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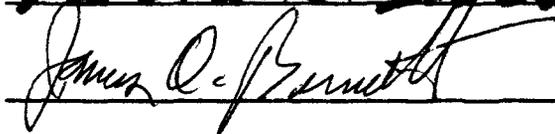
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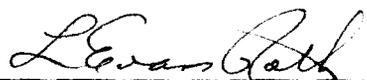
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kyung Ock Chun entitled "Jean-Paul Sartre's Concepts of Praxis and History in his Critique of Dialectical Reason." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Political Science.


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JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S CONCEPTS OF PRAXIS AND HISTORY
IN HIS CRITIQUE OF DIALECTICAL REASON

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Kyung Ock Chun
August 1982

3063067

For My Father

ABSTRACT

The primary problem of this study is to clarify Sartre's concept of praxis as a projective action of human consciousness which creates history and makes it intelligible. I focus on Sartre's attempt to combine an existential humanism with a theory of history as a progressive movement generated by individual actors, their social groups, and their environmental surroundings. Sartre's Critique provides the philosophical basis for understanding social institutions and behavior, and describes human action as a complex totality comprising free subjectivity and its unavoidable environment.

This inquiry focuses on the existential root of Sartre's theory of history and the problematic nature of his position. Although he allocates priority to an actor's consciousness and actions, his explanation, at times, is vague and unconvincing. While he emphasizes human freedom he inadvertently illustrates the enormous influence of a material world which is beyond our control.

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INTRODUCTION

Jean-Paul Sartre, in his later works, tries to synthesize his existentialist view of human freedom with a theory of history. Believing Marxism to be a humanist philosophy, he interprets Marxist social theory in terms of existentialism.¹ The Marxist theory favored by Sartre is that of the young, Hegelian Marx, who insisted that man makes history, and is conditioned by his external environment. Sartre hopes to prove that history is existentially intelligible. Although man is affected by his circumstances, he, not matter, is the propelling force of history. The following thesis is a study of human praxis and its relationship to our comprehending and creating history.

In reply to accusations that existentialism is a philosophy of anxiety, Sartre counters in "Existentialism is a Humanism," originally delivered in Paris in 1945, that existentialism is the thought of human subjectivity. "Existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him."² Subjectivity means that "an

¹Sartre manifests this intention especially in the Search for a Method, trans. Hazel Barns, New York, Vantage Books ed. 1968. Hereafter this book is referred to as SFM and future page references will appear in parentheses in the main body of the text.

²Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism" in Existentialism versus Marxism, ed. George Novack, New York, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., Delta Books ed. 1966, p. 74

individual chooses and makes himself."³ Sartre insists that "it is impossible for man to transcend human subjectivity."⁴ Man is absolutely free. He chooses not only himself but also for all his fellow men based on his own need. As the creator of history, through his own activity he chooses his world. This is his subjectivity.

Opposing both total reason (spirit) and total materialism, Sartre takes the middle ground. Marx had disagreed with Hegel's view that the dialectic of history was primarily spiritual. His dialectic was rather a function of matter. For Sartre the dialectical force of matter is defined by man's consciousness of it. Matter itself cannot comprehend the dialectic and if the subject of the dialectic cannot comprehend this, there is, for Sartre, no dialectic at all. However, without matter man has no ground for dialectical action. The dialectic is the movement itself as well as the method of comprehension of that movement. The subject himself is not only a creator of the movement but also an agent of the comprehension of the movement as a whole. Sartre's historical materialism asserts that matter lies in a dialectical process only through human intervention in history. In this sense the matter is the external condition of man's own dialectic. Because man cannot develop his existence in history without the mediation of matter, matter also shares the subjective rule of dialectical process. Nevertheless, for Sartre, the effects of the

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

mediation depend only on man's understanding of that mediation.

As a humanist, Sartre remarks that man is the maker of his own history and a free agent in making history intelligible. As a social scientist he declares that man integrates his circumstances to create history in relation to other men and matter. In his Critique of Dialectical Reason, Sartre tries to combine these positions with a theory of the intelligibility of history. He seeks to harmonize his humanist ontology with scientific historical social theory.

Sartre attempts to make the intelligibility of human history more concrete by dealing with several questions. What, he asks, is history in a humanist and practical sense? Under what conditions can it be comprehended? And by what means can it be understood? The task of his Critique is to show "the fundamental identity between individual life and human history...the identity of these two totalising processes must itself be proved."⁵

The Critique is a study of the relationship of man to the surrounding world. It is a study of how a free individual makes his existence meaningful without losing his ontological freedom. Man is constrained by his lifetime relationship with his environment, unless he is totally isolated like

⁵Jean-Paul Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith, ed. Johathan Rée, London, NLB, 1976. Hereafter this book is refereed to as CRD, and future page references will appear in parentheses in the main body of the text.

Robison Crusoe. Despite these constraints, however, Sartre believes that an individual integrates his circumstances, including the relationship with other men, into his own existence. This integration is by the individual's dialectical interaction with his surrounding. This method serves to connect him internally with objects. The synthesized meaning of history is possible by the totalizing activity of man's own activity in the context of surrounding conditions. Insofar as an individual realizes this internal bond within social relationships he finds himself a part of the process of history and a subjective agent of the comprehension of that history.

I will now examine the nature of dialectical reason, praxis as human labor in social relations, the internal and external relationship between man and his environment, constituted praxis of a group as social activity toward history, and the dialectical intelligibility of history.

Sartre presents dialectical reason as the method of comprehending history. No affairs of state in this world can be explained as merely causal relationships between events occurring in sequence. For the present is itself the total of what has been and what shall be. Man is a participant in the dialectical process and as such can comprehend it only from within. There can be no detached objective observation. This is the subject of chapter I.

The Critique is the study of what man's role is in history and how this role is developed in relation to

material conditions and with other man. The concept of praxis is the fundamental thesis of Sartre's social theory. Praxis is human labor in the world to satisfy perceived needs. Man realizes the scarcity of what he wants, develops a project to achieve it, and interiorizes the external conditions along with the project. Praxis is, as Sartre defines it in the Search for a Method, not mere action, but purposeful human activity directed by the project. This is carefully examined in chapter II.

According to Sartre's theory of history this scarcity is the starting point of human interaction. There is not enough of anything in the world to meet the needs of everyone. Each person wants objects that are desired by others. The need for the scarce object is the origin of human activity. Complete satisfaction is impossible. When the first need is satisfied, new needs appear in an endless succession. This is the beginning of interaction between men, and between man and his world. Totalization is the movement towards a human project that fulfills the needs of this scarcity. The individual recognizes himself through his consciousness of things and other people which arises from his struggle to alleviate his perception of scarcity. The important concept of totalization is examined in chapter III.

The effect of scarcity on human relations and the efforts to overcome it are therefore the basis of human socialization. Man is alienated by material conditions and

by people, and everyone is deemed a threat to life. In this state there is no humanity. The serial individual escapes from his seriality through cooperation within the group. A group is formed from the desire to regain human freedom through a common effort to overcome individual alienation. Men sharing the same project create a common praxis to accomplish their individual projects. Insofar as each individual separates his life from everyone else's, there is no shared project. Group activity, for Sartre, is both the beginning of humanity and the motive force of history. Group praxis is the subject of the fourth chapter.

The action and reaction between agents of totalization, within groups in society, is the driving force of history. Toward the end of the Critique, Sartre sees contemporary capitalist society as isolating man from humanity. Sartre challenges material determinism and Marxist revolutionary solutions by the victory of one class against another. For Sartre not only the working class but also the bourgeoisie are the agents of history's dialectical process. The struggle itself, not the victory of the proletariat in the struggle, is the motive force of history. Sartre concludes that there is no completion of totalization because the process itself is dialectical, continuously connecting past and future. Only through this constant struggle is man able to comprehend history. The intelligibility of history is examined in chapter V.

This study focuses on Sartre's conceptualization of

praxis as the subject of the dialectical progression of history, and its role within that dialectic. Though Sartre provides a humanistic basis to view history, weaknesses of his theory of history are also caused by the persistent claim of the absolute freedom of the subject within all interaction with his environment. This study is to ascertain how Sartre determines that continuous movement of history which is based on human activity and to discover whether or not his proposed intelligibility is reasonable.

CHAPTER I

DIALECTICAL REASON AND ITS INTELLIGIBILITY

For Sartre, dialectical materialism is the only way to explain human history. If the historical movement is not dialectical and if the development is not understood by dialectical reasoning, there is no history at all. To prove that a dialectic exists, "it must be proved that a negation of a negation can be an affirmation, that conflicts--within a person or a group--are the motive force of History, that each moment of a series is comprehensible on the basis of the initial moment, though irreducible to it, (and) that History continually effects totalisations of totalisations" (CRD 15) This is the task of Sartre's social theory in the Critique.

Among the many theorists of the dialectic, Sartre has been influenced most by Hegel. The basis of Hegel's dialectic is his assertion that every action of nature and man develops systematically. All interaction begins within a given situation under already established conditions, conditions which conflict with efforts to change them to more desirable ones. The combination of change and resistance forms a new unity. The two previous stages are absorbed into a third and new condition, which does not end the process but merely becomes the first stage of

yet another dialectic. This is not an unchanging cycle. Rather, "it is a development in quantity punctuated now and then by a qualitative change, a "leap" from one quality level to a higher quality level. This dialectical movement has no point of culmination:" ⁶ Although the apparent form of movement is as cyclical as Hegel's concept of "thesis," "anti-thesis" and "synthesis," every dialectic varies in content as it varies in time. In Sartre's words the "transition from one state to another is always a process of enrichment." ⁷

Although Hegel serves as the major influence for Sartre, it is necessary to contrast the Hegelian dialectic with that of Marx for one to fully understand Sartre's position.

For Hegel history is the process of self-development of the World Spirit. ⁸ The driving power of the dialectic is Spirit, which is defined as divine Providence. ⁹ There are two realms of this dialectic, one of nature and one of Spirit. Nature is also a rational system but the realm

⁶Walter Odajnyk, Marxism and Existentialism, New York Doubleday & Company, Inc., Anchor Books ed. 1965, p.6.

⁷Jean-Paul Sartre, "Marxism and Revolution", in Existentialism versus Marxism, ed. George Novack, New York, Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1966, p. 98.

⁸Georg W.F. Hegel, Reason in History, trans. Rovert S. Hartman, New Yor, N Y, The Liberal Arts Press, Inc., 1954. As an introduction of the Philosophy of History, Hegel shows here the concept of Reason as a solution to the dialectic of the universal and the particular.

⁹Ibid., p. 14.

of the dialectic of nature cannot be thought independently of its relationship to Spirit. Without the interrelationship there is no dialectical progress in nature. Spirit is not mere human consciousness although it is brought about in man, but a superior power which unfolds dialectic, world history. Spirit is the dynamic of history, as a totality of men and nature and their interaction. Therefore the point of historical synthesis is that of actualization of the Spirit through its materialized form, which Hegel believes to be the nation state. Only at the point of actualization, only when Spirit appears by itself in a materialized form can man experience absolute freedom. In other words, for Hegel, history is a predetermined process initiated by one absolute force. Neither man nor material world (nature) can go toward their conscious end, but they are only directed to the goal of the World Spirit as the absolute good.

Marx explains history as a dialectic. Even though he accepts the logic of the dialectic, he cannot agree with the explanation that every action is spiritually governed. For Marx the dynamic of history is action, man's labor. Man is what he does. The action is characterized by working on matter to produce useful things to meet human needs. This action is then influenced by its fruits, its products. According to Marxist materialism, man is a part of nature. Everything including law, social classes and man's brain is reduced to matter. Man's

consciousness is the product of matter. It is merely the product of the environment to which he belongs. History is understood as a process in which man acts on nature to transform it to meet his needs, and nature in turn influences man. Man's consciousness is entirely dependent on his social position. Outside of his class he has no individual perspective. The materialist view further differs from Hegelian idealism in that the relationship between man and matter is characterized by the material determinism of man's praxis. Man does not make nature a part of the dialectic through his interaction with it. Rather nature determines man's existence.

Sartre contends that reason is neither idealistic nor materialistic. He is convinced that the Hegelian view of the comprehensibility of the dialectic through Spirit is not the way to prove the intelligibility of the dialectical development of history. There is no absolute power to create history. Believing in no absolute power such as God, Sartre argues that man creates the world by himself. Sartre also believes that the driving power of history is man's action, praxis. There is no final point at which development ends. As long as man's consciousness and action go on toward an unknown future, the dialectic will continue. In challenging the idealistic view of reason, Sartre criticizes Hegel for ignoring the role of matter within human consciousness. Hegel asserts that matter is the necessary condition of man's consciousness which is a humanized form

of the Spirit. But for Sartre the investigation of the dialectic is possible only by comprehending the interaction between man's action and external things, so that Hegel fails to see matter as outside of mind. Sartre further rejects the materialistic tendency to reduce everything, including man's consciousness, to matter. For matter, by itself, does not generate dialectical reasoning. If matter alone evolves dialectically, Sartre insists, only analytical reason--not dialectical reason--can explain all interrelationships causally.

The dialectic is the form of interaction between men, man and matter, individual men and groups, and between groups within a set of social relationships. Sartre criticizes the analytical method of understanding a relationship. Sartre criticizes the analytical method of understanding a relationship, such as that used in natural science, and compares it with the dialectical comprehension of such relationships. In analytical reasoning there is the presupposition that every relationship lies in "a definite system of a priori principles and laws." (CRD 19) This he refutes by contending that every movement or phenomena is understood only by human experience in dialectical relationship with matter. "It is action asserting itself within the undertaking, in the explanation of the field and the unification of the means by the end." (CRD 20) In his article, "Materialism and Revolution." Sartre compares these two ways of thinking and stresses the

necessity of dialectical reasoning in comprehending the world and human history.

Sartre believes that materialism, as conceived by contemporary Marxists, served to reduce the action of mind to that of matter. But for the dialectical materialist human subjectivity, as action of the mind, is found in every worldly interaction. Sartre challenges the materialist's view that only material things are rational. This perspective rejects as unreal all that is not visible or empirically discernible. In rejecting this view Sartre refers to Hegel.

Hegel, on the other hand, states that every rational thing is so by human reason. The comprehension of the whole is not causal, but is "synthetic and multidimensional."¹⁰ The determination that something is rational or real is made by man's mind. Every form of matter is the result of man's previous attempts to understand or to be conscious of it. A rational system cannot be separated from man's dialectical relationship to it. This dialectical reason is the way man can see and understand what is true.

Sartre explains this with examples. When one sees a desk, for instance, that desk is not a thing with four legs, three drawers and so on, but is the result of the particular arrangement of its parts. The parts are "isolated appearances. When they occur together, it is always within the

¹⁰Sartre, *Marxism and Revolution*, p. 91.

high unity of a whole, and they are bound together by inner relationships, that is, the presence of one modifies the other in its inner nature."¹¹ In analytical reasoning things are understood causally, a unit is only what it appears to be. It possesses quantitative characteristics within a scientific universe. In perceiving an object a materialist using analytical reason notes different elements which unite to form one object. For example, the chemical making of water is a combination of hydrogen and oxygen. Yet, even in combination, "the elements' retain their individual identity."¹² But for Sartre, using Hegelian dialectical interpretation, water is the totality which results from the set of elements and their combination. It is irreducible into its original state of independent oxygen and hydrogen. The objective of science is to analyze the various elements which are combined to form an object and to thereby learn more about the object. It cannot prove the qualitative transformation of the object. Only dialectical reasoning can comprehend the quality and the internal unity of things. Though a dialectician, Sartre condemns the idea of a dialectic of nature. To him, nature cannot develop its relationship to man by itself. Matter is animated only from without. For there to be a dialectic its subject must not only be part of the dialectical movement but also the agent of comprehension of that

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 92.

dialectic. If there is a dialectic in nature, it must be that nature is able to participate in the dialectical movement and conceive the movement by itself. This is what Sartre disagrees with. Even though there is dialectical movement in nature, only human consciousness can see and know that its totality (matter or nature) is the synthesis from the past and the beginning of another synthesis. Dialectical thinking is intelligible through totalization. A totality is not a process, but merely the result of past activity which is an internally related whole. Totalization, however, is action in process though it is also internally related. Totalization is the action of human consciousness to transform the external world into the internal world, to posit the external into one's project. It is action which occurs anywhere and at any time, both individually and universally. Norman McLeod defines totalization in "Existential Freedom in the Marxism of J. P. Sartre" as "a method of integrating existentially free human activity into dialectical pattern."¹³

To understand human action and history in terms of totalization and to understand totalization in its various forms one must first understand the concept of temporalization as discussed in Being and Nothingness. For the temporal totalities of human activity constitute the action of

¹³Norman McLeod, "Existential Freedom in the Marxism of Jean-Paul Sartre", Dialogue, 7, 1968-69, p. 33.

endless movement toward new object. Sartre states that for an action, "to totalise itself means to temporalise itself." (CRD 53) The three aspects of time, past, present, and future, are "like a point without dimension."¹⁴ The past is the past in the present. The past exists and remains as a transcendent past and, at the same time, a predictable future. The present, thus, should be known as the synthesis of the past and the future. These aspects of time are not sequential. Time exists in man's consciousness as the internal relationship between past, present and future. Thus, temporalization is the dialectical activity of human consciousness, and existence is itself constant temporalization. Temporalization is "a constant self-transcendence from what I am no-longer to what I am not-yet, which makes time itself a structure of my being."¹⁵ In Search for a Method Sartre makes it plain that "dialectic as a movement of reality collapses if time is not dialectic." (SFM 92) Time is not given to man but, conversely, man defines time through temporalization. "One must understand that neither men nor their activities are in time, but that time, as

¹⁴Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel E. Barnes, New York, Washington Square Press, 1966 p. 159. Hereafter this book is referred to as BN and future page references will appear in parentheses in the main body of the text.

¹⁵Yirmiahu Yovel, "Existentialism and Historical Dialectic," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 39, 1979, p. 482.

concrete quality of history, is made by men on the basis of their original temporalization." (Ibid.)

Sartre insists that the internal connection of temporality by human consciousness "has its being outside of it, before and behind. Behind, it was its past, and before, it will be its future At present it is not what it is (past) and it is what it is not (future)." (BN 179)

Human consciousness is the "flight" toward that which is not yet. Temporalization is the expression of the action of totalization in accordance with the nature of time. Totality is temporal in the sense that it is endlessly absorbed within a still newer totality. The endless movement searching for an unknown future is itself totalization. For Sartre the temporal totality is merely a moment of practical totalization.

Human acts of totalization never end, and are reciprocal with one another. Men totalize their environment in accordance with their desires for existence. Their various totalizations meet one another in daily life. One encounters another person or another person's activity as an object or circumstance of one's own. Both parties intermingle as parts or objects of each other's totalizing activity. In human consciousness of the future the totality is not an eternal entity, but is always the starting point of totalization in process. Man produces an object, for example, which is then used to totalize the environment of another. Both parties encounter one another through

totalized objects. Their action is mediated by the object and a reciprocal relationship is formed. In life man seeks the final achievement of some desirable state. However, there are only momentary or partial totalities which are inevitably detotalized and formed yet again. One is merely part of the totalization of others or a still smaller element within the larger totality that is human history. This is a never-ending, ongoing process.

Man exists within the system of history only through his acts of totalization. This characteristic of human existence shows that men are interrelated, regardless of the diachronical sense of physical existence. One's culture begins its evolution long before one is born. Man finds himself only through his relationship with this environment which has been totalizing for generations. One who lives in the present can experience this past though prior to his existence, through the culture surrounding him. Through the cultural experience one in the present is connected internally with ancient people. This relationship through one's culture is due to the totalization of encompassing conditions by one's predecessors.

. . . this culture which I call mine must be conceived as specific participation in interiority in the objective culture As soon as I reflexively grasp this bond of interiority which links me to the cultural totalisation, I disappear as a cultivated individual and emerge as the synthetic bond between everyone and what might be called the cultural field In this way, I find myself dialectically conditioned by the totalised and totalising past of the process of human development:

. . . . I totalise myself on the basis of centuries of history and, in accordance with my culture, I totalise this experience. (CRD 54)

Sartre regards an individual as his temporalizing activity and refers to this way of understanding as the progressive-regressive method. To see a totality is to comprehend its past and future simultaneously. To see man as he is is to see him as he was regressively and as he will be progressively. One of Sartre's criticisms of analytical reasoning is that man and his action is treated as a totality with a causal relationship. Through dialectical development man and his action evolve into new entities in future moments. If we observe a person opening a window, we assume regressively that at a previous moment he felt the need for fresh air and progressively that soon he will feel better upon meeting his need. His act of opening the window was not merely as it appeared. It also contained a past project to meet a need as well as an expected result. For Sartre this method of reasoning is not mere contemplation, but calls for comprehension through dialectical reasoning.

History is the sum of individual totalizations. This totality is not static but is evolving endlessly toward the unknown future. Thus, history as a dialectic never ends in the sense that man's striving for completion, for totalization is never attained. Every moment in the process meets the negation of the present state.

Nevertheless this striving, this projective characteristic of man's thinking, is a crucial element in the comprehension of man.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF PRAXIS

An individual man is the subject of investigation of human history. Sartre's task in the Critique is to develop a social theory without losing this human subjectivity. "Without living man," declares Sartre, "there is no history. The object of Existentialism--due to the default of Marxism--is the particular man in the social field, in his class, in an environment of collective objects and of other particular men." (SFM 133) Sartre explains what existentialism truly is in his "Existentialism is a Humanism" and in Being and Nothingness.

One of the principles of existentialism, especially of what Sartre calls atheistic existentialism, is that human existence precedes one's essences. This is contrary to material objects whose properties (essence) precedes their existence. For instance when one wishes to create a desk one must first have knowledge of its possible use. This is an element of its essence. The process of production and the properties of the desk, the wood and steel, determine the essence of the desk before its appearance as the completed object, the desk. Man conversely, exists prior to all of his actions or his character. Man has essence only by himself, only through his consciousness of a totality. The consciousness of being and of endless

advancement toward being is the essence of man. This permanent flight toward totalization is never completed but is simply the ongoing process an individual chooses to make.

The principle of existentialism is itself that of human subjectivity. Man makes himself; there is no other power to create him, no God, no nature. This subjectivity is itself man's choice of his life and his environment. As stated in Being and Nothingness, human subjectivity which is free choice cannot be transcended. Thus, man is condemned to be free. This freedom is not freedom to act however one wishes, but the subjective role in one's own life and in the whole world. This subjectivity is through and in human consciousness.

For human consciousness to function there must be an object of consciousness. Consciousness itself is "empty." It is only transcendent activity toward some object. Although Sartre is a disciple of Husserl's phenomenology, he doubts that man perceives an object, then the object is regarded as it exists. He insists that the existence of something is prior to man's perception of it. In Sartre's terms, "consciousness is always consciousness of something which is not consciousness itself." (BN 9) The consciousness implies that there is something (being) before recognition.

To be conscious of something is through thinking of what it is not. If one sees a pen he knows it is a pen because he knows everything else which is not the pen.

The pen is known by eliminating all other objects. For Sartre the activity of consciousness is negation.

Man's reality is his consciousness. It is the consciousness of something (being) but it itself is nothing. His consciousness has no inherent existence. It has no definite form but is free. Indeed, consciousness is freedom.

According to Sartre freedom is manifested by anguish. This anguish is due to man's responsibility for himself and for all mankind. Because existence precedes essence, man has responsibility for choosing what he is and what he makes of himself. This choice includes all other men in the individual's environment. In this sense the individual's responsibility extends to all mankind.

For every man, everything happens as if all mankind had its eyes fixed on him and were guiding itself by what he does. And every man ought to say to himself, "Am I really the kind of man who has the right to act in such a way that humanity might guide itself by my action?"¹⁶

Given this responsibility, man can realize, if he so chooses, what he must do or what he must not do at any moment of his life. Sartre asserts that the anguish man experiences is the result of this responsibility, of man's freedom. Conversely he argues that if man does not experience anguish, it is simply because he has surrendered

¹⁶Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism," p. 76.

his freedom and therefore lacks responsibility. The man who escapes anguish is not free. This anxious development of consciousness never reaches a finality. He is never considered "as an end because he is always in the making."¹⁷ Temporality is an essential element of human nature. Therefore, essence is not provable in its present form for it is an incomplete entity also reaching but never gaining the future. If one returns to observation of the desk one perceives it not merely in its present, static form but as a combination of many elements. One perceives its totalized properties, the human project which made it, and its future use for man. This comprehension of the future and the past emanates from the negation of the present condition. This is the basis of human action as characterized by projectivity.

Human consciousness has no rigid structure, it is so lacking in form that Sartre insists that it is Nothingness (No thing). This is because consciousness is freedom itself, it is total possibility. It has no limitation. As man is his consciousness, he should not be defined only as he sees himself through a mirror. He is more than what is seen in the mirror yet he is never complete, always less than totalized. Human consciousness is a movement which never reaches its goal. This creature

¹⁷Ibid., p. 83.

which never ends and is never defined, is man. His reality is Being-free.(BN 60)

This freedom is the freedom to choose. Man chooses what he is or what he will be and what he needs from the outside world in order to exist. "To be a consciousness... is to make choices at every moment while we are conscious."¹⁸

Human activity within one's relationship with his environment, including other people and material objects, is in accordance with his chosen project. This means that human action is not accidental, but is projective, "a conscious project." (BN 559) To project is to negate the present and to go toward that which it is not yet. The project, however, is not the cause of an act, but is itself the development of reasoning and the act of transcendence of the present. A project is "conscious and goal-oriented.... Motivation for action does not come from an actual state of affairs but from some possible state of affairs in the future."¹⁹ This sense of consciousness, freedom, and project as the intention to act moves from one's individual ontology to social theory. Sartre, in his later works, introduces the concept of praxis to explain these three elements of social relationships.

¹⁸Richard J. Bernstein, Praxis and Action, Philadelphia, The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971, p. 140.

¹⁹Gila J. Hayim, The Existential Sociology of Jean-Paul Sartre, Amherst, The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980, p. 48.

For Hegel, reason (spirit) externally directs consciousness to self-consciousness. When one encounters such absolute reason, the history of human action ends. Sartre, in rejecting this concept of external motivation by absolute reason, accepts Marx's concept of praxis as human labor. This praxis is an intentional act which has a goal. "Praxis--is any meaningful or purposeful human activity, any act which is not mere random, undirected motion." (SFM xvi) It is intended to surpass the present state. "Praxis, indeed, is a passage from objective to objective through internalization." (SFM 97) This internalization, of course, occurs when one chooses something outside of himself to be an object of his praxis. As McLeod explains, "praxis . . . is almost a synonym for existential freedom: it is the freely chosen human project, an end-directed action, in a specifically social context."²⁰ It is an expression of the practical mode of action in the social and historical context. It is the totalization, by which man defines himself.

²⁰McLeod, p. 33.

CHAPTER III

THE DIALECTICAL TOTALIZATION WITH MATTER AND OTHER MEN

According to Sartre in Being and Nothingness, without the consciousness of man the world has no meaning. He attempts in his Critique, to explain the necessity of matter as "in-itself," as this concept is explained in Being and Nothingness. He asserts that matter, as man's external condition of totalization, has a different meaning than the materialists give it. Matter is not only an inert object, but the mediation of man's dialectic. It exists for man's praxis. In the Critique Sartre makes clear that man makes history only in the context of his environmental conditions. This man is a social being threatened by scarcity. The effort to overcome scarcity is itself man's totalization.

The praxis of man is intelligible only by interaction with his environment, the interiorizes it and simultaneously exteriorizes himself. The interaction occurs when man internalizes inert matter into the human world by using it as the instrument of his praxis. Without matter man cannot be an agent of his own praxis. Just as there is no dialectic of nature without human praxis, there is no dialectic of human praxis without matter. Matter and man's consciousness play equal roles in the dialectic.

Sartre states that: "man is 'mediated' by things to the same extent as things are 'mediated' by man. . . . This is what is called dialectical circularity and, . . . , it must be established by dialectical investigation." (CRD 79)

Need is the beginning of the dialectic. To meet his needs man accepts the necessity of working within matter. He sets his project towards acquiring his needs. This desire to gain what he desires forces him to work through his praxis.

Everything is to explained through need . . . ; need is the first totalising relation between the material being, man, and the material ensemble of which he is part. This relation is univocal, and of interiority. Indeed, it is through need that the first negation of the negation and the first totalisation appear in matter. (CRD 80)

Matter cannot relate to man through its own action. Only in and through man's praxis does it become intelligible.

Labor is the means by which man attains his ends, the production of that which he lacks. Yet the fruits of his labor cannot be distinguished apart from him since the product is the result of man's project actualized through labor. One becomes the product of one's labor. The product is itself the producer's externalized praxis. It is in this manner that man externalizes himself. Dick Howard, in "Existentialism and Marxism," explains that "man externalizes his internal relation to the external world, and in so doing negates its externality; man becomes a being-in-the-world and the world becomes a being-for-

man."²¹ This statement expresses how much "things can mediate human beings. It also indicates that when human beings become like things it is because of their own action."²²

Man cannot live solely with the products of his own labor. As his life becomes more complicated, and his labor divided, he shares his benefits with others. He desires their products just as they desire his. For Sartre, if these needs were met then interaction would cease. However, because the perception of needs always exceeds the availability of products scarcity is always present. There is not enough of everything. This is the starting point of social relations, of human beings and of history.

Men meet each other in the material field they have produced. Without the mediation of material things men do not have any interrelationship. They recognize others by the mediation of their labor. In other words, "matter becomes the condition of mediation which creates the possibility of social relation."²³ The dialectical relationship between man and matter and men's need for matter is the starting point of the dialectic of human struggle.

²¹Dick Howard, "Existentialism and Marxism" in Towards a New Marxism, ed. Bart Grahl and Paul Piccone, St. Louis, Mos., Telos Press, 1973, p. 109.

²²Mark Poster, Existential Marxism in Postwar France, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 52.

²³Howard, p. 109.

Despite his stress on scarcity as the basis of man's interaction with his environment, Sartre concedes that this is only one possibility of human history. (CRD 125-27) The influence of scarcity is limited to the contemporary material social structure.

We have no way of telling whether, for different organisms on other planets--or for our descendants, if technical and social changes shatter the framework of scarcity--a different History, constituted on another basis, and with different motive forces and different internal projects, might be logically conceivable." (CRD 125)

Sartre says of our history "that it is born and developed within the permanent framework of a field of tension produced by scarcity." (Ibid.) Within this conflict man is the enemy of everyone who threatens his possessions. This is the point at which social struggle begins. Scarcity (lack) of what men need causes conflicts among men in a society to gain the scarce matter. The conflicts lead to the hostile recognition of one another and result in negation of one another within each member's project toward external world. Sartre contends then that, "scarcity is the negation of man through the presence of other men."²⁴

Practico-inert

Sartre proposes a further illustration of the material conditions relating to man. He conceptualizes the material

²⁴Wilfrid Desan, Marxism of Jean-Paul Sartre, Garden City, N.Y. Double day & Company, Inc., 1965, p. 96.

field not only as matter but also as the result of human activity.

Man totalizes matter into his project toward the outside world. "Every praxis is primarily an instrumentalisation of material reality. It envelops the inanimate thing in a totalising project which gives it a pseudo-organic unity." (CRD 161) Human praxis makes matter the means of the actor's life and thereby gives inert being an organic character.

By using the concept of "practico-inert" Sartre shows clearly the historical relationship between human praxis and the resultant matter. Human praxis upon matter also affects man. Matter and material environment are the result of man's initial praxis operated upon them; "matter is inert; it is not an invention of the mind, but a petrification of action." (CRD 171) Man also struggles against his own praxis. For example, in the past Chinese farmers made a human decision to déforest the land to increase cultivation. A unexpected result of the déforestation, however, was increased floods. This is the circular character of the dialectic of man within material conditions. Once human labor meets matter and instrumentalizes it, he cannot control its result.

Men in society face this process within socioeconomic and political constraints.²⁵ Human activity is restricted,

²⁵Yovel, p. 486.

limited by the practico-inert from the material environment. Future activity is determined by the practico-inert created from past praxis. Here, the restriction is not only caused by one's action but that of others as well. The practico-inert is "the milieu in which actions meet." (CRD 376) It comprises not only the material field in which man lives but all of his more abstract social contracts as well. The invention of the automobile, for instance, is intended as a convenience in daily life. The use of the automobile, however, results in fatal accidents and pollution, things which are not desirable. These results, both good and bad, come not only from one person's will and praxis but from the desire of many people.

The result is not only one person's will but also others who want the benefit of the automobiles. Through the practico-inert, the creation and use of the automobile, an individual's praxis is intermingled with that of others. The practico-inert is the expression of the materiality of human beings in social relationships within the context of scarcity. Man is limited by the praxis of others within the material field. He is the product of his product.

Even though the materialized status of man is made by man originally, he cannot control the subsequent result. Man's initial role in the world is hidden within the material field. Sartre maintains that only man's initiative makes these processes possible. The transformation

of human praxis into the practico-inert is an inevitable development within society.

Matter produced by man gradually determines his future action. He faces unavoidable restrictions on his actions within the material structure of society. Man himself is objectified by his need for material goods. It occurs when his individual life interacts with the life of others. The practico-inert is made only through the praxis of those who commonly seek to reduce scarcity. Thus, the practico-inert is the result of collective praxis. Competition for scarce goods is the necessary condition for dialectical movement in history.²⁶

The practico-inert is a counter against finality. (CRD 193) This means that totalized things do not stay at their final point of the process of totalization; they change the totalized state into the practico-inert, which is a threat to the original praxis. For example, the industrialization of society affects the life of the rural classes. Through mechanization landowners can produce more with less labor. Mechanization results in the unemployment of some workers and the reduction of wages for those competing for fewer jobs. Thus, the use of machinery is a counter-finality for rural workers. This counter-finality to the rural workers is not as disastrous

²⁶Marjorie Grene, Sartre, New York, New Viewpoints, 1973, p. 102.

to landowners, for the interests of the two classes differ.

The practico-inert is a bridge between human consciousness and the reality of matter.²⁷ The practico-inert is, for Sartre, the way that man departs from isolated individuality and completes himself as a collective historical being, for the dehumanization produced by society's practico-inert stimulates men to protect themselves collectively.

Serial Collectivity

Sartre rejects the Marxist definition of matter, preferring to define it as the transformation of human activity. He thinks that the practico-inert negates human dignity, generating what he calls "anti-praxis." The practico-inert is a moment in the transition of the dialectic from the individual to the collective. The practico-inert "becomes, by and for men, the fundamental motive force of History." (CRD 183)

The practico-inert results in alienation. Man, for example, sets his praxis in gold, endowing it with value. Transporting, loading, unloading, and protecting gold gives it more value. Man himself becomes gold insofar as his labor earns it. The consequences of this are seen in industrial society: though man creates and operates machines, mechanized mass production makes him a slave to

²⁷ Odajnyk, pp. 163-64.

material abundance. He becomes an object which is defined by the product of his own labor. In this state he is merely an object, other than himself.

Sartre attempts to explain man's position within the practico-inert field through a third observer. Before man recognizes others as having the same project as he does, he is thoroughly isolated. Men are, in Sartre's term, in "seriality." They have no relationship but indifference. Men in this state are defined as inert, nothing but inorganic objects. Sartre cites an example of a group of people in a bus station. They form a line for a "common aim": a bus. Their commonality lies in living in the same district, working in the same factory, or operating the same kind of business. Man in seriality exists in a mode of negation of others. Even though people in line do not realize their mutual negation, they are made interdependent through the practico-inert, the bus they are awaiting. They do not care who the other man is, what he does, or where he lives. They are only whole as "a plurality of isolations." (CRD 256) They are different from each other in thinking and in doing. They negate their mutual dependence by not realizing it. They do not realize it is possible to depend on one another in the practico-inert field. They are in a unity through the bus.

There may be an inadequate number of seats for all of those in line, in which case everyone is the competitor for a seat. "As an ordering, it becomes a negative

principle of unity and of determining everyone's fate as Other by every Other as Other."(CRD 261) Everybody is defined by the order which he has in line to get in the bus. If I were ninth in line perhaps I could take a seat, but if I were tenth I could not. I am tenth, and therefore without a seat, because of the other nine people before me in a line.

I see the man as the Other, and, conversely, he sees me as a mere object of his praxis. This Otherness is hostility in the context of scarcity. More important, I realize that I am the Other too, and this recognition makes me feel alienated, outside of humanity.

At the same time there may be some identification among the people in line. This limited identification is based on the awareness that others are also in line, and that the bus is needed by them as well. Yet this identification is only recognition of the existence of the other. There is no interaction beyond a superficial level. "They reciprocally deny any link between each of their inner worlds."²⁸ People in line for a movie, or in a market, or those who are listening to the same message on the radio are all members of inert collectives which are gathered, without common action, towards a common goal.

²⁸R.D.Laing and D.G.Cooper, Reason and Violence, Rev. ed., London, Tavistock, 1971, p. 122.

They are all Others through the mediation of things. Away from the interiority of the individual, man stands as an inert existence, an other among Others. Seriality is characterized by the Otherness: feeling isolated, powerless, impotent against the practico-inert. Seriality is the mode of everyday life commonly experienced by independent individuals. In the context of scarcity and of powerlessness to control it, people in certain collectives are alienated from their praxis.

All relationships among men are "mediated" by third parties.²⁹ For Sartre, man cannot recognize his integration into the activity of others by himself. The mediator of the environment is a third party not recognized by the two actors. For instance, I see a man in line to buy a stamp at a post office and a woman inside a window selling a stamp to the man. The two persons know each other just as they are in that moment. How the two person's activities are integrated into each other's project toward each other's outside world is seen only to a third man who looks at the two actors yet is not recognized by them. Each knows that the opposite party does not know what he has been doing, or thinking, or what he will do in the future. However, the third man knows that even if they do not care

²⁹The mediation of third party is first explained in p. 106 in the Critique, and this also appears in the explanation of individual existence within group action later.

about each other, they are already in a mutual relationship, for they meet in their environmental conditions. This does not mean men are all indifferent to each other. They may be family, friends, or neighbors. But they do not recognize each other in the context of each other's project toward the outside world and of its mutual integration. Their reciprocity is recognized by a totalizer in their milieu. Through the totalization of the environment the third party sees the two other actors as the object of his totalization. This is the mode of men's mutual connection and its intelligibility. Everyone exists as both the third party and the object of another third's praxis.

In the dialectical connection between men and their environment, matter is the driving force of the human dialectic. Although matter and the material environment are instrumentalized by man's praxis, they provide the ground of history through man's mediation. Matter as the field of the practico-inert seems to dominate man's praxis, making it static and powerless. Nevertheless, Sartre contends that man, through new acts of human freedom, can counter this inert seriality. Individual free praxis encounters the solution of this seriality by acting together with others.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIALECTICAL LINK BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

In this part of his Critique, Sartre attempts to construct his social theory. In Desan's words, "it is the constant purpose of Sartre's book to make intelligible the collective praxis, as he now attempts to do through tracing the slow organization of the worker's collective and their plan to reconstruct the social field."³⁰

To be understood in concrete terms, freedom must be seen in relation to its environment. In social theory man is free insofar as his freedom is harmonized with others. In Odajnyk's term, Sartre gives meaning to man's freedom in the sense that "his responsibilities and his choices are movements shared by the entire structure in which he lives."³¹

Within society's economic and political life individual interests differ. Through the increase in mechanization landowners earn profits while workers are increasingly vulnerable to underemployment or unemployment and poverty because machines are replaced to man's labor. The working

³⁰Desan, p. 127.

³¹Odajnyk, p. 111.

class is a collective whose members share deprivation. Daily life centered around the practico-inert, forces men to lie in serial powerlessness. Sartre enters into an investigation of society from the perspective of class division. The oppression by the practico-inert arises from the economic or political system. Sartre anatomizes the capitalist society in which there are definite class distinctions. The owners, for the most part, do not realize the need to change the social structure, while the workers want to change the present social system. Contrary to the assertion of contemporary Marxists, Sartre does not think that only the working class is the main force in creating history. The force is the conflict and interaction between classes. The oppressed want to be liberated from oppressive conditions. This is their need towards the given world. This is the overriding need of the oppressed.

Sartre distinguishes the collective from group. The former is represented by a multitude of passive individual series, having no consciousness of the possibility of common action even though it chances to gather around the same practico-inert object. The latter, on the other hand, though not organized around a common goal, is characterized by action designed to escape its powerlessness in the practico-inert field. The latter's action reveals itself as continuous action and reaction between members. In isolated seriality individuals cannot react to the actions

of others since they do not recognize being related to one another. Everybody is Other. As Other, everybody experiences alienation and impotency toward the power which makes them inert.

When feelings of alienation become virtually unbearable, an individual reacts against this situation. Then people independently reacting to the situation soon perceive a common destiny. There must be an external stimulus to force one to find others with a common plight. Poverty or political oppression often provides this stimulus. On July 12, 1789 citizens of Paris rose against their government. Individual feelings of oppression were shared. There was an invisible connection between those individual expressions of discontent. As the degree of oppression and anguish is increased, people gather more cohesively. In such a gathering, though people have common feelings, they do not as yet share a common course of action. This is the state of what Sartre calls the "group-in-fusion."

Group-in-fusion

The necessary condition to be a group is to regard common need as individual need. In their struggle to survive people suddenly see in their environment that there are others who have the same desire and determination to act against a given danger or for a perceived need. As scattered individuals, as series, people in a collective realize their common powerlessness. In a group, however,

people regard each individual aim as the common aim. Each believes that the common objective is nothing more than his own objective. As Sartre says,

. . . the group constitutes itself on the basis of a need or common danger and defines itself by the common objective which determines its common praxis. Yet neither common need, nor common praxis, nor common objectives can define a community unless it makes itself into a community by feeling individual need as common need, and by projecting itself, in the internal unification of a common intergration, towards objectives which it produces as common. (CRD 350)

Each individual chooses his position, or the limit of his freedom, in becoming a member of the community. In order to protest government abuse, for example, one group of people demonstrates in the streets, while another group destroys government property. Even though both are acting toward the same goal and against a common enemy, they are not yet unified in acting. On impulse, one man issues an order which many obey. Another man issues a second, independent order which others follow. There are many groupings and regroupings based on scattered words or actions. This is the action of the group in fusion. Everybody is a leader and a follower. Each person chooses to which order he will submit. He spontaneously limits his freedom to join the common action, identifies his aim with the common aim, and his project with the common project. Sartre calls this "self-determination." Here, "the structure of serial otherness is replaced by a fusion of the Same."³²

³²Howard, p. 114.

Unlike those in the serial collective, in which each is Other to everyone else, in a fused group everyone recognizes his neighbor as himself. They become brothers facing a common external threat.

The mutual interaction between group member is recognized by a mediator. The third man who mediates between the interaction of two parties is a member of a group in fusion. There may be as many thirds as there are people in the crowd in fusion. The voice directing other men's actions is a totalizer. By shouting "go to the Bastille" a man becomes a leader of the movement toward the Bastille. For in a group in fusion anyone may be the mediator or the mediated. There is no particular leader. Anyone may order the group to act in a certain way and in so doing totalize the common action. All members of a such group in fusion are no longer a series but not yet part of an organized group. The existence of this group is possible only through the mediation by members as thirds who unite other individuals with a common purpose. Furthermore each member is recognized as a member through the mediation by the group as whole. The latter mediation means that one receives the status of a member once it is recognized that he shares the common aim of the group.

Pledged Group

After achieving a common goal, individuals in the group in fusion lose the need to remain united with other

men. Insofar as the group in fusion is characterized by the individual's free limitation of his freedom to gain another greater freedom, the group then dissolves itself into another serial collective.

When people gather to achieve a common goal, the group is the means of composition of common action. The group action arising from the anxiety of powerlessness is dissolved either when the goal of the action is achieved successfully or when the enemy against which the group acts is not affected by that action. One example of such group action is the conquest of the Bastille by citizens of Paris. After they had conquered they were faced with a crucial choice of either returning to their serialized lives or letting the government suppress them again. They did not want either. The people in the group sought to attain the group cohesion, released from seriality and protected from further oppression.

In spite of this desire of men for unity another danger from within arises. The group in fusion is defined as a multiplicity of individual praxis. This multiplicity is endangered when threatened by disintegration from within. The internal need to maintain a bond may manifest itself as a spontaneous action, a compulsion. It is deemed necessary that individuals swear loyalty to the permanent structure of the group. To retain membership in the group one is continuously asked to limit individual freedom in deference to the common goal.

Despite the fact that each member of the "pledged group" acts according to the direction of the group itself, Sartre nevertheless claims that the action of the pledge is necessary and is the free choice by the individual to protect himself from danger. Through the action of a pledge the man as a mediating third is locked into the inertia of pledge.

By swearing fidelity the individual is released from the fear of being alone. At this stage there are but two choices: the limitation of the pledge or alienation. As "a free limit of freedom" in Sartre's words, everybody as a third party swears his loyalty. The third party as a mediator becomes the regulator watching for betrayal from within the group. By making a pledge to protect all members from external enemies all members are equal, so that one is guaranteed freedom from betrayal as one guarantees the same freedom to others. My pledge guarantees other third's pledge. The pledge is made by a third to every other third party. "It is at this level of integration that the social group is born."³³ For Sartre, however, this is still by a free human choice that each individual is restricted by group membership. In the objectification of a written pact the members are released eternally from returning to the former state (seriality) : "it is the eternal, frozen preservation of its rising." (CRD 436) The necessity of a pledge shows that there is

³³Hayim, p. 94.

always the possibility of betrayal. The group in fusion is composed of individual actions and is a spontaneous limitation of individual freedom. In the pledged group, however, the individual is the means of group power itself. There is only the group praxis that the individual must follow. At this level the group is the end itself, the symbol of cohesion. This group does not call for voluntary alignment, but forces members to stay. This is expressed by the fear of terror.

Through terrorism, permanent membership is guaranteed. Terror is exercised either through physical force or simply by the elimination of one's name from the membership, meaning a return to alienation and powerlessness.

It is still true that my pledge is a guarantee for the other third party; but the meaning of this guarantee is precisely violence. The third party is guaranteed against my free betrayal by the right which I have granted everyone (including him) to eliminate me in the event of my failure, and by the Terror which the common right establishes within me and which I have demanded; and this guarantee--which deprives him of any excuse in the event of dispersal of betrayal--means that he can freely guarantee his own solidarity (freely demand Terror for himself). (CRD 433)

The terror is called the "fraternity-terror." Regulation is necessary to bind pledged members as brothers and sisters. If there is a traitor, the rest of the membership may become lynchers. The violence by the lynchers is "Terror against the traitor" and "a practical bond of love between the lynchers." (CRD 439) Freedom still exists among the members because violence to maintain

group security is a free relationship among members. Fraternity-terror is itself a protection of the members against seriality. In a word, the intelligibility of the group comes about from the character of violence for the common freedom. The common freedom "as a common structure is the permanent violence of individual freedom of alienation." (CRD 441)

The result of the collective action was a totality by group praxis. There could then occur an anti-finality, a return to the state of suppression by the existing oppressing power. Since the fused group has no further reason for group activity, the fear of the counter-finality leads the members to the cohesive status. The pledged group is still in fusion. This the beginning of the process of institutionalization.

Organization

The process of development from the fused group to a more mechanized group is called organization. The group is not a totality, but the organized activity of its members. Sartre defines organization as "a distribution of tasks. And it is the common objective (common interest, common danger, common need assigning a common aim) which defines praxis negatively and lies at the origin of this differentiation." (CRD 446) Group members are divided by either their professional skill or their assigned functions, depending on the group's aim. The member is the function

he performs and the function is the means of linkage between members. The function as the distribution of tasks "remains an inert limit of the freedom of the third party, and, therefore, its basis is still Terror." (CRD 449) Terror reappears whenever the links between various functions seems to have broken down. The organization is itself an act of the group toward a more concrete stage of collective action.

One comprehends the Other by the function he performs. Through the mutual relationship between our tasks in the group we are linked to each other, and, collectively the links constitute group. It is very similar to the system of the human body as a functional physiological unit. Interrelated functions are elements forming an organized set. What we must remember, however, is that social functions in groups are not exactly like those of natural organisms. For the latter is self-produced activity, while the former is produced by other authors. Sartre uses the example of a soccer team. On a team, each player has his own position. Each member acts not by his own will, but according to the function of the position. The duty of the goalkeeper is different from that of a forward. Other functions are assigned by third parties who may be coaches, spectators, or other players. The members limit their freedom in the interest of the team effort. The game itself is totalized by a player kicking the ball and directing the next action of a teammate. In directing the ball to another player, one totalizes the activity of the

player who receives it and the activity of the team as a whole, with victory as the final goal. In this sense, each member at some point determines by his judgement and actions the fate of the entire team. Conversely, the actions of the player are determined by his role within the team. The function of an individual is itself a tool of the group's goal. He is the common individual who is characterized by the group spirit. One's freedom is realized through a united effort directed toward a common aim. The sacrifice of one's freedom in difference to team victory is a prerequisite of participation in the game. The totality of each player's role or action is itself the group's unity, "and in serving the common undertaking . . . everyone turns out to be serving him." (CRD 460) This is, for Sartre, practical and necessary to accomplish the common goal. This spontaneous limitation of one's freedom is his free choice to stay with the group.

Sartre claims that the individual in an organization merely changes the quality of his freedom from ontological state to social. As a social being, free man is absorbed more and more into relative freedom with other men. Sartre, in speaking of group freedom, asserts that, "the freedom is not free activity of an autonomous organism but, from its origins, a conquest of alienation" (CRD 558)

Common Praxis

Since there are some things which an individual cannot do by himself, a group is formed to do it by collective power. By involving himself in a group activity, an individual realizes that the common project is the same as his own individual projects. The formation of a group is a means to achieve the common project as my project. This is the condition of common action.

Sartre proposes a method for the comprehension of group action as a single entity. Dialectical investigation is the method to understand "the practical relations of individual functions within the organised group." (CRD 505) The relation is a group. The group praxis "belongs to every individual praxis as an interiorized unity of multiplicity." (CRD 506)

As a group is organized, the common activity reveals organized form. Here, the common praxis as the plurality of individual praxis is "synthetic temporalisation of the organization." (CRD 507) A group is seen as a totality in process never to be completed. It is the unity of individual praxis as totalizing action. Therefore the totalization of the group is comprehended as a unity of individual totalization. Sartre mentions the relationship between individual and group praxis in the following manner:

. . . common action and individual praxis exhibit a real homogeneity. The individual would be unable to understand either his own common action in terms

of the totalising praxis of group, or that of a group external to himself, if the structures of common praxis were of a different order than those of individual praxis. If the objectives of the group had a hyper-individual character, then the individual would never be able to grasp them. This does not mean that the common action is an organic synthesis of the members of the group but, on the contrary, that the group, far from having hyper-individuality in its action, sets itself objectives of an individualised structure and can achieve them only through common operations which are individual in character. (CRD 509)

In sum, common praxis is the whole of different totalizing actions of individual members. Since the unity, however, is toward one and common goal it can be seen as one synthetic praxis. This group action is seen as a single entity by those in other groups or by individuals who are not grouped. When one sees, for example, a group of people playing musical instruments to perform a symphony, he sees their playing as a single action. They are integrated into each other's play to achieve a common aim--a symphony. They appear as one project. Even though the player interiorizes his and his colleagues' goals separately, to an observer it appears as a single action. Individual praxis is the model of group praxis that is perceived by other groups or non-grouped individuals as a single entity. The group is not some supra power controlling the individual. The collective action is formed by voluntary individual effort.

The group's choice of a goal naturally occurs in the dialectical process of individual's choice. Participation

in group action is nothing more than individual choice, that is, one's praxis toward the outside world. In group activity the individual identifies other men with himself, and feels that he is a "common individual," a member.

Thus, to form a group praxis the individual must be able to find his end in the common aim. In so doing obedience to the common object is "nothing more than the common acceptance of the same solution, according to which a solution is mine to the extent that is the solution of my neighbor."³⁴ The group is a product of the organic praxis of each member.

Like man as an organic being, the group has an internal link between members and their interiorization or mediation of group interaction. The difference lies in the fact that the former constitutes its praxis by its own production, while the latter is constituted by the former's praxis. The activity of the former animates the latter, and endows it with organic characteristics. Nevertheless, the group is still inorganic, existing only through individuals who serve as third mediators. While individual praxis is totalizing activity by a project, group praxis is made by other organic authors and the direction of activity is decided by the internalizing activity of individual members. The latter, therefore, has no project of its own. Group action is constituted by human praxis, and it is not mere passivity.

³⁴Desan, p. 174.

As the reciprocity between two persons is recognized only by the mediation of a third party, a group as interrelation between its members is recognized only by other groups or individuals who are not grouped. In the post office, the clerks inside the windows are members of the group only in the eyes of customers outside the windows. At the same time the clerks view the customers as a group. Each group sees the opposite as an objective entity. Without an other party perceiving the group as a group one does not exist. In the post office, I, a customer, see the clerk who serves me as a member of a group and mediate between the clerk as a common individual and the service of the group as a whole. Only through my recognition that he is a member of a group and that his service is the common aim of the group does the group exist. Each group is the object of the totalization of the other. The reciprocity between groups is the basis of the dialectical development of the interaction between different groups.³⁵

Instituted Group

As groups evolve, they gradually turn to centralized authority. In the fused group each individual is the regulatory third who can direct collective action; everyone is equal. Each member mediates other's integration into

³⁵Hayim, p. 116.

group action. When I totalize individuals, within group action, I am totalized by them. This unity in a fused group suggests that the group is easily ruptured. As it becomes larger and its distribution of functions between members becomes more complex, it must be institutionalized. Institutions are characterized by hierarchical form. Man encounters another seriality as a group becomes organized. All members are subjects, and, at the same time, objects of group action. As the group becomes organized, members become the means by which organization is achieved. At this stage, each member is mediated by others. Seriality is deepened. In a more institutionalized group "once those who the same again . . . have become simultaneously and secretly Others, alterity becomes the secret truth of unity for everyone." (CRD 593) Sartre asserts that the inert unity in the institution is "the struggle of freedom against an internal revival of seriality." (CRD 598) Because of the repetition of seriality and its inevitability, Sartre remarks, "it is beginning to appear that the movement of the investigation may possibly be circular." (CRD 591)

The institution is a new way to regulate the betrayal of individuals. But it is also a dialectical necessity. Sartre explains the transition from the group in fusion to the institution in terms of temporalization. The process from serialized group to fused group and back again is

circular. It is the endless flight toward the future. In Sartre's words: "the group creates itself in order to create and destroys itself by creating itself." (CRD 590)

As the scale of the group becomes larger, the conflicts between sub-groups become more complicated. Bureaucracy in modern society appears as a systematically regulatory structure to control the arising sub-groups through its divisions of roles and hierarchical centralization.

In a fused group everybody is sovereign. But a bureaucracy needs concentration of power for controlling traitors. As the power of regulation is concentrated, it becomes authority. This authority need not be a particular sovereign power. Within group in fusion every member regulates everyone else. All are equal as mediators, thirds, and as such are co-sovereigns. Everyone also is capable of betrayal under unrestrained free fusion as well as is regulator. To maintain permanent group cohesiveness and to defend against betrayal, it is necessary to centralize all regulatory authority. By accepting a single regulator, members cede their rights. Authority is granted to one sovereign. The sovereign may be one man or one well-organized group like a political party. If there is one leader, he interiorizes the multiplicity of third parties in the group. That is, all third regulatory power is centralized in him. "He is a universal mediation, and he destroys reciprocity wherever it exists, and relations between transcended third parties cannot establish themselves

except through his mediation." (CRD 623) By obeying his order, other third parties become the product of his sovereignty. For Sartre, this sovereign authority is not a super power, but is a consequence of human action since it resulted only from members' conceding their rights.

In a bureaucracy, sub-groups and individuals who are not part of a group are directed by the sovereign. Sub-groups must function as a mediation between the top authority and the serial bottom in the pyramid. In the bureaucratized structure, however, the sovereign (top leadership) keeps trying to maintain hierarchies which prevent sub-groups and non-grouped individuals from acting independently and thereby threatening the sovereign's monopoly on power.

Sartre criticizes Stalinism as the model of one-person bureaucracy. For Sartre revolution can be succeed only by an oppressed class through its spontaneous uprising. The Communist Party once in power constitutes a new dominant class with its own bureaucracy, which inevitably turns away from carrying out the revolution and instead concentrates on consolidating its own power.

The disscussion up to this point has dealt with the intelligibility of collective praxis as the solution of individual isolation. As an individual is involved in more institutionalized group action, the free individual praxis of a group member becomes unimportant: his function in a

group is what he is. Group praxis appears as external determination of individual members' praxis. There is endless effort to be liberated from the seriality. This cycle of endless interaction of serialized individuals and groups is history itself.

CHAPTER V

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF HISTORY

As a dialectic develops from an individual entity into a group entity, the individual, striving to meet his needs in the outside world, accepts the interiorization of his environment as his project. Facing scarcity, the individual becomes the Other to men who have the same project for survival. Matter produced by man returns to man as the inert result of man's praxis. Reciprocity between men is mediated by matter. They recognize each other as an object of each individual totalization. This social relationship begins the objectification of human praxis. One's praxis toward his environment is dissolved as an object by the other's praxis. To counteract the impotency of the individual, men who have a common aim in a given social situation gather to solve their problems collectively. Nonetheless, no matter what type of collective actions are exercised, Sartre claims they can have their meaning only in and through the individual man as the agent of all reciprocity. The very beginning of reciprocity is the condition that "man is a practical organism living with a multiplicity of similar organisms in a field of scarcity." (CRD 735) No one in social relationships can avoid conflicts or cooperation with environmental conditions, including other men.

Society is like a pot filled with different serialized groups and individuals. A society itself is the collective of individuals who stand side by side in reciprocity with one another. The distinct elements of a social structure are revealed in the relationship of groups and series.

(CRD 635) There are endless cyclical movements from the group to the series and back again. A group is formed to achieve a goal. When the goal is achieved, the group generally dissolves into series, which may once again be formed into a group when a new goal is made. In highly organized groups, man's seriality is deepened by the manipulation of the sovereign group, the ruling elite. The group is dissolved in the attempt by the members to regroup as individuals. This may occur at any point in social life.

History is the dialectic in which groups come from a series, to which they eventually return. In this state men are indifferent to each other. Men in series act to negate their being, which is made the object of another's project. A group is formed when men in a series feel an impotency which they attempt to overcome. These movements between the states of groups and series occur dialectically, as we have seen. It is the result of totalizing activities of groups and series.

The history of the individual's social life, according to Sartre, begins with an isolated individual, existing in the practico-inert field. It evolves towards the creation of a group in fusion, the appearance of an organized

group, and a return to the original state. Within the context of history, groups are quasi-actors, as constituted praxis derived from individual constitutive praxis. The group is the unity of multiple individual projects. Human individuality is comprehended within the group entity. Individual totalization is replaced by group totalization. The group is the only way to gain practical freedom in social life. The group is the means by which man cooperates in order to survive. It is "a mode of existence: . . . the group is both the most effective means of controlling the surrounding materiality in the contest of scarcity and the absolute end as pure freedom liberating men from alterity."

(CRD 673)

The group has a continuous relationship with serial men who are not yet grouped. For instance, a collection of serial individuals who desire to gain collective power could form their own group. This new group opposes the existing power. If the new group destroys the old, the latter returns to a series. Likewise, if the new group is suppressed by the old, the former is interiorized by the latter--that is, dissolved into the series. Regardless of which result is attained it is not lasting. Inevitably the new group will face other challenges either from within or from without which will either be suppressed and absorbed or will prevail and thereby begin the process anew by opposing other serial individuals.

Within the organization, the distribution of tasks and the fear of fraternity-terror transform common freedom into a mechanized structure. Individuals and sub-groups are manipulated by the attempt of the institutionalized leadership to permanently rule. This activity becomes externally determined and the sub-groups and individuals relinquish their own judgement. In this context, man is alienated from his own loyalty to the group and is subject to the supervision of a more inhuman and mechanized terror. From this seriality a new need for protection arises. Between the existing and the resisting powers one party totalizes the other. One recognizes the other as an object of its praxis. The reciprocity is itself a dialectical movement.

By circularity Sartre means that the states of series and group are repeated, not with same content but only with the same form. The circularity is not the recurrence of the same content of action in the same situation. Since everything is interconnected dialectically and is evolving toward an unknown future, there is no final state. One cannot determine which state precedes the other between the group and the series. They are all on a circle. There is no given priority; "they are reciprocally product and producer, in continual interaction and modification."³⁶

³⁶Howard, p. 101.

The seriality is never eliminated. According to Sartre's logic, if the group never faces dissolution into the series, history stops there. For the alienated seriality is caused by a perception of scarcity which can never be eliminated. In industrial society class distinctions are quite deep, with the population divided between capitalists and workers. Such a society can be defined as a container of different classes. There is a reciprocal recognition between classes just as there is between individuals and between groups. That is, through the existence of another class one class recognizes its own existence and sees its own interests as different from the other. The interaction between classes is the dialectical exchange of each class's praxis as a whole.

Class as an interior bond between members is composed of institutionalized groups, fused groups, and series. As a container of each different totalization, a class, unlike the group, does not operate as a single actor. It is rather a whole determined by the behavior of each actor who recognizes that he is a class being acting within his class interests. The existence of the class reveals itself on three different levels. A class is a multiplicity of groups and series interacting with one another and seeking a common goal. The organized group within a class (for example, trade unions in the working class) acts in the interest of the class to change the existing social

structure. The trade union is itself "the working class objectified, exteriorised, institutionalised and possibly bureaucratised" (CRD 682) As a fused group its action seeks to achieve the goals of the class. Among the workers collectively this level of activity arises at a moment of unbearable tension. These institutionalized or pledged groups serve as an apparatus for class interests. Both of these levels, the organized and fused group, come from the seriality. There are also serial individuals who are not in fused or institutionalized groups, but are class-beings acting within the common aim. The combination of the organized group serving as the vanguard or active force, with a fused group as the locus of common action and the series as the origin or group formation, comprises a class. The dialectical reciprocity between these elements of the class creates a practical unity between members. These different levels exist anywhere, and at any time within the same class.

Since a class is the totality of totalization of the three levels in process, an individual in series is affected by the other two levels. Concomitantly, he affects them, either as they interiorize him or are dissolved into other series. The reciprocity which exists in the relationship between the three levels is understood only through dialectical comprehension. One level totalizes the other two through its own praxis. The exchange of praxis among

levels is a dialectical movement, for each level can recognize itself through recognition of the other two. Each level is praxis and, at same time, the object of praxis. In a word, a class is, as a whole, a single praxis holding a single project which man "produce itself differently at different practical level." (CRD 690) A class is the unity of many different temporalizations by many different subjects.

The intelligibility of class action, for Sartre, is accomplished only by the dialectical comprehension of the individual man. As an observer outside a class and an agent of the reciprocal action within a class or in relationship with other classes, the individual man is the only totalizer of class actions.

The relationship among classes in a society is the exchange of praxis of those classes. A society is a container of all levels of reciprocity between and among individuals, groups and classes. In capitalist society, the conflict between employers and workers emanates from the unequal distribution of benefits and contradictory efforts to maintain the present structure or to destroy or change it. This class struggle results from the effort by one class to overcome the alienation caused by the adversary's actions. In this instance, workers are alienated by the exploitation of the bourgeoisie. The reaction of the bourgeoisie against the uprising of the working class is

also dialectical. Generally class struggle is understood in the context of the dialectical reciprocity mediated by matter. In this example, the reciprocal relationship is mediated by capital. One class totalizes the other into its project. The starting point of reciprocity is the awareness of the adversary as Other. One seeks to interiorize the other's freedom into one's own.

In the context of scarcity, history is ultimately the totalization of all struggles between different interests in the material field. Struggle begins when one party tries to stifle the other's freedom to further its own project, and the latter reacts. Sartre refers to violence in broad terms resembling what we might consider conflict. Thus, praxis as human freedom is naturally violent within the reciprocity mediated by inert matter. In the presence of scarcity, human praxis is a "struggle" for life, a fight to satisfy one's perceived needs. (CRD 736) This violent struggle is one of "freedom against freedom through the mediation of inorganic matter." (Ibid.) One's opponent in such a struggle may be any other man who threatens one's freedom, and thus becomes "anti-men," or even one's "Brother in so far as he has the permanent possibility of becoming anti-human himself." (CRD 736-37) Through totalizing activity one's praxis dissolves the other's. One who wants to be an Other by escaping from the serial state into an organized group faces the terror produced by

fraternity. Other members violently deny his right to secede. This fraternity-terror is the freedom of the rest of the members against the freedom of their brother. Without the recognition by an individual that the adversary is also a free entity, that the preservation of one's own freedom entails in some way the negation of the other freedom, reciprocity does not exist.

Prior to a struggle between two parties there is an awareness that one's adversary has the same project one has. This party synthesizes the adversary's action and interiorizes it into its own project. Referring, as an example, to a chess game, Sartre illustrates the inter-comprehension of two players. By anticipating his opponent's strategy for victory, a player devises an appropriate response to deny that goal. The moves of the competing players are called, by Sartre, "a series of negative and predictable reaction." (CRD 813) The scarcity of opportunities for victory forces one to negate the aim of the other. The judgement to move one's piece is generated from a regressive remembrance of past actions of the other as well as from a progressive prediction of his future movements. The relation between two players throughout the game is the exchange of praxis in order to synthesize each other's temporal decisions and actions.

Man makes history, and history as a totalizing condition limits man's actions. The given social conditions man

faces after birth have been made prior to his birth by previous generations. Man is born within history. He is the agent of the dialectical development of history through the interiorization of the given social conditions as history, while his totalization is limited by the social conditions which have been created before his interiorization. History as the totality of the past, present and future of man is not only the product of human action but also the basis on which man acts and is connected with other men in all generations, past, present and future.

The subject matter of the Critique is the reciprocity of actors in the dialectical movement of history and its intelligibility. The comprehension of history is possible only by a dialectical investigation of human involvement within history. Sartre asserts that

. . . relations between men are always the dialectical consequence of their activity to precisely the extent that they arise as a transcendence of domination and institutionalised human relations. Man exists for man only in given circumstances and social conditions, so every human relation is historical. (CRD 97-98)

History is the universal temporalization. History as a whole is the multiplicity of individual totalizations by individual authors. Thus, any particular author cannot be the author of the entire totalization of history.

History is itself projective. Insofar as the particular totalization is an endless movement toward the unknown future, history is also a endless process toward the

future. History, furthermore, is not merely accumulated past incidents, but rather a regressive-progressive synthesis.

History begins when the individual person begins to recognize his external world in the context of scarcity and co-existence with other men. History is the process in which men endlessly try to solve their problems of alienation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Jean-Paul Sartre in his Critique of Dialectical Reason seeks to develop a theory of history based on humanistic values. The aim of this thesis is to describe and evaluate that project.

As Sartre says in the Search for a Method, in his introduction to his Critique, his object of study is individual man. He tries to explore the position of the individual within a social-historical context because individual consciousness and actions are always attached to a given society and history. For Sartre the individual evolves his ontological freedom into practical, social freedom only in relation to other men within his economic and social situation.

Dialectical reasoning is chosen to explain the inclusive internal, and systematic movement of man's relationship with his environment. In contrast to Hegel, Sartre asserts that it is man, not Spirit, who unfolds the dialectical progression. He also objects to Marx's notion that man is merely a part of the whole of material nature. Sartre's dialectical materialism states that man, through his interaction with matter, comprehends and creates history.

Sartre attempts to apply existential ontology to the systematic interpretation of man's social behavior. His

main contribution to social theory is in allocating priority to an actor's consciousness and actions. Sartre contends that contemporary empirical methods of social inquiry generate only simplistic causal relationships. Dialectical reasoning, on the other hand, is necessary to validly depict human reality.

Sartre provides the basis for a humanistic interpretation of social activity by clarifying what man is in his social-historical context. His basic and important principle is that everything begins with man's free praxis, everything man faces in the external world is faced with a free choice.

His explanation, at times, is inadequate. Sartre's humanistic dialectical materialism is premised on several problematic assumptions.

1. The Practico-inert. Sartre argues that the material world is a product of man, the results of man's past praxis. However, since the practico-inert is beyond the control of the producers, man seems to be powerless to control even his own praxis. Why is it necessary to produce what man never intends? By animating the material world as the product of human praxis Sartre tries to escape the fact that man apparently lies totally within his material environment and is often unable to avoid its determining influence.

2. Scarcity. In the context of scarcity men are inevitably in conflict. Sartre assumes that men are so

egoistic and so hostile that they are totally alienated from each other and, ultimately, from themselves. Is there any possibility that the members of a society could cooperate to share scarce things with each other? Just as Marxist analysis can be applicable only to certain societies, Sartre's theory of scarcity is applicable to some, but not necessarily all, societies which experience scarcity. It is apparently valid only in societies of hostile, self-centered actors.

3. Violence. The reciprocity of individuals is explained as freedom against freedom. It is formed by the effort to destroy an adversary's freedom to gain mine. Sartre again assumes that man is self-centered. Following the emergence of a group-in-fusion, man is limited by his promise to remain loyal to group action. The violence used to maintain his promise is that of freedom against freedom, which is revealed as the fraternity-terror. There is no more freedom of individual will unless he is thoroughly isolated from society. In this situation, man can never really be free. The system denies individual freedom in order to maintain its existence.

4. Third. Men's reciprocity can be objectively observed only by another man as a third party, not by concerned parties. Only through this third, who sees the other two actors as the objects of his perception, can both actors have an objectified role in an historical

context. This is also the nature of human relationships within a social context. Thus, even though Sartre insists that man is totally free, he believes that man is unable to recognize his role in history unaided.

In sum, Sartre's shortcoming is that, even in the context of social and historical relationships, he persists in asserting that everything is decided by man's free intentionality. Real social life, however, shows the existence of unavoidable restrictions. Man is inevitably influenced by his existing social context in deciding his actions. Though man is, as Sartre says, ontologically free, and his freedom may never be thwarted under any circumstance, he, nevertheless, inevitably encounters external limitations. From his birth, man faces established social conditions which limit his actions. Is it necessary that man's product becomes anti-praxis? If so, then we are not really free, for if man freely chose his environment he would likely not choose that which harms him.

Sartre stresses the necessity of certain conditions for dialectical development, but he tends to excessively simplify them. For his dialectic to apply to a society its participants must encounter scarcity in the same way, and feel hostility and alienation. But if man must lie in these conditions to satisfy the dialectic, he is already not free. Freedom cannot be explained in terms of compulsion or coercion.

The general fallacy of Sartre's theory is that he simplifies social phenomena and perhaps trivializes the immense social influence on an individual's behavior. Indeed, it could be argued that in modern industrial societies, man's alienation from himself is even greater because environmental pressures are more intense and unavoidable. Choosing a life style, an occupation, a group activity, or any other individual project is strongly effected by one's social structure. Sartre inadvertently shows us that a great deal of the material world is beyond our control and contrary to our desires.

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