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**Beyond Bad Faith-
Vindicating the Quest for Being**

Yorel Zrihen

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Beyond Bad Faith- Vindicating the Quest for Being

Yorel Zrihen

By equating the “quest for Being” with “bad faith” Sartre has oversimplified and misrepresented human reality. In this thesis I examine Sartre’s description of “the human condition,” as well as his concepts of “bad faith”, “good faith”, “authenticity”, and “the ego”- for evidence of the consistent devalorization of human reality’s “natural quest for being.” I will argue that the desire to self-coincide must be distinguished from the attempt to evade freedom. The quest for Being must be vindicated in order to restore a vital and valid dimension which is flagrantly excluded in Sartre’s depiction of human reality.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| <u>INTRODUCTION</u> | 1 |
| | |
| <u>CHAPTER ONE</u> | |
| <u>"The Human Condition"- Susceptibility to Bad faith</u> | 10 |
| Freud's Challenge | 10 |
| Bad Faith | 13 |
| The Structure of Consciousness | 17 |
| The Human Condition | 20 |
| | |
| <u>CHAPTER TWO</u> | |
| <u>Bad Faith as a "Lie to Oneself"</u> | 25 |
| Common Notions of Self-Deception | 28 |
| The "Lie to the Other" versus the "Lie to Oneself" | 30 |
| Articulating the Lie to Oneself | 34 |
| Santoni's "Lie of Half-Persuasion" | 41 |
| Critique. | 44 |
| 1- "A degenerate form of the lie" | 44 |
| 2- "A non-cynical lie" | 50 |
| | |
| <u>CHAPTER THREE</u> | |
| <u>The Antithesis of Bad Faith- Good Faith versus Authenticity</u> | 60 |
| Authenticity | 62 |
| Distinguishing "Authenticity" from "Good Faith" | 66 |
| Problematic Ethics | 75 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| <u>CHAPTER FOUR</u> | |
| <u>Distinguishing the “Art” from the “Motivation” of Bad Faith</u> | 80 |
| The “Neutral” Art of Self-Deception | 82 |
| The Ego | 89 |
| | |
| <u>CONCLUSION</u> | |
| <u>Beyond Bad Faith</u> | 98 |
| | |
| <u>CHAPTER ENDNOTES</u> | 105 |
| | |
| <u>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</u> | 119 |

INTRODUCTION

With his concept of “the unconscious” Freud offers an explanation for the phenomena of repression, resistance, and hypnosis. In *Lecture XVIII*, he challenges “... anyone in the world to give a more correct account ... [than the] ... hypothesis of unconscious mental processes ... ” 1

The psychological determinism implicit in Freud’s notion of the unconscious is inadmissible to Sartre, who argues that human reality is responsible for determining what kind of being it is going to be. Sartre responds to Freud by replacing “the unconscious” with his own concept of “bad faith”- i.e., the attempt by consciousness to evade the anguish of its absolute freedom.

Taking the concept of bad faith as his “attitude of reference,” Sartre purports to disclose the structure of consciousness by phenomenological analysis. In *Being and Nothingness*, he poses the question:

what are we to say that consciousness must be in the instantaneity of the pre-reflective *cogito* - if the human being is to be capable of bad faith? 2

According to Sartre, human consciousness (being-for-itself) is “inner disintegration” or “lack,” which intends self-coincidence or completion (being-in-itself). However, since to self-coincide, by definition, is no longer to be conscious, this goal is both contradictory and unattainable. Furthermore, since for Sartre inner disintegration is synonymous with freedom, the effort to self-coincide amounts to the futile attempt to evade freedom. It follows that “man is a useless passion” 3 - i.e., man is perennially susceptible to bad faith. Thus,

Sartre's phenomenological methodology equates the features and dynamics of consciousness to those of the particular attitude of bad faith. This is all the more significant when one considers that, for Sartre, consciousness *is* human reality.

Therefore, according to Sartre, bad faith is *fundamental* - it is "one *determined* attitude which is *essential* to human reality." 4 [italics mine] And though "good faith"- i.e., the spontaneous confrontation of freedom- initially appears to be the antithesis to bad faith, we are informed that this attitude shares bad faith's ideal of being-in-itself, and therefore tends to "slide into bad faith." Nevertheless, Sartre suggests that there is a way to "overcome" our natural *susceptibility* to bad faith. In the "authentic" stance, we recognize and *resist* our natural "impetus towards substantiality," and "assume" and "valorize" (give value to) the freedom that we are. He adds, however, that "*most* of the time we flee anguish in bad faith." 5 [italics mine] Thus, for Sartre, the spectrum of human conduct is monothematic. From negative to positive, it ranges from "being in bad faith" to "choosing not to be in bad faith"- i.e., from *evading* freedom to *valorizing* freedom.

This view, however, is problematic. The definition of human reality as "freedom susceptible to bad faith" leads to the notion of an insubstantial self with no concrete foundation for a personal system of values. Although Sartre would claim that his descriptions are disclosed by honest phenomenological inquiry, I submit that the vacuous and impoverished depiction of human reality to which they lead, are the result of a *limited* phenomenological perspective and of the consequent restricted ontological foundation, in which the susceptibility to bad faith is taken to resume the human predicament.

I contend that the options of “bad faith” (the spontaneous and futile attempt to evade freedom), “good faith” (the spontaneous and futile confrontation of freedom), and “authenticity” (the reflective attempt to overcome bad faith; a “valorization” of freedom which is tantamount to the mere resignation to freedom), do *not* exhaust the possibilities of human conduct. By fragmenting and polarizing Being into the mutually exclusive “being-for-itself” and “being-in-itself,” Sartre is committed to holding that freedom is an “all-or-none” affair rather than a matter of degree. Consequently, his ontology incorporates the susceptibility to bad faith into the structure of consciousness and reduces alleged experiences of self-coincidence to instances of bad faith. While Sartre’s description of the inner disintegration of consciousness and of the awesome responsibility of freedom is brilliantly insightful, it is blind to the equally lucid phenomenological observations of the experience of an “enduring self” whose freedom is limited by fixed determinants, and whose lot in life consists of more than overcoming a “bad” nature.

I submit that by equating the “quest for Being” with “bad faith” Sartre has over-simplified and misrepresented human reality. In this thesis I will examine Sartre’s description of “the human condition,” as well as his concepts of “bad faith”, “good faith”, “authenticity”, and “the ego”- for evidence of the consistent de-valorization of human reality’s “natural quest for being.” I will argue that the desire to self-coincide must be distinguished from the attempt to evade freedom. The quest for Being must be vindicated in order to restore a vital and valid dimension which is flagrantly excluded in Sartre’s depiction of human reality.

In chapter one I will describe the notion of bad faith, and examine how the structure and dynamics of this attitude are built into Sartre's definition of consciousness and depiction of "the human condition."

Sartre describes *structural* and *teleological* aspects of consciousness as the conditions for the possibility of bad faith. Structurally, consciousness is the inner disintegration which is synonymous with (its) freedom. Teleologically, human reality desires to self-coincide- i.e., to be perfectly identical with its own reasons for existence and yet conscious of these reasons- i.e., to be an "in-itself-for-itself" (which Sartre also defines as "God"). This contradictory goal is impossible within his ontological system, therefore Sartre is committed to qualify the desire to self-coincide as "bad faith." Hence, "man is *condemned* to be free." 6 [italics mine]

However, since freedom cannot be achieved "as a thing," and once and for all, it follows that *both* the ideal of self-coincidence *and* the ideal of freedom are unattainable. The valorization of the pursuit of freedom over the equally *natural* attempt to self-coincide which Sartre has built into his ontology, is therefore questionable. The de-valorization of the desire to self-coincide in his description of the human predicament presages his limited depiction of the possibilities of human reality.

(I will corroborate this suggestion in chapter three with a discussion of the concepts of "good faith" and "authenticity". In addition, in chapter four I will describe instances in which the *experience* of self-coincidence- which I claim to be integral to what it means to be human- is at least temporarily achieved.)

In chapter two I will analyze Sartre's notion of the "lie to oneself"- i.e., bad faith at the epistemological level. At the *ontological* level, the attitude of bad faith consists of the attempt to flee the anguish of freedom in order to attain the ideal of being-in-itself- "to be what it is." At the *epistemological* level, bad faith accepts and exploits the fact that "one does not believe what one believes," in its attempt "to believe what it believes." Sartre qualifies this evasive manoeuvre as a "lie to oneself". This effort to stall the process of self-re-creation, involves-

a certain art of forming contradictory concepts ["concepts amphiboliques"] which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea. The basic concept which is thus engendered, utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a *facticity* and a *transcendence* . 7

My objectives in articulating the lie to oneself are threefold:

(a) to disclose and underscore the fact that in his description of bad faith, Sartre does not distinguish the *art* involved in self-deception from the *motivation* of attempting to evade freedom. The ability to form contradictory concepts is indeed instrumental in consciousness' attempt to see itself as an "in-itself." And since he defines consciousness as absolute freedom, this attempt is not only an evasion of freedom for Sartre, but also a "lie to oneself." Nevertheless, as I shall explain in chapter four, this skill is equally essential to a variety of "positive" experiences which define human reality, as well as to the indispensable ability of consciousness to construct an ego for itself, neither of which instance constitutes an evasion of freedom. I therefore cite Sartre's failure to dissociate this art from the negative connotation of bad faith as a second indication of his dubious de-valorization of the ontological desire to self-coincide.

(b) to examine how, according to Sartre, human reality is capable

of *successfully lying to itself*- more specifically, how it can *persuade* itself to see itself as an in-itself. This indicates that the transient *experience* of self-coincidence is a “viable”- though not a “valid”- possibility within Sartre’s ontological system.

(c) to suggest an interpretation of Sartre’s apparently paradoxical description of the lie to oneself as “*non-cynical*.” I claim that this qualification illustrates and enhances Sartre’s description of bad faith as a “sincere” (in Sartre’s sense of the term) and *pre-* reflective attitude in which only an “ascriptive” and not a “moral” responsibility can be attributed to consciousness. The characterization of the attempt to see oneself as an in-itself as “pre-moral” is compatible with my claim that the “art” of bad faith is multipotential- i.e., it can either be abused in the attempt to evade freedom, or *validly exploited* as an act of freedom.

In chapter three, we will examine how, though Sartre’s descriptions of bad faith and of good faith are permeated by the *implicit* prescription of a unique moral stance, it is with his notion of authenticity that this precept is articulated. The “authentic” stance is the moral attitude which overcomes bad faith by recognizing and “valorizing” the unique value of freedom. According to Sartre, one ought to purge oneself of the widespread “bad faith illusion” that it is possible to “find an essence” (an integrating focus and center for one’s life). To recognize that one must create one’s own essence is to experience anguish; and to reflect and act upon this knowledge is to adopt a

moral stance.

In this chapter, my objectives are-

(a) to examine Sartre's notion of authenticity and to contrast it to the attitude of good faith, noting the centrality of the notion of bad faith in both of these concepts,

(b) to suggest that the limited moral possibilities represented by Sartre's notion of authenticity once again indicate that his depiction of human reality might be widened and rectified by the vindication of the ontological quest for Being.

In chapter four, I shall present logical and empirical arguments in support of my contention that self-coincidence- as an *experience* if not as an *ideal* - is both attainable and desirable.

First, I will endeavour to redeem the "art" of forming and entertaining contradictory beliefs, which Sartre's description has tainted by associating it exclusively with the bad-faith motivation to evade freedom. This objective will be accomplished by reviewing Jennifer Radden's analysis of the observable experiences which she refers to as the "aesthetic", "symbolic", "empathetic" and "wishful" stances. I draw a parallel between Radden's argument that the art of entertaining contradictory beliefs does not always constitute "self-deception" in the strict sense of the term, and my claim that the exercise of this art in the attempt to see oneself as an in-itself, does not necessarily constitute "bad faith." With Radden, I emphasize the significance of recognizing the *motivation* which

underlies the exercise of the art.

Secondly, I shall cite the construction of the ego as an instance of forming and entertaining contradictory beliefs. Sartre suggests that “the essential role of the ego” might be “to mask from consciousness its very spontaneity.”⁸ Although the possibility of the fabrication of a “false ego” exists, I argue that the ego is primarily the “valid” attempt to see oneself as an in-itself, without which consciousness would have no substantial point of reference from which to reflect upon, and orient, its fundamental project of pursuing being. I contend that through the ego, consciousness is capable of validly experiencing self-coincidence without abrogating its freedom. Although precarious and fleeting (when authentic), the exploitation of freedom which marks the experience of self-coincidence is essential to the possibility of meaningful self-directed existence.

(nb- it is the universal subjective experience of “I” rather than the theoretical concept of the ego which I cite as “empirical evidence”).

Thus, Sartre's phenomenological description is wont to account for the range of "valid" experiences which at the very least "simulate" self-coincidence, but which his ontology only acknowledges as instances of bad faith or inauthenticity. Phenomenological observation reveals that human reality is free and precarious, but also that it is marked by genuine experiences of security, groundedness, self-identity, and fulfilment. I therefore submit that the so-called "authentic stance" ought to denote the reflective and voluntary attempt to coordinate and reconcile human reality's equally essential freedom *and quest for Being* .

CHAPTER ONE
"THE HUMAN CONDITION"-
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO BAD FAITH

Freud's Challenge

Freud offers a mechanism for explaining how "much of supposed voluntary behaviour is profoundly influenced by the workings of primordial impulses and painful affects which an alert consciousness finds unacceptable and can tacitly acknowledge only indirectly." 1 According to him, "the unconscious" is the obscure psychic region which is ultimately responsible for such phenomena as repression, suppression, and resistance.

In *Lecture XIX*, Freud explains *repression* with an analogy. He describes the system of the unconscious as "a hallway" filled with active mental impulses, from which a censor admits only those which please him, into "an adjoining room" in which consciousness is found. Those impulses which are pushed back into the hallway are called "repressed", and are not visible to consciousness. Some of the impulses which are allowed to pass are still not conscious- they exist in the "pre-conscious", and can only become conscious "if they succeed in catching the eye of consciousness." 2

Repression occurs when desires are in conflict with enforced standards of conduct. The impulses or desires, with their affective counterparts, are 'automatically' thrust back into the unconscious. Repression is distinct from

suppression which is a conscious and voluntary dismissal from consciousness of painful thoughts, memories, desires. Both of these phenomena imply the existence of a “censor”, who “is the same watchman whom we get to know as *resistance* when we try to lift the repression by means of the analytic treatment.”
3 Resistance becomes manifest when the analyst attempts to bring a repressed impulse to consciousness.

In Lecture *XVIII* , referring to the phenomenon of hypnosis as evidence for the existence of the unconscious, Freud challenges

... anyone in the world to give a more correct scientific account of this state of affairs, and if he does we will gladly renounce our hypothesis of unconscious mental processes ... 4

With his concept of “bad faith” Sartre picks up the gauntlet.

Sartre acknowledges and focuses on the phenomenon of resistance in his refutation of Freud’s concept of the unconscious. He challenges Freud’s explanation of resistance by asking which part of the self does the resisting:

a- It cannot be the ego because the ego’s relation to the meaning of his own reactions is like that of the analyst. Moreover, the ego is involved in a conscious pursuit of therapy and is considering all interpretations as probable in hopes at arriving at a cure. It’s sincerity is therefore unquestioned.

b- Nor can it be the unconscious because it knows no external reality, according to Freud.

c- The “censor” is the only part of the subject which can comprehend the interpretation of the analyst, because “it alone knows what it is repressing”; indeed it must, if it is to select and discriminate among impulses:

the censor must ... apprehend [undesirable impulses] as to be repressed, which implies in it at the very least an awareness of its activity. In a word, how could the censor discern the impulses needing to be repressed without being

conscious of discerning them? 5

And herein lies the paradox:

... but what type of self-consciousness can the censor have?
It must be the consciousness (of) being conscious of the drive
to be repressed, but precisely in order not to be conscious of it.
What does this mean if not that the censor is in bad faith? 6

According to Sartre, bad faith is a “lie to oneself”, in which consciousness attempts to hide from itself a truth of which it is aware. Consciousness is the deceiver and the deceived, simultaneously. It knows it has deceived itself, and it believes the lie it has created. It hides from itself its responsibility for creating the falsehood. It flees from the truth, without being totally unaware that it is fleeing.

As Mark Conkling summarizes in his article “*Sartre and the Unconscious*” :

For Sartre, then, Freud has substituted for self-deception a lie without a liar ... The liar, which I myself am, is replaced by the concepts of repression, suppression, and the unconscious. This is tantamount to saying, ‘I am my ego, but I am not my id.’ I am not that unconscious instinct or impulse which compels my act. 7

By showing that the censor is in bad faith, Sartre feels he has dispensed with the notions of repression and the unconscious. According to him, consciousness is wholly responsible for determining its own behaviour. Repression can be sufficiently explained without recourse to the unconscious, in terms of self-deception or bad faith. Conversely, when a patient exhibits resistance, he is *aware* of what has been repressed, but *refuses to notice it* until the analyst persists. Thus, bad faith involves the surrender of the direction of one’s life project to fixed determinants, while at the same time being conscious of one’s absolute responsibility to create one’s essence through one’s choices.

Bad Faith

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre introduces the concept of bad faith as one of the diverse kinds of behaviour which illustrate man's capacity for self-negation. Bad faith is:

one determined attitude which is *essential* to human reality and which is such that consciousness instead of directing its *negation* outward turns it *toward itself*. 8 [italics mine]

Bad faith is illustrated by certain patterns of conduct, all of which involve:

a certain art of forming contradictory concepts ["concepts amphiboliques"] which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea. The basic concept which is thus engendered, utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a *facticity* and a *transcendence*. 9

In his example of "the paederast" 10, *facticity* refers to the past and present homosexual behaviour which this individual has adopted but which, *in itself*, *does not define* him as a paederast. The *transcendence* of the paederast is his possibility of engaging, or not engaging, in homosexual conduct- i.e., his future behavioural possibilities.

According to Sartre, there are two immediate attitudes with which consciousness may "manage" itself as "transcendence-facticity". The "valid", or "good faith" attitude is to make free choices on the basis of a lucid acceptance of facticity as facticity, and transcendence as transcendence. The attitude of bad faith, in contrast, misappropriates the two aspects of human reality in an attempt to evade the responsibility of freedom.

Hazel Barnes summarizes Sartre's concept of bad faith as:

A lie to oneself within the unity of a single consciousness. Through bad faith a person seeks to escape the responsible freedom of Being-for-itself. Bad faith rests on a vacillation

between transcendence and facticity which refuses to recognize either one for what it really is or to synthesize them. 11

The “patterns” of bad faith

1- The paederast-

In this example, Sartre illustrates the attempt to deny one's facticity. The paederast claims: “I am not a paederast.” Indeed, he is right because he “is not what he is” in the sense that he is not defined by a pattern of conduct. However, he must not deny that he is a paederast in the sense of “non-being-in-itself”- i.e., “in the sense in which this table is not an inkwell.” 12

2- The date-

Having postponed the advances of a persistent lover, the date abdicates her responsibility for decision by existing in the mode of the in-itself. Her particular situation confronts her with her freedom, and she makes a choice in order not to have to choose. She lets her hand rest inert in the hands of her companion

“-neither consenting nor resisting- inert.” 13 Since in this case her preference lies with transcendence (the possibility that she is engaging in an intellectual rather than sexual encounter), she ignores her hand in order to rob the situation of sexual innuendo, from her perspective. The young coquette exploits the “metastable” (i.e., perpetually alternating) concept of “transcendence-facticity”- i.e., the fact that she *is not* what she is and *is* what she is not. Her deceptive strategy consists in persuading herself that “[i]f only I were what I *am*, I could ... perhaps be compelled to recognize the truth in it. But thanks to transcendence I am not subject to all that I am.” 14 She affirms that she *is* her transcendence, but in the mode of being of a thing.

While there are indeed two facets to human reality, they belong to a dynamic process of perpetual re-creation. The date exploits this structure by affirming facticity *as transcendence* and transcendence *as facticity* . However, for transcendence to *be* facticity is to “thingify” freedom. In this pattern of bad faith, the for-itself surrenders its freedom by pretending to be an in-itself.

3- The waiter-

This example illustrates the slide of the good faith attitude into bad faith. It is an instance of the inevitable failure of the attempt at what Sartre understands “sincerity” to be. Sincerity is the honesty with which one admits to be what one is. It is also the attempt to escape the constant obligation of becoming, to arrest one’s freedom, to rest in the stability of being- but this by definition is impossible, and therefore an instance of bad faith.

This particular situation is one of choosing, but confronting the necessity of constant re-creation. This man chooses to be a waiter, but he realizes that he cannot just “be a waiter” with the inertness of an object. His being a waiter requires the continuous choice to be a waiter. In an attempt to shun the burden of this continual responsibility, he conceives that he has the obligation to live up to the social conception of “being a waiter.” “Being-for-itself” chooses to play the *part* of a waiter- a “Being-for-others.” His futile attempt to possess his freedom as a thing is evident from his forced “performance” as a waiter- “[h]is movement is... a little too precise, a little too rapid.” 15 He ends up in bad faith.

As this example illustrates, even attempts at good faith tend to slide into bad faith because-

(a) the for-itself is *compelled* 16 (see next section) to identify with its objective, and

(b) since consciousness of goals requires lack of identity with those goals, neither the *ideal* of bad faith nor the *ideal* of good faith may be achieved. As Sartre commentator Joseph Catalano puts it:

To the extent that we try to achieve *either* our flight from freedom *or* our confrontation with freedom, we will be unsuccessful: we will be either awakened to face our freedom or led to try to possess our freedom as a thing and thus begin to flee it. 17 [italics mine]

The question arises of whether it is possible to relate to one's freedom without either being in bad faith, or sliding into bad faith. In the discussion of "authenticity" in chapter three, we will note that while Sartre's answer to this question is affirmative, it is unfulfilling and problematic. However, within the context of *Being and Nothingness*, he offers no precise articulation of how the authentic stance is to be achieved. In this work, we are left to contend with the apparent logical impasse created by his ontological description:

These two aspects of human reality [-facticity and transcendence-] *are and ought to be* capable of a *valid* coordination. But bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them nor to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences. It must affirm facticity as *being* transcendence and transcendence as *being* facticity, in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends the one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other. 18

The Structure of Consciousness

Taking the concept of bad faith as his “attitude of reference,” Sartre purports to disclose the structure of consciousness by phenomenological analysis. In *Being and Nothingness*, he poses the question:

what are we to say that consciousness must be in the instantaneity of the pre-reflective *cogito* - if the human being is to be capable of bad faith? 19

According to Sartre there are two regions of being- “being-in-itself” and “being-for-itself”- which are distinguished by the presence in being-for-itself of the negating activity we experience as “consciousness.” Consciousness (or the “for-itself”) is the activity of revealing being. This activity is a power of withdrawal, a separation, a detachment:

There must exist a Being (this cannot be the In-itself) of which the property is to nihilate Nothingness to support it in its being, to sustain it perpetually in its very existence, *a being by which Nothingness comes to things* . 20

Barnes helps us elucidate the relation between consciousness, the for-itself, Being, and nothingness, which Sartre refers to in the above passage:

[a]s an activity, consciousness is doubly dependent on being. First, it cannot exist except as there is something to be revealed (all consciousness is consciousness *of* something). And it is the activity of a being; that is, of being-for-itself. 21

... the for-itself (the human individual) is the being that supports the negating activity of consciousness and ... consciousness is associated with the lack of being that forces the for-itself to make itself rather than simply being what it is. 22

In refusing to give consciousness the status of entity or substance we do not deny its reality. Consciousness is real as activity... We must not think of consciousness as a sort of

empty space within the for-itself. That would make it into a passivity. Consciousness is action, the act of detachment, which brings into being a signifying nothingness. 23

Consciousness reveals the gap, void, or “ontological distance” which signifies that the for-itself is not perfectly one with itself or its object.

Consciousness is simultaneously intentional (awareness ‘of’ an object), and self-aware (aware that it is aware of the object):

To be aware of an object is to separate it as an entity from its ground ... It is also to be aware that the object is not the same as the awareness ... Consciousness is a presence *to* its object, a reflection of it. But consciousness is *not* its object. To be aware of something is thus doubly negating. Every intending act is positionally aware of the object it posits and nonpositionally aware of itself as awareness. 24

When Sartre states that the for-itself “nihilates Nothingness,” he means that the act of being conscious is precisely the introduction of the separation of (self)-awareness from its object and of the object from its ground.

If we firmly grasp the idea that the introduction of nothingness and intentional consciousness are one and the same, we will not fall into the absurdity of asking whether consciousness *is* nothingness, and if so, how it can act. Insofar as it *is*, consciousness *is* the act of intending objects, which *is* the negation that reveals objects as existing independently of the awareness of them. Consciousness *is* the reflection of objects, and this, in turn, is only the (self)-distancing that Sartre calls nihilation. 25

Thus, inherent to consciousness is the distinction between the intentional object and the consciousness of not being that object. Sartre’s pre-reflective *cogito* internalizes the Cartesian subject-object duality within the unity of a single consciousness. It simultaneously identifies and distinguishes positional/thetic consciousness and non-positional/non-thetic consciousness in

order to avoid the infinite regress created by the Cartesian reflective cogito, according to which self-consciousness is a positional consciousness. By identifying consciousness *as being* and being *as consciousness*, Sartre has rendered human reality paradoxical- I *am* consciousness of an intentional object at the same time as I *am* consciousness of not being the intentional object.

Recalling our discussion of “the patterns of bad faith” we recognize that, for Sartre-

[t]he condition for the possibility of bad faith is that human reality, in its most immediate being, in the intra-structure of the prereflective *cogito* , must be what it is not and not what it is. 26

If man is what he is, bad faith is forever impossible. 27

bad faith requires that ... there be an imponderable difference separating being from non-being in the mode of being human reality. 28

The Human Condition

From his descriptive analysis of bad faith, Sartre concludes that consciousness is such that it lacks perfect identity and is aware of its inner disintegration. The ambiguity of non-self-coincidence is expressed in Sartre's definition of consciousness as:

a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself. 29

This definition of the structure of consciousness also reveals the facts of "the human condition":

Freedom-

Consciousness is "the putting in question of being by being" 30, the perpetual ontological act "by which the in-itself [the causal series which constitutes being] *degenerates* into presence to itself." 31 [italics mine] The dissociation from the in-itself is demonstrated in the ability to question, to deny, to nihilate. To question is a sign of one's nothingness. The withdrawal inherent to the act of questioning reveals that the questioner is free- i.e., not subject to the causal order of the world. Indeed, for Sartre being for-itself or human reality *is freedom-*

The essence of the human being is suspended in his freedom ... What we call freedom is impossible to distinguish from the *being* of 'human reality'; ... there is no difference between the being of man and his *being-free* . 32

Anguish-

Having established the freedom of consciousness, Sartre emphasizes the *consciousness of freedom*. Consciousness is “a being, the nature of which is to be conscious of the nothingness of its being.” 33 Consciousness is therefore “associated with the lack of being that forces the for-itself to make itself rather than simply being what it is.” 34 When one realizes one’s freedom to act, affirm, deny, interpret, imagine, question, choose, one is confronted with one’s (overwhelming, according to Sartre) responsibility for one’s fate. This reflective apprehension of freedom is “anguish”.

The desire to self-coincide-

According to Sartre, it is the non-coincidence which is synonymous with freedom, which makes consciousness “susceptible to bad faith.” 35 However, while it is its inner disintegration which permits consciousness to conveniently identify with either but not both of the dual aspects which constitute being, Sartre clearly alludes to a second condition, equally essential to “the possibility for bad faith.”

Consciousness’ “susceptibility to bad faith” is also a function of human reality’s “natural” desire to attain being-in-itself, to *escape* from its ambiguity and radical contingency. According to Sartre, the goal of the for-itself is to be perfectly identical with its own reasons for existence and yet conscious of these reasons. However, since to be conscious of oneself is already to be outside or beyond oneself, “self-coincidence” is unattainable:

[The for-itself has]... the *obligation* never to exist except in the form of an elsewhere in relation to itself, to exist as a being which perpetually effects in itself a break in being. This break does not refer us elsewhere to an other being; it

is only a perpetual reference of self to self, of the reflection to the reflecting, of the reflecting to the reflection... [T]he reflective regard ...*wants to apprehend the phenomenon as a totality...without being able to stop.* 36 [italics mine]

Although consciousness wants final and complete answers, these are impossible to attain. According to Sartre, human reality's "natural disposition" to bad faith reflects his desire to be God, which he defines as the Scholastics did as "His own essence" or as "perfect intelligence". But,

... no consciousness, not even God's, ... can apprehend the totality as such. For if God is consciousness, he is integrated in the totality. And if by his nature, he is a being *beyond consciousness* (that is, an in-itself which would be its own foundation) still the totality can appear to him only as *object* (in that case he lacks the totality's internal disintegration as the subjective effort to reapprehend the self) or as subject (then since God *is not* this subject, he can only experience it without knowing it). Thus, no point of view on the totality is conceivable. 38

The ideal of consciousness is to be God- i.e., "being-in-itself-for-itself"- but according to Sartre, even the idea of God is self-contradictory, therefore it follows that "man is a useless passion." 39 Human reality is in perpetual flight toward what it can never be.

A complete answer to Sartre's question "what must be the *being* of man if he is to be capable of bad faith?" must therefore include *two* essential elements: non-coincidence *and* the desire to self-coincide ("the quest for Being"). If human reality were not constituted in this way, it would be neither able, nor motivated, to attempt the vacillation between transcendence and facticity which constitutes the "bad faith attempt" to flee freedom (i.e., to self-destructively view oneself as an in-itself). Man is therefore "*condemned* to be free"- i.e., condemned to question, condemned to strive for completion (self-identity) through the continual choice of his own essence.

As mentioned earlier, since consciousness of goals requires lack of identity with those goals, neither the ideal of bad faith nor the *ideal* of good faith (the final and complete achievement of *freedom*) may be achieved:

To the extent that we try to achieve *either* our flight from freedom *or* our confrontation with freedom, we will be unsuccessful: we will be either awakened to face our freedom or led to try to possess our freedom as a thing and thus begin to flee it. 40 [italics mine]

Thus we come face to face with the consequence of defining human reality as being-for-itself. Barnes explains:

It would seem, then, that it is no more possible (except in unusual circumstances and then only from moment to moment) to be in the mode of the for-itself, than to be in the mode of the in-itself, or in the mode of the in-itself-for-itself. To live in the mode of the for-itself- to be in good faith, or to live authentically- may be an ethical ideal, but it seems that Sartre's ontology renders this ideal incapable of achievement. 41

Given the futility associated with both of the immediate attitudes with which we can encounter the human condition, we must question the grounds on which Sartre evaluates the pursuit and confrontation of freedom as "good" and the attempt to attain being-in-itself as "bad".

Thus, although Sartre does not explicitly affirm the "ontological status" of the desire to self-coincide as a "condition for the possibility of bad faith," we have seen how his description of the human condition leaves no doubt that it is as essential as the inner disintegration and freedom of consciousness in this regard. We have also discussed how Sartre's definition of consciousness as

being-for-itself limits him to recognizing only the *negative* role which this desire plays in the attitude of bad faith. This restricted ontological foundation “infects” the human condition with the attitude of bad faith and results in the depiction of the human possibilities in terms of a narrow spectrum. This is illustrated in Sartre’s concepts of “good faith” and “authenticity”, and discussed in chapter three.

CHAPTER TWO

BAD FAITH AS A "LIE TO ONESELF"

In this chapter I will analyze Sartre's notion of the "lie to oneself"- i.e., bad faith at the epistemological level. Recall that at the *ontological* level, the attitude of bad faith consists of the attempt to flee the anguish of freedom. Although its motivation is to evade freedom, bad faith exploits this very freedom by "deciding" to construe its non-coincidence as a fragmentation, in order to conveniently choose an identity from the two aspects of being: "facticity" and "transcendence." Rather than "validly coordinating" these aspects in a creative process, consciousness attempts, in vain, to simulate the ontological ideal of self-coincidence ("to be what it is").

At the *epistemological* level, bad faith accepts and exploits the fact that "one does not believe what one believes," in its attempt "to believe what it believes." Sartre qualifies this evasive manoeuvre as a "lie to oneself". This effort to stall the process of questioning, choosing, and self-re-creation, involves a certain "art of forming contradictory concepts."

I shall begin by distinguishing the lie to oneself from other common notions of self-deception, and by reviewing Sartre's comparison between the "lie to others" and the "lie to oneself". My objectives in articulating the lie to oneself are threefold:

(a) to disclose and underscore the fact that in his description of bad faith, Sartre does not distinguish the *art* involved in self-deception from the

motivation of attempting to evade freedom. The ability to form contradictory concepts is indeed instrumental in consciousness' attempt to see itself as an "in-itself." And since he defines consciousness as absolute freedom (or "for-itself"), this attempt is not only an evasion of freedom for Sartre, but also a "lie to oneself." Nevertheless, as I shall explain in chapter four, this skill is equally essential to a variety of "positive" experiences which define human reality, as well as to the valuable ability of consciousness to construct an ego for itself, neither of which instance constitutes an evasion of freedom. I therefore cite Sartre's failure to dissociate this art from the negative connotation of bad faith as a second indication of his dubious de-valorization of the ontological desire to self-coincide.

(b) In an effort to demonstrate Sartre's implicit conviction that it is possible to successfully lie to oneself, I shall distinguish the lie to oneself from the "lie of half-persuasion" on which Sartre commentator Ronald Santoni insists. According to Sartre, human reality is capable of *persuading* itself to see itself as an in-itself. This indicates that the transient *experience* of self-coincidence is a "viable"- though not a "valid"- possibility within Sartre's ontological system.

(c) to suggest an interpretation of Sartre's apparently paradoxical description of the lie to oneself as "*non-cynical*." I claim that this qualification illustrates and enhances Sartre's description of bad faith as a "sincere" and *pre-reflective* attitude in which only an "ascriptive" and not a "moral" responsibility can be attributed to consciousness. The characterization of the attempt to see oneself as an in-itself as "pre-moral" is compatible with my claim that the art of bad faith is multipotential- i.e., it can either be abused in the attempt to evade

freedom, or *validly exploited* as an act of freedom.

Common Notions of Self-deception

Before examining the particularities of the “lie to oneself”, let us distinguish it from other notions of self-deception:

1- Some have attempted to explain self-deception as deception “about oneself”. In other words, the holding of mutually exclusive beliefs is a form of ignorance. Due to lack of awareness, incomplete understanding, or outright error, one may believe two (or more) propositions to be compatible when in fact they are mutually contradictory. 1

2- It has also been claimed that the paradox of self-deception is resolvable when it is recognized that “one may employ (at virtually the same time) different and only *seemingly* mutually exclusive frames of reference, depending on one’s needs and purposes.” 2

3- Still another interpretation suggests that it is possible to engage in “wishful thinking” such that with time, one may forget one’s original motivation such that one eventually comes to hold contradictory beliefs.

None of these explanations describes a genuine instance of self-deception. In the above situations consciousness would presumably be unable to retain the conflicting beliefs once it was aware of their mutual contradiction, and would therefore be compelled to revise its position. In contradistinction to these models, genuine self-deception entails the (at least partial) awareness of a single consciousness that it simultaneously believes contradictory propositions ‘x’ and ‘-x’. In self-deception, consciousness “somehow” succeeds in persuading itself of something it simultaneously believes not to be the case.

The following are attempts to articulate this stricter notion of self-deception:

1- As discussed earlier, Freud posited separate psychic realms to explain self-deception, but ran into the logical difficulty of “the censor” 3.

According to this scheme, consciousness is held responsible for concealing thoughts and emotions arising from the unconscious (the id and the superego).

2- Fingarette posits an ego and a “counter-ego nucleus” 4.

According to him, consciousness includes two or more separate and conflicting personalities. The difficulty with this view is its implication that the sense of integration of different psychic components is illusory. Furthermore, given the reality of conflicting personalities, psychological freedom becomes impossible within this scheme.

3- Sartre claims that bad faith, as an instance of self-deception, is a lie within “the unitary structure of a single consciousness.” The paradox of the “lie to oneself” is expressed here by Fingarette:

... assuming with Sartre that consciousness is ‘transparent’ and ‘unified’, that in the nature of the case there can be nothing unconscious in consciousness, how can we get into a condition where we do not know what we know? 5

In this chapter I will endeavour to articulate and to elucidate Sartre’s answer to this question.

The "Lie to the Other" versus the "Lie to Oneself"

In *Being and Nothingness*, in the chapter entitled "Bad Faith", Sartre acknowledges the dilemma posed by the lie to oneself:

... I must know the truth very exactly *in order* to conceal it more carefully- and this not at two different moments, which at a pinch would allow us to reestablish a semblance of duality- but in the unitary structure of a single project. How then can the lie subsist if the duality which conditions it is suppressed?... If I deliberately and cynically attempt to lie to myself, I fail completely in this undertaking; the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look; it is ruined *from behind* by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes itself well within my projects as its very condition. 6

Sartre "willingly grant[s] that bad faith is a lie to oneself, on condition that we distinguish the lie to oneself from the lie in general," 7 which is "the lie to the Other."

1- Defining criteria of "the lie to the Other":

a- the lie is a negative attitude, a negation, which does not bear on consciousness itself, but aims at the transcendent;

b- the "essence" of the lie implies that the liar be in complete possession of the truth which he "disguises" (conceals): "a man does not lie about what he is ignorant of." 8

c- the "ideal" [description] of the liar consists in a "doubly negative attitude":

a cynical consciousness, affirming truth within himself, denying it in his words and denying for himself that negation. 9

The first negation pertains to truth (i.e., to a type of transcendence): "-x".

The second negation pertains to words (i.e., to an event in the world). The liar denies for himself- i.e., does not believe- that negation: “-(x)”. In other words, he conceptualizes this denial as a lie (i.e., as a denial of the truth) .

d- the liar intends to deceive and does not hide this intention from himself. He does not disguise the translucency of consciousness- in fact, “he has recourse to it when there is a question of deciding secondary behaviour.” 10

e- he is able to “flaunt” his intention of telling the truth by playing a feigned character for the Other.

f- “The lie is a normal phenomenon of what Heidegger calls the “*Mit-sein*,” 11 which is a “being with” others in the world.

By the lie consciousness affirms that it exists by nature as *hidden from the Other* ; it utilizes for its own profit the ontological duality of myself and myself in the eyes of the Other.” 12

Sartre concludes-

Thus the [ideal] lie does not put into the play the inner structure of present consciousness ... [and] does not require special ontological foundation ... 13

2- Defining criteria of “the lie to oneself”

In contradistinction to the lie to the Other, the lie to oneself *implicates the inner structure of consciousness*. Although bad faith appears to have the structure of the lie, it does not aim at the transcendent- it is *from himself* that the liar in bad faith attempts to hide the truth. Bad faith is the attitude which Sartre has chosen to illustrate the self-negation implicit in his definition of human consciousness as “a being such that in its being, being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself.” 14 Bad faith is

one determined attitude ... essential to human reality ... which is such that consciousness instead of turning its negation outward, turns it towards itself. 15

Certain difficulties arise when one attempts to articulate bad faith as a "lie to oneself":

a- Given the *translucency* of consciousness, it can wish "not to see" a specific aspect of its being only if it is acquainted with that aspect which it does not wish to see. There is *no ontological duality* between the deceiver and the deceived as there was in "the lie to the other"-

[B]ad faith, on the contrary, implies in essence the unity of a *single* consciousness. 16

... the one to whom the lie is told and the one who lies are one and the same person, which means that I must know in the capacity of deceiver the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived. Better yet I must know the truth very exactly *in order* to conceal it more carefully- and this not at two different moments, which at a pinch would allow us to reestablish a semblance of duality- but in the unitary structure of a single project. 17

According to Sartre, due to its pre-reflective nature, consciousness must be aware of its attempt to hide the truth from itself. Its flight from anguish, in order not to know it, is in bad faith because it cannot avoid knowing from what it is fleeing.

b- Consciousness is not "infected" but rather "*affects itself*" with bad faith:

One does not undergo his bad faith; one is not infected with it; it is not a *state*. But consciousness affects itself with bad faith. There must be *a n original intention and a project of bad faith*. This project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such and a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness as affecting itself with bad faith. 18 [italics mine]

But, ... If I *deliberately and cynically* attempt to *lie to myself*, I fail completely in this undertaking; the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look; it is ruined *from behind* by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes itself well within my projects as its very condition. 19 [italics mine]

How then can the lie subsist if the duality which conditions it is suppressed? 20

In other words, is it possible in the light of Sartre's characterization of human consciousness, to lie to oneself- i.e., not to know what one knows?

Having exposed the dilemma of the lie to oneself, Sartre appears to offer a clue to its resolution by referring the reader to the "evanescence" of bad faith: by virtue of its metastability, bad faith "vacillates continually between good faith and cynicism," and "exists only in and through its own differentiation." 21

However, a more detailed discussion of the lie to oneself is postponed as Sartre launches into a refutation of the Freudian psychoanalytic explanation of repression, which he concludes by stating that "the problem which we attempted to resolve is still untouched." 22

Keeping in mind the above inquiry, we will, in the following discussion, attempt to elucidate the apparent paradox of Sartre's position and come to some determination as to its salvageability and consequences.

Articulating the Lie to Oneself

We have described in chapter one what Sartre considers to be the ontological requirement for human *being* to be capable of bad faith-

The condition for the possibility for bad faith is that human reality, in its most immediate being, in the intra-structure of the prereflective cogito, must be what it is not and not be what it is. 23

We have also remarked that while the double property of human reality makes possible the vacillation between facticity and transcendence, Sartre must inevitably be confronted by his supposition that no interworkings between these two aspects of human reality are immune to the total *translucency* of consciousness. To suggest that they do would not only be contrary to the law of the pre-reflective *cogito*, but also fragment the psychic unity which distinguishes Sartre's system from Freud's psychoanalytic theory. How then are we to understand the possibility of successfully lying to oneself?

Sartre comes closest to articulating the lie to oneself in the discussion entitled "The 'Faith' of Bad Faith". By "faith" Sartre means "belief", in the sense of "the adherence of being to its object when the object is either not given or given indistinctly." 24 Faith is belief rather than "certainty," which he understands as "the intuitive possession of the object." 25 In this critical section we discover that bad faith is a certain type of relation between belief and evidence. Therefore, "the essential problem of bad faith is an epistemological problem of *belief* " 26 - i.e., how can I succeed in *not believing what I believe* ?

From a disposition to a decision-

The factors which make the lie to oneself possible range from a “disposition” 27 towards the nature of being, to an actual “decision” 28 on the nature of truth:

1- Sartre describes bad faith as a disposition, a fundamental attitude, a *spontaneous determination* towards the nature of being- i.e., towards the ontological fact that human reality “must be what it is not and not be what it is” 29 :

Let us understand clearly that there is no question of a reflective, voluntary decision, but of a spontaneous determination of our being. One *puts oneself* in bad faith as one goes to sleep, and one is in bad faith as one dreams. 30

2- The *primitive project* of bad faith is to utilize the self-destruction of the fact of consciousness in order to achieve the fragmentation of being which characterizes it. Whereas in good faith “being what one is not and not being what one is” expresses the transitional nature of being, in bad faith the dynamic unity of these aspects of human reality is fragmented and exploited. Whereas in good faith consciousness continually recreates itself in new beliefs which it hopes will endure as the ideal of being-in-itself (but which never do), bad faith consciousness “*will[s]* [the] self-destruction of belief” 31 [*italics mine*]:

[t]he being of consciousness is to exist by itself, then to make itself be and thereby to pass beyond itself. In this sense, consciousness is perpetually escaping itself, belief becomes non-belief, the immediate becomes mediation, the absolute becomes relative, and the relative becomes absolute. The ideal of good faith (to believe what one believes) is, like that of sincerity (to be what one is), an ideal of being-in-itself. Every belief is a belief that falls short; one never wholly believes what one believes. Consequently, the primitive project of bad faith is only the utilization of this self-destruction of the fact of consciousness. 32

Due to the metastable nature of human reality (which “is not what it is and is what it is not”), bad faith consciousness is continually referred to “what it is not”: to the critical world of good faith, and to cynicism 33. Consciousness remains aware that bad faith beliefs are *uncertain* from a critical perspective, but it is “resigned in advance” to accept these, by virtue of its original attitude towards freedom and of its simultaneous decision on the nature of truth:

Bad faith apprehends evidence but it is resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence, to not being persuaded and transformed into good faith ... bad faith is conscious of its structure, and it has taken precautions by deciding that the metastable structure is the structure of being and that non-persuasion is the structure of all convictions. 34

This original project of bad faith is a decision in bad faith on the nature of faith. 35

In good faith, this “self-destruction” refers to the perpetual act in which consciousness overcomes or surpasses itself in the process of “becoming”. In bad faith, the self-destructive nature of consciousness is exploited to reflect back onto itself in a *vacillatory* rather than a *creative* movement. In bad faith, consciousness attempts to identify with either aspect of human reality (facticity or transcendence) in its pretense to simulate self-coincidence. In this sense, it is a “sincere” decision on the nature of faith (in Sartre’s sense of “sincere”). Consciousness engages in a stagnating self-referring loop which, according to Sartre, is motivated by the attempt to evade freedom, and “to be what one is.”

3- The *structure* of bad faith is not one that is “deliberately and cynically” 36 concocted by consciousness, but rather a “world” which “appears” when it “affects” itself with an attitude- that of bad faith:

With bad faith a truth *appears*, a method of thinking, a type of being which is like that of objects: the ontological

characteristic of the world of bad faith with which the subject suddenly surrounds himself is this: that here being is what it is not and is not what it is. 37 [italics mine]

Consequently a particular type of evidence *appears* : *non-persuasive* evidence. 38 [italics mine]

4- The epistemological aspect of the spontaneous determination which is bad faith is a *decision* on the nature of truth, based on the apprehension that one can never entirely believe what one believes.

The attempt in bad faith to arrest freedom and “petrify” being could not succeed for very long if the nature of truth were *given* unequivocally. Were this the case, unsupported beliefs would soon be annihilated by critical/objective evidence. Sartre specifies that here we are dealing with faith, and faith pertains to “uncertainty” (“... when the object is either not given or given indistinctly.” 39). The lie to oneself is possible because consciousness is able to decide for itself on the nature of truth, and chooses to accept non-critical evidence in order to support its bad faith beliefs:

faith is decision and [...] after each intuition, it must decide and *will what it is* . 40

Bad faith does not hold the norms and criteria of truth as they are accepted by the critical thought of good faith. What it decides first, in fact, is the nature of truth. 41

Good faith versus bad faith, from an epistemological perspective-

Sartre describes two pre-reflective attitudes with which consciousness may face the dilemma created by its desire to reconcile its goal of self-coincidence with its metastable self-destructive intra-structure. In “good faith” I accept that I *should* be an in-itself even as I accept the impossibility of fulfilling this desire. I therefore apprehend that I am *condemned* “to be what I am not and not to be what I am.” Good faith *accepts* not believing what it believes in the sense of “*no longer* believing what it believes *when* it believes.” It *accepts* pursuing the ideal of “believing what it believes” even as it apprehends the futility of this endeavour. Good faith does not need to adulterate the objective framework within which it operates- i.e., one with *critical* standards of truth, where belief and non-belief continually succeed each other within the unity of a single consciousness. (Sartre’s term “good faith” suggests that there is a sense of righteousness associated with the courageous confrontation of anguish. The moral dimension of the confrontation of freedom is discussed in chapter three).

In contrast, “bad faith” is the attempt to evade the anguish associated with the human condition. Bad faith engages in forms of “sincerity”: I accept that “I am what I am not and am not what I am” but in the mode of being-in-itself (refer to the example of the paederast) rather than as the ontological description of the *process* which is human reality. I attempt to *attain the unattainable* goal of being-in-itself, by fragmenting this ideal and conveniently identifying with one of the two constitutive aspects of being. Because I *cannot* simply “be what I am” by virtue of my inevitable, abrupt confrontation with freedom, the attempt at sincerity must corrupt the nature of truth in order to simulate being-in-itself.

It is precisely as the acceptance of *not believing what it believes* that it is in bad faith. 42

The “art” of bad faith

We have described the lie to oneself both in terms of a spontaneous determination toward the nature of being, and of a decision on the nature of truth. More specifically, Sartre articulates bad faith both in terms of a motivation (to evade freedom) and of an “art”. The manipulation of truth is made possible by :

a certain art of forming contradictory concepts [“concepts amphiboliques”] which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea. The basic concept which is thus engendered, utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a *facticity* and a *transcendence* . 43

We have already discussed how the young coquette in Sartre’s example exploits the metastable concept of “transcendence-facticity”. Her deceptive strategy consists in persuading herself that “[i]f only I were what I *am* , I could... perhaps be compelled to recognize the truth in it. But thanks to transcendence I am not subject to all that I am.” 44 She affirms that she *is* her transcendence, but in the mode of being of a thing.

This articulation suggests that the “lie to oneself” is a result of the fragmentation and petrification which accompanies the primitive resolution of consciousness towards the nature of being. Sartre refers to this resolution as an attempt to evade freedom, and links it inextricably with consciousness’ vacillation between facticity and transcendence, and its exploitation of the self-destruction of belief, in the attempt to convince itself that it can achieve self-identity.

While the ability to form contradictory concepts is essential to the attempt by consciousness to see itself as an in-itself, Sartre makes no attempt to dissociate this art from the negative connotation of bad faith. In chapter four I

will discuss particular instances in which this art may be validly employed in the attempt to experience the mode of the in-itself. The negative characterization of “the art of bad faith” is another indication of Sartre’s consistent and problematic de-valorization of the ontological desire to self-coincide.

Santoni's "Lie of Half-persuasion"

Given Sartre's:

a- ontological premises:

i- the complete translucency of consciousness,

ii- the idiosyncratic (metastable) unitary structure of consciousness,

b- system of meanings: "faith" is a question of "belief", and

c- claim that bad faith involves a "primitive resolution in respect to evidence" 45,

Ronald Santoni proposes a sense in which one may "lie to oneself" without necessarily involving a "collapse from behind" in the face of the translucency of consciousness. According to him,

[I]n its original project, 'bad faith'... structures itself to accept *nonpersuasive* evidence, to count itself satisfied when it has only met minimal requirements for persuasion, to regard itself as persuaded when it is only partially or *'half' persuaded*. 46 [italics mine]

The articulation of bad faith as a lie of "half-persuasion" is, claims Santoni, the (highly) qualified sense in which Sartre finally understands "lying to oneself". However, there are difficulties with this view:

1- A degenerate form of the lie:

Santoni claims that the lie to oneself is a lie of half-persuasion because consciousness accepts not being *fulfillingly persuaded* even when it is *persuaded* 47 - i.e., it accepts not *believing what it believes*. However, early in his discussion, Sartre qualifies the lie of half-persuasion as a degenerate form

of the lie, and *rejects it explicitly* as an instance of bad faith:

doubtless it happens often enough that the liar is more or less the victim of his lie, that he *half* persuades himself of it. But these common, popular forms of the lie are also *degenerate* aspects of it; they represent *intermediaries* between falsehood and *bad faith*. 48 [italics mine]

According to Santoni, this is *nevertheless* the sense in which the lie to oneself is consistent with his ontological premises:

Bad faith *pretends* to believe what it *cannot fully persuade* itself to believe. 49 [italics mine]

2- A cynical lie:

According to Santoni, the

deliberate resolve of consciousness to accept as persuasive what is not fully persuasive, and to 'believe' (according to criteria which one 'knows' are inadequate for *full* persuasion) what one consciously does not fully believe. 50

must indicate that there is a *cynical* element even in the modified version of the lie to oneself.

However, Sartre explicitly denies that the lie to oneself is cynical:

... If I deliberately and cynically attempt to lie to myself, I fail completely in this undertaking; the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look; it is ruined *from behind* by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes itself well within my projects as its very condition. 51

In bad faith there is no cynical lie nor knowing preparation for deceitful concepts. 52

Is Sartre's view inconsistent, as Santoni suggests 53 ? Did Sartre deliberately modify his position? Or did Santoni simply fail to differentiate the lie to oneself from the "ideal" lie in a manner which would do justice to the

paradoxical descriptions- the "lie to oneself" and the "non-cynical lie"- which Sartre explicitly and repeatedly maintains? I shall affirm the latter.

I shall argue that by virtue of the structure of consciousness, and of its primitive resolution toward the nature of being, the type of lie which characterizes bad faith is not a lie of half persuasion. I will also defend Sartre's qualification of the lie to oneself as "non-cynical" by showing that this characterization is not only compatible with the common usage of the term, but illustrative of the "sincerity", and of the "pre-reflective" and "pre-moral" nature that Sartre attributes to bad faith.

Critique

1- "A degenerate form of the lie":

We may begin by dismissing Santoni's claim that

[h]owever well [Sartre] shows that 'a being which *is* what it is not and which *is not* what it is' makes possible the game of reciprocal metamorphosis between facticity and transcendence, he has not shown how this game involves lying to oneself, in his initially defined sense of lying. 54

Sartre never purports to establish the lie to oneself in terms of his original definition of the "ideal lie"- the distinction is made clear from the very start of his discussion of bad faith:

We shall willingly grant that bad faith is a lie to oneself, on condition that we distinguish the lie to oneself from lying in general. 55

Nevertheless, Sartre does maintain that bad faith is a type of lie- the "lie to oneself". What we must decide is whether we must understand this type of lie, as Santoni claims, as a "lie of half-persuasion".

I suggest the possibility that Barnes' translation of "mal persuadée" as "barely persuaded" 56 may have suggested and/or reinforced the interpretation of the lie to oneself as a lie of "half-persuasion" to Santoni-

Sartre: elle se déssine tout entière dans la résolution qu'elle prend de ne *pas trop demander*, de se tenir pour satisfaite quand elle sera mal persuadée, de forcer par décision ses adhésions a des vérités incertaines. 57 [underlining mine]

Barnes' translation:

It stands forth in the firm resolution not *to demand too much*, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded, to force itself in decisions to adhere to uncertain truths. 58 [underlining mine]

However, not only is this translation ambiguous (if Sartre had intended “barely persuaded” he might have written “à peine persuadée”), it is inconsistent with Sartre’s statement that the lie is *not* one of half persuasion. I therefore suggest that this phrase might have been more accurately translated as “badly persuaded”, in the sense both of “unfulfillingly” and “wrongly” persuaded, due to the ambiguous nature of consciousness and to its “negative” motivation, respectively.

In a similar instance of translation-related ambiguity, the following passage-

... elle se détermine à être mal convaincue pour se convaincre que je suis ce que je ne suis pas... 59
[underlining mine]

is translated by Barnes as-

... it determines itself to be not quite convinced in order to convince itself that I am what I am not. 60 [underlining mine]

Once again, I would recommend the following translation-

... it determines itself to be badly convinced in order to convince itself that I am what I am not -

for its attenuation of the ambiguity which might indicate that a lie of “half-persuasion” is at play.

The most distinctive feature of the lie to oneself is, evidently, that it is from oneself that one attempts to conceal the truth. Santoni claims that the success of this enterprise is impossible because of the unity and translucency of consciousness. He attempts to make sense of this paradox by understanding the lie to oneself in terms of a gradation, or level of persuasion. According to Santoni, consciousness must be partially, or “half-persuaded”. Santoni states

that-

[b]ecause faith is not certainty, the consciousness of bad faith ... decides to be content with an insufficiency of evidence; to determine arbitrarily the amount of evidence by which it will be 'persuaded' while 'knowing' that the amount it requires is not sufficient to persuade *fully* . 61

Consequently, he understands "the date", in Sartre's example, as having deliberately set up weakened requirements for persuasion based on her apprehension that belief cannot succeed in believing in what it wishes to believe: she accepts her not believing (due to the translucency of consciousness) of what she "believes" (that her involvement is intellectual, not sexual). This the sense in which, for Santoni, the date is in bad faith.

I argue that it is not the case that consciousness "weakens" its criteria for truth. Rather, it selects those criteria which will support its identification with a single chosen aspect of being. Sartre's description indicates that it is possible for consciousness to be simultaneously persuaded *and* not-persuaded. Just as the metastable nature of

human reality, in its most immediate being, in the intra-structure of the prereflective cogito, must be what it is not and not be what it is 62 [italics mine]

Sartre defines the nature of *faith* such that

to believe is to know that one believes, and to know that one believes is no longer to believe. 63

Both bad faith beliefs and good faith beliefs share this paradoxical structure, which is a determined feature of consciousness itself. Both are therefore bound to be simultaneously *persuaded and not-persuaded* since to be persuaded is to know that one believes, and "to know that one believes is no longer to believe," therefore no longer to be persuaded. Furthermore, just as

bad faith has “decided” to accept its inner disintegration as a fragmentation from which it can select an identity, it is capable of isolating “persuasion” from the metastable phenomenon of “persuasion/non-persuasion.”

Recall that the fundamental difference between good faith and bad faith lies in:

a- the primitive resolution they represent toward the nature of being, and specifically, the goal of consciousness- i.e.,

[g]ood faith seeks to flee the inner disintegration of my being in the direction of the in-itself which it should be and is not. Bad faith seeks to flee the in-itself by means of the inner disintegration of my being. 65

and concomitantly,

b- the standards of truth which characterize them:

... bad faith is conscious of its structure, and it has taken precautions by deciding that the metastable structure is the structure of being and that non-persuasion is the structure of all convictions. 66

On the ontological level bad faith is the particular pre-reflective attitude towards being that we have already described; epistemologically, this translates into a consciousness which has:

resigned [itself] in advance to not being fulfilled by [non-persuasive] evidence, to not being persuaded and transformed into good faith. 67 [italics mine]

Once this decision has been made, however, and the conditions of the “world of bad faith” 68 are clear, and Sartre can state that consciousness

count[s] itself *satisfied* when it is badly persuaded. 69 [italics and translation mine]

By resigning itself in advance that not to be fulfilled by non-persuasive evidence

is “satisfactory”, consciousness may be said to be *persuaded*, even as it is *not-persuaded*. Therefore, by simply adopting the bad faith attitude, consciousness completes the requirements for the lie to oneself to exist. It need not deliberately attempt to persuade itself of uncertain truths:

In bad faith, there is no cynical lie nor *knowing preparation* for deceitful concepts” 70 [italics mine]

In truth, I have not persuaded myself; to the extent that I could be so persuaded, I have always been so. 71

In summary, the original resolution of consciousness is not primarily a choice of critical standards or standards of persuasion, but rather the adoption of an attitude towards the ontological goal of human reality. The mark of bad faith lies precisely in its management of the metastability of consciousness, in which it exploits the self-destruction of belief. It is this fundamental choice which resigns it *in advance* 72 to not being fulfilled by this evidence. Sartre does not claim that consciousness *introduces* non-persuasive evidence, but rather that it *appears* 73 as a peculiar type of evidence. It is in its *primitive project* 74 that bad faith decides on the exact nature of its requirements. Although “faith” or “belief” is a matter of deciding for oneself the nature of truth, it becomes clear that what makes faith “bad” for Sartre, is not merely the acceptance of *non-critical* evidence, but rather the *type of resignation* - with respect to the goal of consciousness and consequently freedom- which is involved in bad faith.

Bad faith exploits the latitude afforded by both the uncertainty of its beliefs and the metastability/self-destructive nature of consciousness. Were it not for the metastable intra-structure of consciousness, the vacillatory and paradoxical character of belief and persuasion described here would not be possible. And were it not for the primitive resolution of bad faith toward being,

consciousness could not succeed in persuading itself that it does not believe what it believes. These factors make belief and persuasion “and/or” phenomena rather than relative notions. Thus, because the nature of truth is not *given* but a free decision which is simultaneous with an attitude towards freedom and the goal of consciousness, consciousness may indeed be said to be *persuaded* by its non-critically supported beliefs, as it simultaneously entertains their critically supported counterparts.

2- "A non-cynical lie":

Sartre states that "the ideal [description] of the liar is a cynical consciousness ..." 75 He also affirms that bad faith, as a lie to oneself, must involve-

an original intention and a project of bad faith; this project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such and a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness as affecting itself with bad faith ... since the being of consciousness is consciousness of being. 76

According to the common usage of the term, "cynical" denotes "the denial of the sincerity of people's motives or actions." 77 This adjective appropriately describes the insincerity which we normally tend to associate with any form of the lie. However, Sartre repeatedly and clearly states that bad faith does *not* involve a cynical lie:

The decision to be in bad faith does not dare speak its name; it believes itself and does not believe itself in bad faith; it believes itself and does not believe itself in good faith ... For me *to have represented it to myself as bad faith would have been cynicism.* 78 [italics mine]

If I deliberately and cynically attempt to lie to myself, I fail completely in this undertaking; the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look; it is ruined from behind by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes itself well within my projects as its very condition. 79 [italics mine]

In bad faith, *there is no cynical lie* nor knowing preparation for deceitful concepts. 80 [italics mine]

How are we to understand Sartre's claim that, in spite of its pre-reflective apprehension of its intention and project of bad faith, consciousness remains non-cynical?

According to Santoni:

[i]t is one thing- and understandable- for Sartre to contend, *prior* to his analysis of bad faith and on the basis of a preliminary awareness of bad faith as a 'lying to oneself,' that bad faith cannot be cynical. It is quite another- a certainly less understandable- for him to maintain the same after he has differentiated more carefully the deceptive structure of bad faith's lying from that of the 'ideal' lie. 81

According to his own highly modified version of the lie to oneself, the

deliberate resolve of consciousness to accept as persuasive what is not fully persuasive, and to 'believe' (according to criteria which one 'knows' are inadequate for *full* persuasion) what one consciously does not fully believe. 82

indicates a cynical element.

Despite Sartre's assurance to the contrary, the bad faith consciousness does make '*knowing preparations*' ... for 'deceitful concepts' and for its own deception. It *connives* to hide the truth, to disregard it ... It is *blatantly 'cynical'* in the common usage sense of 'cynical' to which I have been referring. 83 [italics mine]

Santoni admits that although he has "tried to salvage Sartre's view of the possibility of lying to oneself", he has "offered no intention- or pretension- of delivering his view (of self-deception) from cynicism." 84 Thus, not only does he deny that the lie to oneself is cynical, he bases his claim on his own interpretation of the lie to oneself, which Sartre disclaims.

I shall take the opposite approach. *Trusting* Sartre's explicit statement that the lie to oneself is not a lie of half persuasion-

doubtless it happens often enough that the liar is *more or less* the victim of his lie, that he *half* persuades himself of it. But these common, popular forms of the lie are also *degenerate* aspects of it; they represent *intermediaries* between falsehood and *bad faith* 85 -

and also *trusting* his repeated affirmations that the lie to oneself is non-cynical, I shall endeavour to elucidate the apparent paradox of the “non-cynical lie to oneself” rather to accept Santoni’s significant modification of Sartre’s notion of the lie to oneself.

I submit that a careful examination of the sense in which Sartre uses the term “cynical” will deliver us from this difficulty, and will defuse Santoni’s argued contention, which so flagrantly contradicts Sartre’s unequivocal affirmations and ultimately leads him to conclude that “Sartre has failed to acknowledge the blatantly cynical aspects of the kind of lying that ... goes on in ‘bad faith’ or ‘self-deception’.” 86

Santoni wishes to show that “in spite of his insistence to the contrary, the deceptive consciousness that Sartre characterizes as bad faith is a cynical consciousness; that the project of bad faith is a cynical project; and that bad faith, though not an ‘ideal’ lie, is a form of cynical ‘lying’.” 87 The following is a résumé of his two-part argument:

a- (Santoni’s understanding of) Sartre’s idiomatic sense of “cynical” -

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre does not explicate the term “cynical”, but according to Santoni, one key passage is directive in this regard:

The ideal [description] of the liar ... is a cynical consciousness, affirming truth within himself, denying it in his words and denying for himself that negation. 88

This “doubly negative attitude” marks the cynical consciousness of the ideal liar, and involves the project of concealing a truth from “the Other.” The ideal lie is an “Other-directed phenomenon”- i.e., one whose transcendent character (i.e., directed beyond the liar) affords the duality which permits the lie to subsist.

However, in the lie to oneself, it is from myself that I attempt to conceal a truth of which I am aware. Since the ontological duality which marks the ideal lie is absent within the unity of a single consciousness, the doubly negative attitude cannot be adopted without- to use Sartre's words- "annihilating the whole psychic system." Therefore, although bad faith is a form of lying- i.e., lying to oneself- it cannot be a *cynical* lie.

Basing his argument on his own interpretation of the lie to oneself (the highly qualified sense of the lie of half persuasion), Santoni claims that Sartre is wrong in this inference. According to Santoni, we can attribute both a cynical motive, and the "doubly negative attitude" of the cynical consciousness ("although it cannot succeed in the same manner" 89), to the lie of half persuasion.

b- (Santoni's understanding of) "cynical" in a common usage sense-

According to Santoni, the term "cynical" indicates "having a blatant disregard for, or indifference toward, truth" 90. He argues that when "the bad-faith consciousness forges for itself 'two-faced concepts' ... by which to persuade itself when it is not persuaded" 91, it is cynical in the common sense of the term.

I argue that Santoni's claim that the lie to oneself must involve at least a degree of cynicism, is based on a misinterpretation of Sartre's meaning of the term "cynical", *both* in Sartre's idiomatic sense and in the common usage sense.

a- "Cynical" in Sartre's idiomatic sense-

As we have already noted, Santoni believes that Sartre's definition of this term is to be found in the following passage-

the ideal [description] of the liar is a cynical consciousness, affirming the truth in himself, denying it in words, and denying for himself that negation. 92

Santoni focuses on two elements of this description:

i- the fact that the liar denies the truth to the Other and denies to himself that deceptive falsity, in a "doubly negative attitude".

ii- the phrase "the liar is a cynical consciousness."

i- We have already discussed Santoni's argument that since the ideal lie is an "Other-directed phenomenon", the "doubly negative attitude" of the liar cannot be duplicated without the duality that exists between consciousness and "the Other". And since the unitary structure of consciousness precludes the possibility of *complete* self-deception, the "lie of half persuasion" which results must involve at least a degree of cynicism. According to Santoni,

[i]n focusing on the single and unified consciousness of lying to oneself, while inadvertently allowing the duality of consciousness to become a necessary condition for both lying in general and cynicism, Sartre has failed to acknowledge the blatantly cynical aspects of the kind of lying that, by his own admission, goes on in 'bad faith' or 'self-deception'. 93

I need not reiterate my objections to Santoni's contentious interpretation of the lie to oneself as a lie of half-persuasion. In the present discussion, I contend that Santoni is guilty of the "straw man fallacy" by basing his claim that the lie to oneself is cynical on this questionable and explicitly denied interpretation.

ii- Santoni appears to interpret the phrase "the liar is a cynical consciousness" as a definition of "cynical", in the sense of: "a cynical consciousness *is* a lying consciousness." I submit that this phrase is, as Sartre indicates, a *description* of the ideal liar, rather than a definition of cynicism. By *identifying* the notion of the lie with that of cynicism, Santoni incorrectly purports to isolate the "doubly negative" attitude as Sartre's marker for the "cynical" attitude. I maintain that the "doubly negative attitude" is the definition of the lie, and the adjective "cynical" is a *qualifier* of the *already lying* consciousness. When Santoni associates the doubly negative attitude with the term "cynical" he makes Sartre's description redundant- i.e., the *liar* is a *lying* (since "cynical" = "doubly negative attitude") consciousness.

If my interpretation is correct, we have a second objection to Santoni's claim that the lie to oneself must be cynical. That is, not only does the lie to oneself not involve the doubly negative attitude associated with the lie of half persuasion (first objection), but the doubly negative attitude is *not* synonymous with the cynical attitude.

b- "Cynical" in a common usage sense-

As Santoni himself has noted, the most that Sartre says concerning the meaning of the term "cynical" "is hardly self-explanatory" 94 (cf. "the ideal description of the liar", above). I submit that if Sartre has done little to explicate the term cynical, it is because he simply utilizes it according to the common usage. If my suggestion is correct, the common definition of the term "cynical" ought to both

i- complement the above description of the liar rather than reiterate that "the liar lies", and more importantly,

ii- reflect the significance of Sartre's characterization of bad faith as a "lie to oneself."

We may begin by objecting to Santoni's limited definition of the term "cynical" as "a blatant disregard for, or indifference toward, truth." 95 Although this definition accurately reflects bad faith's dubious "decision on the nature of truth," it does not communicate at least two other significant features of Sartre's sense of the lie to oneself. If the term "cynical" were exclusively meant to qualify an attitude towards *truth*, Santoni would once again have Sartre making redundant statements. The phrase "the liar is a cynical consciousness" would simply communicate the uninformative proposition that the liar exhibits a "blatant disregard for, or indifference toward, truth." I repeat my suggestion that in Sartre's "*description* of the ideal liar," the term "cynical" is precisely meant to *describe* rather than to *redefine* the liar. We must therefore look for a qualification of the act of *lying* in the term "cynical".

According to the Websters Collegiate Dictionary, one of the definitions of

the term “cynical” is: “denying the *sincerity* of people’s actions and motives.” 96 [italics mine] As we have discussed, Sartre’s description of bad faith, far from denying the sincerity of the individual attempting to lie to him/herself, both recognizes and condemns the “sincerity” of the individual who attempts to lie to him/herself. Recall that for Sartre, sincerity is the bad faith equivalent of attempting “to be what one is.” Therefore, according to Sartre’s sense of “sincerity”, the lie to oneself must be described precisely as “*non -cynical*.”

Furthermore, the Websters definition adds that the term “cynical” also implies “a contemptuous disbelief in human *goodness* and sincerity.” 97 [italics mine] This highlights an aspect of cynicism which is more explicit in the French definition:

cynique: “Qui exprime ouvertement et sans ménagement des sentiments, des opinions *qui choquent la morale* ou les idées reçues, souvent avec une intention de provocation” 98 [italics mine] -

which I translate as:

“that which expresses a blatant disregard for opinions *which run counter to morality* or ‘received wisdom,’ often with the intention to provoke.”

This emphasis on the moral dimension of the term cynical is once again significant, and, as we had hoped, informative. As we have found with the denotation of sincerity, these latter elaborations of the term suggest that the adjective “cynical” is not intended by Sartre to simply denote a lie, but rather, in the present context, to answer the question: “what *kind* of disregard for the truth is this lie?” Sartre is indicating by “*non -cynical*”, that the lie to oneself is “not insincere”, and *not* the type of disregard which pertains to *morality* . As we shall see, Sartre suggests that it is the “authentic” stance which marks human

reality's entry into the moral dimension. Therefore, at most, the attitudes of good faith and bad faith must be considered "pre-moral". It appears that bad faith is a "lie" to oneself because it is responsible in an "ascriptive" 99 rather than in a "moral" sense, for simultaneously entertaining a true belief and its false counterpart. Since bad faith, as a pre-reflective attitude, is not answerable to the considerations which define the moral realm, it follows that it cannot be deemed "cynical".

I submit that the adjective "*non-cynical*" reveals yet another aspect of Sartre's notion of the lie to oneself. In the following chapter, we will examine how the authentic attitude is the moral attitude which is marked by a *reflective* stance. As we know, bad faith is a pre-reflective attitude toward freedom. The term "cynical", by virtue of its non-moral and therefore non-reflective connotation, is meant to situate the lie to oneself at the same level as the pre-reflective *cogito*, where consciousness is not self-aware in the reflective sense of attending to itself as a self.

For me *to have represented it to myself* as bad faith would have been cynicism. 100

If I deliberately and *cynically* attempt to lie *to myself*, I fail ... 101

A "cynical" lie- which entails a degree of reflection- would be

... ruined *from behind* by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes itself well within my projects as its very condition. 102

Like consciousness' pre-reflective, non-thetic apprehension of itself, the lie to oneself is non-reflective, non-conceptualized, non-self-conscious, and hence "non-cynical".

The term “non-cynical” is therefore a significant key to defusing the apparent paradox of the lie which occurs “within the unity of a single consciousness.” It denotes Sartre’s position on “sincerity”; it reflects what appear to be his distinction between the moral and the pre-moral; and it denotes the pre-reflective character of the lie to oneself, which allows it not to “collapse beneath my look.”

Thus, the validity of this meaning of “cynical” has been supported by the numerous ways we have discussed in which it *qualifies* rather than *repeats* the definition of the ideal lie. We therefore find Sartre’s phrase “cynical consciousness” to be complementary to notion of the lie rather than merely redundant. Furthermore, the qualification of the lie to oneself as “non-cynical” has been demonstrated to have elucidative and informative value.

In contrast to Santoni’s understanding of the term “cynical”, the meaning which I propose is

- i- compatible with the rest of Sartre’s system of meanings, concepts, and affirmations,
- ii- supported by the common French and English usage,
- iii- informative (rather than redundant) with respect to Sartre’s notion of the lie to oneself, and
- iv- corroborated by Sartre’s descriptions of authenticity and of “the ego” (in the following chapters).

CHAPTER THREE

THE ANTITHESIS OF BAD FAITH- GOOD FAITH VERSUS AUTHENTICITY

Although “condemned to be free” and “susceptible” to bad faith, human reality is not strictly condemned to be in bad faith. Sartre describes a second pre-reflective, “immediate attitude” or “determination of being”¹ with which one may relate to one’s freedom. Although undeveloped, Sartre’s description of good faith outlines the unrelenting attempt to confront one’s freedom- i.e., to accept the responsibility of perpetual choice in the direction of an elusive ideal. At the *ontological* level, good faith consciousness acknowledges and accepts the spontaneity, the non-coincidence, and the continual self-interrogation of consciousness. *Epistemologically*, good faith is an attitude that is open to the metastability of consciousness, to the ambiguity and incompleteness of all belief, to critical evidence.

Sartre’s treatment of the notion of good faith is not only sketchy but also ambiguous. In “The ‘Faith’ of Bad Faith” (*Being and Nothingness*, chapter two, part three) good faith is treated as the antithesis of bad faith. However, when Sartre states in a notorious footnote, that the possibility of radically escaping bad faith “supposes a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted,” he is not referring to good faith: “this self-recovery we shall call *authenticity*, the description of which has no place here.”² [italics mine] To add to the confusion, at times Sartre likens good faith to bad faith because of the unattainable *ideal*

of being-in-itself that it shares with sincerity (which is a form of bad faith, according to Sartre) 3.

Sartre's references to authenticity in *Being and Nothingness* are sparse and usually refer to the possibility of "deliverance and salvation." Although he often treats "authenticity" and "good faith" synonymously (he sometimes describes attitudes as "authentic" when they reflect an acceptance and affirmation of one's freedom) these concepts should not be identified in Sartre's work. The connotation of the term "good faith" articulates what Sartre also explicitly claims with his notion of "authenticity": that it is the responsibility of human reality to "assume" the "break in being" or inner disintegration that it is. However, authenticity also involves *overcoming* the "futile" (although admittedly "natural" 4) desire to attain self-coincidence, and adopting the moral stance of "valorizing" freedom.

In this chapter, my objectives are-

(a) to examine Sartre's notion of authenticity and to contrast it to the attitude of good faith, noting the centrality of the notion of bad faith in both of these concepts,

(b) to suggest that the limited moral possibilities represented by Sartre's notion of authenticity indicates that his depiction of human reality might be widened and rectified by the vindication of the ontological desire to self-coincide.

Authenticity

The following exposition is extracted from Ronald Santoni's discussion of authenticity 5, which in turn is based on Francis Jeanson's interpretation of this concept. Jeanson's is widely considered to be the "approved" account; Sartre to Jeanson: "You have so perfectly followed the development of my thought." 6

"Susceptibility to bad faith"

Jeanson's interpretation of authenticity revolves around Sartre's description of human reality as *ambiguous* - i.e., consciousness exists in the mode of "not being what it is and being what it is not." As we have already described, the freedom of consciousness is based on this non-coincidence of consciousness with itself, and it is this non-coincidence which makes consciousness "susceptible to bad faith." 7 Human reality "naturally" 8 desires to attain being-in-itself, to escape from its ambiguity and radical contingency. Therefore, the human condition is characterized by human reality's perpetual flight toward what it can never be.

We must refer to works other than *Being and Nothingness* in order to elucidate Sartre's notion of authenticity. In *The War Diaries* (1939-1940), we are told that human reality is a foundationless gratuitous nothingness which "falls into the world." 9 The freedom of human reality means that it can never be anything "without motivating itself to be it." 10 "Undisposed" (my term, based on Jeanson's interpretation) to accept this gratuity, human reality seeks to found itself. And it is precisely in its attempt to be its own foundation, says Sartre, that human reality is "moral" 11. In spite of this, each new undertaking reveals to

human reality that it is “gratuitous to the marrow.” 12

Human reality is made up of this “original fall” and “striving for redemption,” but it “loses its way trying to found itself.” 13 In this attempt, human reality tries to tie itself down, to make itself into a thing. The futility of this attempt to flee its gratuity and the torment of its freedom, wears human reality down, and “it self-motivates itself” to conceal from itself “the fact that it is condemned to self-motivate itself.” 14 According to Sartre “most of the time we flee anguish in bad faith.” 15

"Self-recovery"

According to Jeanson, it is Sartre's "ontology of ambiguity" which allows for a passage from the "natural attitude" of my ontological condition to a "new, more fundamental attitude" 16- specifically to a *moral* attitude in which I "valorize" my ontological non-coincidence 17.

Freedom itself is ambiguous. "Factual freedom"- the ontological freedom to which I am abandoned- allows a "radical conversion" to a "freedom-as-valued," to my free choice of "valorizing" my metastable, precarious, troubled freedom. In freely choosing it, I "imbue it with value." I choose to stop pursuing the impossible goal of self-coincidence, yet without disowning this "natural" ontological tendency- i.e., without pretending that human reality can ever eliminate its "natural" or "first impetus towards substantiality." 18 In recognizing and affirming my "nothingness", my "self-distance", my non-coincidence, I recognize that the ambiguity at the heart of human subjectivity is "the sole source of values" 19; and I envisage the possibility of "deliverance", of genuine "self-recovery." By refusing the reassurances and self-justifications made in my natural disposition to bad faith, I reflectively *convert* toward "moral agency." 20 I begin to "value" the non-substantial freedom which I am.

Jeanson's "approved" interpretation of Sartre's phenomenological ontology seems to make clear that my movement from a "natural attitude" of flight to a "willed" acceptance and self-affirmation of my freedom and responsibility- from a "natural bad faith" (Jeanson) to authentic self-recovery- constitutes a *moral* conversion. The reflective adoption of one's freedom as one's own is a moral choice. "Self-recovery" is the moralization of human reality. Therefore, on Jeanson's interpretation, authenticity is, for Sartre, a moral

category. With human reality's new valorization of "non-coincidence," it becomes a moral agency. It puts an end to the futile pursuit of self-justification. Instead, it acknowledges itself as "unjustifiable" and recognizes that the non-coincidence, the "nothingness" at the heart of human reality is the only source of values.

If the foregoing reconstruction is correct, the singular act of individual "*conversion*" is a move *from* "bad faith"- where *unreflective* freedom pursues a "preset goal"- to the "*moralization*" of human consciousness, where even the goal "may be placed in question" and where the individual *reflectively* affirms his/her freedom and responsibility 21.

Distinguishing “Authenticity” from “Good Faith”

1- Conversion from ontological bad faith

Human reality, as non-self-coincidence, is perennially susceptible to bad faith. But good faith, as a contrasting ontological attitude, appears not to be an attitude adopted through a “willed,” reflective *conversion* from ontological bad faith. Good faith appears to be a *spontaneous* self-choosing in which freedom, though tempted by the inevitable passion for being, non-reflectively (i.e., without attending to itself) accepts its abandonment to freedom without projecting flight from the “elsewhereness” of being, i.e., without attempting to conceal or to evade its non-coincidence. It is, as we have already noted, one of “the two immediate attitudes we can [spontaneously] take in the face of our being” 22, one of the two fundamental attitudes or self-choices we can make in respect to our distinctive freedom. Though “most of the time we flee anguish in bad faith,” it does not follow that we cannot be in good faith 23; that we cannot, or necessarily do not, *originally* accept the non-coincidence of our free being. However, although Sartre views good faith as a spontaneous and original attitude, his articulation of authenticity presumes a “natural”, original attitude of *bad* faith.

By viewing “good faith” as a “spontaneous determination of being,” Sartre appears to hold *authenticity*, not good faith, as the “condition” in which, through “radical conversion”- i.e., by a reflective alternation in my choice of myself- I can radically *escape* (my “natural attitude” of) *bad faith* 24. By “pure reflection,” I am able to “recover” myself as “for itself”. In fact, in *Cahiers Pour Une Morale*, Sartre makes it clear that the conversion involves “refusing the

quest for being” 25 that marks the bad faith “natural” attitude, and adds that “authenticity” (not good faith) will consist in “*maintaining* the tension” 26 [italics mine] of the “break in being,” of the non-coincidence of for-itself. Only by this “*pure* reflective consciousness” 27 can the for-itself “recover’ itself as the “for-itself reflected-on in its reality.” 28

The foregoing considerations establish strong grounds for the contention that it is authenticity, not good faith, which constitutes for Sartre “deliverance” from bad faith.

2- Reflection

Sartre distinguishes between an *unreflective* consciousness, which is directed outside of ourselves and our (conscious) acts, and a *reflective* consciousness, which “takes consciousness as an object” and directs attention onto itself 29. As such, reflection is a “second order” and distinctly human activity, while unreflective consciousness, though also conscious (of) itself, is “first order.” 30

This distinction, expressed as early as in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, is brought to a head in the section of *Being and Nothingness* entitled “Being and Doing: Freedom.” While the *unreflective* consciousness is a “spontaneous self-projection towards its possibilities” 31- that is, is an “involuntary spontaneity” or a “non-positional self-consciousness”- the reflective consciousness appears to be a *voluntary* consciousness. Catalano puts it well when he suggests that the unreflective consciousness is the one that is “absorbed in activities,” whereas the reflective voluntary consciousness is the one that seeks to “discover what these activities mean.” 32 Sartre tells us directly that reflection “is the for-itself conscious of itself” 33 and is an effort of the for-itself to recover a for-itself “which it is in the mode of non-being.” 34 “The meaning of reflection,” he adds, “is thus its being-for.” In particular, “the reflective is the reflected-on nihilating itself in order to recover itself” 35 as distinctive nothingness or “non-coincidence.” In the *Cahiers*, Sartre states that-

[t]he origin of reflection is an effort at recovery of the for-itself by itself, to arrive at a For-itself which it is Itself. 36

This reference to self-recovery supports the differentiating role that Santoni has attributed to “conversion” in authenticity. It therefore appears that the reflective consciousness hasn’t any role in good or bad faith; it must rather be viewed as

a differentiating characteristic of authenticity alone.

Since for Sartre, the voluntary exists at a reflective level and the involuntary exists at a pre-reflective level, our fundamental freedom cannot exist as a “will” at a pre-reflective level. Insofar as a radical conversion or radical modification of our fundamental project involves a reflective consciousness (a consciousness *directed upon consciousness* 37), and insofar as good faith is a pre-reflective choice of freedom, then *good faith* cannot be the form of “deliverance” to which we can arrive by reflective or “willed” conversion. As we have seen, pure reflection is an effort on the part of for-itself to “recover” itself as “nothingness” and to recognize and affirm its elsewhere-ness or non-coincidence of being. As such, it does not- at least in any key passages of *Being and Nothingness* - appear to have any role in the good faith attitude of accepting the anguish of for-itself’s non-being 38. Reflection is necessary for the conversion from the bad-faith pursuit of necessary being (the desire to be God or “in-itself-for-itself”). It permits the authentic choosing and recognizing of oneself as a “break-in-being”- i.e., as elusive, gratuitous, ambiguous being.

Good faith and bad faith, viewed ontologically, represent the fundamental and original ways in which freedom approaches itself pre-reflectively: either by confronting the anguish of freedom or by fleeing from it. And this project of being is the context for all our reflections and deliberations. “Freedom is always at stake” 39- i.e., consciousness always pursues Being 40, and human reality is continuously threatened by bad faith. However, my “corrupted” freedom, through a reflective conversion, may deliberately choose to recover itself as freedom and live consistently with the freedom (and “responsibility”) to which it is condemned. This reflective (and radical) conversion, this *deliverance from*

bad faith, is precisely what Sartre means by “authenticity”, and not “good faith”. In other words, the “willed conversion” of which Sartre speaks as early as in *The War Diaries* is the necessary condition and distinguishing characteristic of our move from bad faith (our “natural attitude” of fleeing from freedom and responsibility) to what Sartre calls our “self-recovery,” our “authenticity,” our “salvation.” 41 Therefore, the reflective consciousness that is necessary to any radical transformation of one’s fundamental project- i.e., to any choice of radically altering one’s *bad faith* way of being-in-the-world- represents the *second* basic feature that differentiates authenticity from the closely related fundamental but- as Jeanson’s interpretation suggests- pre-reflective and non-thetic ontological attitude of good faith.

3- The moral dimension

We have discussed how radical conversion, through a reflective consciousness, marks the passage from bad faith to authenticity. The for-itself's conversion to a project of authenticity constitutes what in the *Cahiers* Sartre calls a "new *authentic* way of being to oneself and for oneself" 42 and what appears to be human reality's move into the moral realm. Sartre appears to consider the transition from a disposition to flee one's freedom to an attitude of affirming and *valuing* one's freedom- as a *moral* conversion. The new attitude of "valorizing" one's non-coincidence becomes the beginning of moral agency in human reality. The conversion, suggests Santoni, seems to mark the "moralization" of the human being, and authenticity becomes for Sartre a moral category.

Generally speaking, the *Being and Nothingness* references to authenticity (footnotes in particular, in which Sartre states that the radical conversion of which we have spoken is a prerequisite for the "self-recovery," for the "authenticity," that is required for an "ethics of deliverance and salvation 43), seem to confirm the suggestion, which is so strong in *The War Diaries* and in Jeanson, that embarking on the project of authenticity constitutes a transformation, a "metamorphosis" 44 from a *natural* (bad-faith) attitude of trying to hide one's freedom to a moral attitude of "adopting freedom as one's own" 45 - in other words, of making freedom one's fundamental value and project.

Catalano, acknowledging that "good and bad faith- in contrast to authenticity and inauthenticity- are not described as moral categories by Sartre, suggests that they are to be distinguished by the manner in which the for-itself relates to responsibility. In good faith, the for-itself accepts responsibility; in bad

faith the for-itself flees it. But doesn't the acceptance and/or rejection of responsibility constitute a moral dimension? That is to say, might not good and bad faith also be moral categories?

Catalano proposes that we distinguish between a *pre-reflective, ontological* sense of responsibility and a *reflective, ethical* sense. Although at a pre-reflective, ontological level it might be possible to attribute "responsibility" (in fact I am the one "by whom it happens that there is a world"⁴⁶) to a bad-faith consciousness, it does not seem appropriate to hold bad faith responsible in the sense of being "*morally* accountable" for its "choices".⁴⁷ One must make a distinction between an "ascriptive"⁴⁸ or "authorship" sense of responsibility and an existential/practical/moral sense of responsibility⁴⁹. And if good faith, in contrast to authenticity, is a pre-reflective "original" attitude to one's freedom- in contrast to a reflective "self-recovery", then it is not possible to impute [moral] responsibility to [the person] in [good or] bad faith."⁵⁰ That is to say, one cannot be said to be morally responsible for one's *unreflective* good or bad faith. And if this the case, it would seem once more, that for Sartre good and bad faith are not moral categories. Though bothered by some related anomalies, Catalano remains persuaded that the "general distinction" between good and bad faith as "ontological modes," and authenticity and inauthenticity as moral projects of being, is a "fruitful" one.⁵¹ Moreover, this interpretation is compatible with the interpretation of bad faith as a "non-cynical" lie to oneself, put forth in chapter two.

In summary, it appears that "conversion," is a necessary condition of "self-recovery" and of authenticity, but *not* of ontological good faith. Furthermore, as Catalano suggests, while good and bad faith are categories of the non-reflective consciousness, authenticity is a category of the reflective, voluntary consciousness. Finally, whereas good faith may be salvaged as a creative ontological and epistemological "attitude", it does not share authenticity's ethical or moral dimension; namely a moral "conversion" from corrupted being 52, or ontological bad faith, to a new moral attitude in which, according to Jeanson's interpretation, I reclaim my freedom and valorize and live my "non-coincidence".

The War Diaries give us an early indication of the tenuousness of authenticity, of the uneasy status of the acceptance of one's freedom. Though human reality can "self-motivate itself" to make freedom and responsibility its own, it remains perennially threatened- because of the emptiness of its being- by inauthenticity, by consciousness' temptation to tie down its freedom, to fill itself with something, to adopt the mode of being of in-itself. In my adoption of a "moral" attitude- that is, in my conversion- my freedom wills itself as ambiguous, resolves to maintain its ambiguity, and does so in the knowledge that this "liberation" can never be total or final. My authentic choosing of myself is not an attainment of lucidity once and for all; it is, rather, a "point of departure" 53 for making myself "authentic." In adopting this new attitude, human reality *recovers* itself as freedom and responsibility; that is, it accepts the gratuity of its being, surpasses "illusory justification," and accepts the "burden of [its] initiatives," 54 the *facticity* of its responsibility. This conversion marks the start of one's "self-recovery," the passage from one's "spontaneous initial choice" 55 to one's

authentic making and remaking of oneself. But this does not mean that authenticity is a "state attainable by man." Because human reality is always at a distance from itself and is always metastable and ambiguous, nothing concerning it can ever be finished 56. Human authenticity is the continued task of being authentic: one must, as Sartre suggests in *The War Diaries*, "adapt one's life to one's authenticity." 57

Problematic Ethics

Santoni claims that if the foregoing reconstruction is correct, then we have strong grounds for inferring that, for Sartre, it is authenticity rather than good faith which may more accurately be viewed as the antithesis of bad faith. Whereas good faith shares the ideal of being-in-itself with bad faith, authenticity holds and values being-for-itself, i.e., freedom, as an ideal. Good faith, at the ontological level, is to be viewed as one's unreflective "choice" of, or attitude toward, one's freedom. Authenticity, as a lucid recognition, acceptance, and living of one's ontological freedom (and responsibility), requires, as prerequisite, a *reflective* radical choice to convert *from* the bad faith to which one is "naturally" inclined and in which one is living. Although my pre-reflective awareness of my "affecting" myself with bad faith 58 returns me to my original project of freedom, that is, to my "free project" of being 59, and confronts me with the possibility of good faith, it is only by a "willed conversion," by a reflective act of radically changing my fundamental project, by consciousness "operating" on and redirecting consciousness, that I can "recover" myself as freedom and (rather than try to flee from it) take full responsibility for it and begin to "live" its ambiguity and non-coincidence. For Sartre- and for Jeanson, who gives a pronounced emphasis to Sartre's move- it is this *new* attitude 60, this reflective passage from bad faith to taking hold of one's freedom, that begins the project of *authenticity* and constitutes a "radical escape," a "salvation," from bad faith 61 or "corrupted" being. This means that, although good faith can be viewed as an original attitude (of facing one's freedom) that *contrasts* with bad faith, and although the awareness of bad faith implies a kind of ontological

precomprehension of good faith, it is the *post-conversion* authentic life that marks for Sartre the mode of being that is opposite (or antithetical) to living in bad faith. Freedom now becomes “valued.” 62 One might even say that the reflective conversion by which the bad faith consciousness adopts, or perhaps returns to, good faith's non-thetic, “joyful” affirmation of freedom, not only marks the start of the project of authenticity but also “turns good faith into authenticity”.

What we learn from this comparative analysis is that both the concept of good faith and that of authenticity are defined by Sartre in terms of consciousness' relation to its responsibility to confront freedom- i.e., the same perspective from which Sartre describes bad faith. Once again, Sartre takes bad faith both as his “point of departure” and as his “attitude of reference” (see p. 1). The susceptibility to bad faith is the “negative standard” according to which he evaluates good faith as “good” and authenticity as “valid”. The implicit “de-valorization” of the quest for Being is flagrant: when I choose to stop pursuing the impossible self-coincidence, I accept and affirm my freedom, yet *without disowning* my “natural” ontological tendency, without pretending that human reality can ever eliminate its “natural” or “first” impetus towards substantiality” 63; *nevertheless*, the “radical conversion” involves “refusing the quest for being.” 64

By making freedom an ontological feature of human reality, Sartre answers the question of *whether* consciousness is free. Freedom is the “facticity” of consciousness. It is synonymous with the very structure- the inner disintegration- of consciousness. Although the freedom of consciousness signifies that it is a *causa causans* (“an initiating cause”), consciousness is also necessarily a *causa causata*- i.e., although consciousness is responsible for

the creation of its own essence, it is not responsible for the fact that it *is* a consciousness which is responsible for the creation of its own essence. Consciousness is not only free to choose the orientation of its being (its transcendence), it chooses its attitude towards itself as freedom. Therefore, even “bad” faith- as an attitude towards freedom- is an expression of freedom.

However, Sartre’s description of human reality does not simply establish freedom as incontrovertible, it also dictates *how* one ought to be free: “[i]t is by my agency that everything must happen”, believes Mathieu Delarue, the protagonist in Sartre’s *The Roads of Freedom* 65. By definition, Sartre holds consciousness to be free only in the mode of the for-itself- i.e., when it transcends itself in the act of becoming. More specifically, Sartre establishes how human reality *ought not* to be free- he considers consciousness to be attempting to evade freedom when it *sees itself* as an “in-itself”- i.e., as an object seen by others, as determined and conditioned by its own incarnation. This is “bad faith”. Sartre’s philosophy recognizes, but condemns bad faith as an expression of freedom.

As discussed in chapter one, Sartre does not simply define consciousness as freedom, he assigns an unattainable *goal* to consciousness to be “the in-itself which it should be and is not.” 66 In this Sisyphean scenario, Sartre apprehends consciousness as *desiring* to achieve self-identity but *structured* as inner disintegration. However, he promotes freedom as the *unique value* of human reality, and thereby grafts his own belief of what defines human flourishing, and of what is most distinctive and morally important about persons. In other words, the prescription of how one ought to relate to this existential dilemma is automatically integrated into his description of the

dilemma. He determines that one of the parameters which defines the human condition ought to be valued, assumed, and pursued, while the other ought to be overcome.

This position clearly limits the possibility for a personal system of values. Supposing that I wish to avoid bad faith and live authentically, what is to be the basis of my *particular* moral actions? The recognition that I am a free, conscious, and responsible being offers no *concrete* values to guide me morally. In a universe in which there are only two, mutually exclusive, kinds of being, the for-itself is the only possible foundation of values. However, as free conscious being, I have no essence, since this would contradict and annihilate my freedom. This leads to the hopeless position of attempting to derive or extract values from foundationless consciousness. As a consequence, all such values can only be contingent (i.e., relative and changing); and therefore incompatible with what we understand as meaningful existence.

Thus, Sartre's restricted focus on the ontological foundation of human reality carries the consequence of restricting the basis for a "moral stance." His de-valorization of the quest for Being leads him to the absurd, vacuous, and anxiety-provoking position of proscribing bad faith, but without offering any moral principles by which to choose. Sartre transforms the original "*teleological* should" ("to be the in-itself which it should be and is not" 67) which he derives phenomenologically, into "*prescriptive* shoulds" (consciousness "*should* face its inner disintegration" and "*should not* attempt to see itself as an in-itself") which transgress the bounds of phenomenological description. The questionable move to value freedom over the desire to self-coincide, after having established *both* factors as essential to the definition of the human

condition, leads to the problematic ethical consequence we have discussed.

Sartre's position reflects the belief that self-coincidence is neither attainable (as an ideal) nor accessible (as an experience), while freedom- though unattainable (as an ideal)- *is* accessible (as an experience). Freedom can be "lived", from moment to moment, as long as we "choose".

This raises the question of whether self-coincidence is *in fact inaccessible* as an experience. I will present evidence to the contrary in the following chapter, when I discuss-

(a) how the "art" of "bad faith" need not be associated with the negative motivation of bad faith, and

(b) the role of the ego as a "valid" instance of seeing oneself as an in-itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISTINGUISHING THE "ART" FROM THE "MOTIVATION" OF BAD FAITH

In this chapter, I shall present two arguments in support of my claim that a true depiction of human reality cannot be achieved by an ontology which systematically de-valorizes the desire to self-coincide. I shall argue that self-coincidence as an "experience", if not as an "ideal", is attainable, "valid", and desirable.

First, I will support the suggestion made in chapter two that Sartre's description of bad faith has tainted the "art" of forming and entertaining contradictory beliefs by associating it exclusively with the bad-faith motivation to evade freedom. This will be accomplished by drawing a parallel between this claim and Jennifer Radden's demonstration that the art of entertaining contradictory beliefs does not always constitute "self-deception" in the strict sense of the term. Radden emphasizes the significance of the motivation underlying the exercise of this "art" with an analysis of the experiences which she refers to as the "aesthetic", "symbolic", "empathetic" and "wishful" stances. Analogously, I will argue that the attempt to self-coincide (to see oneself as an in-itself) need not be synonymous with the attempt to evade freedom.

Second, I shall cite the concept of *the ego* as an instance of both the forming and entertaining contradictory beliefs, and the attempt to self-coincide. Although Sartre dwells on the (bad-faith) possibility of fabricating a "false" ego, I

submit that the construction of an ego is also the “valid” manner in which consciousness sees itself as an in-itself, without which it would not have a stable and substantive point of reference or self-image by which to reflect upon and meaningfully orient its transcendence.

Human reality is marked by experiences of security; foundation, fulfilment, and “self-coincidence”. I submit that as *experiences*, these are as genuine as the freedom experienced in the act of choosing. I therefore suggest that the so-called “authentic” stance must move beyond Sartre’s notion of “overcoming bad faith” (which I characterize as the resignation to freedom), and incorporate and valorize the quest for Being.

The "Neutral" Art of Self-Deception

In her article *Defining Self-Deception* 1, Jennifer Radden aims to show that the aspect of the "self-deceived state" which has traditionally been stressed by philosophers, the knowing entertaining of conflicting or contradictory beliefs, is not (or at least not alone) a useful one for defining self-deception, since it is one which equally characterizes a number of different common and otherwise unrelated mental states, not in any way self-deceived.

We have already discussed the "art" exploited by consciousness in the "lie to oneself" - i.e., the epistemological aspect of the attitude of bad faith. Using logic analogous to that of Radden, I submit that the "art [of] forming contradictory concepts which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea" 2, which consciousness utilizes in its attempt to see itself as an in-itself, is not sufficient to define the attitude of bad faith. While this art is exercised by consciousness in its attempt "to see itself as an in-itself," the exploitation of this art need not be motivated by the attempt to evade freedom.

In her endeavour to define the criteria of self-deception, Radden presents a dynamic view of self-deception which encompasses the self-deceiver's motives as well as his/her state of mind. We shall examine four kinds of mental "stances" other than those of the person practicing self-deception, in which conflicting or contradictory beliefs are knowingly entertained.

1- Aesthetic stances-

These are the states in which we apprehend fiction. Aesthetic stances occur when we respond to any form of art which depicts or represents something we may imagine- for example, a representational painting. Similarly, the reactions of a reader or of a moviegoer who is moved by a fictional world, can be analyzed coherently only if certain false beliefs are ascribed, which are entertained by the subject at the same time as other, true but conflicting or contradictory ones. An emotional response (e.g., sympathy or concern) towards a fictional character entails the belief that the character exists, while simultaneously believing that it does not, and never did, exist. Moreover, the reader *knowingly* adopts this stance; there is nothing unwitting about the entertaining of the conflicting or contradictory beliefs. Knowing a book or movie to be fiction, we adopt an aesthetic stance with an awareness of its consequences *in terms of our beliefs*, i.e., that we will entertain false and conflicting ones, although other of its consequences, particularly the intensity of our emotional response to these false beliefs, may still surprise us. The aesthetic stance is therefore an apparent case of the knowing entertaining of conflicting or contradictory beliefs, when self-deception as we usually understand it is not present.

2- Symbolic stances-

We seem to entertain conflicting or contradictory beliefs knowingly in the practice of religious ritual and symbolic action. For example, a Catholic nun's belief that "she is the bride of Christ" coexists with the belief that "she is not Christ's bride." We do likewise when we respond emotionally to non-religious

symbols, such as when we respond to the flag, for example, as a symbol of the nation.

It is not symbolic or religious thinking as such which entails the entertaining of conflicting or contradictory beliefs. Thinking that the nun symbolizes Christ's bride, or that the flag symbolizes the nation is quite distinct from holding the identity belief (nun is bride, flag is nation). So it is not the beliefs of symbolic thinking as such which are important here, but rather the *emotional* responses which that symbolic thinking evokes. The surge of patriotic feeling accompanying the acknowledgement of the flag as a symbol of the nation, the religious response to the idea of being Christ's bride as a symbol- these are the source of the knowing entertaining of conflicting or contradictory beliefs. As was seen in the earlier case of the aesthetic stances, it is a *constituent* part of an emotional response to a protagonist's plight that we entertain the false belief that (s)he exists at the same time as knowing that (s)he does not and never has. Similarly, the patriotic response is comprehensible only if we allow its containing a constituent belief that the flag is the nation- flags as pieces of coloured cloth do not warrant, or receive, such responses.

Again, as strange and even irrational as this kind of response may be, it parallels that of self-deception without itself being what we would usually understand as self-deceived: the beliefs conflict and yet are knowingly entertained at the same time.

3- Empathetic stances-

We engage in the knowing entertaining of conflicting or contradictory beliefs when, for example, out of love of another, we adopt what may be called

an “empathetic stance” towards that other, imaginatively identifying with him or her so that we respond *as if* we were one. An example: if X is sad and I share her sorrow I may do so by imaginatively identifying with her *so that I experience* her sorrow “from the inside”, or empathetically. I identify with her, put myself in her shoes and then respond as she would. Now that response, Radden suggests, entails the constituent belief “I am X” knowingly held, simultaneously with the belief “I am not X.”

Or, in a more complex example: X, of whom I am fond, is honoured for her achievements. I feel proud of her. My response of pride may best be seen as one based on an identification. Out of love, I identify myself with X, and in doing so adopt the belief “I am X”- thus *permitting* me to take pride in *her* achievements- which belief I entertain simultaneously with the conflicting or contradictory one expressing my actual identity.

4- Wishful stances-

Consider that exercise of the imagination, so close in many respects to self-deception, described as “wishful thinking.”³ Again, it is not wishfully thinking as such which involves knowingly entertaining conflicting or contradictory beliefs. When I engage in that activity I may be said to think wishfully *rather* than entertaining contradictory beliefs. However, because wishful thinking by its nature is satisfying (they are my wishes), it entails an emotional response, and that response contains certain false and conflicting beliefs as constituents. I imagine I am rich and famous; my pleasurable response involves the (false) belief that I am rich, which belief I thus entertain simultaneously with my knowledge that I am not. And while wishful thinking

bears many similarities to self-deception, and often, Radden suggests, results in self-deceived states, still it seems to be distinct from it.

Each of the ways we have just described in which conflicting or contradictory beliefs are entertained knowingly, differ both from each other and from self-deception as we normally understand it. One important way in which self-deception differs from all of them is that we view it, in most circumstances at least, with a degree of abhorrence which aesthetic, symbolic, empathetic, and wishful stances do not typically evoke. Still, these stances share an important characteristic with self-deception. In each case the conflicting or contradictory beliefs are *knowingly* entertained. In this respect, the states of mind of the person responding to representational art, empathizing with another, and engaging in ritualistic or symbolic practices or wishful thinking, correspond to those of the self-deceived person, more than they do to the mental states of the ignorant person *unwittingly* entertaining incompatible beliefs.

Knowingly entertaining conflicting or contradictory beliefs, then, rather than a rarity, is a commonplace of everyday life. And the existence of other phenomena involving this particular kind of state shows that while the state of knowingly entertaining conflicting or contradictory beliefs may be typical or even necessary for so doing, it can hardly be sufficient for us to identify a case of self-deception.

Although there are several kinds of occasions which produce the state of mind of knowingly entertaining conflicting or contradictory beliefs, we want to reserve the phrase "self-deception" to describe only one of these. If self-deception is characterized in terms of the self-deceived state of mind, as some

philosophers have proposed, we cannot but fail to demarcate truly self-deceived states from others which share characteristics with them. The “state requirement”, as Radden dubs it, may be necessary for self-deception, but it is not, as those philosophers have supposed, sufficient. So we must introduce elements of the intentional or *motivational* antecedents of the states in question in order to distinguish mental states which are truly self-deceived from those others which arise in other ways. Radden’s stances illustrate instances in which one entertains contradictory beliefs *in order to* accede to certain *emotional experiences* rather than as an attempt to conceal the truth from oneself.

We might apply the insight which Radden has brought to the general notion of self-deception to Sartre’s concept of bad faith. In the following section I shall examine the construction of the ego as a valid instance of attempting to see oneself as an in-itself. One important way in which bad faith differs from this phenomenon is the negative moral judgment which the construction of the ego does not typically evoke. Still, bad faith and the construction of the ego share the characteristic, according to Sartre’s system, of knowingly forming and entertaining contradictory concepts in the attempt to see oneself as an in-itself. Seeing oneself as an in-itself, then, is a commonplace of everyday life rather than a rarity. Sartre, in his discussion of the ego, while rejecting the notion of the “Self”, (reluctantly) recognizes the importance of the “personal aspect” of consciousness (see p.95). Bad faith combines the attempt to see oneself as an in-itself with the motivation to hide from oneself that we are a for-itself, and it denotes the attempt to evade freedom. In support of my contention that in his de-valorization of the natural (ontological) desire to self-coincide, Sartre has restricted, and therefore biased, the scope of his phenomenological description

of human reality, I submit that although there are several kinds of occasions in which we attempt to see ourselves as an in-itself, we want to reserve the phrase "bad faith" to describe only one of these, despite Sartre's claim that "most of the time we flee anguish in bad faith."

The Ego

Just as Radden has demonstrated that not all instances of entertaining contradictory propositions constitute “self-deception”, I argue that not all instances of “seeing oneself as an in-itself” constitute “bad faith”. Case in point: the ego.

Like Sartre’s notions of good faith and authenticity, the question of the reality and the role of the ego is problematic and has never been fully articulated by Sartre. Barnes summarizes Sartre’s description of how the ego comes into being:

It has been constituted by a consciousness reflecting on its own activities, ordering them in terms of imposed meanings and unifying them. The ego is fabricated out of the psychic residue of earlier experiences, and it is their unity. But it is consciousness that establishes this unity. Most important, consciousness *is not* the ego. The ego is not inside consciousness but outside it. Consciousness is separated from the ego in the same kind of nihilating withdrawal that consciousness respect to all of its objects. The ego is the object of consciousness. 5

Sartre tells us that the ego is the unity of actions, qualities and states. It “constitutes the ideal... unity of the infinite series of our reflected consciousnesses.” 6 This “ideal unity” is:

a- real: “it has a concrete type of existence, undoubtedly different from the existence of mathematical truths, of meanings, or of spatio-temporal beings, but no less real” 7;

b- opaque: “it is like a pebble seen indistinctly, at the bottom of the stream, beneath the moving water” 8;

c- “on the side of being-in-itself” 9; According to Sartre, the

ego is not given as an a priori structure of consciousness, in the sense of Husserl's "transcendental ego". I originally encounter my ego as a structure in the world, and I subsequently *interiorize* this structure 10. I therefore originally know my self in the same way as the other knows me. The ego is "an objectivity"- it is the way I appear before others. Although in comparison to the other's perspective on my self my own perspective is more intimate, it is not more privileged in the sense of being more certain or more objective.

The ego is a type of "psychic in-itself"- it is

the result of consciousness' 'working' its own past. Its qualities exist for consciousness to focus on in somewhat the same way that qualities are present in any man-made object- revealed, abstracted, ordered. 11

The construction of an ego is a selective reflective interpretation (conceptualization) of prereflective consciousness' unconceptualized awareness. I assign a meaning to my act, to my self, through my attitude- i.e., in the way that I choose to interiorize the way I see myself in the world for others.

However, contrary to the Freudian perspective, the psychic unity cannot take on a life of its own-

It cannot by itself turn back on itself as a counterfinality. Nor is the ego subject to deviation at the hand of other persons and the forces of nature. The reality of the ego is much closer to that of the aesthetic object. It is like a melody that is composed out of separate sounds but is heard as a pattern ... At this point ... we can more easily understand how Sartre can compare the ego both to a melody and to a pebble at the bottom of a stream. For it is in one sense an object out there, with a certain opaqueness, something we can't get inside of. At the same time it must be constituted by a consciousness, like any unreal social imaginary. We can understand why Sartre can call it both a real existence and an ideal unity. 12

Barnes examines the question of the relation of the ego and the Sartrean fundamental project:

If the fundamental project is the for-itself's chosen orientation toward being, its way of making itself be, its non-reflective creation and pursuit of values, the process whereby it chooses to make itself, a 'plan aware of itself,' to use Sartre's own expression then the ego is the *crystallized reflection* of what consciousness considers or imagines its fundamental project to be. Or if this is going too far, then the ego is consciousness' interpretation of the traces left by the fundamental project. 13 [italics mine]

The ego being a construction of consciousness which imposes a unity on its worked psychic matter, the possibility of a "false" ego exists. According to Sartre, we commonly avoid anguish is by constructing for ourselves an "I" or an ego that serves to give structure and character to our life. We think of the ego as a self whose character determines how we will act. In the manner of Freud, we believe that our past actions reflect a pattern and character that we believe will extend beyond the present. In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre describes the role the ego plays in our attempt to avoid anguish:

Perhaps, in reality, the essential function of the ego is not so much theoretical as practical ... [P]erhaps the essential role of the ego is to mask from consciousness its very spontaneity ... Everything happens, therefore, as if consciousness constituted the ego as a false representation of itself, as if consciousness hypnotized itself before this ego which it has constituted, absorbing itself in the ego as if to make the ego its guardian and its law. 14

By creating an ego for ourselves, we think both that what we will do is caused by us, we are agents that bring about our own futures, and furthermore,

that this ego is endowed with an essence from which our future choices flow. Through such a construction we manage to avoid facing the anguish of having to tirelessly create what we are. Of course, when we try to avoid anguish we are really just deceiving ourselves, since our nothingness prevents us from being an ego with a fixed nature.

Thus, a for-itself which is in bad faith will fabricate a self-deceptive, i.e., “false”, psychic unity. The false assumption which the for-itself conceives to be the proper relation between consciousness and the ego it has produced, is also, according to Sartre, the assumption most commonly held:

We reverse the true order of the ego's formation and assume that an underlying ego-pattern (like a genetic code) generates our psychic states, and so on, which as givens determine the nature of our conscious choices and the behaviour consequent to them. Actually, the ego does nothing. Its apparent spontaneity is part of the self-deception. When Sartre speaks of the ego as seeming to us to produce results, he means that we want to use the same incorrect language that novelists- and ordinary people, too- use when they say that love or hatred *causes* somebody to do something. 15

How then, if we are willing to accept Sartre's phenomenological description, *should* consciousness live with its ego? Sartre says not only that the ego is the product of a reflective consciousness, but that it is the result of *impure reflection*. The connotation of the qualification of “impure”, which is reminiscent of the “bad” of “bad faith”, suggests that somehow the ego is tainted, that it is something which ought not to have been brought into existence. “If that is so,” remarks Barnes, “then, indeed, we are all guilty of original sin and there

is no Grace to save us. But need this be the case?" 16

The negative connotation of the term "impure reflection" seems justified when we examine the patterns of bad faith. Bad faith is the special form of self-deception, the "*lie to oneself*", by which a person shifts conveniently from one to the other of the two ways in which we can say that a human being "is". The example of "the waiter" illustrates one aspect of bad faith, in which we consider our being to be "caused" by determined or instinctual forces. However, according to Sartre, each of us is a free self-consciousness. We are not "destined" but rather "self-determining". As conscious bodies, we are responsible for our interactions with the world.

Obviously, if we regard the ego and its components as things that make us what we are, we have fallen into one of the traps of bad faith by denying our transcendence by refusing to acknowledge that our being is not like that of things in the world. 17

However, the second aspect of bad faith, which Sartre illustrates with his example of "the date", lies in refusing to accept responsibility for our facticity; that is, by pretending that since we are free, we can no longer be defined by our actions at all.

Now, if the ego is an honest representation of our current facticity, then why should it be considered to be a product of "impure" reflection? Nevertheless, Sartre's discussion of "pure" reflection in *Being and Nothingness* indicates that what pure reflection reveals is simply our perpetually active, impersonal intentional consciousness- i.e., the existential freedom which makes it possible for human reality to effect any modification to the fundamental project.

Furthermore, non-reflective responses are not the only expressions of

our freedom- i.e., an “authentic” consciousness (which, as we have discussed, is a reflective stance) might be *obliged* to practice the kind of self-reflection that produces the ego. Barnes puts it well when she remarks:

I do not see how it would be possible or even meaningful to effect a change of project *without the ego* . Whatever the catalytic event precipitating a new choice of oneself or ... of one’s way of being, any enduring change must surely involve the kind of [so-called ‘impure’] reflection that takes a point of view on what the activities of a free consciousness have been. Temporal consciousness does in fact, Sartre claims, exist as a perpetual totalizing of its experiences. Therefore, the ego as their ideal unity must be always conceivable for a consciousness, though a consciousness in good faith will perpetually recreate it- just as we recreate our pasts in projecting our future. Inasmuch as the for-itself, which each of us is, is described as a pursuit of being and a self-making, the image of what seems to be the self that has been made up until now must be among the more significant data of our conscious life ... As a self-image it is legitimate as contrasted with ‘I am what I possess’ or ‘I am my professional title.’ The difference is the same as that between a consciousness’ authentic relation to its ego and one in bad faith. 18
[italics mine]

Barnes draws the parallel between the relation between consciousness and the body, and consciousness and the ego. Just as “it was not necessary that there should be this consciousness in this body, but it is necessary that a consciousness should have- or more properly should exist- a body”, “in the same way, consciousness need not create or sustain any particular ego, but must make *an* ego- at least, if a person is to lead anything at all resembling a normal life.” 19

In further support of my contention that we must consider the role of the ego apart from its susceptibility to utilization as a device in bad faith, consider Sartre’s description of “authentic love” in *Cahiers Pour une Morale* , as not

wanting to appropriate the Other as an object, but rather as respecting the Other's subjectivity. As Barnes accurately remarks, this type of love does not originate in *direct* response to the Other's consciousness as a free upsurge- i.e.,:

Freedom as such is not lovable; for it is nothing but negation and productivity. Pure being, in its total exteriority of indifference, is not *lovable* either. But the Other's body is lovable inasmuch as it is *freedom in the dimension of being* . 20 [italics mine]

Barnes explains:

Since Sartre speaks here of love, not simply sexual desire, it is the Other's body as the expression of his psyche, or as we say more naturally of his personality, that I love. And when one feels that what one loves in the Other is not this or that trait as manifested in particular actions, but somehow the Other's person, it is the ego that is intended, along with the free consciousness that created it. Even outside the erotic context, as in friendship, it is my feeling toward the self which the Other is making that makes me wish to make room in my own project for his or hers, so as to shelter or lend assistance to it. Obviously, as the Other is to me, so am I to the Other. I am aware of this, and insofar as I am not merely trying to offer to the Other an artificial self to be admired, it is the quality of my being that I try to communicate, not the abstract reality of my personal consciousness. 21

This raises the question of why it is not my fundamental project that I attempt to communicate. The answer is that while the project is indeed the ultimate point of reference,

I myself cannot grasp it except as it has been reflected and objectified and inevitably, to some degree, transformed. At best I can try to reveal to the Other only what I believe I have made of myself... [i.e.,] some sense of the ego I have structured is necessary if I am to change significantly, that is, to assume responsibility for my life. Sartre himself acknowledged as much in the *War Diaries* . After concluding that his earlier attempt to identify authenticity with pure spontaneity was mistaken, he began to stress instead the importance of taking one's actions and situation

into account and engaging oneself. 22

While for Sartre this did not entail introducing once again a determining ego, he did recognize the importance of the "personal aspect":

Does that mean that I'm going to allow the Self back in?
No, certainly not. But though the ipseity or totality of the for-itself is not the Self, it's nevertheless the *person*. I'm in the course of learning, basically, to be a person. 22

Barnes summarizes:

If the ego is the product of consciousness, it has at least the value of a creative work in which external ingredients display the stamp of consciousness. Consider what it would mean to be a consciousness without an ego. In a very modified form, one could perhaps live as a sort of weather vane, creating no personal value system, certainly not responsibly and not very meaningfully. If taken to its literal and logical extreme, the condition of conscious life without an ego could only be pathological. 23

Thus, anguish might not simply be the condition which makes human reality susceptible to bad faith, perhaps it is also one of the potential stimuli which initiate the natural, temporary "*crystallized reflection*" of what consciousness considers or imagines its fundamental project to be such as to provide consciousness with a "psychic foothold" for transcendence, movement, recreation, evolution, development- much like the method of the mountain climber, or of the spider spinning its web.

This is not to deny that this process cannot go wrong. We have already discussed the fragmentation which is evident in bad faith. However, Sartre ought not to negatively characterize an entire natural process because of evidence that it "may" or even "commonly does" go wrong.

The purpose of this discussion has been to suggest the possibility that

consciousness may exploit the art of forming and entertaining contradictory beliefs in the effort to see itself as an in-itself, *without* this necessarily constituting an instance of bad faith. Thus, "authenticity" should be predicated on both ontological foundations of human reality- inner disintegration *and* the desire to self-coincide. I contend that human reality can surpass the "second order" attempt to live the "break in being" which constitutes Sartre's notion of authenticity. With a so-called "third order" activity in which human reality exploits the possibility of seeing itself as an in-itself, it moves beyond the vacuous experience associated with the mere resignation to freedom, to experiences of fulfilment which equally define human reality. Sartre's ontology does not permit him to explore the possibility of such a creative exploitation of freedom by means of the "art" which he reserves to describe bad faith.

CONCLUSION

BEYOND BAD FAITH

In his description of authenticity, Sartre recognizes the responsibility to acknowledge the quest for Being. In *The War Diaries*, he states that human reality must not disown its “*natural*” *ontological tendency*- i.e., it must not pretend that it can ever eliminate its “*natural*” or “*first*” impetus towards substantiality.”¹ He adds, however, that consciousness must *refuse* the reassurances and self-justifications made in its natural disposition to bad faith. The “*assumptive conversion*” which characterizes the authentic attitude consists of the willed “*adoption of reality as one’s own*”- by which he means the willed acceptance to *live the freedom* to which one is “*condemned*”. “*Authenticity*” consists in “*maintaining the tension*”² of the “*break in being*” or non-coincidence of the for-itself.

However, Sartre expresses his concern that even authenticity might become a project for escaping one’s freedom- much like good faith can “*slide into bad faith*”. He asks: “*Is authenticity ... going to reinstill in me the spirit of seriousness?*”³ The project of tying down one’s authenticity can also become- as does sincerity- a project of inauthenticity and/or bad faith. “*If you seek authenticity for authenticity’s sake, you are no longer authentic.*”⁴ For if one were to act “*in this way in order to confer on oneself the being or quality of an in-itself-for-itself,*” one would be in “*a project of bad faith.*”⁵

Sartre states in *Notebooks for an Ethics* that authentic existence is *the way out of bad faith* and “*hell*”⁶. It seems, however, that since human reality

cannot purge itself once and for all of the quest for Being, authenticity must lead to an “existential purgatory” in which freedom must continually be re-chosen. This position strives only for “deliverance” from what he implies is our “natural” susceptibility to bad faith. For Sartre, authenticity simply provides an exit from the anguish which accompanies the futile attempt to attain self-coincidence, without affording any of the security or foundation we naturally crave.

The exhortation to resist the urge to self-coincide is appropriate within the context of bad faith, in which freedom is denied. However, when this admonishment is universalized, I contend that it taints the depiction of the possibilities of human reality. Because his ontology radically separates being-for-itself from being-in-itself, Sartre’s description of good faith and authenticity is limited to how they *contrast with*, or *overcome*, the fundamental attitude of bad faith, respectively. The polarization of human reality into diametrically opposed responses to the unique value of freedom suggests that human reality is *either* a futile struggle, *or* a lie to oneself. As a consequence, authenticity turns out to be nothing more than a willful, reflective valorization and choice of the so-called “good faith attitude”- i.e., a courageous resignation to the inescapability of perpetual freedom.

As we have discussed, absolute freedom limits the meaningfulness of human existence by robbing it of a foundation for values. Furthermore, since an act that is uniquely the upsurge of a non-personal spontaneity does not belong to anyone, absolute freedom, ironically, appears to be incompatible with responsibility. This thesis therefore questions Sartre's indication that the “natural or first impetus towards substantiality” *necessarily* leads to bad faith.

I submit that this bleak depiction of human reality does not correspond to

the complete range of human experiences that a “descriptive phenomenology” is wont to include. While Sartre defines human reality in terms of facticity and transcendence, his definition of consciousness as freedom precludes any substantive apprehension of facticity. The objective of this thesis has not been to refute Sartre's valorization of freedom but rather to suggest that his vision might be complemented by vindicating the quest for Being.

Sartre rejects both Freud's determinism and the potentiality of some Heideggerian fusion with Being- human reality is radically separated from the world in which it finds itself precisely because it is conscious. Nevertheless, I contend that the attempt to achieve the experience of being-in-itself has both significance and utility to human reality. The experience of self-coincidence opens up a world of potential values other than, but not necessarily contrary to, that of freedom. Consequently, I suggest that the authentic stance ought to represent more than the mere *resignation* to freedom which allegedly liberates us from the hellish pursuit of grounding or foundation.

Consciousness' groundlessness is paradoxically characterized by its desire to be an in-itself. Consciousness does not want to lapse back into the condition of the in-itself, but rather towards an “ideal unity” or synthesis of consciousness and objectivity, where external phenomena “fuse” with or “dissolve” into pure self-awareness. This aspiration or “fundamental project” can be described as “the desire to be God”, for according to Sartre, the “in-itself-for-itself” represents the meaning of God. Yet, this goal is not only unattainable, it is contradictory according to Sartre's system, since freedom and consciousness are synonymous with lack and change, and would therefore be destroyed by identification with the fullness and inertness of the in-itself. The apparently

desperate implication is that the for-itself is doomed or “condemned” to be a deficient, transcending activity.

However, the ego, as an “approximation” of being-in-itself-for-itself- for, the moment we apprehend or are conscious of our ego, we are already beyond it- provides some of the substance which the pure for-itself lacks, and without which its project would be inconsistent and directionless 7. As a free conscious being, I am nevertheless linked to the in-itself. To *know* this relation, and to conceptualize its meaning for my possibilities of transcendence, requires the construction of a “crystallized reflection”. This crystallized reflection *is* an attempt to see oneself as an in-itself, *but* precisely as a necessary step towards creating an essence for oneself rather than as the bad-faith attempt to relinquish this freedom and responsibility.

To condone the attempt to self-coincide is also to admit a degree of determinism into the ontological picture of human reality. However, the exploitation of the art of entertaining contrary beliefs in the attempt to experience self-coincidence, is *not* equivalent to hiding from the responsibility to choose one’s essence. The ego is not a “lie to oneself” in which a truth is *concealed* , but rather a construct which permits the truth to be *revealed* . To construct an ego “in good faith” is to see oneself as an in-itself- *as if* one’s essence were wholly determined- but precisely *in order to* be able to give a direction to one’s freedom. This natural urge provides the vehicle via which consciousness can “substantiate” its freedom, obtain a purchase onto its facticity, and reflect upon and apprehend its “situation”, in order to make an informed choice with respect to the orientation of its transcendence.

As Sartre has described, it is possible- with the “false ego”- to surrender

one's freedom and succumb to determinism in the attempt to self-coincide. If we *do not* choose- or if we choose in bad faith *not to* choose- our existence will proceed, by default, according to "given" determinants. However, this does not eliminate the significance of freedom in co-constituting human "destiny". We are the final adjudicators of our transcendence through the exercise of our freedom.

Against Freud, Sartre states that human reality cannot be caused by unconscious forces. This applies if he is referring to a facticity of which we are aware. However, the human body and "its" instincts and desires are not necessarily within my awareness, and therefore within my control. In other words, I can choose the meaning of my facticity (the contingent circumstances or facts of my life- which may be biologically, psychologically, socially, and economically determined) only insofar as I am aware of my facticity.

As a free, active consciousness, I transform this facticity by my choice of meanings and possibilities, by my projects, into my "situation." ("By "situation" Sartre means an organization of the world into a meaningful totality from the viewpoint of a free individual. Therefore, I live in a world I have structured, which is a world of my own making, the world as it is to me, by the meaning I choose to give to the facts of my life, and by the projects I choose for my future." 8)

I contend that we must identify with the in-itself in order to allow this facticity to "reveal itself", *so that* we may exercise our freedom to transform it into our "situation."

We must take care to distinguish this from the deterministic conditioning which Sartre argues against. To see oneself as an in-itself does not, in itself, constitute an abrogation of freedom, and a surrender to the causal order of being-in-itself.

Not to admit of the mere attempt to see oneself as an in-itself, is therefore to deny the instrument which consciousness requires in order to *be* free. Not to acknowledge the *experience* of self-coincidence is to deny one's *facticity* - a form of bad faith. I therefore submit that the de-valorization of the desire to self-coincide is a form of inauthenticity. I quote the existential psychotherapist Igor A. Caruso:

It is not the case that man is identical with his own planning. In the first place man brings with him the inertia of the creature, which is precisely the condition of being driven, the 'id'. The human ego is *insidiously affected and conditioned* by the 'id', the general human instinct; and neurosis shows us what happens to the ego that takes its own plans for unadulterated freedom. In the second place the idea of creating oneself out of nothing is absurd, and amounts to 'angelism'. There is a generally valid plan for mankind, and the conviction that man is part of plan is certainly closer to the truth than Sartre's excessive indeterminism. In carrying out his planned development, man must take into account both the plan made for him and the determining factors of his own being. 9 [*italics mine*]

While Sartre's brand of existentialism is meant to defend freedom and the significance of existence against the mechanistic determinism of classical psychotherapy,

human freedom, and more particularly the freedom of the neurotic, is anything but absolute. Paradoxically, this freedom is tied to determinism, so that it can be conceived only as a progressive liberation. 10

Whether or not Sartre's ontology is correct in precluding self-coincidence as an achievable conscious act, it is clear that the fulfilment which characterizes many common and essential experiences which define and enrich human reality, is based upon the *experience* of self-identity.

To de-valorize the urge to self-coincide in spite of phenomenological evidence

of its existence as, and necessity for, human experience, is to constrict the depiction of human reality. Without committing ourselves to Caruso's claim of "a generally valid plan for mankind", the above considerations nevertheless indicate the value of the desire to self-coincide in assuming and transcending our facticity. Sartre's depiction of human reality illustrates the type of constriction of reality, and unnatural dictates, which characterize Sartre's own concept of neurosis or "bad faith". Had he been true to his phenomenological method, Sartre would have posed the counterpart question to "what are we to say that consciousness must be in the instantaneity of the pre-reflective *cogito* - if the human being is to be capable of bad faith?"¹¹; that is:

"What must be the nature of consciousness such that the human being is capable of fulfilling experiences of self-coincidence?"

CHAPTER ENDNOTES

Introduction

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Chapter Four

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Conclusion

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