceiving of the failures and lacks in a political organization or determined economy; this is not, as is stupidly said, because he "is accustomed to it," but because he apprehends it in its plentitude of being and because he cannot even imagine that he can exist in it otherwise. (1956, p. 434)

However:

> Whatever I [we] do, in effect, my [our] historical presence calls into question the "course of the world" and a refusal to call it into question is still a calling into question and an invented answer. (1992a, p. 489)

And recognition of these truths might lead to anguished, non-accessory reflection, which in turn might lead to authentic, non-accessory reflection.

In any case, I believe my discussion of Sartre's metaphysics of our world buttresses the arguments I made, in the previous chapter, concerning the two fundamental ideals of this existential freedom ethic. In the previous chapter, I argued that

(a) We should will freedom as the world's foundation.

(b) We should will ourselves and others morally free.

Firstly, the metaphysics of our world demonstrates that freedom is not the world's foundation and, therefore, if it is to be the world's foundation, it must be willed. Similarly, the metaphysics of our world demonstrates that people, for the most part, live out their being-free alienatedly and, therefore, moral freedom is not given and it too must be willed.

Secondly, we have seen that freedom--that is, moral freedom and freedom as the world's foundation--is lacking in the world. As a consequence, they are candidates for ideals, since ideals are what are lacking relative to what is given. And since moral freedom is the mode of being-free acting in accord with itself, it is the mode of being-free that wills freedom as the world's foundation. Consequently, if one wills freedom as the world's foundation, one should will oneself morally free.

Thirdly, we also have seen that willing oneself morally free is possible, because some people have revolted against oppression. And we have seen that willing oneself morally free requires that one will others morally free, because oppression arises from the alienated freedom of oppressors and oppressed. In other words, the metaphysics of our world demonstrates that freedoms are intertwined. So, if freedom is to become the world's foundation, we must will one another morally free.

Lastly, we have seen that when freedom is not willed as the world's foundation we end up living in a fake world. And what better reason can one give for why we should will freedom as the world's foundation than that doing so dovetails with truth?

In conclusion, I believe my discussion of freedoms' legacy gives external support for the coherency and practical efficacy of this existential freedom ethic, because it buttresses my arguments in the previous chapter that

1. Alienated freedom constitutes something like a human essence.

2. Conversion to moral freedom is possible.

3. Oppression arises from alienated freedom.

4. Oppression is contingent.

5. The only limit to freedom is freedom itself.

6. We should will freedom as the world's foundation.

7. We should will ourselves and others morally free.

In addition, because the theory of oppression developed in this chapter explains the origin and perpetuation of oppression in terms compatible with both the ontology and ethic set forth in the previous chapter, while taking into account the evidence provided by the metaphysics of our world, the existential freedom ethic can adequately account for oppression, as well as condemn its existence. Furthermore, because I have explained why fate, or necessity, in human affairs is compatible with human freedom, I have shown why this existential freedom ethic can with consistency maintain that we are free, i.e., that our being is being-free, even

if we are oppressed.

All in all, I believe my discussion of freedoms' legacy gives *prima facie* evidence that we can do what we ought. And, as a consequence, we have *prima facie* evidence that this ethic is more than a mere fancy of a Pollyannish mind.

1. During a conversation with Wilkinson, he brought to my
attention that Sartre uses 'haunted' in a technical sense in
Being and Nothingness. Human artifacts are haunted because
they point beyond themselves; they are more than dead mat-
ter. In this sense, human artifacts are "spirited" matter.

2. For example, when discussing the facticity of our being-
for-others, Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness*, says,

> To live in a world haunted by my fellowmen is not only
> to be able to encounter the Other at every turn of the
> road; it is also to find myself engaged in a world in
> which instrumental-complexes can have a meaning which
> my free project has not first given to them. (1956, p.
> 509)

And since these instrumental-complexes are ossified praxis
and socialized matter, they are practico-inert being.

3. The other possible counter-finality in this context is
the inadvertent killing of wildlife. In a succeeding chap-
ter I shall discuss the environmental ethics implied by this
existential freedom ethic, and there I shall discuss the
ethical significance of counter-finalities with regard to
the poisoning of our environment and the killing of wild-
life.

4. These differences between a counter-finality and the
coefficient of adversity do not, however, imply an
incompatibility between Sartre's ontological and metaphys-
ical works, because there is nothing in Sartre's ontological
discussion of the coefficient of adversity that either
precludes or necessitates the metaphysical category of a
counter-finality. Moreover, that his ontology neither
precludes nor necessitates the metaphysical category of a
counter-finality strengthens my supplement thesis.

5. Although Sartre's elucidation in his *Critique* of a
serial ensemble does not justify claims he makes in his
ontological work concerning one's relations to other people,
his explanation of sociality founded on practico-inert being
goes beyond--yet is not precluded by--his descriptions of
ensembles in *Being and Nothingness*. While describing the
ontological category of being-for-others, Sartre describes
two distinct ways in which three or more people can be
related. Ensembles of people who Sartre calls 'Us-Object'
are related through the look of a third; those who Sartre
calls a 'We-Subject' are related to one another through a
shared looking. Note that both of these ensembles arise

from the look and neither ensemble is united by or through a supra-subject. So although Sartre's ontological understanding of ensembles is based on the look, his metaphysical understanding of a serial ensemble is based on practico-inert being. His metaphysical understanding of ensembles is, then, distinct from, and goes beyond, his ontological understanding of ensembles. Even so, the Us-Object and the We-Subject neither precludes, nor necessitates, that there be serial ensembles, because members within a serial ensemble, like members of a We-Subject or an Us-Object, are not united via a supra-consciousness and Sartre says, in *Being and Nothingness*, "These few remarks do not claim to exhaust the question of the 'We'." (1956, p. 428) All in all then, Sartre's elucidation of a serial ensemble strengthens my supplement thesis. In addition, his metaphysics of group ensembles, which I discuss later, also goes beyond, yet is not precluded by his ontological description of ensembles; so, it too supports my supplement thesis.

6. In the following pages, I do not use fate and destiny interchangeably, because I want to distinguish between the forecast for oppressed people's future and the forecast for the oppressors' future. Oppressed people's future is fated, because it has been rigged by the oppressor to be what the oppressor wants it to be; whereas, oppressors' future is destined, because they have rigged their future to justify their present action. For example, when our forefathers appealed to "manifest destiny' to justify their oppression of Native Americans, they forecast a fate for Native Americans that was correlative to their so-called destiny.

7. Wilkinson brought to my attention that the English translation of this condition accurately represents the French. (See *Cahiers pour une Morale*, Paris: Gallimard, 1983, p. 338.) Consequently, it seems Sartre does intend the first alternative. In any case, I shall argue that the second alternative, not the first, follows from the existential ontology and freedom ethic.

8. The unity of the fused group is not based on the look of a transcendent Other and it is not based on a shared looking, because it is based on a shared praxis. Therefore, the fused group is not a We-Subject and it is not an Us-object. (See note 5 for an explanation of the We-Subject and the Us-subject.) Even so, the type of unity found in the fused group is compatible with, but not precluded by, Sartre's ontological descriptions of the "We", because the unity of the fused group is not based on a supra-consciousness. The same is also true for the pledged group and the institution.

9. It is possible that a particular fused group might not be founded on moral freedom, since a fused group might revolt in the name of an analytical necessity. As Sartre says in the *Notebooks*:

> So, determinism becomes a weapon of oppression. In
> "Materialism and Revolution," I showed how the op-
> pressed in turn will make determinism a weapon to
> pursue their claims. (1992a, p. 339)

In this case, the fused group is not really willing freedom as the world's foundation, and its members are not really willing themselves morally free, because they present their actions as arising from an analytical necessity and not a dialectical necessity. Moreover, if a fused group trans- forms into a pledged group, then we have a reason to suspect that that fused group was not founded on moral freedoms. In any case, I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, than I did in the previous chapter, what it means to will freedom as the world's foundation and what it means to will oneself morally free. There I argue that morally free action ema- nates from generosity and an explicit willingness to take risks. For now suffice it to say: The fused group is not necessarily founded on generosity and the pledged group definitely is not.

CHAPTER THREE
IMPORTANCE OF GENEROSITY

In the first chapter, I argued that one of the ideals of an existential freedom ethic is that we will ourselves and other people morally free. I also argued this means we must positively will them morally free. In the second chaptar, I showed what kind of world we have when this is not done. And, in both of these chapters, I argued it is possable for us to do what we ought. Even so, in *Being and Nothingness* Sartre, after his description of concrete realtins with other people, concludes that our relations with them are fundamentally conflictual. And according to Sartre relations between people toss between two fundamental attitides: one in which I treat the other person as a pure transcendence while allowing that person to treat me as a pure facticity, and the other in which I treat the other person as a pure facticity and require that person to treat me as a pure transcendence. Now if our only possible concrete realtins with others will be based on conflict, or the sado-masochistic circularity depicted in Sartre's play "No Exit", then it seems we will be incapable of doing what we ought.[1]

My primary task, then, is to show here how we can do what we ought. I shall explain why and how it is possible for us positively to will the freedom of other people, as well as explain, more fully than I did in previous chapters, what it means to will oneself and other people morally free. To do this, I shall draw from Sartre's *Notebooks* where he

introduces, but fails to develop, an existential freedom ethicist's notion of generosity. I shall argue that generosity, in the existential freedom ethicist's sense, is the existential structure of moral freedom. And I shall show it is through generosity that we can transcend the hell of "No Exit" and the hell of practico-inert being. In short: I show there is an exit.

Existential Freedom Ethicist's Conception of Generosity

In the *Notebooks*, Sartre says *Being and Nothingness* concerns an ontology before conversion (1992a, p. 6), and he says,

> Sadism and masochism are the revelation of the Other. They only make sense--as, by the way, does the struggle of consciousnesses-- before conversion. (1992a, p.20)

And even in *Being and Nothingness* he lets on, as I argued in the Introduction, that the phenomenological ontology developed there is incomplete and not the last word on possible relations with others. But Sartre also holds in *Being and Nothingness* that the "ideal" of being haunting human activity is--for the most part--to be, e.g., an in-itself-for-itself, and that when this is our "ideal" of being, our activities are reducible to being or to having.

Consider now what type of concrete human relations will obtain when they are founded on the "ideal" to be. Such relations will be conflictual if not sado-masochistic, because one will try either to possess the other person or to be possessed by the other person, or one will try to be

either for the other person pure facticity or pure trans-
cendence while concomitantly trying to make that person be
for oneself either pure transcendence or pure facticity.
However, being-free--as you recall--signifies that our being
is activity, that we are not what we are and are what we are
not, that we are limited beings, and that we are both facti-
city and transcendence.

> At the end of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre says,

> A freedom which wills itself freedom is in fact a being
> which-is-not-what-it-is and which-is-what-it-is-not,
> and which chooses as the ideal of being, being-what-it-
> is-not and not-being-what-it-is.
>   This freedom chooses then not to recover itself
> but to flee itself, not to coincide with itself but to
> be always at a distance from itself. What are we to
> understand by this being which wills to hold itself in
> awe, to be at a distance from itself? Is it a question
> of bad faith or another fundamental attitude? (1956,
> pp. 627-628)

In reply to the first question, it is my interpretation that
Sartre is describing the mode of being-free acting in accord
with itself. Hence, my reply to the second question is that
Sartre is describing the fundamental attitude of authentic
living, i.e., the attitude of the morally free person. As
you recall, the morally free person acts in accord with her
being-free, and in order to act in accord with her being-
free, her ideal of being must be being-for-itself, i.e.,
being-free. And since being-free signifies that one's being
is an activity and since an activity entails doing, not
being, one's ideal of being, when acting in accord with
being-free, must be doing for its own sake. As a conse-
quence, the morally free person's ideal of being will be a

dovetailing of doing and giving, not a dovetailing of being and having.

Generosity, in the freedom ethicist's sense, entails transcendence of what is, and it entails the non-coincidence of being. By acting generously, a person wills not to coincide with her ego, with her reputation, or with her creations and wills that other people not coincide with their egos, reputations, or creations. In addition, generosity entails giving for the sake of one's own and other people's freedom, not for the sake of a practico-inert benefit, e.g., an interest. Generosity, in short, spells death for the ego and life for our being-free. As such, generosity is a dovetailing of doing and giving, and it just is being-free in the mode of moral freedom. (Perhaps for these reasons, Sartre, in the *Notebooks* refers to the consciousness "of generosity as the original structure of authentic existence". (1992a, pp. 493-494)

Because generosity, in the freedom ethicist's sense, leads to the dovetailing of giving and doing, such giving is nothing other than the act of gift-giving. Explaining an this sense of gift-giving, Sartre says,

> Ontologically, the gift is gratuitous, not motivated, and disinterested. . . . A trinity is constituted through the gift: the giver, the thing given, the man to whom it is given. To give the thing is to make a new relation spring up. It is to create, to invent. The gift is invention. It is to give the *universe*, therefore to affirm the inessentiality of the universe and the essentiality of relations between consciousnesses or, to put it another way, to affirm man as essential. (1992a, p. 368)

So gift-giving for an existential freedom ethicist is a

trinity, which includes the one to whom the gift is offered. We, therefore, have need of others in order to give a gift. Moreover, gift-giving requires that the other be a person and not a thing; we need the one to whom we give a gift to be a being whose being is being-free. And because the gift is gratuitous, one acting in the mode of moral freedom no longer aims to possess another person or to just be some thing for another person, rather one gives to another person or one is for another person what one will do, not what one has or is. For the above reasons, the ethically relevant sense of 'giving', which is the sense capturing an existential freedom ethicist's meaning of generosity, is that in which a gift is given, that in which the gift-giving is gratuitous, and that in which the gift is offered to a subject, not an object.

Using an ordinary language approach to help clarify the existential freedom ethicist's sense of 'giving' and thus to help clarify the existential freedom ethicist's sense of 'generosity', Wilkinson says,

> Here the concept is that of giving. Now there are various ways it gets used:
> 1. I gave my house a coat of paint.
> 2. I gave my son a coat of many colors.
> 3. I gave the beggar my loose change.
> 4. I gave the mugger my wallet.
> 5. I gave the customer the wallet he just paid for.
> 6. I gave a large donation to Oxfam to feed the starving children.
> 6a. I gave food to the starving children through Oxfam.
>
> Now, not all of these involve giving in what I shall call the relevant sense (the sense relevant, that is, to Sartre's concern). The ones that do are, I think, 2, 3, 6, & 6a. In these cases, the giving involves a gift

and that, I think, is your ordinary language clue to
the relevant sense of giving. So your first claim is
that you can only give to a person--that's true, using
the relevant sense of giving. So in that sense #1
doesn't work: You can't make a gift, in its literal,
non-humorous sense, of a coat of paint to the house,
which also can't receive it in a relevant sense.
Personhood, or, if you & S are right, original freedom
[being-free] is required. (Letter on Chapter Six, June
28, 1994, p. 2b)

Note that Wilkinson also disqualifies #4 and #5 as instances

of giving in the ethically relevant sense--that is, in the

existential freedom ethicist's sense. He does so, because

the ethically relevant sense of giving requires that the

giving of a gift be gratuitous. Now in instances #4 and #5,

the giving is not gratuitous, since in both cases the giving

is not unprovoked. And although Wilkinson suggests instan-

ces #2, #3, #6, and #6a are instances of giving in the rele-

vant sense, his suggestion is only provisional, because in

these instances it is entirely possible that the giving is

not gratuitous. Wilkinson says,

. . . now it's interesting to note that one can fake a
purely generous giving; one could make what we'll call
a 'fake gift', the item imparted in bad faith giving.
So (case 2b) I gave my son a coat of many colors, so he
would love me and recognize what a good papa am I. So
(case 6b) I gave Oxfam money, so they would know, and
others I told would know, what a generous fellow am I.
So (case 3b), knowing the beggar is really the king in
disguise, I gave the beggar my loose change in order to
be richly rewarded later. Or I sent a X-mas gift to
someone and expect to be sent one in return. In all
these cases, we have a kind of interest which corrupts
the gift. One gives in sort of the relevant sense;
there's nothing absurd in saying in 3b "I made a gift
to the beggar". And yet it's not all Sartre is after.
So here, too, some kind of distinction has to be made,
and it involves perhaps defining interests, so as to
indicate what sort of motivations prevent giving in its
fullest sense. (Letter on Chapter Six, June 28, 1994,
p, 3b)

In reply to Wilkinson's suggestion, I first reiterate that gift-giving in the existential freedom ethicist's sense must be gratuitous, because only then does the giver affirm the essentiality of being-free and the inessentiality of the world. But what does this mean? Sartre correctly says,

> So the gift is freedom and liberation. It is not on the side of the world or our image in the world but on the side of our nonthetic consciousness (of) ourselves. It is a break, a refusal to believe, a refusal of being caught up in the world, a refusal of narcissism and of fascination for the world, an affirmation of negativity and of my creative power. . . . It is, in every age and situation, an affirmation of interhuman relations (whether it be a present or some service rendered). If we consider the pure universe of desire wherein man is the inessential and the thing is what is essential, the gift appears in its initial intention as the reversal of this structure and, consequently, a kind of deliverance. (1992a, p. 369)

The gift is "on the side of our nonthetic consciousness (of) ourselves", because not either one's own ego nor the other person's ego and not either one's own possessions nor the other person's possessions mediate between the gift-giver and gift-receiver.[2] Rather, the mediation occurs through the gift. And because it occurs through the gift, the giver and the receiver transcend the world of the "serious".

Let us now return to the issue of whether cases 2, 3, 6, and 6a are instances of giving in the existential freedom ethicist's sense. The issue, then, is whether such instances of giving transcend the world of the "serious". Does giving in these instances transcend one's practico-inert interests? Does giving in these instances transcend one's reputation and one's self-image? In other words: Is one

giving for the sake of giving, or is one giving for the sake
of some egoistic gain? If the motivation is the former,
then the giving captures the existential freedom ethicist's'
meaning of generosity; however, if the motivation is **solely**
the latter, then the giving is not an instance of what we
mean by generosity. As a consequence, cases 2, 3, 6 and 6a
are instances of the existential freedom ethicist's sense of
giving only if the gift-giver's giving does not aim at being
or having.

Since gift-giving in the existential freedom ethicist's
sense is gratuitous, gift-giving affirms the importance of
being-free and the insignificance of the practico-inert, of
one's ego, and of one's reputation. But we might wonder why
gift-giving engenders more than just the essentiality of the
giver. In other words: Why does generosity, in an existen-
tial freedom ethicist's sense, affirm the importance of the
being-free of the receiver? Moreover: Why isn't gift-giv-
ing merely a form of disguised sadism or masochism? After
all when the sadist gives, his gift is an attempt to ensnare
or belittle another person. For example, a sadist might
give another person a gift that would be impossible for the
receiver to buy for herself, as the slave-owner might give
away his table scraps to his slaves. In either case, the
sadist intends to show his being-free is essential and the
other person's being-free is inconsequential. When the
masochist gives, his gift represents an attempt to give his
life, so to speak, to another person. For example, it might

be thought that presidential bodyguards affirm the essentiality of the president, for whom they will die, and in so doing, affirm their own inessentiality.

First, in response to the above misgivings, since gift-giving, for us, requires that the receiver of the gift be being-free, the gift-giver must acknowledge the being-free of the receiver. The upshot is that the gift-giver must—in order to give a true gift—not use the gift to reduce either oneself or the receiver to facticity. As a consequence, giving, in the existential freedom ethicist's sense, cannot be a form of disguised sadism. Granted people can and do give gifts in order to control, but such gift-giving is not a giving that dovetails with doing. Such "gift-giving" is a doing that aims at dovetailing of being and having and thereby is not giving in our sense.

When one gives in order to be or to get, one's gift is a false gift. A false gift affirms the essentiality of the world and the inessentiality of the one to whom the "gift" is given; whereas, the true gift is a triadic, internal relation between giver, receiver, and the world whereby freedom becomes the world's foundation.

In the case of a true gift, the world does not disappear, rather it is put in its place. And not only does the true gift presuppose that the gift-giver acknowledge the being-free of the one to whom the gift is given, it also presupposes that the receiver acknowledge the being-free of the giver. As a consequence, generosity, in the existential

freedom ethicist's sense, cannot be a form of disguised

masochism. Sartre says,

> The gift presupposes a reciprocity of recognition. But
> this reciprocity is not a reciprocity of gifts. Since
> through my gift I treat the other as freedom, it is
> fitting that, in return, the other recognize me recog-
> nizing him, so this recognition will occur within the
> dimension of truth. This recognition takes place in and
> through the mere acceptance of the gift. But this
> acceptance, if it is free and proud as it ought to be,
> implies quite simply that I *ought to recognize* that the
> gift was not provoked by some interest, that it is a
> pure freedom that created the world for me, thereby
> setting up an interhuman relation. (1992a, p. 369)

Thus, a true gift is accepted by the receiver and presup-

poses the acknowledgment of the being-free of both parties.

A true gift implies the moral freedom of each person, be-

cause the gift is given for the sake of one's own and anoth-

er person's freedom and is treated as such.

Generosity then, in the existential freedom ethicist's

sense, gives rise to intersubjective moral freedoms, because

both parties recognize and rely on the being-free of one

another. And such mutual recognition of each other as

being-free arises within the "dimension of truth", because

truth, for us, is the unveiling of what is. And since to

unveil something implies that something is hidden, genero-

sity is nothing other than unveiling the being-free of

oneself and another person, as well as the unveiling of

freedom as the world's foundation. Therefore, the inter-

subjective relation created by the true gift and by its

acceptance cannot be sado-masochistic, because sado-maso-

chistic relationships attempt to cover over our being-free.

Wilkinson questions, however, why generosity must

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entail the mutual recognition of giver and receiver.

> Both S in the quotation & you in your explication let
> on that the recipient must recognize the freedom of the
> other and that the gift is not provoked by an interest.
> I think #6a belies that claim, as does every case in
> which one gives something to someone who has no idea
> where the item given comes from or even perhaps that it
> was a gift; here's a case: Noseworthy, knowing Milbert
> is very needy but feels so bad about it that he'd be
> extremely embarrassed to take charity, leaves $50 on
> the sidewalk just before, as N knows, Milbert comes
> along, so that Milbert just thinks it's a lucky find.
> Noseworthy never says anything to anybody. That's
> generosity. Again, in S's sense of giving of oneself,
> one might carefully arrange something to help another--
> say, quietly tidy up a dirty hallway or scatter salt on
> a slippery spot in the park--who will never recognize
> that someone has done such a thing or even that it has
> been done. (Have you ever picked up a bit of trash in a
> forest & disposed of it later? How would next week's
> hiker even know it had been done?) So I'm not sure
> about the mutuality of recognition as a requirement,
> though it seems right in many paradigm cases (#2, 3,
> 6). (Letter on Chapter Six, June 28, 1994, pp. 3a-3b)

I agree with Wilkinson that all of the above cases appear to

be instances of generosity, since the giving of the gift is

gratuitous. However, these cases cannot give rise to inter-

subjective moral freedom if the receiver of the gift does

not know s/he is receiving a gift. As a consequence, such

anonymous giving does not unveil freedom as the foundation

of the world if the receiver of the gift does not know she

or he has received a gift. Milbert, for example, believes

luck is the source of the 50 bucks. Believing in luck, when

in fact a generous act by someone is the source of the

money, Milbert may very well believe fate is and ought to be

the ground of the world. As a consequence, N's "genero-

sity", though perhaps well intended, backfires. Similarly

for the instances of scattering salt on icy walkways, of

tidying up a dirty hallway, and of picking up trash in the forest. While such acts of anonymous giving might affirm, for the giver, the essentiality of oneself and the other person, as well as the inessentiality of the world; such acts cannot affirm, for the receiver, the essentiality of herself and the anonymous giver, and they cannot affirm the inessentiality of the world. For these reasons, anonymous "generosity", does not give rise to intersubjective moral freedom. But since generosity, in the existential freedom ethicist's sense, does give rise to intersubjective moral freedom, anonymous "generosity" falls short of the existential freedom ethicist's sense. My point is not that one should never give anonymously; rather my point is that the existential freedom ethicist's sense of generosity is distinct from, though related to, the ordinary language sense, since generosity, for an existential freedom ethic, entails the mutual recognition of the being-free of both giver and receiver.[3]

Beyond the Hell of "No Exit"

Now even though generosity, or gift-giving, is the way in which intersubjective moral freedom can be achieved, it is possible for one's gift to be turned into a counter-gift by the receiver. A counter-gift is a gift that for one reason or another boomerangs. For example, a gift boomerangs when it is reduced by the receiver to form of exchange of "gifts".[4] The gift becomes a counter-gift, because the

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receiver fails to acknowledge the gift as gratuitous. In
this case, the relations that come into being do not tran-
scend the sado-masochistic relations of "No Exit" or the
impersonal relations arising from the demands of practico-
inert being, because Tip, the receiver, refuses to acknow-
ledge the being-free of Tap, the one who originally gave.
As a consequence, Tap is reduced to her facticity and her
gift is turned into a counter-gift by Tip. And the gift
that Tip gives is a false gift, since it is not given gra-
tuitously. Here we meet a process similar to the hell aris-
ing from our complicity with practico-inert being. A gift
is turned into a counter-gift (a counter-finality) by anoth-
er who takes the gift as an occasion for promoting a false-
gift (an interest) and thereby Tip's false gift is Tap's
anti-gift (counter-interest). Clearly, generosity is lack-
ing on the part of the receiver. And since it is always
possible for one's gift to be turned into a counter-gift,
generosity is always a risk. However, if we are to trans-
cend the hell of "No Exit" and of practico-inert being, the
risk must be taken.

Hell, then, is not other people. Rather, hell is the
lack of generosity. Without other people, generosity is
impossible, since it requires another whose being is being-
free. And without generosity, moral freedom for myself and
other people is impossible, since generosity is the exis-
tential structure of moral freedom. All in all then, a
person's reason for willing the moral freedom of other

person's is not--as Kerner contends--that that person needs to be challenged; rather it is so that one's own and other person's being-free can thrive.

To transcend the hell of the conflictual relations depicted in "No Exit", we also need to consider how we understand other people. For example: Is our understanding of other people based solely on the look? The look, for Sartre, signifies the medusa's stare, because it turns another person into a transcendence transcended. By merely looking at another person, we are trying to size the person up. We are trying to categorize the person in terms of his or her outward appearance. We are trying to reduce another person to a thing. Consequently, we do not recognize the other person's being as being-free, and we do not foster that person's moral freedom. Instead, we lay the foundation for the other person to choose alienated freedom as her mode of being-free, because we have laid the brick for her to respond in kind--to look at us. This leads into the dialectic of sadism and masochism. I look; she looks back; I look back; etc. And we are thereby in the hell of "No Exit". So we must ask: Is there a way of understanding other people beyond the look? The answer is: Yes.

A way of understanding other people that is beyond the look will be based on understanding them in terms of their goals. By understanding other people in terms of their goals, we are recognizing them as for-itselfs, because only for-itselfs act for reasons and have goals. The

for-itself's being is being-free, which signifies one is a

finality and an activity, not a causality and a being. It

follows then that when we understand other people in terms

of what they do and not in terms of what they look like, we

recognize that their being is being-free.

Although such understanding goes beyond the look,

merely understanding other people in terms of their goals is

not sufficient for transcending the hell of conflictual

relationships. As Wilkinson rightly points out,

> We might contemplate George Washington and reflect on
> his aim to defeat the British at Yorktown; but still
> see G.W. simply as an historical phenomenon, i.e., an
> in-itself. Worse yet, the con artist will often prey
> upon persons precisely by way of pretending to help
> that person achieve that person's goals, and that is to
> say, will treat the person as having goals but nonethe-
> less as an instrument of the con artist's own work.
> (Notes on Chapter Five, March 16, 1996)

Wilkinson's point with these examples is that merely under-

standing other people in terms of their goals may in fact be

used to undermine their goals. If this is the case, then

the result is really no different from that of the look. As

a consequence, if we are to transcend the hell of conflic-

tual and manipulative relationships, we must do more than

merely understand other people in terms of their goals.

I shall argue that the type of understanding required

for transcending such hellish relationships is what Sartre

means by comprehension.[5] Explaining the meaning of compre-

hension, Sartre says,

> . . . it is not contemplative, it is not a system of
> means organized toward some end. It is sympathetic. It
> is this sympathy we need to describe. (1992a, p. 276)

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Comprehension, unlike the look and unlike merely understanding other people in terms of their goals, is sympathetic. When we comprehend other people we imagine ourselves as thrown into experiencing what they are experiencing as they attempt to bring about their ends. For example, I am working at a Budget Rent-a-Car desk in an airport, and I see a person trying to carry three pieces of luggage to the airline counter in time to make her flight. I am not sizing the person up, not saying to myself, e.g., "Must be a rich bitch from some Sun Valley condo-complex, just get a look at that bleached-blonde hair, I bet she has to get her nails done four times a day, she must spend the other part of her day at Tanfaster," etc. Nor am I merely understanding the loaded-down passenger in terms of her goals; rather, I "feel" the weight of her luggage; I lean forward as if I too were trying to reach the airline counter in time for the flight. So when I comprehend this loaded-down passenger, my understanding is sympathetic. And in this sympathetic understanding of another person, I am engaging both my facticity and transcendence, as well as understanding the other person in terms of her facticity and transcendence. Such understanding transcends the circle of sado-masochism, because it is not the case that either person is reduced to facticity or elevated to a pure transcendence. And it is not the case that the person comprehending the other person is plotting ways to undermine that person's goal. Even so, comprehension alone is not always sufficient for willing

another person and oneself morally free.

Comprehension is a necessary condition for willing other people morally free, since in order to will other people morally free we must understand them as a being who is being-free. When we comprehend other people we do not reduce them to a transcendence transcended, i.e., to a, facticity. However, by merely comprehending other people as being-free, we are not necessarily willing ourselves and other people morally free; because, to will ourselves and other people morally free, we must, as I argued in the first chapter, treat other people as ends to the same extent that we treat them as a means, and we must simultaneously treat ourselves as an end to the same extent that we are a means. But, now, what would this entail? To answer this question, let's consider the example under consideration.

I comprehend the loaded-down passenger as having difficulty. But the issue is: What do I do with my sympathetic understanding? Sartre suggests there are three antitides we can take with regard to other people who are having difficulty achieving their ends, but only one of these three attitudes culminates in willing ourselves and other people morally free. (1992a, p. 278-279) With regard to the example under consideration, the possible attitudes are:

1. I can turn my back on the other person, e.g., I go back to the computer to determine the number of Budget Rent-a-Car reservations I have for the next week.

2. I take up the other's end and do it myself, e.g., I

run from behind my Budget Rent-a-Car desk, grab the

luggage from the passenger and take the luggage to the

airline counter myself.

3. I want the other person to be successful in achiev-

ing her goal, so I help.

Only the third attitude amounts to willing myself and the

loaded-down passenger morally free, because comprehension is

coupled with helping another person achieve her ends and

such comprehension treats the loaded-down passenger as an

end to same extent that she is a means and treats oneself as

an end to the same extent that one is a means.[6] In this

case, I will that the woman loaded-down with her luggage

make it to the airline counter in time for her plane, so I

go over to her and ask her if she would like some help. I

am not stealing her end from her, because I do not take over

her end as my end. When I steal her end from her, as is the

attitude expressed in option two, I am treating her as a

mere means to what is now my end. In that case, I reduce

her, in Sartre's jargon, to a transcendence transcended by

my transcendence. By contrast, when I ask her if she needs

help, I leave her end intact, and I treat her as a means to

her end. In addition, I treat myself as both an end and a

means. My end is not her end; my end is to help her achieve

her end. I too am a means to my end of helping her, since I

offer bodily assistance, and she too is my means to carry-

ing out my end, since my end is to help her achieve her end.

Each of us is a transcendence traversed--not transcended--by

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the other person's transcendence.

Note that in the first optional attitude suggested, my comprehension culminates in indifference toward the other person. Here my comprehension, which was sympathetic, becomes as icy as the look; so comprehension here is lost. I return to my tasks at hand and let the loaded-down, airline passenger go about her own business come what may. In fact, I might feign indifference, because I do not want her to succeed. In any case, I have not willed freedom as the world's foundation, because I have not helped to turn what may very well be an impossible possible for another person into a possible possible. I leave the achievement of her end up to fate, not to freedom. This reveals that I do not will freedom as the world's foundation.

All in all then, comprehension is a necessary condition for willing other people morally free, but not a sufficient condition. It is the former condition, because without comprehension one does not acknowledge the other person's being-free and, hence, does not understand that person in terms of her or his situation. Comprehension, though, is not sufficient for willing oneself and another person morally free, because one can take different attitudes toward one's comprehension of what another person is doing; however, comprehension of another person in conjunction with helping that person is sufficient for the realization of willing oneself and another morally free. Metaphorically put: Comprehension opens the door to non-sado-masochistic

relations, and, by helping another person achieve her or his end, such people walk hand-in-hand through the exit to an authentic intersubjective relationship.[7]

In conclusion, when we comprehend other people, rather than merely look at them, we refuse to see their being-free as a threat to our being-free. This refusal to see the other person as a threat is a risk, since the other person might try to ensnare us. Moreover, when our comprehension culminates in the gratuitous helping of another person, such assistance, when accepted, is a true gift. We help for the sake of helping, not to prove ourselves helpful, not to get money in return, not to get an autograph, etc. In other words, by choosing to comprehend another person and to help that person when help is needed, we make a gift of ourselves to another person. Therefore, comprehension that culminates in helping is a giving that dovetails with doing. And the attitude illuminating this activity is nothing other than the existential freedom ethicist's conception of generosity.

Beyond the Hell of "Freedoms' Legacy"

In "Freedoms' Legacy", I demonstrated that the world into which we have been born is a product of the way in which our ancestors have worlded being, that the hell of practico-inert being is the product of alienated freedoms, that alienated freedoms are the source of oppression, and that alienated freedoms perpetuate oppression and the hell of practico-inert being. Thus, since the world is the

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product of the way in which people world being, oppression and the hell of practico-inert being are contingent. In addition, it follows that both oppression and the hell of practico-inert being can be overcome. And one of the ideals of this existential freedom ethic is that freedom become the world's foundation. So we ask, "How can we create freedom as the world's foundation?" It is through generosity. Through a generous, as opposed to a "serious", worlding of being, we will, as I shall show, (1) give our creations as gifts to others, (2) take responsibility for our creations, (3) not act for the sake of an interest, (4) undercut oppression within our world and (5) transcend economic relations with other people by gift-giving.

When we world being generously, we do not attempt to coincide with or to appropriate our creation. And since this is so, our generous acts of creating a world may be prolonged through giving it to other people, e.g., by making our possibilities possibilities for other people. And when our ideal of being is a dovetailing of doing and giving, we not only give our creations as gifts to other people, we also explicitly recognize that they are creations. In other words,

> authenticity will unveil to us that we are condemned to create and that at the same time we have to be this creation to which we are condemned. (1992a, p.515)

The person, then, whose mode of being-free is moral freedom recognizes and wills herself and the world as on-going creations with which she never perfectly coincides,

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but for which she assumes responsibility. Therefore, con-
version to moral freedom implies that one will not only
create generously, but also responsibly.

Since the morally free person does assume responsi-
bility for what she creates, she will try to prevent her
gifts from being turned into a counter-gifts. A counter-
finality is, as you recall, a finality that has boomeranged
and undercuts one's intention. In the case of a gift that
becomes a counter-gift, the giver's generous intention is
undercut. For example, suppose I have created a chemical to
increase crop yield.[8] Suppose further that I give this
chemical as gift to farmers. Suppose further that as time
passes it turns out that this chemical actually decreases
crop yields over time, as well as poisons the environment.
At this point, my gift becomes a counter-gift. But since I
take responsibility for my creations, I will try to con-
vince other people to stop using the chemical I created.[9]
Perhaps I will also decide to create another chemical that
will not have these deleterious effects. Note, however, my
reason for creating another chemical without deleterious
effects is not based upon either an exigency or an interest.
As you recall, exigencies and interests are motivations for
action of alienated freedom. For example, I don't create a
new and improved chemical in order to keep my job, in order
to make money, in order to prove myself to others as a good
guy; rather I create another chemical, because I want to
help farmers safely increase crop yields.

In contrast to the morally free person, the person whose mode of being is alienated freedom refuses to give his creations as gifts to other people. Such a person sells what he makes, patents his ideas, charges for his services, etc. Not only does he refuse to give his creations as gifts to others, he also often fails to recognize that he has created anything. As Sartre correctly says,

> The illusion of possessive consciousness (which would change one into King Midas) is that it would like to assimilate Being without changing it, whereas it trans-forms everything it touches. A property owner, there-fore, has an internal contradiction within himself: he creates in order to possess, but to possess is to pos-sess what is, so he denies his creation in affirming his possessing. (1992a, p. 514)

and

> I act in order to be--I do this act in order to be courageous. Not, by the way in order to create myself as courageous but rather to make manifest that I am so. (1992a, p. 512)

The first passage demonstrates that when one's ideal of being is to have, one does not recognize that one has creat-ed, for example, the world of property relations. The second passage demonstrates that when one's ideal of being is to be, one does not recognize that one creates oneself. In either case, alienated freedom maintains that one creates nothing, e.g., property relations are a given, one is by nature courageous or cowardly. And if one fails to acknow-ledge that one creates oneself and the world, then one will not take responsibility for what one has, in fact, created.

What I have said so far with regard to alienated free-dom's worlding of being and of moral freedom's worlding of

being has a direct bearing on the perpetuation of counter-interests. Within the realm of practico-inert being, counter-finalities have become interests for some and counter-interests for others. Although counter-finalities (or counter-gifts as I have just shown) do not necessarily arise from alienated freedom, their perpetuation through being taking up as interests is due to alienated freedom. On the supposition our worlding of being is based on moral freedom, we may unwittingly create counter-finalities or counter-gifts due to our ignorance of the particular dispositions of the matter that we are working over. For example, given our relative ignorance of ecology prior to World War II, people unwittingly created and used such new products as plastics and pesticides. Although these human creations were intended to improve the quality of life, they have in some cases proven to be counter-gifts. The above statement is rather generous given that for some folks the creation of plastics and pesticides was very likely motivated by profit and not by generosity. However the point I want to make is a generous creation could give rise to counter-finalities, because of one's ignorance of the possible consequences of one's creation. Such ignorance could have been possible with regard to plastics and pesticides.

On the other hand, it is also possible that some chemists did foresee the counter-finality possibilities of plastics and pesticides. After all, the "good"-making features of both are suggestive of "bad"-making features. Both were

made to be durable and thus to be non-biodegradable. As such, both would accumulate within our world if production and use were to continue through space and time--"and if ways of preventing accumulation other than biodegradation were not found and used".[10] With regard to pesticides, which historically were not only intentionally durable, but also were intentionally toxic, the deleterious effects of pesticide use, it would seem, could have been foreseen. And if this is so, then their production, it would seem, stems from alienated freedom, because only the motivations to have--e.g., to make profits--or to be--e.g., to be the man from Dow--would have created a harmful "gift". However, playing devil's advocate, Wilkinson suggests one might reason "the benefits would outweigh the harms" and if this were so then the motivation would not necessarily be the result of alienated freedom. But he also says, "By the way, maybe the utilitarian argument was used in bad faith?" Yes, an utilitarian argument can be used in such a way, since the person making the decision must decide upon what will constitute benefits and what will constitute harms, as well as decide upon the quantitative value of the benefits and the harms. Because the utilitarian must make such decisions, she or he can make them so as to serve her or his interest. And to make one's decisions pander to one's interests--in an existential freedom ethicist's sense of interests--is to make a decision based upon alienated freedom's reasons.

Let us suppose for the sake of argument, however, that the reason was not an obvious case of using an utilitarian argument in bad faith: Pesticides were intended as a gift that would do more good than harm. What is odd about this way of thinking is we think of gifts as being something good, not harmful. Explaining this point through an ordinary language approach, Wilkinson says,

> While Carolyn & I were hiking through the woods, I told her of the senses of 'give' & then we thought of a couple of more uses idiomatic in English:
> 7.   I gave him a clout on the ear.
> 8.   I'll give her a piece of my mind.
> 9.   Give me a break!
> In #7 & #8, it's clear that the giving doesn't involve a gift and is not giving in the relevant sense. **Moral: a genuine gift cannot be abusive**. [My emphasis] But a fake gift can: you give someone you don't like an undesirable or inappropriate "gift", in order to make them squirm as they try politely to thank you & express appreciation. In this way you one-up them at the Christmas party.
>   #9 works in Sartrean terms. A break could indeed be seen, perhaps in a slightly extended sense, as a gift, and indeed insofar as the recipient's aspirations are made realizable, the gift is better than some material possession: it is a sort of gift of freedom.
>   10. The person with whom I had a one-night stand gave me the clap.
>   #10 is a bit like #7 & #8. It's not giving in the relevant sense because the gift is undesirable, although if it was made unintentionally, it's not exactly abusive. And if done ignorantly & unintentionally, as it could be, it cannot perhaps be said crucially to involve freedoms at all. We do see, in English an idiom which allows us to associate the giving with a gift: "My lover gave me a gift"--i.e., a venereal disease or an unwanted pregnancy. But in these cases, I think, 'gift' is being used in a mood of sarcastic humor, so should count as figurative, and the usage is non-para- digmatic. (Letter on Chapter Six, June 28, 1994, p. 6b)

Given Wilkinson's suggestions, it seems to me the person who wants to give a true gift to other people would wait until she or he had a gift that would not entail foreseeable

harms. But should the person decide to give a gift that does portend harm, I must ask, "What could be the motivation for such giving?" It seems it would have to be alienated freedom's motivations, not moral freedom's motivation of gift-giving. In other words, I believe that a person who willed freedom as the foundation of our world, which would be after all not hers or his, but ours, would not have created pesticides, for example, as a gift, since it would have been foreseen to be a counter-gift. In any case, the taking up of actual counter-finalities as interests to be perpetuated can stem solely from alienated freedom. And when interests rule the worlding of being, the world's foundation will be unfreedom, and its countenance, lacking in generosity.

Finally, given that generosity, or gift-giving, is the model for authentic relations with other people, it should be fairly apparent that a world based on supply and demand, consumerism, wages, profits--in short, capitalistic econo-mics--is founded on unfreedom. Consequently, one of the aims of the existential freedom ethicist will be putting an end to the role exploitative economics plays in our lives.

In summary, since interests do not interest the morally free person, she creates the world beyond her interest and beyond her ego. And since she does not uphold her interest, she does not create herself as an oppressor and she does not create an oppressive world. She worlds being in terms of opportunities for herself and other people, not in terms of

interests, which entail a fate for other people. Lastly, through such generosity, she transcends and helps other people transcend the hell of practico-inert interests and counter-interests. And as Sartre rightly says,

> Relations among men must be based upon this model if men want to exist as freedom for one another: 1st, by the intermediary of the work (technical as well as aesthetical, political, etc.); 2d, the work always being considered as a gift. (1992a, p. 141)

Now, given generosity is the model for authentic relations, we might wonder whether this existential freedom ethic allows for the possibility of asking another person for help. It should come as no surprise that it does, but how the request is made will be ethically relevant.

In the *Notebooks* Sartre makes an important distinction between the existential structure of an appeal and of a demand. When I demand something from another person, I am not respecting his or her being-free. By demanding that another person do something for me, I am treating that person abstractly, because I am implicitly saying that she or he cannot legitimately refuse to help me--that is, whatever the person's personal goals might be are irrelevant. This shows that I refuse to comprehend the other person. In addition, it shows I am my treating my own goal as unconditional; I will use any means to bring about my end. The upshot: The demand is a form of violence.

By contrast to the demanding person's request, a generous person's request will be nothing like the demand. One type of request that has the structure of generosity is the

appeal. Sartre says,

> the appeal is first of all concrete, not abstract
> recognition of the other. What I recognize is not an
> unconditioned freedom set above any and all situations.
> To recognize such a freedom would be a trick of bad
> faith disguised as a plea or a demand and would be
> *violence*, since it tries to separate the other's free-
> dom from his situation. In reality to recognize the
> other's freedom concretely is to recognize it in terms
> of its own ends, along with the difficulties it experi-
> ences and its finitude, it is *to comprehend it*. . . .
> And since I neither demand nor plead, since, on the
> contrary, I recognize the concrete situation, I count
> all the more on the gratuity of the other's freedom.
> But at the start, I recognize that my end has to be
> conditional for the other as it is for me. That is,
> that it must always be possible for the other to refuse
> to help if the means used in such help will alter his
> own ends. (1992a, p. 283)

An appeal then, unlike the demand, entails comprehension of
the other person. And when a request includes comprehension
of the other person, the person making the request thereby
acknowledges the being-free of the other person. Also
unlike a demand, an appeal to another person acknowledges
the appealer's own being as being-free. Therefore, by
appealing to another for help, the appealer sets the stage
for the type of reciprocity found in generosity. I acknow-
ledge that the other person my very well refuse to help me;
yet if she does help me, I acknowledge that her willingness
to assist me is an act of generosity.

Furthermore, because the appealer recognizes and ac-
cepts the possibility of refusal, she takes a risk when she
requests another person's help. Risk is also implicit in
the appeal, because the person to whom the appealer appeals
may refuse to comprehend the appeal or to do what the ap-
pealer requests. In other words, one person's particular

appeal to another person is also an appeal that the person appealed to comprehend the appealer's situation.

By contrast to the appealer, the person who demands is unwilling to take these risks. A demand is an attempt to guarantee the future and signifies the fear of refusal.

Because the appeal entails the comprehension of the other person's being as being-free and relies on the generosity of that person to comprehend the appealer's being as being-free, the appeal, unlike the demand, has the structure of generosity and the gift.[11] As Sartre says,

> In every appeal there is a gift. In the first place, there is a refusal to consider the original conflict between freedoms by way of the look as something impossible to surpass. There is a gift of my end to the other's freedom in confidence. There is an acceptance that my operation will not be realized by me alone; that is, acceptance: 1st, that the other haunts my realized end, that is, haunts me inasmuch as I announce what I am through the object (hence a beginning to the moral conversion that will consist in preferring that my creation exist as something independent and in resigning myself to losing myself . . .); 2nd that the other transcends me with all his freedom *toward my end*, that is, I accept being **traversed** [my emphasis] in my freedom toward my end by the other's freedom. (1992a, p. 281)

My gift to the other person through my appeal is, then, my willingness to project a relationship with that person beyond a sado-masochistic relationship and to treat my end as not solely my own. In other words, the appeal implies the generosity of the appealer. And because it does, as well as relies on comprehension, the appeal contains the structure of reciprocity that is compatible with moral freedom. The kind of reciprocity engendered through the appeal relies on the concrete recognition of the being of the

appealer as being-free, as well as the concrete recognition of the being of the one appealed to as being-free. Moreover, the successful appeal, like comprehension that culminates in helping another person, fosters reciprocity in which oneself and the other person are ends to the extent that oneself and that person are means. And though the appealer asks, as well as allows, the other person to **traverse** her transcendence, she does not ask the other person **to transcend** her transcendence. This means she asks only for assistance in achieving her end and assistance only is what she receives. She is a transcendence traversed, not transcended, by another's transcendence. Therefore, an appeal does not imply masochism on the part of the appealer.

In overview, the appeal goes beyond the dialectic of sadism and masochism, because the appeal creates an intertwining of one's end with another person's end, as well as an intertwining of both oneself and another person as the means to distinct, yet, intertwined ends. The appeal arises from generosity and creates unity, but maintains difference. While discussing the appeal in the *Notebooks*, Sartre says,

> An appeal is first of all the recognition of diversity. . . . Hence I do not consider that our joining together is given in the first instance (identity) and I do not require an act *in the name of some prior identity*. On the contrary, I conceive the act that I am asking for will be expressly destined to create a solidarity and a unity that *do not yet exist*. (1992a, p. 274)

Now that we have a richer sense, than we had previously, of what it is to will oneself and others morally free, I want to discuss why historically group action has

often failed. To will oneself, as well as others, morally free is to act generously toward other people and to foster--in the same act--their generosity. When relations with other people are based on generosity, such relations are created. And since this is so, the creation of authentic relations with other people need not presuppose a given similarity. Moreover, since ethically successful gift-giving signifies that both gift-giver and gift-receiver acknowledge the being-free of one another, the intersubjective relation created by generosity, in fact, presupposes there are concrete differences between beings whose being is being-free. So authentic group action will take into account the concrete differences between group members and will create solidarity through, not in spite of, difference. Yet nowhere in all the possible phases of group action is the relation between members explicitly based on generosity.

Let's consider the fused group first. Historically the fused group often is most likely based on a given similarity, e.g., membership in a particular class or of a particular gender or race, etc. When this is why the individuals form a fused group, then the members of that group are not related to one another through the type of reciprocity found in the true gift. As a consequence, the fused group does not necessarily constitute authentic intersubjective relations. Moreover, the transition from a fused group to a pledged group betrays the lack of generosity within the original fused group, because the pledge signifies the

members' refusal to take a risk. And by requiring a pledge, the members of the group are implicitly or explicitly asking group members to choose alienated freedom as their mode of being-free.

The pledged group comes into being when members take the pledge to maintain the group regardless of individual personal circumstances. And by making a pledge, the member agrees to act in disaccord with her or his being-free, because the pledge requires the compliant member to live out her or his freedom abstractly. This demonstrates that the pledge is, in effect and foundation, a demand, not an appeal, answered; as such, it is violence "and a submission to violence".[12] Therefore, pledged group members refuse to act generously toward one another. And the pledge is really an anti-gift, since it destroys the possibility of gift-giving. It is not surprising, then, that the pledged group often evolves into an institution.

Criticizing Sartre's *Critique* characterization of group praxis and consequently my description of it, Aronson in *Jean-Paul--Philosophy in the World* says,

> Designed as a philosophical basis for historical material-ialism, the *Critique* is also a forceful attack on Marxism's hope for humankind.
>   At the core of Sartre's mature, as much as his early thought, we encounter a single dominant mood, his abiding pessimism. (1990, p. 287)

But why does Aronson believe Sartre's *Critique* character-ization of group praxis is pessimistic? Perhaps because his characterization of group praxis does not imply the inevitability of a utopian society or of social progress.

And perhaps because Sartre's (or any existential freedom ethicist's) characterization of group praxis does not presuppose a given human solidarity. Unlike the Marxist who believes in historical materialism, which holds to a predestined utopia and presupposes a given human solidarity, the existential freedom ethicist leaves everything up to us. Even so, I believe Sartre's *Critique* shows the sources of our failure to create solidarity and, thereby, shows us what we will need to do if we want to bring about a concrete and contingent world founded upon freedom. I find this to be anything but pessimistic--unless, of course, you define 'pessimistic' as any philosophy not endorsing a pre-given human solidarity and utopian destiny.

In any case, I shall show now that an existential freedom ethic, far from encouraging a mood of pessimism, leads to joy. And contrary to the view of some existential freedom ethic commentators, e.g., Kerner, I shall argue an existential freedom ethic does not condemn the morally free person to the moods of despair, forlornness, or nausea.

Kerner, for example, says,

> In order to be free in the ethical sense, we must come to see and face our freedom. According to Sartre, that is a matter of learning to live in anguish, with a sense of forlornness, and in despair. It is these feelings or moods which disclose to us the truth of our existence--namely that our freedom entails unlimited responsibility. (1990, p. 168)

While I agree with Kerner that anguish is, as I argued in the first chapter, of ethical significance, I do not believe the same is true of despair and forlornness. Anguished

reflection, as you recall, entails the questioning of the world and of oneself, as well as the revelation that one's being is being-free. In anguished reflection, one is at the crossroads of choosing alienated freedom or moral freedom; so, in anguished reflection, one will not be either pessimistic or optimistic about the future, rather one's future is in suspense. Since that is so, anguish does not entail despair or forlornness, because both of these moods imply an attitude has been chosen with regard to how one's future will go: both imply a pessimism about the future. Moreover, despair and forlornness are moods of evasion, because they cover over one's being as being-free. And since they hide one's being-free, they hide anguish too. Despair and forlornness, then, are moods correlative to alienated freedom. Sartre says as much about despair.

> Many men, in fact, know that the goal of their pursuit is being; and to the extent that they possess this knowledge, they refrain from appropriating things for their own sake . . . . But to the extent that this attempt still shares in the spirit of seriousness and that these men can still believe that their mission of effecting the existence of the in-itself-for-itself is written in things, they are condemned to despair; for they discover at the same time that all human activities are equivalent (for they all tend to sacrifice man in order that the self-cause may arise) and that all are on principle doomed to failure. (1956, P. 627)

In other words, the despairing, or forlorn, person's ideal of being is to be, even though he or she recognizes that this ideal is unachievable. And rather than seeing beyond to moral freedom's ideal of being, which is a dovetailing of giving and doing, the despairing or forlorn person lives his or her days disingenuously, in ungenerosity. As a result,

we can see that such a life corresponds to an alienatedly free life, not a morally free one.

Not only is the morally free person's mood beyond forlornness and despair, it too is beyond nausea. In Sartre's novel *Nausea*, Roquentin's nausea corresponds to his belief that he is uncreative and inessential. He sees his existence as absurd, contingent and superfluous. In fact all concretely existing things are *de trop*; they are sickening. Only the undifferentiated and ephemeral being "behind" all things is essential; only it is pure. Only it is. Like the Platonic Socrates who yearns to rid himself of his bodily existence, Roquentin too has a distaste for flesh. He wants to transcend his own flesh, as well as the "flesh" of the world. His nausea, therefore, stems from alienated freedom, because Roquentin wants to flee his facticity. Roquentin's nausea also reveals his refusal to will freedom as the world's foundation, because his nausea subsides only when he flees the fleshiness of this world.

But the morally free person assumes her or his facticity and creates the world by unveiling the "flesh" of being. And the authentic person, Sartre says, has "a taste for Being". (1992a, p. 495) The mood correlative to such unveiling is joy, not nausea, not despair, and not forlornness. Of willing freedom as the world's foundation, Sartre rightly says,

> Authenticity at this level is a double source of joy: through the transformation of gratuity into absolute freedom--through the contact with the being of the phenomenon. (1992a, p. 491)

In my words, joy comes from two aspects of conversion to moral freedom. First by accepting and willing the contingency and gratuity of my existence, my project to be either my ego or to have an ego are replaced by the project of myself as a gift through my work. I am what I will do, not what I am or what I have. Second by willing freedom as the ground of the world, my relation to being changes from one of appropriation and identification to one of illumination. What both of these amount to is the assumption, recognition, and willing of oneself as a limited, but generous, creator. And joy, not surprisingly, is the distinctive mood of generosity. After all, think of how you have felt when you have given truly, generously.

But if joy is the distinctive mood of the morally free person, how are we to make sense of the ethical significance of anguish. Anguish is, as I showed in the first chapter, the mood correlative to non-accessory reflection and to the awareness of our very being as being-free. And since the morally free person wills to act in accord with being-free, it would seem she must will herself anguished. And if this is so, why would and how could the morally free person experience joy?

Although I argued anguish is correlative to non-accessory reflection, I also argued that anguish is not correlative to moral freedom's way of being. I argued moral freedom's reflection is authentic, non-accessory reflection and is a modification of anguished reflection. So, any

moods correlative to moral freedom's way of being will be a modification of anguish and will not be anguish, simpliciter. Such moods will be complex--that is, they will incorporate, rather than hide, one's anguish.[13] For example, speaking of the mood correlative to authentic love, Sartre says,

> . . . in love itself, at its heart, there will be, if it is authentic, this being or not being, and thus a fundamental anxiety that this love might not be. And just as love is willed at the same time that it is felt, this anxiety too must be willed in authenticity as our only defense against the future. (1992a, p. 477)

Similarly, the joy of the morally free person will be an anguished joy, not a simple, or delirious joy. And this is fitting, since the person who wills freedom as the world's foundation and who unveils the concreteness of being, assumes and wills herself as a limited and gratuitous creator of the world. As a limited and gratuitous creator of the world, the morally free person is joyful, but also anguished. She knows that through her limits as a creator her generosity is a risk, and her creations are at risk. Her generosity might not be received generously by others, and her gifts might not turn out as she had hoped. Even so, she takes the risk; she explicitly creates herself and her relations with others. As a consequence, she is joyful, though anguished.

In summary, anguished joy is a distinctive mood of generosity, not nausea, not despair, and not forlornness. By willing freedom as the world's foundation, the morally free person sheds light on being, which would otherwise be

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lost in darkness and obscurity. Through her concrete and perspectival illuminations, she wills to lose herself in the anguished joy of creation. Sartre aptly says,

> . . . to see is to pull Being back from its collapsing. And as soon as it is revealed, Being springs into this unveiling with all the reaffirmation of its Being. Perception is the upsurge of Being, the fixed, dizzying explosion of Being into the "there is," and this is originally for the For-itself enjoyment. (1992a, p. 494)

With this passage, we can see that the existential freedom ethicist's world is beyond the nausea of Roquentin's world, beyond the despairing and forlorn world embraced by Kerner, and beyond the terror-bound world of the pledged group. All in all, this passage captures not only the importance of aesthetic unveiling in a world where freedom is founding, it also captures the concrete, non-idealistic unveiling pecu- liar to such a world founded upon freedom. And for all of you who unveil the beauty of this mountain range or that rainforest, this painting or that person, you will exper- ience the concrete joy of creation; for upon conversion to moral freedom, anguish proper will be transformed, as Wilkinson suggests, into "a kind of excitement about life, and maybe then the joy would then be a sort of bittersweet joy". (Letter on Chapter Seven, June 30, 1994, p. 3a)

Defense of the Existential Freedom Ethic Revisited

Now that we have before us the existential freedom ethicist's conception of generosity and the moods entailed by generosity, I shall reply to some perennial and not so

perennial objections to an existential freedom ethic. By referring to the moods entailed by generosity, I first will reply to the following perennial charges leveled against an existential freedom ethic: 1. the charge of abstractness, 2. the charge of pessimism, and 3. the charge of nihilism. After replying to these perennial objections, I shall reply to the not so perennial objection that this existential freedom ethic is practically inefficacious, because generosity, in the existential freedom ethicist's sense, is not possible.

Firstly, the anguished joy of the morally free person is of this world and not the eternal bliss Plato projects into an intelligible world. Secondly, the morally free person's worlding of being is correlative to an anguished joy and not to the despairing and forlorn world of Kerner. Thirdly, the morally free person's worlding of being is correlative to an anguished joy, not to Ivan's delirious joy as he relates to Alyosha his tale of the Grand Inquisitor.[14]

The first point demonstrates the actual concreteness of this existential freedom ethic, because the joy correlative to moral freedom arises from and with the creation and discovery of the sensible world, not from and with the contemplation of a Platonic ideal.

The second point demonstrates that this existential freedom ethic is not pessimistic, because this ethic does not condemn one to unrelenting despair; rather it enjoins people to transcend despair through the joy of creation.

The third point demonstrates that this existential freedom ethic is opposed to nihilism, because the type of joy correlative to moral freedom's mode of worlding being is anguished. Anguished joy signifies that one is creative and concerned about the effects of one's creations on other people; however, Ivan's delirious joy, which is the joy of a nihilist, betrays his destructive irreverence for other people and his refusal to create.

The last point has bearing on the not so perennial objection that I shall entertain now. In this chapter I have argued that generosity, in the existential freedom ethicist's sense, is the basis for creating authentic relations with one another, for creating authentic group praxis, and for founding the world on freedom; but the not so perennial objection contends generosity is not a possible mode of behavior for human beings, because human beings by nature can act only from self-interest.[15] In other words, the objector holds that all human actions are necessarily self-ish; therefore, generosity is not humanly possible, because generosity entails being concerned about how one's actions effect other people. It entails that one not intentionally harm other people and that one intentionally help other people.

My first response to this objection is to point out that not all people act selfishly and not all people who, for the most part, act selfishly do so all of the time. Some people are concerned about the effects of their actions

on other people, are concerned that their actions not harm other people, and are concerned that their actions help other people. Buddhists, physicians, nurses, parents, teachers, etc. show this type of concern for other people.

At this point the objector says, "You have misunderstood the objection. I'm not claiming that people won't show this type of concern for other people; I'm claiming that if they do show such concern, their motive is necessarily a self-interested one. I'm not claiming that people can act only selfishly; I'm claiming that people can never act disinterestedly. People will always and only act according to what they perceive as benefitting themselves. If helping other people is perceived to benefit oneself, then and only then will a person help another person. Surely even you see that Buddhists, physicians, nurses, parents, teachers, etc. help other people, because doing so benefits themselves, e.g., it feeds their egos or fills their pocketbooks."

In reply to this version of the psychological egoism objection, I call on the reader to ask himself or herself if he or she has ever acted generously. Surely each of you has at least once in your lifetime done something for another person that was not motivated by self-interest. It could be something as seemingly insignificant and commonplace as giving directions to a lost, unknown person to something as seemingly supererogatory and rare as peaceably intervening with persons unknown to oneself who are engaged in a barroom knife fight.

At this point the objector says, "But you must realize that people do not always know what their real motive is. So even if someone believes she or he has acted disinterestedly, it is very likely their real motive was a self-interested one."

My response to this version of the objection is to point out that, since the objector seems to refuse to accept any evidence as falsifying psychological egoism, the believer in psychological egoism presupposes there is a given human nature, whereas we do not. Our conception of consciousness and the ego differs from the objector's conception. For us, consciousness is contentless. There is no unconscious in consciousness. There is no ego in or "behind" consciousness. The ego is an object in the world; it is a projection of consciousness.[16] This implies that acting from self-interestedness is a choice, and it is the choice of heteronomy, i.e., it is alienated freedom. Generosity, too, is a choice, and it is the choice of autonomy, i.e., it is moral freedom. We grant, then, that it is possible for people to act solely from self-interest, but it is also possible for people to act from motives other than, or in addition to, their own self-interest. The upshot: Generosity is a possibility even if the bad faith of egoistic self-interest rules the western world.

In summary, generosity engages one's own, as well as another person's freedom. When a generously given gift is accepted as a true gift, we can transcend the hell of

sado-masochistic relations depicted in "No Exit" and the hell of practico-inert being. Through generosity, we positively will ourselves and other persons morally free. So in contrast to Kerner's world of knightly duels, the world of this existential freedom ethic is more like the world of an improvisational jazz ensemble, where each player makes a gift of her or his notes for the other players who in their turn take up the gift and turn it into a new gift of notes.[17] However, through this metaphor I do not want to give the impression that moral freedom can surface only in the world of art. The point is to turn all doings into generosity and gifts: Let freedoms ring!!!

NOTES

1.   Many Sartrean commentators have argued Sartre's ontology does not make room for such a possibility. One such commentator is Kerner who in *Three Philosophical Moralists* says,

> Mutual recognition of freedom in real life, as we have seen, seems to be, in Sartre's terms, a preordained impossibility. Were I to make the freedom of someone else my goal, by this very act I transcend and deny it. . . . The conclusion to be drawn is therefore this. Mutual antagonism cannot be overcome, and the co-operation of others cannot be taken for granted, but we can face all this in candour. . . . Conflict between humans is inevitable. . . . The freedom of another is a threat to me. Hence I embark on the effort to limit or even destroy it. (1990, pp. 165-167)

So, while Kerner contends that our relations with other people are necessarily conflictual, he also accepts the claim that we must will other people free. Kerner says,

> Respect for the freedom of others must mean therefore solely that it is an end only negatively, that is, I must not undermine or sabotage it. (1990, p. 166)

and

> Genuine co-operation is also a rivalry. Challenges are needed for freedom to unfold. Therefore, willing my own freedom entails that I must will also the freedom of others, for only another free being can challenge me. (1990, p. 161)

All in all then, Kerner's characterization of an existential freedom ethic is that of knights dueling and is based on the assumption that the hell of sado-masochistic relationships cannot be overcome.

By contrast to Kerner's characterization, I have argued that an existential freedom ethic requires one positively to will the freedom of other persons; so I do not bite the sado-masochism bullet. I contend that we not only can, but also must, transcend the circle of conflictual relations.

2.   In a marginal note on an earlier draft, Wilkinson points out that the ego, for Sartre, "includes one's self-image & reputation".

3.   At this point I want to say that this existential freedom ethic's concept of generosity differs from Aristotle's. First, in this ethic, generosity is not a virtue; rather, it

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is being-free in the mode of moral freedom. Second, generosity is not a mean, as it is for Aristotle, between the vices of ungenerosity and wastefulness. And though it might seem generosity, in the existential freedom ethicist's sense, is a mean between sadism and masochism, it is not since generosity actually transcends the alienated freedom of sadism and masochism. Third, generosity is not solely or even fundamentally concerned with the sharing of one's wealth, as it is for Aristotle. Rather, in this ethic, generosity fundamentally involves the giving of oneself. Granted one might do this by sharing one's wealth, but sharing one's wealth is not the only way for one to give of oneself. Making time for another person or helping another person in her or his endeavors are examples of giving of oneself that do not involve wealth. Fourth, generosity creates authentic intersubjective relations, but for Aristotle generosity need not create such relations.

The existential freedom ethicist's concept of generosity is, however, similar to Gabriel Marcel's concept of availability. (In a letter from Wilkinson, June 30, 1994, he mentions that Sartre's/Henig's notion of generosity reminds him of Marcel and I agree.) For Marcel availability connotes one's willingness to make time for others, although not in a slavish manner. Perhaps more significantly, availability is related to giving, as opposed to having, is the means by which one creates ethical intersubjective relations with other people, and involves something like our ideal of positively willing oneself and other people morally free.

4. Not only can a gift become a counter-gift because of the ungenerosity of another person, a gift can also become a counter-gift because of one's ignorance of the "disposition" of matter. In the next section while I discuss the differences between the way in which alienated freedoms and moral freedoms world being, I also discuss the ethical significance of a counter-gift arising from such ignorance. Note, however, that regardless of the reason a gift becomes a counter-gift, a gift is a counter-gift if the giver's generous intention is undermined in such a way as to create an effect in direct opposition to giver's gift-giving intention.

5. Sartre discusses the importance of comprehension in the context of the aims of the *Notebooks;* he also discusses the importance of comprehension in both *Search for a Method* and the *Critique.* In the ethical work, comprehension is tied directly to authenticity and thus to ethics; but in the meta-anthropological works, comprehension is tied directly to the grounds for obtaining anthropological knowledge and thus to scientific methodology. Comprehension of other people is, then for Sartre, not only related to fostering the good, it also is related to obtaining the truth.

6. Discussing the third attitude, Sartre says in the *Note-books*,

> The only authentic form of willing here consists in
> wanting the end to be realized by the other. And
> wanting here consists in engaging oneself in the opera-
> tion. But not to do it oneself, rather to modify the
> situation so that the other can do it. Indeed in so
> doing, I keep my *comprehension* since, in effect, I in
> no way negate the value and the end by surpassing them,
> but, on the other hand, I preserve their autonomy for
> them in relation to me. I do not steal them from
> anyone, they are not mine. Yet I do surpass and de-
> stroy their *factual* aspect. The reaching of the goal
> will no longer be an event for me that does not concern
> me. I contribute to *its happening* (or, in some cases,
> I turn away from my own ends so as not to prevent its
> happening). (1992a, p. 279)

Note Sartre suggests that sometimes helping another person
to achieve her or his ends means that the one assisting not
do something he or she had intended to do. This is as it
should be, since, to paraphrase Sartre, not acting is also
an act. So, in some cases, not acting my be the very act
that contributes to another person's achievement of his or
her end.

7. Although in the example under consideration the only
authentic attitude toward the other person is comprehension
that culminates in helping her achieve her end, there may be
times when willing another person morally free entails not
helping that person bring about her or his immediately
chosen end. In the next chapter, I discuss several cases
when this is so.

8. I refer the reader to Note 4.

9. For example, Robert Oppenheimer in the 1950's worked to
prevent future use and development of the atomic bomb;
whereas Edward Teller spent his entire career promoting the
development of atomic weapons. (I even heard Teller give a
speech on the "beauty" and importance of the neutron bomb.)
I ask you, "Who of these two physicists ultimately willed
freedom as the world's foundation and who willed unfreedom
as the world's foundation?" The answer is clear to me.

10. The addendum to this statement was a marginal comment
by Wilkinson on an earlier draft of this chapter. It is an
important addendum, since without it my statement would not
be true.

11. I want to reiterate a point made by Wilkinson. A gift
need not be a material thing. Thus, "Giving another the
time of day", like "Giving another a break", might entail

the creation of an authentic intersubjective bond. By "giving another the time of day", we show concern for another person's well-being, and we thereby treat this person as a subject, not an object.

12. Wilkinson noted this aspect of the demand in a marginal comment on an earlier draft of this chapter. It is an important addendum, since it reveals the bad faith of those taking the pledge.

13. In Robert C. Solomon's work *The Passions*, Solomon characterizes existential *angst* in such a way that it would be impossible for it to be compatible with any "positive" moods. Although Solomon distinguishes between anguish and anxiety, in both characterizations Solomon links these emotions with fear. Solomon characterizes Sartre's notion of *angst* as the "fear of oneself" and in particular as the "fear of one's own 'nothingness'". (1983, p. 288) Solomon also says that *angst* makes "negative evaluations of one's own potentiality", is the desire "to render oneself impotent, to protect oneself (and the world) from oneself", and "makes trust of others difficult". (1983, pp. 289-290)
　　　　I disagree with Solomon's understanding of what Sartre and the existential freedom ethicist mean by 'anguish'. First, anguish is not a form of fear. (I refer you to *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 29-30.) Second, despair and forlornness imply pessimism about oneself and the world, but anguish does not. Third, willed anguish is the desire to take responsibility for one's creations, which is anything but the desire to render oneself impotent. Fourth, willed anguish expresses one's willingness to take risks, which includes the risk of trusting other people. Overall, Solomon's understanding of what we mean by anguish is mistaken. Therefore, when I argue later in this chapter that anguish and joy are compatible, it is important to keep in view the existential freedom ethicist's sense of anguish.

14. My discussion here refers to the section titled "The Grand Inquisitor" in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.

15. This is not a perennial objection to an existential freedom ethic, because this is the first time generosity has been explicitly held to be fundamental to achieving authenticity. Kerner's characterization of an existential freedom ethic, for example, appears to be compatible with the claim that all human behavior is motivated only by self-interest, because "dueling knights" need not be concerned with promoting the freedom of one another or with the effects of their actions on one another. However, I have argued that moral freedom entails willing oneself and other people morally free and entails generosity. As a consequence, my characterization of an existential freedom ethic is not compatible with the claim that human behavior is motivated only by

self-interest. And if psychological egoism is true, then
this existential freedom ethic can not be practically effi-
cacious even if it is theoretically consistent and coherent.
In short, if psychological egoism is true, then we cannot do
what we ought.

16. See Sartre's *The Transcendence of the Ego,* and, in
particular, see pages 56-60.

17. My use of the jazz ensemble metaphor comes to me by way
of Wilkinson.

IMPORTANCE OF SITUATION

In the previous chapter, I insinuated that Ivan Karamazov's decree that anything is permissible if god does not exist is not a tenet of this existential freedom ethic. My discussion in the first and second chapter of its ideals and of why it does condemn, for example, oppression should make it clear an existential freedom ethicist does not share Ivan's view that everything is permissible--though she does agree that god does not exist. Even so, an objector might point out that I have failed thus far to offer any practical guidance for determining what is and is not permissible. Moreover, Sartre in his essay "The Humanism of Existential-ism" seems to embrace Ivan's decree and to imply that an existential freedom ethicist's method of decision making is antinomian.[1] In response to these objections, I shall argue and demonstrate here that our method of decision making is not antinomian. I shall then illustrate an existential freedom ethicist's method by discussing the issues of lying, institutionalized punishment, environmental destruction, and assisted suicide.

General Characterization of the Existential Freedom Ethic's Method of Decision Making

In this section, I shall argue this existential freedom ethic represents a situation ethics similar to, yet distinct from, the ethics Joseph Fletcher proposes in *Situation*

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Ethics. And to keep in view the differences between the two, I shall call our situation ethics 'situationalism' and use Fletcher's term, 'situationism', to refer to his version of a situation ethics.

Fletcher characterizes a situation ethics as a method of decision making between the extremes of legalism and antinomianism. The situation ethicist's method makes use of *prima facie* guidelines, whereas the legalist's method relies on rules or principles. At the other extreme is the antinomian approach, which shuns all rules, *prima facie* guidelines **and** prior experience. For this reason Fletcher refers to the antinomian approach as "unprincipled". By 'unprincipled', Fletcher intends not only a neutral connotation, but also the negative connotation of unscrupulousness, arbitrariness, and capriciousness. Between these two extreme approaches to decision making is situation ethics, which is not a slave to rules nor is it an anarchist of the moment. This third approach is responsive to the particulars of a situation requiring a decision, yet makes use of ethical guidelines or ideals, which are to be treated as "illuminators" and not as directives.

I contend the method of an existential freedom ethicist is situationalist. A freedom ethicist's method is not legalist or antinomian, because she employs her ideal that freedom become the world's foundation as a goal to be achieved and she recognizes that the achievement of this goal is dependent upon determining the appropriate means for

each situation.   This means as Beauvoir rightly says that

> no behavior is ever authorized to begin with, and one
> of the concrete consequences of existentialist ethics
> is the rejection of all the previous justifications
> which might be drawn from the civilization, the age,
> and the culture; it is the rejection of every principle
> of authority. (1948, p.142)

In other words, an existential freedom ethicist would not
hold, for example, that lying is wrong because society holds
it to be wrong or because a god commands it to be wrong.
However, our rejection of authority does not entail an
acceptance of capriciousness or arbitrariness in decision
making, since our aim is to bring about freedom as the
world's foundation.

Yet I admit our situationalism differs from the
Fletcher's situationism. Of his version of a situation
ethics, Fletcher says,

> The situationist enters into every decision-making
> situation fully armed with the ethical maxims of his
> community and heritage, and he treats them with respect
> as illuminators of his problems. Just the same he is
> prepared in any situation to compromise them or set
> them aside in the situation if love seems better served
> by doing so. (1966, p. 26)

Unlike Fletcher's situationism, our situationalism does not
begin with ready-made maxims of the tradition, culture or
community, nor does it take Christian love as the absolute.
Given the role ethical **maxims** play in Fletcher's situation-
ism, it seems his situation ethic is fundamentally a deonto-
logical ethic. Our situationalism, however, is goal-based
and the achievement of the goal is necessarily dependent
upon and responsive to one's situation. This difference
suggests to me that the existential freedom ethicist's

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method is more truly a situation ethics than is Fletcher's situationism, because his situationism is covertly legalist.

In any case, Fletcher contends an existential freedom ethicist's method must necessarily be antinomian. Despite his acknowledgment that Beauvoir's characterization of an existentialist ethic is not explicitly antinomian, Fletcher maintains it must be.

> She [Beauvoir] shrinks from a candid antinomianism. But the plain fact is that her ontology--her idea of basic reality is, like Sartre's, one of radical discontinuity, so that there can be no connective tissue between one situation or moment of experience and another. There is no fabric of life, hence no basis for generalizing moral principles or laws. Every situation has its own particularity! (1966, p. 25).

But what is it about our ontology and characterization of reality that allows Fletcher to come to such a conclusion? Fletcher says that our conception of reality is one of "radical discontinuity". But this is not so.

Fletcher has either ignored or misunderstood the significance of the interplay of facticity and transcendence whereby one creates and discovers a world. With the threads of facticity and transcendence one weaves the fabric of one's existence and world. Granted the fabric of the world does not exist before humans exist, since for us existence precedes essence. Moreover, since humans are the creators of the world, humans are responsible for the continuity or discontinuity in it. In addition, the interplay of facticity and transcendence constitute one's "situation". I use 'situation' here in its technical and Sartrean sense. The significance of Sartre's notion of situation has direct

bearing on the issue of continuity in human life. One's
situation connotes continuity in life, because one's situa-
tion is necessarily temporal. One's situation is not only
the present, but also the past and the future. Through
transcendence of the present, one projects a future and in
so doing reaches back to the past by illuminating and making
use of one's facticity in order to bring about one's future.
Therefore, for us, situation connotes continuity in life,
not radical discontinuity. Contrary then to Fletcher's
belief that this freedom ethic must be antinomian, our
godless ontology does not preclude meaning and continuity in
human life. It only precludes that meaning and value may
pre-exist human life.

I have contended that our situationalism is more truly
a situation ethic than is Fletcher's situationism, since our
situationalism is not, as is Fletcher's situationism, co-
vertly legalistic. Yet, this difference might raise con-
cerns about the form of relativism entailed by our situa-
tionalism. Of his own method Fletcher says, "In our attempt
to be situational, . . we can pin another label on our
method. It is relativistic." (1966, P. 43). However,

> To be relative, of course, means to be relative to
> something. To be "absolutely relative". . . is to be
> inchoate, random, unpredictable, unjudgeable, meaning-
> less, amoral--rather in the antinomian mode. There
> must be an absolute or norm of some kind if there is to
> be any true relativity. This is the central fact in
> the normative relativism of a situation ethic . . . .
> In Christian situationism the ultimate criterion is, .
> . "agapeic love." It relativizes the absolute, it does
> not absolutize the relative! (1966, pp. 44-45).

Thus, Fletcher holds that his own situation ethic is not

perniciously relativistic; yet, since he holds that an existential freedom ethicist's method is antinomian, he also holds it is perniciously relativistic. But our freedom ethic is no more "absolutely" relativistic than is Aristotle's ethic. I grant that the end sought in our freedom ethic is not conceived of as a given telos, but the end sought, when concretely expressed, is relativist in the sense that its particular content will be relative to one's situation. This acknowledgment, however, does not entail a pernicious ethical relativism any more than Aristotle's ethic--which holds the expression of moral virtue is relative to a person's particular situation--entails a pernicious ethical relativism.

In overview, consider the following passage from Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity*:

> Ethics does not furnish recipes any more than do science and art. One can merely propose methods. . . . one may say that in the case where the content of action falsifies its meaning, one must modify not the meaning, which is here willed absolutely, but the content itself; however, it is impossible to determine this relationship between meaning and content abstractly and universally: there must be a trial and decision in each case. But likewise just as the physicist finds it profitable to reflect on the conditions of scientific invention and the artist on those of artistic creation without expecting ready-made solutions to come from these reflections, it is useful for the man of action to find out under what conditions his undertakings are valid. (1948, p. 134)

Note that the method Beauvoir describes is responsive to the situation, since she enjoins us to obtain a harmony between the end sought and the means used to attain the end. This method is not arbitrary, since transcendence and facticity,

intention and content, and end and means are internally
related. Means cannot be treated separately from one's
chosen end. This means right action is that by which the
realized end is consonant with the projected ideal of this
freedom ethic. And though this freedom ethic refuses to
treat ready-made principles from tradition as authoritative,
an existential freedom ethicist does not create something
from nothing. She acts with and from her facticity and the
good at which she aims is to create a world founded on free-
dom. Overall then, as Beauvoir rightly suggests, the method
of decision making employed by an existential freedom ethi-
cist is no more "ruleless"--that is, it is no more capri-
cious or arbitrary--than is the method used by a scientist
or an artist.

Given this characterization of an existential freedom
ethic's method of decision making, it should be apparent
that situationalism is concerned with the consequences of an
act, since its method of decision making aims to have the
meaning (intended result) of an act coincide with the actual
results (consequences) of an act. Even so, it is not con-
cerned solely with the actual results of the act, since it
is also concerned with both the intended result (freedom as
the world's foundation is its fundamental goal) and with the
content of an act (the means employed to its goal). And
since an existential freedom ethic does not aim to promote
an aggregate freedom, its method of decision making is not
reducible to a cost/benefit analysis of what best maximizes

an aggregate good--that is, its method is not utilitarian; rather its method of decision making is a situationalism in which one aims to promote the concrete moral freedom of each individual.[2] And since the method of decision making is situational, no act is *a priori* good or bad. In short, our method of decision making is not Kantian or utilitarian.[3]

To substantiate my claims that our method of decision making is not antinomian, legalist, Kantian, or utilitarian, I shall illustrate our situationalist method by taking up the ethical issues of institutionalized punishment, lying, assisted suicide, and environmental destruction. Along the way, I shall suggest *prima facie* guidelines, which, for an existential freedom ethic, are proposals--not demands or commands--concerning what would constitute ethically per-missible action in particular situation types. I refer to these *prima facie* guidelines as proposals, because they are tentative, experientially and, thus, historically rooted, are meant to be discussed with other people, and are sugges-tions only.

In addition to making proposals concerning the ethical permissibility of institutionalized punishment, lying, assisted suicide, and environmental destruction, I shall discuss the antinomy of action, which is an ethical paradox peculiar to an existential freedom ethic that Beauvoir discusses at length in her ethics.[4] An antinomy of action arises for an existential freedom ethicist in contexts of oppression, because in these contexts the existential

freedom ethicist more often than not is unable to will the oppressor morally free though one of her ideals is to will all people morally free.[5]

The Issue of Institutionalized Punishment

What would be the existential freedom ethicists' justification of institutionalized punishment--that is, if any is possible? For starters, if we could give a justification, it would not be deterrence-based, since this justification uses the person who is being punished as a mere means.[6] Nor can we *a priori* appeal to a retributive justification, since we cannot claim irrespective of a person's situation that a person who breaks a law must be punished.

Another question is: "What would constitute a crime according to a freedom ethic?" For an existential freedom ethic only those actions that explicitly and intentionally run counter to promoting freedom as the world's foundation would constitute *prima facie* grounds for interfering with another person's freedom. Consequently, rape, murder and oppression would constitute *prima facie* grounds for interfering with a person's expression of his or her freedom, because a person who rapes, murderers, or oppresses another person treats that person merely as a means.[7] When treating another person as a mere means or merely as a means, the rapist, murderer or oppressor reduces his victim to her facticity and thereby does violence to her and, thus, to her freedom.

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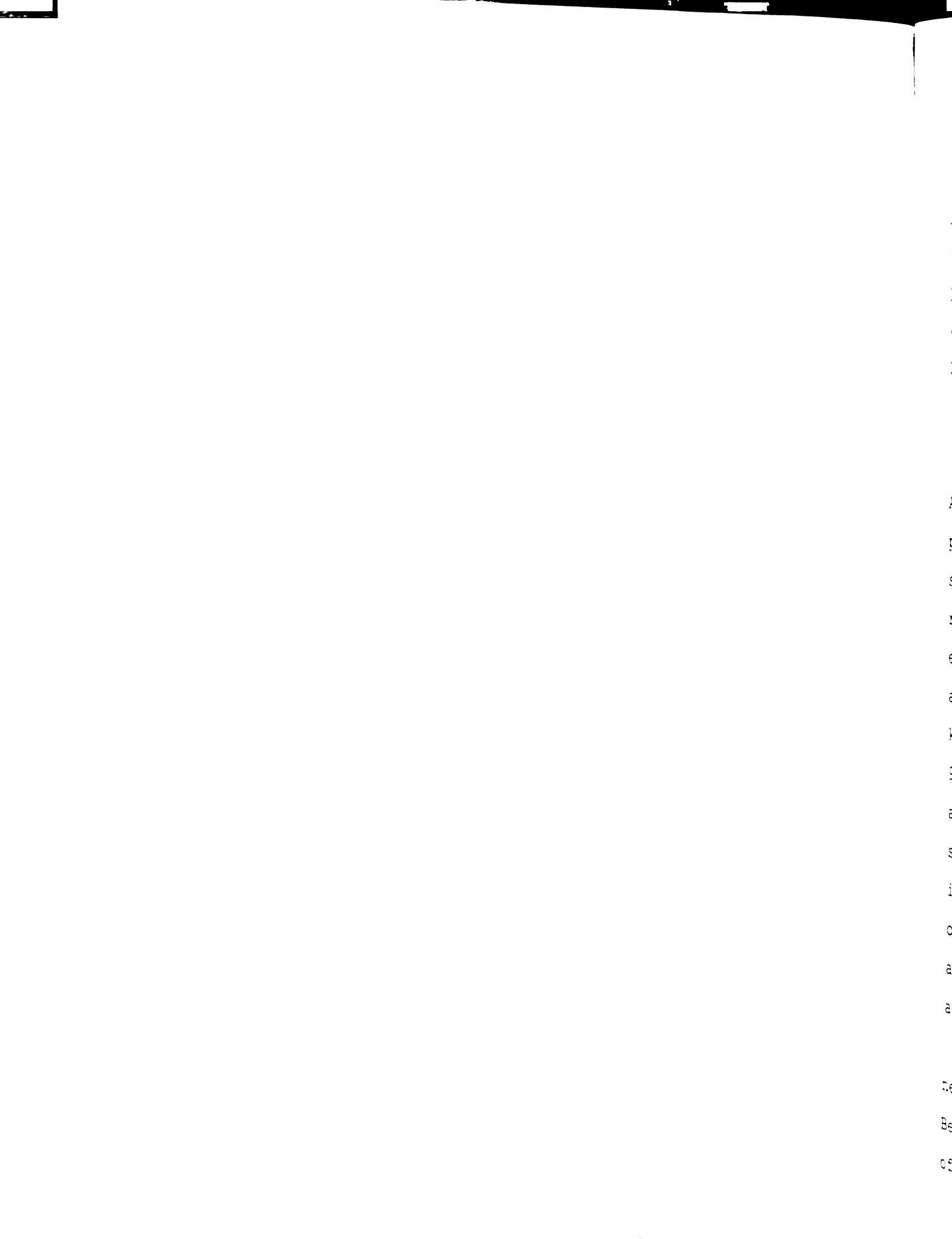
But since an existential freedom ethic cannot appeal to a deterrence justification of punishment and cannot appeal *a priori* to a retributive defense of punishment, it is unclear whether a person who rapes, murders, or oppresses another person could be justifiably punished. And punishment in and of itself is, after all, also violence. On the other hand, Beauvoir suggests,

> We have to respect freedom only when it is intended for freedom, not when it strays, flees itself, and resigns itself. A freedom which is interested only in denying freedom must be denied. (1948, pp. 90-91)

And since a person who rapes, murders, or oppresses another person does violence to his victim and her freedom, it might seem we are justified in denying the freedom of the one who rapes, murders or oppresses. So it seems imprisonment, for example, might be justified; however, Beauvoir also says, "I am oppressed if I am thrown into prison, but not if I am kept from throwing my neighbor into prison." (1948, pp. 90-91) So it seems imprisonment would not be legitimized by an existential freedom ethic. All things considered, we seem to have, then, an antinomy of action with regard to institutionalized punishment; because by incarcerating an oppressor, rapist or murder, we seem to be oppressing them and thus there seems to be no moral difference between our action and the oppressor's, rapist's or murder's action.

To see the way through this antinomy, I think what is needed first is a clarification of the senses of 'freedom'. Beauvoir's initial description is of being-free in the mode of alienated freedom turned into oppressive freedom;

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therefore, it is being-free in the mode of oppressive free-
dom with which we can interfere. But is throwing someone
into prison also an act of being-free in the mode of oppres-
sive freedom? It depends. It depends on what prison condi-
tions are like. It depends on why the person is imprisoned.
It depends, because the other fundamental ideal of our ethic
is that one will oneself and other people morally free.[8]

First, because our current system of justice does not
allow a person found guilty of a crime any say in how he or
she should be treated, our current system of justice does
not will the moral freedom of the person found guilty of a
crime. It does not because it does not treat the guilty
person as an end to same extent that it treats this person
as a means.[9] Second, our current prison system does not aim
to promote the moral freedom of the inmates, since inmates
are, in fact, treated as non-persons and often leave prison
with the attitude that oppression is the way of the world.
As a consequence, many for whom rape or murder might have
been a once-in-a-lifetime act of violence, become serial
rapists or serial murderers. So imprisonment as it is
currently practiced is oppressive and often, in fact, en-
courages people to play out their being-free in the mode of
oppressive freedom. What this means is that the way in
which our prisons are set up does amount to oppression and,
therefore, the prison system must be changed or abolished.

But that is not all that must be done if incarcer-
ation is to be morally justifiable. The judicial system

will need to treat each person found guilty of a crime of violence individually. It will need to try to establish why the accused did what he or she did. It thereby treats the individual as an end to the same extent that it treats him or her as a means. And it should allow the guilty party to have some say in how he or she should be treated. It thereby treats the individual as a means to the same extent that it treats him or her as an end. And if the judicial system treats the guilty party as an end to the same extent that it treats him or her as a means and treats the guilty party as a means to the same extent that it treats him or her as an end, it is showing respect for the person's concrete being-free, as well as encouraging that person's moral freedom.

Given what has been said, it seems to me incarceration would be justifiable only if it is to prevent a person from committing future crimes of violence. In this case the aim of incarceration is not to punish or to harm the oppressor, murderer, or rapist, rather it is to prevent such people from harming other people. And since the aim is to prevent such people from harming other people, the purpose of incarceration, in the long run, is to "rehabilitate" such people so that they can re-enter society. Given that rehabilitation is the aim of incarceration and not punishment, we can get an idea of how our prison systems should be changed. They will need to be made more hospitable. For example, rather than guards patrolling the cell blocks, humanistic psychologists or psychiatrists will make the rounds.

I submit that prevention coupled with a humanistic and rehabilitation oriented prison system does not give rise to the antinomy of action under discussion, because the prevention justification of incarceration coupled with a non-punitive prison system does not reduce the person incarcerated to his or her facticity; however, it does take into account that person's facticity. It takes into account that person's facticity, because it recognizes the oppressor's freedom as what it is: oppressive and intentionally so. But by incarcerating an oppressor within an hospitable environment, the oppressor's oppressive freedom is curtailed while fostering the oppressor's transcendence of his or her oppressive freedom. In short, incarceration under these conditions is not tantamount to violence, since the aim is not punishment.

In summary, I propose imprisonment is justifiable for an existential freedom ethic only from the standpoint of prevention and only when the prison system is hospitable. Incarceration, however, as it is currently practiced and justified amounts to oppression. As a consequence, the antimony of action arising from the issue of imprisonment is currently present, since it is both permissible and impermissible to incarcerate people who are unwilling to change their violent ways. Notice that this version of the antinomy arises due to the lack of appropriate means within our world and not from something intrinsic to an existential freedom ethic.[10] In other words, the antinomy of action

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concerning imprisonment is contingent, and since means and
ends are intertwined, if we will freedom as the world's
foundation, then we must will the means to achieving this
end. And since the means are not present within the world,
then creating those means is a secondary ideal to willing
freedom as the world's foundation. This means that we must
try to change our current prison system from a place of
punishment and oppression into a place of learning, growth,
and nurturance. The upshot: This antimony of action can be
resolved, but only through time and the re-making of the
world in terms compatible with moral freedom.

"But what is to be done in the meantime with violent
offenders? Should or shouldn't they be imprisoned?" In
other words, "Can the antimony of action with regard to
imprisonment be resolved in the short run or through a
single act?" The answer is no. All that this existential
freedom ethicist can propose is that the antimony of action
concerning incarceration be recognized and assumed. This
means the existential freedom ethicist will be saddened and
anguished if she promotes the incarceration of violent
offenders, because the means she employs to bring about
freedom as the world's foundation discolor the projected and
realized end. On the other hand, if the existential free-
dom ethicist maintains that no one should be imprisoned
until the prison system and judicial system fulfill the
requirements of an existential freedom ethic, she will be
saddened and anguished when violent offenders continue to do

violence against other people. So, in either case, the existential freedom ethicist will acknowledge and take responsibility for her dirty hands, because she either fails to promote the moral freedom of the person of violence or she fails to prevent the person of violence from oppressing another person. In any case, the existential freedom ethicist will be anguished, because her decision entails responsibilities and risks.[11]

The Issue of Lying

For a purely consequentialist moral theory like act utilitarianism, lying is not in and of itself either right or wrong. For example, an act utilitarian physician might lie to a patient about the patient's health. Realizing that the patient's days are numbered, but that the patient and the patient's family would be devastated by the news, the act utilitarian physician decides not to reveal the gravity of the situation. But what would the physician do if she were an existential freedom ethicist? She doesn't have in her "black bag" either the Kantian rule that she must never lie or the utilitarian calculator programmed to determine what will best promote the aggregate happiness. Yet, she wills to promote the moral freedom of all people, and through such willing, her acts will emanate from generosity. So, she might ask, "Would lying promote the patient's moral freedom?"

At first glance, it seems that lying would not, because

the lie would undercut the patient's ability to act in accord with his being-free. To know something about another person, but not to tell them, is to allow the person to live in a "fake" world. In this case, the patient who is not told about his terminal illness cannot fully engage his being-free, for he is not fully aware of the facticity of his being-free, which is part of the means by which he can achieve a projected end; therefore, he cannot knowingly employ his transcendence. This means his final days are reduced to a fate. So it would seem the existentialist physician would tell her patient the truth in order to promote the reign of concrete moral freedoms.

On the other hand, telling her patient the truth might in fact interfere with her patient's actualization of his transcendence of freedom. Knowing his days are limited, the patient might very well choose to live the remainder of his days under the full weight of his facticity. If the existentialist physician suspects this to be a likely possibility, she would not be promoting the moral freedom of her patient by thoughtlessly and coolly announcing the simple truth. And if she were to act in this manner, her so-called gift of the truth is tantamount to a false gift. In short, her manner of truth-telling would be ungenerous.

But since the existential physician's ultimate aim will be to give her patient the truth, the existential physician might decide to prepare her patient for the truth. By preparing the patient for the truth, the existential physician

acts generously not callously. In this case, she will take into account the temporal dimension of human freedom when she reveals the truth about the patient's condition. For example, she will discuss possible modes of treatment, but will indicate they are at best a long shot. She will ask her patient to set up an appointment with her at a time in the near future and will ask him, in the meantime, to discuss with friends and family what course of treatment, if any, is wanted.

Given my explanation as to why the existentialist physician will ultimately reveal the truth to her patient, does it follow that for this freedom ethic lying will in fact never be ethically permissible? Will it turn out that it entails the hypothetical imperative that if you promote moral freedom, then you must, in time, tell the truth? Not quite, for I think it is more accurate to think of this as a proposal. The proposal is that telling other people the truth promotes the ideals of a freedom ethic, because others require the truth in order that they might effectively act in accord with their own situated being-free.

Let us now look at this proposal by considering instances when lying might in fact be the appropriate means for promoting the ideals of this existential freedom ethic.

Let's first consider the classic example of calling into question a deontologist's position on lying. The case I am referring to is whether one must tell the Nazi the truth about where one's Jewish friend is hiding. According

to Kantian ethics one is obligated to tell the truth. But what if one is an existential freedom ethicist?

The existential freedom ethicist--let's call her Hannah--realizes that the goal of the Nazi is against the ideals of a freedom ethic, because the Nazi aims to destroy or to otherwise oppress people. The Nazi's goal is to make unfreedom the world's foundation. So, if Hannah did know where her friend was and if she told the Nazi where her friend was, she would be an accomplice to the Nazi's alienated and oppressive freedom. It follows that in this case by telling the truth Hannah would not be promoting freedom as the world's foundation and she would not be willing the moral freedom of other people. So it seems she should not tell the Nazi the truth.

On the other hand, Sartre suggests in the *Notebooks* that lying runs counter to the ideals of an existential freedom ethic. He says,

> freedoms are normally side by side, each pulsation of the one being felt by the other, each one being a situation for the other. A lie unglues or sections off freedoms from each other. One of the two is butting up against the void. A lie is a withdrawal. I deliberately transform a freedom into a thing. At the same time, I take away every concrete signification from the other's words and gestures. If my fellows are in on the game, the deceived person is like the blindfolded player in blind man's bluff. I see him but he doesn't see me: perpetually transcended. (1992a, p. 200)

In my words, Sartre is saying that by lying to another person, we reduce him or her to facticity. And since one of the ideals of an existential freedom ethic is that we will all people as both facticity and transcendence, it seems I

ought to tell the Nazi the truth, for to do otherwise seems
to reduce him to his facticity.[12]

Here, with the Nazi example, we encounter an apparent
antinomy of action. Hannah should not tell the Nazi the
truth, since the Nazi is a perpetrator of violence; yet, by
lying to the Nazi, she seems to be reducing the Nazi to his
facticity, which does violence to his being-free. Hannah
could try to surmount this apparent antinomy of action by
getting the Nazi to change his Nazi ways. But what if this
does not work or is not advisable? Beauvoir suggests,

> In order for a liberating action to be a thoroughly
> moral action, it would have to be achieved through the
> conversion of the oppressors. (1948, pp. 96)

Therefore, it seems Hannah cannot surmount this antinomy if
the oppressor does not agree to change his oppressive ways.
Even so Hannah has a decision to make.

Hannah's choices are either to be the Nazi's accomplice
or to be the oppressed person's protector. As a result, she
believes that lying to the Nazi will best bring about free-
dom as the world's foundation. After all, the Nazi's mode
of being-free is an oppressive freedom. And by acknowledg-
ing that the Nazi's mode of being-free is an oppressive
alienated freedom, Hannah realizes there really isn't an
antinomy of action here. First, the only reason for Hannah
to believe lying in this case is morally impermissible would
be that she were implicitly appealing to a categorical
imperative. But as I argued in the first chapter, an exis-
tential freedom ethic's ideals are hypothetical, not

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categorical, imperatives. Second, by lying to the Nazi, she

is not reducing the Nazi to his facticity, since she is not

killing the Nazi or preventing the Nazi from transcending

his Nazi ways.

When lying appears to be what the situation requires,

we might wonder what content the lie should have? Hannah,

our existential freedom protector of the oppressed, could

lie by saying she does not know where her friend is, or she

could lie by telling the Nazi a place where she believes her

friend is not. But could these options in their own way run

counter to accomplishing freedom as the world's foundation?

Perhaps. For example, if Hannah employs the second option,

an option Sartre formally considers in his short story "The

Wall", Hannah risks being the Nazi's unwitting accomplice;

for her friend might have moved to the very place where

Hannah believes she is not.[13] This lie could, then, com-

promise the safety of the person Hannah is trying to protect

and, thus, could undermine Hannah's ideal to bring about

freedom as the world's foundation.

So what about the other option? It is a simple lie,

since it does not endanger Hannah's friend. But does this

lie promote freedom as the world's foundation? In a way it

does not. By lying under these circumstances, Hannah might,

in a way, be giving in to the Nazi's goals, because she

might be being an accomplice to the untruth and unfreedom of

the Nazi regime. She might be giving into fear. On the

other hand she might not be. So what could Hannah do that

would not involve her in complicity with the Nazi? She

could say that she does know where her friend is, but that

she is not going to tell the Nazi. Or she could say noth-

ing. Or she could turn the Nazi's question into a ques-

tion. She could ask why the Nazi wants to know. She could

ask why the Nazi is a Nazi. In other words, there are many

possibilities other than the simple truth or the bald lie.

Of all these possibilities, other than telling the truth,

not one is necessarily better than another--at least at this

level of abstraction. Even so, Hannah must choose and must

take responsibility for possible failure.[14]

There are situations, then, in which lying would pro-

mote the ideals of an existential freedom ethic. And that a

lie, as Sartre says, "unglues freedoms" is precisely what

the existential freedom ethicist wants to do when she en-

counters the demands of an oppressor. She wants to "unglue"

the oppressor's world, so she can create a world that is

held together through freedom. And in opposition to what

Sartre implies about lying, I propose that if one wills

freedom as the world's foundation, then one should speak

honestly unless doing so involves the existential freedom

ethicist in maintaining the oppressor's world.

But does this proposal mean that one should always lie

to an oppressor? So it would seem. Yet this proposal would

constitute reducing the oppressor to his facticity, because,

if we were always to lie to an oppressor, we would not be

acknowledging that the oppressor might and can transcend his

facticity. Consequently, I believe my proposal needs to be revised. I propose that if one wills freedom as the world's foundation, then one should speak honestly unless one is in a situation of imminent violence. This was the situation Hannah found herself in and is similar to a situation Sartre describes in his play "The Respectful Prostitute".[15]

In this play, a black man who is hiding from a lynch mob asks Lizzie (whom he and another black man, according to the lynch mob, raped) to hide him. She has already been asked by the perpetrators of the lynching to lie, to sign a paper saying she had in fact been raped by him and his friend--which she had not--and saying this was why a white man had killed the other black man.[16] She does not want to lie and tells them she won't, but waffles throughout the play. However, when the black man asks to be hidden and has the lynch mob on his heels, she tells him to go into the bathroom and she gives him a gun. Her "paramour" arrives, who is one of the chief instigators of the lynching, and hears someone in the bathroom. He demands to know who it is. She first denies that anyone is in there. (This is a simple lie.) But as he advances toward the door, she tells him that it is a "paying" client unlike himself. Did Lizzie do wrong by lying in order to protect the black man? No, the lie, which ends up not being a bald lie, takes place in a situation of imminent violence. On the supposition that Lizzie wills the moral freedom of all people, the lie in this context "unglues" the oppressor's world and creates a

gap for creating a world founded on freedom.

In summary, it seems to me that the times in which lying would promote freedom as the world's foundation and would not give rise to an antinomy of action are when violence against oneself or another person is imminent; however, it seems that in non-violent situations telling an oppressor a lie would not promote the ideals of a freedom ethic. Therefore, my revised proposal is that if one wills freedom as the world's foundation, then one should tell the truth unless telling the truth would involve oneself as an accomplice to another person's alienated and oppressive freedom. Yet, as I have shown, the truth is not necessarily a simple truth. For example, the existentialist physician will not simply tell the patient her prognosis and say good-bye. The existentialist physician will take time to talk with the patient, will answer questions, and will be available for help. When one wills the moral freedom of other people and becomes concretely involved in another person's life, one must take into account the temporal dimension of human freedom. If an existential freedom ethicist were to do otherwise, she would be willing only abstractly another person's freedom and, hence, would not be the promoting that person's moral freedom.

The Issue of Assisted Suicide

The next issue I want to discuss is that of assisted suicide. The existential freedom ethicist does not rule out

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assisting another to take his or her life. However, she
will not decide the permissibility of such an action based
upon an aggregate good or a "happiness" factor; instead she
will decide whether such an action promotes the suicidal
person's moral freedom. So the question for the existential
freedom ethicist, let's call her Jill, is whether helping
another to die would in fact promote that person's moral
freedom. If willing the moral freedom of other people were
merely a matter of helping them do whatever they want to do,
then one would help with no questions asked. But willing
the moral freedom of other people is not so simple. For
example, the person who is being asked for assistance needs
to find out why this person wants to take his or her own
life. The person's reason needs to be known, so that the
person being appealed to for help can determine whether the
reason stems from moral freedom or from alienated freedom.
If the person's reasons stem from alienated freedom, then
Jill would not help the person because if she did she would
be an accomplice to the other's alienated freedom.

At first glance it might seem that the reason to kill
oneself could only stem from alienated freedom, since the
person who wants to kill himself or herself seems to be
fleeing, rather than assuming, her or his being-free. For
examples, the person who wants to die because of a "broken"
heart or the person who wants to die because he falls into
financial ruin is refusing to transcend her or his situa-
tion. Both people want to die so that they can flee their

facticity. By helping such people kill themselves, Jill
would not be promoting their moral freedom; rather she would
be an accomplice to their alienated freedom. So, rather
than help such a person commit suicide, Jill, by discussing
future possibilities, suggests all is not lost.

But what happens if the person's reason for wanting to
die seems to stem from moral freedom? (In a moment I shall
discuss what reasons might stem from moral freedom.) Should
Jill say, "Okay, what's your poison?" Perhaps if she is
trying to introduce some levity into the situation. But
Jill still doesn't seriously jump in and set up a date for
the person's demise. Time is needed. Just as the existen-
tialist physician might decide to tell the truth to her
terminally ill patient over a period of time, so too will
Jill, the existentialist who considers helping another take
his or her life, take time to make certain the reason for
wanting to die does not stem from alienated freedom. Jill
would discuss future possibilities, as well as the irrevoca-
bility and finality of such an act. I am not suggesting
that the existentialist freedom ethicist would be moralis-
tic; she would be understanding, but determined to find out
the motivation through discussion over time. And given that
Jill does not believe in life after death, heaven or hell,
she realizes that with death the freedom of the dead person
is no longer an issue. Consequently, she sees that in many
cases she would not be promoting moral freedom by helping
another to take his or her life, for she would be helping

another to flee permanently his or her being-free.

Jill also needs to take into account her own reasons for helping another take her or his life, because Jill needs to make certain her reasons stem from moral, not alienated, freedom. A person's reasons for doing something when in the mode of alienated freedom are, as you recall, to be or to have; whereas, a person's reason for doing something when in the mode of moral freedom is a giving that dovetails with doing. Therefore, if Jill does decide to help a person take his or her life, she will help for the sake of helping and not, for example, for the sake of an egoistic interest or personal gain. This is what is ethically suspect about someone like Jack Kevorkian, for he seems to enjoy the celebrity status that has come along with his deadly deeds.

From what I have said thus far, does it follow that a freedom ethic always rules out the permissibility of assist-ed suicide? No, but it does suggest to me the proposal that in some cases helping a person kill himself or herself would go against the ideal that one will oneself and other people morally free.

Let us now consider instances when assisting a person to kill himself or herself might promote that person's moral freedom. Such instances might be: 1. A terminally ill person whose pain is unremitting and wants to die. 2. A person being tortured who is concerned that she will tell her torturer what he wants to know so wants to die. 3. A person who has an illness that will eventuate in mental

incapacitation and who wants to die before being reduced by her disease to her facticity. 4. A person who in a lifeboat situation where there is not enough food for everyone to survive wants to die.

In two of the instances--the lifeboat situation and the torture situation--the person wants to die in order to help other people. In these instances, or instances like them, the person is really giving himself or herself as a gift to other people. So the person's reason stems from moral freedom, since the reason is nothing other than generosity. As a consequence, it would be permissible for Jill to assist in this suicide--that is, if help were needed and if Jill's reason also were based on generosity.

Even so, Jill will feel anguished if she assists in this suicide, because, while she is assisting this person in the promotion of moral freedom, she is also assisting this person to destroy her being-free.

These instances when generosity is the reason for wanting to commit suicide show that unending pain is not, for an existential freedom ethic, a necessary condition for the permissibility of assisted suicide. But let us now discuss whether unending pain, as in instance number one, is a permissible condition for assisting another die. In this instance the person wanting to die is terminally ill with unrelenting, unbearable pain. He wants to die now. And he appeals to Jill for help. Would helping him promote moral freedom? Perhaps.

If the pain is intolerable to the point that the dying person is nearly reduced to his facticity, because there is no way the alleviate the pain, then the reason to commit suicide might in fact arise from moral freedom. Suicide, in this case, might be the only means by which the terminally ill person could meaningfully transcend his situation. Therefore, Jill may help this person die, because doing so promotes his moral freedom. Yet, if she does help, she feels the weight of her action; since, by helping to promote his moral freedom, Jill is also assisting in the extinction of his very being as a freedom.

What of instance number three--the person wants to die due to the prognosis that the course of her disease will reduce her to her facticity--should Jill help? This instance of wanting to die is similar to instance number one. In both cases, the person wants to die, because dying seems to be the only means by which the person can meaningfully transcend his or her facticity. However, this case differs from the first case in that this person has not yet reached the point of being reduced to her facticity. This person is entangled in a dilemma not met in instance number one. On the one hand, for this person to take her life before she is reduced to her facticity might be an act of flight from her freedom. As long as her disease has not incapacitated her, there might be meaningful ways for her to transcend her facticity. On the other hand, once the disease has reduced her to her facticity, as in the case of advanced alzheimer's

disease, she would be unable to contemplate suicide, let alone, appeal to another for help. So, if this person were to want to die before being almost reduced to her facticity, she might be acting in the mode of moral freedom. In this case, Jill might help her.

In summary, I do not contend I have given an exhaustive list of instances when an existential freedom ethic would condone assisted suicide; however, I think the instances I have considered indicate several things about when it would be permissible. I propose that it is permissible when the suicide is an act of generosity or when the act of suicide is the only meaningful way for the person to transcend his or her facticity, because in these cases the suicide assistant would be helping the person to play out his or her being-free morally.

Note, however, that for an existential freedom ethic unending pain is not in and of itself a criterion for the permissibility of assisted suicide; rather the ability to transcend one's facticity in a meaningful manner is what is at issue. Secondly, note that all of these instances when assisted suicide would be permissible are instances of what Sartre refers to as limit situations. Limit situations are situations when someone's concrete future is nearly closed off. When a person, as in case one or three, is nearly reduced to her or his facticity, her or his ability to create a concrete future is practically nil. Here suicide presents itself as the only concrete possibility for

engaging one's being-free. Instances two and four involve limit situations as well. In these instances, the person decides to commit suicide in order that the other people in the situation may have a concrete future. This act of generosity takes place within a situation that is collectively limiting. The aim of this act of generosity is to change the limit situation into one in which the concrete future of others becomes a real possibility. Third, note that an instance of assisted suicide is permissible only when the instance of suicide is permissible. However, having pointed this out, I want to mention a concern I have. If a person decides to commit suicide and does not need the assistance of another person, yet asks for assistance, then Jill wonders why the person would appeal for help.[17] Perhaps the request for assistance is really a cry for help. This is another reason Jill takes ample time to talk with those appealing to her for help.

The Issue of Environmental Destruction

In this final section, I shall briefly discuss the issue of environmental destruction from a Kantian perspective and from an act utilitarian perspective. Then I shall discuss the existential freedom ethicist's approach to the issue.

Since for Kantians the only thing that is good in and of itself is a good will and since one is obligated to treat only persons as ends and never as mere means, a Kantian

would have no direct obligation to protect the environment. Furthermore, since Kantians are not concerned with the unintended consequences of an act, e.g., counter-interests, such unintended consequences as destroying the environment are ethically neutral as long as no one is treated directly as a mere means. For example, destruction of the rainforest by the fast food industry, which levels the rainforest in order to raise cattle as cheaply as possible in order to supply its customers with inexpensive burgers and, of course, to make a larger profit than it would if the cattle were raised elsewhere, is of no ethical concern as long as the indigenous people are not treated directly as a mere means. My main point is environmental destruction is not in and of itself an ethical issue for a Kantian, since he is ethically blind with regard to the counter-finalities or counter-interests produced by his actions.

The utilitarian, however, is concerned with the consequences of his actions, so the issue of environmental destruction will have ethical significance for him. But whether destroying the environment is ethically permissible is a matter of "number crunching", since his good is an aggregate good. Taking an act utilitarian approach to the rainforest issue, I submit that an act utilitarian sympathetic with the concerns of business and industry would calculate his way to maximizing the aggregate happiness by destroying the rainforest. On the other hand, I submit that an act utilitarian sympathetic with the concerns of environmentalists

and ecologists would calculate her way to maximizing the aggregate happiness by not destroying the rainforest. So whether destroying rainforests or protecting rainforests maximizes the aggregate happiness depends upon whose happiness one includes in one's calculations, depends upon the relative weights given to costs and benefits, and depends upon how far into the future one projects his or her cost/benefit analysis.

In short, while the Kantians peacefully slumber as the trees come crashing down, the utilitarians will be bickering well into the night about whether protecting the environment maximizes happiness. But what about the existential freedom ethicists? Would environmental destruction be an ethical issue for them?

Like the utilitarian, the existential freedom ethicist is concerned with the consequences of her actions, so she too would consider environmental issues as having ethical significance. However her good is not an aggregate good. And rather than "crunching the numbers" to determine when environmental destruction is impermissible, her determination of impermissibility is rooted in her ideals, which are not quantifiable and include willing herself and other people morally free. So, the question for the existential freedom ethicist, let's call her Rachel, is whether acts that create environmental problems undercut her ideals.

Let's consider now, from Rachel's perspective, the issue of the fast food industry's destruction of the

rainforest. First, the fast food industry's destruction of

the rainforest stems from alienated freedom, since the

destruction is based on an interest and not upon generosity.

Second, the fast food industry's interest has produced a

correlative counter-interest for much of the rainforest's

indigenous population. As you recall from Chapter Two, an

interest upheld by some produces a correlative counter-

interest for others. In addition, the significance of the

counter-interest correlative to the interest upheld is that

those upholding an interest oppress those for whom the

upheld interest is a fate. In the example under considera-

tion, the fast food industry's interest in raising beef as

cheaply as possible has created a correlative counter-

interest for the indigenous population of the rainforest

being destroyed; therefore, the fast food industry's upheld

interest oppresses those for whom destruction of the rain-

forest is a fate. And since an ideal of this freedom ethic

is the promotion of a non-oppressive society, destruction of

the rainforest by the fast food industry is condemned by our

ethicist Rachel.[18] And even though the destruction of

rainforests may become, if it is not in fact already a fate

for those of us living outside of the rainforest--that is,

if scientists are correct about the connection between the

green house effect and mass destruction of forests--we need

not make appeals based upon this possibility, since the

existing indigenous population's counter-interest is suffi-

cient for condemning the fast food industry's destruction of

rainforests.

So whether the way in which one uses and interacts with the environment leads to counter-interests is the ground from which an existential freedom ethic sprouts environmentalism. In other words, if one wills freedom as the foundation of the world, then one will will the end of existing counter-interests and the prevention of future ones. For example, not only does Rachel condemn the destruction of the rainforests by business and industry, she would also condemn air, water, and land pollution by business and industry; however, she would not necessarily condemn every instrumental use of the environment, e.g., use of trees for furniture, use of ores for the construction of bridges, use of silicon for the manufacture of computer chips, since an instrumental use of the environment need not necessarily create counter-interests. It follows then that the kind of environmentalism promoted by an existential freedom ethic will be moderate, since extreme forms condemn all actions that alter the environment.

Up to this point, I have given no indication if the environmentalism promoted by an existential freedom ethic would protect endangered species, wild-life refuges, national and state parks and forests. At this point in my discussion, the only issue for Rachel is whether interests upheld create counter-interests. Therefore at this point, Rachel would only protect endangered species, or wild-life refuges, or national and state parks and forests if to do otherwise

produced a counter-interest. It seems to me that by not protecting endangered species, or wild-life refuges, or national and state forests and parks, one does not necessarily produce a counter-interest, because the demise of endangered species, or of wild-life refuges, or of national and state forests and parks does not necessarily entail others are oppressed. In any case, I shall now introduce a reason Rachel believes an existential freedom ethic would protect endangered species, wild-life refuges, and national and state forests and parks.

This reason concerns the difference between the way in which moral freedoms and alienated freedoms world being. Since alienated freedom's ideal of being is to have or to be, the way in which alienated freedoms unveil being will often be primarily instrumentally egoistic or purely egoistic. For example, the alienatedly free person whose worlding of being is instrumentally egoistic would not see, or would be indifferent to, the beauty of the forest or of the mountains, for she or he only sees wood and pulp, "precious" ores and concrete. And though the alienatedly free person whose unveiling of being is purely egoistic might see the beauty of a forest or a hillside, her unveiling is not generous, for she wants to be the only person who has the opportunity to unveil being. Therefore, an egoistic unveiling of being is at odds with moral freedom's unveiling of being, because moral freedom's unveiling of being is generous but alienated freedom's egoistic unveiling of being is

stingy. The alienatedly free person's egoistic unveiling of being is at odds with moral freedom's generous unveiling of being, since the morally free person's generous unveiling of being entails that being can be unveiled from a multitude of perspectives. Metaphorically put: the egoist wills a monochromatic unveiling of being whereas the generous person wills a polychromatic unveiling. Because the morally free person's unveiling of being is generous, the morally free person will try to promote the protection of endangered species, of wild-life refuges, and of state and national parks and forests, since by protecting these things she ensures that other people can also unveil these aspects of being. Moreover, by protecting endangered species, wildlife refuges, and state and national parks and forests, the morally free person is in effect giving these possible unveilings as gifts to other people; this the alienatedly free person whose unveilings are instrumentally egoistic or purely egoistic does not do.

Another environmental upshot of an existential freedom ethic is that by acting in the mode of moral freedom we are less likely, than when acting in the mode of alienated free-dom, to create environmental problems in the first place, because many of our environmental problems are the result of the perpetuation of interests, which, as I have argued, are upheld by alienated freedoms and produce counter-interests. But since moral freedoms transcend interests in the name of generosity, the morally free person will not create--that

is, at least not intentionally create--counter-interests.
In addition, since the morally free person creates relations
with other people based on gift-giving and not based on
interests or exigencies, the morally free person will try to
ensure that her gifts to other people are not harmful. And
if it turns out her gifts are harmful to other people, she
will take action to undercut the harmful effects of her
gifts. These points I made in the previous chapter. In
short, I believe that the alienatedly free person is more
likely to create counter-finalities harmful to the environ-
ment than is the morally free person.

My reasoning that an existential freedom ethic entails
environmentalism, though perhaps more limited in scope than
some environmentalists would want, might come as a surprise,
since Sartre showed little concern with ecologist's criti-
cisms and environmental concerns brought to his attention in
an interview in 1975.[19] For example consider the following
exchanges in that interview.

> R.   There is a problem that is very bothersome to the
> Americans (who have a solid naturalist tradition),
> namely, ecology. Have you reflected on it?
> **Sartre** No.

and

> P. . . . . what concerns these ecologists is that
> we are now in a situation in which we risk exhausting
> the resources of Nature, or of spoiling them com-
> pletely. In several years there will be no more air
> for us to breathe. . . .
> **Sartre** That is rather likely. In that case there
> are two alternatives: the first is that as resources
> have been exhausted, we will have invented something
> else, which could happen; the other is that we will
> disappear, which could also happen. I never thought
> that the human species was infinite. (1981, P.29)

Sartre here claims he has given no thought to environmental problems and shows no concerns about pollution. Yet some of Sartre's examples in his *Critique* of counter-finalities and counter-interests suggest an awareness of ecological problems and an implicit condemnation of their perpetuation.[20] In any case whether Sartre was an environmentalist is not really the issue. The issue is what in fact follows from the existential freedom ethic's ideals.

What I have proposed is that an existential freedom ethic does entail not polluting and wantonly destroying the environment. My reasoning is not based on an appeal to rights, to the principle of utility, to the environment's intrinsic value, or to a future-generations morality. My reasoning is based on the concrete and historical fact that environmental pollution and destruction falls short of respecting the concrete freedom of existing persons for whom environmental pollution and destruction is a fate.

Overview of Situationalism

In this chapter, I have described the situationalist method of the existential freedom ethic I am developing. I believe I have shown that our situationalism is not anti-nomian or covertly legalist, because, although our method of decision making does not imply that anything goes, it also does not entail applying rules to a situation; rather our method makes proposals for action. I have proposed that truthfulness promotes freedom as the world's foundation

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unless a person is being threatened with violence. I have proposed that incarceration promotes freedom as the world's foundation only when used to prevent violence and only when coupled with a non-punitive prison system. I have proposed that assisted suicide in some situations promotes freedom as the world's foundation. And I have proposed that wanton and careless destruction of the environment does not promote freedom as the world's foundation. These are proposals, because an existential freedom ethicist's knowledge is situated, arises with and from action, and is responsive to consequences. So I hope I have not given the impression I have laid down laws or that my characterization is complete.

I have illustrated how our situationalist method is to be employed and hope to have demonstrated that it is not based on the calculative type of reason employed by the utilitarian or on the legalistic type of reasoning employed by the Kantian. The method, as Beauvoir correctly says, is neither a recipe nor a decision procedure. Consequently, the type of reason employed by the existential freedom ethicist is more similar to Aristotle's conception of practical wisdom than it is to Kant's conception of practical reason or to utilitarianism's calculative reason.

I believe I have demonstrated that our situationalism is responsive to one's concrete situation, because lying, for example, is sometimes morally permissible. In addition, I have demonstrated that our method is experimental and inventive, unlike the method employed by the legalist or by

the Kantian, because our method yields proposals. As a result, the method employed by the existential freedom ethicist involves risks and entails that she learn from her mistakes. And just as an artist is an artist only by getting her "hands dirty", so too for the existential freedom ethicist. Neither the armchair ethicist, nor the would-be artist who merely dreams about the work she or he will produce, takes risks. Then again, neither one ever accomplishes anything. The existential freedom ethic is not armchair ethics; it is an ethics that requires thought, action, risks, and anguish.

NOTES

1.   See "The Humanism of Existentialism", pp. 40-41. Detmer
in *Freedom as a Value*, for example, interprets this passage
as a Sartrean endorsement of Ivan's decree. (1988, pp.
153-154) He also interprets Sartre's discussion of an
ethical dilemma confronted by one of Sartre's students as
betraying Sartre's antinomian ways. (1988, p. 156) See
"The Humanism of Existentialism", pp. 42-45.

2.   Please see page 54 for my discussion of why an existen-
tial freedom ethic's ideal is not the promotion of aggregate
freedom.

3.   Our method of decision making is not utilitarian nor is
it Kantian also because our understanding of the means-end
relationship differs from an utilitarian and a Kantian
understanding. See page 56, note 6.
     Also see page 47 for an explanation of why an existen-
tial freedom ethic is not Kantian and thus why our method of
decision making does not employ a categorical imperative.

4. See *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, pp. 96-156. My discussion
of the antinomies of action differs from Beauvoir's in two
different respects. While Beauvoir's approach to coming to
grips with an antinomy of action is covertly utilitarian, my
approach does not directly or indirectly appeal to a
cost/benefit analysis. Also unlike Beauvoir's belief that
antinomies of action are ubiquitous and a necessary outcome
of an existential freedom ethic, I believe otherwise. She
says,

     "Thus one finds himself in the presence of the paradox
     that no action can be generated for man without its
     being immediately generated against man. (1948, pp.
     99)

I hope to show that Beauvoir has failed to distinguish
between morally free action and alienatedly free oppressive
action.   While the latter type of action is generated for
some people and is concomitantly generated against other
people, the same is not true of the former. Thus, I do not
believe that morally free action entails the oppression of
the oppressor.

5. Setting up the antinomy of action Beauvoir says,

     . . . if the oppressor were aware of the demands
     of his own freedom, he himself should have to
     denounce oppression. But he is dishonest; in the
     name of the serious or of his passions, of his

will for power or of his appetites, he refuses to
give up his privileges. In order for liberating
action to be a thoroughly moral action, it would
have to be achieved through a   conversion of the
oppressors: there would then be a reconciliation
of all freedoms. . . . However by virtue of the
fact that the oppressors refuse to co-operate in
the affirmation of freedom, . . . others will here
have to be treated like things, with violence; the
sad fact of the separation of men will thereby be
confirmed. Thus, here is the oppressor oppressed
in turn; and the men who do violence to him in
their turn become masters, tyrants, and execution-
ers: in revolting, the oppressed are metamorphosed
into a blind force, a brutal fatality; the evil
which divides the world is carried out in their
own hearts. (1948, pp. 96-97)

In the text that follows, I shall discuss whether it is true
that "In order for liberating action to be *thoroughly* [my
emphasis] moral action, it would have to be achieved though
a conversion of oppressors". I shall suggest that while at
times this might be true, it is not always true.

6. See pp. 49-50 for my discussion of why one who wills
freedom as the world's foundation ought not treat other
people as a mere means. See also my discussion of the
"authentic" torturer objection, pp. 51-52.

7. Note I have excluded as punishable offenses the use and
selling of drugs, because drug use does not necessarily
entail treating oneself or another person as a mere thing.

8. See pp. 45-46 and pp. 49-50 for a discussion of why this
is an ideal of an existential freedom ethic.

9. See pp. 49-50 for the explanation of why someone who
wills freedom as the world's foundation ought to treat other
people as ends to the same extent that she or he treats them
as means and ought to treat them as means to the same extent
that she or he treats them as ends.

10. I point this out because Beauvoir seems to treat the
antinomy of action as intrinsic to an existential freedom
ethic. See notes 4 and 5 where I present Beauvoir's charac-
terization of the antimonies of action.

11. I want to mention that this antimony of action concern-
ing incarceration does not arise for either the Kantian or
the utilitarian. It cannot arise for the utilitarian,
because his good is an aggregate, not a concrete and indi-
vidualized, good. It cannot arise for the Kantian, because
he holds that punishment of a guilty party constitutes

showing respect for the guilty. One upshot of this is that both the Kantian and the utilitarian can sleep with a clear conscience that he has done the right thing when a guilty person is incarcerated. In other words, they will not experience anguish. Perhaps, many will see this as a virtue of both of these ethics; however, its seems to me that it amounts to bad faith. So, rather than seeing the awareness of an antinomy of action as a weakness or inconsistency in an existential freedom ethic, I believe it is one of its strengths. It is a strength, because it unveils the truth that the other two ethics hide. The apparent inconsistency --that is, the antinomy of action--arises from the concrete situation, because the current judicial practices and the current prison systems are not founded upon freedom. As a result, an existential freedom ethic is not an ethic of the *status quo.* I do not think the same can be said of either Kantianism or utilitarianism.

12. See pages 49-50 for my discussion of why if one wills freedom as the world's foundation, then one will will that other people be both facticity and transcendence.

13. The short story "The Wall" appears in *The Wall and Other Stories,* pp. 1-17. The story is told by Pablo Ibbieta, who is a revolutionary during the Spanish Civil War and who is taken prisoner. He is told that he will be killed in the morning by a firing squad if he does not tell where Gris, another revolutionary, is. Pablo believes he knows where Gris is, but says he does not know. Morning comes and Pablo is given another opportunity to tell where Gris is. In a final act of defiance, Pablo tells them Gris is in a cemetery, where Pablo believes Gris is not. What was to be only a farce turns out to be the truth; Gris is found at the cemetery and Pablo's life is saved.

14. That an existential freedom ethic is occasionally unable to give a determinate answer as to what one ought to do is held up as proving its untenability as a normative theory. It is held to be untenable, because this lack of a determinate answer and call to make a choice is interpreted as arbitrariness. Yet, given the situation under discussion, what would an act utilitarian do? Should an act utilitarian lie? Or should he tell the truth? The act utilitarian would ask himself what would promote aggregate happiness. Well, what would? It depends. It depends upon whose happiness the utilitarian takes into consideration and on what he takes to be happiness. Suppose this utilitarian has a large family and by lying he believes he would endanger himself and his family. So, he reasons that he will tell where his friend is, since, all things considered, the death of his friend is more than outweighed by the unhappiness that would otherwise fall upon his family. Yet, we can imagine other scenarios in which the act utilitarian would come to another conclusion, because he takes into

account more or fewer people whose happiness would be effected by his decision. So, even though the act utilitarian could "calculate" his way to an answer, he, too, is involved in making choices. But more often then not his choice really amounts to a rationalization of what he had already decided to do. The point I am trying to make is that the act utilitarian's apparent determination is often a disguised personal choice.

By contrast to the act utilitarian's arbitrariness, the freedom ethicist's apparent arbitrariness is really an affirmation of one's being-free, which is situated and limited, but creative within its own boundaries. Unlike act utilitarianism, in an existential freedom ethic the means to the intended end, as well as one's intention, do play a role in the her situationalist method. Furthermore, an existential freedom ethic's ideals are not as elusive as the utilitarian's aggregate good. For example, there is no reason to rule out the possibility of an act utilitarian being sympathetic with Nazism. In other words, a Nazi utilitarian is not an oxymoron, for aggregate happiness is conceivably compatible with the goals of Nazism. This is not a possibility for the person who embraces the ideals of an existential freedom ethic. As I argued previously, an "authentic" torturer is an oxymoron. For the situationalist method of an existential freedom ethic to reveal that there may exist more than one way to promoting its ideals does not entail that "any old way" is fine or that "any old" intention is compatible with its ideals. This has been misunderstood or ignored by many critics of existential freedom ethics.

15. See Sartre's *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, pp. 249-281.

16. I want to mention that the reasons given by the lynchers as to why Lizzie should lie and sign the paper are utilitarian. See *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, pp. 269-270.

17. Of course, we might wonder what would constitute needing help. A person might need help committing suicide, because he or she is physically constrained, because he or she does not have the means available to commit suicide, or because he or she wants the "moral" support of another. I have my doubts about whether this last example of needing help to commit suicide stems from moral freedom, since the person in this case may not really want to commit suicide. And since I have my doubts about this case, I have my doubts about Jack Kervorkian's assisted suicide exploits.

18. See pages 48-49 where I explain why if one wills freedom as the world's foundation, then one will will a non-oppressive world.

19. The pages of this interview that deal with ecology are pp. 28-30 in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*.

20. For examples, consider Sartre's discussion of counter-finality and deforestation, pp. 161-164 in the *Critique*, as well as his discussion of pollution and counter-interests, pp. 193-196 in the *Critique*.

CONCLUSION

My aim has been to construct an existential freedom ethic that is internally and externally consistent and coherent, is practically efficacious, is a viable alternative to deontological and consequentialist ethical theories, and differs in relevant respects from existential freedom ethics constructed by other people. I shall argue, here, that I have done what I set out to do.

My primary aims in the first chapter--that is, in addition to giving an initial characterization of an existential freedom ethic--were to demonstrate that this existential freedom ethic is *prima facie* consistent, coherent and practically efficacious. There I explained why the existential freedom ethicist can consistently maintain that, even when a person is oppressed, the only limits to human freedom is human freedom.[1] I explained why the existential freedom ethicist can coherently hold that, even though we are being-free, freedom is the end of all ethical action.[2] I explained why the existential freedom ethicist can condemn and adequately account for oppression, even though she maintains we are always being-free.[3] I explained why, even if alienated freedom constitutes something like a human nature, the existential freedom ethicist can without embarrassment rightly claim we can do what we ought.[4] And I explained how the existential freedom ethicist can rebut the existential paradox of conversion objection.[5]

Also in "Road to an Existential Freedom Ethic", I implicitly, if not explicitly, gave *prima facie* evidence that an existential freedom ethic is an alternative to deontological and consequentialist ethical theories. It is an alternative to deontological ethical theories, because it is based on ideals that are understood to be hypothetical imperatives, not categorical imperatives.[6] It is an alternative to consequentialist ethical theories and in particular to utilitarian ethical theories, because the good that it promotes is not an aggregate good.[7] Moreover, it is an alternative to both deontological and consequentialist ethical theories, because the projected ends of the existential freedom ethic, as well as the means to used to achieve the projected ends, are morally significant.[8]

Since my discussion in the first chapter presents *prima facie* reasons for believing this existential freedom ethic is consistent, coherent, and practically efficacious and for believing it is an alternative to deontological and consequentialist ethical theories, I submit that this existential freedom ethic is a viable alternative to both of these Western mainstream ethical theories. And since my description and illustration of the situationalism of this existential freedom ethic in the fourth chapter demonstrates that it represents an alternative to deontological and consequentialist methods of decision making, the existential freedom ethic is not only theoretically different from deontological and consequentialist ethical theories, it also

is practically different from them. And I believe this difference coupled with my discussion of "Freedoms' Legacy" and the "Importance of Generosity" supports my contention that the existential freedom ethic is a **viable** alternative to these two Western mainstream ethical theories, because in "Freedoms' Legacy" and the "Importance of Generosity" I bolster my *prima facie* reasons for believing that the existential freedom ethic is consistent, coherent, and practically efficacious.

In "Freedoms' Legacy", I showed that alienated freedom constitutes something like a human nature, thus that this existential freedom ethic's ideal to will oneself and other people morally free is not vacuous.[9] I showed that oppression is contingent and arises from alienated freedoms, thus how and that oppression can be overcome.[10] I showed that historically the only limit to human freedom is human freedom, thus that the existential freedom ethic is coherent.[11] I showed that historically conversion to moral freedom is possible, thus that the existential freedom ethic is practically efficacious.[12] And I showed that historically human freedoms are intertwined, thus why if one wills oneself morally free, one must will other people morally free, as well as will freedom as the world's foundation.[13]

My primary aims in the "Importance of Generosity" were to describe and explain more concretely than I had in the first chapter what it means to will oneself and other people morally free, what it means to will freedom as the world's

foundation, how it is theoretically and practically possible to will oneself and other people morally free, and how it is theoretically and practically possible to will freedom as the world's foundation. In this chapter, I developed the existential freedom ethicist's conception of generosity, argued that through generosity we can transcend oppressive relationships with other persons and create the world's foundation in terms of freedom, and argued that generosity is humanly possible. All in all, my discussion lends sup-port to my arguments that

1. The existential freedom ethic is practically effi-cacious, because generosity is humanly possible.[14]

2. The existential freedom ethic is internally coher-ent, because through generosity one can will oneself and other people morally free.[15]

3. The existential freedom ethic is internally coher-ent, because through generosity one can will freedom as the world's foundation.[16]

4. The existential freedom ethic is practically effi-cacious, because it offers practical advice concerning the words and deeds of a morally free person.[17]

5. The existential freedom ethic is externally coher-ent, because it can explain, yet condemn, oppression.[18]

My secondary aim in the "Importance of Generosity" was to show explicitly and implicitly that the existential free-dom ethic I have envisioned differs in relevant respects from the existential freedom ethics developed by other people. I believe I have shown explicitly that it differs in relevant respects from the existential freedom ethic put forth by Kerner.[19] I believe I have shown implicitly that it differs in relevant respects from the existential freedom

ethics put forth by other people, including Beauvoir's exis-
tential freedom ethic, because no other existential freedom
ethic puts generosity at the heart of an existential freedom
ethic. No other existential freedom ethic develops generos-
ity as the key to transcending oppressive relations with
other people.[20]

Throughout the body of this text, I believe I have, if
not explicitly shown, then at least alluded to, other ways
in which the existential freedom ethic I've developed dif-
fers in relevant respects from the existential freedom
ethics developed by others. No developer of an existential
freedom ethic makes a distinction between being-free and
modes of being-free. Granted Detmer, in *Freedom as a Value*,
makes a distinction between "ontological", and "practical",
freedom, but this distinction is not the same as the one I
have made.[21]   And granted Beauvoir implicitly suggests a
distinction of the sort I make, but she does not explicitly
flesh it out.[22]

Another relevant difference between the existential
freedom ethics developed by other people and the one I've
developed is that this existential freedom ethic is both
fleshed out and defended in light of Sartre's *Critique of
Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1.[23] Furthermore, other than
passages in Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity* that are
pregnant with suggestions concerning a method of decision
making peculiar to an existential freedom ethic, no other
existential freedom ethicist--that is, other than myself--

has developed and illustrated a method by which an existential freedom ethicist makes decisions.[24] Lastly, no other existential freedom ethic, except the one developed here, discusses the issue of environmental destruction.[25]

Although I believe I have just shown that I have done what I set out to do, I would like to mention, before closing, some of the possible shortcomings of the existential freedom ethic that I've developed and defended. First, while I present some of Sartre's arguments, which I buttress with my own, why our being is being-free, one could nonetheless claim that I have not adequately demonstrated that our being is being-free. The point is that people who are committed to a metaphysics of determinism will believe I have not adequately supported my starting point, which is a metaphysics of possibility. However, to adequately meet this objection, I would need to write a "Prolegomena" to the existential freedom ethic developed here. In such a "Prolegomena", I would deal directly with the metaphysical issue of free will and determinism. And that is what I would have done had I been interested in writing on that issue.

Second, although I believe my discussion of "Freedoms' Legacy" supports the consistency, coherency, and practical efficacy of this existential freedom ethic, it does so at a relatively high level of abstraction. As a result, I believe historical and cross-cultural case studies of oppression, of individuals who have been oppressed, and of individuals who have fought against oppression would be

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essential for determining the extent to which this existential freedom ethic is concretely supported by the specific facts of oppression and by the specific personal experiences of oppression.

Third, although I have given reasons why we ought to promote freedom as the world's foundation and why we ought to will ourselves and other people morally free, the arguments, ultimately, will have force only if coupled with conversion from alienated freedom to moral freedom. In other words, the significance of "ought" in this existential freedom ethic is that people choose, rather than be compelled to accept, the ideals of this ethic. For this reason, punishment and institutionalized incarceration pose ethical problems not met in deontological and consequentialist ethical theories.[26] Even so, I contend this is a good making feature of this ethical theory, because it makes us face the brutal facts of institutionalized incarceration as it is presently meted out.

Fourth, although I have proposed that this existential freedom ethic entails a modest environmental ethic, more radical environmental ethicists would think it is too modest if not purely and simply egocentric. This charge would come from the environmentalist camps that support a biocentric environmental ethic. For these environmental ethicists, nature taken as an organic whole is the proper ground from which a suitable ethic will sprout. If they are correct, then this existentialist freedom ethic, which is based on

Sartre's phenomenological ontology, is hopelessly rotten at its roots; therefore, this existential freedom ethic would not be able to sprout an adequate environmental ethic. On the other hand, if human beings are the origin of value, which is what this existential freedom ethic holds, then I submit that the environmental ethic it does sprout is adequate.

Fifth, although I have argued that this existential freedom ethic does not condemn us to despair, forlornness, or nausea, I have argued that an anguished joy is a mood correlative to the morally free person's mode of living.[27] Some people might view this as undesirable if not unlivable. After all, happiness should be a benefit of acting morally, not an anguished joy. My response to this concern, though perhaps too flippant, is--to paraphrase Nietzsche--only blockheads are concerned primarily with happiness.

Sixth, although I have illustrated this existential freedom ethic's method of decision making, I have admitted that situationalism entails risks, anguish, trial and error. Some people might view its situationalism as practically untenable. People don't want to experience anguish; they don't want to take risks. My response to this concern is that ethics is not solely about what people want; it is also about truth. And the truth is: Action is risky.

1. See pages 18-24.

2. See pages 28-31 for my response to the vacuity objection.

3. See pages 21-24.

4. See pages 40-45.

5. See pages 41-43 for my response to the paradox of conversion objection.

6. See pages 45-48.

7. See pages 52-54.

8. See pages 48-50 and notes 5 and 6 on page 57.

9. See pages 92-94.

10. See pages 68-81 and pages 86-91.

11. See pages 58-68 and pages 86-91.

12. See pages 85-91.

13. See pages 94-95.

14. See pages 142-144.

15. See pages 100-113.

16. See pages 120-128.

17. See pages 128-132 where I discuss the difference between an appeal and a demand. Also see pages 112-120 where I discuss the difference between comprehension and the look.

18. See pages 132-135.

19. See Chapter Three and, specifically, note 1 on page 145.

20. See page 3 where I give a list of other people's attempts to construct an existential freedom ethic.

21. See pages 24-28 where I discuss the import of being-free and Detmer's distinction between "ontological", and "practical" freedom.

22.   See pages 28-31 where I discuss Beauvoir's implicit distinction between being-free and its modes.

23.   See Chapter Two. Also see pages 8-9 of the Introduction where I discuss how my characterization of an existential freedom ethic differs from Anderson's characterization in *Sartre's Two Ethics*.

24.   See Chapter Four where I develop and illustrate the situationalist method of ethical decision making.

25.   See pages 180-189 where I discuss the issue of environmental destruction in light of the existential freedom ethic I've developed.

26.   See pages 158-164 where I discuss these ethical issues.

27.   See pages 134-141 for my discussion of emotions.

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