

CHAPTER 2

EXISTENTIALISM AND PHENOMENOLOGY

Existentialism and Phenomenology are vital in understanding Spiral dynamics; it explains some of the major differences between Graves on the one hand, and Beck and Cowan on the other. It also goes back to Graves's original explanation of the theory of Spiral dynamics. The original account of Graves's theory introduced the concept of 'existential needs', but the term was later changed to 'life conditions' by Beck and Cowan. The link between existential needs, according to Graves, and Existentialist thought is important in explaining the gaps in the theory of Spiral dynamics.

It is not simple to explain all the links between these two theories in detail and to discuss Existential phenomenology in a single chapter. Therefore, the focus in this chapter will be on discussing Existentialism while extrapolating the major links between the two theories. The contribution that Existentialism makes to the theory of Spiral dynamics will be explained by discussing the major links between the two theories.

Phenomenology is often characterised as a philosophical method in which the goal is to establish a 'science' of philosophy and to demonstrate the objective validity of the foundation principles of mathematics and natural science. This field of philosophy was named by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl. In contrast to this, the Existentialists rejected academic and professional philosophy, as well as discounting the idea that philosophy could ever become a science, and hence they illustrated their ideas in novels and plays as often as arguing them in philosophical essays. The existentialists have ignored and denied the importance, and even the possibility, of proofs of the 'objective validity' of science and mathematics. Because of their scandalous reputations and their dramatic celebration of the human condition, Existentialists are often ignored, and even repudiated, by many professional philosophers, including the Phenomenologists. According to this point of view, Sartre sanctioned an impossible marriage of professions. Having said this, it must be made clear that Sartre is not the only philosopher to link Phenomenology and Existentialism. Heidegger before him, as well as Marcel, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur who were his contemporaries, were both Phenomenologists and Existentialists. The main reason for this is that both these disciplines in philosophy are concerned with a certain relationship, which we may tentatively

start out by calling it ‘the relationship between human consciousness and the world’. This relationship also deals with the “foundations” or “essences” or “existential structures” that support this relationship. In the work of Heidegger and Sartre, Phenomenology becomes support for an Existentialism derived from the work of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. This support is not, as often described, simply the support of a set of philosophical doctrines by a philosophical method. Phenomenology supports Existentialism as an epistemological and ontological thesis that is used to support a theory of human action and freedom. Both these begin with the description of a special kind of consciousness. While Husserl (in Phenomenology) remains concerned with human knowledge and belief, Heidegger and Sartre (as Existentialists) turn their attention to problems of human practice. Because both these disciplines are movements and not systems of catechisms, they cannot be expounded simply by a small number of “official” statements by the leading proponents. Moreover, because Phenomenology has carried on investigations in virtually every possible human endeavour (including psychology, ethics, aesthetics, and science) and Existentialism has spread its efforts just as widely, a reader in Phenomenology and Existentialism might include selections on any topic whatever (Solomon, 1972, p. xi).

Because of the extent of this study, and the fact that the main focus is Existentialism (and more specifically the grounding of existential needs) the main contribution will be from the field of existential phenomenology and specifically the work of Heidegger, Sartre and, to some extent, Merleau-Ponty. In order to contextualise the main focus of this study, it is vital to explain, at least in brief, the origin of phenomenology and existential phenomenology.

What is Phenomenology?

In Phenomenology the focus falls on the study of human consciousness, and it is an attempt to define the “structures” that are essential to any and every possible experience. In the final analysis, Phenomenology is the search for ‘foundations’. Husserl views Descartes and Kant as his most important predecessors. Husserl’s Phenomenology originated with the explanation of the validity of the fundamental laws of arithmetic, later on he would focus on the *a priori* principles of human cognition or all knowledge and beliefs. Ultimately Husserl addressed similar concerns as Kant (in *Critique of pure reason*) with the identification and defence of the basic *a priori* principles of all human experience and understanding (Solomon, 1972).

The Existential Phenomenologists also begin with Descartes and his first person standpoint, but they shift their attention away from the foundations of knowledge to the foundations of human action. According to the variations of Phenomenology advanced by Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, “consciousness” is not to be interpreted primarily as knowing consciousness, but as an acting, “willing”, deciding, and consciousness. It is thus not those experiences relating to knowing and reasoning that are the paradigm to be examined, but rather the experiences of doing, participating and choosing.

For Husserl (and Phenomenology) the study of consciousness is essentially an epistemological one, while for the Existentialists it is a means to understanding what it is to be a person. Of course, there are very important disagreements between the Existentialists as they carry this analysis through, but their heretical deviation from Husserl can be best appreciated by understanding that Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are only tangentially interested in the foundations of mathematics and science, while they are fundamentally interested in the universal (‘a priori’, ‘essential’, ‘existential’, ‘ontological’) presuppositions of human action. Although Phenomenology, both Husserlian and Existential, adopts a Cartesian starting point, there is no easy way to define this general philosophical approach. Perhaps the most general characterisation of Phenomenology possible is the thesis that the Phenomenologists begin with an analysis of ‘one’s own consciousness of the world’, but this complex concept is analysed in drastically different ways by different Phenomenologists (Solomon, 1972).

Phenomena and Phenomenological Description

To answer the question “What is described in Phenomenology?” The most logical answer would be “Phenomena”. But what are Phenomena? And what is the phenomenological standpoint from which these phenomena are described?

It would not be correct to say that phenomena are experiences, even if we were to qualify this by adding that these are essential experiences. The problem with this argument is that it reinforces the traditional philosophical dualisms that distinguish between experiences and the objects themselves. Husserl’s Phenomenology, though, and the Existential Phenomenologists both reject this distinction. The concept of the “Phenomenon” represents both something that

is ‘in’ experience, as well as the object itself. This can be explained as that the phenomenon is an object that is experienced, or what is directly evident, or what immediately represents itself. The only way to say that a phenomenon is directly evident, is to say that the only justification for the proposition identifying that phenomenon is that one is conscious of the phenomenon.

It is difficult to clarify to what extent a phenomenon is and is not an experience, but Husserl describes this phenomenon as not something other than a physical object, although it is not something other than experience either. To understand this, we need to understand the intentionality of objects as well as the constitution of objects in consciousness. This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

One of the disputes that most sharply distinguishes the Husserlian Phenomenologists from the Existential Phenomenologists is the rejection by the Existentialists of the idea that one can talk about intuitions or phenomena at all without at the same time talking about existent objects. Although this distinction is very subtle, it forces us to separate a characterisation of Phenomenology in terms of an examination of consciousness from a similar characterisation in terms of the Phenomenological standpoint. What makes the Existentialists Phenomenologists is their acceptance of the point of view in spite of their rejection of key Husserlian doctrines concerning the nature of consciousness (Solomon, 1972). The contribution that Husserl made to the field of Phenomenology and Existentialism cannot be denied. It is because of these contributions that we need to be clear about how Phenomenology differs from, and agrees with, Existentialism.

From Phenomenology to Existentialism

Husserl thus had a conception of philosophy as a rigorous science, and to this he gave the name phenomenology. As a starting point he drew a set of distinctions between the empirical and the *a priori*, and the contingent and the necessary. Empirical sciences occupy themselves with contingent facts about individual objects. Husserl believes that this should not be the concern of philosophy. According to Husserl, “true philosophy, phenomenology, is not a science of facts, but...of essential being,...which aims exclusively at establishing knowledge of essences” (*Ideas: General introduction to pure Phenomenology*, 1962, p. 40). It is only by virtue of somehow instantiating essences that an object can count as a man. “It belongs to the

meaning of everything contingent that it should have...an Eidos (essence, idea) to be apprehended in all its purity” (Husserl, *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*, 1962, p. 47). Phenomenology is the knowledge of these essences. Husserl goes about this through his epoché. Husserl’s epoché sets out to produce a purified consciousness, cleansed of any assumptions about the existence of nature of things beyond what is immanent to that consciousness. Reality has thus undergone a phenomenological reduction to an absolutely autonomous and self-contained realm of essential being. It is self-contained because it is essentially independent of all being of the type of a world or Nature, and it has no need of these for its existence (Husserl, 1962, *Ideas*, p. 142). The phenomenologist becomes a methodological solipsist who can now develop the theory of the essential nature of the transcendently purified consciousness. In this the phenomenologist suspends the world as it is seen. According to Solipsism, the self is all that exist or all that can be known. This is ultimately how Phenomenology differs from Existentialism. The former believes human beings to be suspended in the world and the only thing to know is ourselves, while the latter holds that we can only know ourselves through the world we live in, because we are not separate from this world but forced to differentiate “me” from “it” outside. This differentiation is explained through the theory of Spiral dynamics and Graves’s contributions to it.

According to Husserl (1962), the key to the theory of the essential nature of the transcendently purified consciousness, is the notion of intentionality. Because of the importance of this concept, the concept of intentionality will be discussed in more detail at a later stage.

Husserl is not the only philosopher to have postulated a self-contained domain of consciousness. Descartes and the British empiricists also did. Husserl was keen, however, to dissociate himself from them, and according to Husserl their mistake was that they analysed consciousness into no more than two terms, namely an *ego* and its *cogitationes* (or thoughts and sensory experiences). According to Husserl, Descartes and the British empiricists could not accommodate the fact that it is of the perception’s essence to be of objects. The phenomenological fact for Husserl was that we do not first experience sense-data or sensory impressions, and only then infer that we perceive something, say a tree. Therefore for Husserl analysis of a conscious act must be into three terms, namely: ‘ego’, ‘cogitatio’, ‘cogitatum’. Which, “though inseparable from one another, one must pursue...one at a time”

(Husserl, 1970, *The crises of European sciences*, p. 171.) The ego has a cogitatio directed towards a cogitatum (or an object) or, according to Husserl, the act intends an object. This directedness or intentionality is the essential feature of consciousness. Every intentional experience, as is the fundamental mark of all intentionality, has its intentional object. Intentionality is fundamental, because the directedness of a conscious act cannot be inferred from any more parsimonious account – in terms, say, a passing parade of sense data (Husserl, 1962. *Ideas*, p. 241). The contribution of intentionality by Husserl is most significant in terms of Phenomenology and Existentialism. It is also invaluable in the understanding of Spiral dynamics. This intentionality that is the focus of consciousness will be explained later in the discussion of Existentialism through the use of Sartre’s concept of ‘*lack*’ and Heidegger’s concept of ‘*sorge*’.

To summarise, the concern for the pure phenomenologist is not with empirical facts, but with the essences by virtue of which objects are the ones that they are. To attain essential intuition, we must bracket the ‘natural standpoint’, including the scientist’s account of the world, and our beliefs in the existence of an outside world and our empirical psyches. Once this is done we are free to focus on an autonomous realm of consciousness, whose principal feature is to intend or direct itself towards objects. According to Husserl, consciousness does this by casting a net of meaning or noemata for objects to ‘fulfil’. It is, roughly speaking, these noemata which are the essences studied by the Phenomenologists. In studying them, the Phenomenologist lays bare the way in which consciousness, as the trafficker in meanings, animates and constitutes the world as it is encountered. Describing consciousness as the trafficker of meaning opens a new means to understanding the world.

The Existentialist Critique of the Phenomenological Standpoint

The Existentialists’ criticisms of pure phenomenology were mainly developed out of dissatisfaction with Husserl’s philosophy, and this is why Husserl’s point of view is so important to understand. To understand the Existentialists’ critique, we also need to look at their debt to Husserl’s work.

“So near and yet so far”, might summarise the Existentialists’ verdict on Husserl. The key to understanding the relationship between consciousness and the world is to be found in Husserl’s writings, but as Sartre judged, he “misunderstood the essential character” of his

insights and ended up with conclusions so far away from the truth as can be imagined (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p.11).

There are certain contributions that were made by Husserl to Existentialism that cannot be denied. The first debt is to certain Husserlian doctrines, his misunderstanding of them notwithstanding. The main one is the insistence of the priority of the *lebenswelt* over the worlds depicted by the sciences. The *lebenswelt* or life-world is the “world for all of us...the world that cannot be openly talked about” (Husserl, 1970, *The crises of European sciences*, p. 209). Husserl was no enemy of science *per se*, but to the pretension that science could provide one true account of reality. Only out of a world revealed in our everyday engagement with it can the possibility of its scientific study arise, and this study cannot challenge the previous revelation. A true physics, as Sartre puts it, cannot contradict that other absolute...the world of perception and praxis.

A second debt is Husserl’s rejection of the Cartesian cogito. According to Husserl, “Descartes’ mistake was to view the cogito as a small corner of the world, a substantia cogitans, related to other substance by a principle of causality” (1975, *The Paris lectures*, p. 9). This is to view the relation between consciousness and its objects as contingent. Consciousness might never have been directed, and its objects might never have been accessible to consciousness. For the Existentialist, as it is for Husserl, this view is incoherent. In Sartre’s terminology, consciousness is nothing apart from its directedness and hence not a ‘something’ that could stand in causal relationships to other things. Nor can sense be made out of a world logically independent of our experience. The world as we experience it requires our contribution to be as it is (Sartre, 1956, *Being and nothingness*, p. xlv).

Thirdly, and according to some philosophers the deepest debt to Husserl, lies in the doctrine of intentionality. Simone de Beauvoir (*The prime of life*, 1965, p. 135) relates how Sartre “turned pale with emotion” when in the early 1930s the doctrine was described to him. Sartre saw two implications in this doctrine. With its insistence that conscious acts must be directed to objects, the doctrine posed an alternative to the theory that consciousness can have a concern only with its own inner ingredients. Secondly, the doctrine requires that our awareness of objects is mediated by meanings. Human beings are inescapably semantic, or as Merleau-Ponty put it, intentionality demonstrates that “we are condemned to meaning”

(*Phenomenology of perception*, p. xix). The theory of Spiral dynamics explains how humanity is condemned to meaning through the concept of intentionality. This intentionality is directed towards how we define ourselves or how we create meaning in our lives. Spiral dynamics points out that this meaning is created through our existential or essential needs in life.

Finally, the Existentialists cannot ignore Husserl's conviction that philosophy is no mere intellectual exercise, but a procedure of self-discovery and self-liberation too. The idea that the philosopher is engaged in a kind of withdrawal that is also a movement of freedom is an important theme in existentialism.

Despite these debts the Existentialists' judgement is that Husserl betrayed his own best insights. Sartre wrote that "Husserl has not always been faithful to his first intuition(s)" (*Being and nothingness*, 1957, p.vii). Some philosophers see this view of Sartre as an understatement, but it is also a measure of the esteem in which Existentialists held Husserl that their critical remarks tend to be muted or disguised. In this sense Heidegger's criticisms rarely mention Husserl by name, and Merleau-Ponty presents his own Existentialism as being, what deep down, Husserl was really trying to say. Some Philosophers express their views more bluntly as, Husserl being someone who did not know when to stop. Examples of this are that the purpose of Husserl's attack on naturalism was to turn attention back to the *Lebenswelt*, because Husserl saw this as a prelude to a global epoché in which the *Lebenswelt* itself could be bracketed. Similarly, the real importance of the rejection of the Cartesian *cogito* is that human existence is not to be modelled upon that of things or substances. Husserl, not willing to leave it at that, concluded that the self in the shape of the transcendental ego, must exist somehow outside the empirical world. The most severe example of the abovementioned process is that Husserl betrayed his own doctrine of intentionality. The doctrine's true message that no sense can be made of consciousness except in terms of its engagement with the world, is contradicted by the phenomenological reduction which impoverishes experience as the immanent contents of consciousness. The result of this deduction is, as Sartre put it, that conscious act becomes like so many "flies bumping their noses on the window without being able to clear the glass" (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 100). Sartre and some other existentialists went further in this criticism in that they accused Husserl of being an idealist, who denied that there is anything more

behind the glass. For the purpose of this discussion we do not need to continue with this debate on Husserl's idealism, but should rather focus on the impact he had on Existentialism.

The importance of Husserl cannot be denied in the contributions he made to the philosophy of Existentialism. It is, however, important that we discuss the details of the existentialist criticisms, to see them in the light of what the existentialists discern as the underlying cause of Husserl's self-betrayal. This is Husserl's failure to divest himself of the epistemological premise which has underpinned so much traditional philosophy. It is the premise that knowledge and understanding belong, in the final reckoning, to spectators rather than agents. Philosophy, according to Husserl, can only attain its proper aim and field of interest through a deliberate epoché from all practical interests which allow the philosopher to become the non-participating spectator of his acts of life (Husserl, *The Paris lectures*, 1975, p. 30 and *Phenomenology and the crises of philosophy*, Ed. Lauer, 1965, p. 168). It is not denied that our practical activities in the *Lebenswelt* incorporate beliefs and conceptions, but for Husserl, and others before him (Descartes and Hume as well as countless others), the credentials of such beliefs and conceptions can only be determined by placing them, and the activities in which they are embedded, under the gaze of a detached passive intellect. Phenomenology becomes existential with the denial of this primacy of spectatorial knowledge. Heidegger insisted that human existence is indeed more than mere cognition in the usual spectator sense of knowledge, and that such knowledge presupposes existence (*The basic problems of phenomenology*, 1982, p. 276). As well as Sartre's realisation upon reading Heidegger in 1940 that since meaning came into the world only by the activity of man practice supersedes contemplation (Simone de Beauvoir, 1987, *Force of circumstance*. p. 13). The first product of this spectatorial premise is the transcendental ego. This is then as Husserl stated nothing but the disinterested spectator of the natural and worldly ego and its life (*The Paris lectures*, p. 15). This ego is bodiless, moodless, characterless, loveless, since body, mood, character traits and emotions are, like everything else, so many items for a disinterested gaze. This was unacceptable to the existentialists, since they see human beings as part of this world and our creation of meaning takes place through our role in this world. This will be dealt with in detail later in the chapter.

Part of this criticism of the transcendental ego blends with the doctrine of intentionality. For Heidegger, intentionality is a central possibility of the factual self, or the concrete person (*Husserliana*, 1962, vol. 1. p. 601-602). Husserl refused to regard the concrete person as the

locus of intentionality, on the grounds of the result of his spectatorial premise. For Husserl the engaged, participating agent is not the vehicle of knowledge and understanding, because an agent can be an object from reflection and the spectatorial premise requires that understanding and knowledge are the privilege of the disengaged being which does the reflecting. In part the lesson to be drawn from the intentionality of consciousness is that we are plunged into this world, as revealed to us through the meanings of our activities and projects. By making the objects of experience immanent to consciousness, and by turning meanings into essences intuited by pure ego, Husserl betrays the doctrine of intentionality according to the existentialists.

Another point of contention in Husserl's theory of intentionality that the existentialists object to is his account of meaning. Husserl treated meaning as the essences or *noemata* via which consciousness is directed towards objects. Understanding of experience is thereby reduced to intuition of these essences and the manner in which they are fulfilled. This for the existentialist is an impossibly intellectualist and spectatorial account. For both Husserl and the Existentialist alike, the fundamental feature of conscious existence is its trafficking in meanings. But the effect of the criticisms of Husserlian intentionality is to relocate the relevant notion of meaning. In Husserl's account meanings are analogous to the senses of words, but for the Existentialist they are closer to the meanings that we speak of actions both possessing and conferring in virtue of their purpose of goal-directed nature. Merleau-Ponty wrote about Husserl, for whom the body is bracketed and meaning gazed at by a disembodied ego, and who makes no allowance for this understanding: "all meaning was...conceived as an act of thought, as the work of a pure 'I'...(but) bodily experience forces us to acknowledge an imposition of meaning which is not the work of a universal constituting consciousness...my body is (the) meaningful core..." (*Phenomenology of perception*, 1962, p. 147).

Existential Phenomenology

Existential Phenomenologists shift the emphasis away from the question "What is knowledge?" to a very different question "What is it to be a person?" The Existential phenomenologist's primary interest is what people are and do, rather than what they can and do know. In this Existential Phenomenology is not a rejection of Husserl, but rather a redirecting of his philosophy (Solomon, 1972).

Existentialists are thus concerned with the existential foundations or “the *a priori* principles to what it means to be a man. Heidegger’s early formulation of the ‘question of Being’ begins with the question of self-identity. Heidegger’s notion of authenticity and inauthenticity (ownness or ‘*eigenlich*’ and un-ownness) as well as Sartre’s central concept of ‘bad faith’ and ‘sincerity’ are wholly concerned with the question of who one is. The concept of self-identity, which is fundamental to existential Phenomenology, is directed both at the general problem, “What is it to be a person?” and at the particular problem, “As a person, who am I?” (Ricoeur, 1967). The existentialist answer is that the nature of a man is such, that there is no nature of man, referring to Sartre’s celebrated slogans that “man makes himself” and that “human existence precedes essence”. In other words, to be a person is to be in a position to raise the question of whom one is. This question, however, is not one of knowledge, one does not find out who he or she is. He or she decides and acts upon his or her decision. Man does then not find that he is selfish, he makes himself selfish. The existentialist answer to the question “Who is man”, is roughly “whatever he decides to be”. The answer to the question “Who am I?” is then “Whatever I make of myself” (Solomon, 1972).

Existentialism is known for its ethical theses, although the existentialists do not consider their own work as ethics. Sartre did not take *Being and Nothingness* to be a work on ethics and he did not write the treatise on ethics that he promised at the end of that work. Heidegger went even further in that he claimed that ethics is not possible. This separation between the popular conception of existentialism as ethics, and the existentialists’ own rejection of ethics is apparent. Their answer to the question “What is it to be a person?” is that a person is whatever he or she makes of him- or herself. In light of this, the existentialists could not possibly give a detailed account of specific principles by which men have to live. They argued that there is no given answer to the question, “Who am I”, and so refused to treat any ethical principles as “givens”. The existentialists had a great deal to say that bears on the nature of evaluation, action, freedom, choice, and reasons for choice. Although it was impossible for them to dictate choices or courses of action, the existentialists outlined a theory of choice and action, one which sets the parameters for any choice or action (Solomon, 1972, p. 31).

Solomon (1972), in defence of phenomenology and Husserl's work, disagreed with the work of some of the existentialists. According to Solomon, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty hardly confined themselves to a point-by-point critique of Husserl's work. The opposite is true, as these existentialists ignored Husserl's warning against systemised philosophy and returned in style to the systemised philosophy of Hegel (Solomon, 1972). Existentialists attempted their own construction of a system of phenomenological descriptions, and the key deviations from phenomenology as a separate discipline was not always clearly defined. There are some clearly identifiable elements in the existentialist revolt within phenomenology, and these suffice as an introduction to existentialist thought.

The following concepts are crucial in understanding Existentialism. The goal in this thesis is not to describe every construct in Existentialism in detail, but rather to describe those that are most relevant to understanding Existentialism in relation to Spiral dynamics.

The Epoché Reconsidered

The existentialists reject Husserl's phenomenological reduction in all its forms. According to the existentialists it is not possible to suspend our belief in the world, nor is it possible to place oneself in any realm other than the natural world. The existentialists did not reject the phenomenological standpoint, but rather a specific technique applicable within the phenomenological standpoint. Man is not a detachable consciousness that can abstract himself from the world around him. Most importantly for the existentialists, and the philosophical key to calling themselves 'existential', is the insistence that it is not possible to abstract oneself from involvement in the world. The epoché requires that we bracket existence because our existence, and the existence of the world around us, is given together as the starting point of all phenomenological description. The rejection of the epoché, even in itself is not a serious departure from Husserl and the phenomenologists, leads the existentialists to conclusions that are antithetical to the phenomenological outlook. Heidegger's introduction of the notion of 'being-in-the-world' is not simply a clever Germanic neologism, but one of the most radical moves in modern philosophy. Heidegger rejected not only the Husserlian epoché, but the entire tradition of epistemological dualism for which Descartes is ceremoniously blamed. Husserl and phenomenology rejected the dualism of objects of consciousness and objects-in-themselves, but accepted another dualism, namely that between consciousness and its intentional objects. Heidegger rejected all such dualisms and demanded that philosophy begin with a single concept of "Being-in-the-world"

which is not separable into consciousness, on the one hand, and objects, on the other (Solomon, 1972). Sartre also started with the existential concept of man-in-the-world, but then he distinguished between pure consciousness (being-for-itself) and objects (being-in-itself), using terms that originated with Hegel. Sartre was correctly accused of having fallen back into the traditional dualistic traps. Merleau-Ponty remained truer to Heidegger's radical notion of "Being-in-the-world" by developing in detail a concept of "bodily consciousness" that further breaks down all the traditional attempts to isolate consciousness from a concrete worldly existence.

The Question of Being

Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word 'being' (*seiened*)? Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of Being (Heidegger, *Being and time*, 1962).

It is said that 'Being' is the most universal and emptiest of concepts. As such it resists every attempt at definition. Nor does this most universal, and hence indefinable, concept require any definition for everyone constantly uses it and clearly understands what is meant by it.

The question we need to ask is: What does it mean to Be? 'Being' determines entities as entities, and on which basis entities is understood. The Being of entities is not itself an entity. The first philosophical step is not defining entities as entities by tracing them back in their origin to some other entities, as if Being had the character of some possible entity. Being must be exhibited in a way of its own, and this is a way that is essentially different from the way in which other entities are discovered. Questioning the meaning of Being, also demands that it be exhibited in a way of its own; essentially contrasting with the concepts in which entities acquire their determinate signification.

Being-in-the-World (In-der-Welt-sein).

Arguably one of the most important structural characteristics in Phenomenology and Existentialism is being-in-the-world. For human 'Being', as Heidegger understood it, does not, and simply cannot, occur except in the framework of an encompassing world with which it belongs together, into which it finds itself inserted. This is not simply a matter of a part-whole relationship where the human being is encased in the world like a box within a box.

The relationship is much more intimate. Both are what they are only in being related to one another. If this being-in-the-world is the basic structure of being human, consciousness and particularly knowledge are only modifications of this underlying fundamental relationship. Being in this world is crucial to understanding Spiral dynamics. The spiral is a reflection of this fundamental relationship that people have with the world. Graves used existential needs in his original theory. Being in the world explains this construct of existential needs in more detail. This is important, because it highlights how human beings create their world or meaning in their world. This makes Spiral dynamics more than just a personality theory in that it provides an explanation of human consciousness. The reason for this is that Spiral dynamics refers both to the ‘I’ as in the self-expressive side of the spiral, as well as the ‘We’ in the self-sacrificial side of the spiral. The spiral is therefore a reflection of life as defined by both parties (namely the individual and the others) involved in creating this world.

The claim is therefore made in Existentialism that the world is ‘essentially human’, and that human existence is intelligible only in terms of an engagement with this world. The world is a human one. The world’s structure, its articulation, and its very existence are functions of human agency, and according to Sartre “the world is more the image that I am, than I am the mirror of it” (*Being and nothingness*, 1956. p. 200). According to the Phenomenologists, the standard account of the world is one of a reflective, disengaged stance. This is not acceptable to the Existentialists, because they hold that the world is not that of reflectors or disengagement, but one where people are actively involved in the everyday dealings with the world. The standard account of the world is the result of this reflective and disengaged stance, where the world is essentially a collection of substances of more or less enduring, discrete, physical objects. These are identified by their intrinsic properties, such as size, colour and density. These substances stand in various relations to one another, pre-eminently spatial and causal ones. This account of the world is a natural link to the spectatorial premise. This view holds that if the world is as it has been described above, then our fundamental understanding of it must be the kind we possess through perceivers and observers. Knowledge of the world will be empirical knowledge of substances, their properties and their interrelations. This knowledge will be a mirror of a world articulated prior to, and independently of, our acquisition of the knowledge. The Existentialists do not hold that this standard account of the world is false or useless. Rather, what they reject is its pretension to being fundamental and phenomenologically adequate. This account of the world is necessarily parasitic in a more basic way, and the entities described are not ones we

experience or encounter at all, except during special moments and for special purposes. What this standard account ignores is the degree to which the world is a human one, whose structure, articulation, and very existence, are functions of human agency. Existentialists offer three main, and closely related, considerations in support of this alternative to the standard account. The first two according to Heidegger concern the ‘equipmental’ and ‘sign-like’ character of things in the world. The third consideration is owed to Sartre and concerns the place of ‘negativity’ in the world fabric. Because the equipmental, the sign-like and the negative only come into the world through human agency, and as they are essential aspects of the world, then this world will indeed be a human one. The argument that the world is a human one is relevant to Spiral dynamics, because movement on the spiral can only take place because it is a function of human agency. The momentum or drive to move from one side of the spiral to the next can therefore be attributed to humankind creating its world. The argument that the world is a human one is not only important in explaining the spiral, but also in explaining human consciousness.

According to Heidegger, the standard spectatorial account of the world, construes objects as present-at-hand or ‘*vorhanden*’. Heidegger’s contention is that there is a prior and more proximal way in which objects are encountered, namely as ready-to-hand or ‘*zuhanden*’. Readiness-to-hand is the kind of Being belonging to equipment or ‘*zeug*’. So it is as equipment that we first encounter the world’s contents. Objects are thus encountered as serviceable for a certain purpose. Heidegger saw everything that is proximally encountered as ready-to-hand: “To the extent that any entity...is discovered in its Being — it is already something ready-to-hand... not a “world-stuff” that is merely present-at-hand. Even an item in nature. Something is “discovered” only by the circumspection with which one takes account of things” (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 85). Heidegger is emphatic that anything at all, once discovered, can be viewed as present-at-hand. These two kinds of Being are not mere descriptive devices, because we do not merely describe, but actually encounter things as ready-to-hand in our dealings and traffic with them (Heidegger uses the term ‘*Umgang*’). This traffic or dealing is not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather the kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use, creating its own kind of knowledge. So we do not first encounter things and then describe and interpret them as ready-to-hand, for the encounter incorporates our ‘proximal’ understanding. According to Heidegger, “the hammering itself uncovers the specific manipulability of the hammer” (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 67, 69). Eventually, though, things can only be for something, and only give an ‘in-order-to’ and so

be ‘ready-to-hand’, by virtue of the human projects and purposes in which they are ‘for-the-sake-of’. It follows then, that if the world can only be lit up and yield access to itself through equipment, then the world as we first encounter it is intelligible only in relation to human concerns. This will be discussed in more detail through the concept of ‘*sorge*’ or care and ‘lack’ later in this chapter.

The second concern that Heidegger addressed in support of the thesis of a ‘human world’ is that of the ‘sign-like’ character of things. Not everything is a sign in the way an indicator of a car or a milestone is, but Heidegger held that the sign-like character of things is an ontological clue for characterising any event whatsoever (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 77). This is because signs accomplish in a paradigmatic manner what everything ready-to-hand achieves in less obvious ways, namely ‘reference’ (or ‘*verweisung*’). Reference, directionality and indication are of the very essence of the ready-to-hand – that by which the readiness-to-hand is constituted (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 83). The world is thus a gigantic referential totality, each of whose constituents relates to others in a ‘sign-like’ way. This assimilation of objects to signs deepens the criticism of the standard, spectatorial account of the world. According to the standard account of the world the relations between objects are spatial and causal, and between objects and ourselves perceptual. This cannot be true if objects are essentially sign-like. An example of this is that although a flashing indicator of a car doubtlessly stands in many spatial and causal relations to the car and the road, it is not by virtue of these that it signals a right turn. If everything ready-to-hand is sign-like, then neither the fundamental relations among things within a referential totality, nor that between these things and us, will be of the kind proposed by the standard account. There are difficulties in explaining the exact nature of the relations between signs, their users, and what they signify. This does not detract from the importance of the claim that the essential relations obtaining among human beings and things ready-to-hand are of an analogous nature. Mankind thus creates the meaning that the readiness-to-hand objects points to, and in this the world is a human one.

If everything has to be ‘proximally’ encountered as ready-to-hand or sign-like, and not as ‘equipmental’, then the world is a human one. It is difficult to squeeze everything we experience under such headings. This then brings us to the third of the Existentialists’ main considerations concerning the human world, which is Sartre’s concept of negativity. Although Sartre made some remarks that are similar to Heidegger’s world as a world of tasks,

in which the original relations between things are instrumentality, Sartre viewed instrumentality as a function of a deeper, more pervasive dimension of reality (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 199). In order for “being to order itself around us as an instrument, it is necessary that negation rise up...as the rubric...which presides over the arrangement...of being in things” (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 24). Sartre used the concept of negativity to explain the presence of an absence. By describing what is not there, he pointed to what is absent. This is also true in human beings where everything is instrumental. Instrumentality is the original relation between things, because the world is a world of tasks. Because a task exists, you need an instrument to do the task. Sartre rejected the familiar view that negativity is a function solely of propositions and judgements, and argued that negativity belongs to the fabric of reality. In Sartre’s picturesque phrase “Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being – like a worm” (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 21). This is Sartre’s explanation that the world is imbued with negativity. For the not-being-there of something is a real and vivid property of the context. The following example was used by Sartre to explain this. When I go to the café to find my friend Pierre, his absence and his-not-being-there is real. The world is imbued with negativity. There are “an infinite number of realities...which are experienced...and which in their inner structure are inhabited by negation (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 21). Sartre coined the concept ‘négativité’ to refer to these realities to describe Pierre’s absence from the café. This concept of négativité is not the same as things described in negative terms. An example that is used is that if we say that the storm destroyed something, then we must recognise that by our criteria something no longer exists after the storm. To say that the glass is fragile means that it carries in its being the possibility of non-being when it is struck or dropped. A creature incapable of experiencing négativité could not conceive the possibility of things being destroyed. Countless things thus have negativity as an essential part of their existence. It could also be said that countless concepts contain a negative element as a condition of their intelligibility and application (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 8).

How is this applicable to humankind and specifically to this discussion on the world being a human one, as well as to the theory of Spiral dynamics? Negativity is indeed a dimension of reality, but “man is the being through whom nothingness comes into the world” (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 218 and p. 24). It is people who cause the world to be discovered through the negativity they impart (for Being-in-Itself is said to be solid). Pools of nothingness can only enter the world through a creature possible of ‘nihilitating’. This is the

For-itself of human consciousness. Sartre's point is that our experiences of *néгатité* cannot be a mirror of how the world is independent from our engagement in it. Pierre can only be absent from the café for someone who expected to find him, and the glass can only be fragile for creatures who are concerned about the conditions under which it can break. The world is human, because it is one we cannot conceive of in terms of the *néгатité* which we, with our concerns, expectations, hopes, and fears bring into the world. The possibility of nothingness or rather the absence of something explains Spiral dynamics in terms of Existential needs. Human beings always look for, or strive for, something that they do not have. Like some missing piece of the puzzle. The obvious link to Spiral dynamics is that if a person is in the self-expressive side of the spiral he or she will miss or become aware of the lack of the self-sacrificial side of the spiral. More important are the concepts of 'lack' and '*sorge*'.

Sartre's link with Heidegger becomes clearer, when he referred to the kind negativity as "the one which penetrates most deeply in our being" (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 86). Sartre referred to this kind of negativity as 'lack' (*manqué*). He saw lack as the *néгатités* which appear as the central condition of instrumentality. Something is an instrument if it can be used to make good a lack. Ultimately lacks are human. In the example of my pen's lack of ink, makes the inkwell an instrument when it can be used to cure my pen's lack. It is then because I lack something — as in to finish writing the page — that my pen can be said to lack something. That humans are constantly in a position of lacking and trying to make good their lacking is a fundamental aspect of their existence. It is therefore, because I lack something that the order of instruments in the world is the image of what I am (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 200). The theory of Spiral dynamics is a reflection of what we are lacking in life. Human beings create the world according to what they need or want out of life. If this is achieved, a person will identify something else or the next need he or she requires or lack. This explains how the spiral functions from the one need, or lack, to the next. It also relates to the demands of the lived world with which a person has to comply. The demands are according to the needs of the 'others' or of the 'I', as will be explained in more detail under the concepts of Being-with or being-for.

With this thesis that the world is human, the Existentialists present a challenging alternative to the traditional accounts of the basic relation between us and the world. In summary, it could be said that things or objects are encountered as elements within referential totalities, and that it is not possible for them to exist in isolation of their totalities or contexts. "What

we call nature...or the world is essentially nothing but a conjunction of favourable and adverse conditions encountered by man...(it) has no being...independent of us; it consists exclusively in presenting facilities and difficulties...in respect to our aspirations” (Ortega y Gasset, 1962, *History as a system, and other essays*, p. 114).

To imagine the nonexistence of something can only be done in the relation to the context in which it existed before. For example, to imagine a piece of fence that is missing, will only make sense in the context of the whole fence having a piece that is not there. It is solely against contextual backgrounds that we can speak of something as missing or absent. The existence of physical objects is not something we hypothesise, and in which we might suspend belief, but an ineradicable aspect of our experience. This is then the difference between pure phenomenology and existential phenomenology in that existential phenomenology deals with our existence in this world as the only way to be.

Self-estrangement

In the Existentialist view, not only is there a distinct phenomenon of self-estrangement, but it can only be appreciated in the light of the account of Being-in-the-World. One has to accept something like that account to see that self-estrangement is a real and pervasive phenomenon. Interestingly, it is usually in the sense of self-estrangement that existentialist writers used the word ‘alienation’. Heidegger wrote that our everyday existence “drifts along towards an alienation” and this, by virtue of our being estranged from our “ownmost potentiality-for-Being” (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 178). Existential self-estrangement is not an exclusively introspective approach towards self-understanding. Heidegger’s hostility towards this may be gauged from his reference to the “extravagant grubbing about in one’s soul” which it implies (*Basic problems of phenomenology*, 1982, p. 159). Heidegger did not deny the need to pause and take stock of oneself, but this is the need not for inner perception, but rather for an awareness of the things and my engagement with them, which constitute my environmental world. According to Heidegger, “Dasein finds itself...in things, because tending them, distressed by them, it always...rests in things” (*Basic problems of phenomenology*, 1982, p. 159). For Sartre too, self-reflection is conducted not by switching on an inner searchlight, but by observing how one is reflected in that “world of tasks” which is the “image of myself” (*Being and nothingness*, 1957, p. 200). How indeed could matters be otherwise, given that “each of us is what he pursues and cares for” or a “sum of actions”

(Heidegger, *Basic problems of phenomenology*, 1982, p. 159). The Existentialist view is then an extension of the rejection of Cartesian and Husserlian accounts of consciousness as a self-enclosed, autonomous realm which might be inspected in isolation from a real world. If consciousness is “plunged into the world of objects” and “the ego is...outside in the world”, then it will be there, and not in the inner recesses of a “soul-thing” that I find myself (Sartre, 1957, *The transcendence of the ego*, p. 49).

In Existentialism the way to understand self-estrangement is seen as not by converting it into an idiom of an estrangement of a self, and then pondering the nature of the self. Rather, in Existentialism references would be converted to a self into talk about self-estrangement and the like and rather ponder what this amounts to. Heidegger writes “When we say that...Dasein understands itself, its own self...we must not rest this on some fabricated concept of soul, person or ego, but we must see in what self-understanding the factual Dasein moves in its everyday existence (*Basic problems of phenomenology*, 1982, p. 160). Existentialists does not have and is not interested in having, an independent concept of the self.

Being-with and being-for

Self-estrangement is virtually equivalent to what Existentialists call inauthenticity. When Dasein’s “ownmost potentiality-for-being is hidden from it, this alienation closes off Dasein from its authenticity (Heidegger, *Being and time*, 1962, p. 178). For Sartre, authenticity is the “self-recovery of Being” which is lost during self-estrangement (*Being and nothingness*, 1957, p. 274). Both concepts are crucially to be understood in terms of a person’s relations to others. According to Sartre, “My Being-for-Others, is a fall...towards objectivity...this fall is alienation” (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 274). Inauthenticity, Heidegger tells us, is “a kind of Being-in-the-World ...which is completely fascinated by the “world” and by the Dasein-with of others” (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 176.)

This relates to Spiral dynamics in the following way. If we live in the “I” of the spiral, we are authentic. But the “I” only makes sense in its referential totality with the “We” of the spiral. Therefore we cannot live in the “We”, because this being-for-others is not our potentiality according to existentialism, but rather our facticity in terms of others or “the they”.

Explaining the concept of self-estrangement is a matter of describing the ways in which human existence may be carried on, and of showing that some of these ways deserve the epithet 'self-estranged'. Only when these concepts have been explained can people be referred to as living in ways that are estranged from their selves.

Self-estrangement, for the Existentialist, lies in the general relation between an individual and others. The starting point is the problem of other minds, but this problem is an unreal one, because it rests on the mistaken assumptions that mind and body are contingently related. It assumes that sense can be made of a person's experiences in a world devoid of any other consciousness. The latter assumption fails on two counts according to Cooper (1999). I experience the world as a 'referential totality' of things having uses and significances for others with whom I am in the world. We are embodied intelligences, whose thoughts and feelings are only intelligible through our physical engagement of the world. Merleau-Ponty asks, "If my consciousness has a body, why should other bodies not have consciousness?" What I encounter are 'lived bodies', and not the inert lump of meat inspected by a surgeon, and a "lived body, is not a mere fragment of the world...but a certain view of the world" (*Phenomenology of perception*, 1962, p. 351). For the Existentialist, there cannot be a problem about the existence of other minds over and above the problems of the external world and of myself. Knowledge of the external world and of me incorporates knowledge of others. My proximal experience of the world refers me to other people, intelligent and purposive as myself. This is because we encounter things as ready-to-hand, and not as things present-at-hand to which the existence of people must be somehow added on in thought. The ready-to-hand, the equipmental and the sign-like constitute a public, social world in which things are available for use by people at large, not just by me (Heidegger, *Being and time*, 1962, p. 117). Things exude an atmosphere of humanity (Merleau-Ponty, 1962. *Phenomenology of perception*, p. 347). It follows that a person cannot first exist alone and then later enter into relations with others. *Dasein* in itself is essentially 'Being-with'. Heidegger gives the name 'solicitude' (*Fursorge*) to a person's general relations with others. This is the analogue of the 'concern' which is the basic relation to things in the world. Together they constitute the 'care' that which is *Dasein*'s defining mode of existence. In 'concern', I encounter things in the light of my purposes, which manifest how my life is an 'issue' for me. In 'solicitude' I encounter entities as ones with purposes of their own, as ones which are 'issues' for themselves, in short, as people (Heidegger, 1962, *Being and time*, p.

120). Our human existence is thus described by the two halves of the spiral. The self-expressing half that focuses on the 'I' or 'Me', and the self-sacrificial half, focussing on 'others'. One possibility is that the 'lack' that Sartre speaks of explains the self-expressive half of the spiral. Heidegger's *sorge* or concern then explains the other half of the spiral. This explanation lends itself to a simplification of this definition of Being and Self-estrangement. A more acceptable explanation is that this being in the world makes it a human one, although it not only ensures, but requires, people to live in both halves of the whole spiral.

Secondly, it is only through being 'for' others that I can enjoy those emotions and that sense of individuality which partly constitute my being a person. This applies regardless of my primordial experience of others is 'Being-with' them in a public world as Heidegger thinks, or 'Being-for' them as an object of their attention as Sartre holds. The difference in these views is not as important as the single conclusion to which these experiences attest, namely that: I am in a world in which others must also be present. This is echoed by Jaspers "I am only in communication with others" (*Philosophy*, Vol. 2, 1970, p. 47) and Marcel "I cannot think of myself as existing except in so far as I conceive of myself as not being the others" (*Being and having*, 1949. p. 28).

Sartre's Being-for-Others elaborates this point. Sartre was willing to concede the possibility of a 'For-itself' which would be wholly free from all 'For-others', but he added that this 'For-itself', would not be 'Man'. To count as 'Man', a For-itself must be self-conscious in more than the bare sense of being aware that it is aware of things. It must also have a sense of itself as an individual, a distinct presence in the world. Without this sense, a For-itself would be incapable of a vast array of emotions central to our notion of being a person, but this sense is impossible without a concomitant awareness of others. In shame, I am ashamed of myself before the other, and so confer on the other an indubitable presence (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 282, 289).

The example of shame in Sartre's writings is appropriate, because it links with Graves's description of the self-expressive half of the spiral, in particular the colour Red (C-P) or Orange (E-R). It is also interesting, because we can only experience shame if we have both an experience of ourselves as well as of others, and we come to realisation that 'I' want and what 'they' want are not the same. Shame would not exist exclusively on one side of the

spiral or if our consciousness was not punctuated by being in the world as explained by the Existentialists. The opposite of the shame that the self-expressive half of the spiral experience is contradicted by the guilt of the sacrificial half of the spiral.

The importance of these arguments is that that they point the way to understanding what Existentialists view as inauthentic existence. This view holds that a person's life is for the most part a life of inauthenticity or self-estrangement. These arguments also point to the importance of not to cling to a definition of 'self' and then to deduce what it is for humanity to be estrange from itself. Rather, one should look at the definitions of self-estrangement and in-authentic existence, and see why such labels are not inappropriate. It could then be argued that a person who only embraces the self-expressive half of the spiral could be just as inauthentic as someone that goes to the other extreme and only embraces the sacrificial half of the spiral.

Modes of self-estrangement.

The Existentialist questions the tension that exists in human life. On the one hand, we find humanity to consist of asserting, free, meaning-giving individuals and, on the other hand, humanity is necessarily a participant in a public, social world where it is the object of judgements and categorisations of others. This tension is crucial to human life, because it yields the possibility of the estranged or inauthentic life. This kind of life refers to someone who deals with this ambiguity by identifying too much with the communal character of our existence. In doing so he or she loses what is unique about him or herself, and in that sense loses his or her very self. He or she no longer owns himself or herself, because he or she has succumbed to a take-over by others. In that sense he or she is not authentic, for authenticity here refers to its Greek origin, meaning one who does a thing by him or herself. The German word for authentic comes from the word '*Eigentlich*', and refers to the meaning 'own' (*Eigen*), as in 'doing your own thing' or 'being your own person'. For many the communal character of humanity is the whole essential truth about human existence. Existentialism cannot accept that life's communal character represents the whole story of human existence. According to Jaspers "I am not a result of...(for) I retain my own original potential" (*Philosophy*, vol. 2, 1970, p. 30). What the Existentialists do accept is that people are only too liable to live as if the communal character of existence were the whole story. These modes of existence for the Existentialists are ones of inauthenticity and self-estrangement,

and are made possible by our Being-with-others and Being-for-others (Cooper, 1999, p. 110). This is then exactly what Spiral dynamics explains through Graves's contribution and one point of view can be made sense of as follows: Authenticity could then be explained as the self-expressive half of the spiral. Therefore to be authentic would be to follow the 'I' or the 'Me'. This doing your own thing or being your own person, according to the Existentialist view, is mirrored in the self-expressive half of the spiral. Inauthenticity is seen as the self-sacrificial half of the spiral. This leads to self-estrangement through the 'they' or 'others'. In this, human beings accept the communal character of life. This then leads to the self-sacrificial half of the spiral. Existentialism cannot accept that the communal character of human beings represents the whole story of human kind. The result, according to Existentialism, is that human beings accept their facticity as communal and therefore ignore their potentiality and that this is then self-estrangement.

Following this train of thought could mean that inauthenticity exists throughout the spiral. When it comes to Yellow, humankind manages to do the both / and relationship with others and ourselves. There are two reasons for this hypothesis. The first is that yellow is the first being level, distinguishing humankind from the lower existence levels of life. Yellow is thus something to aspire to, because in yellow human beings can choose which side of the spiral to access, and will therefore have free choice (this will be explained in more detail later). The second reason is that Yellow is further along on the spiral, and human beings must first learn this dichotomy of life through the two halves of the spiral, which inevitably implies that not many people will access Yellow easily.

The first description of self-estrangement is known as the public, herd or they. Kierkegaard referred to the public, while Nietzsche referred to the herd. Jaspers called it the individual's struggle against the 'mass-existence' and Ortega y Gasset also referred to the masses. As Kierkegaard puts it: "...public is ...an abstract void which is everything and nothing ...the most dangerous of powers...the public is also a gruesome abstraction through which the individual will receive his religious formation – or sink...More and more individuals, owing to their bloodless indolence, will aspire to be nothing at all – in order to become the public" (*The present age*, 1962. p. 63).

All these concepts refer to the same condition of inauthenticity as what Heidegger called the dictatorship of the ‘they’. Existentialists are concerned about social and political conditions in which there is little or no scope for individual self-expression and idiosyncratic taste and opinion. Existentialism is not to be equated with an elitist social criticism, because something more profound is at stake. What the power of the public, or the tyranny of the herd, suppresses not so much the outstanding individual or the higher individual, but the very possibility of a distinctly human existence. For Nietzsche (*The will to power*, 1968), it was the power individuals manifested in lending sense and value to their lives and their world, and in so doing, they represent, in the most vivid way, the essentially creative and interpretative character of human existence. Nietzsche said that “we have to realize to what degree we are the creators of our value feelings – and thus capable of projecting ‘meaning’ into history” (1968, p. 361). It is humanity, or the pragmatic manifestations of what are truly human, which suffers under the public or the herd. The concept of values is clearly defined in Beck and Cowan. The Existential contribution Graves made lead to this decision of what it is that human beings value. The difference is that we can choose our values, simply because it is in the nature a human beings to define ourselves or to choose our essence. This is where the definition of Existential needs is crucial in the understanding or explanation of the spiral. The movement on the spiral is an indication of a person’s ability to choose different Existential needs to the previous set he or she had chosen.

It is, however, Heidegger’s account of the ‘they’ that illuminates the Existentialist’s real objective from a social elitist criticism. The ‘they’ that Heidegger referred to is a translation of ‘Das man’, that means ‘one’, ‘you’, ‘people’, ‘we’ and ‘they’. Heidegger’s insisted that by describing people’s ‘fallenness’ or ‘absorption of the they’, he is not expressing any negative evaluation, but rather a ‘night view’ of Dasein (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 179). Heidegger also maintained that the inauthenticity of ‘life in the they’ is, without limits, something we can and should resist, and modify. His point is that inauthentic existence is not a characteristic of passing social conditions of which more advanced stages of human culture can rid itself. This ‘fallenness’ or ‘life in the they’ is an ‘existential’, or a necessary, a priori feature of Being-in-the-world. It is inconceivable that inauthenticity be done away with, because authentic existence cannot be replaced by inauthentic ‘life in the they’ (*Being and time*, pp. 176-179). Although authentic existence cannot replace inauthentic life ‘in the

they’, it can only be a modification of the ‘they’ where people do not float above it, but rather comes to grips with it.

Life must, for the most part, be ‘in the they’. This is explained through humanity’s account of Being-with-others. A person is necessarily with others because the world he or she encounters has already been articulated into things ready-at-hand, by virtue of the publicly available uses and significations they have. In using the things in this world, I do not act in a way which individuates me, but I act in a way that is similar to everyone else. In me making use of the things as they are, I am like the rest, and therefore part of the ‘they’. In general terms, the ‘they’ articulates the referential context of significance. Because a person’s various projects and ambitions invariably involve others, he or she is bound to care about the distance between him or her and others. It is essential to the smooth running of, and even the survival of, a society that these distances (or respect) between people be inconspicuous relative to a sense of shared, common forms of existence. There is thus a premium on an averageness in which the ‘they’ keep watch over everything exceptional, and on a levelling down of individual possibilities. As a result “We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as ‘they’ take pleasure...we find shocking what ‘they’ find shocking. The ‘they’, which is nothing definite, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness” (*Being and time*, p. 127). Heidegger insisted that in everyday life a Dasein is ‘not itself’, has lost itself, and that the Self of everyday Dasein is the ‘they-self’, and not that of the authentic individual. What a person loses in the ‘they’ is their ‘ownmost possibility of Being’. This does not mean that in the ‘they’ there is no opportunity for self-expression, originality, personal opinion and a kind of self-exploration, because the ‘they’ often encourages a busy versatility, curiosity and an exaggerated self-dissection. A possibility to Heidegger’s meaning of this is that in the ‘they’ people come to see themselves and others as things present-at-hand. There is thus not a way to escape this being in the world as being with others, but it should not be the only definition that human beings have of themselves. In this acceptance of our potentiality according to others, we become present-at-hand and accept our facticity and this describes our self-estrangement or in-authenticity.

For the Existentialist the urgency lies in taking up the clues and developing an account of authenticity and loss of self in the ‘they’. A person’s existence is an issue for the Existentialist and in confronting it the person must develop beliefs, values and interpretations

of his or her situation, which will direct the shape he or she gives to his or her life. Human beings must determine the place that work, pleasure and religion will occupy in their lives, as well as the membership of a specific ethnic group or profession. There is no shortage of opinions, values and interpretations from others and a person may simply take a collection of these on board with minimal reflection, perhaps especially those closely pressed on them by his or her family and peers. When people fail to make their lives their own, then it is clear that it is an inauthentic existence. Cooper (1999) called those beliefs, values and interpretations which serve to lend shape to a person's life 'directives'. Now we know from Heidegger that people's differing directives can be disturbing to their Being-with-one-another. Unless muted or quietened down they lead to jealousies, conflicts and arguments. There are many ways of dehumanising a human being by refusing to take his or her directives earnestly. This process takes place when an audience absolves itself from taking seriously the values and beliefs of a person. What is revealed here it to treat directives as expressions, and a person's deepest issues or directives are regarded as a mere conflict of taste. Each society deploys a strategy for quelling the disturbance that conflicting directives introduce to our Being-with-others. Therefore, to lose oneself for Heidegger is for the 'they' to have taken hold of one's ownmost possibilities of Being. These possibilities are the projects for lending shape to a life which a person determines in accordance with the beliefs and values that matter most to him or her. From the inside, a person's directives are what give meaning to his or her life; viewed by the 'they', these directives furnish meanings in the way that hairstyles and jewellery do. The person's ownership of his or her possibilities is treated by the 'they' as akin to owning the watch or wig that goes with his or her station or type. The self is only truly lost when the person comes to view his directives and possibilities with the same lack of gravity as the 'they' does. Now a person can speak as the 'they' do, but in the first person too. In his or her own eyes, a person becomes no more than the intersection at which a variety of character traits, roles, and social affiliations have chanced to meet (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 178). The theory of Spiral dynamics describes the process by which we as people or human beings self-express our directives or self-sacrifices in order to belong to or challenge the 'they'. This process is a purely natural one, according to Spiral dynamics and Existentialism, because it is in this Being-for-myself and Being-with-others dichotomy that my world has been cast or 'thrown' as Heidegger describes it. It is this Being-with-others that is described in the self-sacrificial half of the spiral and Being-for-myself is described in the self-expressive half of the spiral.

The second mode of self-estrangement is bad faith and the predominance of the other.

Sartre agrees with Heidegger in that each one of us is for the most part a docile instrument of family, of a social group or of a profession saying and hearing what anyone would have said and heard (*Saint Genet: Actor and martyr*, 1968, p. 407). The difference between Heidegger and Sartre is that the mode of self-estrangement that Sartre emphasises is a different one. Sartre's mode of self-estrangement is due to the prominence of the 'Other' in the coupling of Other and Self. A person gets taken hold of by others, in the sense of coming to construe him or herself for others. The person thus conceives his or her own consciousness on the model of the Other, as if he or she were to themselves as he or she is to others and they to him or her. Self-estrangement through the predominance of the Other is one of Sartre's patterns of bad faith. When others view me in a certain way and 'I resign myself to being only that' this is 'a reaction of...bad faith' (Sartre, *Being and nothingness*, 1956. p. 290).

Bad faith can also take other forms, as in not paying any heed at all how one is for others. Or it can take the form of identifying with one's 'objective' body as something to which things simply happen. An example of this would be the woman who pretends that the hand she leaves in an admirer's clasp, neither consenting nor resisting, is a mere thing and not part of her Being. There is also bad faith in identifying too closely with how one has been with one's past, thereby divesting oneself of responsibility for one's future. Bad faith has to do with self-identity in the sense of a person's reflective conception of who he or she is and what he or she is like. Some such reflective concern is inevitable, given that a person's existence is an 'issue' for him or her. Or, as Sartre puts it, one has to accept that a consciousness is more of a "being such that in its being, its being is in question" (*Being and nothingness*, 1956. p. 47). Self-reflection, in this sense, could have a variety of objects. A person who is convinced of his or her imminent death may reflect on his or her life by taking stock of how he or she lived. Cured of the illness that would have caused his or her death, the past becomes water under the bridge, and the self-reflection will now focus on future possibilities open to the person. Self-reflection may veer between concerns with what Sartre calls 'facticity' and 'transcendence', thus between examination of one's present physical circumstances and musing on one's ideal 'spiritual' destination. The constructs of facticity and transcendence are used in the interpretation of the Lens. This will be explained in detail in the discussion of the Lens results.

A further way of self-reflection is that on any one of my behaviours it is always possible to ascribe two views, namely mine and that of the Other. Because of this, I might exclude from my self-rumination any help that others may provide, convinced that they are possessed only of a deformed image of me. Alternatively, I might focus exclusively on how I am for others, perhaps in the belief that any solo feats of self-analysis would be a wayward exercise of narcissistic introspection. Bad faith is at work when, instead of balancing these various styles of self-reflection, I identify myself too fully with one or other of the competing objects of my reflections. As, for example, in identifying with my past at the expense of my future, or with my body to the exclusion of my spirit, or with my image of others instead of a more solipsistically formed self-image. According to Sartre, bad faith reveals that “human reality is a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is” (*Being and nothingness*, 1956. P. 58). The thrust of this remark in the present context is that no single perspective of self-reflection can pretend to yield a complete story. Human existence is ambiguous and multifaceted. Bad faith operates when a person, instead of facing up to his or her inevitable ‘ambiguity’, resolves it by ignoring or denying some of the poles between which his or her existence stands. Such denials are in bad faith, and not simply intellectual errors, because there are bound to be moments of self-reflection when each of these many poles of one’s ambiguous existence asserts itself. Bad faith always involves denial of something which, at times at least, we know to be true ourselves.

Everyone has the following motive to flee into bad faith. By conceiving of him- or herself as something In-itself, a person is relieved of a sense of responsibility for his or her life, and of the *Angst* and feeling of groundlessness, which are coeval with that sense. The main direction of this flight, whereby a person gives to him- or herself ‘the type of being of the object’, is for the them to ‘think of himself or herself from the position of the Other’ (Sartre, 1983, *Cahiers pour une morale*, p. 484). What Sartre means by giving to oneself ‘the type of being of the object’ is best gleaned from his contention that, submitted to ‘the Look’ of others, my possibility becomes a probability which is outside me. Others cannot stand by my decisions and commitments in the way that, if authentic, I would myself. It is the taking up of these possibilities that lend meaning to my existence. For others they are only indicators of my probable future behaviour. In the pattern of bad faith the person comes to view him- or herself from the position of the third person, or a third person perspective upon him- or

herself. He or she comes to view him- or herself as a series of events in the world, no different in principle from the series of events that constitute the causal histories of physical objects (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 265). From the previous discussions and the interpretation of the slogan ‘existence precedes essence’ we know this person views him- or herself as a substance and not as an existing individual. Graves described people as closed or open, although in Graves’s theory he referred to some neurological function or condition too. It is possible that bad faith as an existential construct could explain the same aspect of humanity? According to this argument bad faith is when people accept the definition of the ‘they’ for themselves as individuals. In this definition of bad faith the focus is exclusively on the self-sacrificial half of the spiral. This is one possibility where people would only define themselves according to the ‘they’ or self-sacrificial part of the spiral. Bad faith, therefore, would be avoiding the ambiguity in which we live. This ambiguity would be inclusive of both sides of the spiral.

These two modes of self-estrangement discussed previously, are woven by the Existentialist as a comprehensive account. Not only are these two modes consistent with each other, they are also complementary. Heidegger spoke of authenticity as something to be won as struggling out from a neutral condition of inauthenticity, while Sartre’s reference to authenticity as self-recovery implies that it is the original condition, later lost through bad faith. The difference also reflects the more constant emphasis of Heidegger on Being-with-others in a public world of shared meanings and activities. We start in the hive, so to speak, as whereas Sartre sometimes makes it sound as if we begin outside it. For both Heidegger and Sartre the individual is thrown in a public and already articulated world. For Sartre bad faith is essential to human reality and the normal aspect for most of us. Something to consider would be where Sartre and Heidegger were on the spiral? If we accept Heidegger was more on the sacrificial side of the spiral, then it is possible that Sartre was more on the expressive side thereof. This might explain some of the differences between the two concerning their views on self-estrangement.

Angst

Angst is a phenomenon which is pivotal to existentialist thought. So much so that Kierkegaard devoted more than one book to it and according to Heidegger “provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein’s primordial totality of Being” (*Being and*

time, 1962, p. 182). The German word is preferred, because it lacks the misleading connotations that the various English words (anxiety, dread, and anguish) have. To appreciate the importance of *Angst* for the Existentialist, we need to focus on the specific problem faced by the Existentialists. Existentialism, as seen previously, has described everyday life as lived, in most part, in bad faith, sunk in the ‘they’ and under the sway of the Other. Such descriptions proposed an authentic existence from which average everyday life is a ‘fall’, and individualised existence in which a person recalls him- or herself from bad faith and the ‘they’.

Existentialists attribute an important role to *Angst*, in that they are insistent that the world is revealed not only through cognitive operations, but through action and mood. Without the ‘*befindlichkeit*’ which gives us our stances towards the world, there would be nothing to think and have beliefs about. *Angst*, however, does not have an object like existing emotions or mood. Existing mood or emotions are individuated by the way in which objects appear to people, either as threatening or promising pleasure. I will therefore experience fear towards something, as in I fear the rabid dog. This is not true for *Angst*. *Angst* does have an object in the sense of being towards or about, however it is not ‘thing-like’ or an ‘entity-in-the-world’, like the dog that is feared. What then is the object of *Angst*? According to Sartre, *Angst* means that man is always separated by a nothingness from his essence or that the self exists in the perpetual mode of detachment from what is. It is in this disengagement or detachment of *Angst* that a person apprehends that exigencies and values only have the force which that person, unconstrained, grants to them. According to Sartre (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, pp. 36-37) “it is I and I alone...who makes...values exist in order to determine [my] actions by their demands”. At its deepest and most dramatic, *Angst* discloses a being which is compelled to decide the meaning of being (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 556). For Sartre then, *Angst* testifies to a freedom to be moved only by those appeals of the world which a person permits to move him or her. Graves said that a person will not change unless he or she has a reason to change. Graves explained this in terms of the individual being dissatisfied with his or her existence. This dissatisfaction would be referred to as dissonance by Graves, but the Existentialists would call it *Angst*.

According to Heidegger, if *Dasein* is not doomed to lose itself in the ‘they’, there must be “a way of disclosure in which *Dasein* brings itself before itself” (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 182). Heidegger saw this as the function of *Angst*. *Angst* is distinguished from fear of particular

objects and events. In *Angst* all entities within the world...sink away, so that the familiar world becomes uncanny (*unheimlich*). This is the crucial consequence that a people's understanding of themselves and their world can no longer be in the familiar terms of how things have been publicly interpreted. For this reason Heidegger wrote that *Angst* individuates *Dasein* and thus discloses it as 'solus ipse' (*Being and time*, 1962, p. 188). What sinks away in *Angst* is the world as interpreted by the 'they'. The usual meanings of things and actions fade as the everyday framework into which they have their slots becomes uncanny. Heidegger explained this by saying that we are brought before the 'nothing', but this nothing is 'the world as such'. We know already that there can be no world, except in relation to *Dasein's* engagement and disclosure. The world to which Heidegger referred is the world considered as a world, as the totality of what *Dasein*, through being in it, discloses and is responsible for. The 'they' forgets and disguises the worldly character of 'their' world. This is but one product of a way of disclosing, and it is masked by 'their' inveterate tendency to pass off a system of meanings as inevitable. Even worse, they pretend that the world is not sign-like at all, but a mere collection of things present-at-hand. In this, the 'worldly' character of the world in which I am 'in', is that which is intimated by *Angst*. The strategic importance of *Angst* is in the experience of the possibility of a disclosure which is quite distinctive: for *Angst* individualises (Heidegger, *Being and time*, 1962, p. 190). If *Angst* intimates my potential for an individual, 'distinctive' disclosure of the world, it follows that I am not to be identified with the publicly interpreted persona which I present to the 'they'. In *Angst* these aspects of me sink away into insignificance as much as the things around me. I am therefore a 'soul-thing' who might be disengaged from social existence, but I come to appreciate that the shape and significance of my life does not have to be stamped upon it from the outside. Rather, that it can belong to it by virtue of the ways in which I, as individual, take up the 'issue' which my existence is for me.

Absurdity

According to Sartre, "man is a useless passion" (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 615). This passion is the human being's futile project to metamorphose his own For-itself into an In-itself-For-itself. The futility of this is that no creature can both freely determine its essence and have its existence determined by an essence. Man's 'useless passion' combines bad faith (where in a person wishes on himself the status of an object) and the desire to be totally free. There is an absurdity in the person's pursuit of the project despite recognising its impossibility. It is, however, not this futility that prompts Sartre to regard life itself as

absurd, because some people, the authentic one's, manage to avoid this. Thus life cannot be absurd if some people manage to resist the temptation of bad faith. The concept of absurdity in the view of Existentialism, lies in Sartre's claim that the being For-itself is freedom. This claim entails that we shall never comprehend ourselves except as a choice in the making. This choice is the fundamental one of a stance towards things, others' and ourselves. This choice is also the one which causes there to be a world for the For-itself (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 479). This choice is not determined, since all determinations — in terms of motives and desires — operate only within a 'chosen' world. Thus, there can be no rational basis for it, since justifications and reasons are also relative to the fundamental stance adopted. According to Sartre "Such a choice made without basis of support and dictating its own causes to itself...is absurd. This is because freedom is a choice of its being but not the foundation of its being" (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 615). Sartre added that this choice is absurd, because there has never been any possibility of not choosing oneself. This point becomes clearer when viewed in the context of the following statement:

"Precisely because here we are dealing with a choice, it dictates other choices as possibilities. This possibility is lived in the feeling of unjustifiability; and it is this which is expressed by the fact of the absurdity of my choice and consequently of my being" (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 480).

To exist at all, I must be engaged, for example through my having values as referred to in Beck and Cowan (1996), without which nothing could appear more worth doing than anything else. Yet these values which justify my everyday choices are themselves the outcome of a 'fundamental choice' for which no justification is available. It is in this tension, between the necessary seriousness with which we are engaged through our beliefs and values and their lack of a justificatory ground, that absurdity is located.

It is therefore said that absurdity is a relative notion, with certain lives recognisable as absurd only in contrast to others, which are not. Something is thus absurd in this sense when it is not supported by reasons we normally expect to be forthcoming. Something is absolutely absurd, however, when it is beyond all reason in that it is impossible that reasons should ever be forthcoming (*Being and nothingness*, p. 279 & *Nausea*, p. 185). Sartre did not say that all contingent phenomena are absurd, although they too are beyond all reason. Absurdity is a privilege of the For-itself and is constituted not by the lack of grounds for 'fundamental

choice' alone, but by the tension between this and the seriousness of engagement in the world. Actually, this is an argument that there should be nothing beyond Yellow on the spiral, and even that Yellow in itself is probably questionable – since man can never arrive at an end destination. In a way, the Being Levels of the Spiral is assuming a place where the absurdity of life can be incorporated to some extent. Whereas the levels before Yellow are the Existent levels, and I am not sure we can ever escape these, because these levels represent our basic *angst* of choosing for ourselves (self-expressive side of the spiral) or for the others (self-sacrificial side of the spiral).

According to Nagel (*Mortal questions The absurd*, 1979, p. 14) “We cannot live human lives without energy and attention, nor without making choices which show that we take some things more seriously than others. Yet we have always available a point of view outside the particular form of our lives, from which the seriousness appear gratuitous. These two inescapable viewpoints collide in us, and that is what makes life absurd. It is absurd, because we ignore the doubts that we know cannot be settled, continuing to live nearly undiminished seriousness in spite of them.”

The relationship between absurdity and *Angst* is now reasonably clear. What was dimly intimated by *Angst* is one of the two aspects of existence whose confrontation makes for absurdity. The anxious person, disengaged from everyday exigencies, discerns that it is up to him or her to decide the meaning of being. This perception fails, absurdly, to diminish the sense of exigency with which for the most part everyday life is lived.

This is then the description of the spiral and Graves's understanding that we actually live between these two halves of the spiral. Had this not been the case, human beings would not need to change from one side of the spiral to the other at all. Through the spiral humankind can exist in this absurdity by moving from one to the other when the *Angst* or dissonance becomes too much. This process describes an essence or foundation of our existence. The construct of absurdity therefore relates to our human condition to keep changing what is (or was) important in our lives according to our existential needs. Absurdity is the result of our existence in the world as described by Graves on the spiral.

Sartre (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 615) describes the absurdity of being human as “man is a useless passion”. This passion is the human being's futile project to metamorphose his or

her own For-itself into an In-itself-For-itself. This is futile, since no creature can both determine its existence and have its existence determined by his or her essence. This ‘useless passion’ combines bad faith, wherein the person wishes on him- or herself the status of an object, and the desire nonetheless to remain totally free. What makes it absurd is the impossibility of success of the person’s pursuit of the project despite recognising its impossibility. Humanity thus presses ahead, knowing that nothing will come of the project. This is according to Sartre, but Graves disagrees here with Existentialism. In Graves’s view humanity finds a way to solve this absurdity or ‘useless passion’, in that in the being levels or existence (from Yellow onwards) humanity manages to live within this given context of being in this world.

Consciousness

The existentialists are as concerned as the phenomenologists with the nature of our consciousness of the world, but they disagree with the description of consciousness. Fundamentally, we do not know about objects in the world, we use them. The problem for the phenomenologists is to explain how it is that we can withdraw ourselves from our tools in order to look at them as things. Phenomenology can therefore not describe the objects of our world without paying attention to what we do with them, as well as what we know about them. The mistake according to the existentialists was that our primary commerce with things was to know them, that our distinguishing and most essential ability was reflective thought, and that our relationship with the world was not first to live in it. Existentialism cannot describe the ‘things themselves’ as intentional objects without regard for the person who is conscious of them. This also means paying attention to those intentional acts which are not merely cognitive, but involve caring, desiring and manipulating.

As pointed out previously, the existential emphasis on human practice, and the rejection of the *epoché*, came together in the recognition of an entire realm of investigation that Husserl neglected, if not ignored. Husserl (1960), like Descartes, began his philosophy from a *cogito* (or an “I think”) and took this *cogito* to be a basic starting point for phenomenological description and his philosophical argument. Existentialists point out that the starting point of phenomenological description need not be self-reflection or the reflection on our consciousness of objects. We can describe what we are doing as well as our knowledge of what we are doing. Heidegger (1962) thus distinguishes between ontic and ontological structures, namely those that exist before we are aware that they exist as opposed to those that

come into existence only with reflection. In a similar manner, Sartre distinguishes between ‘prereflective’ and ‘reflective consciousness’ and Merleau-Ponty (1962), distinguishes ‘preconscious’ and ‘conscious (i.e. knowing) intentionality’. Important to note is that the existentialists pay attention primarily to description of human action, rather than human knowledge. To this we may add that they describe our preconscious or prereflective involvement in our actions, rather than our reflections on our actions and our actions as they become reflected upon.

Intentionality and intentional objects.

The question of whether Phenomenology is a realism or an idealism – whether it maintains that consciousness simply finds objects before it or whether it actively creates the objects – is a manifestation of the unresolved attempts at synthesis throughout Husserl’s works. The split between Husserl’s Transcendental phenomenology and the Existentialists’ phenomenology revolves around this intuition-constitution dispute. If one interprets Husserl as placing his emphasis wholly on the production of phenomena by consciousness or by the ego, one has the picture of a total split between phenomenology and existentialism that is found in Sartre’s writings on Husserl. If, however, one focuses rather on Husserl’s notions of ‘intuition’, ‘the givenness’ of phenomena and the notion of ‘intentionality’, then the split between Husserl and existentialism appears to be one of minor points of interpretation. According to Solomon (1972), it is this kind of reconciliation that is found in Merleau-Ponty’s reflections on Husserl.

Some of the problems encountered with any attempt to explain the notion of ‘phenomena’ are the temptation to reduce it to the empiricist notion of “experience”, as well as the dialectically opposed compulsion to interpret the phenomena as if they are not to be distinguished from things-in-themselves, as whatever natural objects we experience. The traditional philosophical analysis of consciousness has often either fallen into a treatment of consciousness as some mysterious and autonomous realm of substance (as in Descartes and the British empiricists) or it came to deny consciousness altogether and simply talked in a persistently third-person if not behaviourist manner (as in Spinoza and Wittgenstein). Phenomenologists criticise empiricists for their ‘naturalisation’ of consciousness, which means that they mistook *a priori* truths about consciousness for empirical truths about consciousness. In so doing, they treated consciousness as a medium or stream separate from

nature and natural objects. Secondly, they incorporated into their analysis of consciousness a great many naturalistic concepts.

Phenomenologists, and especially Husserl, hold to the central thesis that: consciousness is intentional. This is the view that consciousness always takes an object, and that an act of consciousness is always directed towards something. Thus, when we love, we love something; and when we are afraid, we are afraid of something. The object of the intentional act need not be a real material object. We could be afraid of something under the bed, even if there is nothing under the bed to fear. Therefore, the intentional object can be a material object, but it may also be an ‘unreal’ object, a proposition, or an ‘ideal’ object. A necessary distinction is to be made between an act of consciousness and the intentional object of consciousness. Intentional acts are of many kinds – loving, thinking, acting, feeling, imagining, asserting and doubting. The correlation between acts and objects is that every act takes at least one object, and every object is the object of at least one possible act. From this we can see what is wrong with traditional philosophical talk of ‘experience’ or ‘consciousness’ by itself, and understand the difficulties in understanding the notion of ‘phenomenon’. “Experience-in-itself, are one and the same. But at the same time the phenomenon is inseparably connected to experience, for it is a phenomenon because it is an object as experienced” (Solomon, 1972, p. 20).

The question raised by Existentialism, and especially by Sartre’s work, is that of a person’s relationship to his or her natural or social surroundings. Two classical views exist according to Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology of perception*, 1962). The one treats a person as a result of the physical, physiological and sociological influences which shape him or her from the outside and make him or her one thing among many. The other consists of a person recognising an a-cosmic freedom in him or her, insofar as he or she is spirit and they represent to themselves the very causes which supposedly act upon them. On the one hand, a person is a part of the world; on the other hand, he or she constitutes consciousness of the world. Neither view is satisfactory. After Descartes one can object to the first on the grounds that, if indeed a person were one thing among many, he or she could not know any of them, because he or she would be locked in his or her own limits like ‘this chair’ or ‘that table’ present at a certain location in space and therefore incapable of representing to himself or herself all the others. We must grant a person a very special way of being – intentional being – which consists of being oriented towards all things but of not residing in any. But if

we tried to conclude from this that our fundamental nature makes us absolute spirit, our corporal and social ties with the world and our insertion in it would become incomprehensible, and we would give up thinking about the human condition. The merit about the new philosophy is that it tries, in the notion of existence, to find a way of thinking about our condition. In the modern sense of the word, existence is the movement through which people are in the world and involve themselves in a physical and social situation which then becomes their point of view on the world. This relates back to Existentialism's Being-in-the-world. All involvement is ambiguous because it both affirms and restricts a freedom: my undertaking to do a certain thing means both that it would be possible to do it and that I exclude this possibility. My involvement in nature and history is likewise a limitation of my view on the world and yet the only way for me to approach the world, know it, and do something in it. This being in the world, where human beings have the potential to be everything and nothing at the same time, explains our consciousness. We choose our own consciousness according to our intentionality. Our intentionality is influenced by that which we 'lack' or care for (*sorge*). This is where Grave's theory on the explanation of the spiral becomes a theory of consciousness, explaining humankind's being in this world.

Freedom

The idea of a person creating him- or herself, provides an idea of the celebrated existentialist notion of 'absolute freedom'. A person can therefore never know what is known (their facticity) and what is up to them to decide (their transcendence), and because of this he or she can never settle for any characterisation of him- or herself or of humanity in general. Absolute freedom means that nothing is simply 'given': this does not mean that man is free to do anything that he or she would simply like to do. It means, at most, that a person has freedom to decide to do anything, but even this must be tempered by Sartre's thesis that a person can only decide to do what he or she believes he or she can actually try to do. It is not right to focus only on the freedom or transcendence half of the existentialist ambiguity. A person is, by the same token, also always unsure about the limits of his or her situation and the restrictions on his or her freedom. In terms of Heidegger's dramatic terms a person is thrown into a world and into a particular situation and in terms of absolute freedom, as Sartre tells us, one is free only within the confines of one's situation. A person never knows where his or her situation brings it to a standstill and his or her freedom begins. This is the source of existential anxiety and a person is always forced into a position where he or she must make choices, but existentialists also insist that a person is always in a position in which there are

any numbers of choices that he or she does not have. To add to the problem, he or she never knows which is which.

According to the phenomenological view, humanity's Being is found in the everyday condition as being with others. It "appears first of all and for the most part a being immersed among others absorbed in the day-in-day-out business of life" (Richardson, 1963, p. 129). A closer look reveals the world to be a horizon within which being is met. This is not simply a horizon within which being is encountered, but rather a matrix of relationships within which being have their meaning. A person is never solitary in the world. He or she exists with other people and this interlacing structure is the basis of all empathy. A person is also not the source of his or her own Being, but rather discovers himself or herself, so to speak, as thrown into his or her world. He or she is not independent of other beings, but is related to them, and depends on them to be what they are. This dependence goes so deep that a person tends to become absorbed in other beings. The process of becoming absorbed in other beings leads to a point where a person becomes fallen among others to such an extent that he or she tends to be oblivious to his openness to Being, forgetting his or her true self.

Thrown among beings, a person is open to their Being, yet trammelled with infinitude. The privileged experience by which a person discovers the unity of the self is *Angst* or also translated as anxiety. This is a special mode of ontological disposition or rather an affective, non-rational attunement within us. It is different from fear, because fear is always an apprehensive response to something. With anxiety, however, the self is not anxious about any single thing, but about no-thing in particular, about nothing and being nothing. When this happens, the things that give meaning to our lives slip from our grasp and thus losing their meaningfulness. We are no longer at home with them. We are thus alienated from them, but also alienated from 'everybody else' from the in crowd as well. Through this we discover that there is another dimension in life, than merely the everyday one. This is a new horizon of which we are ordinarily unaware, yet within which and toward which we truly exist. Through the phenomenon of anxiety the self becomes aware of itself as a unified whole. It could be related to beings within the world; being open to Being, or just the World as such. It is also of being aware of the possibility of accepting the fact that this is what it is or of running away from the truth, refusing to know except what the In-crowd knows. Thus the phenomenon of anxiety reveals to man the possibility of choosing to be authentic or not.

What then, according to Existentialism, does it mean to be free? The first moment of freedom occurs when a person is startled out of the complacency of his or her everyday absorption in being and realises the first time that by his or her comprehension of Being he or she passes beyond these beings to the process that lets them be. This occurs in the moment of anxiety when all being seem to slip away from a person, and leaves him or her exposed to the ‘something that is No-thing’, the horizon of the world. In this moment a person is freed or liberated from the obscurity that has held captive the structures of his or her own transcendence. In this moment, a person’s existence is wrested from the concealment that held it prisoner. This moment is, therefore, clearly a moment of truth. Graves described this moment of truth as occurring as a result of dissonance. It happens when a person gets to a point where he or she is not satisfied any longer. This first moment of freedom makes possible a second moment in which a person can choose to accept him- or herself as a transcendence that is finite. Alternatively, he or she can refuse him- or herself by trying to run away from the awesome privilege by yielding to the seduction of being ‘In’ with the ‘In-crowd’. Humans therefore have the choice to opt to be authentic or inauthentic. If they choose to be inauthentic, they become slaves of the ‘In-crowds’ worlds. It is only when they choose to be authentic, that they become authentically free. This is reflected in Spiral dynamics, where human beings have the choice to be on the self-sacrificial or the self-expressive side of the spiral.

When Sartre wrote about his doctrines of the For-itself and the precedence of existence over essence that “all this is to say one and the same thing ...that man is free” (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 439), he made it clear that he added nothing new by proclaiming human freedom. Rather, Sartre switched the focus onto the practical. A man being free “carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders...[He] is the one by whom it happens that there is a world;...he is also the one who makes himself...It is therefore senseless to think of complaining, because nothing foreign has decided what we are” (Sartre in Cooper. 1999, p. 153). Here the existential phenomenologist’s insistence on the ‘humanness’ of the world is yoked with the later insistence on the ‘individualisation’ which makes you or me, and not mankind in general, the maker of the world. This is the origin of the radical responsibility which each of us bears.

Freedom for the Existentialist is to be contrasted with two kinds of constraints, which could be labelled ‘causal’ and ‘rational’. A person may be causally constrained through something

like brainwashing to accept certain conclusions, even if they are not rationally determined by the available evidence. Conversely a conclusion may be rationally required even though no causal process guarantees that a person will draw this conclusion. The existentialist upholds a freedom from both kinds of constraint. *Angst* and the sense of absurdity indicate that there is no final, rational determination of the large decisions in life, of our ‘fundamental projects’. As has been shown before, the course of human existence is not amenable to sufficient explanation of a causal kind. Existentialism does not use ‘freedom’ ambiguously, but rather refers to two dimensions of a single initial idea about freedom. This is an idea intimately related to that of responsibility. The idea of being a fully responsible agent may be treated from two directions. First, by the thought that of being in the grip of inexorable causal processes, and second, by the thought that one’s decisions in life are all subject to rational decision-making procedures with determinate outcomes. If they were so subjective, then problems of choice could only arise as a result of irrationality or ignorance. This offends the conviction that even a fully informed and rational person occupies a space within which large decisions are for him or her to settle. Such a person would not experience *Angst*, or even a sense of independence, if the right decisions could always be determined by a sufficiently well programmed calculating machine.

Choice and refusal in freedom.

The key notion of freedom is that of an initial choice or project. Sartre employs it in order to reconcile the explicability of our actions with our complete responsibility for them. The tired hiker in Sartre’s story could have soldiered on, but at what price? It is because there would have been a price that his actual behaviour was not gratuitous. The price would have been a collision with the person’s initial choice. An action is explained when we connect it up, through going further and further back, with the original relation which the ‘For-itself’ chooses with ...the world (Sartre, *Being and nothingness*, 1956. p. 457). According to Ortega y Gasset, actions are typically explained through “their accordance with the general programme a person sets himself. Although vital to the intelligibility of a person’s subsequent behaviour, the initial choice or programme is not rigid. It can be renewed or modified, and in times of *Angst* we are conscious that we can abruptly invert the choice and reverse steam (*Being and nothingness*,. 1956, p. 457 & p. 465). As explained in the concept of dissonance in Graves’s theory, people can change on the spiral when there is enough dissonance to change. Existentialism refers to this dissonance as *Angst*. The general

programme a person sets him- or herself can be changed according to the context in which that person finds him- or herself. Spiral dynamics is a reflection of this process.

The initial choice in Existentialism is vital, since without it there would not be the motives and situations in terms of which we ordinarily account for behaviour. The hiker's fatigue (in Sartre's story) is a reason to give up only because, unlike his companions his relation to the world, it is not to something he feels the need to overcome in the face of adversity. He has opted for a stance towards the world in which such physical accomplishments count for little.

Situations too are not brute, factual givens. Rather they are intentionally constituted through the projects and values whereby we lend significance to things. A situation is defined as the 'coefficient of adversity' it represents; hence it is a function, not a cause, of the projects a person has adopted. Like a motive, a situation is demanding only in relation to how a person has decided to 'sculpt his figure' in the world. We are not the confronting external forces which press in on us, but factors that emerge only as a result of our initial choices and their modifications.

Explanation of behaviour, says Sartre, is hermeneutical and not causal, because it attempts to disengage the meanings of an act, which is not the 'simple effect of prior psychic states', not part of a 'linear determinism, but is integrated in...the totality which I am (*Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 459). Ortega y Gasset (*History as a system*, 1962, p. 205) uses the metaphor of man being the novelist of his life. This indicates that the episodes in life, as in fiction, are made intelligible not as causal products of earlier happenings, but as items within a whole narrative structure. Freedom for the Existentialist is all about initial choices, informing the actions that human kind has made, and for which they should be responsible.

Existential Ethics

From the preceding discussion, it has become evident that existentialists cannot provide us with an ethics. Our situations consists not only of tools for us to act with and physical obstacles for us to act against, but it also consists of any number of given values – as in given by God, or parents, society, conscience, or by Nature. One can, however, never tell whether a value is truly a given value, or whether it is something that one has chosen to accept (Solomon, 1972).

Sartre made it plain that it is a mistake to take anything, and not just values, as pre-given of independent of human engagement. So called ‘brute facts’ about the past are not really such, since it is ultimately impossible for me to distinguish the unchangeable brute existence from the variable meaning which it includes. “A thousand projects including, my adoption of a social order in which a person’s existence is deemed to begin at birth, are involved in my holding it for a brute fact that I had whooping cough at the age of four. It may be that, in some sense of ‘choose’, we choose our values; but in that sense we also choose the world” (*Sartre in Being and nothingness*, 1956, p. 498). A comparison can be made with Nietzsche’s remarks on values such as “there are no moral phenomena...morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena” (*Twilight and idols*, 1954, p. viii). His concern here is not the divorce of facts and values. According to Nietzsche facts too only emerge from the interpretations or perspectives which we bring to the world: “Facts is precisely what there is not...only interpretations” (*Will to power*, 1968, p. 481).

Summary

The central proposition of existential philosophy is that we exist in a ‘human world’ contents of which are articulated in terms of the significance they have through the intentional projects in which we engage. Our relation to this world is not that of substances causally interacting with others, but rather what Heidegger calls ‘care’ and Sartre calls ‘lack’. This is a relation to things in so far as they matter to us for the ‘issue’ that each one of us is to ourselves. This central proposition serves as a premise for freedom in two ways. Because the human world is constituted by ‘signs’, ‘négatités’ and other intentional items, it cannot be an outside agency causally dictating our attitudes and actions. I am thus not free as the Stoic would have it, because I am an inner citadel protected against outside incursion through impregnable walls. Rather, as Merleau-Ponty put it, “nothing deters me from the outside...because I am from the start outside of myself and open to the world” (*Phenomenology of perception*, 1962, p. 456). This is the doctrine of intentionality as revised by the Existentialists. The human world is neither outside us, nor inside us, but the external world is really a projection of imagination. The mode in which I am ‘there’, outside in the world, is intentional and not natural, as with a bird in its natural habitat. My situation is not an environment with which I interact. It is, according to Ortega y Gasset’s metaphor, something which I carry like the vagabond carries his bundle. The vagabond cannot survive or begin his journey without a bundle; but how he carries it and where to, are his responsibilities.

The second implication for freedom of the ‘human world’ is that if human beings ‘make it’, they can also ‘unmake it’. People can alter their projects and thereby refuse the interpretations and values which projects carry. They are not spectators at a show, destined to register and share a particular impression of what passes before them. These powers to ‘refuse’ and to begin something else, go deep – which is why the *Angst* in which they are intimidated may exhilarate or disturb, but not leave us indifferent.

Existential freedom should not be ‘over-intellectualised’. Its powers are not exercised, typically, by deciding in the quiet of one’s study to submit this or that aspect of one’s attitude to the world to critical analysis. Once this deliberation occurs as Sartre articulated it ‘the chips have already been put down’ (or ‘*les jeux sont faits*’). The person is already on his or her way, a part of the business of living, by ‘refusing’ aspects of how he or she has so far been. He or she will be on his or her way not through contemplation, but through embarking on a new career or through the value he or she finds him- or herself placing on a new personal relationship, or through a colleague’s chiding him or her about his or her habits.

The priority of practice over intellect has a further consequence. If the behaviour of ‘refusal’ is to be intelligible to the agent, it must have real continuity with the previous behaviour which has embodied his or her interpretations and evaluations of things. While there are no limits on the scope of the powers of freedom, there are nevertheless limits to the manner and velocity of their exercise. In Neurath’s famous analogy, the ship’s planks may well get replaced, but not all at once, for the carpenter must have some to stand on while he removes the others. Sartre’s talk on the ability to reverse steam, a person’s exercise of freedom’s powers cannot be a nihilist assassination of his former self, its convictions and compartments. To continue the nautical figures, the order has to be ‘Slow ahead!’ (Cooper, 1999. p. 164).

We can see, finally why Existential freedom is not an ideal or passion. Its powers are those a person is condemned to possess by virtue, simply, of enjoying a human existence. A creature for whom the world and his or her place in it are an ‘issue’, which he or she is constantly in the business of resolving through the projects in which he or she engages, is a free one. This freedom is not like a feature in a car, an optional extra with which a human life may or may not come equipped. To be free is to have that kind of life, reviewed from the perspective of the responsibility which such a life has for itself.