

Bad Faith and the Other

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One of the characteristic features of Sartre's philosophical writing, especially in *Being and Nothingness*, is his use of extended narrative vignettes that immediately resound with the reader's own experience yet are intended to illustrate, perhaps also to support, complex and controversial theoretical claims about the structures of conscious experience and the shape of the human condition. Among the best known of these are his description of Parisian café waiters, who somehow contrive to caricature themselves, and his analysis of feeling shame upon being caught spying through a keyhole. There is some disagreement among commentators on Sartre's philosophy, however, over precisely what these two examples are intended to convey and over how they relate to one another. The waiter is usually taken to provide an example of bad faith, on grounds that he is taking himself to have a fixed nature that determines his actions, but this reading has recently been challenged. The description of shame is usually understood as an account of the revelation of the existence of another mind and as at the root of the conflictual basis of interpersonal relationships, though commentators are divided over just how this revelation is supposed to work and why it is supposed to lead to conflict.

My aim here is to defend and enrich the interpretation of these vignettes and their associated theories that I offer in my book, *The Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre*. On this reading, the waiter should indeed be understood as he usually has been, but the significance of this discussion of bad faith is much greater than has generally been recognised. For we should read the discussion of shame and interpersonal relations within the framework sketched in the discussion of the waiter and other characters in bad faith. Other people are hell, Sartre thinks, unless we abandon the project of bad faith. We should read *Being and Nothingness* not as a series of discussions of discrete issues, but rather as progressively elaborating a single view of the ontology of human existence and the ways in which we think and behave as a result of that ontology. The book is a work not only of phenomenological ontology, but also of existential psychoanalysis. It is intended not only to show what we most fundamentally are, but also to provide a cultural critique aimed at exposing the roots of many personal and social problems. Quite how we should understand this aspect of his work more than half a century later and from within a different linguistic community is a matter for careful consideration, since the question of the acuity of Sartre's cultural critique at the time is matched with the question of the significance of the cultural distance between Sartre and ourselves (see Leak 2010). Although we will not address this question here, we will see that readers of *Being and Nothingness* are apt to misunderstand the book if they overlook this cultural dimension of it.

Defending this view of the relation between bad faith and interpersonal relations, however, does require us to consider a different methodological concern rooted in the cultural aspect of Sartre's work. Critics have argued that some of the central stories that

Sartre presents are distorted by prejudice. Sartre has been accused of being unfair to waiters, for example, and indeed of showing through this vignette a condescending and demeaning attitude towards working people in general (Phillips 1981). Critics have denounced a similar vignette of his, in which a woman on a date wants simultaneously to enjoy her companion's advances while overlooking his intentions, as patriarchal fantasy (Moi 1994: 127-33; Doeuuff 1991: 72-3). Reviewing a recent production of Sartre's play *Kean*, an influential theatre critic declared that 'there is nothing remotely original in Sartre's ideas' on grounds that the play merely propounds 'the discredited myth of the actor as an echoingly empty vessel' (Billington 2007).¹ These criticisms are clearly misplaced: Sartre argues that people in general, not just particular groups of them, are guilty of the bad faith that these characters represent in their different ways. But these criticisms do raise a deeper question: just why does Sartre think he can surmise someone's motivations on the basis of brief observations of their behaviour across the café floor? According to his own phenomenology, the world as they experience and respond to it is not immediately accessible to anyone but themselves. According to his own theory of existential psychoanalysis, these motivations are accessible to others only through careful analysis of the whole range of their behaviour.

We will see that Sartre's use of these examples is compatible with his overall philosophical theory after all. He does not consider the overt behaviour of these characters to show that they are in bad faith, but rather considers it to be equally compatible with the recognition and affirmation of our lack of any fixed nature. Appreciating this point will help us to see where recent commentators have gone wrong

¹ This production opened on 30 May 2007 at the Apollo Theatre in London. It was booked to run for an initial twelve weeks but closed after seven.

in denying that the waiter is intended as an illustration of bad faith, but also to see what is right about their reasoning. Moreover, it will help us to see that Sartre's famously gloomy discussion of interpersonal relations cannot be arguing for the pessimistic view that human interaction is necessarily conflictual, but is rather intended to show that such frustrating and alienating relationships are all that is available within the project of bad faith, a theory that Sartre sketches in his account of the waiter and other characters in bad faith but only fully elaborates in the discussion of shame and the subsequent discussion of sexuality much later in the book.

One challenge to this reading of *Being and Nothingness* is presented by Matthew Eshleman's recent claim that the discussion of various characters in bad faith, the most detailed of which is the depiction of the waiter, would be much better placed towards the end of the book. To understand that chapter correctly, he argues, we need to read it in the light of the discussion of shame and interpersonal relations, since the theory of bad faith is dependent upon the outcome of that later discussion. Sartre would therefore have followed his method of progressive exposition more closely, on this reading, if he had established the theory of the look before introducing bad faith and the example of the waiter (see Eshleman 2008a; 2008b). In terms of our two vignettes, Eshleman's claim is that the earlier presupposes the later. This seems to challenge my view that the later should be understood within the framework sketched by the earlier, unless we are to accept both points and reject Sartre's existentialism as fundamentally circular.

Once we clarify the sense in which each vignette is dependent on the other, however, we will see that there is no circularity here at all. For we will see that the aspect of shame that is born of bad faith is distinct from the aspects of shame on which that bad faith

relies. Sartre would have made his position clearer, of course, had he discussed the two aspects of shame separately, but his running them together is no mere accident of exposition. It results from the overall structure of *Being and Nothingness*. Eshleman is right to draw attention to the way in which Sartre's phenomenological ontology progresses from the highly abstract to the fully concrete, and to point out that we are apt to misunderstand it unless we allow for the development of the central phenomenological and ontological concepts through this progression (2008a: 18; 2008b: 44-5; 2010: § 6). But we should also be aware of the further complication that this is accompanied throughout by a critical account of the ways in which this ontology is manifested in modern life. Borrowing terminology from Martin Heidegger, we can say that Sartre's discussion weaves a concern with the ontic facts of our current existence into his investigation of the ontological structures of our kind of existence (see Heidegger 1962: §§ 3-4).

To put it another way, *Being and Nothingness* is as much in dialogue with Sigmund Freud as it is with Edmund Husserl. The discussion of various characters in bad faith provides an excellent illustration of this. Sartre introduces these vignettes by saying that they will help to 'fix more exactly the conditions for the possibility of bad faith' (B&N: 78). This has led some commentators to argue that these vignettes are solely, or at least primarily, aimed at uncovering the ontological structures of the kind of existence we have. Rather than trying to present a complete picture and analysis of a pervasive psychological phenomenon, on this reading, Sartre is pursuing the much more limited aim of showing that certain actual behaviour patterns reveal something peculiar and fundamental about our existence, namely that we are what we are not and are not what we are (e.g. Eshleman 2008a: 16-18). Other commentators, however, point out that Sartre's concern

with the detail of bad faith pervades his philosophical and other writings throughout his career, which implies that detailing it is not a secondary or subsidiary issue in these vignettes but is part of a wider concern with bad faith itself (e.g. Santoni 2008: 36). This latter point seems right and should be made more broadly: Sartre's concern with existential psychoanalysis is closely bound up with his phenomenological ontology, but is not merely a means to it; his concern with ontology, after all, seems at least partly aimed at getting psychoanalysis right. It is no accident, therefore, that the two concerns are often woven together in a single discussion.

Bearing this in mind, we will see that Sartre describes two aspects of shame. One is the revelation of the existence of what Sartre calls 'the Other'. This is part of his phenomenological ontology: the claim that the structure of the experience essentially involves the Other is both phenomenological, since it is about the structure of experience, and ontological, since this experience reveals part of the structure of our existence. The second aspect is the ascription to another person of a particular kind of attitude towards me, one of seeing me as having some fixed characteristics that explain my current behaviour, even though I cannot know exactly which characteristics that person sees me as having. This aspect presupposes the first, since without the revelation of the Other there could be no question of ascribing anything to any other person. But this second aspect is neither an essential structure of feeling shame nor constitutive of my existence. It is merely the way in which our experience of the Other is played out within the project of bad faith.

Understanding the behaviour of the waiter in the light of this distinction is rather complicated. The issue is best approached through consideration of the recent claims that the waiter is not intended as an illustration of bad faith at all. For these readings emphasise the role of the waiter's clientele in the story. Customers demand that the waiter behaves in a certain way, writes Sartre, 'as if we lived in perpetual fear that he might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition' (B&N: 83). Two commentators have recently argued that the waiter Sartre describes in the chapter on bad faith does not take himself to have a fixed waiterly nature that determines his actions, but is rather acceding to the demands of the clientele in a superficial and ironic way in order to deny that he has such a nature. 'The waiter succeeds in rejecting the attempt to reduce him to nothing more than being a waiter', according to Robert Bernasconi, 'not by refusing the role, but by highlighting the fact that he is playing it to the point that he escapes it' (2006: 38).

There are two ways in which the waiter could be behaving as Bernasconi describes. He could be rejecting the attempt to identify him with being a waiter because he wants to identify himself with some other fixed nature, such as that of a writer or a musician, and emphasise that he is only working as a waiter to make ends meet. In this case, he would still be an example of bad faith, since he would still be taking himself to have some fixed nature. Alternatively, he could be rejecting the very idea of a fixed nature underlying his actions. Gary Cox interprets the passage in this second way: the waiter is intended to illustrate the correct attitude of authentic recognition and affirmation of one's true condition, he argues, since the exaggerated display is at once a rejection of the idea that

he has a fixed nature and an emphatic identification with the social position that he does in fact occupy (Cox 2006: 101-4, 137).²

Bernasconi and Cox are certainly right that Sartre's philosophy does not rule out the possibility of a waiter having precisely the motivations they give for his over-inflated routine. Towards the end of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre briefly characterises behaviour in the absence of bad faith as a form of play. 'The point of these remarks', he tells us, is 'to show us that in play ... the function of the act is to make manifest and to present to itself the absolute freedom which is the very being which is the person' (B&N: 602). A waiter 'playing at being a waiter' (B&N: 82), therefore, could be playing this role in an attitude of authenticity. Sartre does not claim, however, that this is the *only* way in which one can play (see his brief discussion at B&N: 601-2). So it seems that the very same behaviour could be engaged in with the aim of manifesting and presenting freedom or with the aim of denying that freedom and identifying with the role played; the difference here is not in the act but in the function of the act.

This might seem to leave us at an impasse: we have competing ways of understanding this waiter's behaviour and no way of deciding between them from our external perspective. Perhaps it is for this reason, however, that Sartre abruptly switches from a

² Anthony Manser has also argued that we should not understand the waiter as an illustration of bad faith. He is not denying the usual interpretation of the waiter's behaviour, however, but is rather arguing that this behaviour is a manifestation of what Sartre calls 'good faith', not what Sartre calls 'bad faith' (Manser 1987: 66). But this overlooks the fact that Sartre uses the term 'bad faith' to mean *both* the ascription of fixed natures to people *and* the more specific form of this that ascribes to oneself qualities that one does not in fact have. My claim here is only that the waiter is an example of bad faith in the broader sense. Manser shows only that he is not an example of bad faith in the narrower sense. For more on the various senses in which Sartre uses this phrase, see Webber 2009: chs 6 and 7.

third-personal description of ‘this waiter in the café’, in the midst of his initial description of this behaviour, to the first-personal account of ‘this person who I have to be (if I am the waiter in question)’ (B&N: 83). Shortly after this switch, Sartre refers to the motivations behind the behaviour. ‘What I attempt to realize’, he writes, ‘is a being-in-itself of the café waiter, as if it were not in my power to confer value and urgency upon my duties and the rights of my position, as if it were not my free choice to get up each morning at five o’clock or to remain in bed’ (B&N: 83).

We should continue to read this version of the waiter example, therefore, as presenting a way of denying one’s freedom to choose how to see and react to one’s situation. The vignette illustrates the strategy of seeing oneself as having a fixed nature that fits and explains one’s current condition, as possessing the being-in-itself, in this case, of a waiter. We should see this waiter as being in bad faith. But this is not the claim that one can recognise bad faith in the behaviour of a waiter: that behaviour itself is compatible with any of a number of motivations. It is rather the claim that bad faith is among these motivations and that in this passage bad faith is the motivation Sartre is interested in. By couching this part of the passage in the first person, Sartre signals that external observation of such behaviour alone will not settle the question of motivation. This issue is more acute in the case of the waiter than in the case of Sartre’s other examples, since only this one begins as a description of the behaviour of a real person. The other vignettes are more clearly fictional and therefore stipulative, allowing Sartre the novelist’s insight into his creations’ motivations.

Reading the waiter as wanting to deny his freedom to do otherwise, however, leaves us with a second puzzle: why does Sartre here draw attention to the expectations of the

customers if the waiter's motivation is independent of these expectations? In order to answer this question, we need to consider the reasons one might have for denying one's ability to change course in life. By this point in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre has not explained why we should want to deny our freedom. He has provided vivid examples, of course, in which people find their freedom disconcerting: confronted with the ability to destroy oneself, or with past resolutions that seem to provide no barrier to the actions they proscribe, or with our responsibility for the ways in which we see the world and behave in it, he argues, we become reflectively aware of our own freedom and this awareness is the feeling of anguish (see B&N: 53-69). But why should this be anguish? Why should it be unpleasant at all? Why should we not celebrate our freedom with all the openness, all the possibilities, and all the responsibility that it brings? What is more, there is another option open to the waiter that does not even involve asserting his freedom. Soon after the vignette of the waiter, Sartre provides an example of someone who refuses to accept the social identity that his friends confer on him in the light of his actions, a man who insists that he is not homosexual but merely sexually adventurous and unlucky enough not to have found the right woman (B&N: 86-7). The waiter could likewise insist that he is by nature something else entirely and only working at this job to make ends meet.

To see why Sartre casts the waiter as he does and to see why he mentions the expectations of the customers, we need to take seriously his claim towards the end of *Being and Nothingness* that all positive and negative feelings are manifestations of one's projects. 'Generally speaking there is no irreducible taste or inclination', Sartre tells us. 'They all represent a certain appropriative choice of being' (B&N: 636; see also B&N: 589-90). Negative feelings are triggered, he argues, by the awareness of anything that

itself challenges our deeply held beliefs and values, even when this challenge is wholly symbolic. Sliminess is abhorrent, for example, because it symbolically represents the impossibility of consciousness having the solidity of being-in-itself and therefore challenges our pretence to having fixed natures (B&N: 630-2). Sartre has here generalised to all affective states the theory he initially developed in studying a particular class of them, the emotions (see STE: Part 3). Whatever we think of his psychoanalysis of aversion, we cannot properly understand the role anguish plays in Sartre's philosophy unless we see it in this context: the reflective apprehension of freedom is anguish only because the object of that experience, the freedom of which one is directly aware in that experience, conflicts with some project one is pursuing. What project could this be? Clearly, a direct awareness of one's freedom would conflict with a project of denying one's freedom. Sartre thinks that such a project is widely pursued: central to his existential psychoanalysis is the idea that the denial of freedom is widespread or even ubiquitous. The aversive tenor of reflective awareness of freedom is explained by the subject of the experience aiming to avoid acknowledging that freedom.³ Anguish is a product of bad faith.

³ This is not to imply that Sartre thinks of anguish as a common phenomenon, even though he does think of bad faith as an ongoing uninterrupted project and as widespread. Anguish occurs when we become reflectively aware of our freedom, but most of our lives are spent unreflectively engaged in our activities; 'the most common situations of our life', he writes, 'do not manifest themselves to us through anguish because their very structure excludes anguished apprehension' (B&N: 59). What is more, we have organised our world in such a way that we do not often need to reflect on the range of possibilities that really confront us: 'there exist concretely alarm clocks, signboards, tax forms, policemen, so many guard rails against anguish', ploys to cover over the fact that I am 'the one who gives its meaning to the alarm clock, the one who by a signboard forbids himself to walk on the flower bed or on the lawn' (B&N: 63).

Part of the way in which bad faith perpetuates itself, therefore, is by making any evidence of freedom unpleasant and so unlikely to be faced. Anguish is thereby a sustaining cause of bad faith, but since it results from bad faith it cannot also be an initiating cause of bad faith. So we are left with the question of where bad faith comes from in the first place. Some commentators argue that Sartre considers bad faith to result from the structures of our ontology. Lacking a fundamental nature, writes Ronald Santoni, 'human reality' as Sartre understands it 'is immediately and perpetually disposed to flee from its nothingness, to fill its emptiness, to become *something*' (2008: 30). An 'original or primitive ontological bad faith', he claims, which is 'congenital' or 'natural', underpins any particular projects of bad faith (2008: 31; see also Thomas 2010: § 1). Indeed, towards the beginning of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre does say that bad faith 'is essential to human reality' (B&N: 71). Nearer the end of the book, he reiterates this when he argues that 'human reality is the desire for being-in-itself' (B&N: 586). He does think that the structure of 'human reality' involves the desire to have a fixed nature, the desire for being-in-itself, the desire that drives the project of bad faith.

We should not conclude from this, however, that Sartre thinks of this as part of the ontology of our existence. For that would contradict his claim that we can 'radically escape bad faith' through the 'self-recovery of a being that was previously corrupted' that he calls 'authenticity' (B&N: 94 n9). We should rather bear in mind that Sartre is offering not only a phenomenological ontology of existence but also an existential psychoanalysis of the way in which that ontology is played out in our culture. We should not take his term 'human reality' to denote the deep and necessary structures of our existence, but rather to refer to the whole of our current socially structured existence built upon that

ontology; it is an ontic term, not an ontological one.⁴ He is claiming in these passages, therefore, that bad faith is endemic in the lives of people in his culture even though it is not necessitated by the basic structures of human existence. Far from being an occasional act of self-deception, it is part of the very fabric of everyday life as he sees it. But this is only contingently the case: bad faith is the corruption from which authenticity is recovery.

If bad faith is not a necessary result of ontology and is not originally a response to anguish, then where does it come from? It would seem plausible to suggest that one initially understands people in terms of their fixed natures as a result of upbringing and social pressure. Having learned to see people in general this way, one sees oneself as having some particular fixed nature or other. One attempts to discover who one truly is, while skewing the evidence to ensure that one does not find anything one does not want to find. Since other people generally see the world this way, moreover, the other people one encounters are likely to see one as having some fixed nature or other. Bernasconi, Cox, and Eshleman are right to emphasise the role of other people's expectations and demands in Sartre's illustrative examples of bad faith. For faced with such view of oneself, one must either accept the nature they ascribe, reject the nature they ascribe, or reject the very idea of a fixed nature altogether. In his discussion of various characters in bad faith, Sartre presents the waiter as an example of the first response and the unhappy homosexual as an example of the second. The third response, of course, is an authentic affirmation of the true human condition. But this is likely to be unusual, even though

⁴ For a more detailed argument in favour of distinguishing the 'human reality' Sartre discusses from our basic ontological structures in this way, see Webber 2009: ch. 8, esp. 107-110.

Sartre ultimately thinks it best, since it runs against the demands, expectations, and teachings of one's society.

As with everything else that one encounters, Sartre argues, this nature that others ascribe to me cannot simply be something I am aware of as it is in itself. Rather, it is through the lens of my projects that this nature appears to me in this or that way. I may be aware of it 'in fury, hate, pride, shame, disheartened refusal or joyous demand', or indeed in any of 'an infinity of ways', depending on how that nature fits with my conception of myself and with my aims in life (B&N: 550). In becoming aware of this nature that other people confer upon me, therefore, I subsume it within the projects that I pursue. In so doing, I 'assume' that nature even if I aim to deny it. This is what Sartre calls 'interiorisation': taking up some aspect of the world as I find it, and as it has been constructed by other people, within the ambit of my projects, which does not require any explicit decision to do so (see B&N: 544, 547-50). Authenticity would involve interiorising such natures within the project of affirming my genuine condition of lacking any such nature. Bad faith, on the other hand, subsumes the nature others ascribe to one either through affirming it or through denying it in favour of some other nature.

Bad faith, therefore, is a social disease rather than an individual failing, in Sartre's view, and is an ongoing condition rather than a sporadic activity. But this cannot be fully explained or justified until the end of *Being and Nothingness*, by which point Sartre has elaborated enough of his phenomenological ontology to be able to detail his notion of existential psychoanalysis. Since the waiter's project of bad faith is originally motivated, and perhaps also partly sustained, by the expectations other people have of him, it seems that Eshleman is right: explaining the waiter's behaviour requires reference to his

understanding that other people see him as having some fixed nature or other. If this is right, then how could it also be the case that the experience of shame that grounds this understanding is itself a manifestation of bad faith?

To answer this question, we need to distinguish two things that Sartre considers to be implied by the experience of shame. One of these is that another person is looking at me and categorising me as having certain fixed properties, such as being a snoop or a voyeur, on the basis of my behaviour, even though I cannot know exactly what properties they ascribe to me. The feeling of shame implies that this is occurring, but that implication might be false; there may even be nobody there at all (B&N: 300-1). Shame also implies a dimension of my existence that Sartre calls my 'being-for-others'. This implication is infallible; my being-for-others is essential to shame. Shame is therefore a genuine revelation, a discovery of an aspect of my existence that is not manifested in my absorbed engagement in the world. Shame presents me with the very fact that an external perspective can be taken on me, that my existence is not simply my awareness of a world but is also my appearance in the world. In addition to my experience 'on the inside', to put it another way, there is how I look 'from the outside'.

Interpretation of this aspect of Sartre's philosophy is particularly delicate, partly because Sartre uses the term 'being-for-itself' sometimes to mean one's engaged unreflective consciousness of the world and other times to mean the being that is conscious of the world in this way. He has been understood as claiming that conscious experience of the world is ontologically dependent upon being-for-others (e.g. Gardner 2005: esp. § 1). On the other hand, he has been claimed to view being-for-others as no part of the ontological structure of the individual at all (e.g. Santoni 2008: 26-7). To render the

account coherent, however, we should read such claims as that ‘being-for-others is not an ontological structure of the For-itself’ (B&N: 306) as asserting the independence of *one’s consciousness* from one’s being-for-others, while reading such claims as that ‘we are talking of objective characteristics which define me in my being-for-others’ (B&N: 545) as describing the ontology of *the individual one is*.⁵ My engaged experience of the world and my appearance in the world are therefore, for Sartre, independent aspects of my existence. I am ‘simultaneously for-itself and for-others’ but neither of these aspects can be derived from the other one (B&N: 306).

The experience of shame, Sartre writes, reveals ‘that our being along with its being-for-itself is also for-others’; shame is ‘the cogito a little expanded’ which ‘reveals to us as a fact the existence of the Other and my existence for the Other’ (B&N: 306). It is not just my ‘being-for-others’ that is revealed, then, not just ‘my existence for the Other’, but the very existence of ‘the Other’ itself. But this does not mean that shame infallibly reveals

⁵ There is something puzzling about first of these quotations: the term ‘pour-soi’ is here capitalised in the original French edition (342), but not in the French edition with corrections by Arlette Elkaim-Sartre (321), though ‘For-itself’ remains capitalised in the English edition corrected by the same person. By capitalising some but not all uses of this term, Sartre clearly means to indicate that he is using it in more than one sense. Perhaps the capitalisation is intended to indicate the entity that has being-for-itself (i.e., the person) whereas the absence of the capital is intended to indicate the kind of being it has (i.e., consciousness of the world). Alternatively, perhaps the capitalisation is intended to indicate its use in contrast with his other capitalised term ‘the Other’, in which case, if I am right about the meaning of ‘the Other’, it would seem to indicate the perspective one has on the world as opposed to a perspective not one’s own. To decide on the meaning of the capitalisation directly, of course, we would need to be able to distinguish intended instances of it from occasional slips of the pen, but the puzzle over the sentence quoted casts doubt over whether we can do this with confidence. This capitalisation therefore fails to communicate the distinction it is intended to mark. Perhaps he should just have told us, just as he does tell us what some of his parentheses mean (e.g. B&N: 10, 305).

that someone is watching me. For the same experience can occur when I hear a rustle of branches and wrongly assume there is somebody there or when soldiers creep past a farmhouse they do not realise is empty. In such a case, 'the Other is present everywhere, below me, above me, in the neighbouring rooms, and I continue to feel profoundly my being-for-others' (B&N: 301). Mark Sacks reads this as claiming that the experience reveals absent human beings and hence the 'fundamental presence' of people in general. 'What I am experiencing', he writes, 'is that the world contains some such persons' (2005a: 292). This might seem rather mysterious: could I not have the same experience if, unbeknownst to me, all other people had been destroyed in some recent apocalyptic calamity? Given this possibility, we should say that other people are present in such experiences only in the sense that when one imagines an external observer one imagines a specific sort of external observer, such as a member of one's society or an enemy soldier, and this is informed by one's experience of other people (see Zahavi 2010: § 3).⁶

If experience can manifest the Other without there being any other persons present or even in existence, we cannot understand the term 'the Other' here as referring primarily to other people. 'What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches crackling behind me is not that there is someone there', Sartre writes; 'it is that I am vulnerable, that I can be hurt, that I occupy a place ... in short, that I *am seen*' (B&N: 282). What is

⁶ As it stands, this discussion of the writings of Sebastian Gardner and Mark Sacks in this area does not do justice to either their motivations or their arguments, since they make the claims that I discuss here in the context of articulating careful analyses of Sartre's critique of solipsism, an aspect of Sartre's philosophy distinct from, though closely related to, the issue I am discussing, and their discussions of this are part of their wider interest in the transcendental aspects of his philosophy. While there is much to recommend these discussions, I do not fully agree with the accounts they give of Sartre's response to the problem of solipsism. Proper discussion of this disagreement, however, is for another time.

apprehended immediately, that is to say, is that my own perspective on the world is not the only one, and that I am an entity in the world as it is seen from such a perspective other than my own. The primary meaning of Sartre's term 'the Other' (*l'Autrui*) is consciousness of the world which is not my own consciousness of the world. This is why the Other is necessarily revealed along with my being-for-others (*être-pour-autrui*). Although he often uses the term 'the Other' to refer to another person, then, this is a derivative usage intended to highlight that the other person has a perspective that is distinct from one's own pre-reflective engagement in the world. Shame infallibly reveals that not all experience of the world need be my experience of the world, and thereby that there can be experiences of the world that include me as an external object of experience, but it does not infallibly reveal that anyone exists who has such experiences.

In revealing that I am an entity in the world seen from other perspectives, moreover, shame thereby reveals that I am my body. Although I am aware from the inside that I have a particular relationship with my body that I do not have with other bodies, that I can move my limbs directly but only move chairs and tables indirectly, this is not sufficient to reveal to me that I *am* that body, as Sacks points out (2005a: 286). What is manifest to the Other is not simply what my body is doing, but what I am doing. This requires that I am that body. 'It is that identity that is established, with all the immediacy of a blush' when I am caught spying through the keyhole, writes Sacks; 'what they have caught at it is not my body, but me, my self' (2005a: 287). For myself, within my own experience, Sartre claims, 'I shall remain forever a consciousness', whereas for the Other 'I have an outside' since for the Other 'I am seated as this inkwell is on the table' or 'I am leaning over the keyhole as this tree is bent by the wind' (B&N: 286). My body's posture is my posture; what the Other sees is me.

We are now in a position to see just which aspects of Sartre's account of shame are presupposed by his account of the behaviour of the waiter in bad faith. For the waiter presents himself as 'a being-in-itself of the café waiter' through his actions (B&N: 83). This requires that he understands his actions as *presenting himself*, rather than simply being effects that his decisions have on this particular body, and that he understands that there is an *external perspective* on the world to which such actions can present himself. This is rooted in the experience of shame. The assumption that people are watching him and are ascribing to him a fixed nature, on the other hand, is part of the project of bad faith and therefore is not something revealed in shame. Of course, some of the waiter's behaviour that Sartre describes will occur in the absence of any other person, such as his getting out of bed in the morning, sweeping the café before it is open, setting the coffee pot going. His clientele need not actually be present and demanding him to behave in this way, therefore. But even in their absence, he is acting under the abstract gaze of the Other which, as we have seen, will not be devoid of expectations and motivations but will rather have precisely those the waiter expects his potential witnesses to have. His absent clientele haunt the closed café.

We should agree, therefore, that the vignette of the waiter early in *Being and Nothingness* cannot be fully understood except in the context of aspects of our experience that Sartre does not explain until much later in the book through his analysis of shame. Together with the observation that Sartre's discussion of anguish cannot be fully appreciated except in the context of his existential psychoanalysis of feelings in general, which also appears towards the end of the book, this might seem to show that the waiter vignette is, in Eshleman's words, a 'misplaced chapter' that would be much better placed towards

the end of *Being and Nothingness*. What this suggestion overlooks, however, is that much of Sartre's discussion in the book is to be understood within the framework of the theory of bad faith that is sketched in the example of the waiter and the other examples he places alongside it. Unless we read that early chapter as setting the context for the subsequent discussion, we cannot understand why the feeling of shame should involve the assumption that the other person is ascribing to one a fixed nature.

Moreover, given Sartre's theory that feelings are a function of the projects we are pursuing, the experience of the Other would not be aptly described as *shame* unless some dimension of it conflicted with some project. What is it about the revelation that I am my body and can be seen from perspectives other than my own that conflicts with my projects? Sartre does not give us any reason to think that we are each pursuing a project that is directly challenged by these aspects of the experience. But the ascription to me of a fixed nature which is outside of my control, on the other hand, clearly conflicts with the project of seeing myself as having a particular kind of fixed nature. So it seems that we cannot understand why this experience should have a negative affective tenor unless we see it as an experience occurring within the project of bad faith.

Thus it seems that Sartre's account of the alienation felt under the gaze of another person, the consequent claim that conflict is at the heart of intersubjectivity, and the conclusion that sexual and other interpersonal relationships are doomed, are all strangely undermotivated unless we read him as describing awareness of the Other from within the project of bad faith. Sartre's account of our relations with one another is an account of the lives to which we are condemned by the project of bad faith. Reading the book in this way makes sense of Sartre's recommendation of a radical conversion to authenticity:

such a conversion will liberate us, he thinks, from the difficulties detailed throughout *Being and Nothingness*. If this is the right way to read Sartre, then the discussion of the waiter is not misplaced at all: its early position is crucial to the argument of the book as a whole.

If we are to make sense of *Being and Nothingness* as a whole, therefore, the discussion of shame should be understood in the context of the theory of bad faith. We have already seen that the theory of bad faith depends in part on the phenomenological analysis of shame. So there is a threat here of conceptual circularity: if neither bad faith nor shame can be explicated without reference to the other one, then it seems that Sartre has not offered us a coherent theory after all. However, this threat is only apparent. For the aspect of the discussion of shame that presupposes the account of bad faith exemplified by the waiter is not one of the aspects presupposed by that account. The waiter vignette presupposes the waiter's awareness of his being-for-others, of the gaze of the Other, and that his actions present himself to that gaze. These aspects of Sartre's keyhole spying example do not presuppose the theory of bad faith: they are essential to the phenomenology of shame entirely independently of whether one is in bad faith or not. What does depend on being in bad faith is the assumption that the other person will be ascribing to one a fixed nature. Sartre sees this assumption as underlying the alienation that he finds in our experience of shame and the conflict that he finds in our interpersonal relationships. While this assumption is at the heart of the project of bad faith, it is not derived from the experience of shame. That these aspects of his discussion of shame need to be teased apart is a result of his weaving his phenomenological analyses of the essential structures of experiences together with his existentialist critique of his surrounding culture.

The central tenet of Sartre's account of interpersonal relations, therefore, is internal to his theory of bad faith, while that account of bad faith relies on other aspects of his analysis of shame. Although there is no conceptual circularity here, there might seem to be an explanatory circularity. If social expectation is part of the causal explanation of bad faith, then how can it be that one's view of other people as ascribing one a fixed nature is itself a product of bad faith? To answer this, we need to distinguish the general background view that people in one's culture tend to see one another's behaviour as manifesting fixed dispositional properties from the particular occurrent belief that this other person or these other people now see this behaviour of mine as manifesting my fixed nature. The latter can be a product of bad faith while the former is not. Indeed, if bad faith is indeed part of one's cultural fabric, then one will come to learn that people generally see one another this way as a result of growing up within that culture and relying on the people around one to help one to make sense of the world (see B&N: 544-5). Bad faith itself, of course, is not the recognition that people see one another this way; it results from the interiorisation of this view of people into one's own outlook.

Once this view of behaviour is adopted, once one just sees behaviour as clearly manifesting fixed dispositional properties, one is liable to make the assumption that any given observer will read fixed dispositions off one's own behaviour. What is more, any evidence that behaviour should not be viewed in this way will, according to Sartre's theory of aversion, be experienced negatively; the reflective apprehension of freedom will be anguish. Relations with other people will be tainted with alienation due to one's realisation that other people's understanding of one's fixed nature is beyond one's own control or even knowledge. If the view that people manifest fixed natures in their

behaviour is culturally pervasive, moreover, then it would hardly be surprising that most people end up with this outlook. Bad faith would be the default position for anyone growing up in such a culture, though its perpetuation as one's outlook would involve persistence in trying to portray oneself as having some particular fixed nature, a project occasionally challenged by the awareness of one's freedom to start behaving in a whole different way.⁷

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