

SARTRE'S WAR DIARIES:

PRELUDE AND POSTSCRIPT

The War Diaries (Les Carnets de la drôle de guerre) were a prelude for Sartre, and for us they are a postscript. The *Diaries* are a medley. They combine, usually not in clearly distinct sections, narrative, reactions to people, to public events, and to books, introspective self-analysis and philosophical discourse. They are a unity only in that they are the recorded life of one man over a period of less than four months, but they are incomplete. They are physically incomplete; Sartre's notebooks originally covered the months from mid-September 1939 through March 1940 (with a few desultory entries after that), but only those for most of November-December and February-March have come to light and been published. They are designedly incomplete in two respects: Sartre wrote in them only at his post of duty and not when he was on leave. And he has deliberately omitted details concerning his relations with other people which are essential if we are to understand keypoints in the *Diaries*. Fortunately the published letters written by Sartre at the same date to Simone de Beauvoir fill in the background, and I will be making use of these here.¹

Given this situation, it would be possible for us to look on the *Diaries* as a collection of disparate data which we might use to establish stages in the development of Sartre's philosophy or to augment what we already knew of his biography. Two significant revelations, however, compel us as philosophers to recognize that the *Diaries* offer more than an early rough sketch of what became

¹All translations are my own, but I am providing references for the *Diaries* both for the French text and for the English translation: *C* for the French text and *WD* for the English. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Les Carnets de la drôle de guerre. November 1939-March 1940*, ed. by Arlette Elkaim-Sartre (Paris: Gallimard, 1983). *The War Diaries of Jean-Paul Sartre. November 1939/March 1940*, trans. by Quintin Hoare (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). At the time this paper was written, no translation of the letters had yet appeared. *Lettres au Castor et à quelques autres*, ed. by Simone de Beauvoir. *Vol. I, 1926-1939; Vol. II, 1940-1963* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983).

the philosophy of *Being and Nothingness* and should prevent us also from attempting to isolate the philosophical matter from the personal self-reflection. First, the *Diaries* testify absolutely to the fact that Sartre's initial intention was to work out an ethics; the ontology was ancillary so far as his original purpose was concerned. Second, the project to formulate a moral theory was, in Sartre's mind, inextricably bound up with his search for authentic personal morality to serve as a guide for his own life. I will speak briefly about the first point and then more at length regarding the second.

In early December Sartre writes to Beauvoir that he has been thinking about ethical questions since his mobilization in September. Now, he says, "I have *seen* that ethics which I have been practicing for three months without making a theory out of it—quite contrary to my usual habit." (I. p. 455) He goes on to quote to her from a passage he had just written in the *Diaries*.

I believe that I now understand and *feel* what a true ethics is. I see the connections between metaphysics and values, humanism and scorn, our absolute freedom and our condition in a life unique and limited by death, our insubstantiality as a being that is without God and is not its own author, our self-sufficient independence as an individual and our historicity. (C, pp. 121-122. *WD*, p. 95)

In the letter he adds, "All of this naturally revolves around ideas about freedom, life, and authenticity."

A bit later Sartre tells Beauvoir that he has worked out a metaphysics which is a natural accompaniment for his ethics. At this stage he uses "metaphysics," not "ontology" for his own theory, apparently because he wanted to contrast it with the philosophy of Husserl and of Heidegger.

What we wise little phenomenologists were doing up till now was ontology. You searched for the essence of consciousness with Husserl or for the being of existents with Heidegger. But metaphysics is an "ontic." You put your hands in the dough. You no longer think about essences (which gives an eidetic—sciences of possibles—or an ontology) but of actual concrete, given existences, and you ask why it is like that. This is what the Greek philosophers were up to—there is a sun, why is the a sun? Instead of "What is the essence of all possible suns, solar essence?" Or "What is the being of sun?" (II. pp. 49-50)

Sartre is not after questions of origin; of course. The "why" questions he will raise will be answered by a description of the purposive activity of an individual consciousness in the everyday world. Later in *Being and Nothingness* he wisely,

I think, realized that ontology was what he was doing after all, and he allocated to metaphysics only hypothetical though legitimate speculation as to the probable evolution of consciousness and the like. In 1940 he worried for a while lest what he was offering was warmed over Heidegger, but this doubt was quickly dispelled. He wrote to Beauvoir, "I believe that what I am doing is interesting and new; it bears no resemblance to Husserl's philosophy nor to Heidegger's nor to anybody's. Rather it would represent all my old ideas on perception and existence, ideas stillborn for lack of any technique but ideas which I can now develop with all of phenomenological and existentialist technique." (II. p. 51)

Three days later Sartre pinpointed the unifying element in his metaphysics.

I am retaining all of Husserl's being-in-the-world, and yet I arrive at an absolute neo-realism (in which I integrate Gestalt theory). "What a confused mess!," [*quelle salade*] you will say. But not at all. It is very carefully ordered around the idea of Nothingness or pure event at the heart of being.² (II. p. 56)

The *Diaries* show that Sartre developed his crucial concept of *Neant* in reaction to and against Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's use of the notion of anguish or dread at nothing and Heidegger's description of the world as suspended in nothingness. The old stillborn ideas presumably refer to his student interest in contingency and to the view of consciousness as a void in being, which Sartre mentioned in a letter he wrote in 1925.³ The concept of Nothingness as a lack in the very being of consciousness Sartre held to be the decisive cleavage between himself and his predecessors as well as the unifying foundation of his own philosophy. I made everything fall into place. Quotations chosen almost at random from a single passage in the *Diaries* show this centripetal force in action.

²The published French text reads *événement*, and the notion of the emergence of consciousness with its nothingness as an event that happens to Being is orthodox Sartre. I wonder, however, if the manuscript might possibly have read *éventement*, an airing or ventilation (i.e., an emptiness) at the heart of being, which would, I think, fit his thought at this stage even better.

³Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *Les Ecrits de Sartre. Chronologie, bibliographie commentée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970, p. 23.

Anguish before Nothingness, with Heidegger? Anguish before freedom, with Kierkegaard? To my mind, it's one and the same thing, for freedom is the appearing of Nothingness in the world. . . . Freedom effects a discontinuity, it is a rupture of contact. It is the foundation of transcendence because beyond what is, it can project *what is not yet*. . . . I cannot commit myself because the future of freedom is nothingness . . . because my present, become past, will be nihilated and put out of play by my free present-to-come. . . . These characteristics of freedom are no other than those of consciousness. . . . If Nothingness is introduced into the world by man, anguish before Nothingness is nothing other than anguish before freedom or, if you prefer, the anguish of freedom before itself. . . . Anguish is indeed the experience of Nothingness, and it is not thereby a psychological phenomenon. It is an existential structure of human reality; it is nothing other than freedom becoming conscious of itself as being its own nothingness. (C, pp. 166-167. *WD*, p. 132)

And so on in terms by now familiar to all of us.

Here Sartre has anchored his metaphysics in the stream of existential-phenomenology. Some pages earlier he had arrived at the view of a nihilating, self-making consciousness via the traditional ethical concerns of self-fulfillment, value, and responsibility. I will quote a few illustrative sentences:

An ethics is a system of ends. Then to what end ought human reality to act? The only answer: to itself as end. . . . An end can be posited only by a being which is its own possibilities; that is, which projects itself toward these possibilities in the future. . . . Human reality is of an existential type such that its existence constitutes it in the form of a value to be realized by its freedom. . . . [It] exists as a plan for itself [*a dessein de soi*]. It is this *self*. . . . (as that which awaits it in the future to be realized by its freedom) which is *value*. There exists no other value than human reality from its plan. Without the world, no value. Ethics is a specifically human thing; it would have no meaning for angels or for God. . . . [Human reality] motivates itself without being its own foundation. What we call its freedom is the fact that it is never anything without motivating itself to be it. Nothing can ever happen to it *from outside*. . . . The fact that there is a consciousness which motivates its own structure is irreducible and absurd. (C, pp. 136-139. *WD*, pp. 107-109)

I desist at this point. To summarize the philosophical content of the *Diaries* would be to outline *Being and Nothingness*. Indeed at one time Sartre thought he might excerpt these passages for separate publication. They lack the closely reasoned argument to support certain of his conclusions; for example, the attempt in the Introduction of *Being and Nothingness* to prove that his view of consciousness avoids the pitfalls of both idealism and realism. And the

discussion of bad faith was in one of the missing notebooks for January. But most of the later work is there and not just in *embryo*. What we have is close to a condensed first draft⁴ except for the intrusion of details of army life, autobiographical material, and personal introspection. The last two, while extraneous to *Being and Nothingness*, in one sense, are directly relevant in another, for they show Sartre in the process of formulating theories to explain what he had observed in his own and other' behavior, thereby shedding light on his intentions in the later work. The ties to its author are no longer obvious in the way that they are in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, for example, but they were there at the start. Virtually everything in *Being and Nothingness* can be shown to be rooted in the autobiographical reflections, but I will concentrate here on two major themes in the *Diaries*—authenticity and love.

Authenticity

Authenticity is not a key concept in *Being and Nothingness*; it is partially replaced by the notion of good faith, but even this is more implied than discussed. Authenticity *is* a central idea in the *Diaries*. It is the goal of Sartre's moral theory. He speaks of it as a "metaphysical value," the "only absolute," and he offers ethics based on it as the sole alternative to moral codes founded on duty, resignation, or complacency. I think the case can be made that it is equivalent to what Sartre later called good faith; if so, he regarded it as both possible and difficult. In the *Diaries* Sartre sought to achieve authenticity personally while trying to explain it philosophically. He encountered pitfalls in both pursuits.

Sartre's notion of authenticity embraced two not entirely compatible sets of ideas, one deriving from the earlier preoccupations that had culminated in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, the other leading him to break new ground. In each case he approaches a positive view after considering forms of its opposite, inauthenticity. Sartre's first discussion of inauthenticity is applied Heidegger. He amuses himself by describing his companion Pieter as an "angel of inauthenticity" who exemplifies perfectly the avoidance of personal responsibility by taking refuge in the social, impersonal "one" or *das Man*. (C, pp. 22ff. WD,

⁴If taken too literally, this statement may be a trifle, but not very much exaggerated. It certainly expresses my feeling in first reading the *Diaries*.

pp. 11ff.) Sartre prides himself on being different. Whereas Pieter sees everyone as a type, acting in whatever way is natural to his character, Sartre claims that he has never felt any solidarity with his self; his consciousness has never suffered from adhesions with a self. He confesses to an acute anxiety if anyone points to seeming evidence of the permanency of Sartre's ego. (C, p. 19. WD, p. 8) He worries lest the war might find him keeping a rendezvous with the same self that was there at it start. (C, p. 270. WD, p. 222) Such feelings had led him in *The Transcendence of the Ego* simply to eject the self from consciousness like a "nosy visitor." (C, p. 393. WD, p. 324) He remains true to the view that the ego is the construct of consciousness, not part of its structure, and he wants to live this detachment as openness to change. He does, to be sure, speak of a "fidelity to self," but this means simply that he will not lie to himself. Stoics, he points out, seek to gain equanimity by demeaning the object which might cause them grief. But Sartre, when he jealously fears that he has lost his current love, Tania, to someone else, admits to himself that he would be deprived of something precious. "Authenticity demands that we be a little tearful!" (C, p. 69. WD, p. 51) Yet in a half-serious statement to Beauvoir Sartre remarks that it is hard for him to be authentic since he clings so closely to his love for her. (II. p. 76) The fact is that for a time Sartre identified authenticity with pure, unreflective spontaneity in which one was caught up entirely in immediate feeling. And since he felt incapable of letting himself go in this way, he concluded that he was not authentic. By some strange reversal Sartre, while retaining his belief that consciousness is not identical with the ego, felt that his awareness of this basic freedom precluded authenticity. The latter required that one be wholly given to an experience whereas the price of freedom was that one is always outside. (C, p. 405. WD, p. 334) He writes,

It's true, I am not authentic. With everything I feel I know that I feel it even before feeling it. And then, wholly occupied with defining it and thinking it, I no longer more than halfway feel it. My greatest passions are only nervous impulses. The rest of the time I hasten over my feeling, then I develop it in words, I press a little here, I force a little there, and behold an exemplary constructed feeling fit to be inserted in a bound book. (C, p. 82. WD, p. 61)

Sartre goes on to say that this sort of exploitative self-scrutiny is his most basic reality, and he is a bit weary of it. We might be inclined to dismiss this kind of thing as typical of writers, but Sartre, who sounds this note with distressing

frequency, alternates between the conviction that something is missing in him (a view that is certainly not consistent with his philosophy) and the idea that he is somehow not authentically realizing himself as a spontaneous, nonreflective consciousness.

Influenced by such feelings, Sartre played an unadmirable part in a most unsavoury episode. Passing judgement on himself afterward, he said that it was out of this experience that he developed his theory of authenticity, obviously seeing in his own behavior a negative example. (*Lettres*, II. p. 131) But it was the unfamiliar satisfaction of feeling strongly and acting recklessly in the face of all cautionary reflection that led him more and more deeply into it, as though he took delight in doing what he condemned. The incident reads like a travesty of his later practice of thinking against himself. The full story of what happened is in the letters to Beauvoir, to whom Sartre regularly confided the troubles encountered in his "contingent" love affairs with other women: the *Diaries* also make cryptic reference to it. Briefly, the crisis was precipitated when Martine Bourdin, with whom Sartre had enjoyed a prolonged affair some months earlier, showed some of his love letters to a male acquaintance of Sartre's new mistress, Tania. Martine had added an unflattering oral description of Sartre's sexual practices, and all of this had been relayed to Tania, who now not only felt that she had been betrayed but looked on Sartre, as he himself expressed it, as "an obscene goat." (*C*, p. 295. *WD*, p. 242) Parenthetically, I note that Sartre's shocked realization of how he appeared to others, his confused sense of irremediably having to recognize that he was this self that others saw while at the same time he was free to not be it—all this must certainly have contributed to the devastating look described in *Being and Nothingness*. But what concerns me here is Sartre's own action and the attitude he took toward it. Furious with Martine, he wrote a letter to her in which he repainted the history of his entire relation with her in the most disgusting terms. This letter he sent to Tania, asking her to read it and then mail it on to Martine. Even that request was in bad faith, for Sartre thought that Tania would find reasons not to do so, and he profoundly hoped that she would not. Later he condemned his conduct in the harshest terms. "I am very thoroughly disgusted with myself." (II. p. 92) "I very profoundly and sincerely feel myself to be *un salaud*." (II. p. 94) Yet his regret is tinged with a kind of wistful pride that he had been able to commit the infamy. The night that he wrote the letter to Martine, he recorded in his diary, "This evening (after a few libations, it must be said) I was gripped by a kind of

rapture at the idea of defending so just a cause. What has seduced me here is the idea of action." (C, p. 285. WD, p. 242) Action, he observes, which as usual used words as its instrument. Five days later he writes to Beauvoir,

The letter to Bourdin was abject. I agree completely. But you do not know the kind of rasping joy I found in being enough outside of myself to do a filthy thing. I have often been a stinker negligently and frivolously, but I have never done the kind of absolute dirty trick that the sending of that letter represents. Up until now I have always been too cold to do it. (II. p. 105)

To me this episode demonstrates the bankruptcy of the attempt to equate authenticity with spontaneous action motivated purely by immediate desire. Some persons, only superficially acquainted with Sartre's ideas, have indeed tried to define authenticity as the decision to do that which one absolutely and arbitrarily wants to do. Ironically, Sartre has furnished his own example to seem to support this charge and the pejorative judgement on Sartre that usually accompanies it. Whether he specifically had this negative conclusion in mind when he said that it was out of this experience that he developed his theory of authenticity, I do not know. I suspect that he referred also to other positive conclusions which were more far-reaching than resolutions for his personal life—although related to them. I believe that when he told Beauvoir that henceforth he wanted to care more deeply about things and to take on responsibility for seeing them through, he was drawing on reflections not connected exclusively with the recent crisis but deriving from a second set of associations with authenticity which he had been working through, those placing value not on spontaneity, but on responsibility.

Having introduced the preceding discussion with Sartre's portrait of Pieter, I turned now to his analysis of another of his comrades, the inauthentic Paul. Paul had remarked, "Me, a soldier? I consider myself a civilian in military disguise." Sartre comments,

This would be all very well if he were not making himself a soldier, despite his resentment, by his volitions, his perceptions, his emotions. A soldier: that means taking on the responsibility for carrying out the orders of his superiors, an accomplice down to his arms which carry the rifle, his legs which march, a soldier in his perceptions, his emotions, his volitions. Therefore he persists in fleeing what he is making himself, and this plunges him into a state of miserable, diffuse anguish. (C, p. 142. WD, p. 112)

There is some indication that this portrait of Paul is also a retrospective self-portrait by Sartre.

He introduces the example of Paul in presenting the view that consciousness, as a lack of being, realizes its existence as the activity of making itself be; consequently consciousness is self-motivating, must provide its own self-justification. But "it is so difficult to live without being *in any way* justified." (C, p. 87. WD, p. 65) The need to make oneself be and weariness at perpetual responsibility go hand-in-hand. One may take refuge in either of two inauthentic attitudes. One may feel that freedom is simply swallowed up in facticity, that one is a victim of circumstances, a consciousness buffeted by external pressures like a piece of wood tossed about by the ocean waves. Or, like Paul, one may deny the connection between consciousness' judgement and one's facticity. Without using the term, Sartre has described the mechanism of bad faith as playing on the two meanings of the verb to be, as failing to acknowledge our existence as both facticity and transcendence. (C, p. 142. WD, pp. 111-112)

Sartre points out that in someone (himself, perhaps, but not Paul) the anxiety stemming from his unacknowledged realization of a contradiction in his basic behavior might serve as a motive for a conversion to authenticity. What would such a conversion be? One must suppress the flight. One must *assume* the situation in which one finds oneself. To assume is not the same as to accept. Sartre has no use for Nietzsche's *amor fati*, which he considers just another variation on bad faith. To assume is to take to one's account, to be responsible for, to admit that whatever one is or does, one is without excuse. In words virtually copied in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre shows how the war that comes is my war, etc.

But if authenticity is a value, it is not primary. It appears as a response to, and in the context of, the fundamental search for the value of substantiality, of existing as self-cause, what Sartre later calls the desire to be God. Human reality can no more discontinue the quest to be its own foundation, Sartre says, than a cognitive consciousness can cease to posit the world. But it is possible to carry on the quest authentically; one must "assume what one finds. If the act of founding is prior to the existent that one finds, as in the case of creation, the assumption is contained a priori in the act of founding. [As when one makes a pot, writes a book, or initiates a new social reform.]

But if . . . it is the effort to found what already exists in fact, the assumption must precede the founding as an intuition which reveals what one is founding." (C, p. 143. *WD*, pp. 112-113)

An example here would be the South African who must decide what role he/she will assume in the racial conflict for which he/she is responsible even though not personally the initiator. Or we might cite Sartre's own example from the *Critique*, the French colon in Algeria who must internalize as part of his project the exploitative structure of the practico-inert laid down by earlier generations. At the end of *Being and Nothingness*, of course, Sartre implies that it might be possible to live without the value of the self-cause and to substitute freedom in its place. In the *Diaries* he seems to limit himself to the view presented in the section on "Doing and Having," in *Being and Nothingness*: that one must pursue the self-cause, that to achieve it symbolically in various forms of creating or appropriating is what provides concrete satisfaction in life, that the varying ways in which one pursues it color and define the human person, and that such pursuit is in no way to determine, hence to destroy, freedom but rather to realize its possibilities. In short, it is not the pursuit which is inauthentic but the belief that one has reached the goal and need pursue no further.

In a later passage Sartre states that to be authentic is to call into question. "And it's not enough to call into question; you must change." (C, p. 269. *WD*, p. 221) We note that authenticity continues to require a willingness to break with one's past, to effect a radical conversion of one's projects and one's conduct. On the other hand, what Sartre says toward the end on the *Diaries* shows that he no longer views authenticity as pure spontaneity or detachment as such. "Castor correctly writes to me that genuine authenticity does not consist in overflowing one's life on all sides, or in withdrawing so as to judge it, or in liberating oneself from it at every instant, but on the contrary, in plunging into it and making yourself part of it." (C, p. 356. *WD*, p. 293). In place of this freedom suspended in air he believes not that one ought to put down roots. "Personality ought to have a *content*. It should be made of clay, and I'm made of wind."

The full implications of the metaphor may be seen in another passage in which Sartre compares himself to Katow, a character in Malraux's *The Human Condition*, who when taken prisoner, gives away the cyanide which he had counted on to protect him from torture.

It seems to me that at that moment he is genuinely human reality because nothing holds him outside of the world; he is fully within it, free and defenseless. The movement from absolute freedom to a disarmed, human freedom, the rejection of the poison [i.e., Sartre's detachment] has been effected for me this year and by the same stroke, I now envision my destiny as *finite*. And my relearning must consist precisely in feeling myself "in the fray," without defense. The war and Heidegger have put me on the right track; Heidegger by showing that there was nothing beyond the project by which human reality by itself realized itself. Does this mean that I must let the Self in again? Certainly not. But the selfness or totality of the for-itself is not the Self, and nevertheless it is the *person*. Basically, I am in the course of learning to be a *person*. (C, pp. 393-394. WD, pp. 324-325)

Like his character Mathieu, Sartre has at last discovered that freedom must engage itself. A philosophical change has accompanied the moral development. By now Sartre has concluded that individual character is not a deterministic structure but is identical with the individual project. Instead of bestowing all importance on pre-reflective consciousness, he recognizes the significance of the ego as the object indication of what the for-itself has made of itself by inscribing its being in the world. If the ego is the product of consciousness, it has at least the value of a creative work in which external ingredients display the stamp of consciousness.

Sartre attributes his awakening to Heidegger and to the war which taught him the vulnerability of his concrete project. I think of the episode which I mentioned earlier played a part as well. Writing to Beauvoir after the event, Sartre says that he feels sullied [*sali*] by it. He adds, "I thought that nothing could ever sully me, and I perceive that this is not true." (II. p. 95) It was not only the war that made inroads on his protective isolation.

In a kind of postscript to his reflections on authenticity, Sartre asked himself whether his new view of engagement might entrap him in the spirit of seriousness. With relief he quickly concluded that to make oneself a person did not mean to give oneself the "coagulated consciousness" of the serious man. The spirit of seriousness assigns more reality to the world than to oneself and measures one's own reality in terms of the world. But one is still a consciousness. And "it is not possible to apprehend oneself as a consciousness without thinking that life is a game." Sartre sums up in a reconciling statement.

To grasp oneself as a *person* is the very opposite of grasping oneself in terms of the world. However authentic you are, you are nonetheless free—even more free than in the case of the ivory tower since you are condemned to a freedom without a shadow

and without excuse. . . . In renouncing the ivory tower, I would like the world to appear to me in its full, threatening reality, but for all that, I don't want my life to cease to be a game. That's why I subscribe entirely to Schiller's statement: "Man is fully man when he is playing." (C, pp. 396-397. WD, p. 327)

Apparently now Sartre feels that one must play for higher stakes and be willing to abide by the rules one lays down.

But what about concern for the other players? In the real world one cannot play *solitaire*. For a time it was as if Sartre tried to do so and saw others chiefly as obstacles on the path to authenticity. It is clearly something of this kind that he has in mind when he concludes woefully that he had not been authentic when on leave in Paris and that it is easier to be authentic in wartime than in peace. Sartre considers the example of the soldier who has chosen to be authentic and then is visited by his wife. He will act differently in his relation with her because he is different. But there will be a problem. The one who has been expecting to find the inauthentic in us will "freeze us to the marrow by reawakening our old live. This is an imposed inauthenticity against which it is easy but painful to defend ourselves." (C, p. 270. WD, p. 221) In this context Sartre's comments seem to me to point even beyond *Being and Nothingness* and to state the thesis of the *Critique*. Resistance to the resolve to live authentically does not come from residues of inauthenticity left like patches of dirt on an ill-dusted surface. It is simply that earlier relationships and prior situations resist change like things. "They have become *institutions*." They take on permanence and even evolve outside the person. "These revolutionary changes which are translated into a struggle against the solidity of institutions are not different in nature from the changes that a politician wants to bring to social institutions, and they encounter the same resistances." (C, p. 269. WD, p. 221) The unity between the early and the late Sartre is already apparent.

Love

At a moment of depression Sartre declared that his relations with others were "an open wound." (C, p. 302. WD, p. 248) The section on relations with others, in the *Diaries*, though brief, is very close to the chapter on "Concrete Relations with Others" in *Being and Nothingness*, conceptually and even verbally. It centers on love as the project of wanting to be loved. He says explicitly that this is only one way of loving and that it is inauthentic. (C, p.

314. *WD*, p. 258) He adds, "I have painted myself to the life in this metaphysical description." (*C*, p. 318. *WD*, p. 261) And he provides an autobiographical narrative to attach his own experience even more closely to the preceding discussion. Yet while disavowing any attempt to describe all kinds of love or even love as such, Sartre lays claim to some universality in his portrayal of one of its inauthentic forms. His introductory statement makes this clear. "In every imperialistic feeling like mine, there is some sort of inauthenticity. But we must understand what that means. I am struck this morning by that universal demand: to want 'to be loved.'" (*C*, p. 310. *WD*, p. 255). Sartre's explanation of why the lover wants to be loved follows along lines familiar to us. Love is not a project of enslavement. One doesn't want to be loved by an automaton or by an Isolde-like victim of chemistry, nor by a person dutifully fulfilling a pledge to love. Then Sartre moves into the personal.

Nothing is dearer to me than the freedom of those I love. . . . Yes, but this freedom is dear to me on condition of my not respecting it at all. It's not a question of suppressing it but of actually violating it. (*C*, pp. 311-312. *WD*, p. 256)

Obviously Sartre does not mean to resort to physical violence or mental cruelty like the sadist. But his goal is perilously close to that of the sadist; it is that previous moment when the beloved victim consents to self-surrender.

To tell the truth, for a long time—perhaps still today—I find nothing more moving than the moment when the confession of love is finally wrenched forth. And I think today that what charmed me in that confession from the time I was a child was the spellbound freedom from which it emanated. (*C*, p. 325. *WD*, p. 267)

This inauthentic love, which Sartre openly labeled as a project of seduction, held the same aim as all other forms of inauthenticity—the sense that one's existence is justified—in this instance because the other finds one to be absolutely necessary for her being.

I do not wish to dwell, as Sartre does, on the detailed history of this not very elevating enterprise and will confine myself to a few observations. First, I note that Sartre wrote these entries exactly at the same time that he was caught up in the episode involving Martine and Tania, which had plunged him into an unaccustomed self-questioning with respect to his relations with others. In a letter to Beauvoir, he remarked that it was his project of seduction that led him to form relations which were not truly meaningful to him. Second, the

distinctively Sartrean style of seduction involves personal characteristics which Sartre does not hold to be universal, and which, except for a faint echo, do not appear in *Being and Nothingness*. (I refer here to the statement that the lover seeks to captivate the beloved by making himself a fascinating object and the linking of love and language.) Sartre's means were entirely verbal. This was partly, he says, because he felt himself to be ugly. Indeed he remarks that part of his unending pursuit of women was so that he might possess vicariously the beauty that he lacked—still another form of appropriation. Partly, also, he took pleasure in his own verbal performance. He actually compares his seductive activity with writing and calls each attempt a "whole literary labor." Through words he turned an occurrence into a work of art, much as Roquentin (in *Nausea*) tried to create an adventure out of his past experience.⁵ But whereas Roquentin realized that he had to choose between living and telling, Sartre made one the means of the other. More closely linked with the lover in *Being and Nothingness*, is his statement that through words he wanted to interpose himself as the indispensable intermediary between the woman and the world. In the *Diaries* Sartre expresses horror at the way he had actually tried to steal from the woman her own way of looking at the world and to replace her perceptions and feelings with his own. And he recognizes that he had regarded each woman as raw material to be molded into a form in which he as creator might find his image in the work he had created. Finally, I would say, Sartre's self-portrait of himself as seducer, combines the two attitudes toward the Other which is *Being and Nothingness* he so carefully distinguished. This is not surprising since he makes the point that one is likely to slip from one attitude to the other and back again; in all forms of bad faith there tends to be a vacillation between the denial of transcendence and the denial of facticity; the subject-object conflict is only a particular exemplification.

To do Sartre credit, he concludes his description with the statement that he not only feels disgust retrospectively at this kind of behavior on his part but realizes that he had felt it all along, but had hidden the feeling from himself by

⁵In this connection Sartre makes an amusing reference to a failure. "For my seduction I relied solely on my speaking. I still remember my embarrassment in Berlin. I had set out resolved to know German women, but in a short time I realized that I did not know enough German to converse. Stripped of my weapon, I remained quite stupid and did not dare to attempt anything. I had to fall back on a French woman."

satisfaction at his conquests. Refreshingly he adds that although it had never occurred to him at the time, the women might have been playing the same comedy, casting him in the reverse role.

The *Diaries* should put to rest forever the often heard argument that the section called "Concrete Relations with Others" in *Being and Nothingness* describes love as it is essentially and inevitably. Yet despite Sartre's statement in the *Diaries* that "there are other ways of loving," (C, p. 314. *WD*, p. 258) he does not describe them. At no point does he even raise the question of the nature of authentic love. He does, however, make some positive assertions about the nature of friendship, which indicate the possibility of relations in good faith. Even more important, there is the fact of his relation with Simone de Beauvoir. If we supplement the *Diaries* with material from the *Letters*, we see Sartre sustaining an entirely different kind of love relation, one which he unquestionably regarded as enduring and authentic. It is generally not considered fair to derive a man's theory from his practice, let alone from his love letters, and especially if he is a philosopher. But given the intent of this paper, I want to do something of the sort, partly so as not to leave the impression that Sartre's emotional life was limited to what he himself denounced as utterly inauthentic, if not worse.

In the *Diaries* Sartre is naturally more reserved, but what he says is significant. Only at one point does he even slightly suggest that he ever tried to subject Beauvoir to his usual project of seduction, and what he says here is accompanied by a rueful reflection on himself. Confessing that part of his line with a woman was first to warn her that she must never try to encroach on his freedom and then grandly to proclaim that he gave it to her as a gift, fully expecting he would easily get it back from her, Sartre writes, "Once I was caught at my own game. Castor accepted this freedom and kept. . . . I was fool enough to be upset by that. Instead of comprehending my extraordinary good luck, I fell into a sort of depression." (C, p. 111. *WD*, p. 85) Castor pulled him out of his silly belief in salvation by art. (C, p. 102. *WD*, p. 78) And more than once, "Castor was right when she said, . . ."

The letters could well support a full and richly rewarding exploration of the nature of the Sartre-Beauvoir relationship, far beyond the scope of a single paper. Here I can only summarize and highlight the most obvious relevant points.

To start with, the avid desire to share every detail and mood of each day, simply for the pleasure of learning or telling one another testifies to the deepest mutual concern and to their will to have their lives thoroughly intermingled. It is accompanied by a genuine wish for criticism from one another and willingness to modify action in response to it. (For example, when Beauvoir adversely criticized a long prologue Sartre had enthusiastically written for his novel trilogy, he jettisoned it, gratefully.) When he writes that their love is the only achieved success in his life, a "perfection and a repose," (I. p. 314) that whatever good there is in him is due to her, (I. p. 359) we may smile at a lover's exaggeration. But when he tells her repeatedly that she is the only honesty of his life, his "moral consciousness," his "witness" and his "judge," the "consistence of this person," his "other self," I think we are reading the true signs of how Sartre lived this relationship.

I will not claim that it stands as a perfect model of what authentic love should be—objectively or by Sartre's own criteria. In his avowal that she is his only honesty, Sartre is contrasting his absolute truthfulness to her with his false words to others. Worse yet, he has just confessed to her that in a letter to Tania he had written that he would gladly ride roughshod over everybody, including Castor, if it would somehow set him right with Tania. Fearing lest Beauvoir might wonder if he lied to her, too, he says,

Castor, I swear to you that I am altogether pure with you, If I were not, there would no longer be anything in the world with respect to which I would not be a liar. I would lose myself in it [i.e., in the lying]. My love, you are not only my life but also the only the honesty of my life. (II. p. 110)

I think we can believe him, chiefly because in view of what he confides, it would be hard to imagine what he would want to keep hidden.

Sartre told Beauvoir that the war had made him even more forcefully aware of how much she meant to him, of the irreducible and incomparable value of their love. Clearly the distasteful episode involving Tania and Martine also served as a revealing catharsis. Before it was over, he lived it as a crisis in his relations with Beauvoir, one evoked solely by his fear that if she saw him as he now looked on himself, some irreparable harm might have been done. I join my own to Sartre's self-reproaches for the way that he involved Beauvoir in petty deceptions of other women, even wanting her to conceal from Tania, for instance, the greater number of letters and the larger proportion of his leave

time allotted to Beauvoir. What exactly ought we to think of his practice of confiding in her the details of his emotional response to other women and the vicissitudes of his affairs with them? Is it honesty or insensitivity? Both, of course. But I think a bit more needs to be said.

Waiting anxiously to hear Beauvoir's judgement on his action in the Martine/Tania affair, Sartre writes,

I have the feeling that this whole period will be settled, ratified, interred only when we two will have been able to talk it over. It's necessary for you to have a little seal and to affix a stamp to all that I live. You are indeed my little absolute, you know. Not metaphysical, because I do my metaphysics by myself, like a grown-up, but moral." (I. p. 111)

What was the reality behind the lover's declarations: "You are my conscience, my other self"; "Together we make one"?

This was a relation between subjects, of course, not a merging of subjectivities. I think I can see that in a special sense it was for Sartre like a relation with his own self or at least his second self. It was as though together they had constructed a common ego, though not to the exclusion of their separate egos, a projection of a crystallization of themselves that each was willing to support. In each person there was a trust in the other consciousness great enough to insure that any new view it might offer deserved to be considered a revelation of a true aspect of the world and the feeling that the other person could be counted on to protect one against the risk of falling into bad faith, could do so by offering, as it were, one's own unclouded vision.

It is exactly in one's relations with oneself that bad faith arises, and Sartre records in the *Diaries* an occasion when his appeal to his "moral consciousness" was recognizably in bad faith. He wanted to apply for a Populist literary prize, for the sake of the money, but felt uncomfortable about doing so since he did not favor the Populist party and disapproved of prizes on principle. Therefore he wrote to Beauvoir, knowing that she would tell him to try for the two thousand francs and that he would do so. It all happened as he predicted, but Sartre recognized that he had in effect substituted her judgement for his own; reproached himself even as he wrote out the seventeen copies of the letter of application. We are reminded of Sartre's remarks, in the lecture on existentialism as a humanism, concerning the young man who came to him for advice, carefully selecting the person he hoped would give the advice he wanted.

Most of the time, however, I believe that Sartre's relationship with Beauvoir did exemplify authentic love, or love in good faith. I find in it the qualities which I have myself always thought to be the positive possibilities for human relations in Sartrean terms, and which can be expressed by expending Sartre's metaphor of the Look—the Look as exchange, in which each one not only seeks to know and to respect the structures of the other's private world, but to modify and enrich the structures of one's own in response; and the looking-together-at-the-world, which is the personal equivalent of Sartre's notion of common praxis in the *Critique*. The extant *Diaries* contain no theoretical discussion of authentic love or of human relations in good faith. One has to wait for the *Cashiers pour une morale* for Sartre's explorations of reciprocity and empathy.

One other anticipatory note is sounded if we look at the *Diaries* as a prelude. This is the ideal of transparency, which Sartre reintroduced only in the interviews of his last decade. It finally became for him the aim of a resocialization of such a kind that nobody would ever, out of fear or some other inhibiting force, feel the need to hold secrets. In the *Diaries* he speaks of it as the factuality of his life as a student when he lived "publicly as a couple," not only with Castor, its highest fulfillment, but also in friendship with Nizan and one or two others. Existence in such transparency was an "Olympian security," and "an overwhelming happiness—like summer." (*C*, pp. 331-332. *WD*. 273-274) Yet the Sartre of the *Diaries* worries lest his ability to live without secrets and to lead others to do the same might stem from his own too great pride in feeling no solidarity with his self, a detachment that manifested itself too often in a lack of warmth. Be that as it may, I think his predilection for this transparency explains his almost total lack of reticence with respect to himself, both in the letters to Beauvoir and in the *Diaries*. Sartre says that he treated his feelings like ideas and pushed them as far as they would go in order to explore and to understand the possibilities within them. On principle he believed that "a man is not meant to look at himself but should always keep his eyes fixed ahead." (*C*, pp. 175. *WD*. p. 139) By exception he devoted the months of late

1939 and early 1940 to self-scrutiny. The ontology of *Being and Nothingness* is the direct result of Sartre's decision to conduct an authentic analysis of his own being-in-the-world.

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