Transcendence, Facticity, and Modes of Non-Being

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Abstract: Research in artificial intelligence has yet to satisfactorily address the primordial fissure between human consciousness and the material order. How is this split reconciled in terms of human reality? By what duality is Bad Faith possible? We show that the answer is quite subtle, and of particular relevance to certain classical A.I. problems in introspection and intensional belief structure. A principled approach to bad faith and the consciousness of the other is suggested. We present ideas for an implementation in the domain of chemical engineering.

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In Being and Nothingness Sartre proposes a primordial split, or

fissure, between human (conscious) reality and the material order—that is,

between the being-for-itself and the being-in-itself. How is this fissure

reconciled in terms of human reality? By what duality is Bad Faith possible?

The in-itself exists, that is, it is neither true nor false, nothing

can be predicated of it, it has no concern with primordial support (causal

explanation) for its being. Being-in-itself differs most radically from

the Heideggerian what-is-in-totality in that what-is includes the human order,

or own for-itself. Were I to conceive of what-is without myself (the image

of the for-itself on a linguistic leash) and to grant that the consciousness

of the other is at best, hypothetical, then this would be something like

the totality of being-in-itself. But how does the for-itself differ from the

in-itself? What does this mean? Does this imply a total rift? Is there no

coincidence, or at the very least, contiguity? Perhaps there is an overlap?

The answer, of course, lies in both: like a catalyst, the Sartrian

formula that the for-itself is "not what it is and what it is not" must
necessarily permeate its analysis of itself. The inability of consciousness
to become the in-itself, to become a thing, to escape from a foundationless
"thrownness" (nothing) is the anguish of the for-itself. This thrownness
(in Sartrian language, "...the missing act of founding") is the lack of
orginary explanation, of causal support for our being, it is conceived as
a lack of the in-itself, the order of things. And yet modes of the in-itself
permeate our existence: if a man is to work, let us say, as a chemist, then he is
a chemist in the sense that certain occupational duties and patterns of
behavior attributable to the social role of the chemist (chemist-ness)
coincide with his own. But on the other hand he is not a chemist in that
after work he eats dinner, he watches television, he makes love—and yet he
does not cease to be a chemist at these instants—but who would point over
and say, "Look at that chemist making love?" But what is happening? How
can he be and not be? If this man were to constantly try to escape the for-
itself, to strive to become a thing (the in-itself) with all his being, he
would devote all his time to machines, he would read technical documents
and devise new lab apporati day and night, and yet at the very pinnacle of
his thingness, when he had surely become that which he is, he would look
back at himself or laugh or fall asleep or in some way become not a chemist
once more. But in what sense is he that which he is, i.e., a chemist? The answer
lies in facticity, "this perpetually evanescent contingency of the in-itself
which...haunts the for-itself." Facticity can be explained in terms of a
"lost unity"—thus, if we were to assume a primordial union of the in-itself
and the for-itself (perhaps in some irrevocably lost pre-consciousness, a flood

of half-remembered resonances and almost-abandoned meanings from

a time before the for-itself arose as a "crack" in being) then what is left

over in the for-itself of the material order, that which binds one to what one

is by virtue of some residual, undeniable contingency--this is facticity. With the

appearance of the for-itself in the world arose the first being which could not

be what it is--in particular, the upsurge of the for-itself made interdifferentiation

of intentional objects possible. What does this mean? Clearly, it is only

intentional objects which can be different from one another--this glass is

undifferentiated from anything else in the plenum of the in-itself until I

make it exist (as an intentional object, at the end of the "arrow of consciousness")

as if silhouetted against a backround of nothing: in Sartre's terminology, I

introduce Nothing into the world through negation (discrete uses of the not)

by saying, "Yes, this glass is not that desk and it is not the floor and not

this and not that..." In this sense the for-itself causes a crack or fissure

in being by isolating itself from the plenum. Yet do we not similarly isolate

the glass from the rest of being-in-itself when we study it as an intentional

object? Surely when we say it is not ourselves, nor this nor that nor any

other object in the plenum we have in effect surrounded it with Nothing, we

have cut it off from the in-itself through the very process of differentiation?

But we have isolated only the intentional glass, not the glass-itself. The

glass-itself is completely unaffected by our study, and even were we to postulate

the construct glass-for-us (the intentional glass we observe, privileged,

isolated from the plenum) surely this glass-for-us is evanescent and evaporates

as soon as the arrow of intentionality, the "glance of consciousness" is

turned towards some other object, away from the glass, surely then the glass

falls back into the undifferentiated, inseperable jumble of the plenum as soon as I forget it, as soon as my gaze turns away, as the radiant excitement of discovery, need, or desire fades. Thus objects in the plenum can be picked out, set apart through the introduction of Nothing (the not) only momentarily, only for as long as I chose to set them apart.

But the for-itself can never sink back into the plenum. We can prove this in two ways: first of all, the for-itself is itself always an intentional object, since its consciousness is constantly the object of the pre-reflective cogito: it is nihilated in its apprehension of itself, of its own consciousness. In other words, that the for-itself knows itself as consciousness, that at the most primordial level it is at every instant aware of itself as consciousness (and therefore as an intentional object) means that it is always set apart from the plenum by the nothing. Consider how the for-itself contemplates any intentional object: it introduces a nothingness between itself and the object [it is pre-reflectively aware that it is not the object] and between the object and the rest of beings in the world [those which are not the object.] Thus consciousness, in its own pre-reflective apprehension of itself must introduce a Nothing into itself, into the for-itself. This process is the constant nihilating character of the for-itself, this is what prevents the for-itself from falling back into the plenum--the for-itself induces a Nothing at its core through its self-awareness this Nothing sets it apart from being-in-itself. (Note that it does not matter that there is no "ego," nothing "behind the arrow"for pre-reflective consciousness--the very fact that it intends itself/its-self-consciousness is enough to differentiate it[self] from the plenum, to introduce the Nothing.)

However, this argument that the for-itself it always its own
object of nihilation and its own intentional object may be offensive to
certain people (those who are shy of doctrines of "constant self-consciousness,"
etc.) But we can take a different approach. The differentiating consciousness
must by the very nature of the differentiating process set itself apart from
the intentional object(s) it is considering at any moment, and thus from
the rest of the plenum. How it this possible? When the for-itself considers
an object, it first induces a Nothing between the object and itself; this
is a residuum from the stage of apprehension that infants pass through, the
stage when they learn to tell Me from Not-Me (cf. Piaget.) Nothing is
introduced through the not of self/non-self differentiation. This is also the
root of certain psycho-pathological disorders--Victor Erlich speculates that
visions of experiences such as infant twins learning to call each other not
by their names but by the terms "the other" [drugoi] and "this one" [etot]
may have formed the catalyst for Dostoyevsky's The Double. In any case the
distinction between the for-itself and the not-for-itself and its corresponding
introduction of Nothing is one of the most primordial cognative processes.
Thus in intending any object in the world, consciousness by the very nature
of the intentional process of thought sets itself off from the object and
the rest of the world. This does not even argue (as we did before) for a pre-
reflective apprehension of me/not-me, which would imply a non-thetic
differentiation from the plenum. To imagine a consciousness which never
considered any object in the world would be as if to consider a rock--perhaps
this consciousness would not differentiate itself from the plenum of the in-
itself, but in any case it would not really matter. Whether a rock is self-

conscious   is not a very interesting question, since it is certainly

not conscious of anything else. Thus without even considering the pre-reflective

cogito, we can determine that any consciousness which intends any object(s)

in the world differentiates itself from the plenum and runs no risk of falling

back into it. To the contrary, as we shall see, as much as it may want to

become a thing (though retreat into facticity) to actually join the in-

itself, this is impossible for human reality.

The past joins facticity as a ragged fragment of the in-itself, it

is frozen by that instant of temporality (the Pachinko ball of the present),

about the past there is no question of what was, one can only reestablish oneself

in relation to it. That I "am" a student is factically determined by an event

in the past (matriculation) in this sense I am imprisoned by the in-itself

(studentness) and yet I constantly transcend being-a-student whenever I

think about something outside the encompassing regions of studentness,

in fact, it is clearly necessary that at every moment I both be and not be

a student, since it is impossible to totally be anything: in the very act

of assimilating all the factic armour of what-I-am, I have both a reflective

and pre-reflective apprehension of what I am becoming in this retreat

towards the in-itself, and in that instant I transcend this being (or, more

acurately, this "retreating-becoming") and become not a student, but

consciousness (of) becoming (or mimicking) a student.

We have postulated a "pre-reflective apprehension of what I am becoming

in this retreat towards the in-itself"- the consciousness seeks to withdraw

or not to introduce Nothing into the world in order to be blind to the

differences so that it can "deceive itself," trick itself into thinking it

has become just a thing--a part of the in-itself. "No," it says, "I am just a

student, and nothing more, there is no difference between me and this or that
archetype of success--" But even if it succeeds in the withdrawal of nothing
from around itself, the pre-reflective _cogito_ still has as its intended
object its own (self) consciousness. (Thus when one level of differentiation
fails, the other takes over.) The pre-reflective consciousness of consciousness
constantly "pumps" Nothingness into the for-itself, constantly differentiates
it from the plenum, it shouts at the pre-reflective level, "No, no, I am
not that, not a thing." And it is this never-ceasing "ambivalent affirmation
of identity" that re-introduces _lack_ into the for-itself (lack of solidity,
of _thingness_, of the in-itself) at the pre-reflective level and causes the
project of escape-through-facticity to fail.

There is a proverbial and rather tedious argument between two would-be
politician-philosophers, one who seeks to "learn from the mistakes of
history," and the other who claims that "to map the future with the charts
of the past is to ignore the basic fact of the future which is its complete
non-existence, etc." Sartre would take issue with both, since man _is_ his past
and his future "in the mode of non being them." What does this mean? In a
sense I _am_ my past, as it accrues factic weight I cannot escape it--yet the past,
of course, is _not_, it happened, it was, it is-not now. This first man seeks
to weight himself down with the past, he will take it as a _thing_ and attempt
to ingest it, to consume it as an object, he will limit his possibilities with this
ingested pseudo-"thing" But the past differs radically from "things" in that "things"
are, they are crucified on the interstices of the in-itself, whereas the past
is _not_ , we make it exist ("in the mode of non-being") by differentiating it, by
setting it apart with the tool of the _not_ --the past is _not_ now, it was, then.
I free myself from it. To cling to the past is to deny one's freedom, it is

to deny the possibility of transcending the past, to attempt to annihilate the possibilities for change. "Oh, we cannot do that, why in 1798 there was a similar border skirmish with Mexico and look what happened then, that is forbidden, we cannot, we refuse to consider that as a possibility," the first man will cry: he denies the possibility of a war, he rejects his freedom-to-start-a-war by chaining himself to the past. Even if his freedom for-the-future, his being-of-possibilities is perceived by his "unhappy consciousness" as anguished, nevertheless he, in clinging to the past, is in bad faith. The second man, with all his rationalizations ("to take the heady rush of the present into the future for 'rational movement' is folly..." etc.) choses to ignore the past, he aims at total transcendence of what was, he claims complete freedom for his future. This man retreats into transcendence from the anguish of constraints from the past. But how is this possible? The past, surely, is not, this is the fundamental of its [non] being he will claim. But that the past is even now even though it is not is seen through such mundane events... it is revealed to him though the quantity of munition stores left over from the last war, through his inability to caress a deceased wife, through his growing incompetence at chess due to cortical atrophy... Both men are in Bad Faith, one seeks to limit his freedom-for-the-future, his possibilities by clinging to the shredded garment of that enveloping pastness, to the fragments of the past that we still "are" (in the mode of facticity) while the other seeks to throw himself defenceless upon the future.

Let us further take the example of a man haunted by the experience of an unhappy love affair. At one moment he may cling to the fond memories of the happy times, of those joyous moments in the chemical plant or whatever. He

may tell others that these were the happiest times of his life. This is a retreat into facticity, he grieves himself by fixing his being to those past instants, which, while they surely _were_, just as certainly are _not_ now. He attemps, therefore, to found his being on something which is _not_, on Nothing. The "authentic" or "healthy" amount of facticity that should remain from this relationship would be the extent to which it influences his later encounters with women, his sexual adeptness, etc. While the past "is" in the mode of non-being, the "authentic facticity" is that residue of the past which even now permeates my "am-ness." But just as the _fact-that_ I was born in France could become obsessive, that I might suddenly think of myself as having certain eccentric traits or proclivities which were what I was _and nothing more_, which I _could not change_ and could not escape (transcend), this facticity is given a pathological importance: the past is made to be, even though it is not. However, in another moment, this unhappy man may declare himself free, unfettered by past relationships, completely at liberty to form whatever attachments me pleases--here he denies the past, he escapes into transcendence, he says, "I don't care about her, that was all in the past and is no more, I am beyond that now--" Here he renounces even that little "authentic" facticity, the _thatness_ that he still is, and throws himself towards his possibilities in an escape _into_ transcendence _of_ an unhappy past. This oscillating escape pattern (first into facticity, then into transcendence, and then back...) is what we might call the "ambivalent" nature of bad faith. It is rooted in the essential evanescence of either escape, in the escape's eventual failure and disintigration. . It can grant only a moment's respite. For instance, as soon as the spurned lover denies his past and goes out for a night on the town, he will be reminded--for in its evanescence the project of bad faith must be constantly reaffirmed and

continued--yes, he will be reminded, let us say, of the sheer contingency of
that woman in the faces he meets, he will recall what was and at the height
of his denial in face of the past he will be brought up short, revealed to
himself as factically bound to what he was even in the instantaneous
transcendence of its wasness.

What is the "incentive" for escaping into facticity? Why it is that
the for-itself so often finds it necessary to become something? Consciousness
is driven by its terrible fear of that eternally vacillating becoming that
is its only mode of being. The for-itself can never hope to establish itself
as anything that is, since (as with our friend the chemist) it is perpetually
what it is not and (as with the student) it is at every moment not what it is--
this is what Sartre describes as "...perpetually evanescent contingency," that is,
the isness of one's condition, of one's state-in-the-world is constantly
evaporating, support for one's being receeds, leaving the self high and dry
not only without causal explanation for it's "original" being in the world
(being de trop) but also without any (external) justification for one's being
that way that one is in the factic sense. Just as the in-itself constantly haunts
the for-itself in the form of facticity, so does what we are not (in one sense,
Possibility) mock what we are and pull us forward out of each crystallized
moment into a foundationless void (the future) in which we must constantly
reestablish ourselves. Thus this transcendence of what we are into the not (that
which the for-itself is not) inherently clings to temporality (futurity)
just as Heideggerian "projection into Nothing" is based on the innate temporal
transcendence of Da-sein. And yet Da-sein differs fundamentally from the for-itself
in that it implies no apprehension of consciousness (or of a "non-thetic cogito,"

a pre-reflective self-consciousness _of_ consciousness). Thus the <u>not</u> (here,

the <u>not</u> that the for-itself is <u>not</u>) of Sartre is derived from consciousness,

it is not a "<u>Not</u> of Being" (in the sense of what is <u>left over</u> when what-is

receeds, of what is <u>not-there</u> before and after Being) but the foundation

of consciousness: we are thrown into every moment as <u>nothing</u>, we must

constantly refound ourselves in the world, we must constantly choose what

we <u>are</u> to be--from this follows responsibility (for at every moment I choose

to be what I am to be) every moment is only a becoming, I can choose to be

some<u>thing</u>, I can root myself in facticity as firmly an a bureaucrat in

government service and strive to be a thing, a rock, a monument to what I am--

or I can exist as one aimlessly floating in a sea of Possibility. In this case

I exist only to transcend the moment and that which I am--but even then

facticity imprisons me (having learned its lessons well from the in-itself)

and drags me back into the past--I am chained to solidified moments of

becoming.

Bad faith is rooted precisely in this, the inability of the

for-itself to coordinate or even apprehend retreat from itself in <u>either</u>

direction, into transcendence or into facticity. For in the very moment either

of transcendence or of factic <u>thingness</u>, one is yanked back by the other

into the void of the for-itself, the <u>nothing</u> of possibility--for if the for-itself

<u>is</u> anything, it is surely its own possibilities, they swarm about consciousness

from the vacuum of the future, towards which each moment of becoming is

sucked in that same' heady rush." And yet the for-itself is certainly <u>not</u>

its possibilities, for the Possible by its very definition is that which one

is <u>not</u> but at the same time that which one is <u>capable</u> of becoming. This <u>not</u>

is not crystallized in a kind of "eternal" nothing, that is, the <u>not</u> that we

are not at this instant may be something that we <u>will be</u> in the future,

the not is slave to temporal subjectivity. More clearly, we see that the not
of the past (and therefore, of facticity) as in "Oh, I was not like that a
year ago," or "I did not live there in my childhood" is automatically
transcended by the factic state of our present, of our everyday lives—and
this from statements such as "Yes, I do live here, I am living here now."
Yet how does facticity transcend the not? Only "evanescently," as Sartre would
say—for at every moment I must constantly rejustify, refound my being-here
(more prosaically, my living in this or that place) I choose it, I take
total responsibility for my situation, for my situatedness. The non-being
of the past is momentarily transcended by my factic condition now, yet
this justification vanishes, the not evaporates as soon as I take responsibility
for it—the factic not of the past merges with the transcendent not of the
present, in the (earlier) sense that I am not living here after all, in that
I am not what I am.

The "evanescent not" is a metastable structure in as far as it is
subject to temporality. Even if the not of the present which allows me to
transcend the past demands immediate justification (for how "I have decided
not to be like that-which-I-was" or what "I conceive as this or that immediate
project in spite of this or that past contingency"), it must pale and
disappear in face of the future, in face of the possibilities for being. At best
I could incorporate this not into what might be perceived as a social role
or into a pattern of [bad faith] behavior (such as "I do not roller skate"
or "I make it a practice not to speak during the fish course")—but even
as such, I would have to constantly reestablish it, to reaffirm this
"negation in bad faith." And, of course, to deny the for-itself's ambivalence

towards this attempt at founding is to be in bad faith also: even a stasis
based on the Nothing is impossible since in some profound sense the for-itself
really is what it is (through facticity, _thatness_) and this _isness_ cannot
be transcended through any amount of not-roller-skating-or-talking, or
through the refusal to engage · in _any_ intentional act. (Note that the for-itself's
isness that behaviorally-constrained bad faith seeks to flee is also founded
on the Nothing--i.e., that which it would escape is _that_ the for-itself is _not_
what it is, (this is the dangerous thatness.) When I try to root myself in
not-loving-that-woman the emphasis is on the _loving_, not on the _not_: the _not_
is only a tool of bad faith here. In insisting on not-loving I refuse to admit
the possibilities for future love, I deny the chance that later on I will
transcend the isness of that _not_ and love her once again. Thus, the primitive
intentional act of loving-that-woman remains the same _now_ and in the future when,
perhaps, I shall say, "Oh, that was a long time ago, now things are different
and we are in love--" If I decide (choose) to love her once again, then the _not_
shall evaporate in the future, but the intentional object (that-woman) and act
(loving) are unaffected, they remain the same. But should I, in a year's time,
still refuse to love her, the _not_ evaporates _in any case_ before my eyes
when in a moment of doubt I ask myself, "Well, why don't I love her, why
can't I, Why do I refuse to?" It is the "evanescent not" that is brought into
question, not the intentional act. And, as Sartre maintains, the act of
questioning a being raises the possibility of its non-being (as "Are you
still reading?" raises the possibility that perhaps you have fallen asleep--
even when that contingency is absurdly remote!) thus the being of the _not_
within the intentional act is questioned, (in "not-loving-that-women")

and the possibilities are raised that the being-of-the-not is in fact

non-being, and that the not is actually not at all: and then that perhaps I do

love that-woman is revealed to me. Thus the not, when used as a tool of bad

faith, or even in a sincere belief ("Do I love that woman?" "I believe that

she has hurt me terribly [in as much as sincerity with respect to the past

is possible, it is possible to authentically reestablish oneself in relation

to it] and I do not believe I can still love her--) here the speaker may even

be speaking in good faith about the intellectualized being of possibilities

for-his-emotions) requires a perpetual refounding, reestablishment. We shall

say that the not in the above example (the not modifying a situated

temporalized intentional act) exists either in the mode of evanescence

(in doubt) or in the mode of becoming (in a structuration of justification).

Bad faith, when conceived as a lie to oneself, a lie between the

reflective and pre-reflective levels of apprehension attempts to enclose

"the duality of the deceiver and the deceived in one consciousness." Thus, for

example, the reflective consciousness might root itself in facticity and

say "I am a chemist, I am living here--" thus attempting to deny to a pre-reflective

apprehension of consciousness as consciousness that it is not what it is. Thus

in terms of consciousness or so-called rational thought the "denied portion"

of the self joins the not. In its most adamant and passionate cries that it

is what it is and nothing more, the for-itself denies (Freud might say,

"represses") this part of itself, this denied ("lacking") portion of the

for-itself joins the not, and thus a part of consciousness is not, it is not

what it is, therefore the for-itself is not-what-it-is: the individual is on the

most primordial level (i.e., not in terms of apprehension of the self in

"occupational terms," not in the sense of apprehension of a possible lover, but with respect to a vision of the self with respect to the for-itself's reflection of itself as consciousness) in bad faith.

What is this denied "part," or structure of the for-itself? It is the lacking that is in the mode of non-being—for instance, the for-itself's "missing [of the] in-itself (the lacked)" is denied in the movement of bad faith in the mode of facticity, since it conflicts with that project. An interesting criticism of Sartre here might be to ask whether this structure of the for-itself which is denied (therefore "negated," "lacking," therefore apprehended as not-what-it-is) is only not what it is in terms of of the self's apprehension of itself in bad faith (that is, including the reflective level). In other words, is this structure of consciousness objectively speaking, outside the "psychological" realm ("repression") of the programmer, really that which it is and nothing more? Then is it only the supression of itself into the nothing that makes it seem to be not what it is? Is the for-itself really just what it is and in my unwillingness to believe this I attempt to deny a part of this homogenous structure, is bad faith really a mere self-fulfilling prophecy?

First of all, we have to raise some questions concerning philosophical "access" to consciousness. If one could objectivize the self in a non-reductive way, then perhaps there could be such a thing as "consciousness-in-itself," instead of consciousness of consciousness. I am told that Husserl thought this was the "pure form" of consciousness—but still it seems that the very self-consciousness of the for-itself (if one accepts Sartre) always keeps us at a certain distance from consciousness, we are always a genative step away:

Consciousness as we know it can only be an apprehension of consciousness, at least at some subliminal (primordial) level we are always aware that we are thinking, that we are conscious as we slip into the future.

Marjorie Grene suggests that Sartre may be mistaken, that consciousness need not be self-conscious at some pre-reflective level. It may be self-conscious, she claims, but only if it chooses to think about itself (i.e., it may be self-conscious on a reflective plane). Yet this is no help to us really, whether a non-self-conscious consciousness would be in fact "unconscious" is not relevant here, since in discussing "access" to consciousness, we are conoting a reflection on, or about consciousness—these thoughts are clearly based on a reflective self-consciousness. "Objectively," what we seek is, to quote a Wallace Stevens poem, "Not Ideas about the Thing, but the Thing Itself." But with this objectivity comes a certain distancing, a dessication of consciousness—then I treat the for-itself as if it were consciousness of-another. But this introduction of distance, commencing (upsurging) when I try to treat my consciousness as if it belonged to the other (or as if it were intentionally towards another) is accompanied by an upwelling of nothing: The introduction of distance into consciousness is a negatité. In the attempt to declare consciousness not-mine, the not is intruded between myself and the "object" (consciousness), Nothing arises in between. And yet this "object" must be myself also! This consciousness is just as surely "mine" at the same time, it does not belong to another even if I treat it so in my dessicating objectifieation. Thus the attempt of certain disciplines (psychology, sociology) to treat consciousness "objectively," (as not-one's-own) reveals once again that consciousness is not what it is and is what it is not:

in intending consciousness-as-object I introduce the nothing, I induce a

distance "between" myself and it, while at the same time there can be no

distance, the not-mine here is purely fictive, a specious elaboration, a

ruse by the dessicated charms of radical objectification.

We are constantly left only with consciousness _of_ consciousness

(for even if there were a "tangible reality" which __was__ consciousness, what

would any thought about it, such as this paper, be but consciousness of

consciousness, an apprehension of the self but not the self [by] itself?--

thus I chase the "I" of chess games [_cogito_] and the Jakobsonian Lyric but I

constantly elude myself, I am lost amidst the glitter of __my__ interreflecting

linguistic baubles). Then our consciousness of consciousness, even at the

reflective level with all the anathematic tools of "Rational Negation," _is_

what consciousness __must be__, it appears to-be as close as we can get. (Perhaps

this is intuitively clear from the fact that as opposed to in positional

consciousness--there is no "ego" behind "the arrow of intentionality" for

the pre-reflective _cogito_: in a sense, at this level, we have eliminated

a confusing duality by concerning ourselves only with where the arrow

points--i.e., at consciousness itself.) Thus, even if I deny a structure

of the for-itself (eg., the being of the missing [of the] in-itself, the

structure of __lack__ which must be made to not-be in the course of the project

of bad faith) then since I __make__ my own consciousness, since I create what

it is and what it is not, (here, by denying it, negating it, refusing to

recognize what it is __not__--by chaining myself to the facticity of __chemist-ness__)

then this apprehension, this structuration of my own for-itself must be valid

since it is all that I have, there is no one who can tell me that "my consciousness"

(unfortunately, the same animal of "consciouness _of_ consciousness) is not "correct." How the for-itself builds itself by denying a structure of itself is how it can be what it is not and not what it is. Thus, paradoxically, bad faith can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, (thus this "criticism" turns out to consist of more Sartrian ammunition), from the begining the for-itself can be unwilling to believe that it is not what it is and can press this "pre-reflective argument" (in as much as it "is" at all) into Nothing by denying it--but in that very instant the for-itself fulfills the prediction of its own enemy by becoming what it is not (in as much as a structure of itself has joined the not) in the moment of asserting what it is, yes, in this instant it trips into bad faith. On one level, Sartre's "Faith of Bad Faith" consists precisely in this, the (pre-reflective and, ultimately, primordial) denial of bad faith as such is from the outset an act de la mauvaise foi.

A more troublesome (and yet, alas, almost wholly linguistic) problem in apprehending consciousness as consciousness of consciousness is that the fundamantal duality that the for-itself is not what it is and is that which it is not can only saturate its apprehension of itself. Crudely speaking, in order to prove anything pertaining to consciousness, this implies that it is only necessary to show that this "thing" is not what it is while having certain factic roots in Heidegger's "mundane everyday reality" which somehow imprison it in the obvious. This is an ungracious criticism perhaps, but it seems that there is some primordial fault with a philosophy which proves its points by disproving them. Possibly this retreat from the subjectivity of Heidegger's key-moods is a good thing (in terms of some type of universal reality--for a conscious man who has "never been bored"

is certainly as easy to imagine as a catatonic/rock that is exclusively
self-conscious) and yet it is worrisome none the less. Perhaps Sartre would
respond that the fissure in consciousness (the lack of the in-itself,
an originary nothing in the for-itself) so permeates all modes of thought,
and that the manifestations of the primordial differentiation of the for-itself
and the in-itself are so all-pervasive that all thought (as an intentional
act, or inner structuring of the for-itself) must by its very nature express
this duality, and if this leads at times to a rather peculiar logic then
this is a perfectly reasonable and organic reflection by the scaffolding
of cognition about the fault upon which it is built. In less structural
terms, our not being (not being what we are) leaves us with certain positive
exhortations: we are left with a responsibility for our own placement in the
world, we are cast adrift in the midst of boiling possibilities for change--
and if the freedom that is thus foisted upon us is at times an agonizing
one, then at least we are not chained to our [immediate] situation in
immanence, in any kind of static or (God forbid) rational incarceration
in Being: and thus it is the very fluidity of the human condition that is
its greatest anguish and its most compelling freedom.

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