Sartre on the relation between consciousness and the ego

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This is the last in a series of three essays on the shared features of the relations between mood and self in the different systems of existentialist philosophers. I gently request readers to first read the last short section, 'Concluding Remarks', to see for themselves if they might then wish to read this essay from the start.

Moods provide an intuition of what, who and how we are and they also can help us to transform that self. The possibility of such an inquiry comes alongside what we may generally term the 'transcendental premise', i.e. there are necessary characteristics of experience, mind or, more comprehensively put, being-in-the-world, and these characteristics are internally related or equiprimordial such that the absence of one of these entails the impossibility of experience. This series of essays examines, in the work of three quite different philosophers of existence, the claim that mood is a

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necessary component of experience. An entailment of this claim is that: Anything that is held to have experiences from - least contentiously - a human being in active conversation; to a sleeping human; to a coma patient; to a foetus; to a walrus; E.T., an angel; a robot; a computer from the future; an artificially intelligent computer program — must have various moods through which its world and its self can be meaningfully disclosed. And these disclosive moods must also be capable of effecting transformation of the experiencing self. A neat example of this can be seen towards the end of Ridley Scott's film, Blade Runner, where Harrison Ford's character Rick Deckard, the policeman in charge of retiring (killing) replicants (artificial humans created for manual labour and recreational purposes on extra-terrestrial colonies) suddenly finds himself about to be killed by the strongest of the replicants, Roy Batty (acted by Rutger Hauer). Roy, pursuing his pursuer, ironically asks Deckard "Where are you going?". Roy pauses, contemplating for a second or two, then savours the sensation of rain on his face as if for the first time, yet this is the last day of his life. After this pivotal moment of authenticity, Roy catches his would-be killer, the policeman Deckard. But instead of slaying the man who would kill him, he grabs him by the hand, then grasps his imagination by communicating the incommunicability of his own experience:

"I've seen things you people wouldn't believe.
Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion.
I watched C-beams... glitter in the dark near Tännhauser Gate.
All those... moments will be lost... in time... like tears... in rain.
Time... to die."

Deckard is transfixed. Roy does not slay Deckard. The time to die is for Roy Batty himself. He knows that he is about to expire, exactly as he has been programmed. What is not in the program is how he faces his death. Batty could not alter the fact of the moment of his death-very much like Sartre's hero captured in the Spanish Civil War, in his story 'The Wall', could not alter the fact of being taken to the firing squad, but both could choose how they approached death and how they could look their willing exterminators in the eye. They could ennoble existence by refusing the cowardly option. They could affirm life even, nay especially, in its closing seconds. This scene neatly exemplifies the extended transcendental premise that the possibility of genuine experience requires moods that are disclosive and transformative. This mooded transformation shows Roy Batty coming of age just moments before his death, demonstrating something very human. It is the power and resolve of the emotion towards self-transformation that effects the crucial existential transformation.

Not all philosophers holding what I term the basic transcendental premise agree that there is indeed such a thing as the self. The basic premise, the result of Kant's analytic of experience, simply asserts that experience necessarily contains such components as the forms of intuition (space and time), mood, imagination and understanding. Exactly what the components are held to be depends on the philosopher's approach. Kierkegaard and Heidegger assume that there is a self; their notions of authenticity rely on a self with which one's existential stance can be in accord or discord. Sartre appears to deny such a self, his notion of authenticity refers instead to the avoidance of bad faith by remaining true to experience and

respecting the truth of the freedom of others. Indeed, Sartre sees human freedom as negated by a self with which we may act in accordance or which we may betray.[1]

Sartre's no-self theory of consciousness evolved from his critique of Husserl's later philosophy, so we will first take a brief survey of Husserl's account of the ego in consciousness. We will proceed to examine Sartre's non-egological account of consciousness with an aim to clarifying why Sartre ignores or overlooks the notion that moods may bring us to authenticity or may call us to more comprehensive selfhood. While Sartrean existentialism does not lead to the Kierkegaardian style of authentic perspicuity[2], it very strongly argues, with Kierkegaard, that we must 'choose ourselves' as well as asserting that we are not automatically or naturally 'ourselves' simply by virtue of being here, human and alive. For Sartre, all that we automatically are and have to be is free. We shall come to see that Sartre's model of the transcendent ego (the ego as one object among others, transcendent to consciousness and not immanently centred within it or commandingly positioned behind it) as encountered in and constituted by reflexive consciousness has interesting similarities with Kierkegaard's idea of the self, a self that is far from being a 'natural organ' but is rather an existential relation that emerges through authentic and transparent reflexivity.

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[1] Sartre's idea here is similar in form to the argument that Kierkegaard had Climacus put forward in *The Concept of Anxiety* - that if the human were in any way animal, it could never become spirited freedom. Both positions assume that any 'nature' specifying one's qualities is an *en-soi* fatally inserted into the heart of the free *pour-soi*.

[2] See my essay on Kierkegaard in the FukuDai Review, June 2004.

This essay will close with some remarks on the mystery of the ineffable content of moods as intelligently perceptive and their internal relations to self and world.

The difference between a transcendental ego and a transcendent ego

The guiding argument of Sartre's *The Transcendence of the Ego*[3] (*TE*) is that there is no transcendental ego, no 'I' that does and must accompany all of our presentations. Sartre presents an ego that is not transcendental; it is not a necessary 'I' functioning as the centre of reference within or behind the transcendental field of consciousness. Sartre's ego is a transcendent ego, which is to say that it is not an inhabitant of consciousness but that it is an object for consciousness. The sartrean ego is as external to consciousness as is a coffee table to the number nineteen. Ideas regarding the self and the self-relation in *TE* seem to contradict the Kierkegaardian notion of a self to which the individual can relate authentically or with which the individual can be at odds.

The Transcendence of the Ego was born of a criticism of Edmund Husserl. The main criticism was basically that the Husserl who wrote *Ideas* betrayed the Husserl who wrote the *Logical Investigations* by admitting an ego into transcendental consciousness. Husserl originally found no need for a transcendental ego in the *Logical Investigations* and argued instead

[3] Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego*,

that the ego is a mutable and synthetic object, a transcendent production of consciousness rather than an immanent producer or homuncular guardian of consciousness. A transcendental ego would be, after a Kantian fashion, the apperceiving subject that is a necessary condition of all possible experience. The apperception predicated of this subject is self-consciousness as opposed to the consciousness of things perceived as external to the self. Kant further distinguished between empirical apperception, which observes the stream-of-consciousness, and transcendental apperception, which constitutes the a priori unity of experience so important for Kant's theory of personal identity. For Husserl, but not for Kant, this transcendental ego would be an omnipresent and factual 'I', an 'I' actually subject to all experience. On the other hand, a transcendent ego would be an ego given sporadically as an object for consciousness. This ego would be transcendent to consciousness rather than immanent in and continuous with consciousness.

What immediately follows is an account of how Sartre reached the position of the transcendence of the ego as opposed to its transcendental necessity and how the transcendent ego may be defended against some critics. Sartre's position will then be compared to Kierkegaard's notion of a self with which one's existence can be in accord or discord, a self that is a thoroughgoing relation to the individual's existence.

To the things themselves: the phenomenological reduction

In order to better understand Sartre's position in *The Transcendence of the Ego* we must touch on the development of Husserl's work that led to his affirmation of the actual existence of the transcendental ego. In founding Phenomenology, Husserl founded a radical departure in methodology that sounded the bell for a return to the things themselves, to '*die Sache selbste*'. This return would occur by isolating phenomena in the field of consciousness and studying their content and the acts of consciousness that sustain them (e.g. a unicorn would be sustained by imagination and its synthetic operations). This amounts to linking the *noema* (object content) to the *noesis* (knowing/perceiving/imagining act) through the intentionality or aboutness of consciousness in such a way that every phenomenon is conceived as directly present to the conscious subject.

The phenomenon is directly present to the subject or to consciousness, and it only presents itself one aspect at a time. When I have a hand before me, it is a palm, or the back of my hand, or the side or some other particularly angled profile: I never see the whole hand[4]. Only a god, angel or some creature capable of intellectual[5] as opposed to sensory intuition could perceive objects in their totality- we cannot swallow, as it were, our objects

[4] This problem proved a thorny one in A. J. Ayer's radically empirical phenomenalism, which theory essayed to show that the appearance of the phenomenon (pardon the pleonasm) was logically equivalent to the being of the object. See his *Language, Truth and Logic*, 1936.

[5] E.g. A Jedi knight who, though blindfolded, can 'use the Force' to fight an opponent.

in one gulp. Husserl thought that consciousness must grasp the essence of each successive phenomenon, performing what he called the *eidetic reduction*. This performance afforded consciousness a temporality — an access to time by virtue of being aware of mutable and enduring presences with their essences.

So far we can see that Husserl's phenomenology inquiry is a *reflexive* journey *into* consciousness and is not just one theory among other 'philosophies of consciousness'. Husserl's aim is not to put forward an explanation or just-so-story of how and why consciousness is around. He is not eager to ground consciousness in spirit, physiology, psychology, God, or anything else for that matter. Husserl's position is closer to Kant's transcendental arguments as he is, 'occupied not so much with objects as with our mode of cognition of objects, so far as this is possible a priori'[6]. This position can be contrasted with that of Heidegger who was interested in the attitude of our everyday concernful dealing with situated objects. From Heidegger's perspective Husserl's detached interest in a subject who leaps across epistemological gaps in order to experience shifting aspects of phenomena seems not only disengaged but also derivative of primary and immediate engagement in practical and worldly tasks. Indeed, it is not difficult to picture Husserl as an ontological idealist and solipsist who sees consciousness as the foundation of all sustained phenomena with the question of the material existence of the world beyond consciousness being conveniently bracketed. However, we should not forget that this conscious-

[6] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B25, A11-12.

ness is always intentional, i.e. consciousness, as Husserl learned from Brentano, is always consciousness *of* something.

The intentionality of consciousness may not cohere easily with transcendental ego, as we shall explore with Sartre, but it remains an integral feature of Husserl's later work. The importance of intentionality here is that it means that consciousness does not create its objects, it is only conscious of them. Consciousness intends its objects, even though they might sometimes be 'intentional inexistents', as Brentano described those objects of thought that have no real correlates — e.g. unicorns and golden mountains. Husserl's call to study the 'things themselves' meant that his number theory was not to be reduced to psychology, aesthetics was not to be the study of human taste and its quirks but the study of aesthetic objects and *their* principles (not ours). In short, consciousness was seen to focus away from itself such that its objects could be liberated from psychologism.

In order to focus on the things themselves, as they are present to consciousness, Husserl performed his phenomenological reduction or epoché. Bracketing the question of the material or real existence of things outside of consciousness, Husserl outlined his transcendental field of consciousness. Of the result of this epoché he writes that:

> 'I do *not* then *deny* this "world", as though I were a sophist, I do not doubt that it is there as though I were a sceptic, but I use the phenomenological epoché, which completely bars me from using any judgement that concerns spatio-temporal existence.[7]

Husserl sees the objectivist point of view of the natural sciences as a refinement of what he calls 'the natural standpoint', the perspective of everyday living, which never begins its inquiries prior to the belief in an external world but always takes it for granted. One is, of course, and especially if not a philosopher, rarely self-conscious of this natural standpoint. The natural standpoint is similar to Santayana's 'animal faith' whereby all rational processes are expressive of the 'animal' compulsion to believe in certain things (e.g. the existence of matter)[8]. Husserl's way of thinking was here diametrically opposed by Heidegger's approach, which considered the theoretical question of the existence of the external world as highly abstract, secondary to and derivative of everyday practical comportment. To talk of faith in an external world, Heidegger would challenge, is to presuppose the separation of subject and object and to utterly misunderstand the upsurge that is our being-in-the-world. Such descriptions as Husserl and Santayana give of practical comportment make it sound inferior to what they might call genuine philosophical attitudes. For Husserl, the natural standpoint was certainly inferior to the reduced neutral standpoint of pure consciousness that occurs after the phenomenological epoché.

Husserl's phenomenological reduction suspends belief in an external world as the exclusive field of reference for all of our intentional acts. This move allows our intentional acts to be described as referring to purely noematic

[7] Husserl, 'The Phenomenological Epoché', *Ideas*, [1913] pp. 110-112, London; George Allen & Unwin, 1931.
[8] Santayana, G., *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, 1923.

structures, which just *are* the things we know about. When we reflect on our thinking, our observing, or our understanding, we discover intentional acts of experience that always refer to phenomena. Husserl argued that these acts of experience (noeses) are not evident to us in the natural attitude. These are the acts of experience that hold the noemata as noemata. Suspending the belief in the external existence of things in the world, he argues, allows us to focus on our experiences and on our experiencing.

Having performed the phenomenological reduction, the act of bracketing, Husserl acts us to perform a second reduction at a further remove from everyday experience. This move is supposed to allow us to discover the essence of the intended structure or *eidos*. These essences are said to constrain psychical existence; they are the possible structures that any psychical existent might have, and therefore Husserl holds that eidetic phenomenology is the proper study of the forms and structures by which experience is limited.

The Ever-present 'I': The Transcendental reduction

In all of this perceiving, imagining, knowing and so on, it is *I* who do the perceiving, imagining, knowing. *I* see the appearances, *I* imagine the images, *I* know the object. So far we have performed only reductions that yield one kind of subject matter, namely appearances. Husserl argues that *I* can also be experienced and treated as the result of a phenomenological

reduction just as the appearance of any object can be. It is just a matter of concentrating on the subject rather than on the noema. But this *I* upon which one may concentrate is what Husserl calls psychical subjectivity and it is therefore still a matter of merely empirical concern. Following Kant, Husserl distinguishes between the empirical ego and the transcendental ego. There is, he affirms, a deeper *I* that he calls "I myself". This is transcendental subjectivity and it is the central subject of transcendental phenomenology. It therefore becomes, for Husserl, the central subject of philosophy. It is the pure *I* to which the psychical or empirical ego is present. This transcendental ego is the final residuum of Husserl's most stringent reduction. The dangers of ontological idealism and solipsism are greatest when Husserl performs his transcendental reduction. Husserl reports back to us that here, 'no real thing, none that consciously presents and manifests itself through appearances, is necessary for the being of consciousness itself'[9]. This is a tremendous result and one that few have understood. Isn't he saying something more here than just the bare assertion of a logical entailment? It seems as though he is reporting form a state of pure consciousness that few have experienced or clearly reported. Here is not the place to explore the profound implications of Husserl's position with full justice or in any great depth. Rather we are here limited to exploring why Sartre rejected this, Husserl's later position.

We see that Husserl moves from intentional engagement in a world towards the transcendental disengagement. The husserlian phenomenon is

[9] Husserl, 'Indubitability of Immanent, Dubitability of Transcendent Perception', *Ideas,* op. cit., p. 145.

what is at once revealed and what reveals and in this note we can detect how close Husserl was to Heidegger's 'corrective' position of being-in-the-world. But then Husserl shifted from a model of intentional engagement in a world towards a theory culminating in transcendental disengagement.

This later position of Husserl's was not held in the *Logical Investigations*, indeed in this work Husserl actively criticised the notion of a constituting transcendental ego[10]. In the *Ideas,* the transcendental ego is very much the principle of an individual personality. In this respect it is far from the Kantian formal principle of transcendental appercerption. Husserl's transcendental ego is individual; The transcendental ego is a form and a way of being; it is no natural entity or abstract principle. This ego is not constituted, as Sartre will later argue, but constituting, and what it constitutes is its own character and habits from out of its history of intentional acts and thereby it constitutes the meaning of the world. The thoughtful and meaning-giving intentionality of this transcendental ego's activity is the thesis of Husserl's elimination of the opposition between theory and action[11]. This elimination of a former opposition is where Husserl locates human freedom: to think is to act and, a fortiori, to think in a meaning-bestowing way is to act freely in a world-changing way. The similarity here between Husserl's notion of freedom and Sartre's notion of radical metaphysical freedom is remarkable. Indeed, Sartre's thesis that emotions are not passive passions but free and 'magical' invocative actions

[10] See especially book II of *Logical Investigations*.
[11] See Levinas, *Discovering Existence with Husserl,* p. 76, Northwestern University Press, 1998.

performed on the world in order to act on it from a distance seems to be drawn directly from of Husserl's understanding of human freedom[12].

Sartre also believed that intentionality was the very accomplishment of human freedom. But his metaphysical underpinnings of this freedom, outlined in *Being and Nothingness*, rested on the nothingness that consciousness brings to bear on the world in its acts of 'nihilation' through which practical possibilities (things which don't materially exist in nature without human being) may be viewed at all and be viewed as practicable. For Sartre, Husserl's crowning of a transcendental ego on the throne of freedom was beyond the pale. Sartre argued that the transcendental ego would turn the initially liberating enterprise of phenomenology on its head. While the phenomenology of *Logical Investigations* claimed the right to study intended objects along the lines of their own discoverable principles, the introduction of the transcendental ego into the scene as the emperor of all experience would then allow the bestowal of characteristics upon consciousness' objects that would be impossible to disentangle from the thing itself. Sartre was here arguing for the freedom to clearly and distinctly grasp objects without distorting them. I think it makes sense here to say that Sartre wanted to evict the transcendental ego in order to restore a Cartesian clarity. Even if some method were possible for disentangling ego-bestowed qualities from noemata, grasping the newly baptised object once again would sully it with subjectivity and the transcendental ego's constituting qualities. In denying the transcendental ego and

[12] See Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, op. cit

in thus placing the object in its autonomous or non-constituted position, Sartre moved into a thoroughgoing existentialism, distinguishing every possible being, even the ego, from the existence that is consciousness of such things.

Husserl's intermediary stuff of consciousness

Husserl's transcendental ego watches from its vantage behind consciousness and invariably accompanies it. Being an intentional consciousness, this pure ego must make contact with a reality, a reality it transcends towards and one that is not of itself. Husserl avoids the absolute idealism of a Fichtean epic that pictures reality as of a piece with an absolute ego, an ego that would always find itself wherever it sought, unable to escape from itself or to genuinely find anything other than itself. This dreamlike autophagous is unlikely to subtly supplant Husserl's world thanks to the intentionality of consciousness that entails that I am not whatever I am conscious of. This intentionality thesis also clarifies why the experienced, psychical ego is an object for husserlian consciousness while he calls the transcendental ego 'I myself'. All the same, Husserl's ego leads him into epistemologically troubled waters: how can a transcendental ego reach out and know a reality that is utterly other to itself? Husserl posited an intermediary stuff, a tertium quid, to allow for the interaction of self and world.

This intermediary realm was composed of what Husserl called *hylé,* or

hybrid stuff, which we might understand as raw sensuous stuff. The *hylé* is described as being 'within' consciousness and is able to resemble or to represent the object intended by the ego. This notion implies a raw sensuous 'given' bereft of meaning, the building blocks to which Heidegger objected as unnecessary rubble compared with his direct realism and the idea that the presence of anything to Da-sein entails that it must already be meaningfully interpreted in one way or another (i.e. for Heidegger we can't be presented with meaningless sense data 'stuff' as something present but meaningless from which we then construct a meaningful something corresponding to a reality 'out there'). It seems, with his hyletic conception, that Husserl, does indeed settle for a given detached and abstract world that is prior to all meaning, which subsequent meaning must come from reflection and the intentional moulding of basic data. Hence Husserl talks of 'sensile *hylé'* and 'intentional *morphé*'[13]. His hyletic stuff is the pre-meaning-bestowing stratum, the very raw data that Heidegger discounted as not at all primary but merely as detached theoretical, secondary and derivative of engaged comportment. Husserl leads us to imagine hyletic data as basic material for the transcendental ego and its intentional activities, rather than allowing for an immediate connection with a world presenting characteristics in its own right. Here we have the intentional object as a construct of the transcendental ego's activity upon some raw stuff that is the given content of experience. Thus, in opposition to his original purposes, Husserl can be seen as heading for not the things themselves, but for the principles governing the activity of the transcenden-

[13] *Ideas*, op. cit., p.246.

tal ego, those principles directing the constitution of the object.

Sartre's objection: the opaque entity that destroys free and clear consciousness

Sartre often remarks that that the position of the transcendental ego in Husserl's philosophy is a heavy opacity that weighs down the free movement of consciousness. This transcendental ego is said by Husserl to actively *receive* (as one may receive guests and show them where they might sit) its objects as *contents* into its transcendental field. The idea of consciousness as having contents is not instantly recognisable as problematic, mainly because that is one of the conventional metaphors used when discussing the relation of consciousness to its objects. For Husserl consciousness is like a net drawing in raw stuff to be reconstituted and processed. Consciousness has contents strewn within it. Concerning the relation of consciousness to its objects, Sartre has a different image in (pardon the metaphorical preposition!) mind.

Sartre's alternative has no ego lying in a privileged position behind consciousness or secretly located in its operating centre like some wonderful Wizard of Oz behind a theatrical curtain. There can only be an ego *for* consciousness. In Sartre's description, we *encounter* the ego much, in some respects, as we encounter a desk, or a pain, or another person: all being equally 'out there' with respect to transcendental consciousness. So what or who is left in charge of the housekeeping, who or what is responsible for fashioning the contents (raw stuff) of consciousness if not the 'I myself' of

the transcendental ego? Answer: nothing, nobody. Why? -Because consciousness does not have contents. All content is on the side of the object. Consciousness is not a net to be filled; not some bag; not a box — it is nothing of the sort. Consciousness is not a container. Not only does consciousness, in Sartre's description, contain no transcendental ego, it does not contain anything at all. This is not to suggest that consciousness is empty either, for the very reason that that which cannot contain cannot be held to be empty, it simply isn't a container. So what is it then? How are left to imagine consciousness with Sartre? Sartre asks us to think of spontaneity, of activity transcending towards objects. The desire to somehow picture consciousness leads so often to a betrayal: consciousness as a box; as a computer; as a hydraulic system; as a web of neural cathexes; and so on. Insofar as Sartre provides an image of consciousness at all it is that of a wind blowing towards things.

Sartre aims to restore the original phenomenological notion that for consciousness everything is an object. There can be no stuff that is the fabric for consciousness; consciousness is utterly exhausted in intending what is other. Thus consciousness, for Sartre, *is* intentionality. Thus it is ek-static in that it is always outside itself and never self-contained. The equation of consciousness and intentionality, Brentano's thesis, is to be seen as Sartre's good will in returning to the initial project of phenomenology.

Within Sartre's work consciousness is distinguished from everything else.

The conscious, the intentional, is described as being *pour-soi,* the for-itself, that for which there is meaning, that which has a relation to being and through which nothingness is brought into the world[14]. *En-soi* being, on the other hand, is non-conscious, it is the being of phenomena and it does not ek-sist. The en-soi, in itself, does not stand out in existence, rather it sinks and merges into the plenum of being. It just is.

From here we can go on to see why Sartre believes in the impossibility of the *epochê*. Sartre rejects the aim and the validity of bracketing questions concerning the existence of the external world. If there is no transcendental ego and if consciousness has no contents, then *en-soi* beings quite simply cannot be constituted by the transcendental ego from out of its contents. Sartre is left with *en-soi* entities as discovered with each conscious act. Thus Sartre sometimes calls consciousness a 'revealing intuition' or an intuition of objects *en-soi*. Husserl never 'denied the world like a sophist', or 'doubted it like a sceptic' when he performed the *epochê*, but Sartre affirms that consciousness cannot even suspend affirmation of the real existence of its objects for the important reason that consciousness can never be isolated.

[14] Unlike Heidegger, for whom nothingness is disclosed through anxiety, failure, rebuke, etc., but is not dependent on human reality (see his 'What is Metaphysics?', *Basic Writings,* op. cit.), Sartre holds that through the activities of negation and nihilation human being precedes and 'produces' the possibility nothingness.

The transcendence of the ego

Sartre's *The Transcendence of the Ego* is divided into two main parts, 'The I and the me' and 'The constitution of the ego'. 'The I and the me' begins by asking whether the ego is an inhabitant of consciousness. If the ego were not some resident of consciousness could it nonetheless be, as Kant suggested, a formal principle of unification? Or could it not be the centre of all desires and acts, as some psychologists suggest? Sartre answers these questions in the negative in saying that the ego is, 'neither formally nor materially *in* consciousness: it is outside, *in the world*. It is a being of the world, like the ego of another'[15].

It is plain that Sartre objects to theories asserting the concrete presence of the ego in consciousness. Kant deduced that, 'the "I think" must be able to accompany all my presentations'. But the 'must be able' does not necessitate that an, '*I in fact* inhabits all our states of consciousness and actually effects the supreme synthesis of our experience'[16]. Indeed, it is not for nothing that Kant wrote, "must *be able to*", an otherwise superfluous phrase if an ego actually inhabits each and every state of consciousness. Kant's problematic was to determine the conditions for the possibility of experience. One such condition is that I can always recognise this experience as *mine*. Sartre is complaining of authors who reify the critical conditions. Such people ask what this transcendental ego thing can be in actuality, believing that it may be an existing something that constitutes

[15] Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego,* p. 31, New York: Noonday Press, 1957.
[16] Ibid., p. 32.

empirical consciousness. Sartre is not here arguing against Kant, as Kant was not concerned with how an empirical consciousness is in fact constituted. Kant never deduced, neo-Platonically, empirical consciousness from Higher Consciousness. For Kant, transcendental consciousness is a set of conditions necessary for the possible existence of empirical consciousness. The questions that Sartre addressed to transcendental philosophy are:

- Does the 'I think' *actually* accompany all of our representations?
- Does the 'I think' modify the structure of our representations?
- Is the unity of experience effected by the 'I think' or is the synthesis of representations not rather that which allows the possibility of an 'I think'?

Such questions concern matters of fact. Husserl's phenomenology may be seen as helpful in this connection precisely because phenomenology is described as a science of fact proceeding by intuitions that, as Husserl emphasises, 'place us in the presence of the thing'. As Sartre notes, Husserl discovers the transcendental consciousness of Kant and grasps it by the *epoché*. But for Husserl this transcendental consciousness is not some set of logical conditions, it is an existing and absolute fact; a constituting of empirical consciousness and of our world; an 'I' that constitutes the 'me'. Sartre admires Husserl's descriptions showing transcendental consciousness defining its world by 'imprisoning itself in empirical consciousness'[17]. Sartre agrees with Husserl that the psychic and the psycho-physical 'me' is a transcendent object. He is just asking why, above all of this, need we to

[17] Ibid., p.36.

posit a transcendental ego. Without a transcendental ego, the following consequences arise:

- The transcendental field becomes pre-personal
- The ego loses omnipresence and becomes an aspect of the 'me'
- The synthetic unity of experience allows for the 'I think' and not vice versa.
- Utterly impersonal consciousness may be possible: personality need not be a necessary accompaniment of consciousness

A few words are perhaps needed here to help explain the second consequence of the transcendence of the ego. Sartre is saying that his transcendent ego, the 'I' discovered in the world, comprises the 'I' and the 'me'. In his own words, '[t]he 'I' is the ego as the unity of actions. The 'me' is the unity of states and qualities'[18]. 'I' and 'me' are equally transcendent, only consciousness is transcendental. States, actions and qualities are, with the ego, equally transcendent. The state appears, as does the 'I', to reflective consciousness. They are always relative to reflective consciousness. Here we detect a similarity with Kierkegaard's position. Action is transcendent because, 'the reflection which is directed on the consciousness apprehends the total action in an intuition which exhibits it as the transcendent unity of the active consciousness'[19]. Qualities are transcendent objects that represent, 'the substratum of the *Erlebnisse* [⋯]. The relation of the quality to the state (or to the action) is a relation of actualisation [⋯]. Its

[18] Ibid., p. 61.
[19] Ibid., p. 69.

actuality is precisely the state (or the action)'[20]. Where Kierkegaard wrote of the possibility of being in a state of 'unconscious despair', Sartre suggests that one can be in a state and subject to that state but the state is only felt when it is realized in the reflection that gives way to the quality such that the quality is the actualisation of the state. On the topic of reflective consciousness and self-relation Sartre is very close to Kierkegaard. If I seem close sometimes to conflating the concepts of 'self' and 'ego' it is because for these writers the ego is the reflective and intuitive relation of an individual's experience as a self which itself is to be understood as the self-relation of an experiencing being. Although Sartre removes the primacy and necessity of the ego from consciousness, his theory of the ego as apparent during the self-relation of consciousness (and at other times not merely unconscious but non-actual) is remarkably similar to kierkegaard's reflextive theory of self. In both theories we may see the existential theme of the importance of choosing and willing oneself rather than simply taking it for granted that one, everyone, has a natural self. This choice of self requires an examination of life such that without self-reflection one is not yet an authentic individual who embraces responsibility for his or her existence.

All of Sartre's arguments on the status of the ego concern the empirical ego and he suggests that the empirical ego is sufficient to account for our experience of selfhood. A deeper, transcendental ego would, he argues, shatter freedom—the freedom of self-determination and self-interpretation, the freedom of intentional consciousness. Sartre's ego is no more that the,

[20] Ibid., p. 70.

'concrete totality of states and actions which it supports. Undoubtedly it is transcendent to all the states which it unifies, but not as an abstract X whose mission is to unify: rather it is the infinite totality of states and of actions which is never reducible to *an* action or to *a* state'[21]. The ego that Sartre will admit is the experience of a self that is the 'infinite totality' of all that we do and all that we feel.

Travelling a similar path, Husserl approaches this conclusion in his *Logical Investigations*. In this work Husserl proposes that the 'me' is a synthetic and transcendent product of consciousness. However, in *Ideas,* § 57, he has recourse to the transcendental ego qualified such that, 'we shall never stumble across the pure Ego as an experience among others within the flux of manifold experiences'[22]. This transcendental ego is, 'always there', but not as, 'some stolid unshifting experience of a fixed idea' (*Ideas*, § 57). Husserl's pure ego is no abstract principle, but is an ever present and personal 'I myself'. In a footnote to this section, Husserl acknowledges his change in position since the *Investigations*: 'In the *Logical Investigations* I took up on the question of the pure Ego a sceptical position which I have not been able to maintain as my studies progressed'.

The unity of experience

As we have noticed, Husserl, in a kantian move, justifies the transcendental

[21] Ibid., p. 74.
[22] *Ideas*, § 57, op. cit.

ego by virtue of its powers of explaining the unity and individuality of experience. Each percept and cogito refers back, so the story goes, to the ever-present and continuous transcendental ego, thus consciousness derives its coherent unity. It follows that it is the pure ego that produces inwardness. But Sartre contests that phenomenology has no need of this story. Consciousness, goes his refrain, is defined by intentionality and by intentionality consciousness transcends itself. This transcendence, in the sense of going beyond itself such that it is what it is not and is not what it is (to use the language of *Being and Nothingness*) is the virtue by which consciousness unifies itself by always evading itself. Because consciousness is always at least non-thetically conscious of being conscious (of things in the world), experience is unified. Firstly, there is a sense of continuity in so far as shifting experiences all have the quality of consciousness of being conscious. Secondly, the object helps in establishing this coherent unity. The coherence of the world lends itself to the coherence of consciousness. In a world other than a *kosmos* of any sort of order, a world of pure chaos, wherein things, if they could even be called such, disappeared almost as soon as they appeared, where qualities like colour were not bound to forms, where cause and effect meant nothing at all, experience, if possible at all, would be terribly incoherent. In fact the counterpart of experience in the world of pure chaos would be so incoherent that there could neither survive nor exist selves as we know them.[23] Phenomenology unshackled from the transcendental and constituting ego restores independence to the things

[23] Although Lewis Carroll's wonderful world through the looking glass is not so chaotic, tricks are played there with cause and effect and object constancy, so I often admire Alice's staunch mental resole in her simple way of coping with her existence there.

themselves. A transcendental ego theory is in danger of reverting to psychologism. Sartre noted that, 'the unity of a thousand active consciousnesses by which I have added, do add and shall add two and two to make four, is the transcendent object "two and two make four"'[24]. The transcendent objects, in the world, the world of logic, the world of action, of friends and family and in the familiar world of tables and chairs, lend unity and coherence to experience. A repetition of the calculation does not alter this transcendent object, thinking does not *make it so,* cannot make it not so. Wittgenstein made the same point: ' Knowledge in mathematics: here one has to keep reminding oneself of the unimportance of the "inner process" or "state" and ask, "Why should it be important? What does it matter to me?"[25].

What is at stake is the independence of the object and the possibility of, for Sartre, a unified consciousness without recourse to a doubling of the ego into the transcendental, god-like, 'I' behind the scene. For Sartre the object is transcendent to consciousness, so Sartre suggests that the object contributes to the unity of consciousness by furnishing it with a world that that has some coherence and predictability. The reality that one experiences is not a surreality utterly intransigent to a general world-view or existential stance. So much can account for the endurance of impressions and ideas around certain themes and objects, but a principle of unity within duration is also required. Kant's answer to this problem involved transcendental apperception: the a priori unity of consciousness that gives coher-

[24] *The Transcendence of the Ego*, p. 38.
[25] Wittgenstein, L, *On Certainty*, § 38.

ence and meaning to experience and is contrasted with empirical apperception and self-consciousness. For Kant's retention of personal identity and, importantly, for the possibility of the experience of duration, there must be perpetual syntheses of past consciousnesses and present consciousness. In his *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*[26], Husserl has consciousness unify itself with 'transversal intentionalities', consciousness intending prior consciousnesses and expecting future ones, knitting together protention (expectation) and retention (memory). The distinguishing feature of duration in this account is that the stream-of-consciousness has a 'double intentionality'. Transversal intentionalities are thus the concrete retentions and protentions of consciousness. Thus consciousness refers perpetually to itself.

Sartre emphasised the individuality of consciousness, as Heidegger emphasised Da-sein's 'mineness', in the fact that it can't be divided or shared. While Heidegger emphasised this point by stressing that nobody else can die for us, Sartre noted that nobody can really do anything for us, whether it is loving, thinking, feeling and so on. The threat of the heideggerian 'They' is that we accept its public interpretations and move away from the possibility of authentically being ourselves. While we are in constant danger of merely behaving just as 'they' behave, and while we may often choose this as a way of evading the anxiety of authentic existence, the bad faith of such semi-somnambulant evasion of authenticity is always felt with a shabby feeling that recognizes inauthenticity. Any consciousness is

[26] Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness,* p. 105, New York, 1936.

a synthetic and individual totality separate from other consciousnesses. The ego, therefore, is only an expression of inwardness for Sartre, not a condition of it. Sartre argues, that phenomenology does not need a unifying and individualising ego. Furthermore, consciousness and its syntheses make possible the unity and personality of the ego. Not only is this ego superfluous as a necessary condition, it is a hindrance to free experience. Sartre saw a pure ego as dividing consciousness from itself by sliding, 'into every consciousness like an oblique blade'[27]. The existence of consciousness is an absolute as consciousness is, thetically or non-thetically, conscious of itself. It is self-aware insofar as it is consciousness of a transcendent object; this object is opaque and so consciousness is purely consciousness of being conscious of that object.

This consciousness of consciousness is (except in reflective consciousness), non-thetic, that is to say, it is not for itself its own object. It posits and grasps the object. Here there is no room for an ego: the ego is not the object of consciousness unless the awareness reflects on the transcendent unity of states, actions and qualities that the transcendent ego stands for. Sartre wanted to retain the idea of consciousness as a non-substantial absolute, absolute in that it is conscious of itself in being conscious of its objects. In drinking the hot tea I am already aware that I am aware through my awareness (of drinking the hot tea). I do not, unless in a reflective thetical and subsequent consciousness, turn this direct self-awareness into an object for consciousness.

[27] *The Transcendence of the Ego*, p. 40.

For the later Husserl, the transcendental ego is a necessary structure of consciousness, an opaque, personal ego that is elevated into an absolute. Instead of a, 'light, translucent' consciousness we are, 'in the presence of a monad'[28]. Consciousness becomes heavy, 'loaded down', tied to a pure ego. Without the pure ego as an omnipresent necessity, consciousness is a freedom that transcends itself at all times. Sartre thus dignifies consciousness with the paradoxical title of, 'the absolute existent *by virtue of inexistence*'[29]. Phenomenology is utterly changed, indeed diminished, if the ego is no longer only a relative existent, an object for consciousness.

Remarks on Sartre's non-egological description of consciousness

Sartre tried to show that the unity of experience did not necessarily require a pure ego as the effective agency of this synthesis. He showed that the transcendent object, as transcendent, could contribute by giving a focus to consciousness and by their persistence (tables and chairs don't just vanish like Hume's purse of gold left at Charing Cross and two and two always make four). He also demonstrated the contribution that Husserl's transversal intentionalities made to the unity of experience. However, observant readers have been quick to criticise Sartre by saying that these factors are not sufficient in accounting for the unity of experience. For example, Peter Caws remarks that Sartre's account fails to fully explain the unity of consciousness[30]. Caws' comment is apt if one considers only

[28] Ibid., p. 42.
[29] Ibid., p. 42.
[30] Caws, P., *The Arguments of the Philosophers: Sartre*, Ch. IV,Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.

these two factors of the synthesis. However, in *The Transcendence of the Ego,* Sartre was primarily concerned with the possibility that the pure ego as synthesising agent is in principle replaceable. In Sartre's later works, which Caws had read, we get something closer to his bigger picture. Michael Sukale thinks that, 'it is the "permanence" of the object which is the necessary and sufficient condition for the unity of consciousness' in Sartre's account[31]. If this were the case then Sartre is justly criticised. It is not, however, the case that Sartre put forward a list of sufficient conditions in order to account for the unity of experience; his goal was simply to argue that the pure ego was not a necessary condition of intentional consciousness.

It may be argued that in rejecting the pure ego there is nothing left to retain a personal identity through time: who indeed is left to pursue Sartre's points to their conclusions once the 'I myself' of the pure ego is rejected? Who is left is the transcendent 'I', the infinite untotalised (untotalised because I am still living and expecting) totality of states, actions and qualities. This transcendent ego is closely linked to Sartre's notion of transcendence as freedom. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre, in a move reminiscent of Kierkegaard's recourse to the finitude and infinitude of necessity and possibility respectively, contrasts factitity with transcendence. Facticity refers to what is understood as 'given' in a person's biography: my height, weight, date of birth and so on. Transcendence refers to a 'going beyond' the 'given' in order to desire, imagine, or

[31] Sukale, M., 'Sartre and the Cartesian Ego', *Comparative Studies in Phenomenology*, p. 174, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976.

otherwise pursue a state of affairs that is not so 'given'. Sartrean consciousness demonstrates this transcendence while the transcedent ego is an object for consciousness to which, again echoing Kierkegaard, consciousness can relate. For Kierkegaard, the self is not a natural given but is the result of self-relation. A difference in Kierkegaard's and Sartre's accounts is that Kierkegaard's self is spirit. In self-relating Kierkegaard's individual is taking possession of his or her self at a higher level than that of consciousness. This spirited self-relation brings the individual to the pathos of self-possession,understanding ethical responsibility and existence before his or her Constituting Power (God, nature, environment, society —whichever your metaphysic decrees) as a relation that cannot be shirked once recognised. Sartre does understand, however, that consciousness is involved in what he calls 'the circuit of self' in that the transcendental field of consciousness is involved in the evolution of an axiological structure shaping meaning in the world. In some respects we can see that non-thetic self-consciousness occupies the place in Sartre's philosophy that self-relating spirit occupied in Kierkegaard's.

For Sartre, the ego is the principle of the series of past actions, states and qualities. Others can know this pattern as well as myself, maybe even better than I do. On hearing this account of a transcendent ego, one might well fear a disjunction at the heart of personhood, a fear that as our character is not immanent we could become completely opposite in character to what we have been. This fear is genuine. Sartre is well known for expounding this idea. It is also this same fear of the lack of an immanent self that Kierkegaard recognises in the possibility of the

negative infinite self, the possibility that because I am freely given unto myself in self-possession, determination and self-interpretation, than I can shake off any prior commitment or way of being and choose a totally different course in self-determination. Sartre conception of this kind of freedom is intimately bound with his insight that consciousness would be loaded down if it were to suffer the opacity of a pure ego.

However, while Sartre removes the ego from its formerly conceived position of immanence within consciousness, this dethroning does not scatter the personality like chaff in the wind. Indeed, the transcendence of the ego better accounts for its unity. The essence of a person is the ever-growing past of his or her actions, etc.. Sartre provides us not with a totality, but a totalising movement effected by transcendent objects and a factical series of, as Heidegger would say, thrown historicity and anticipated possibility.

Freedom not weighed down by a pure ego

Sartre often employs the metaphors of darkness and heaviness in describing the transcendental ego. It is said to 'weigh down' consciousness and to make it 'opaque'. This is simple enough to understand given Sartre's understanding of the ego as created by a synthesis of actions, states and qualities. His ego is the ideal unity of states and actions and not the real, coagulated totality of consciousness. Sartre's ego is not the generator of consciousness, nor is it its pilot. It is this that leads to Sartre's conception of radical freedom and to his understanding of the the general fear of this

freedom. Towards the end of *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre recounts a case history from the French psychiatrist Janet as an illustration of this freedom and its concomitant fear:

> 'A young bride was in terror, when her husband left her alone, of sitting at the window and summoning passers-by like a prostitute. Nothing in her education, in her past, or in her character could serve as an explanation of such a fear. It seems to us that a negligible circumstance (reading, conversation, etc.) had determined in her what one might call "a vertigo of possibility". She found herself monstrously free, and this vertiginous freedom appeared to her *at the opportunity* for this action that she was afraid of doing. But this vertigo is comprehensible only if consciousness suddenly appeared to itself as infinitely overflowing in its possibilities the *I* that ordinarily serves as unity.'[32]

The bride's ego was not a limit. It was not a brick wall or a set of rail tracks. Possibility was not limited by her ego. Her anxiety came with the understanding that her freedom overflowed her ego. When Sartre speaks of a transcendental ego 'loading down' consciousness, as making it 'opaque' or as 'dividing it from itself', he is noting that if the ego *were* the all-seeing and constituting pilot of consciousness, then we would not have this kind of freedom that so overflows the ego itself. Then we would have something like a nature from which we could not deviate, with set or acquired

[32] Ibid., p. 100.

inclinations, tastes and so forth that impose limits on freedom and possibility. If this were the case, then the young bride, so much troubled that she consulted a psychiatrist, could never have for a moment worried that she could be unfaithful. Sartre speculates that, 'perhaps the very role of the ego is to mask from consciousness its very spontaneity'[33] in order to flee from itself and to hide in something transcendent, determinate and *en-soi*.

If our possibilities are not shackled by a pure ego, then are we faced with the negative infinite freedom described by Kierkegaard in *The Sickness Unto Death*, an unmanageable excess of possibility unable to commit to one possibility over any other? What about physical constraints? As Sartre asks, 'Can I choose to be tall if I am short?'[34]. He noted that, 'it is necessary to obey nature in order to command it; that is to insert my action into the network of determinism'[35]. But the important point is not that the 'coefficient of adversity', as Bachelard would say, always faces us, but that physical constraints are only ever interpreted and created by ourselves on the basis of a chosen project. We can discern similarities between Sartre's ego and its constitution through self-reflection and Kierkegaard's self and its essential self-relation. Identification with ones ego, in Sartrean philosophy, is a way of trying, in bad faith, to escape from the drastic possibilities of radical freedom. Also in Kierkegaard's philosophy, such identification would be a false self, the real self not being some arbitrary

[33] Ibid, p.100.
[34] *Being and Nothingness,* op. cit. p. 481.
[35] Ibid., pp. 481-482.

commitment to this or that abstract description of a personality and its duties but rather being a serious choice to take responsibility for one's existence in its transcendent (infinite) and in its necessary (finite) aspects.

The place of emotions after the transcendence of the ego

Sartre's position of a consciousness unimpeded by a transcendental ego led to perhaps the most radical accounts ever given of human freedom. Sartre's account of freedom describes us as utterly responsible for our selves, our possibilities and even, which position he certainly held in *Existentialism and Humanism*, for the entire world. Far from being pessimistic, Sartrean existentialism, entailed that the individual can always do something to assert freedom, even against the entire world. Emerging from the struggle French resistance against the Nazis, this position abhorred quietism as positive cowardice. Until Sartre, almost all accounts of emotion worked on the premise that we are passive to the passions. Kierkegaard and Heidegger did much to show that moods and emotions are importantly disclosive and that they are vitally necessary in 'getting the world to matter' to us. But even then we are left with the impression that moods happen to us, that we 'find ourselves' in a mood. Sartre's strong position on freedom, developed in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, confirmed in him the enormous scope of individual responsibility. This position of a free and perfectly transparent consciousness cannot accept that we are simply passive to our emotions and that we are not responsible for them. It was not until Sartre that anybody had seriously proposed that the individual is

directly responsible for the emotions that others would assume he or she passively suffered.

In his *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*[36], Sartre presents the case that we are responsible for our emotions and that they are to be thought of as active operations on the world conferring meaning on things and thus constituting the world as significant. This acceptance of emotions as being *my* responsibility begins with an acceptance of Heidegger's statement that in each case Da-sein is recognisably *mine*. Thus Sartre writes that, '[i]t is this consciousness that must be interrogated; and what gives value to its answers is that it is *mine*.'[37] Sartre's approach is phenomenological, interrogating the field of consciousness unified in each instance by its *being mine*. Immediately, Sartre distinguishes his inquiry from any positivist psychological approach. According to Sartre, the psychologist is a fact-collector who has no guiding principle with which to unite the various phenomena relating to human being. As Sartre notes: 'To wait upon the *fact* is, by definition, to wait upon the isolated; it is to prefer, positively, the accident to the essential, the contingent to the necessary, disorder to order. It is to discard, in principle, the essential as something in the future — "that is for later on, when we have collected enough facts". The psychologists do not notice, indeed, that it is just as impossible to attain the essence by heaping up the accidents, as it is to arrive at the number one by the continued addition of figures to the right of 0.999. Because, in opposing to positivist psychology, Sartre is beginning with the 'synthetic totality that

[36] Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions,* [1939], London: Methuen & Co., 1962.
[37] Ibid., p. 22.

man is'[38], he can agree with Heidegger that it is possible, 'in every human attitude — in emotion, for example [⋯], to rediscover the whole of human reality, for emotion is the human reality assuming itself and "emotionally-directing" itself towards the world'[39]. Sartre clarifies his aim as arriving at the 'transcendent essence of emotion as an organised type of consciousness'[40]. Sartre objects that the positivist psychologist can never arrive at the consideration of emotion as meaningful activity if he or she expects all of the answers to the inquiry to come from outside of consciousness, consciousness as that transcendental field which is always *mine*. Sartre's inquiry into the emotions will therefore emerge from an understanding of human reality that sees the individual as 'assuming' or 'choosing' him or herself in each attitude, the individual is then self-responsible, living his or her body and giving significance to the world. In 'emotionally directing' himself or herself towards the world the emotions will be understood as active intentionality and not as passions to which are prone.

Like Heidegger, who argued that one is always in a mood, even if the mood is that of indifference, and that attunement is eqiprimordial with understanding in our being-there, Sartre sees emotions as necessary conditions of consciousness and not at all as irrational irruptions that we could do without even for an instant. To understand emotions as an organised form of human existence is to see them as ways of inhabiting the world and of making it make sense. It is this emotional engagement with reality which makes us responsible for our existence, 'instead of receiving it from outside,

[38] Ibid., p. 25.
[39] Ibid., p. 25.
[40] Ibid., p. 23.

as a pebble does.'[41]

Responsible for our existence, we must always *assume* our being, which is to accept that we must, as Kierkegaard said, 'choose ourselves'. The necessity of assuming ourselves in self-possession, a necessity which certainly goes as far as being responsible for our emotions, is the re-iteration of Kierkegaard's concept of existence. Seeing emotions as an organised form of consciousness is to understand them as intentional — they must always be about some object for consciousness. While Kierkegaard understood emotions and moods as ultimately *about* the self, Sartre emphasises their role as transfiguring objects (other than the self) in the world in the midst of, and as a part of, my dealings with them. Sartre saw emotions as world-transforming in that they transfigure objects by altering their significance in an intentional act and the self would be, in due process, constituted in part by the history, style and manner of these emotional intentionalities. For Sartre, the self is a transcendent ego composed somewhat like a melody, a metaphor he employs in *The Transcendence of the Ego*. After one note (read action, state or quality) a melody could move in any direction and become any style. After a few notes the melody is still by no means fixed. Indeed, nothing is to stop a melody from dramatically altering in style at any moment and any number of times in its composition. The composer may even abandon this melody and begin another, but it remains true, nonetheless, that the melody was composed. A style or pattern of emotional intentionalities would then go towards constituting the self. Kierkegaard, however, in holding onto the idea that

[41] Ibid., p. 24.

ultimately emotions always refer to the self, is arguing not that emotions work towards constituting the self, but rather that they are always qualitatively felt signs of how distant we are from ourselves in our manner of existence. The state of despair, for example, and how it feels is *about* the fact that we are somehow denying ourselves and refusing to take responsibility for and possession of our existence; refusing by, for example, escaping into the fantastic imagination of possibility alone or by denying possibility and hiding in an acceptance of determinism or fatalism. For Sartre, an emotion is not absorbed in itself but is always and indissolubly bound to its object such that the affective subject and the affective object are inextricable. In Kierkegaard's understanding, however, while emotions may well be bound to worldly objects as ways of revealing, constituting, or rearranging their significance, they always have a qualitative hue or tone that refers back to the self from which one is alienated by evasion and the lack of commitment to take existence and the choosing of oneself seriously. Thus in the first section of *Either/Or* we acknowledge the pleasure that the young aesthete gains from his lifestyle, but we also notice that his pleasure is plagued by dreadful shades of melancholy, anxiety and despair. In *The Sickness Unto Death*, despair is understood as the pain that arises from the refusal to choose oneself; other emotions pleasant, or otherwise, will themselves be subject to the bitter aftertaste permeating through the state of despair, disturbing all aesthetic sensibility with its quality.

Emotion as magical activity

In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre divides all intentionalities, all acts of consciousness, into the reflective (positional or thetic) and the non-reflective (non-positional or non-thetic). Non-reflective acts of consciousness are directly concerned and do not involve the redirection of consciousness upon itself. Without direct reflection of consciousness upon itself in a thetic manner, the ego is absent from consciousness. In non-reflective consciousness we are directly conscious of the object on which consciousness is focussed and we are *non-positionally* and transparently conscious of the structure of the intentional act as being imagining, thinking, perceiving, wishing, and so on. In reflective consciousness, it is the *consciousness itself* which is in focus.

Sartre uses this distinction in his *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* as he describes emotions as being unreflective. We should at once see that this description endangers Kierkegaard's attestation that moods ultimately and always refer to the self and that it is the self that they will always somehow be about. So for Sartre, the emotions, as intentional acts, are not characterised by the self but rather they themselves pre-exist and contribute, as past states and qualities, to the composition of the tone, tempo and melody that is, in Sartre's metaphor, the constitution of the self. We do not, however, need to see Sartre's description of emotion as unreflective as contradicting Kierkegaard. Rather Sartre's position shows how it is possible for a person to act and feel in the world without necessarily doing so with the aim and consciousness of him or herself as the chosen project

and authentic unity of his or herself. This is shown to be possible (for Kierkegaard this would be the possibility of self-evasion and losing oneself by refusing to choose oneself) by Sartre because in emotion the acting consciousness is not theticaly self-conscious. A thetically self-conscious emotional relation to oneself would need to be a deliberate turning of consciousness to the self as an object, which transcendent object is the unity and personality or character of all of my intentionalities: this deliberate (and not logically necessary) relation to myself amounts to grasping myself as having to be chosen. Kierkegaard's position may thus be insightfully unravelled by Sartre's phenomenology.Another similarity in Kierkegaard's and Sartre's positions on the relation of consciousness and ego is that for both, the egoic self is a creation of self-reflection. For Kierkegaard, self as spirit is essentially self-relation and for Sartre, the ego only exists in those moments when consciousness turns towards itself.

To see emotion as intentional is to see it as a purposive and deliberate directing of consciousness as an action upon the objects of consciousness. Sartre sees emotion as praxis, a way of intending, apprehending and understanding the world; emotion bestows a value or significance on things. How does emotion act upon objects? An emotive style of, say, cool indifference with a hint of calm confidence, does not help when 'all paths are barred' to the familiar ways of directing oneself about the world, so an emotional action changes the way we perceive the world and its qualities. As a whole, life becomes a dream, or a challenge, or occurs under the presence of the gods, or one find oneself abandoned, or the world utterly absurd, or cruel, or just a game. We can make the grapes sour, we can

make the demanding boss amusing or pointless, we can make the alarm clock's or telephone's ringing 'urgent'. Emotions are epiphanal, they are transfigurative through altering significance and they effect a magical transubstantiation by acting at a distance, yet it is a distance that is involved in the essence of the object in attempting to alter the meaning of its essence or of some aspect in the object. As Sartre points out, when we are terrified we are not recognising certain sensations as constitutive of terror. Rather we are immediately aware of the situation as terrifying. Terror casts the situation. The world takes on a new complexion. This feeling of terror is my relation with the world based on my interpretations of events in terms of value and significance.

Enchanting the Umwelt

Sartre's model of having a world is not precisely the Heideggerian model of being-in-the-world wherein the subject-object divide is rendered meaningless. The model Sartre uses is comes from *Umwelten* theory, which theory also influenced Heidegger's theory, although neither directly acknowledge it as a source of their theories, *Umwelten* theory was founded by the Estonian born German physiologist Jakob von Uexküll. *Umwelt* is German for 'surrounding world' and von Uexküll used this as a concept and guiding image in his studies of the life world of animals[42]. The *Umwelt* should be understood as the surrounding world of the organism, somewhat

[42] Von Uexküll, Jakob, A stroll through the worlds of animals and men: a picture book of invisible worlds, [1934], *Semiotica*, (89), pp. 318-394, 1992.

like a soap-bubble in which the living organism is the centre. *Umwelten* theory holds not that the boundary of an organism is its skin, shell or scales, but rather that its periphery is the perimeter of its subjective world. This notion implies that it is impossible to understand any living creature unless one also understands the internal relations between the organism and its world. Each *Umwelt* is different and no *Umwelt* should ever be thought of simply as an environment because the *Umwelt* contains many non-environmental aspects. For example, territory can be an aspect of the *Umwelt*. Two rival male sticklebacks will have different territiories and these borders will be disputed at times. While the territory may be very clear indeed to the stickleback, it is impossible for the investigator to do more than guess at where one territory begins and another ends until he or she can observe the behaviour of the two fish, which behaviour then reveals the territories and other *Umwelten* phenomena. The philosophical import of von Uexküll's theory is that of the inevitability of subjectivity or apperception such that with everything experienced we also experience aspects of ourselves.

Von Uexküll's position is inherently Kantian and Sartre will import some of this in using the *Umwelt* as a model in his theory of the emotions. Von Uexküll wrote that: 'All reality is subjective experience. This must form the major fundamental understanding in biology as well […] With this recognition we are standing on the solid ground which was uniquely prepared by Kant to support the edifice of all the natural sciences. Kant has placed the subject called man in opposition to the objects, and has outlined the basic principles according to which the objects are formed in

our mind.

The task of biology is to expand the result of Kant's research along two lines: (1) To consider the role of our body, particularly our perceptual organs and the central nervous system and (2) to study the relationship of other subjects (animals) to their objects.'[43]

The world of desire, of personal significance, innumerable worlds of subtle differences and personal textures. These worlds are not populated by epistemata, by facts and objects of knowledge, but by the sensitively significant foci of personal concern. One is here reminded of Nietzsche's parody of the idea that we can simply and passively receive experience of the world: 'the doctrine of the Immaculate Perception'. For Sartre, everybody's world has a unique flavour, texture, quality. Some world's glow under a benevolent aspect, others seem positively dyspeptic, galling and bitter. Other worlds are clear, cool and apparently mood free, yet this is their very guiding mood. It is when these main keynotes are disturbed that emotion becomes apparent as a change of emotion. As Sartre says, '[w]hen the paths traced out become too difficult, or when we see no path, we can no longer live in so urgent and difficult a world. All the ways are barred. However, we must act. So we try to change the world, that is, to live as if the connection between things and their potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by magic.'[44] In its desperation in the face of a difficult, almost impossible situation, consciousness transforms

[43] Ibid.
[44] *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, op. cit., p. 63.

itself in its qualitative aspect in order to change its otherwise intransigent object. Thus emotion is conceived by Sartre as a way of transforming the world by 'magic'.

The mood of biting sarcasm transforms the arguments of the disputant into an object to be forcefully shattered. Resignation, optimism, indefatigability, any attitude that one can take up in the face of any situation will always, according to Sartre, incorporate the transformatively engaged assistance of the emotions. Sartre uses Aesop's fable of the fox who could not reach the grapes on the vine as an example of what he means by the magic of emotion. The fox could not reach the grapes, one moment ago so desirable, so he goes away complaining that they are still too sour to be picked! While Sartre's descriptions do well to show moods as all-pervasive in their world-transformative aspect, it seem to me that he focuses too much on examples of emotions used when all else fails. One can read Sartre and be justified in thinking that emotions happen only now and again and only when rational telic activity has come to an impasse and is rendered impotent. Sartre shows emotions as being the last ditch cowboys called in at the last minute to bodge a quick change in the world without too much effort. Sartre's position suffers where Heidegger's does not in that while Sartre asked us to consider an extremely novel suggestion (that we in fact are responsible for our emotions and not just passive to them) he still did not operate entirely within the broadened concept of mood and emotion being a necessary aspect of every instance of consciousness, be it rational reflection or any other instance. Everything we do matters to us in one way or another, even if it leaves us entirely cold, this being left cold is still

a way of being affected and is therefore still a mode, or mood, of concern.

In Heidegger, the presence of the emotion is at all times discernible. In Sartre, it appears in the face of the impossible, in the emergency. Sartre does, nevertheless, provide some insights not given by Heidegger on the subject of the emotions. With Sartre we first ask ourselves if we are not indeed so free and self-responsible that this freedom and responsibility may extend so deeply as to our very feelings and passions. While Sartre continues to work with Heidegger's understanding of attunement as disclosive, he carries this further and asks if it is not also transformative, in that it positively effects a change in the world by effecting a change in *my* world. This possibility is only latent in Heidegger, in his concepts of being-with-others and of public interpretedness. If I accept a public interpretation of the too high grapes as being sour then the magical transformation of the grapes in *their* world has also effected a change in *my* world. Avoiding the use of language hinging on the subject-object distinction and the possibility of different subjective worlds, Heidegger instead talks about the public interpretation of the world by the they-self.

The Magic of the Magical World

Sartre contrasts the effectiveness of the emotions with the effectiveness of what Heidegger described as the network of instrumentality. For Heidegger, the everyday way of doing things focuses on objects as instrumental: a hammer is for banging nails. This world is characterised

by instrumentality: I bang the hammer in order to fasten the wooden plank in order to keep up the roof in order to keep out the rain in order to keep me healthy in order to sustain my being. Each instrument refers to the totality of instruments and instrumentality which itself refers back to myself in my being. Heidegger describes this in 'The Worldhood of the World' (Pt. 1, div. 1, § 3 of *Being and Time*). In Sartre's magical world, this network of instruments disappears. Heidegger noticed that the instrumentality of the object is only apparent in itself as an aspect for our attention when the object is faulty. Otherwise we just pick it up and use it transparently. Sartre adds that when the possibilities of instrumental action become more difficult and desperate we may well drop the instrument and choose to magically act on the world through emotionally modified consciousness.

I think that it is a pity that Sartre often describes emotions as a degraded form of consciousness. Yet his descriptions are often so compellingly written and beautifully observed. In *Being and Nothingness*, he writes, for example, of desire as a clogging of consciousness (Pt. 3, ch. 3) that transforms clear and transparent consciousness into an almost thing-like, muddy disturbance. In his close analysis of the meaning of the contingency of existence in *Nausea*, on the other hand, he showed that pervasive moods can bring into sharper focus the urgency importance of coming to terms with the significance of existence and with the world. There is a Cartesian bent to Sartre in that he is often guided by the notion of consciousness as being a clear and distinct grasp of its objects and, sometimes despite his own theories, he can describe emotions as a degradation of this

consciousness. Sartrean emotions refer not so much to the self (unlike Kierkegaard's passions which, while they may feel as though they are tearing apart the sufferer, act as a call to becoming one's authentic self) as to one's choice of world. One's emotions, for Sartre, constitute the kind of world in which one lives and the meaning and values that it has. This is, of course, extremely relevant to the self, but this self is a self which is secondary to the chosen world. This self will grow and develop with the chosen world, which world has primacy over the transcendent self. For Sartre, the important thing was to act in the world, these actions would then constitute ones values and moral character. One does not first begin as a hero or as a coward (or say to oneself, 'I choose to be a hero/coward') and then act accordingly; it is ones actions which tell the truth about moral character. A student went to Sartre for advice during the war: Should he stay and protect his beloved mother, or join his compatriots in armed resistance? He wanted to treat others as ends and not means, but his dilemma was that if he stayed with his mother, he would be treating the members of the resistance as means, yet if he fought with them, he would have to abandon his place at his mother's side. Feeling cannot be consulted as a guide for action because feeling is formed by the deeds that one does. This was Sartre's advice to the young man: 'You are free, therefore choose-that is to say, invent. No rule of general morality can show you what you ought to do: no signs are vouchsafed in this world.'[45]

Sartre talked of emotion as an embedded consciousness that is very rarely

[45] Existentialism and *Humanism*, online sourse, http://www.marxists.org/refrence/archive/sarte/works/exist/sartre.htm

a reflective self-consciousness. As Sartre emphasised in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, intentional consciousness concerns the way in which we apprehend the world but it entails no necessary apprehension of ourselves beyond a non-positional consciousness. Someone may be angry and assume a relation of anger to a situation without being reflectively aware that he or she is angry. What the person is angry about is the focus object of consciousness and not the (angry) consciousness itself. This point relates to Sartre's more general point concerning pre-reflective and pre-objective levels of being. The intellectual activities traditionally associated with consciousness, such as reflection, judgement, interpretation presuppose, as Heidegger also argued, a prior or at least an equiprimordial level of emotively meaningful experience. Reflection requires something significant to reflect upon, judgement some concern to judge, etc. This points to the existence of a pre-intellectual level of being-in-the-world preceding these cognitive operations. But does this not imply a great difficulty concerning our ability to be transparent to ourselves? Not really we already take a position to the world prior to any reflective awareness that we may have of ourselves and the world. But at the same time, the qualitative feel of our unreflective consciousness is itself our non-positional and immediate consciousness of being a conscious existence relating to the world and to self. Far from being an obstacle to self-transparency, emotional existence is an immediacy so immediate that it need not be grasped in reflection, which is fortunate because it can be grasped in reflection or otherwise. Indeed, it is our emotional being that allows for the possibility of reflective existence. We exist in, through and by way of our emotions.

Concluding Remarks: The Internal Relations of Self, World and Mood.

I mentioned above that in *Umwelt* theory it is implied that it is impossible to understand the living creature unless one also grasps the internal relations between it and its world. This statement applies equally to Da-sein and its world and to the Kierkegaardian self, its moods and its relations to its world. I do not here allude to the theory of internal relations expounded by absolute idealism typified by the idea that if one wished to know and understand thoroughly why a certain person's hair was red, then he or she must in the process come to know and to understand the entire universe. The idea is familiar in Tennyson's plucking the 'flower in the crannied wall', whose roots involve a connection with everything, or in Umberto Eco's example of the unlimited semiosis of a person who only knows a few words of a new language being trapped in a dictionary: the person will end up reading the entire dictionary trying to fully understand the first word that she finds. No, this is not the kind of internal relations theory to which I refer. What I identify as the *Umwelt* or transcendental notion of internal relations makes the limited claim that any being that has a world to which it relates and is oriented can only be properly understood as being-in-the-world. The hyphens in the English translation *being-in-the-world* serve aptly to signify these internal relations. The idea is that 'world', 'being' and 'self' are internally related concepts. This series of essays has looked at how moods disclose and transform world and self insofar as moods can be considered as a manner of the relating to itself and to the world of that concerned, magical, practical, emotional being who understands being by being concerned about its own being. The limited

application of the theory of internal relations that I think is relevant here is that world, self and mood are internally related because their relations are already embedded in their definitions. Heidegger argued that understanding and affectedness are equiprimordial; that understanding always has its mood and that feeling already understands (e.g. the *feeling* of bereavement is already an *understanding* of death). These concepts refer to one another and require one another. We may see how world, self and mood are internally related, each logically requiring the other two. I am not asserting that the relations between the objects that go to make up the world must also be internally related. One can still conceive of the salt and the pepper, the table and the chair, the salt and the table and so on as being externally related while holding that the existentials— as Heidegger calls the Da-sein-analytical counterpart of categories— of world, self and mood are internally related.

For Sartre, emotions are a magical performance, an invocation, a liturgy uttering the transformation of the world. Emotions reveal or transform the significance of entities as 'attractive', 'repulsive', 'threatening', and so on. For Sartre, however, human emotion exhibits a freedom entailing that the individual is responsible for his or her emotions as actions on, or active perceptions of, the world. For Sartre emotion as action on the world is to be seen as an alteration of the world by changing the quality of consciousness, by coagulating consciousness, as Sartre would say, with qualitative and significant tones and textures. An example from Sartre's writings of a significant texture is *'le visqueux'*, described in *Being and Nothingness*. This notion of a viscous texture accompanies our consciousness of

something 'slimy'. This could be something literally slimy, like an old tree branch pulled from a stagnant pond, or it could be metaphorical, like a greasy handshake or an untrustworthy smile, too ' slick' perhaps. Readers of *Nausea* will recall the sheer physicality Roquentin's nausea, the mood accompanying the sense of the superfluity and absurdity of existence without authentic commitment.

Thus the viscous also points beyond itself, but it also represents a deep human fear, that of our being absorbed by the in-itself. Sartre's examinations of the general and pervasive qualities of consciousness are unparalleled in philosophy, unparalleled not only because of their exquisite description and analysis of meaning, but also because, at least in philosophy, this simply hadn't been done before. Even in literature, for example in Proust, this had never been attempted so consistently and confidently. Simone de Beauvoir described Sartre's excitement when a friend introduced him to phenomenology in a cafe by announcing,"if you are a phenomenologist, you can talk about this cocktail and make philosophy out of it !"

This made Sartre 'pale with emotion. Here was just the thing he had been longing to achieve for years-to describe objects just as he saw and touched them and to extract philosophy from the process.' In her introduction to Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, Mary Warnock notes Sartre's 'careful and obsessive absorption in the actual physical properties of the world, not as a source of scientific laws, but as a source of revelation of the nature of existence itself. Coleridge perhaps more than any other writer in English demonstrated in his detailed description of, for example, the movements of

water the same belief that from the sensible properties of things one could deduce not only *their* true nature, but the true nature of the universe at large.'[46]

Sartre notes that we often describe moral qualities using the terms of physical textures. In English, we can refer to someone as smooth, slippery, rough, hard, soft, fragile, brittle, delicate, course, grating, filthy and so on, without intending any of these words to be taken literally. Such qualities are felt as living metaphors, vividly apprehended and highlighting the importance of touch and contact, real and imagined, in human relations.

Sartre's emphasis on the radical freedom of a 'self-free' consciousness leads to his description of man as a 'useless passion',[47] struggling to be both a pure thing and a freedom in a godlike synthesis (only God, he maintains, can be in-itself-for-itself). For Sartre, fundamental moods such as anguish and nausea disclose freedom, possibility, nothingness, and contingency. The absurdity of a world devoid of meaning until bestowed with human significance led Sartre to feel what he called 'abandonment'. Observing such dark terms as 'anguish', 'nausea','nothingness' and 'abandonment', it would be hasty to judge Sartre as a weary pessimist. One must remember his spirited fight against such quarry as the transcendental ego, the concept of an innate human nature determining our behaviour, quietism, and any absolute moral code enforced from without. With spirit, Sartre sought to defrock all obstacles to our understanding of human reality as free. While anguish, nausea and so on are bleak states, they were acknowl-

[46] Being and Nothingness, op. cit. , p.xiii.
[47] *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit., p. 615.

edged by Sartre as key low points, if you will, that we may not only survive, but triumphantly seize in a full appraisal of human existence as radically free. It is at critical moments strongly perceived in states of despair or anguish that existentialism can reveal the importance of its central concepts: human freedom; choice; commitment; power to create meaning, while it is precisely at these moments, at the portal of nihilism,that other theories may begin to break down or lose relevance and persuasive force.

Both Sartre and Heidegger give penetrating, novel and profound analyses of moods as disclosive, orienting, attuning, inventive and creative. Like Kierkegaard, they see moods as 'infinite' in that they are world-defining: the tonal aspect shift given to the world shows the sensuous infinitude of mood. To attempt to understand another person, and not just superficially under the public interpretation of 'the they' and its procrustean method of comparison and relation, becomes an act of courage involving a leap into divergent realms of feeling and understanding, judgement, morality and understanding not ones own. In doing so could I risk losing my own hard-earned perspectives and 'truths'?

In *The Phenomenology of Sprit*, immediately after his description of the Bacchic, animal mystery of sensuous relations to the world as really being self-consciousness, Hegel argues that the, 'external or singular objects, the absolutely singular entities in their utter uniqueness and particularity, can only be described as universal'[48]. One can point and say, 'This! Here! Now!',

[48] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit. p. 66.

gesticulating at *this* piece of paper, at *that* sunset, but when we try to capture the utter particularity of the sensuous object, language lends us only the complete opposite of what we are looking for- it offers the most universally applicable terms. How paradoxical! Yet Hegel does not argue that this highlights the limits of language. Like some Eleatic, he uses this to uncover sensuous immediacy as essentially unutterable because it is ultimately untrue.

We can, however, take another position and hold that the presence of things in their qualitative aspects through feelings and emotional or mooded relation provides a truer and more fully disclosed, relation to the world than language can disclose: this is the limit and melancholy of poetry and the hope of rhetoric-that language may stir moods but can never disclose what mood alone discloses. With Kierkegaard, we can say that moods provide us with a truer and closer perspective on ourselves. Any access to ourselves as such, would be impossible without mooded attunement.

An ideal and perhaps happily unattainable proximity of lived existence to self and world would be a proximity that became an identity that no longer implies any detachment or a distance, however close. Sartre always stressed the impossibility of our being able to simply *be* ourselves, or to just *be* a part of the world and to participate in it according to the dogma of immaculate perception unpolluted by freedom, desire or distance. This is why Sartre said that we are separated from the world by a secret nothingness, by our free capacity for nihilation[49], which means that we can never

[49] 'Consciousness exists as consciousness by making a nothingness [⋯] arise between

simply be ourselves or just be a natural part of the world. The idea of what I term an existential-essential identity such that my existence would be identical with my self is what Sartre meant by that doomed project of man: the desire to be God — *en-soi-pour-soi*. This doomed goal is a threat to existence, threatening the outstanding mode of existence by which man both stands-out as 'stretched' throughout temporality (holding on to the past, thrusting into the future, never wholly in the present) and always stands, in ek-stasis, outside of himself. Such ek-sistence, as Kierkegaard and Heidegger also note, can occur with greater or lesser perspicuity.

An emphasis on linguistic interpretation, in which the articulations of the linguistic are the only interpretations permissible, will result in the Eleatic illusion that we witnessed when Hegel showed the particularity of the singular experience vanish into the universality of the linguistic concept. An emphasis on logic and on conceptual understanding will diminish perspicuity and sensibility, leading to a form of blindness with regard to self, others, significance and world as components of living experience. Sartre is well known for his descriptions of the bad faith by which we attempt to evade ourselves. We can end up living a lie by playing at one moment on our facticity and at another moment slipping away from this with our transcendence. It appears that an emphasis on the inevitably universalising laws of linguistic articulation (as representative of the many by the one, the word essentially tends towards universality — the linguistic

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it and the object of which it is consciousness. Thus nihilation is that by which consciousness exists. To nihilate is to encase with a shell of non-being. The English word"nihilate"was first used by Helmut Kuhn in his *Encounter with Nothingness*.' *Being and Nothingness*, Key to Special Terminology, pp.662-663.

description of the utterly particular fails and becomes, paradoxically, the universal) is another possible tool of bad faith by which we can hide and hide from the meaning and import of our feelings. Because human reality is radically free, because it is transcendence and is at the same time subject to the factical, our being will always be capable of being untrue and dishonest of dissimulating others and ourselves and of living in bad faith. Our capability of being true and honest and of having integrity and faith is equally guaranteed.

Without needing to posit an unconscious we can linguistically articulate our path away from ourselves and from all that we hold significant so long as we accept as valid only the submissions of rational proposition. As many a poet or storyteller would attest, the particularity of the real is indeed ineffable in its sensuous infinitude. Its not that there aren't enough words, its rather that any word universalises by virtue of its schematic repeatability, its enhanced metaphoric applicability and its conceptual universalising power. The *quale*, on the other hand brings us immediately to the presence of the real. We can choose to live in a skein of words and thereby try to ignore that we can be a self, the potential disclosed through the meaning of our moods, but this wilful evasion will only intensify despair. Moods present the unutterable in their recall of the individual to the self. Periods of contemplation often involve enduring moments feeling the presence of something and getting a feel for its being, its meaning, its value. Contemplation can also focus on a concept, for example, the concept of peace; this kind of contemplation can deepen our understanding of a concept without modifying predicates, analysing usage, and so on.

Contemplative stillness does not move from premises to conclusions; it is more like a plumbing of the depths, or a quiet time of taking stock. Meditation is yet more still. In the opportunity given by their various states of consciousness, moods enable us to live with greater perspicuity. A negative emphasis on the ineffability of moods misses their positive value as an access to self and world in their equiprimordial infinitude. As direct access *par excellence* to self and world, mood does not need to be utterable. But there are many examples of things which do not need to be spoken or written which nevertheless are spoken or written. Mood may add to the utterance, indeed it always does. An utterance may be ironic, loving, humble, afraid and so on; nevertheless, what is qualitatively disclosed through the mood and through emotion is not linguistically articulable. A mood may be and very often is conveyed by words. It is no accident that Aristotle wrote almost nothing of moods in *De Anima*, covering the topic extensively in his *Rhetoric*. Aristotle described how moods can be conveyed almost contagiously through acts of speech and writing. But it is the mood that is kindled in the other. The mood must be kindled in the other, then the other is left, with his or her mood, to discover what is to be thereby disclosed. As R. D. Laing wrote, as the last sentence of his prose poem, 'The Bird of Paradise', 'If I could turn you on, [⋯] I would let you know.' What mood alone discloses, however, cannot by any other means be disclosed. Its immediacy is its ineffability. And that is a part of the mystery darkly familiar to us as our life. In concentrating our existences within the articulation of the repeatable, on the skein of words and on the public interpretations so readily available as the currency of life, feeling, as the disclosure of how things are with us, becomes easier to misinterpret

because its essence is ignored or distorted. What mooded experience discloses is for you to discover, alone. And what you discover can't be directly passed on as tradition in words or even as practice. What is passed on through tradition is a set of ways to articulate a form for the content of experience.

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