Hell Is Other People:
A Sartrean View of Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

This presentation focuses upon the critical consideration of the possibilities and limitations of therapeutic interventions designed to reduce, remove or resolve conflict from the standpoint of a number of key ideas presented in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre's (in)famous statement that "hell is other people" is considered as a central aspect of the therapeutic relationship itself, whether viewed from the standpoint of the client or the therapist. Further, Sartre's descriptive notions of being-in-itself, being-for-itself, and being-for-others are reconsidered as useful means with which to investigate the varied disturbances presented by conflict issues. The paper argues that the application of Sartre's ideas leads the practice of psychotherapy away from notions of a dissolution of human conflict and, instead, places such dilemmas within the confines of more adequate possibilities of "living with conflict" in one's relations with self and others. The presentation concludes with an overview of an innovative training programme developed and run by a team of psychotherapists and lawyers based at the School of Psychotherapy and Counselling at Regent's College, London, UK which provides trainees with a Sartrean-inspired existential approach to mediation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

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Let us all step into Hell.

Three people whose names are Garcin, Estelle and Inez have been imprisoned in a single room without windows, furnished with Second Empire furniture in a condition of permanent artificial light and with a door which is shut and usually locked but also at unforeseen moments can be opened. They can never sleep, they have occasional visions of the continuing lives and judgements of those whom they have left behind on earth, they can never blink their eyes, nor can they die.

Garcin is the editor of a pacifist newspaper in Brazil. He is desperate to convince the other two in the room that he died too soon, apparently in an act of cowardice, but that, had he lived longer it would have become evident that he was in fact a hero.

Estelle, a vain and attractive young woman, makes it clear that she is willing to allow Garcin to seduce her, but only in exchange for his overlooking the fact that she murdered her child for the sake of a man's attentions.

Inez, an older woman who is also a lesbian, continually points out to both Garcin and Estelle that they are, respectively, a coward and a murderer. At the same time, she is desperate for Estelle to acknowledge her not only as an object of attraction but of superior attraction to Garcin – something that Estelle is unable – or unwilling – to do.

Garcin and Estelle cannot consummate their passion because Inez is ever-present to taunt and make fun of them. At the same time, Inez wishes that Garcin could simply disappear so that Estelle's need for love and approval will be focused upon her. And Estelle, meanwhile, hunts in vain for a mirror so that she can apply her makeup properly and so ensure the attractiveness of her appearance – which is, for her, the confirmation of her identity.

This circle of mutual anguish, shame, accusation and counter-accusation, denial and objectification is repeated over and over again throughout Jean-Paul Sartre's play, Huis Clos (which has been translated into English as either In Camera or No Exit) (Sartre, 1989).

At its conclusion, after various individual truths are revealed and confronted, all three characters resign themselves to the truth: "So this is hell… you remember all we were told about the torture-chambers, the fire and brimstone, the burning oil. Old wives tales! There is no need for red-hot pokers. Hell is… other people" (Sartre, 1989: 190).

Well, as you may have ascertained by now, it must be said that Sartre's view of human relationships is not exactly optimistic. To be more accurate, it is fundamentally pessimistic. What value might such an outlook that is so closely associated with by now somewhat discredited 1950's Parisian Left Bank Gitanes-smoking doom and gloom intellectuals (so "Old Europe", as George W Bush would say) have to offer the 21st century with regard to issues surrounding conflict resolution in psychotherapy or mediation or in its wider world-arena meaning? Well, as one who has straddled his whole life between "old" and "new" worlds, I want to say: "A good deal, I believe". This talk is my attempt to provide an argument in defence of this assertion.

Sartre's most fundamental assumption rests upon the hypothesis that each of us is faced with a basic and inescapable conflict. This conflict is the continuous tension between what might be labelled as our actuality and our facticity. Sartre's own terms are "being-for-itself" (pour-soi) and "being-in-itself" (en-soi) (Sartre, 1958), but I believe that the terms actuality and facticity may make it easier to grasp his ideas.

Our actuality is the expression of all that is possible for us to be as human beings. It presents us with the freedom to be as we can be within the wide-ranging limits of our possibilities. Our actuality permits us to transcend the definitions, labels and habitual stances and attitudes with which we have cloaked ourselves. It is our actuality that offers us the means to remain open to the potential and possibility of our existence. This is all very nice. However, there is a price for this actualising freedom: it is nothing less than the experience of anguish. Anguish of what? Well, most basically, the loss of all substantive meaning. What Sartre is arguing here is that through our actuality we become aware that there is no fixed, reliable, certain objective criterion or value upon which we can base our chosen meaning as to what, how and who to be. Nothing – no rule, no law, no god, no scientific fact. Nothing outside of our being is responsible for any and all emergent meaning given to our existence. For Sartre, our actualising freedom and choice do not lie at the event level itself – we cannot control nor truly initiate events. Rather, our freedom and choice become most apparent when our stance to "what is there", what has emerged at an event-level, is to embrace it, accept it, "say yes" to it rather than adopt a stance that pretends and deludes itself into believing that "something else is there for me". Sartre's argument brings to light something that most other approaches have missed: The price of complete actualisation is meaning itself. Psychotherapists have been particularly naïve in taking this implication on board. They have sought to convince themselves and their clients that actualisation and meaning go hand in hand. As usual, it is their clients who have known better. In this Sartrean understanding of actualisation, no meaning remains, or is possible. All is flux, chaos, absurdity.

So what about meaning? Where does meaning exist in the Sartrean view of things? Meaning exists as a property or expression of our facticity. It is through facticity that we approach being from the standpoints of objectivity, necessity and external or permanent truths, dogmas, facts, meanings. Our facticity continually moves us toward encasing and capturing our actualising freedom – essentialising it through what might be seen as the objectifying realities of life – our bodies, our culture, our place within an historical framework. Our facticity soothes our anguish, removes many of the burdens of actuality, provides us with meaning, or at least the possibility of construing some lasting, externally-founded meaning. But the move toward facticity also has its price: If facticity permits us to escape the anguish of freedom, we are, as a result, brought to the experience of shame that is provoked by our willingness to adopt a servile unfreedom.

As an expression of facticity, being becomes meaningful. All meaning directs us toward facticity: a constructed reality, an interpreted world made up of "self", "others", "scientific laws", "religious truths" and so forth. But for Sartre, our very search for and reliance upon meaning belittles us, makes us less-than the being we are in actuality. It is this awareness, available to us all, that provokes our shame. In embracing facticity, and all the secure, if limiting, meanings that it permits, we deny our actuality.
(Move next sentence up)For Sartre, we are nothing pretending to be something. And therein lies the source to all our conflicts.

Sartre is not suggesting that facticity is bad and actuality is good. They both co-exist. Even so, while we can speak fairly knowledgeably of facticity, give it defining shape and substance, we cannot speak so directly of actuality since to name it will capture it and place it within facticity. At the same time, if we become aware of our actuality, it is precisely through or via our facticity. Without facticity we would not have the awareness of actuality. We might be actual, but in a pre-conscious way which is not open to human beings.

However, what is crucial for Sartre is that our very awareness of, and response to, this personal or subjective conflict does not arise as a result of some internalised, isolated, intrapsychic mechanism of tension as might be suggested by Freud and all his subsequent followers. Rather it is an inter-relational consequence. For Sartre, self and other are inextricably bound together in an inescapable relationship. If my life-projects are attempts to fulfil my actuality, the presence and demands of others serve to remind me of my facticity.

As such, Sartre argues that the dilemma we all face is that each of us is locked in a continual and unceasing struggle with others. This struggle is no minor thing: It is the basis to each person's being confronted with his or her actuality and facticity.

When two people meet, a struggle begins between each person's desire is to be perceived as a transcendent, actualising subject and to avoid being captured as a defined and limited factual object. Each person wants the same and fears the same. And each places the outcome of the struggle, be it success or failure, in the hands, or more accurately, in the gaze of the other.

As a way of encapsulating this, Sartre describes a person in a corridor outside a closed door who is irresistibly tempted, whether because of curiosity, jealousy or vice, to look through its keyhole. As the person bends down he is riveted by what is opened to his gaze (it is another undressing while oblivious to his gaze) and experiences himself as pure actuality – every possibility set by the circumstance is open to the one who gazes. His power, within such a

situation, is overwhelming. He is at one with his behaviour, the subject of his own story.

But, unfortunately, this situation will not last. Taking on the role of the person peeking through the keyhole, Sartre writes: "But all of a sudden, I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me. What does this mean?" (Sartre , 1958: 260).

At this moment, the gazing person experiences a rapid shift of perception and finds himself having a far more disagreeable experience. He is now embarrassed, uncomfortable, shamed. What has happened? He has suddenly found himself to be the object of someone else's gaze and is now conscious of the way in which the onlooker sees him. Not only might he come to the conclusion that he looks like a "peeping tom", the other's gaze shows him that he has become one. He has been impaled upon this label and categorisation via the transformative power of the other's opinionated gaze.

So… What happens to the person at the keyhole? This person, we are told, will suffer the objectifying shame of the other's gaze to be sure, but even so, he will later go away and rely upon some form of bad faith – perhaps a lie or self-deception of some sort or other, perhaps the suppression of the event, perhaps a transformation of its experienced meaning into something quite different, perhaps an excuse or other – that will explain away the objectifying experience of the other's gaze. Perhaps he will even convince himself that it was the other all along who had intended to gaze into the keyhole and that his own act had prevented a truly perverse or disgusting or violent scenario from having occurred. As such, he might further convince himself of how wise, or forward-thinking, or even heroic, if misunderstood, he actually is.

Given the circumstances of such self-other relations, what way out is there? For Sartre, there is none. Of course.

The other steals my projects and gives them another meaning. The other re-writes my scripts. The other seeks to rid me of my freedom. Think carefully on this. Is this not what, for many of us, psychotherapy is both for and about? To create new meanings, novel narratives. Fine, but at what price? Could Sartre actually be correct in asserting that the price of such possibly caring acts on the part of 'the other' who is the therapist is the client's actualising freedom itself?

Scary thought. But let us not worry over psychotherapy for the moment. Sartre's concerns are much wider than this. How do we respond to the other's attempts to reshape and redefine and transform us? Well, in brief, we retaliate, we make attempts to disorient or displace the other by adopting various attitudinal and behavioural stances. Here are some of the most typical and obvious:

First, we might adopt a masochistic stance. In order to be approved of by the other, and in that way perhaps retain some of my actualising project, I must attract the other's attention in such a way that the other experiences me as an object of interest or desire. For instance, I might compose a lecture that the other will find interesting or amusing or befuddling and, thereby, his or her gaze will be distracted from, or miss entirely, some of my other, perhaps more pertinent, actualising projects. Even if I achieve this, however, I become a slave to the other's master. I become a thing – no matter how interesting or wise or attractive, still a thing - for the other and thereby limit my actualising possibilities.

Alternatively, I might adopt a sadistic stance. In order to reduce the power of the other in my project, I can reverse the masochistic scenario and try to ensure that I perceive the other as an object for my wants and desires. Even better, I can try to get the other not just to accept this strategy of objectification, but to actually be grateful for

it and beg me for more. Much of psychotherapy utilises this approach to some degree. However, the success of this strategy is unlikely without my resorting to some form of coercion or even, at the extreme, some sort of violence, be it physical, emotional, sexual or verbal. I might, for instance, create the means whereby I convince the other to attend my talk because in some way or other it will be seen by him or her to be important, desirable, even necessary to do so. If I can succeed sufficiently, I might also convince the other that it is both valuable and pleasurable for him or her to attempt to make sense of what I say, to view and value me as some expert, some man of wisdom, some superior being. Best of all, if the other experiences confusion by what I say or do, he or she will be convinced that its basis lies in his or her own deficiencies rather than my own. The use of such a strategy by psychotherapists is somewhat obvious. But this strategy, too, will only serve to capture me in that I am forced to concede the other's control of my project in forcing me to adopt such strategies. This is the old "s/he made me do it!" gambit. And further, even if I should succeed and gain the other's acknowledgement of my power over him or her, it remains the unhappy case that the other who now confirms me does not do so willingly, but only as a slave reduced to the condition of being a mere object. This brings me no lasting comfort - as the bully, the rapist, the molester, the tyrant, the chauvinist, the celebrity, and the god will readily testify.

Failing the above, I can adopt an indifferent stance. If I become indifferent to all of my relations with others by denying the possibility of any form of rapport with others, this may succeed in providing me with at least a partial resolution. But no. My very determination to avoid others ties me even more to them. I must now avoid them at all cost. And in order for me to do so, I must be forever out-thinking and out-manoeuvring the other and, thereby, all my thoughts, concerns, projects and behaviours become other-focused, even other-obsessed.

Still, I might now adopt the scapegoat stance. I can attempt to create a view of a persecutory outsider (perhaps the other who disturbs me, or some "other" other who disturbs us both. For instance, let us say that both you and I agree that I have delivered an excellent and stimulating talk. Much to our chagrin, we come upon yet another who takes a very different view on the matter. For him or her, the talk is boring, or inadequate or dangerous or heretical in some fashion or other. In such circumstances you and I might join together in order to maintain our differing projects and seek to find the means to dismiss this alien other. We might argue that he or she misunderstands, is incapable of understanding, is a representative of another approach which remains closed-minded to this one, is pathetic, or dangerous, or sick. In this way you and I can attribute all manner of qualities, including that of evil, to the outsider and create a false sense of harmony and social community. You and I are now joined in a mutual exercise of limiting the power of the scapegoated other, or even seeking to eradicate the scapegoat's existence. (Think of current propaganda surrounding – you name it: Israelis, Palestinians, terrorists, communists, fascists, unwanted immigrants, The Axis of Evil, and so forth – and it becomes obvious how common this stance remains). But this creation of a social actualisation project diminishes or compromises or eradicates or obscures any private project each of us may have had and which each may still be attempting to maintain. It is bad faith at a societal level.

Or, as an almost last resort, I might fall in love with one other: In love, each lover

wants two possibilities: to be the provider of the beloved's freedom and, in turn, to be provided freedom by the beloved. The lover must be secure in the gaze of the beloved. And, in turn, the beloved must be secure in the gaze of the lover.

But how? The sad paradox is that in this strategy the very opposite to what is intended comes into being.

To achieve the desired outcome, each, lover and beloved alike, paradoxically abdicates his or her freedom and demands the abdication of the other's freedom. "You can be free", each says to the other, "but only insofar as that freedom rests upon your acknowledged wish to be bound to and by me. It is I, not you, who determines the confines and boundaries of your freedom."

Each lover must become an ever-fascinating, ever-desirable object designed to seduce the beloved into retaining an abiding interest surpassing that which might arise from the gaze of any alternate, competing other. And this cannot succeed. The beloved will begin to love the object that I have become and not me. I will begin to love the object that my beloved has become and not him or her.

If my falling in love provided me with an initial sense of an actualising freedom potential, the experience and struggle of my remaining in love, and of the beloved's remaining in love with me, is one of ever-increasing, and demanding, containment and restriction, a captured facticity rather than an uncertain actuality.

When I take the other's freedom as my end, the other becomes an object by the mere fact that I make it my goal to be the provider of his or her freedom. If I act for the other's benefit in order to realise the other's freedom, I am forcing the other to be free on my terms – even if I am acting from a stance of comfort and reassurance rather than coercion or force. Again…. This might be something for the therapist who is so keen to free up or improve the life experience of clients to consider with some degree of caution and humility.

And if, as a final strategy, I hate the other? Hate implies the recognition of the other's freedom in that he or she does not act, or is not, how I want him, her or them to be. To hate is to be reminded of my own lost possibilities, my own loss of actualising freedom, the power of the other over me.

And what is the felt experience of all these failed attempts? Anguish, shame, self-deception, disgust (of others and self).

Every human enterprise may begin with the best of intentions but will eventually turn into its opposite. What begins as an attempt at actualising freedom becomes the facticity of oppression.

If we stay with Sartre's argument, what implications might there be for conflict resolution – whether in the form of psychotherapy, coaching, or mediation and be it between individuals, organisations or nations?

If Sartre is correct, then it must also be the case that inter-relational conflict is inevitable. The other – be it the psychotherapist or client, coach or coachee, confronting or confronted parties in a mediation caucus – remains inescapably my antagonist. The various strategies that are adopted in any such instances reveal themselves to be all too reminiscent of the more general strategies summarised before.

Is there truly no way out? Well, Sartre certainly pondered a great deal on this and in his later writings he became more willing to consider a potential alternative relationship which, fraught with peril as it was, nonetheless permitted the possibility of an alternative possibility.

Sartre's beginning of a possible solution comes from Heidegger's insight that "by 'others' we do not mean everyone else apart from me – those against whom the 'I' stands

out. They are rather…. those among whom one is too" (Heidegger, 1962:154).

Heidegger's insight was that one's very sense of "I" - or more generally speaking, one's sense of self – is also an expression of "other-ness". Who I say I am is also a statement about who I am not; no real separation between the two exists.

For Sartre, too, others are the way through which we perceive our own existence. Our experience of being the object of someone else's gaze brings us to our own awareness of ourselves as agent.

This novel stance of being-for-others emerges as the result of a conscious being's ability to consider the world as it is perceived by another such being. Being-for-others rests upon the acceptance of a mutuality of being between beings. Through it we each come to recognise our inescapable reliance upon others for our very sense of self, our very ability to recognise actuality and facticity.

But make no mistake: For Sartre: "conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (Sartre, 1958: 364).

The move toward a being-for-others is not through the abdication or denial of conflict, but rather it is through the very acceptance of its inevitability and via the mutual embracing of its possibilities. A recent, if admittedly uncommon instance of this understanding is, I would argue, the series of "Truth and Reconciliation" hearings carried out in South Africa.

So, with all the above in mind we can now ask: How might an attempt at conflict resolution along Sartrean lines begin to look?

A few years ago, The School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, under the impetus of a senior member of its faculty, Dr Freddie Strasser, developed a Mediation and Dispute Resolution Programme based upon Sartrean and more general existential principles. As its basic stance, the now

highly successful programme takes the view that disputes between separate or competing parties are also equally and simultaneously present within the worldview of each participant.

Therefore, one of the fundamental focus points in this approach to mediation is that of considering, exploring and unravelling each party's various "self-focused" and "other-focused" relations and motivations in order to then place these face-to-face so that each other's views, beliefs, values and attitudes can be considered from the standpoint of their impact upon, and challenges to, each party's intended and thwarted aim or project. In turn, the discerned conflicts illuminated through this analysis can then be examined in light of the inter-personal dispute that has led the parties involved to the point of other-focused disagreement and antagonism between them.

This focus upon inter-relational issues permits each party to gain a more accurate awareness of the complex and contradictory structure that makes up his or her values, motivations, beliefs and behaviours. More often than not, the inadequate awareness and understanding of one's varying motivations allows their competing concerns and interests to remain unclear and unseen. As well, this focus also permits each party to consider one's own varying motivations in the light of the other party's own set of conflicting stances. Not surprisingly, what often occurs is that, via the process of mediation, both parties may well discover that their difficulties and differences may rest upon all-too-similar foundational values, beliefs, and projects that are shared by both. Considered broadly, for instance, what is being suggested here is that while the worldviews of fundamentalist Christians and fundamentalist Muslims might initially seem to be in direct opposition to one another, more careful analysis might well actually reveal the source of mutual conflict

to be as much (if not more) an expression of shared assumptions in their worldviews as they might be about the divergences between them.

As a more "day-to-day" example of what is being argued, let me present the following brief vignette of a mediation meeting with a married couple engaged in an acrimonious divorce dispute. In the course of discussion, the couple defined their primary presenting problem as being their inability to develop a satisfactory sexual relationship. The caucus session revealed that the sexual concerns, while undoubtedly real and relevant to them, also served to hold and express a far wider area of concern that had remained obscured. It emerged that each partner felt the other to be overwhelmingly and oppressively powerful in the relationship and that each party experienced major difficulties in maintaining his or her own sense of self-esteem while in the presence of, or while relating with, his or her spouse. These wider inter-personal issues were most clearly exemplified in their sexual relations. But their sexual problems, in themselves, were not causes to their conflict; rather they could now be seen as consequences and expressions of far wider worldview issues. In fact, it could now be seen by the couple that, rather than be at odds with one another, they were actually much more in agreement with each other with regard to their shared experiences of being themselves in the presence of the other. The recognition of this agreement permitted each to be more willing to consider how he or she "became" this oppressively powerful person to the other. Further, this same insight provoked each to question whether the way of engaging with the other that each adopted succeeded in addressing the most important elements of the complex worldview which each sought to embody.

If participants are better able to reveal their worldviews in a far more accurate and widely-encompassing fashion and, through this face their own sets of demands and vulnerabilities, then this in turn may permit an antagonistic attitude to be replaced by a mutually-created and mutually-responsible working alliance through which both sides may find some partial way to their own wants via the acknowledgement of the other's stance.

This approach to conflict resolution interprets 'resolution' as a 'living with conflict', not 'living without or beyond conflict'.

This attempt provokes a novel experience: co-operation with one another not because we have eradicated the conflict between us, but rather because our attempt at 'being for' one another arises through the mutual recognition of the inevitable conflict between us. It is a 'fallen' sort of co-operation and resolution, to be sure: incomplete, always uncertain, and constantly straining to undo itself. In short, it could be seen as a sort of fun-house mirror image of the pivotal Christian message: 'Don't do to others what you do not want done to yourself… for to do so is to do it to yourself'.

Now, let me consider some of the more immediate implications for psychotherapy were we to take seriously the notion of conflict being presented by Sartre.

Sartre saw that our most typical resolution to the inevitable conflict between actuality and facticity is the act of self-deception – we lie to ourselves. Continuously. But, as ever, Sartre takes a different spin on this dilemma. He argues that the lie is the behaviour of transcendence. That is to say, the fact that we can lie and that we can know that we lie, brings us to the awareness of our actualising possibilities.

And, in one sense, it is our recognition of "the lies" that infuse our lives that first brings us to psychotherapy and which, in turn, becomes the narrative focus of psychotherapy. Psychotherapy then, viewed in this Sartrean sense, is no longer about the eradication of our 'lies' (as expressed in terms such as "symptoms", "disorders", "dilemmas" and so forth) but rather becomes the investigation of how these very "lies" serve our project and illuminate its previously unforeseen actualising possibilities.

So, how might a psychotherapy that acknowledges all such begin to look?

Well, it would be a psychotherapy that insisted that the focus of psychotherapy is not a dominating gaze by the psychotherapist upon the client's problems and concerns – as if the client were nothing but these. Rather, the psychotherapist might seek to find the means to provoke the client to attend to his or her own concerns through reflection upon "what is there" between that client and the therapist. As a way of doing psychotherapy, it remains manipulative, to be sure. But it is a manipulation that requires the therapist as well to somehow become the focus of his or her own gaze through the awareness of the client's gaze. The term "transference" only begins to capture the minutest, and least significant, aspects of this process. In essence, it is a move by each participant toward the acknowledgement and embracing of the otherness of the other as it presents itself, without desire or intent to direct any impact, alteration or amelioration of that otherness.

This sort of psychotherapy would be one that acknowledged that the therapeutic relationship, like all others, remains grounded in conflict and competing strategies. What might distinguish it, then, is not the lack of such, but rather its active and unstinting recognition of this given and the willingness – at first on the part of the psychotherapist, and subsequently, via reflection, by the client as well - to struggle to face such honestly and openly from a "for-the-other" focus.

This attempt – and it is only an attempt, not an achievement - could provoke a novel experience: co-operation at a limited level, a real attempt at being-for-others that is shared by psychotherapist and client alike, that avoids any pre-imposed focus or aim, that is transformative, to be sure, but whose transformative possibilities only emerge during and through the meeting, are not previously set and directed by one participant upon or to the other, but which fall on both as and when they will.

Perhaps the following quote by Vaclav Havel begins to capture something of the ineffable meaning being hinted at:

> There are no exact guidelines. There are probably no guidelines at all. The only thing I can recommend… is a sense of humour, an ability to see things in their ridiculous and absurd dimensions, to laugh at others and at ourselves, a sense of irony regarding everything that calls for parody in this world. In other words, I can only recommend [the] awareness of all the most dangerous kinds of vanity, both in others and ourselves….. those who have retained the capacity to recognise their own ridiculousness or even meaninglessness cannot be proud. [The] enemy [to this stance] is the person with a stubbornly serious expression and fire in his eyes (Havel, 2000, p. 41).

And just how many therapists do you know who might fit that last description?

So, to conclude: Sometimes the world seems a very bleak place indeed whether because of personal circumstances or those of the more international variety. It is in those moments, I believe, that our willingness to embrace our human existence is truly tested and we are confronted with

the full brunt of our own, and the world's, imperfection. I don't know about you, but in my own life I have found that as painful as they are, such moments also permit a certain numinous transcendence, an inkling of my actualising possibilities. Perhaps that is just some self-protective movement; I can't say. But, whatever, I have found myself sustained by such. Among those things that have sustained me, I count the work of Sartre. I hope that, through this discussion, I have not done too much damage to his ideas. I also hope that, in some mutually-acknowledging way of course, I have provoked you to consider, or reconsider, your ideas surrounding conflict and its resolution. I hope that some hint of your own struggle with actuality and facticity may have been illuminated, even if only momentarily and without the removal of its undoubted uncertainty.

I leave you with one final Sartrean-inspired sermonette: "Even if Hell truly is other people, do not forget that the voice that welcomes you to enter therein can only be your own."

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