INGVAR JOHANSSON

Hochberg on Sartre

1. Hochberg and Sartre

Sartre the philosopher has many interpreters. Remarkably, when most of them are discussing his *Being and Nothingness* they omit a discussion of the book's ontological introduction: "The Pursuit of Being." Herbert Hochberg seems to be the only one to have noticed its real importance. Also, and equally originally, he relates it to problems discussed in early analytic philosophy. After having presented and tried to develop Hochberg's views, I will relate Sartre's introduction to contemporary analytic philosophy.

Early in his philosophical life Herbert Hochberg came to read Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Transcendence of the Ego* (Sartre 1957 [1936-7]) and *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1966 [1943]), and despite being an analytic philosopher he let these "wild birds" create a nest in his head. Now, after his retirement, he is working on a book on parts of Sartre's philosophy. As a young philosophy student in Gothenburg that had read some Sartre, I had the fortune and the pleasure to participate in a couple of seminars that Hochberg (visiting professor 1965-66 and 1970-71) held about Sartre in spring 66. All of them started with a good lecture-like introduction. However, I had to wait until 1999 in order to see something similar in print, namely "Consciousness and the Self" in (Hochberg 1999: ch. VIII).[1] Then, in 2005, came his paper "*Being* and *Nothingness*, *Nichtsein* and *Aussersein*, *Facts* and *Negation*: Meinongian Reflections in Sartre and Russell" (Hochberg 2005). The same views, but more briefly presented, can be found also in (Hochberg 2003), (Hochberg 2011a), and (Hochberg 2011b). His account of Sartre in these writings is what this paper is about; I have not read any draft of his Sartre book.

As already said, Hochberg's account of the early Sartre is highly original and interesting in two respects; the Sartre of *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (Sartre 1976 [1960]) is not mentioned at all. First, he stresses Sartre's introduction to *Being and Nothingness*, a chapter-long section called "The Pursuit of Being," which other presenters and commentators neglect more or less completely.[2] Second, he is as far as I know alone in having tried to relate Sartre's discussions of the act-object distinction, universals, and negations to similar discussions that took place in early analytic philosophy. I base these two remarks on knowledge only of the

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[1] The book is very much centered round problems dealt with by Ivar Segelberg (1914-87); at the time professor in theoretical philosophy in Gothenburg. Hochberg has, with the help of Susanne Ringström Hochberg, translated Segelberg's Swedish writings into English; see (Segelberg 1999).

[2] Sceptical readers can test my harsh judgment as follows. Take first a look at Herbert Spiegelberg's and Mary Warnock's presentations of Sartre in the 1960s, (Spiegelberg 1969) and (Warnock 1965), continue with The Library of Living Philosophers volume on Sartre (Schilpp 1981) and *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre* (Howells 1992), and end the test with the very recent (Catalano 2010), (Webber 2011), and Stanford's Online Encyclopedia (Flynn 2011).

Anglo-American discussion of Sartre, but many signs seem to indicate that they hold true on a larger international scale.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In Section 2 I present how I think *Being and Nothingness* ought to look like to careful readers who, despite their carefulness, skip the book's "Introduction." It then becomes, in the words of a recent commentator, "an extended reflection on the relation of the free human organic body to the world of things and peoples" (Catalano 2010: 70). I hope this presentation will make it possible for readers unfamiliar with the early Sartre to appreciate Hochberg's stress on the introduction. Then, in Section 3, I will present and discuss Hochberg's views. When this is done, it is easy to relate the early Sartre's views to discussions about self-awareness and the self/ego in contemporary analytic philosophy; some such remarks constitute the concluding Section 4.

2. *Being and Nothingness* Without "The Pursuit of Being"

The subtitle of *Being and Nothingness* is "A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology."[3] A philosophical ontology should contain an abstract more or less exhaustive classification of what there is, but this holds true of Sartre's ontology only if one forgets small children and the higher animals. They seem, by the way, neither to have played any role in Sartre's psychological universe. Therefore, let us in what follows look upon the world as if it contains only two main kinds of entities: (a) *entities that completely lack consciousness*, i.e., dead matter, machines, computers, robots, plants, the lower animals, and human corpses, as well as all these entities' relations and property instances; (b) *entities that intermittently have acts or states of consciousness*, and who in principle are capable also of having a well-established self-consciousness, i.e., adults and somewhat grown up human beings.

Sartre calls an entity of the first kind a "being-in-itself," and one of the second kind a "being-for-itself," but I will in Section 2 use the mundane expressions "material entities" (thereby stretching the concept of material) and "consciousness entities," respectively; then, in Section 3, I will use the expressions "in-itself entities" and "for-itself entities." I drop Sartre's term "being," because I think the word "entity" creates better associations for readers not already familiar with his philosophy; I keep the terms "in-itself" and "for-itself," because there are no other terms around that cover what Sartre's terms are meant to delimit.

There are material entities of many diverse kinds. A thing with properties is such an entity, but so are also (in the sense of "material" now used) particular tropes or quality instances and processes. According to Sartre, all such entities have an essence in the sense that Husserl speaks of essences. That is, the terms essence and universal become almost synonymous; Aristotle ascribed essences only to natural kinds. An essence is what gives a unique spatiotemporal particular its *identity*. A color trope receives its identity/essence from a certain universal color hue; a piece of metal receives its identity/essence from the universal kind of metal it consists of; and a rose receives its identity/essence from the universal natural kind rose. In this sense, each and every material entity can be said to be simply what it trivially is, namely its own identity.

All material entities are *inertial* in the wide sense that, causal networks apart, *either* they cannot of themselves change themselves *or* their internal changes follow a path predetermined by their identity/essence. Normally, material entities causally affect each other and are completely caught in causal chains; be these deterministic or stochastic. In other words, material entities lack *spontaneity*.

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[3] Note that the page references in all my quotations are from the paperback edition, whereas the references in Hochberg's papers are to the hardback edition. Unhappily, they do not coincide.

If human bodies are thought of in isolation from human consciousness, then they have to be regarded as being inertial material entities, too. However, according to Sartre, with consciousness comes spontaneity, which is the same as both freedom and (in a very specific sense) nothingness.[4] His reasoning goes somewhat as follows.

Every consciousness entity, be it called state or act, is characterized by *intentionality*, i.e., by directedness as conceptualized within the phenomenological tradition. Necessarily, such directedness has two distinct poles: a to-pole and a from-pole.[5] A consciousness entity is always a consciousness *of* something, namely the to-pole, but it is always more than that. There is *always* a distinction to be made between a whole intentional state/act and its to-pole. Sartre, who indulges in seemingly (but not really) self-contradictory sentences, says that a consciousness entity can be defined "as being what it is not and not being what it is" (Sartre 1966: 68). Also, he says that (in a phrase that I will return to in Section 4) such entities always have a distance to themselves: "The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* as a presence to itself" (Sartre 1966: 125). On this account, not even a simple consciousness of only a Humean impression or a Russellian sense-datum can be completely identical with an impression or a sense-datum.

Every consciousness entity contains a directedness ending in a to-pole of which it is aware, but it also contains a kind of self-awareness of this very directedness. This second awareness, however, does *not* have a to-pole in the sense described. Such a to-pole is by definition something "posited" (or "thetic," placed, set forth) but the self-awareness now spoken of is a pre-reflective "non-positional" ("non-thetic") awareness. According to Sartre, "every positional consciousness [*of* a to-pole] is at the same time a non-positional consciousness *of* itself" (Sartre 1966: 13). Conversely, every non-positional consciousness requires beside itself an awareness of a posited to-pole. Therefore, *every consciousness entity contains two "of" or "about," one positional and one non-positional.*[6] In the case of awareness of an impression (sense-datum), this state/act is positionally "of" or "about" the impression (sense-datum), and pre-reflectively and non-positionally "of" or "about" the rest of this state/act.

Often, this view of Sartre is explained in terms of *explicit* and *implicit* awareness, e.g. in (Gallagher and Zahavi 2010), but I think it can be better understood by means of the fore-ground-background distinction, combined with the view that there is no perception without both a foreground and a background. Non-positional awareness can be said to be awareness of a background, but a background of a very peculiar non-traditional sort now to be explained.

An ordinary perceptual background is something perceived beside and around the centrally posited perceptual object or state of affairs. Because of this, what it contains is non-determinately perceived. These objects and states of affairs, however, can be made determinate by being turned into a foreground and so focused on. Sartre's non-positing awareness, on the other hand, (a) is not beside and around a foreground, but present to the whole to-pole (which includes both a foreground and a background in the traditional sense); (b) cannot possibly be made a foreground. If one tries to switch from the to-pole (with both its foreground and background) into one's non-positional awareness, one does not find the latter as a posited

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[4] Sartre is not using the term "spontaneity" often, but he says: "change belongs naturally to the for-itself inasmuch as the for-itself is spontaneity" (Sartre 1966: 209). It is quite clear that he is using the term in the sense of free production/creation that it is used by Kant and Husserl.

[5] The latter terms are mine; in phenomenology, the to-pole is often called intentional object or intentional correlate, and the from-pole sometimes the pure ego. These terms, however, are too loaded with non-Sartrean content to fit the purposes of this paper.

[6] Sartre's translator, Hazel E. Barnes, writes: "Sartre uses the words *conscience non-positionelle (de) soi* and puts the *de* in parentheses to show that there is no separation, no positing of the self as an object of consciousness. Similarly he speaks of it as a non-thetic self-consciousness. Thetic or positional self-consciousness is *conscience de soi*" (Sartre 1966: xii).

foreground. Instead one finds the *whole preceding and now past* intentional state/act with *its* to-pole and *its* non-positional self-awareness. When a consciousness turns from its posited to-pole object towards its own non-positional awareness, this awareness disappears as something that belongs only to the past. Up pops a new state/act with a new non-positional awareness. Sartre's view can be stated thus: *a non-positing awareness is an awareness of an all-embracing background that cannot possibly become foreground*. Translated into the explicit-implicit contrariety, which means loss of some content, it says: *necessarily, direct self-awareness is always only implicit awareness*.

In *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre writes:

> Then, behind the state, at the horizon, the ego appears. It is, therefore, never seen except "out of the corner of the eye." As soon as I turn my gaze toward it and try to reach it without passing through the *Erlebnis* and the state, it vanishes. […] the ego is *by nature* fugitive. (Sartre 1957: 88–9)[7]

Every intentional state/act (directedness) must be directed from something (the from-pole) to something (the to-pole). According to Sartre, the existence of the from-pole is always indicated by the non-positional self-awareness mentioned, but since it is impossible to make it a to-pole, *what it really is cannot be grasped by a phenomenological investigation*. Sartre's move in order to come to know the from-pole might be said to be a kind of transcendental reasoning, i.e., reasoning from the fact that something certainly exists (we know that X exists) to the existence of a necessary presupposition for this very something (since the existence of Y is what makes X possible, we know that Y exists, too); were it not for the case that Sartre never leaves this world for any transcendental presuppositions.[8] To contemporary analytic philosophers his reasoning had better be called an inference to the best (presumed) explanation of the phenomena met with; Sartre himself calls it an "analytical regression" (Sartre 1966: 84). I will divide Sartre's inference into three steps.

Step 1. Consciousness entities can be, but need not always be, directed at material entities as such. Obviously, explicitly negative judgments such as "Your ball is not here" and "Pierre is not there" have as their to-poles a negation of a material or partly material entity. Something similar, Sartre claims, is true of every situation in which a meaningful *question* about something has arisen, or when one wants to *get rid of* something. In such intentional states/acts a negation is present, too. Moreover, since in principle everything met with in an intentional state/act might be questioned, a negation exists as a possibility in each and every state and act of consciousness.

Most conspicuously, the possibility of negating is shown in some perceptions, but here it had better be called *nihilating*. If, for instance, one is intensely looking for the mentioned Pierre at a certain place, and is perfectly sure that he will be there, then if he is not, one's perception contains Pierre's absence *as a positive to-pole phenomenon*. In the terms of early analytic philosophy, Sartre claims that veridical perceptions can *directly* contain presumed negative facts. He calls them 'négatités' (normally not translated into English).

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[7] Readers familiar with the aphorisms 5.63–5.641 of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (Wittgenstein 1961) can note that whereas Wittgenstein says that "If I wrote a book called *The World as I found it*" he would not find a subject, Sartre says that he does find a subject, but only "out of the corner of the eye."

[8] In (Gardner 2011) "The Transcendental Dimenson of Sartre's Philosophy" is discussed, and the author says that the early Sartre's "metaphysical position we may justifiably describe as a form of transcendental idealism" (ibid. p. 57). Gardner's view is to me due to a neglect of Sartre's "Introduction."

Step 2. From the ever-presence in human conscious life of either the actuality or the possibility of negating and nihilating, Sartre concludes that all consciousness entities must in their inner structure contain some kind of entity that explains this possibility:

> There is an infinite number of realities which are not only objects of judgment, but which are experienced, opposed, feared, *etc.*, by the human being and which in their inner structure are inhabited by negation, as by a *necessary condition* [italics added] of their existence. (Sartre 1966: 55)

Step 3. The origin of the phenomena of negation and nihilation seems not to be able to reside anywhere else than in the from-pole of consciousness entities. It cannot possibly have an identity/essence of the kind that material entities have, since then it would of necessity be caught in deterministic or stochastic causal processes without having the possibility of negating anything in the true sense of this word. Therefore, it must be a freedom or spontaneity; in a certain sense it is a nothingness. Since it is outside of all pre-determination, it lacks an identity/essence in the sense that all material entities have one. It is not only a nothingness in the sense that it is not a thing (neither are events, processes, and property instances, which here – remember – are called material entities, too), it is not a material-like entity at all; and so also in this broader sense a nothingness from the point of view of traditional naturalism. However, this fact notwithstanding, it is a positively existing something in our world.

In the history of philosophy before Sartre, we can find ideas about a naturalist positive nothingness in the form of ideas about empty regions in a postulated space conceived of as a container. Think of Democritus, Lucretius and Newton. Such a positive nothingness, however, is passive; it is a mere receptacle for other kinds of entities. Sartre's nothingness is a special kind of activity, an absolutely free activity, a spontaneity.

Consciousness entities have both a from-pole and a to-pole, and the latter can be either a material entity or a *négatité*, but in either case the from-pole is a positive nothingness in the sense explained. This does *not* mean that the from-pole is an enduring ego-pole or self of any sort; it is not an enduring material substrate (e.g. the brain), not an enduring spiritual substance, and not a transcendental ego. According to Sartre (in my terminology), *there is a from-pole but no enduring ego-pole*. Of course, this view further supports his choice of the label "nothingness." The freedom and spontaneity he infers is not an enduring freedom and spontaneity, only a something that necessarily occurs in and co-exists with every state/act of consciousness.

Sartre distinguishes between an affective consciousness and a purely cognitive consciousness; he calls the latter "knowing consciousness" (Sartre 1966: 11). States/acts of the latter kind have, he claims, no content apart from the content of the posited to-pole, be this an object or a state of affairs. Nonetheless, apart from the to-pole, *they contain a from-pole, a content-free directedness, and a non-positional awareness of these taken together*.

If Sartre had not written in a philosophical milieu where metaphors, metonyms, and paradoxical expressions were regarded as a normal way of expressing also philosophical thoughts, but had had a longing always to express himself as literal as possible, he could have explained his view about the essence or non-essence of consciousness entities as follows.

Let us distinguish between identity/essence in a narrow sense and in a wide sense. States and acts of consciousness lack an identity/essence in the narrow sense that makes them parts of causal chains, but they have an identity/essence in the wide sense that make all of them differ from the whole genus of material entities. All material entities have as their wide identity/essence the feature of being *inertial* (in the sense earlier explained), whereas all consciousness entities have as their wide identity/essence being entities that contain *spontaneity*.

Sartre is a naturalist in the sense that everything existing is regarded as belonging to the world of ours. The nothingness inherent in the from-poles of consciousness entities does not exist outside of the world. Already in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre strongly denounced both Kant's and Husserl's kinds of transcendentalism.

Furthermore, according to Sartre, if there were no material entities there would be no consciousness entities either; and if there were no consciousness entities there would be no nothingness. "Nothingness [freedom, spontaneity] lies coiled in the heart of being—like a worm" (Sartre 1966: 56). Sartre's nothingness is not an absolute non-being, or a non-being that makes being possible; it is part of being. Here are some further quotations to this effect:

> Being is not one "structure among others," one moment of the object; it is the very condition of all structures and of all moments. […] we must be careful never to posit nothingness as an original abyss from which being arose. […] This means that being is prior to nothingness and establishes the ground for it. By this we must understand not only that being has a logical precedence over nothingness but also that it is from being that nothing derives concretely its efficacy. This is what we mean when we say that *nothingness haunts being*. […] the total disappearance of being would not be the advent of the reign of non-being, but on the contrary the concomitant disappearance of nothingness. (Sartre 1966: 46, 48, 49)

With respect to the philosophy of time, Sartre is a presentist in the sense that he ascribes the present moment another and stronger mode of existence than the past and the future. It is only in the present that spontaneity/freedom can exist; and spontaneity/freedom is always future oriented. Past consciousness entities lack spontaneity/freedom and are, just like material entities, simply what they are. Therefore, when a conscious person looks back on her/his once free actions, these can be looked upon *as if* they have an identity/essence of the same kind as material entities have, and *as if* these actions have in all their details sprung from some pre-determined character traits.

When one looks back on one's past actions, one has, Sartre says, a positional awareness of oneself; but since this to-pole is an entity existing in the past, this view does not contradict his view that direct self-awareness by necessity is non-positional. One can have a reflective positional self-awareness of one's past life and ego, but only a pre-reflective non-positional self-awareness of one's present ego.

The from-pole contains a spontaneity that always can try to, and sometimes succeeds in, negating or nihilating various aspects of material entities, and it contains the same spontaneity in relation to what it itself is. It can *try* to negate its own freedom, and try to regard itself as being what, in fact, only its past as-if-identity is. But it cannot possibly succeed, even though the attempt makes something happen. The result is a consciousness entity Sartre calls "bad faith." Spontaneity and inertia are contrary opposites, and it is logically impossible for anything to be both at once. For something that contains a spontaneity to believe that it is wholly inertial is, necessarily, a kind of self-deception. Bad faith is self-deception about one's ontologically true nature.

What makes bad faith at all possible is the interplay between reflective and pre-reflective consciousness. On the reflective level a person can deny what on the pre-reflective level she/he necessarily is. It has some similarities with a situation such as the following (example mine). Someone puts you into a windowless room, closes the only door, shouts "now I have locked you in," and leaves. In fact, however, the person has not locked the door. If you firmly believe her/him you may not even try to open the door, and then you are in a sense unfree. Not because you have really lost your freedom to leave the room, but because of your

own false beliefs. Similarly, if you think you have an identity/essence (the as-if-identity of your past), then you will be locked into this identity/essence.

Sartre claims that freedom (spontaneity, nothingness) is absolute in the sense that it takes no degrees. This does not mean that our ordinary experience of being freer in some situations than in others is a complete illusion. Usually, a from-pole is directed towards a situation where the to-pole consists of some material entities and some other consciousness entities; Sartre calls such a whole situation the from-pole's *facticity*. Our feelings of being more or less free come from the relationships between the absolute freedom of the from-pole (which is always qualitatively the same) and the different facticities that constitute the to-pole. His position can be understood by means of the following analogy.

Think of a number of color spots of widely different sizes that have exactly the same color hue, intensity, and saturation. As perceptual objects they differ radically, but nonetheless the color [freedom] is in all of them *absolutely* the same. According to Sartre, in each moment of your life in which you are a consciousness entity, there is no facticity that can determine into the least detail what your next action will be like; on the other hand, there are not many facticities in which you can do whatever you want to do.

Sartre is easily read as if he says that consciousness entities choose not to see their inevitable freedom because this would *give* them anguish. Exactly this, however, he cannot say, since consciousness entities are placed outside of all causal networks. Instead, he relies on views widely held in the phenomenological tradition; but now we have to bring affective consciousness into the discussion, too. It is of the nature of some kinds of objects and states of affairs that they can only become presented to consciousness in a certain affective mode. For instance, according to Brentano, value-objects can only be given in a love-or-hate kind of directedness. It is in this vein that Sartre should be understood when he says: "anguish is the *mode of being* (italics added) of freedom" (Sartre 1966: 65). According to Sartre, it is not that apprehending your freedom *causes* you to feel anguish. As a matter of a non-temporal necessity, freedom cannot be reflectively apprehended in any other way than in anguish.

Similarly, he is easily read as saying that consciousness entities project aims and goals into the material entities, because to see these entities as they really are gives rise to "boredom, nausea, *etc.*" (Sartre 1966: 7), i.e., such truthful seeing *causes* negative emotions. But even here it is for Sartre a matter of non-causal necessity. Only in certain kinds of affective apprehension can material entities be apprehended as they are in themselves.

Summary: in order to avoid anguish and boredom/nausea, consciousness entities hardly ever choose to see the world as it is in itself in either its from-poles or to-poles. There are in all human beings strong reasons to choose (a) to see oneself not with the spontaneity one really contains, but instead completely in the light of a pre-given identity, and (b) to see the external world not as it really is, but in the light of some nice project of one's own. However, since we human beings cannot, as stated, nihilate our own pre-reflective freedom, the deepest longing in us human beings is to be what it is logically impossible to be: *a fusion of freedom and identity*. In despair of fixing it, Sartre says, we regard this impossibility as constituting the essence of an entity that exists outside of the world: God.

> Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ [who chose to lose himself in order to redeem mankind], for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion. (Sartre 1966: 784)

So far, I have said that the existence of a from-pole is for Sartre always indicated by a non-positional self-awareness, and that the (wide-sense) identity/essence of nothingness can

be grasped by an inference to the best explanation (from the negations and nihilations that obviously exist in the to-pole). However, there is, Sartre also says, another and more natural way to become reflectively aware of one's from-pole; moreover, one that does not require philosophical reflection.

A consciousness entity does not in its to-pole find only material entities and negations/nihilations of such,[9] it also finds other consciousness entities. Sometimes these other consciousness entities have the first consciousness entity as *their* to-pole. Put in non-philosophical terms, we can see that we are seen by others. And when this happens, we realize without any reflection that we have a from-pole. Sartre finds this phenomenon so important that he regards it as a special third mode of being beside being-in-itself and being-for-itself; he calls it "being-for-others."[10]

In the light of this mode of existence, Sartre tries to show how our presumed longing both to have an identity and to be free not only creates the idea of God, but also determines how the innermost structure of a number of different human relationships such as love, hate, shame, guilt, sadism, and sadomasochism look like. In this undertaking, he seems to take it for granted (I can't see that it follows from anything else he has stated), that whereas in relation to itself a consciousness entity wants to deny its freedom (i.e., wants to live in bad faith), it does not want to be so reified by other consciousness entities; and, furthermore, that every consciousness entity wants to deny the freedom of all the other consciousness entities. Therefore, in so to speak the state of nature, there is an everlasting ontological war going on, in which each and every consciousness entity tries (unsuccessfully) to reify all other consciousness entities. "Hell is the others," as the famous message of his play *No Exit* has it.[11]

I find it quite understandable that most readers have put Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* in a partly commonsensical framework, where material (in-itself) entities are regarded as ordinary material objects and structures, and where consciousness (for-itself) entities are regarded as ordinary conscious states/acts of ordinary people. This makes it possible to start at once to think about human freedom, possible self-deceptions, and various intriguing relationships with friends and foes. I see no reason to condemn this kind of reading and its ensuing reflections, but it should be borne in mind that such a reading is not completely true to Sartre's own view of the matter at the time around the publishing of *Being and Nothingness*. His introduction says farewell to *The Transcendence of the Ego* and to all common sense ontologies, even though he later came himself to move towards such views. In *Critique of Dialectical Reason I. Theory of Practical Ensembles* (Sartre 1976), he presupposes an ontology that postulates both traditional material entities and states and acts of consciousnesses connected to enduring biological organisms.

The latter book is an attempt to put the freedom preached by existentialism into a Marxist framework; this in order to save Marxism from determinism and to save existentialism from having only a notion of freedom that is so abstract that it is of no help in everyday life and political thinking. If Sartre had not turned Marxist, but instead had come to embrace some other deterministic social-scientific theory, his philosophical-ontological problem would

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[9] Note that every *project* contains a negation, too, namely a negation of something presently existing.

[10] As I have tried to show in another place, (Johansson 2004: ch. 15: 4), there is more to this idea than is realized in either the phenomenological or the analytic-philosophical tradition. I call the phenomenon *nested intentionality*, and shows that it contains non-reducibly different formal structures of intentional(ity) nesting. Sartre's analysis of shame is used as one illustrative example.

[11] Soon, however, probably under the joint influence of Simone de Beauvoir and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, he came to appreciate the ontological possibility that consciousness entities can choose to cooperate just as well as to fight; see e.g. (Daigle 2011: 13), even though she does not mention Merleau-Ponty.

have been exactly the same. In an overarching ontology one cannot without contradiction posit both spontaneity and an all-embracing determinism (inertia).[12]

Let me now move on to "the true early Sartre" and to Hochberg.

3. "The Pursuit of Being" and
Phenomenological Phenomenalism

"Modern thought has realized considerable progress by reducing the existent to the series of appearances which manifest it" (Sartre 1966: 3); this is the first sentence of Sartre's "Introduction." In stating this, he denies Kantian things-in-themselves, mind-independent material entities, and all kinds of idealist subjects that are meant to function as bearers of phenomena. Thereby, he even denies the kind of vague common sense ontology that was allowed in Section 2. According to Sartre's introduction, there are in the world neither enduring material entities nor enduring mental subjects. However, let me start with some words about Edmund Husserl.

Husserl's development can be divided into two main phases. First, he wanted phenomenology to stay free from all ontological positions by means of a specific way to suspend judgments on the world and on metaphysics; he meant to ground phenomenology in his famous epoché procedure. Later, he came to claim that phenomenology, when really thought through, has to end in a kind of transcendental idealism. Sartre rejects this move completely; but this does not mean that he wants phenomenology to stay in its early epoché phase. Even though Sartre is fond of paradoxical expressions, the subtitle of his *Being and Nothingness*, i.e., "A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology," should be taken literally. It must not be translated into a contradictory expression such as "an ontological essay from within the epoché."[13] The reason that the book can rightly claim to be both phenomenology and ontology is that Sartre makes the epoché superfluous by claiming that phenomena is all there is. One consequence of this view is that, from an ontological point of view, traditional negative facts (*négatités*) become exactly as positive as traditional positive facts.

Obviously, such a position must in some sense merit the label "phenomenalism."[14] An obstacle to be overcome, however, is that Sartre explicitly denies that he regards reality "as the *sum* [Sartre's italics] of its various manifestations" (Sartre 1966: 5). Hochberg labels Sartre's view "realistic anti-idealism" (Hochberg 2005: 220); and opposes it rightly to both "idealistic phenomenalism" and "classical phenomenalistic empiricism," but I will call it "phenomenological phenomenalism." The reasons behind my change of Hochberg's label will become clear in due course. Next follows five subsections, each of which, among other things, will credit Hochberg for something he has pointed out in his discussions of Sartre. The subsections could have been titled "Hochberg as a Sartre highlighter: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5."

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[12] I am well aware of the existence of so-called *compatibilism*, but, to my mind, the compatibilists are only redefining the traditional concepts of spontaneity and freedom.

[13] It can be noted that, at the same time, also Sartre's friend Merleau-Ponty wanted to delete Husserl's epoché. In the preface to (Merleau-Ponty 1962 [1945]) he writes: "The most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction" (ibid. p. xiv). A very early inner circle critic of Husserl's idealistic turn is Roman Ingarden; I present my view of him and his relation to Husserl in (Johansson 2010).

[14] Marjorie Grene, for instance, writes: "Sartre begins, as we have seen by accepting modern thought's banishment of the Kantian noumenon. Much of what he says in this applies, incidentally, as much to 'phenomenalism' as to phenomenology." (Grene 1983: 111). She never, however, discusses whether Sartre deserves to be called a phenomenalist.

3.1 Sartre aligned with Moore

One of the classic papers in the emergence of analytic philosophy is G. E. Moore's 1903 paper "The Refutation of Idealism" (Moore 1960: ch. I). Moore is then grappling with late 19th century British idealism; Sartre is grappling with the later Husserl's transcendental idealism. What they have in common is the view that the idealists they are opposing have not really thought through the act-object distinction. It is impossible, they claim, to make the object (the to-pole) and the act identical; be the object real or fictional. Sartre talks about an ontological proof of the existence of in-itself entities, but this is only a proof to the effect that such entities cannot be completely identical with any for-itself entities:

> consciousness is born *supported* by a being which is not itself. This is what we call the ontological proof. […] our theory of the phenomenon has replaced the *reality* of the thing by the *objectivity* of the phenomenon and that it has based this on an appeal to infinity [more about this kind of infinity in the next two sections]. The reality of that cup is that it *is* there and that it *is not me*. (Sartre 1966: 23, 5)

I have nothing in particular to add to Hochberg's presentation and remarks (Hochberg 2005), but I can't resist taking the opportunity to say as follows. In my opinion, the problems that Moore and Sartre independently of each other have spotted haunt also today's so-called strong social constructivism, i.e., the view that, necessarily, everything we talk about is a social construction completely identical to the speech and writing acts used.

3.2 Sartre on tropes and universals
(synthetic unities of tropes)

Husserl believed in both the phases mentioned in the existence of universals (Johansson 2010: sect. 1–2), but even though Sartre rejects both the epoché and Husserl's transcendentalism, he does not completely reject a belief in universals. "Husserl has shown how an eidetic reduction is always possible; that is, how one can always pass beyond the concrete phenomenon towards its essence [universals]" (Sartre 1966: 7). Phenomena, however, are primarily concrete particulars; that is, *prima facie* there should with respect to properties be only tropes. So, how does he manage to reconcile his phenomenalism with his belief in universals? Hochberg, of course, has noted this problem, but let me start with a quote from Sartre:

> The appearance does not hide the essence [its universals], it reveals it; it *is* the essence. The essence […] is the manifest law which presides over the succession of its appearances, it is the principle of the series. […] But essence, as the principle of the series, is definitely only the concatenation of appearances; […] He must seize *Red* through his impression of red. By *Red* is meant the principle of the series– […] This new opposition, the "finite [e.g., the individual red impression] and the infinite [the series]," replaces the dualism of being and appearance. (Sartre 1966: 5–6)

Instead of having universals either existing in a transcendent mind-independent Platonic realm or existing immanently in the material world á la David Armstrong, Sartre claims that the universal *Red* is in the phenomenon itself present as a "principle of the series" of all (possibly infinitely many) red tropes. What to say about this conception? Hochberg says as follows:

Aside from the phrasing, the claim is familiar. In grasping instances of a color, the blue of the blotter, in one of his examples, one makes a "trip to infinity" – that is, one grasps the connection tying all "tropes" – quality instances along the lines of Meinong and Stout – of that shade of blue. Such "connected" instances comprise the synthetic unity that is the "essence" or particular shade of blue. […] This is said to be the "infinite in the finite" that replaces the duality of appearance and reality (being). (Hochberg 2005: 200)

In what sense can a quality be the unification of all its actual and possible instances, but not be a distinct entity? He seeks to have an entity that plays the role of the realist's universal, while adopting the nominalist's inhibitions against universals. What he offers […] is merely a verbal solution. All he does is introduce a universal that is not recognized as such. (Hochberg 1999: 235–6)

In one sense I agree with Hochberg, Sartre offers us only a substitute for universals, and a doubtful one for that, but Hochberg seems to me nonetheless not to make Sartre's substitution justice. The *synthetic unity* spoken of by Sartre is not something that, like a similarity class (set, mereological sum) of tropes, is external to a single trope or trope-phenomenon. It is internal to the trope phenomenon itself, but only in a very special sense. Let me explain by one the most common examples in the phenomenological literature.

When we perceive a house and its front-side, we perceive it also *as* having an inside (and backside and much more, but for simplicity's sake I write only about the inside). Now, whether or not the true causal perceptual-neurological explanation has to correlate the front-side awareness primarily with one brain network, and the inside awareness primarily with another, it holds true that *in consciousness* both are simultaneously present as different aspects of one single synthetic unity, a house perceived. I am fairly sure that Sartre conceives his color universal as being present in a perceived color trope in about the same way as the inside of the house is in the house perception present by means of the front-side. In more general words: "The phenomenon of being requires the transphenomenality of being" (Sartre 1966: 9). And, again, in more specific words: the direct seeing of one part of a house requires the indirect seeing of some other parts; the direct apprehension of a color trope requires the indirect apprehension of something universal-like. A concrete particular, Sartre also says, contains its essence "as a sign implies its meaning" (Sartre 1966: 8).

3.3 Sartre on subjects and objects as enduring entities (synthetic unities of aspects)

According to ontological phenomenalism, phenomena is all there is, and in themselves they can be classified neither as material nor as mental. Only clusters of them can deserve such labels, some clusters the one label, some others the other. Russell calls them *logical constructions*.[15] About Sartre, Hochberg says:

Sartre's alternative line is *reminiscent* [italics added] of the pattern one finds in both Moore and Russell in the first two decades of the twentieth century, where, as opposed to idealistic phenomenalists, they took the "data of sense experience" to exist whether

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[15] "Physics and psychology are not distinguished by their material. Mind and matter alike are *logical constructions* [italics added]; the particulars out of which they are constructed, or from which they are inferred, have various relations, some of which are studied by physics others by psychology" (Russell 1961: 307).

sensed or not – and hence spoke of "unsensed sensa". […] In Russell, the pattern led, at times, to the physical objects being construed as complexes of phenomena, in two senses – as bundles of compresent sense qualities and as complex temporal sequences of such bundles. (Hochberg 2005: 206)

Beyond the flamboyant language, there is *nothing new* [italics added] here. We simply have a "Humean" bundle theory of the self along lines Russell has made familiar. (Hochberg 2005: 229)

Such a bundle is a temporal complex of momentary complexes, i.e., a complex of complexes. In my opinion, Hochberg is right when in relation to enduring physical objects he writes that Sartre's position is "reminiscent" of empiricist phenomenalism, but wrong when in relation to selves (enduring mental subjects) he claims that Sartre's position contains "nothing new." In both cases, Sartre is quite a bit away from Russel's neutral monism, which regards some kind of sense-data as the only non-inferred or non-constructed entities. Instead, Sartre relies, here as in the case of universals, on his notion of synthetic unity. According to Sartre (whether he is wrong or right), both in a perception of a physical object and of a mental self there is a synthetic unity of synthetic unities, but in neither case is there an enduring underlying synthesizer. The last claim is important. Hereby, Sartre denies a view implicitly held by many idealists, and explicitly stated by Kant, namely that all analyzing presupposes a preceding synthesizing.[16] There is, though, a *principle of a series* of temporally past and future *aspects* of the object apprehended (Husserl's German word is "Abschattungen"), be such objects regarded as physical or mental. Sartre writes:

Although an *object* may disclose itself only through a single *Abschattung*, the sole fact of there being a subject implies the possibility of multiplying the points of view *on* that *Abschattung*. This suffices to multiply to infinity the *Abschattung* under consideration. (Sartre 1966: 5)

What, to my mind, Hochberg misses here is the same thing he misses in relation to Sartre's conception of universals. The temporal complex is, in the sense I have tried to explain, regarded as being present *inside* the momentarily existing complex. Sartre's view is *reminiscent* of Russell's, but it contains in relation to Russell something quite new. Instead of *logical constructions*, we meet *synthetic unities*, and they cannot, *pace* Hochberg, be looked upon as being only a special variety of logical constructions. Once, Sartre is using the expression "the error of the phenomenalists":

Here we see the error of the phenomenalists: having justifiably reduced the object to the connected series of its appearances, they believed they had reduced its being to the succession of its modes of being. That is why they have explained it by concepts which can be applied only to the modes of being, for they are pointing out the relations between a plurality of already existing beings. (Sartre 1966: 21)

Here, Sartre contrasts two different kinds of reduction: reduction to appearances and reduction to modes of being (i.e., to tropes and aspects). The first reduction is regarded as justified, the other as an error. In Sartre's conception, the parts of a synthetic unity cannot be entities that first existed and then were synthesized or made parts of a logical construction. Unfortunately, Hochberg does not delve into such details. Sartre says, to repeat: "The reality

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[16] "For where the understanding has not previously combined, it cannot dissolve" (Kant 1968: 152).

of that cup is that it *is* there [as a synthetic unity in perception] and that it *is not me*" (Sartre 1966: 5). And he could have said: The reality of my enduring self is that it *is* there [as a synthetic unity in a *reflective* apprehension] and that it *is more than my present consciousness*. In both kinds of cases, the apprehensions in question may turn out to be illusory, i.e., the series invoked may never be realized in the future or have been realized in the past.

3.4 Sartre's undifferentiated being

The distinction between in-itself and for-itself entities raises a question that is seldom raised, but Hochberg raises: how is Sartre's being-as-such or Being to be understood? It seems to be presupposed in the distinction between being-in-itself and being-for-itself. Sartre speaks of this distinction interchangeably in terms of "types," "modes," and "regions" of being, so presumed differences between these terms are of no use when trying to understand his notion of "Being."

One option would be to think of "Being" as a mass noun that refers to something completely undifferentiated such as Aristotle's prime matter; which, then, would be differentiated by some kinds of Aristotelian-like forms into entities that can be referred to by means of count nouns falling under the terms "being-in-itself" and "being-for-itself." Hochberg tries another option, and I think I go along with him. The real point of all Sartre's elaborations around being-as-such is only to make clear that, despite his phenomenalism, he is opposed to fusing the meaning of "existence" with that of "existing as a phenomenon." Hochberg states:

> In simpler language, the mode of being of the phenomena is that of "appearance". But the *existence* of a phenomenal entity is not to be confused with its mode of existence – thus its *existence* (being) and its *being an* appearance are two "things" and not one. Hence the *being*, or existence, of a phenomenal object or of a physical object, taken as a "connected series" of phenomena, is not to be understood in terms of *being perceived*. To put it even more simply, as Moore actually did, the concept of existence does not involve that of perception. […] What all this talk of "being" amounts to appears to be no more than what Plato said about Existence, as one of the five basic forms, in *The Sophist* [the other four are sameness, difference, motion, and rest]. It characterizes all existents, and is not analyzable. (Hochberg 2005: 206, 209)

Once Hochberg writes:

> For all Sartre's focus on Being as a mark of his realism, it is only Being as noncharacterized—without determinations—that is mind independent. (Hochberg 2011a: 3)

I would not have written only "is mind independent," but "is mind and phenomena independent."

3.5 Sartre, bare particularity, and bare intentionality

In the writings of Hochberg that I am considering, he now and then brings in Gustav Bergmann's notion of a "bare particular." This notion is meant to denote an entity that functions as a pure individuator without being a property bearer. For the purposes of this paper, a bare particular might be regarded as a presumed necessary individuating residuum that remains when from a spatiotemporal particular all its properties, as well as the kind it is, have

been abstracted away.[17] In one of the places just alluded to, Hochberg says in passing: "We have seen the same theme [of bare particularity] in a way in Sartre via the purported transcendence of Being-as-such" (Hochberg 2011b: 15). This of course relates to the topic of section 3.4, but once Hochberg also brings in bare particularity when he comments on Sartre's view that (purely cognitive) for-itself entities have no content beside the to-pole:

> This means that a particular consciousness is construed as a particular that is a bare particular, except for its nature as consciousness – it is bare with respect to the object it intends, as it does not have a content that necessarily determines the object it intends. He does not say this, but it is, I am arguing, implicit in his view and hence his view is inconsistent. (Hochberg 1999: 236)

I would like to defend Sartre. Since he is of the opinion that there can be no for-itself entity without an object (to-pole), one is not within Sartre's framework allowed to think as if one specific particular conscious act could be connected to a different object. A for-itself entity enters the world as a complex unity, and leaves it as such. This being said, however, I think Hochberg's approach – let's see what happens with Sartre if we move towards a Bergmannian bare particular – can be used to make clear another important but partially neglected view in Sartre's phenomenological phenomenalism. Implicitly, it contains a notion of "bare intentionality."

Let me make a thought experiment with some consecutive steps. To begin with, we have a for-itself entity (an intentional state) that is a complex unity of (a) seeing a glass of water, (b) feeling very thirsty, and (c) intensely desiring to drink the glass of water seen. The first step consists in abstracting the desire away. We are then left with another logically possible for-itself entity, a complex unity consisting only of (a) and (b). In a second step we take away the feeling of being thirsty, which leaves us with a third logically possible for-itself entity, seeing a water glass without any accompanying feelings or desires, (a). However, this is not yet a bare particular, so let us continue.

Let us next abstract even the to-pole, the glass, away. Hereby, if we believe in Sartre's views, we obtain in thought what it is logically impossible to have as a perceptual phenomenon. But what can we truly say about this mere abstraction? Since even abstractions can be complex, we may well ask what kind of entity it is. Hochberg answers: "a bare particular, except for its nature as consciousness." My more detailed answer is: *a particular containing an indissoluble unity of a from-pole and a bare intentionality*. Therefore, if we continue our abstractive enterprise, we obtain two further different abstractions: an empty from-pole and a bare intentionality. If (contrary to my opinion) there are bare particulars, then there might be one such bare particular in the empty from-pole and another in the bare intentionality in question.

(The abstracting away of the glass can be understood by an analogy. If first you see a person pointing at something, and then you abstract this something away, you are left with only the person and a *bare pointing*. A purely cognitive for-itself entity (e.g. seeing something) is as a whole a particular containing an indissoluble unity of a from-pole, a bare intentionality, and a to-pole. In an affective for-itself entity (e.g. feeling thirsty), an affective mode component has been added; and in a conative entity (e.g. desiring to drink) a conative mode component has been added. Neither affective nor conative consciousness can exist without a cognitive consciousness component, but the converse is possible.)

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[17] Bergmann gives bare particulars a more precise role, where by necessity they are connected to universals in atomic facts, and where an ordinary object is a molecular fact all of whose atomic facts have the same bare particular as a constituent.

As earlier remarked, Sartre claims that all for-itself entities contain two different intentional "of" or "about." There is the positional-of, and there is the non-positional-of. Whereas the first is about a to-pole, the latter is about an indissoluble unity of a from-pole and a connected bare intentionality. If Sartre is right, then this is the only kind of *first-person awareness of intentionality* we can have. When we see that another person is looking at something, and so sees that this person has directedness in the sense of intentionality, we have a third-person awareness of intentionality. Such an awareness of intentionality is to first-person awareness of intentionality what seeing pain behavior in another person is to feeling pain oneself.

3.6 Summary

Hochberg rightly highlights the similarities between some of Sartre's problems and some problems dealt with in early analytic philosophy. In particular, he notices the similarities between Sartre's phenomenalism and Russell's phenomenalism, but he takes too lightly on the differences. He is quite aware of Sartre's rejection of some of the later Husserl's central views, but he is not sensitive enough to what Sartre nonetheless has in common with Husserl. Therefore, in order to indicate the whole content of Sartre's "pursuit of being," one should not label the ontology of *Being and Nothingness* "realistic anti-idealism," as Hochberg does, but as "phenomenological phenomenalism." In Sartre's phenomenalism, the phenomena posited contain features that the early Husserl finds within the epoché, but which Sartre retains despite his deletion of the epoché.

4. Phenomenological Ego-Phenomenalism?

Ontological phenomenalism does today in all its versions seem to be completely out of fashion; and I don't mind. However, as a partial ontology, as an ontology of only the conscious mind, as only an ego-phenomenalism, phenomenological phenomenalism might be reasonable. Such a partial phenomenalism need not come in conflict with the view that there are material enduring entities (such as the brain) without with which states and acts of consciousness cannot exist. In a remarkably fast development – out of both phenomenological and analytic philosophy of mind, cognitive science, psychology, and neuroscience – so-called "consciousness studies" have emerged. In this new setting, I think it might be fruitful to consider Sartre's views on the ego as they now have been presented.

In order to indicate more precisely what I mean, I will briefly comment on three recent and renowned books about the ontology of the self: Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective* (Zahavi 2005), Barry Dainton, *The Phenomenal Self* (Dainton 2008), and Galen Strawson, *Selves. An Essay in Revisionary Metaphysics* (Strawson 2009).

Below, I have as a point of departure highlighted three interrelated Sartrean views. It is the third one that will be stressed, but if Sartre had not accepted the first two, I think he would never had put forward the third. The views are:

(a) Necessarily, direct self-awareness is always only non-positional all-embracing background awareness.

(b) All parts of conscious phenomena are not open to traditional phenomenological investigation; therefore, we have to seek knowledge of some such parts by means of an inference to the best explanation.

(c)Every state and act of consciousness, however short-lived and simple, contains awareness of three mutually dependent entities: a from-pole (a positive nothingness), a bare intentionality (bare directedness), and a to-pole (an object or state of affairs); the awareness of the first two entities is non-positional, the awareness of the third is positional, and there is always some kind of ontological distance between the from-pole and the to-pole.

The last sentence is just as important as what comes before it. I think Sartre can be ascribed this view: without distance no intentionality (directedness), and there is intentionality even in direct conscious sensing.

4.1 Zahavi

Zahavi has since long set himself the task to bridge the gap between phenomenology and analytic philosophy (Zahavi 1999), and to link phenomenology to consciousness studies in general. He is an expert on both Husserl and Sartre, and has convincingly argued that much of what Sartre says about pre-reflective awareness is in fact also said by Husserl; (Zahavi 1999: 52–62) and (Zahavi 2005: ch. 2). He really brings the notion of "pre-reflective awareness" to the fore, even though, when working out his own view of the ego and the self, he wants to exchange it for a broader notion of "self-affection." One of his main claims is that all consciousness entities, from the very simplest to the most complex, contain a minimal pre-reflective non-positional self-awareness, which "deserves to be called the *minimal self* or the *core self*" (Zahavi 2005: 106). He regards the existence of such selves as a presupposition for the existence of ordinary thick narrative selves.

There are many good things to say about Zahavi's book, but my aim here is not to review the book, only to relate it to the Sartre that I have expounded (and the same goes for Dainton's and Strawson's books). Put bluntly and briefly, it seems to me as if Zahavi has not clearly seen Sartre's stress on the view that a state/act of consciousness always has a kind of distance within itself; as stated in point (c) above. I quote Sartre again: "The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* as a presence to itself" (Sartre 1966: 125). The root of the mistake might be that Zahavi has not paid enough attention to Sartre's introduction to *Being and Nothingness*.

When Zahavi is discussing the impossibility of catching the pre-reflective in a reflective act, he takes recourse only to the implicit-explicit distinction that I mentioned in Section 2 (and where he is quoted). He seems to be pleased with stating that as a matter of fact there is always a pre-reflective self-awareness that explains the quality of "mineness" of our experiences, and that this self-awareness constitutes a minimal sense of self. Furthermore, he seems to be of the opinion that there are no epistemological problems connected with coming to know the whole structure of this self. Once he writes: "the [minimal] self is […] taken to be an integral part of our conscious life with an *immediate* [italics added] experiential reality" (Zahavi 2005: 106). I take him to mean that the *whole* of the minimal self is immediately given. Unlike Sartre (and me), he seems to be free from the feeling that there is more to non-positional consciousness as consciousness than what can be gathered by pure phenomenology. Therefore, he never explores the view that consciousness might contain within itself a kind of ontological distance or gap.[18]

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[18] He does admit, though, an *epistemic* gap. He writes: "Any convincing theory of consciousness has to be able to explain the distinction between *intentionality*, which is characterized by an epistemic *difference* between the subject and the object of experience, and *self-consciousness*, which implies some form of *identity*" (Zahavi 2005: 106).

4.2 Dainton

In (Dainton 2008), Dainton wants to develop a neo-Lockean account of the self in the sense of personal identity. Instead of psychological continuity by means of memories, beliefs, personality traits, etc., Dainton brings in continuities that he claims can be found in the stream of consciousness: "we can account for the unity of consciousness at and over time without appealing to the causal relationships that are constitutive of psychological continuity" (Dainton 2008: xix). Temporal gaps in consciousness such as dreamless sleep are explained by means of enduring underlying systems of *experiential capacities*. What is of concern here, however, is only how well he brings into his discussions the Sartrean views I have presented. He makes an effort to take an explicit stand on many theories of consciousness, so my question is quite adequate.

In order to make my main point, it will be pedagogic to bring in even his former book *Stream of Consciousness. Unity and Continuity in Conscious Experience* (Dainton 2000). Dainton mentions Sartre in his preface (Dainton 2000: xv), and says that his second chapter is influenced by Brentano and Sartre, but everything is then left with this hint.[19] In the second book there are two very general references to Sartre and a brief dismissal of a book concerned with Sartre's critique of Husserl (Dainton 2008: 141–5). In both books, Dainton regards pre-reflective self-awareness as merely a kind of traditional "phenomenal background." About this move Zahavi is quite critical, and I agree. He says:

> Dainton has recently called this sphere of experience the *phenomenal background* and has argued that it has three main components: one is the diverse range of bodily experience, another is world-presenting perceptual experience, and the third component is our sense of self, an ambient inner background of what it feels like to be the conscious being we are. All of this seems perfectly right. The crucial question is, however, whether the distinction between focal and peripheral consciousness—a distinction between two types of object-consciousness—is pertinent when it comes to an understanding of the pre-reflective givenness of our experiences. (Zahavi 2005: 62)

Having read this criticism before writing the second book, how does Dainton respond? He says:

> I can see no reason to accept the various claims Zahavi makes on behalf of minimal [pre-reflective] self-consciousness. There is certainly no need to posit a quality *mineness* to explain how it is that we are always aware of our own experiences. (Dainton 2008: 242)

In my opinion, just as Zahavi's, and even doubly so in the light of what I have said about Zahavi, non-positional pre-reflective consciousness cannot be regarded as a kind of background in the traditional sense.

Now, interestingly to me, Dainton does in passing, without mentioning Sartre, remark on two views close to those that I have ascribed to Sartre. First, he defines a concept of "bare

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[19] This despite the fact that here he discusses – and dismisses – the act-content distinction and Moore's defense of it (Dainton 2000: ch. 2.4).

awareness*" that has some similarities with the notion of "bare intentionality" that I have introduced.[20] But he quickly dismisses it:

> Given that awareness* is entirely characterless, […] awareness* can contribute nothing to the phenomenological case for its own existence. […] Since awareness* is entirely featureless, there cannot possibly be anything that it is like to be a bare awareness*. From a phenomenological standpoint, the condition of being a bare awareness* would be indistinguishable from non-existence. (Dainton 2008: 42, 45)

From a Sartrean point of view, his main mistake is that he discusses bare awareness* only in the Humean way, i.e., as something that lacks an "of" altogether; bare intentionality has the feature of directedness and is "of" something.

Second, he discusses a notion of "bare locus" or "centre of pure awareness*" (Dainton 2008: 41, 44) that is close to the notion of "from-pole" that I have used. What these two notions are meant to refer to he dismisses in the following way (fringe feelings belong to the phenomenal background):

> There is indeed an additional 'something' in consciousness; not a point centre of pure awareness*, but simply fringe feelings of various sorts, some more ubiquitous than others. (Dainton 2008: 44)

So, what does Dainton's own solution to the problem of the unity of mind look like? Galen Strawson has recently highlighted Hume's similar problem (Strawson 2011: part III). In the "Appendix" to the third book of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume famously states that he now finds his philosophy not wholly consistent, but that it would become so if one of the following two options were true (each, if true, can explain the unity of the mind, but both are in conflict with his explicitly atomistic-empiricist philosophy):[21]

> [O1] 'our perceptions … inhere in something simple and individual'.
> [O2] our perceptions are distinct existences, and 'the mind perceive[s] some real connexion among them'. (Strawson 2011: 104-5)

I think these alternatives are the two main alternatives even in the contemporary philosophy of mind. Husserl, Sartre, Zahavi, and Strawson put forward, each in their own way, a variety of the first option (and so would I), but Dainton grabs for the second. So, what does he say? In essence, only this:

> A unified state of consciousness simply consists of experiential parts that are all linked to one another by co-consciousness, where the latter is the relationship of 'experienced togetherness' with which we are all so familiar; in this sense (if no other) experience can correctly be regarded as *self-unifying*. […] When two experiences are co-conscious they are experienced together, but this togetherness is not the product of a third experience which comes between the two, it is a direct (unmediated, experientially speaking) relationship between the two experiences themselves. Co-consciousness has no phenomenal features of its own—it is not an experience in its own right—rather it is the

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[20] The differences are that Dainton does not connect awareness* to a from-pole, does not ascribe it a directedness, and so does not ascribe it any "of" at all.
[21] For more details about Hume's problem with unity of the mind, see (Strawson 2011) and (Johansson 2012).

way in which they are experienced together (and we all know precisely what it is like for experiences to be related in this way). (Dainton 2008: 48–9)

First Dainton dismisses *bare awareness** for the reason that it is not phenomenologically visible, and then he brings in as his explanatory posit *co-consciousness*, which he *explicitly* states has "no phenomenal features of its own." In my opinion, consistency seems to require that if bare awareness* is dismissed, so should bare co-consciousness be; and, vice versa, if co-consciousness is accepted, then Dainton's main reason to reject bare awareness* is gone. I find it a bit odd. Surely, by the way, Hume would not have regarded Dainton's relation of co-consciousness as a "real connexion."

4.3 Strawson

Strawson uses the term "mental" in such a wide sense that mental entities might well be physical entities, and he himself thinks they are (Strawson 2009: 4). I will, however, discuss him counterfactually as if he regards the mental as something distinct from the physical. So regarded, his views on the mental can fruitfully be compared with Sartre's on for-itself entities.

Whereas Sartre posits only momentary from-poles and no enduring ego-poles, Strawson finds in consciousness a semi-enduring (my term) ego-pole. It does not endure through the whole life of a person, but neither is it only momentary. It endures as long as there is a temporally uninterrupted consciousness entity, but no longer. Since Strawson's view is called "the transience view of the self," Sartre's ego-phenomenalism might be called "the momentary view of the self." I guess most people would say that, normally, Strawson's purported ego-pole lasts as long as one is continuously awake. He himself, however, claims that consciousness consists of a number of much shorter interrupted "experientially unitary periods of experience" of some seconds. Within each such period one finds "the lived present experience" (the specious present), which he thinks is at most half a second long (Strawson 2009: 4). I leave these empirical questions out.

I think what Strawson calls "the lived present experience" well corresponds to one single Sartrean for-itself entity, when looked at from the point of view of phenomenological phenomenalism. Each such experience, Strawson says, contains a self-experience, which he labels a "SESMET." According to Strawson, in ordinary self-awareness the self appears as (watch out for the capital letters) a *Subject of Experience*, as something (at each moment synchronically) *Single*, as something *MEntal*, as a *Thing*, as *persisting* (being a diachronically single thing), as an *agent*, as something with *personality*, and as *distinct* from the organism. He argues that the last four features (persistence, agency, personality, distinctness) are, even though mostly there, not essential to the existence of self-experience, but that the first four are. In order to have a self-experience, one has to be in a state/act of consciousness that contains at least all the four features of SE, S, ME, and T.[22]

In a section called "Eye and I" (4.4), Strawson discusses the distinction between thetic (positional) and non-thetic (non-positional) self-apprehension, even though Sartre and Husserl are not mentioned. Here he flatly denies the thesis that self-apprehension is *always* non-thetic; that it mostly is he does not question. He says: "I think, in fact, that immediate (no time lag) self-awareness can also be thetic, or at least express [a special concept of his], so that the eye

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[22] Strawson uses "thing" in about the sense that I have been using "entity": "The general idea behind the present use of the term 'thing' is probably much the same as the idea behind the philosophical use of the word 'substance' as a count noun with a plural" (Strawson 2009: 66).

objection is false even in that formulation, and I will shortly say why" (Strawson 2009: 178). To me, however, it seems as if his explanation, which relies on experiences from deeply meditative consciousness states, rather than showing – in his and others way of describing them – that thetic self-apprehension can be a reality, shows that (if true) a proper description of what such a consciousness looks like falsifies one of Sartre's views. There are even in such consciousness states, as usual, non-thetic self-awareness and bare intentionality, but there is, *pace* Sartre, *no to-pole*. Strawson does not discuss this descriptive possibility.

Let me now go back to the ordinary non-meditative SESMETs. When I try to compare these with Sartrean for-itself entities (but with the to-pole abstracted away), the following important difference seems to emerge: a SESMET, unlike a for-itself entity, does not contain any "of" at all. In this respect Strawson's view fits the empiricist tradition and is in opposition to Sartre's. Let me again use Hume and his term "impression" as a contrast. According to Hume, in a mental entity consisting of only a single impression there is no "of" or "about" at all; there is only the impression. According to Sartre, there are two "of," one positional and one non-positional.

Let me repeat. In Sartre's view, a complete purely cognitive for-itself entity is a complex three-term entity with two "of." There is (1) a from-pole, his nothingness; (2) a bare intentionality or content-less directedness; (3) a to-pole consisting of an object or state of affairs, (A) a non-positional or non-thetic awareness of the first two components; and (B) a positional or thetic awareness of the third. And there is always some kind of *distance* between the from-pole and the to-pole.

Like in Dainton's last book, Sartre is in Strawson's book indexed for two pages. Both Dainton and Strawson seem to be aware of the fact that Sartre has put forward interesting views about pre-reflective consciousness, but none has tried to become clear about his detailed views. Therefore, they have never really discussed the following view of consciousness: "The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* as a presence to itself." With this out of context almost contradictory and now thirdly repeated quotation, I have come to the end. This paper is not meant to express a definite view on the hard issues presented.

Ingvar Johansson
University of Umeå
Sweden
Ingvar.Johansson@philos.umu.se

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