

Review of: "A Philosophical Analysis of Sartre's Critique of Freud's Depth-psychological Account of Self-Deception"

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The article concentrates in a few paragraphs the debate on a complex issue of great significance in Sartre's philosophy. In simple and accessible language, after discussion, the author defends the Freudian distinction between unconscious and conscious as superior and more in line with the results of science than Sartre's elimination of it and its replacement by a consciousness that is aware of its knowledge at all times. Such a task is successfully accomplished. I think his premises and reasoning support his conclusion well. It is recommendable as an introduction to this interesting issue. However, if his conclusion is correct, his premises are not necessarily true. They are at least worth discussing. Nor am I sure that Sartre's conception is in contradiction with experience and scientific findings, as the author suggests in his conclusion, although I recognise that sometimes it is simply more a question of which science one turns to. Therefore, I think it is interesting to open the debate on the following points:

- I think it is necessary to stress that Sartre is trying to eliminate duality, bad faith does not consist of a subject who deludes himself as if he were splitting himself, or as if he were holding and uttering logically contradictory beliefs (propositions). Rather, it is the (unitary) life project that the subject gives himself that constitutes bad faith: 'there must be 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' (Sartre, BN, p. 49). Such a project implies giving the subject as essential a nature that is not his own, such as being inferior and showing it by failing in his attempts to perform tasks that are beyond his capacities. In this sense, bad faith is a large part of life's choices (Sartre, BN, p. 50). That project is a transcendence that is apprehended as facticity (Sartre, BN, p. 56). As the project is bad faith, there are not two contradictory beliefs, there is a being that is the consciousness that gives itself a being that is not, a being that wants to fix as its being (facticity) what it is not (transcendence): 'the ambiguity necessary for bad faith comes from the fact that I affirm here that I am my transcendence in the mode of being of a thing' (Sartre, BN, p. 57). The ontological character of Sartre's philosophy seems otherwise to become an analysis of contradictory propositions.

-It must be said that as the review above points out, Sartre's existentialist preoccupation brings him constantly face to face with moral questions and at its root the cancellation of the Freudian unconscious is motivated by maintaining the moral responsibility of the subject, for if the unconscious is considered to explain conscious behaviour, given that the former is inaccessible to the subject, the latter seems to be relieved of moral responsibility for his behaviour. Thus, certainly, the substitution of the unconscious by a reflective consciousness is of great importance for Sartre's thought. That pre-reflective consciousness is consciousness and not unconscious is motivated by moral concern but has also been proven

by Gestalt (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945, p. 4), and cognitive science (R. Hanna and M. Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Actions*, 2009, p. 32). The fact that all reflective consciousness presupposes a pre-reflective consciousness can be proven by an experience of everyday life as, for example, that in order to be able to focus perceptual consciousness a background consciousness is required, so that the object we perceive always appears under a background. This happens when we look at an object, for example, the lamp in front of me can only appear in my visual field because I am aware of the background in which it appears. We cannot perceive this background directly (to focus on it would be to turn it into an object), but this does not mean that we cease to be aware of it and we could move on to focus on another different object that crosses quickly and slightly through it, for example, my cat crossing now in the perceptual field that allowed me to perceive the lamp. Without that background of which we are aware, there would be no perceptual object. According to Sartre, the same could apply to the pre-reflective consciousness we have of our life projects.

- Finally, I think it can be argued that while Sartre grants consciousness to be pure freedom, consciousness is always bound to facticity; this is important, because the author of the article seems to understand that the Sartrean subject can freely change his project, and yet such a possibility always depends on a situation in which consciousness apprehends a certain degree of resistance to its project, which can turn into a change of project if it has lost the meaning it had. That is to say, if consciousness is free and changes its project at will, such a change, however, cannot be arbitrary, it depends on facticity and its apprehension as meaningful by consciousness. This means that it can only change its project when it no longer makes sense to the subject, and not arbitrarily as if it could decide to be this or that because nothing makes sense anyway.