Sport, Being and Dialectical Reason: A Sartrean
Contribution to Critical Theorisations of Sport

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Abstract

The critical theorisation of sport has drawn on a wide range of social thought. Frankfurt School Marxism, Gramscian influenced hegemony theories, figurational sociology and the works of Bourdieu and Foucault, have all been prominent influences for the analysis of sport. Work such as this fails to place sufficient emphasis on the role of individual praxis, resulting in general conceptualisation, and a failure to account for concrete particularities. In addition, the issue of temporality is largely ignored within the theorisation of sport.

This thesis treats the work of theorists influenced by the concept of hegemony as a point of departure from which to rethink the critical theorisation of sport. Having identified a number of problems with the hegemonist position, which stem from a failure to consider the constituting role of individual praxis, the thesis explores the potential of an approach to the theorisation of sport which draws on elements of the work of Jean-Paul Sartre.

The influence of the early work of Sartre, particularly *Being and Nothingness*, on the application of his progressive-regressive method to the study of sport is explored. This is followed by an analysis of Sartre's conception of dialectical reason, and an explication of the mediating factors which constitute the 'formal conditions' of social possibility.

The progressive component of Sartre's method is explored through an analysis of key aspects of the posthumously published *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume two. This includes a study of boxing as a vehicle for the analysis of the notion of incarnation, which, it is argued, is central to the formulation of a synthetic method.

The example of boxing is explored further through a detailed outline of a progressive-regressive analysis of the 1974 World Heavyweight title fight in Zaïre between George Foreman and Muhammad Ali.

A regressive analysis of boxing is conducted, in relation to the conditions experienced at the time of the fight. This is followed by a progressive analysis to explain Ali's unique historialisation of his times.

The thesis concludes by discussing the implications of the progressive-regressive method for our understanding of the general and the particular, the construction of a synthetic method and freedom and necessity in the critical theorisation of sport.

Acknowledgements

Researching and writing a thesis such as this is not a social experience. In fact, it is an extremely lonely process. One spends a great deal of time occupied with thoughts which simply cannot be shared with family, friends and colleagues. One often appears largely absent while being quite clearly physically present. It is for this reason that my thanks are offered largely for tolerance of these absences and a large amount of practical assistance, rather than for direct assistance with the content of the thesis. The content, including the failings, of the thesis is something for which I am solely responsible.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Graham McFee and Professor John Sugden for their assistance and advice, but most of all, for allowing me the freedom to explore such an unusual topic. Dr Gregory Elliott and Tom Hickey also proved invaluable advisors during certain periods of the research. For their assistance, I am extremely grateful.

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If Sartre is to be believed, my parents have played a far larger role in enabling me to complete this thesis than they realise. The combination of my mother's constant

enquiries about my progress with the thesis and my father's expression of support through silence proved the perfect combination.

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Introduction: Rethinking Critical Theorisations of Sport.

Jean-Paul Sartre developed a concrete dialectical philosophy of history with a strong ethical dimension, that was concerned with Being[1] and consciousness. It is a philosophy which explores the role of human freedom, and restrictions on that freedom. As such, it is concerned, though not exclusively, with the individual and everyday experience. We might also say that Sartre's is a philosophy of commitment that is concerned with change (both political and temporal) and allows a significant role for the imagination in our understanding of history. While, broadly speaking, all this may be true; it really tells us very little about the theory that he developed. There is no substitute for engaging with the detail and the tortuous terminology of the work of Sartre. To undertake this task as a means of rethinking the critical theorisation of sport presents us with a problem. Sartre may deal with areas which have traditionally been the concern of sociology and the sociology of sport, such as class, institutions, groups and their formation, and even the occasional sporting example. But he tackles these issues in a manner which is far from familiar to most practitioners of the sociology, or even the philosophy, of sport.

The purpose of this investigation is to rethink the critical theorisation of sport in light of the work of Sartre, as there are a number of problems with dominant approaches to the critical analysis of sport, which Sartre's thought may help us resolve. To that end, we will begin by looking at critical theorisations of sport which draw on the work of Gramsci,

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[1] I have adopted a practice common amongst translators of Heidegger in capitalising 'Being' as a method of distinguishing between the ontic and the ontological uses of the term. In other words, to differentiate between 'beings' (entities) and the to-be (what it means for things to exist). Heidegger does not adopt this approach himself because all nouns are capitalised in German.

specifically in relation to the concept of hegemony, and its use by practitioners of 'British cultural studies', such as Raymond Williams. This is a suitable starting point as such work represents a dominant force in the theorisation of sport, one which has occupied both sociologists of sport, and philosophers of sport, since the early 1980s.

Such a point of departure highlights the close association between this investigation and the sociology of sport. Yet this is *not* a work of sociology. Craib (1976) begins his study of sociology and Sartrean existentialism by situating the work of Sartre in opposition to sociology. He claims that the work of Sartre (Craib simply uses the term 'existentialism') 'grew up in opposition to an increasingly rational industrial and democratic society, against what Weber was to see as the dominant trend in modern society: bureaucratic rationality. In other words, it was opposed to a society in which sociology was establishing itself as an integral part' (Craib 1976: 2). Sartre clearly had a negative opinion of sociology as commonly practised. He refers to sociology as having a 'non-situated and, therefore, even non-human viewpoint.'[2] He also claims that sociology is 'non-dialectical and non-comprehensive', the sociologist has 'the eyes of a positivist.'[3] Despite this antipathy to sociology on the part of Sartre, we cannot avoid the fact that any critical theorisation of sport must deal with subject matter that has been explored in most detail, to date, by sociologists of sport. The key point is that Sartre approaches the social wholes commonly dealt with by sociology from an entirely different perspective from the dominant theoretical trends within the sociology of sport. As a result, it leads us to a distinctly different methodology and set of conclusions.

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[2] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 139

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In the final lines of *Class, Sports and Social Development*, Richard Gruneau tells us that 'progress in the sociology of sport depends primarily upon our capacities to make the critique of sport a part of the much broader attempt to discern the alternatives within which human reason and freedom can make history' (Gruneau 1999: 112). Reference to 'the much *broader* attempt' leads us back to the opening pages of that text, where we encounter a discussion of what Gruneau (1999: xix) sees as 'one of the basic problems' facing the sociology of sport. Gruneau laments the demise of concerns with 'classical' research questions, and the accompanying style of analysis. He cites favourably a description of early sociology as *synthetic* in character and proceeds to chart the break up of this synthesis as a result of the institutionalisation of sociology. He claims that institutionalisation led to the setting of specific tasks for the discipline which brought a move away from synthetic encyclopedianism. This also meant a move from political philosophy and the philosophy of history, which was seen as ideologically laden, to a positivist emphasis on logic, analytical reason and empirical analysis.[4]

Despite doubts as to whether Durkheim and Weber can be regarded as wholly part of the shift in emphasis which led to a neopositivist structural functionalism, Gruneau argues that this was nonetheless the general trend, particularly in North American sociology

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[3] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 286. Also see p. 161 and p. 242, and Flynn (1997) p. 304 n. 32.

[4] Giddens (1976) p. 11 continues this 'story' by claiming that 'throughout the nineteenth century, idealism in social philosophy and romanticism in literature, in their various guises, maintained their distance from the intellectual standpoints fostered by the natural sciences, and normally expressed deep hostility to machine technology. But for the most part, authors within these traditions were sceptical of the possibility of creating a science of society as they were distrustful of the claims of the sciences of nature, and their views served as no more than a critical foil to the much more influential writings of those who sought to create just such a science.'

through the 1940s and 1950s. C. Wright-Mills may have been the first notable voice of dissent in relation to this trend. The 1960s and 1970s saw something of a return, albeit a partial return, to the synthetic character of classical sociology, along with new theoretical developments. Gruneau concludes, however, following Giddens, that this return to the synthetic approach has led to little new insight. This is not just the result of a persistence of the 'theoretical orthodoxies of the forties and fifties' (Gruneau 1999: xxiii), but, more importantly, it is a consequence of the fact that the new theoretical and methodological directions which have been adopted since the 1960s have failed to provide the insight that they promised.[5]

In addition to claiming that the move away from a synthetic approach led to a fragmentation of sociology into many subsociologies which concentrate on narrow problems and often employ an equally narrow empiricism, Gruneau also argues that the domination of Stalinism, and the inclination to dogmatic interpretations of Marx, even in Western Europe, has meant that Marxism has not given satisfactory solutions either, despite its obvious promise. This leads Gruneau to argue that, in looking for a solution to the problems facing sociology, it is necessary to return to the concerns of classical sociology and preserve a unity of the critical, the empirical and the interpretative. In addition, he stresses the significance of questions relating to human capacity and the restrictions on that capacity in changing social environments (agency and structure by another name). Finally Gruneau (1999: xxviii) warns against the uncritical application of abstract theoretical models.

Gruneau raises four issues which frame the problem which will be explored here. First, there is the advocacy of a synthetic methodology. This is closely linked to the second issue, resistance to positivism, analytical reason and empiricism. The third factor of importance here is the inadequacy of the new theoretical and methodological directions that have been adopted since the 1960s. Finally, there is the problem of dogmatic interpretations of Marx as a result of the domination of Stalinism. Taken together, these issues frame a problem but do not necessarily suggest an answer. Gruneau offers one approach but, for reasons which will become clear, we shall explore another, far more wide reaching approach to these issues and the accompanying problem of an historically sensitive synthetic method which explores new theoretical and methodological directions for the study of sport.

Both Gidddens and C. Wright Mills approach a synthetic method but ultimately fail to provide anything which conforms to the requirements of such a method. The same is true of Gruneau. Giddens (1986: 13) sees the sociological imagination as consisting of 'an historical, an anthropological and a critical sensitivity.' By recovering 'the world we have lost' (Giddens 1986: 14), we are able to appreciate the difference between the lives that we live today and those of our immediate predecessors. This may be true, but far more significant is the fact that historical analysis is essential if we are to grasp the process involved, as praxis[6] responds to existing circumstances in light of a projected future, yet

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[5] This seems a rather strange claim for Gruneau to make given that he has drawn on the work of Gramsci, Foucault and Bourdieu since writing *Class, Sports and Social Development*. See Gruneau (1991 and 1993).
[6] When referring to 'praxis' we will adopt Sartre's interpretation of the term. For Sartre, 'praxis' is purposive historical human action which inscribes itself in matter. Matter in which past praxis is inscribed

is deviated in this process. Giddens does not grasp the role of individual historical action, or the restrictions and deviations of that action. He may have been closer to the formulation of a productive synthetic method had he broadened his meaning of the term 'anthropological' beyond that which allows us to eradicate ethnocentrism.

C. Wright Mills (1959: 7) appears to be approaching a synthesis when he refers to 'the capacity to shift from one perspective to another – from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry.' Mills (1959: 7) claims that 'it is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self – and to see the relations between the two' that constitutes the superiority of the sociological imagination as an approach to the study of the social world.

The advance that we find in Mills is the concern with the individual and the personal. Mills (1959: 143) claimed that 'social science deals with the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within social structures ... these three – biography, history, society – are the co-ordinate points of the proper study of man.' Flynn (1997: 149) points to the similarity between the approaches of Mills and Sartre, claiming that 'Mills echoes ... the ideal of Sartre's approach and anticipates his subsequent characterisation of his massive "biography" of Flaubert.' The subject of that biography

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is referred to by Sartre as the 'practico-inert.' Praxis always encounters an existing practico-inert and transcends it to produce a new practico-inert. See *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 734. We

(*The Family Idiot*), which Sartre claims is a sequel to *The Problem of Method*, is 'what at this point in time, can we know about a man?'[7] Flynn suggests that both Mills and Sartre may have been influenced by *verstehende Soziologie,* and more specifically, Dilthey and Weber.

Mills (1959: 6-7), however, maintains a distinction between the personal, or individual and the public, or social and grossly oversimplifies our task by failing to recognise the role of the social in the individual and the individual in the social. Despite Mills' reference to biography, the issue of individual praxis is as far from his concern as it is from that of most other sociologists and it is this which prevents Mills, Giddens or Gruneau from formulating an adequate synthetic method. It is also this issue which makes the work of Sartre worthy of exploration in relation to this issue.

It is necessary to be not only more specific, but also more discerning about what are the requirements of our synthetic method. Yet, at this early stage, any comments must still be general. The very nature of our problem suggests that we should begin by rejecting artificial disciplinary restrictions. The problems outlined by Gruneau are not problems facing sociology, but problems facing any attempt to understand the social world. We also require a synthesis, rather than a sum of the many accounts that can be given of an event. This suggests that we must preserve a role for the individual (exactly what role is not yet clear), while avoiding idealism and voluntarism. In addition, we require a method that is sensitive to temporality. This does not simply mean that it must be historical.

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will discuss these terms in more detail in chapter three.
[7] *The Family Idiot* volume one, p. ix

Rather, we must be able to account for the temporal spread of Being, the fact that everything is becoming. Finally, a synthetic method must, as Gruneau (1999) suggested, be concrete rather than abstract. That is, while any theorisation may have a significant abstract component, it must support a methodology that is capable of undertaking concrete studies. If it cannot, we drift into an idealised account, which makes sense as abstract theory, but bears little relationship to the real world.

Mills (1959: 6) was correct to claim that 'no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey.' It seems remarkable how often this point is ignored. Although, when one considers the full consequences of such a claim for a synthetic approach to the study of the social world, it is less surprising because it opens a theoretical debate which greatly complicates our problem as we have identified it. It is in the exploration of these complications that Sartre can be of assistance and, conveniently for those interested in the study of sport, it is through a study of boxing that Sartre elaborates the key idea that forms the link between biography and history. This is essential to the formulation of a synthetic method.

Boxers are individuals, each with a unique biography and therefore, a unique situation within any specific event. Who, for example, are George Foreman and Muhammad Ali?[8] What is the significance of Foreman's acceptance of boxing as 'the vindication of the American dream' (Sugden 1996: 191), and Ali's use of boxing as a platform for political activism from which he 'turn[ed] his back on America, Christianity and the white race'

(Marqusee 1999: 10)? To what degree did Foreman and Ali see themselves as representatives of their nation, their religion or their race, and in what way did this influence their actions? What was the influence of external factors such as the media, promoters, spectators, the venue, the boxing community, the American public and the Nation of Islam on this unique event and the actions of the two fighters?[9] These are only a few of the questions that are not answered by a simple description of one man hitting another, no matter how evocative the language used. The most pressing question, however, is how do the various issues that arise, come together in a synthetic account of the historical event?

Sociologists have attempted to give us a more detailed understanding of the practices and processes which combine to produce specific fights and the boxing world as a whole. Existing theoretical and methodological approaches have hitherto proved, at best, incomplete and often inadequate. Attempts to characterise sport, and boxing in particular, as part of a civilising process (Elias and Dunning 1986, Dunning 1993 and Sheard 1990) have attempted to compress the diversity of history into a model that has far less explanatory power than it is often accorded. Such work has been critiqued in some detail in relation to boxing elsewhere (Sugden 1996: 174-180) and repetition of such arguments need not detain us here. Both Sugden (1996) and Wacquant (1992, 1995 and 1998) have attempted to apply a synthetic approach to the study of boxing, yet both have failed to provide more than a sum of accounts of various aspects of boxing. Here, we will explore how the work of Sartre can assist in the development of a method which can provide a

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[8] Later we will consider the Ali-Foreman fight in Zaïre in 1974 in some detail.
[9] We will address some of these issues in chapters five and six.

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true synthesis. This will be done through a discussion of boxing and will therefore help us to clarify some of the theoretical and methodological issues which will help render boxing intelligible.

Philosophy and Sport

It is necessary at this early stage to clarify some central issues concerning sport by reviewing how they have been raised in the philosophy of sport. Morgan (2000: 206-7) identifies three major areas of inquiry within the philosophy of sport; metaphysics, epistemology and axiology. He regards the following three questions as central to the metaphysical (and specifically ontological) study of sport:

1. 'What makes a given physical activity a sporting activity as opposed to some other related human movement activity?

2. What differences and distinctions can be drawn between sport and other related human movement phenomena?

3. What similarities and commonalities can be drawn between sport and other related human movement phenomena?'

Around these three questions Morgan (2000) identifies three areas of controversy in the metaphysics of sport. First, there is the dispute over the aim of attempting to define sport.

MacAloon (1991) attacked attempts to define sport by arguing that such attempts fail to recognise the cultural specificity of conceptions of sport. Morgan and Meier (1995:3-4) have defended the attempt to produce definitions arguing that detractors of this approach do not accurately represent the kind of definitions that are sought. Morgan and Meier (1995: 3-4) claim that:

> 'Much of our daily discourse (and this is especially true within popular cultural forms like sport) is said in confusing ways that typically conceal far more than they reveal. The definitional quest for greater precision and clarity, then, is less a block to inquiry into cultural practices, as detractors of definitional inquiry like to claim, than a particularly fruitful way to carry out such inquiry. What makes this inquiry productive is precisely that it takes into account the twists and turns in meaning that are common to our ordinary discourse about sport without surrendering to its obfuscations, stultifying conventions, and manifest confusions and inconsistencies.'

A second dispute is that between formalist (Suits, 1973) and contextualist (D'Agostino, 1981; Lehman, 1981) definitions of sport. Formalist definitions of sport draw purely on the rules of a sport while contextualist definitions consider both the rules and the social conventions or ethos of 'sport' in general or individual sports. The third and final area of dispute in the metaphysics of sport which Morgan (2000) identifies is that over the relationship between sport and games. In relation to this issue Suits (1973) argues that all sports are games although all games are not sports. He later altered his position (Suits, 1988d and 1989) drawing a distinction between 'athletic performances' and 'athletic

games'. Suits argues that athletic performances are not games because they are essentially defined by the fact that they are judged in relation to ideals of performance as opposed to means-limiting rules which are the basis of athletic games. It is for this reason that they require judges rather than a referee. Kretchmar (1989) and Meier (1988 and 1989) have argued that Suits was wrong to alter his original position.

The issues which Morgan raises are important because, regardless of whether we wish to define sport or not, thinking about these issues helps us to clarify what we are investigating when we consider sport. This is true even if we conclude that sport is not a thing and cannot be defined. The debates around the nature of sport are attempts to come to terms with the range of practices that can be encompassed by the term 'sport'. While it is certainly true that the diversity of sporting practices (especially when different cultures are considered) creates a problem for the theorisation of sport, the attempt to wrap the problem up 'and tie the knot'[10] through the production of a definition is both misguided and guaranteed to fail. McFee (1998) deals with this issue perceptively as part of a wider discussion of whether there are any philosophical issues with respect to sport aside from the obvious ethical issues. He asks us to:

> 'Consider … discussions of "the nature of sport" (or, worse, of the definition of the term "sport"): all who have engaged in these, whether staff or students, recognize their mind-numbing dullness, but aren't they at least the starting point of any philosophical investigation? The answer, of course, is "no", for the conclusion of

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[10] *Search for a Method* p.xxxiii

such discussions must be that sport – like everything else of interest – lacks such a "nature": and the proof here lies, not within the field of philosophical investigation of sport, but in the philosophy of understanding. For it is a perfectly general thesis about concepts and our understanding of them. (Even if it were false, that fact too would have this kind of generality.)' McFee (1998: 6)

The term 'sport' comes from the abstraction of a general essence from the various activities that are regarded as sports. In this sense, we can say that 'sport', or perhaps it would be better to refer to 'Sport', doesn't really exist other than as an abstract concept. We can take this a little further and point out that in the same way that use of the term 'Sport' abstracts an essence from a range of practices, reference to each individual sport abstracts an essence from the concrete instances in which that sporting practice takes place. For example, there is no such thing as 'football'. There are only individual instances of the playing of football. The World Cup Final and a Sunday morning kick-about in the park are very different from each other yet they are both still regarded as football. This is because the general concept of football only has a concrete existence in the individual instances in which the game is played. There is little point in claiming that football is defined by its rules as the briefest observation of children playing football in the street will show that they do not conform to the official rules of the game as outlined by FIFA. Yet, despite this, we would not wish to suggest that they weren't playing football just because they were playing a modified version of the game which suited their environment and resources at the time. It would, therefore, be unwise to attempt to formulate a theory of 'Sport', or even a theory of individual sports. If we were to attempt

this we would be developing a theory of a concept (a theoretical abstracted essence) drawn from a range of different social practices. This would be so far removed from the concrete reality of those social practices that our 'theory' would be meaningless.

The project of formulating a theory of sport appears even more misguided when we consider McFee's (1998) wider point about the philosophy of sport. Having ruled-out debates over the nature of sport, he also finds discussions of non-verbal communication and the notion of an aesthetics of sport to be devoid of philosophical problems which could be said to be anything other than general problems from philosophy viewed in a sporting context. That leaves us with a number of ethical problems which may arise from sport and be distinctive as a result. This, of course, opens the question of whether ethics is a worthwhile enterprise and how universally applicable it could ever be. We will not deal with this issue here. It is sufficient to recognise that a theory of sport would be an unwise goal and the notion of 'the philosophy of sport' as a coherent discipline is also problematic. Considering the issues raised by Morgan (2000) not only clarifies what we are dealing with when we attempt to theorise sport, but it also gives some indication of how we should view that enterprise. In other words, it allows us to see that we are not attempting to produce a 'Theory of Sport' and that historical social practices, rather than 'Sport', should be our real concern.

The application of philosophy to help with the resolution of socio-historical and socio-cultural issues or theoretical problems and the use of sporting examples to help clarify wider philosophical positions, for example, in the philosophy of history, are quite

different from the development of a theory of sport. We can use philosophy and sport in these ways without having any need for an autonomous discipline called 'the philosophy of sport. This is the approach that will be taken here. Sport will be treated as a social practice, the specific nature of which varies with historical, geographical and cultural location. We will, therefore, apply an approach to the philosophical understanding of historical action to a sporting example. That example will be looked at in its specificity. The basic methodological framework could then be applied to other cases, but generalised conclusions could not be drawn from the specific example dealt with here and applied elsewhere without moving back to abstraction. In dealing with a World Heavyweight Title fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman we will be concerned purely with an elite-level professional sporting event. This example has been chosen largely on the basis of the fact that material is readily available on this topic. There is no reason to suggest that more mundane sporting examples could not be analysed with the method used here, but it would be unwise to explore the potential of a rarely used theoretical approach to the study of sport through a contentious example. By concentrating on an elite-level example, we are dealing with a case that is easily accessible. This is important as it improves the clarity of an example if it avoids obscurity. We will return to this issue in the conclusion.

The issue of why sport has been chosen as a worked example for Sartre's philosophy as opposed to any other social practice should also be dealt with here. The range of practices that could be analysed using Sartre's method is very wide indeed. Sartre himself dealt with the French Revolution, Stalinism and the Bolshevik Revolution, and the life and

works of Gustave Flaubert at length. He also employed a number of other examples which were either dealt with in less detail or before he had developed the progressive-regressive method fully. These were mainly literary, historical and political examples, but also included discussions of boxing, a bus queue, the Top Ten and observing a gardener and a workman mending a road. Clearly there are many examples that could be drawn from popular culture and sport is just one of those options. Popular music, television, cinema and the print media would all provide a range of examples, as would the study of youth cultures or sub-cultures. However, sport is so frequently presented as autonomous and detached from the social and political concerns of individuals that it appears as one of the major areas of popular culture that requires detailed and serious interrogation by philosophy and social theory. Popular music, television, cinema, the print media, youth cultures and many other sub-cultures are recognised as sites of resistance far more readily than sport. This, along with the fact that Sartre occasionally used sporting examples as illustrations of points he wished to make, but did not develop those examples fully, makes sport a fairly obvious, although so far largely neglected, area for consideration using the work of Sartre.

The Plan

Having identified a number of problems with the hegemonist theorisation of sport, we will look at the work of Sartre in some detail. We will begin with the more abstract early work, and move towards the theory of History articulated in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and exemplified in *The Family Idiot*, Sartre's 'existential biography' of Gustave

Flaubert. We will trace the development of a social ontology as Sartre's thought develops, along with the gradual formation of his philosophy of History.

The early work of Sartre[11] deals with ontology (the study of Being) and, as a result, is atemporal and highly abstract. It is not designed to be a complete philosophy, but rather a foundation for our understanding of the human world. In reality, it is not even a complete foundation. The early work does, nonetheless, develop some arguments which are central to Sartre's later thought. One of the most striking absences from the early work is that of an adequate social ontology. Despite devoting a large proportion of *Being and Nothingness* to an analysis of social relations (Being For-others), Sartre does not provide an account that can be said to be social in the proper sense. *Being and Nothingness* concludes with individuals in conflictual relations as a result of the objectification of individuals by 'the look' of the Other. This position is encapsulated in Sartre's play, *Huis Clos*,[12] where he declares that 'hell is other people.' The resolution of this problem took many years, and the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

The later work of Sartre sees him formulate a dialectical method (the progressive-regressive method) as a means of introducing the qualities of his 'existentialism' to modern Marxism.[13] Craib (1976: 8) points out that 'the *Critique* aims at making explicit the philosophical basis of Marxism and the social sciences. Both, Sartre argues, force the real world into their concepts and are thus incapable of "understanding" human activity.'

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[11] Among the major texts of Sartre's early work are: *The Transcendence of the Ego, Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions, The Psychology of the Imagination, The War Diaries* and *Being and Nothingness*.
[12] *Huis Clos* was translated as *No Exit* in Sartre, J-P. (1955) *No Exit and Other Plays*, trans. L. Abel, New York: Vintage. *Huis Clos* was first published in France in 1944, a year after *Being and Nothingness*.

We will follow Sartre's thought as he develops his philosophy of History; 'filling in the gaps' by considering posthumously published material. This will lead us to produce a 'sketch' of a progressive-regressive analysis of Muhammad Ali and his World Heavyweight title fight against George Foreman in Zaïre. The aim: to understand the historical agent, and their unique historialisation of their times. How is an individual produced by their times? In addition, how does an individual personalise their social conditioning within the unique incarnation of the historical event? In short, how does the individual historical agent shape their time, as it shapes them?

The work of Sartre comes with a health warning, and the need for something of a disclaimer. As Caws (1984: 2) points out, much of Sartre's work makes 'demands on the reader's patience and the world's supply of paper that can only be called extravagant.' The Sartrean corpus amounts to around 10,000 pages, not including novels and plays, (Caws 1984:1) most, though not all of which has been considered here, albeit not always in detail. Emphasis has been placed on texts which contribute the central body of Sartre's philosophical work: *Being and Nothingness* and both volumes of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The ethical dimension of Sartre's thought has not been explored in detail because a considerable amount of his writing on this issue remains unpublished in France. This leads to the inevitable admission that this is *a* reading of the work of Sartre. It is a reading which must echo Caws (1984: 1) in pointing out that in relation to the arguments contained here, 'I cannot claim that they reflect Sartre's own intentions adequately, or that many of them could not be successfully refuted by other arguments

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[13] See chapter three.

drawn from the same corpus.'[14] In relation to commentaries, much greater emphasis has

been placed on work written after the publication of *The War Diaries* (1983), *Notebooks*

for an Ethics (1983) and *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two (1985).

Commentaries published before 1985 tend to emphasise the regressive element of

Sartre's progressive-regressive method, leaving any account to resemble sociology much

more than Sartre intended. Such difficulties do not, however, prevent a 'Sartrean'

contribution being of great assistance to a rethinking of the critical theorisation of sport.

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[14] This is not as great a problem as it may at first appear. In 1975 Sartre gave an interview (published in Schilpp, 1981, pp. 5-51) in which he responded to the key points made in a collection of twenty-eight critical essays written by leading Sartre scholars. One would have to search very hard indeed to find an example of Sartre agreeing with any of the main points these commentators made in relation to his work. In general, he was scathing in his responses, and was clearly unimpressed by the contributions and commentaries on his work.

Hegemony Theories of Sport: A Point of Departure.

If we wish to rethink the critical theorisation of sport we must begin by considering existing attempts to theorise sport. It is not possible here, nor necessary, to cover all the major theoretical approaches to the study of sport. We could critique a wide range of theories, but this would not take us very far towards producing an alternative to existing approaches. Instead, we will focus on *one* of the major theoretical approaches to sport. This will act as a point of departure from which we will be able to identify key issues to guide our formulation of an alternative approach to the theorisation of sport. In selecting hegemony theories of sport as our starting point, we have already made a number of decisions. First, we have rejected the obscure and the residual; so we are not beginning with a critique of theories that are rarely applied to the study of sport, or to those such as functionalism which are not as strong a feature of the sociology of sport as they were. Functionalism would also be rejected on the basis of a second decision; that we must reject theories which lack the necessary level of criticality. Figurational sociology, for example, would be rejected on this basis. This would leave us with three clear candidates for consideration as our point of departure: Hegemony theories, the work of Bourdieu and the work of Foucault. Here, an assessment has been made of the strengths of these approaches. While they all have significant contributions to make, hegemonist thought appears closest to being able to give a coherent critical account of sport. By beginning from this point, we are able to avoid unproductive discussions, which merely establish theses that are already accepted by hegemonists. For example, this may have been the case had we begun by looking at Foucauldian approaches to the theorisation of sport.

1.1 What is the Hegemonist's Position?

We will begin by simply giving exposition of some of the key theses of hegemonist thought on sport. From here, we will identify some criticisms of such work. As with many schools of thought, identifying a clear 'hegemonist position' presents us with an immediate problem. Within the group of sports theorists who could be considered hegemonists there are differences in influences, methodology and the specifics of their theoretical positions. As a result, it would be rather misleading to follow the example of Morgan (1994a) and address an 'essence' of hegemony theories. The danger is that we create a straw man; an account of hegemonist theories which shares some features with each of the positions of the main sports theorists who could be labelled 'hegemonists', but which differs markedly with each on other issues. For this reason, the term 'hegemonist' will be used here to refer to a loosely connected group of sports theorists in whose work Gramsci's concept of hegemony plays a central role. In an attempt to preserve the specificity of the positions of individual theorists, close consideration will be given to the work of John Hargreaves and that of Richard Gruneau. This is a necessary compromise to preserve accuracy. Space does not permit consideration of every theorist who could be regarded as hegemonist[15] and

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[15] Among those works which are central to the hegemonist position are: Gruneau, R. (1982) 'Sport and the Debate on the State', in Cantelon, H. and Gruneau, R. (1982) *Sport, Culture and the Modern State*, Toronto: University of Toronto. Gruneau, R. (1983) *Class, Sports and Social Development*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. Gruneau, R. (1988) 'Notes on Popular Cultures and Political Practices', in Gruneau, R. (ed) (1988) *Popular Cultures and Political Practices*, Toronto: Garamond Press. Gruneau, R. (1991) 'Sport and "Esprit de Corps": Notes on Power, Culture and the Politics of the Body', in Landry, F., Landry, M. and Yerlès, M. (eds.) (1991) *Sport: The Third Millennium*, Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de L'Université Laval. Gruneau, R. (1993) 'The Critique of Sport in Modernity: Theorising Power, Culture, and the Politics of the Body', in Dunning, G. et al (eds.) *The Sports Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics. Hargreaves, J. (1982a) 'Sport and Hegemony: Some Theoretical Perspectives', in Cantelon, and Gruneau (1982). Hargreaves, J. (1982b) 'Sport, Culture and Ideology', in Hargreaves, J. (1982) *Sport, Culture and Ideology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Hargreaves, J. (1986) *Sport, Power and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity. Hargreaves, J. (1992) 'Sport and Socialism in Britain', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 9 (2) 131-153. Hargreaves, J. and Tomlinson, A. (1992) 'Getting There: Cultural Theory and

generalisation, beyond a certain point, leads us to an inaccurate caricature of a 'hegemonist' position.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the main features of the work of both Hargreaves and Gruneau. From here we will be able to identify some key problems with the 'hegemonist' position. These problems will serve as a guide to our navigation of the work of Sartre. At that point, our concern will not only be with the resolution of the problems identified with the hegemonist framework, but with the formation of a coherent and defensible position in relation to the study of sports as social phenomena. We will begin by outlining the main elements of hegemonist thought on sport. Having outlined their position, we will then offer a critique of the main theses. The first step in identifying the hegemonist position is to grasp hegemonist critiques of other approaches to the theorisation of sport.

1.1.1 The Hegemonist Critiques.

The emergence of theories of sport which draw on the concept of hegemony led to critiques of existing Marxist theories, positivist theories of sport and liberal idealism. In relation to Marxist theories, the positions of both the New Left and structural Marxists influenced by the work of Althusser were subjected to criticism. Structuralist Marxism was principally criticised for failing to give sufficient consideration to the role of human agency and therefore giving a functionalist account of the autonomy of

the Sociological Analysis of Sport in Britain', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, vol. 9: 2, pp. 207-219. Tomlinson, A. (1988) 'Good Times, Bad Times and the Politics of Leisure' in Cantelon, H. and Hollands, R. (1988) *Leisure, Sport and Working-class Cultures*, Toronto: Garamond. Palmer, B. (1988) 'What the Hell' in Gruneau (1988). Corrigan, P. (1988) 'The Politics of Feeling Good' in Gruneau (1988). Donnelly, P. (1988) 'Sport as a Site for "Popular" Resistance' in Gruneau (1988). Hollands, R.

sport in which the autonomy of sport is regarded as simply reproducing existing

relations of domination in society. In addition, Marxism influenced by the Frankfurt

school (mainly the work of Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse) was criticised for

failing to differentiate between popular culture and mass culture. It was also accused

of adopting an elitist position in which mass culture is regarded as responsible for the

creation and maintenance of false consciousness, which pacifies the working class and

diverts them from challenging the ruling class in any significant, organised manner

(Gruneau 1991: 174-175).

Hargreaves' claims that, if the 'official' Marxist position on sport[16] is left aside, there

are three Marxist approaches to sport. These are correspondence theory, reproduction

theory and hegemony theory. Correspondence theory regards sport as completely

determined by capitalism and as demonstrating the complete domination of the ruling

class: So sport would be entirely alienating. Hargreaves cites Brohm, Vinnai and

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(1988) 'Leisure, Work and Working-Class Cultures' in Cantelon, H. and Hollands, R. (1988). Clarke,
J. and Critcher, C. (1985) *The Devil Makes Work*, London: Macmillan.

[16] For discussions of the 'official' Marxist view of sport see Riordan, J. (1977) *Sport in Soviet Society*,
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Riordan, J. (ed.) (1978) *Sport Under Communism*, London:
C. Hurst & Company. Riordan, J. (1980a) *Soviet Sport*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Riordan, J. (1980b)
The Political Role of Sport in Britain and the USSR, The Centre for Leisure Studies. Riordan, J.
(1982a) 'Sport and Communism – On the Example of the Soviet Union' in Hargreaves (1982) *Sport,
Culture and Ideology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Riordan, J. (1982b) 'Sport and the Soviet
State: Response to Morton and Cantelon' in Cantelon, H. and Gruneau (1982) *Sport, Culture and the
Modern State*, Tototno: University of Toronto. Riordan, J. (1987) 'Soviet Muscular Socialism: A
Durheimian Analysis' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, vol. 4, pp. 376-393. Riordan, J. (1988) 'The USSR
and Olympic Boycotts' *International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 5, pp. 349-359. Riordan, J.
(1991) *Sport Politics and Communism*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. Riordan, J. (1993)
'Soviet Style Sport in Eastern Europe: The End of an Era', in Allison (1993) *The Politics of Sport*, New
York: St. Martin's Press. Peppard, V. and Riordan, J. (1993) *Playing Politics: Soviet Sport Diplomacy
to 1992*, Greenwich, Connecticut: Jai Press. Wohl, A. (1968) 'Fifty Years of Physical Culture in the
USSR: Reflections and Conclusions', *International Review of Sport Sociology*, vol. 3, pp. 173-196.
Cantelon, H. (1982a) 'The Rationality and Logic of Soviet Sport', in Cantelon and Gruneau (1982).
Cantelon, H. (1982b) 'Stakhanovism and Sport in the Soviet Union', *Working Papers in the
Sociological Study of Sport and Leisure*. vol. 2, no. 2. Foldesi, G. S. (1991) 'From Mass Sport to the
"Sport for All" Movement in the "Socialist' Countries of Eastern Europe."' *International Review for
the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 26, pp. 283-297. Hoberman, J. (1984) *Sport and Political Ideology*, Austin:
University of Texas Press. Morton, H. (1969) 'Soviet Sport in the 1960s' in Loy, J. W. and Kenyon, G.
S. (1969) *Sport, Culture and Society*, New York: Macmillan. Morton, H. (1982) 'Soviet Sport
Reassessed' in Cantelon and Gruneau (1982).

Hoch as examples of this approach to sport.[17] Reproduction theory, however, claims that the autonomy of sport and culture enables them to function as instruments of the reproduction of relations of domination.[18]

In criticising the work of Jean-Marie Brohm, Gerhard Vinnai and Paul Hoch, Hargreaves accuses them of determinism because they adopt an 'all or nothing' approach to consciousness. This view of consciousness assumes that 'it is either completely false and all is alienation, ... or it is absolutely true, a state of total illumination which enables people completely to see through and reject the social order' (Hargreaves 1982b: 43). Hargreaves also claims that correspondence theory only gives consideration to sport at the highest level, rather than engaging in 'a systematic interrogation of a range of evidence from the different types and levels of sport' (Hargreaves 1982b: 43). Such neglect of different levels of sport leads, according to Hargreaves, to a failure to consider the reality of how the majority of people actually experience sport, and the assumption that all sport is essentially the same as elite level sport.

Hargreaves also claims correspondence theory adopts an approach which is 'static and ahistorical' (Hargreaves 1982b: 43). He gives the example of competition. Correspondence theorists refer to the absolute evils of competition, but give no consideration to the fact that the meaning of competition varies with its socio-historical context. Competition in ancient Greece was very different from competition

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[17] Brohm, J-M. (1978) *Sport: A Prison of Measured Time*, London: Inks Links. Vinnai, G. (1973) *Football Mania*, London: Ocean Books. Hoch, P. (1972) *Rip Off the Big Game*, New York: Doubleday.
[18] In relation to reproduction theory Hargreaves (1982a) cites Althusser's 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in *Lenin and Philosophy*, Bourdieu, P. (1978) 'Sport and Social Class' in *Social*

in modern sport. Hargreaves is also critical of the fact that Brohm, Vinnai and Hoch equate bourgeois ideology with the extreme right. Such a position ignores the reality that capitalism also has liberal aspects. In addition, Hargreaves is critical of the assertion by correspondence theorists that sport is essentially the same regardless of whether it is practised in capitalist societies or state socialist societies. He claims that this 'obscures very important differences between the way it [sport] is organised in each [society]' (Hargreaves 1982b: 43).

Hargreaves is equally critical of Althusserian Marxism and the notion that sport is an Ideological State Apparatus. He claims that, an analysis based on Althusser's work, rules out consideration of agents autonomously responding to their sporting experiences, and that no consideration can be given to the problematic nature of maintaining control on the part of the ruling class. The Althusserian approach, according to Hargreaves, is similar to the work of Brohm, Vinnai and Hoch in that it is unable to explain either why conflict arises or existing conflicts.

Hargreaves is also critical of Althusser's rejection of any distinction between the state and society. Such an account regards any element of the superstructure as simply an apparatus of the state. By contrast, Hargreaves is insistent on the distinction between the state and civil society made by Marx. He argues that the distinction is strongly institutionalised, claiming that there is no other way that 'one could explain the powerful resistance to further encroachment by the state on the private sector in Britain, and the fact that elements within the state itself are a crucial element in that resistance? Without the distinction between state and civil society it becomes

impossible to analyse and establish the way structures of hegemony work in different types of system. The fact is that the state plays a very different role in general, and in relation to culture and sport specifically, in liberal-democratic, capitalist societies, in Fascist dictatorships, and in state socialist societies' (Hargreaves 1982b: 46).

Such a critique leads Hargreaves (1982a) to conclude that the major problem with correspondence theory and reproduction theory is that they are both non-dialectical and deterministic. He claims that in both theories 'sport is viewed as a totally ideological phenomenon, totally controlled by, and working in the interests of, the dominant class without limit. There is little or no conception of a dialectic between dominant groups attempting to control and use sport, and subordinate groups with their own responses to such attempts' (Hargreaves 1982a: 105). This means that correspondence theory and reproduction theory are both incapable of grasping conflictual relations and differentiation in sport. In addition, Hargreaves (1982a: 105) argues that correspondence and reproduction theories have 'little sense either of sport and culture as material processes.'

Gruneau (1999: 15) is also critical of New Left theories of sport. He describes the work of Brohm as 'powerful, penetrating and greatly overstated.' Like Hargreaves, Gruneau is critical of the determinism in Brohm's view that sport mirrors relations of production, that sport simply reproduces dominant ideologies, and that there is a sharp distinction between sport and play. Gruneau claims that this destroys any notion of culture; reducing it to the realm of mere belief determined by material history. Gruneau also identifies a tendency in the work of Brohm towards a form of left wing

Education, Society and Culture, London: Sage.

idealism as a result of the separation of culture from material history by regarding culture as superstructural and somehow secondary to economic considerations. Gruneau also mirrors Hargreaves' criticism of the work of Brohm, Hoch, Vinnai and Rigauer by claiming that domination was regarded as so total in the counter-cultural critique of sport that the resulting position was 'decidedly non-dialectical' (Gruneau 1991: 175). Gruneau sees this as an abandonment of the notion of contradiction, central to Marxist analyses. He claims that contradiction should form a central part of our understanding of sport. Gruneau (1999: 16) concludes that it is 'just plain silly to argue for a theory of institutional development and cultural production which relegates sport to the objectified status of a simple reflection of abstract capitalist categories.'

1.1.2 The Role of Sport in the Hegemonic Analysis of Society.

Having looked at hegemonist critiques of other theorisations of sport, we can now turn to the hegemonist's own views of the role of sport in society. This is the first step in clarifying exactly what individuals such as Hargreaves and Gruneau argue. Later, we will develop this further by looking at the issues of base and superstructure, agency, the emancipatory potential of sport and social structure.

Gruneau (1983) argues that sport is contradictory in a number of ways. First it is able to appear unreal despite its considerable links to society as a whole. Also, the rules of sport, which are designed to increase the division between sport and the 'real' world actually increase the links by conforming to the prevailing social logic; while the majority of the tasks that are taken incredibly seriously in sport are utterly futile from

the point of view of that very logic. Gruneau argues that critical theory should

concern itself with these contradictions, conflicts and tensions rather than with what

Morgan (1994a: 64) refers to as 'the growing social, economic, and political influence

of sport (and quantative assessments of such influence).' Gruneau advocates an

analysis of the connection between the 'internal' contradictions of sport, and the

contradictions of wider society.

Both Hargreaves and Gruneau regard sport as a social practice which is socially

constructed and grounded in history. Gruneau (1999: 8-9) argues, following Raymond

Williams, that 'play, seen as activity, as a real social and cultural practice, is not in

any way separate from, prior to, or generative of human experience; rather it is simply

constitutive of that experience.'[19] So, for Gruneau, sport is one of many social

practices by which humans create and alter their social world, and by which they

make themselves both as individual agents and members of groups. This position

leads Gruneau to the conclusion that the structures and meanings of sport are

intimately connected to material history. It is, after all, through such social practices

that 'men make history' and, to some degree, history makes men.

Hargreaves (1982a: 107) regards sport as 'a social relation which is internally related

to the mode of production, politics and culture.' Sport, like all social relations, has

many aspects (such as the economic, cultural, ideological and political), but these are

facets of the whole and the importance of each aspect at any given time varies with

the prevalent nature of the social conditions in any given situation at a specific time.

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[19] Gruneau's remarks are based on Raymond Williams' attack on idealism in *Culture and Society* and *Marxism and Literature*. Also see Gruneau (1982) *Sport and the Debate on the State* pp. 27-28 and Gruneau (1983) *Class, Sports and Social Development*, p. 28.

Hargreaves (1982b: 47) argues that 'cultural processes are no less material or real, i.e. no less important a feature of social life than economic and political processes.' This means that, for Hargreaves, the cultural, the economic and the political contribute equally to the construction, and presumably, the maintenance of hegemony. As a result, Hargreaves (1982b: 47) claims that 'culture therefore is not just a mental product: it is a lived practice formed by conscious human beings from their lived experience, and constituting for them a whole way of life.' He claims that culture is both constituted by agents and simultaneously constitutive of the choices and actions of agents by tradition, or the influence of previous cultural choices.

The 'hegemonist position' makes some important points relating to anti-essentialism, for example, that sport does not have a transhistorical essence, and does not meet the requirements of an essential need on the part of human beings. Another view of sport which is criticised by Gruneau is the claim that sport forms cultural-texts. The notion of sport as cultural-texts regards sport as imaginary and symbolic narratives which combine with many other cultural-texts and are simultaneously constituted by and constitutive of the culture of a particular group.[20] Gruneau (1999: 45) argues that this view can lead to cultural-texts being regarded as 'transcendent forms that allow for the metaphorical resolution of social conflicts in a supposedly neutral manner.' In other words, the idea that sports are social texts suggests that they can be abstracted from[21] social reality and form a symbolic representation of that reality. Writers in the hegemonist tradition are opposed to the view put forward by Simmel, that such social forms as sport can become autonomous with their own logic. Hegemonists regard this

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[20] In relation to cultural-texts, Gruneau (1999) pp. 44-45, cites the work of Clifford Geertz on Balinese cockfighting. See Geertz, C. 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight', *Daedalus* (Winter 1972).

as idealism and are opposed to any view which makes sport an abstraction, separate from society in any way. They argue that all sport is socially grounded and can therefore never be an abstraction. For Hargreaves, Gruneau and others influenced by hegemony theories, as for the New Left, no properties of sport can be regarded in isolation from social reality, or lived experience.

For both Hargreaves and Gruneau sport is an 'amalgam of socially structured possibilities and human agency' (Morgan 1994a: 66) in which agency and structure are dialectically linked and therefore cannot be considered in isolation. Hargreaves (1982b: 47) claims that:

> 'A concept is needed which concedes the principle that cultural processes are no less material or real, i.e. no less important a feature of social life than economic and political processes: all are integral to social existence, and indeed, the cultural is a vital condition for the existence of the economic and the political. In fact, all three are equally important in their own ways in the construction of hegemony. Culture therefore is not just a mental product: it is a lived practice, formed by conscious human beings from their lived experience, and constituting for them a whole way of life. There are two internally linked dimensions to this process of cultural formation: culture is both constituted by people consciously making choices and evaluations of their experience AND simultaneously, because culture is also inherited from the choices and evaluations people have made in the past as tradition, it is also constitutive of choice and action, and therefore culture can also, though it never does entirely, act as a powerful

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[21] Morgan (1994a) p. 64 uses the term 'raised above.'

constraint on understanding social life in appropriate terms and on taking appropriate forms of action.'

So, for Hargreaves, culture is not an idealised product, separate from the material economic and political basis of a society. Rather, it is part of a material, dialectical whole. He is less clear, however, about how the dialectical relationship between cultural, economic and political processes actually exists and is reproduced. Hargreaves, Gruneau and other theorists of sport working in the hegemonist tradition, clearly have something of a different understanding of the term 'dialectical' than that of Sartre. For Sartre, individual *praxis* is central to our understanding of how there can be a dialectic whereas the hegemonists use the term in a much more simplistic manner to mean the way that aspects of a whole are linked. For them, the question of how there can be a *dialectic* appears to be unimportant and the role of individual praxis is inconsequential. When Hargreaves and Gruneau refer to agency, they are not concerned with the praxis of the individual, but rather with human action on the world in opposition to the structural impositions of the social world. The different approaches to the dialectic of hegemony-based theories and the work of Sartre will be explored in more detail later.

Hargreaves (1982a: 119) identifies three dimensions of hegemony: 'the extent of incorporation, the strategic mode of incorporation, and the mode of compliance.' He opposes incorporation to opposition and argues that specific sports differ greatly in the way they should be classified in relation to the three dimensions of hegemony. In addition, the social and historical context of practices within a given sport influences the classification of those sporting practices. For example, Hargreaves (1982a: 120)

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notes that the F.A. Cup Final would be categorised differently to a local match, a street kickabout, or folk football of the eighteenth century. He does not mention how the local match, the kickabout and folk football differ from each other in the way they would be classified in relation to the three dimensions of hegemony. Hargreaves aims to be able to classify different sports and, one must presume, different levels of each sport in relation to the three dimensions. But he warns that not only the place of particular sports, but also the place of sport as a whole, varies with the social and historical context in which they exist. This means that no classification would be fixed. Hargreaves sees the identification of features which are specific to sport and which contribute to transforming class power into 'common sense', as central to the study of sport and hegemony. He claims that one way of doing this is to consider the dramatic and ritual nature of sport.

1.1.3 Base-Superstructure and Theory-Practice in the Hegemonic Analysis of Sport.

We have considered hegemonist critiques of other approaches to the theorisation of sport and the relationship between sport and society in hegemonic analyses. We will now turn to the hegemonist view of the classic Marxist distinction between base and superstructure. This will allow us to develop further, our understanding of the hegemonist view of the relationship between sport and society, and the dialectical connection between cultural, economic and political processes.

Hegemonists abandon the base-superstructure model in favour of one in which the superstructure is subsumed in the base and every social practice; all production, is regarded as part of the productive forces. They regard all social practices as being

interactive, and therefore impossible to isolate for analysis without becoming unintelligible. Such hegemonists therefore adopt a totalising approach by which all social practices 'collectively define the material conditions of life' (Morgan 1994a: 65). This means that an analysis of sport in itself is theoretically incompatible with the hegemonist position.

For Hargreaves, the work of Marx is 'anti-determinist, anti-idealist, and anti-dualist' (Hargreaves 1982a: 105). The duality of traditional dichotomies such as mind/body, theory/practice, individual/society, fact/value and subject/object, are resolved, according to Hargreaves, by Marx's employment of dialectical reason. This results in such dualities being regarded as aspects of a whole with practice providing the resolution of any polarity to such aspects. Evidence for such a claim is provided by Marx's eighth thesis on Feuerbach when he argues that 'all mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.'[22] Theory leads to abstraction, which generates dualisms. These dualisms are resolved when we return to the concrete lived experience, where they are found to be resolved in human action. Hargreaves (1982a) argues that the satisfaction of human needs is achieved by human interaction with, and action on, matter.[23] This action on matter to achieve the satisfaction of needs is the labour process. It is the human capacity for reflection and ability to 'formulate and pursue purposes in relation to them' (Hargreaves 1982a: 106) that allows humans to

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[22] 'Theses on Feuerbach' in *The German Ideology* p.122.
[23] Hargreaves uses the term 'nature'

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overcome nature.[24] Hargreaves argues that as a result of the human capacity for reflection, formulation and pursuit of purposes in relation to their circumstances, thought is never separate from the material world; it is part of the process by which humans produce their world and their history. In addition, culture and social relations act as mediating factors. Hargreaves (1982a: 106) concludes that labour 'is not merely a physical capacity, and the labour process is not just a physical process - in labour the mental and the physical, nature and culture, theory and practice, are united in one continuous movement.'

Having identified the 'polarity' of theory - practice (or consciousness – being)[25] in the work of Marx, Hargreaves (1982a) highlights another polarity within which Marx theorises. The base - superstructure polarity raises a seemingly contradictory element of the work of Marx. The theory-practice framework and the base-superstructure framework do not appear to be compatible. Hargreaves (1982a: 107) claims that 'the superstructure cannot be equated with consciousness, since in Marx's usage it evidently subsumes material institutions like the state; and the base, or economic relations cannot be equated with social being because the latter encompasses all social relations, including the economic.' The problems arise when the two frameworks are isolated. On the basis of the base-superstructure model we must conclude that there is an economic determinism of consciousness and non-economic institutions. Hargreaves also claims that the theory-practice model, when taken in isolation, leads to the view that practice is the product of free will.

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[24] See *Capital* vol. 1, pp. 177-178.

Within the two models of base-superstructure and theory-practice, very different accounts of hegemony, ideology, politics and culture (including sport) emerge. The base-superstructure framework suggests an economic determinism in relation to such elements of the social world, while the theory-practice framework regards hegemony, ideology, politics and culture as 'free, conscious products of subjects' (Hargreaves 1982a: 108).

Hargreaves (1982a) is critical of the interpretation of the base-superstructure model as necessarily leading to economic determinism. He adopts the approach of Williams (1977), claiming that the distinction between base and superstructure should be conceptual and descriptive of 'separate observable areas of social life' (Hargreaves 1982a: 108).[26] This must mean that Hargreaves regards the base and superstructure as dialectically linked, although he does not clearly state this.

Hargreaves (1982a: 108) argues that the base-superstructure model and the theory-practice model should be integrated, with the former taken to show the foundation of consciousness and culture in material reality, and the latter taken to highlight 'the foundation of all institutions in practice and that material reality is not a given objective world separated from the subject. Yet this practice is itself determined by crystallisations of past practice.' This gives some indication of the hegemonist approach to the issue of agency and structure, but it is necessary to look more closely at how theorists in the hegemonist tradition address what they take to be the central problem of social analysis.

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[25] This use of the terms 'consciousness' and 'being' is different from that of Sartre, for whom, consciousness and being could not be equated with theory and practice.

The account of agency and structure given by the hegemonist tradition in the sociology of sport faces something of a problem when attempting to discuss either agency or structure. The problem lies in the fact that any discussion is considerably clearer when agency and structure are analysed separately and then the relationship between the two is dealt with, yet for Hargreaves, Gruneau and any other writers influenced by hegemonist thought, agency and structure have no meaning in abstraction. It is therefore necessary to note that the following discussion of agency and structure in the hegemonic analysis of sport is conducted on the clear understanding of the dialectical relationship which binds both phenomena.[27]

1.1.4 Agency in the Hegemonic Analysis of Sport.

Agency is understood differently in hegemonist thought from how it is regarded in the liberal tradition where the emphasis is on 'negative' freedom, or the freedom of the individual to act unhindered by others, or by the state. The hegemonist tradition is more concerned with which groups have collective control over the economic and political aspects of society (including sport), rather than with the freedom of the individual to exercise choice in such economic and political spheres. This means that, for theorists of sport influenced by hegemonist thought, the important factors in relation to agency are who controls the rules, resources and direction of sports. Agency is, therefore, connected to power[28] and freedom is important only insofar as it

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[26] Also, see Williams (1977) pp. 75-82.

[27] Sartre's progressive-regressive method, which is outlined in *Search for a Method* gives some structure to discussions of moments in a dialectic. This will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

[28] Hence the focus of Hargreaves' *Sport, Power and Culture*, and much of the rest of his work, is on power.

is freedom to realise personal, and more importantly, collective projects. A lack of restriction or constraint is insufficient for significant freedom in the hegemonic analysis of sport. Hegemony theorists are, therefore, concerned with which group or groups have controlled the formation of modern sport, and what the implications of this are for the reproduction of relations of production. Morgan (1994a) notes that 'hegemonists' draw a distinction between their 'relational' view of class and the 'distributive' view, which is common to liberal analysis. The distributional view of class places emphasis on material and symbolic factors, which are seen as determinants of social class and therefore key features in the analysis of inequality. In such a distributive analysis, the factors which are regarded as important are those which relate to material wealth and social status. In relation to sport, emphasis is placed on the access of different groups to sport; in other words, the degree to which various groups are able to participate in sports. The hegemonist tradition regards this form of analysis as inconsequential and deceptive. What it regards as important is which group(s) have control, not who has the greatest opportunity to participate.

The hegemonist tradition argues that social action is never totally formed by one group. Power is negotiated in struggle (and especially class struggle), therefore, it is not possible to argue that the shape of modern sport is purely the product of the ruling class, but is rather the product of 'patterned interaction' between social classes. The term 'hegemony', however, has a more subtle element which relates to the way the dominant group increases its influence. This approach to hegemony is employed by Raymond Williams (1977: 118), who claims that:

'The true condition of hegemony is effective self-identification with the hegemonic forms: a specific and internalised 'socialisation' which is expected to be positive but which, if that is not possible, will rest on a (resigned) recognition of the inevitable and the necessary. An effective culture, in this sense, is always more than the sum of its institutions: not only because these can be seen, in analysis, to derive much of their character from it, but mainly because it is at the level of a whole culture that the crucial interrelations, including confusions and conflicts, are really negotiated.'

This view places the achievement and maintenance of hegemony in the realm of ideology and culture rather than with the crude exercise of economic power. Self-identification maximises the stability of hegemony, which is itself inherently unstable. At the heart of the notion of the contingency of domination is the view that along with the inability of one group to achieve a monopoly, different classes will create different cultural forms, and different classes view the world in different ways as a result of different lived experience. This should make self-identification less likely.

Hegemonists argue that the ruling class have considerable advantages in the negotiation of power, not least the fact that they can control the content of negotiations. Despite this, they insist that the dominant class requires the consent of the dominated groups; that they are the dominant group on this basis. Domination for any group is contingent and therefore requires at least the compliance of dominated groups for its maintenance. The process of negotiation is continual, which highlights the poverty of notions of static domination, such as those present in the work of Brohm, Hoch and Vinnai. Morgan (1994a) points out that in relation to the dynamic

nature of class negotiation, even the use of the term 'hegemony' leads to reification; to the presentation of a particular temporal occurrence as a thing, when in reality it is constantly changing. Williams' suggested solution to this problem is to refer to the concept in its adjectival form (hegemonic) rather than its nominal form (hegemony).

A question which arises when considering the role of agency in the analysis of sport as a social practice is: to what degree is sport emancipatory or repressive? Morgan (1994a: 72) points out that:

> 'The answer given by the hegemonists ... is a decidedly historical one. They are quite certain that this is the only way in which we can know and judge any social practice. Resorting to theoretical abstractions here, as we have seen, is ruled out because they necessarily falsify the terms of lived experience. Put differently, hegemonists contend that there are simply no "natural starting points" beyond the ken of social life with which we can anchor our knowledge claims and our value judgements. Therefore, all that is gained by "naturalising" social practices such as sport is to explain away the complex and contradictory historical processes that constitute them.'

The degree to which this is a satisfactory position to adopt on the issue of the emancipatory potential of sport will be discussed in detail later. Here, we must simply look at the hegemonist claims in relation to this issue more closely.

1.1.5 Sport: Emancipation or Repression?

In considering the question of whether sport is emancipatory or repressive, hegemonists begin by asserting that there are no qualities of sport which provide an answer to this question. Sport is regarded by hegemonists as socially constructed so they therefore, turn to history to evaluate the emancipatory potential of sport. This means that sport must be evaluated in relation to the historical conflict over rules and resources. Morgan (1994a: 73) also adds that 'this approach requires that we play off against each other human capacities and the social (institutional) forms that frame them. By simply asking whether this or that institutional form disables or enables this or that capacity, we can determine whether the regulated and expected ways in which social actions have to be institutionally carried out are justified or not.'

Gruneau (1983) makes a distinction between institutionalised sport and informal play. He argues that non-institutionalised play is considerably more liberating than repressive. He argues this because he claims that the restrictions of play are only those necessary for the activity to constitute social action and that beyond this the will of the agents engaging in the activity is free to alter the limitations.

However, Gruneau regards institutionalised sport as significantly more repressive than emancipatory. The first reason is that the structures of sport are predominantly concerned with the formation of sport as an element of capitalist society rather than with sport as a social practice. The second reason that Gruneau adopts this position in relation to institutionalised sport is that the agents involved in such sport are not able

to alter the restrictions on them according to their will. Rather, they are constrained by the interests of the dominant class which controls the structuring of sport.

Gruneau has two major objections to the linking of sport to play. First, he objects to the fact that it produces a false separation of sport from social reality; and, second, the separation of sport from social reality universalises sport. This is counter to the historical reality of the constitution of sport as a form of social practice. It should be noted that it is with regard to the issue of sport and play that hegemonists have accused the New Left of idealism in their desire to return sport to the realm of play, despite the fact that both hegemonists and the New Left regard themselves as opposed to idealism.

There are three further reasons why Gruneau regards this separation of sport and social reality as ideologically mistaken. First, it leads to the idealisation of sport as emancipatory, which is illusory and operates counter to the material interests of individuals. Second, there is a confusion of two forms of freedom: namely (a) the freedom from necessity that is achieved by participating in certain social practices which can supposedly be conducted independently of wider society, for their own sake. This requires adherence to the rules of that social practice; and (b) more general social and political freedom. Gruneau argues against the separation of sport and reality on ideological grounds because the confusion of these two forms of freedom implies that social and political freedom can be achieved by adherence to the rules and structures which currently exist in society. Gruneau argues that this is repressive. The third and final objection that Gruneau has to the separation of sport and social

reality is that the notion of freedom which results, is an ideological support for liberalism.

Gruneau's position on play has received little criticism from other theorists in the hegemonist tradition, but his view of institutionalised sport has been criticised by Hardy and Ingham (1984: 90-92). They argue that Gruneau fails to make sufficient distinction between recreational sport, which can be anything from play to institutionalised sport, and professional sport. Hardy and Ingham (1984) urge that, while Gruneau's analysis of institutional sport applies to professional sport, it is not applicable in relation to recreational sport. As Morgan (1994a: 75) points out, however, while Hardy and Ingham are correct to highlight the diversity of the structuration of sport, many forms of recreational sport are as repressive as professional sport.

Gruneau's position did not lead him to assert dogmatic, clear-cut conclusions. He claims that the search for emancipatory elements in institutionalised sport is a legitimate and necessary practice in tackling the issue of the emancipatory potential of sport. With regard to this, he follows an established tradition in hegemonist thought by making the distinction between residual and emergent aspects of sport.[29] Residual aspects are those class practices that are still present despite being older, but differ from the dominant class practices and are therefore either opposed or neglected. Among such residual elements of sport, Gruneau cites 'the ethos of fair play, the spontaneous enjoyment of sport, the qualitative appreciation of sport performances,

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[29] See Williams (1977) pp. 121-127 for a discussion of the hegemonist position on the dominant, residual and emergent in relation to culture.

the persistence of an ascriptive oriented, non-instrumental amateur code, and working class traditions of sport participation that trade on socialist notions of class solidarity' (Gruneau 1983: 145-46). Emergent elements of sport are new oppositional class practices, including, for example, the 'women's movement', 'alternative sports' and the 'black movement'.[30] These class practices tend to be neglected by the ruling class or are regarded as part of the dominant moment of sport by the ruling class.

Gruneau (1983) argues that residual and emergent aspects of sport contribute to the counter-hegemonic drive within sport. He also claims that given the fragility of the consent by which the dominant class holds power, a certain optimism should prevail when assessing the potential for progress, both in sport and in society in general. This position, however, is not supported by the evidence from the historical analysis of sport, which hegemonists regard as central to their work. The historical evidence shows sport to have been ruled by the dominant class with dominated classes forming little or no resistance and being 'won over' rather than forced to consent to relations of domination.[31] Hargreaves (1986: 209) claims that:

> 'Sports have contributed to bourgeois hegemony in two different but nevertheless related ways: on the one hand, by helping to fragment the working class in particular, as well as subordinate groups in general; and on the other hand, by reconstituting them within a unified social formation under bourgeois hegemony. On the whole, sports unify dominant groups and supporting classes,

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[30] Gruneau (1991) p. 176 claims that examples of emergent sporting practices 'include such new (and old) sporting structures as independently organised women's teams, community leagues, Master's competitions, beer leagues and so on; 'new' sporting practices ranging from bungee-jumping to snowboarding; and a range of new bodily aesthetics, both for men and women, tied variously to function, performance, or just plain marketing'.

while disorganising and fragmenting subordinate ones. In this sense, the divisions in the social formation - in particular, those among subordinate groups - and the dispersal of power throughout the social formation, are just as important as consensus among groups, and the concentration of power in the hands of any one group in the achievement of hegemony.'

Hargreaves also notes that in addition to fragmentation of dominated classes, there is a process of unification through sport, and, it must be assumed, through other cultural forms. Hargreaves (1986: 216) highlights two mechanisms by which this is achieved: 'the consolidation of consumer culture' and 'the construction of national identity'.

Having looked at the hegemonist conception of agency and the related issue of the emancipatory potential of sport, it is necessary to give consideration to the hegemonist conception of structure before we can establish the *role* of agency and structure in hegemonic analyses of sport.

1.1.6 Social Structure in the Hegemonic Analysis of Sport.

In the hegemonist analysis of sport social structures have two forms: first, some are either institutionalised social practices, or simply social practices which have become habitual. Such structures have an existence that is independent of the individual. Second, there are more abstract structures such as the logic of language. In the analysis of sport, it is structures of the first kind which are of interest to the hegemonist tradition. Such 'hegemonists' argue that social practices are constituted

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[31] See Tomlinson (1988) and Hargreaves (1992).

through social structures as, simultaneously, the product of agency. As a result of this view, these hegemonists regard social structures as irreducible to human agency. Structures cannot be regarded as the sum of individual acts, yet they do not have an independence of individual acts, and they do not determine action. Structures are constituted historically by collective action. They then frame and constrain social actions. So individual social actions are always subject to the constraints of the patterns imposed by social structures. Action is not, therefore, the product of the freewill of individuals. As Morgan (1994a: 66-67) adds, for such theorists:

'These patterns are variously modulated by rules, resources, traditions, and organisations. Each of these sets out limits that constrain, rather than absolutely determine (given their rootedness in human agency), what we can and cannot do. They induce us to act in certain ways and impress upon us that social actions have to be done in accordance with what is regarded to be the "normal," "expected," and "official" way to do and value them.'

Gruneau (1983: 59) sees the institutionalisation of sport as providing the specific structure of sport. He regards institutions as 'distinctive patterns of social interaction whose structural features represent recognised, established, and legitimated ways of pursuing some activity.'[32] Gruneau therefore, sees institutionalisation as a process that determines *the* dominant values and practice of sport as opposed to others. He sees

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[32] Sartre regards an institution as 'a group which develops from a pledged group through the ossification of its structures and the emergence of sovereignty and seriality within it' (*Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 828, and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume two, p. 457). Sartre's notion of the development of institutions is, therefore, somewhat different from that of Gruneau. This will be discussed in more detail later in relation to Sartre's Theory of Practical Ensembles. It could be argued that consideration of Sartre's analysis of institutions helps us understand *how* institutions emerge, and what is the significance of their nature; questions which Gruneau seems less well equipped to answer.

codification as a major contributing factor in this respect. The fact that this defines sport, and therefore, also that which is in any way 'not' sport is seen by Gruneau as evidence of the influence of particular groups who gain from the maintenance of the nature of sport. Gruneau argues that a pattern can be discerned in the development of sport, which has seen the structure of sport move from the control of individual participants to the control of institutionalised organisations which enjoy a semi-autonomy. He sees the institutionalisation of modern sport in the West as having led, through the codification of sport, to the imposition of technical and moral limitations on the behaviour of participants in sport.

Hargreaves adds to the discussion of structure and rule-bound activity with his comments on the role of ritual in sport. He argues that ritual can contribute not only to hegemony, but also to counter-hegemonic struggles. Ritual, therefore, has a central role in conflict.[33] Hargreaves claims that if we regard ritual as rule bound activity which symbolically directs the attention of participants to objects of thought which are taken to be of significance, then we can see that ritual directs attention to a multiplicity of objects of thought. There is, therefore, a broad 'spectrum' of signification. An important point which Hargreaves is aware of, but seems to regard as of little significance is the fact that the notion of ritual to which he refers[34] is too broad to allow the differentiation of ritual activity from other social activity. Hargreaves (1982a: 123) points out that 'all social relations are rule-governed and symbolically mediated.' He sees it as sufficient that the conception of ritual to which he subscribes can identify different degrees of ritualistic activity, while also

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[33] This point is developed in detail in Hall, S. and Jefferson, T. (eds.) (1976) *Resistance Through Rituals*, London: Hutchinson.

identifying the social activities which are most closely linked to, and representative of 'key social relations.'[35]

Hargreaves argues, following Lukes (1975), that not only do official ceremonies symbolically reinforce hegemony by directing attention to representations of the existing social order, but other institutionalised activities, such as the ritual related to the legal and education systems in Britain, 'play an exactly similar role' (Hargreaves 1982a: 123). The legitimation of relations of power by the symbolism of ritual activity is achieved, according to Hargreaves (1982a: 123), by the fact that ritual activity produces a defining or clarification of society and a 'defining away [of] alternatives.'

Hargreaves does not elaborate on the expression 'defining away'. If he means by this that the symbolism presents representations of the existing order which are so strong that they overpower any appeal of alternatives, then he seems to be presenting an extremely simple account of human beings. If he means that in addition to providing a strong representation of the existing social order, there is also an inherent symbolic message that not only is the existing order 'good', but that it is greatly superior to any alternatives, then he appears to be presenting an almost equally simplistic account of the ease with which human thought can be manipulated.[36] Ultimately then, there

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[34] Hargreaves adopts a view of ritual which is taken from Lukes, S. 'Political Ritual and Social Integration', *Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 2, May, 1975.

[35] Hargreaves (1982a: 123) does not make clear what he means by the term 'key social relations.'

[36] In relation to the cognitive element Hargreaves cites Lukes (Lukes, S. 'Political Ritual and Social Integration', *Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 2, May, 1975. P. 301.), who claims that 'ritual plays, as Durkheim argued, a cognitive role, rendering intelligible society and social relationships, serving to organise people's knowledge of the past and present and their capacity to imagine the future. In other words, it helps to define as authoritative certain ways of seeing society: it serves to specify what in society is of special significance, it draws people's attention to certain forms of relationships and activity - and at the same time therefore, it deflects their attention from other forms, since every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing.' This quote from Lukes seems to indicate that Hargreaves is claiming that ritual

seems to be little real difference between Hargreaves account of ritual and those of theorists of the New Left, such as Brohm (1978). The only difference seems to be that Hargreaves prefaces his account with the classic hegemonic disclaimer that power must be negotiated, and is not the result of complete domination.[37] In relation to the account of ritual, however, this seems to amount to little more than saying that dominated groups can also employ ritual as a counter-hegemonic aid. The conception of how easily human thought can be directed seems little different from that implicit in the work of Brohm (1978). Hargreaves insists that this is not the case. He claims that the strength of his account over that of simplistic 'brainwashing' explanations, such as those of Brohm (1978), is that he introduces a cognitive component. He claims that 'the advantage of seeing sport from this point of view, as ritual and drama which is part of a popular tradition, is that it obviates the necessity of accounting for the possible effects of sport in such crude terms as 'brainwashing' or 'drugging' or 'catharsis' and returns the analysis to the cognitive level, that is, to people's rationalities that are grounded in material practices' (Hargreaves 1982a: 125-26).

This seems to mean little more than there is thought on the part of those exposed to ritual on Hargreaves' account, but not on the account of Brohm. Since the result is the same on both accounts and Hargreaves' 'cognitive element' seems to have little

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simply provides a strong account which turns attention away from any alternatives. There is no indication that there may be an implicit symbolic message attacking any alternatives.

[37] Power is not simply the relation we see in the repressive acts of the police or the army when forcibly breaking up a demonstration (Althusser's RSA), nor in the ways in which the media manipulates 'what we want' (Althusser's ISAs), but relations of power are negotiated. The Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher allowed council tenants to buy their houses as part of the negotiation over power. Such a concession led to the re-election of the Conservatives partly because of the fact that a large section of the electorate, who may have been regarded as traditional Labour voters, could see that they had made concrete gains under the Conservative government. We will deal with the issue of the imbalance of power within these negotiations later in this chapter.

power to resist the message of the ritual, it seems safe to conclude that Hargreaves requires a more complex account than that which he is putting forward here.

Hargreaves regards the dramatic component of sporting ritual as of particular importance. He argues that drama in sport is not simply entertaining, but is also a powerful mechanism by which sporting ritual draws attention to objects of thought pertaining to the social and political order. Hargreaves (1982a: 124) draws a distinction between the drama of sport and the drama of the theatre, claiming that sport is 'the quintessential form of popular theatre.' While the theatre is almost exclusively the preserve of dominant groups, it is distinctly different from sport which, according to Hargreaves, provides far greater opportunity for popular participation.

For Hargreaves, the media take the already dramatised spectacle of sport and 're-present' it. This, he claims, 'facilitates the passing of ideologically encoded messages, that is, preferred ways of seeing sport and society' (Hargreaves 1982a: 127). So sport takes the form of 'modern morality plays' (Hargreaves 1982a: 127) in which sports act as representations of the values and ideals of the existing social and political order. In his account of the way the media present sport, Hargreaves, rather surprisingly, resembles Brohm (1978) in claiming that the referee is a symbol of authority, who has the role of punishing those who break the rules and contravene the norms. The authority of the referee is beyond question, and a game is regarded as successful if it is played within the rules, and regarded as unsuccessful if there are infringements of the rules. The implication is that this reflects society with the state as the unquestionable custodian of authority and a successful society is taken to be one in

which the rules and norms of that society are not challenged. Hargreaves (1982a: 129) also claims that sports 'come to serve as exemplifications of the bourgeois ideal of the individualistic competitive, "meritocratic" society.'

1.1.7 Hegemony, Culture and Ideology.

An understanding of the hegemonist position on agency and structure does not provide us with an adequate exposition of the work of Hargreaves and Gruneau. If we are to be able to move on to a critique of their work, we must outline their understanding of the concept of hegemony itself, along with their views on culture and ideology.

In relation to capitalism, Hargreaves (1982a: 113) claims that 'the really pressing theoretical problem would seem to be to pinpoint the social processes that are responsible for its survival which extend beyond the mode of production.' Hargreaves (1982a: 113) regards Marx's theory of ideology as restricted to a number of specific ideological forms such as 'coherently articulated religious, philosophical, social and political ideas.' Hargreaves sees this as only partially covering the issue of ideology within modern capitalism. He argues that a more detailed understanding requires elucidation of the mediating factors which allow ideologies to become dominant while maintaining concealment of contradictions. Hargreaves claims that there has been a tendency in Marxist thought to regard ideology not as a process, but simply as a reflection of material circumstances. Then sport is equated with ideology and sport is taken as a medium for the imposition of ruling class ideology on subordinate groups. Hargreaves regards this as an oversimplification of reality, and claims that

Gramsci's theory of hegemony allows one to give greater consideration to cultural and ideological elements of social life, while also complementing the predominantly economic and political emphasis of the work of Marx.

Hargreaves (1982a: 114) argues that:

> 'By hegemony Gramsci meant the ability of a dominant class, or class fraction, to exercise a special kind of leadership over a society, a leadership not simply based on ownership and control of the means of production, a monopoly of state power and the ability to impose its ideas willy nilly on the population, but which is also founded on "moral" leadership, the ability to obtain the consent of the dominated, which amounts to something more than acquiescence, and unites the whole society positively behind it in a "historic bloc." A hegemonic class manages in a variety of ways to suffuse every level or pore of the society, from the most formal institutions down to the informal practices and meanings of everyday life with its version of reality.'

This is an interesting understanding of hegemony because Hargreaves notes that hegemony is the ability of the dominant class 'to impose its ideas willy nilly on the population.' He claims this despite arguing that it is *also* more than that, by his use of the phrases 'not simply' and later the phrase 'but which is also'. The question is whether Hargreaves is really claiming that hegemony amounts to the ability of the dominant class to *impose* its ideas on dominated classes even although there is a subtlety and complexity to how this is achieved. 'Impose' seems a strong term to use and implies a little too strongly that the dominated groups are passive recipients of

ideology. While this *may not be* what Hargreaves means[38], it is nonetheless, what he implies by the wording of this account of the meaning of hegemony in the work of Gramsci. Elsewhere, Hargreaves claims that 'it is too simplistic to think of ideology as mere illusion. Beliefs and practices which are based on them are only accepted and adopted by people if there is some 'rational' kernel to them, i.e. if there is some aspect that makes sense to people in their particular situation. People do not believe things unless they are some way socially prepared and therefore predisposed to believe them, and if ideology were merely illusion it would be far easier to expose and shake off … in other words, ideology has a material base in social practice and is not merely the antithesis of science' (Hargreaves 1982b: 50). Taken in isolation, this statement may be regarded as less inclined towards the view that hegemony involves the imposition of ideas. But a reliance on the 'rational kernel' argument is not such a move from the imposition of ideas when we take into account the previous comment that hegemony was not *just* the imposition of ideas. When we also stress Hargreaves' view that people can be socially prepared and predisposed to the appeal of ideologies, then we appear to have an account of hegemony and ideology in which ideas are imposed on individuals, but the mechanisms by which this is achieved are claimed to be subtle and complex.

The difficulty of establishing and maintaining hegemony is stressed by Hargreaves (following Gramsci). He notes that the history and structure of a society, including the specific prevailing circumstances in any society at a specific time, influence patterns of hegemony. To maintain hegemony a class must make concessions to other groups,

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[38] See his claim that people do not accept an ideology unless there is a material reason for them to do so, in Hargreaves (1982b).

form bonds with those who could constitute opposition, accommodate the demands of opposition and foresee challenges to their hegemony. This is achieved by 'assessing accurately what combination of coercion and persuasion to use' (Hargreaves 1982a: 115). Hargreaves claims that reliance on force for the maintenance of hegemony is only necessary when consent breaks down, and that to rely on force for substantial periods of time introduces even greater instability to hegemony than that which already exists.

1.2 Critique of Hegemonic Theories of Sport.

We have looked at some claims by Hargreaves and Gruneau as a means to gaining an understanding of some themes in the hegemonic analysis of sport. Thus far we have simply provided exposition of such analysis. We will now offer a critique of hegemonic theories of sport. We will follow many of the broad lines of criticism developed by Morgan (1994a), but we will often diverge from Morgan with regard to the detail of the criticisms raised. This will allow us to identify a number of issues where the work of Sartre may be of assistance in allowing us to develop an alternative approach to the theorisation of sport.

It is not possible here, or indeed, desirable to conduct an exhaustive discussion of every convolution of hegemonist writings on sport. It will be sufficient for our purposes to identify a number of important problems with the hegemonic analysis of sport. This will provide a framework for the discussion of the work of Sartre in subsequent chapters. It is in relation to these problem areas that the work of Sartre can be particularly useful, although it is not possible to simply 'drop in' certain ideas from

Sartre to rectify problems identified with the hegemonic analysis. Instead, it will be necessary to completely re-centre the discussion. This will resolve the problems that are identified with the hegemonic approach without encountering additional problems as a result of the shift in theoretical perspective.

Major criticisms of hegemonist theories of sport can be made in eight different areas:

i. The failure of hegemonists to consider individual praxis.

ii. There are problems with the hegemonist account of the emancipatory potential of sport, and with hegemonist attempts to explain changes in relations of domination.

iii. Hegemonists provide an organicist account of class and social wholes.

iv. The hegemonist attempts to avoid relativism lead them to rely on an objectivity which we cannot achieve.

v. The account of the role of history given by hegemonists is problematic.

vi. The hegemonist theory of ideology is too simplistic and often lapses into an account which underplays the ability of individuals to resist ideologies and often resembles New Left theories of ideological reproduction.

vii. The hegemonist reliance on the concept of civil society as a central explanatory tool in their analysis of the social world is misleading. It does not lead us to the level of intelligibility that hegemonists claim.

viii. Hegemonists fail to display the sensitivity to temporality that is required to account for change in the social world.

Despite their many inter-relationships, these problems will, artificially be separated here to some degree, for purposes of discussion before the inter-relationships themselves are considered. In addition, it would be premature to deal adequately with the issues of civil society and temporality, and a number of objections to Hargreaves' treatment of ideology have already been made. We will, therefore, confine our discussion in the later sections of this chapter to the first five problems identified above, leaving further discussion of the remaining three to later.

The first two problems, concerning individual praxis and social change, are so closely related that they can be seen as overlapping problems because the issue of individual praxis is central to the debate over the emancipatory potential of sport, and the emancipatory potential of sport is a significant aspect of the issue of social change. These problems are also closely connected to other problems, such as organicism. As a result, the distinctions that we draw between the problems and the headings under which we discuss them are aimed at preserving clarity in what may otherwise become a rather confusion discussion of the problems and their interconnections.

1.2.1 The Individual and Emancipation.

Morgan (1994a: 99) identifies five forms of agency described by hegemony theorists:

i. 'The privately accommodative' is the goals that constitute, or contribute to, the individuals personal project, which conform to existing social relations and lead to the reproduction of those relations. This would include sports participation or spectatorship choices of the individual.

ii. 'The privately oppositional' also includes personal goals, but those which are in opposition to existing social relations. There are many examples of such forms of agency, for example individual political protest, or individually held moral positions. In sport, privately oppositional agency would include examples such as participation in minority sports, or those that are privately organised or 'New Games' which could be viewed as in opposition to dominant sport forms. Such oppositional practices, however, exist within the framework of dominant social relations and therefore, to some degree, contribute to the reproduction of those relations.

iii. 'The collectively accommodative' is that which is a collective action taken in accordance with dominant social relations, and which therefore, contributes greatly to the reproduction of dominant relations.

iv. 'The collective oppositional' forms of agency are collective actions which challenge relations of domination. Such counterhegemonic practices are aligned to specific interests in opposition to those of the ruling groups. An example of collective

oppositional practices in sport is the use of sport as a political arena. This form of agency does not aim at radical social change, simply at reducing inequality within existing social relations, and therefore, it is claimed by hegemonists that there is an element in this form of agency which leads to reproduction of existing social relations.

v. 'Radically transformative' agency is that which attempts to collectively change social structures. This would of course constitute revolution, and is therefore the least common form of agency, but is the only form which has no reproductive effect.[39] Morgan (1994a: 101) argues that hegemonists have provided little evidence that anything other than revolutionary acts can be regarded as radically transformative agency.

Hegemonists argue that emphasis should be placed on the oppositional forms of agency, and that accommodative forms should be excluded from analysis as they reproduce relations of domination. So, hegemonist analysis focuses on the political role of sport and the emancipatory potential of the exercising of agency within minority sport practices. It is, however, in their support for privately and collectively oppositional agency that hegemonists introduce a contradiction in their position given their stated aim of producing an optimistic theory. The contradiction lies in the fact that privately and collectively oppositional agency do not, according to hegemonists, have the power to transform; they both contain reproductive elements. It is radically

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[39] It is questionable whether radically transformative agency has no reproductive effect. In Sartre's discussion of the Russian revolution in the *Critique* volume two, he identifies deviations in the revolutionary project as a result of counterpraxis which leads to outcomes which were far from the intentions of those who displayed radically transformative agency in producing the revolution (ordinary

transformative agency which has the power to transform, yet the historical analysis which hegemonists hold as so central to their work suggests that there is little reason to be optimistic about the role of radically transformative agency, simply because it is so rare to find the working class sufficiently cohesive and motivated to exert such agency. Morgan (1994a: 101) argues that 'all that hegemony theory manages to show regarding so-called oppositional agency in sport, therefore, is its largely conformist and ineffectual manner, and by extension, the largely conservative aspirations and allegiances of the subordinate groups that engage in such agency.' Morgan also claims that the historical analysis conducted by hegemonists has tended to suggest that even the privately and collectively oppositional forms of agency have, at least in the case of sport, and it could possibly be argued, elsewhere, been severely limited.[40]

Morgan (1994a) suggests that the contradiction in the hegemonist position is such that the pessimism of the Frankfurt school, on the issue of whether the working class are capable of mounting an effective response to bourgeois domination, is vindicated. But the fact that hegemonists fail to provide an adequate account does not mean that we are resigned to a pessimism echoing that of the Frankfurt School. Hegemonists fail to provide a theory of sport that properly considers human agency and is, therefore, optimistic. Contrary to their own aims, hegemonists provide a pessimistic and somewhat deterministic theory of sport.[41] At the root of this problem is the fact that hegemony theory has little to say about the choice of the individual. It also fails to

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people and Bolshevik leaders). It is possible that the unforeseen results of counterpraxis could be such that a degree of reproduction of relations of domination, or of social conditions occurs.

[40] Morgan (1994a) cites Tomlinson (1988) and Hargreaves (1992) as examples in relation to this point.

[41] There is, of course, no reason why hegemonists, or anyone else should set out with the intention of producing an optimistic theory. It is the hegemonists themselves who take a theory which suggests the potential for emancipation to be an important aim. The important point is that hegemonists fail to

recognise that individual freedom should not be equated with the liberal view of freedom, which hegemonists dismiss as something which can be omitted from any analysis. As a result they throw the baby (individual freedom) out with the bath water (the liberal notion of freedom).

Gruneau (1983) regards the issue of individual choice as being wholly related to that of opportunities for participation, claiming that the issue of who controls sport is far more significant. Gruneau adopts this position because he claims that emphasis on the liberal (negative) notion of freedom leads to idealism. Morgan questions whether this need necessarily be true while also being critical of the hegemonic practice of privileging one form of freedom over another. Morgan argues that both positive and negative freedom are necessary, and that they presuppose each other. The issue of the hegemonists neglect of individual freedom is hugely significant. It is important, not only because Gruneau is incorrect to claim that consideration of individual freedom leads to idealism, but also because hegemonists ignore the ontological freedom of the individual, and in doing so deprive themselves of the intellectual tools necessary to tackle the issue of agency and structure adequately. Liberal freedom should not be confused with Sartre's notion of ontological freedom. The liberal view of freedom simply refers to freedom from constraint by others, while Sartre is referring to the fact that conscious beings are condemned to choose, and cannot fail, by their very Being, to be free. As a result of this distinction Morgan also fails to treat the issue of freedom and human agency correctly.

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achieve that which they claim is important for an adequate theory of sport; namely, an optimistic theory.

Ontological freedom is an idea which is completely alien to hegemonic analyses. As such, we must give a basic account of what we mean by ontological freedom, although we will deal with it in more detail in chapter two. Sartre argued that consciousness is such that humans have a fundamental form of freedom, which means that they are always able to project futures and identify alternatives to a given situation. This means that humans are not determined, but are able to orient their actions towards goals. For example, I may have made a number of choices which have led me to become a university lecturer. This does not mean that I am unable to project a future in which I am no longer a university lecturer. I could leave my job and decide to become a musician or a shop assistant. There would be a whole series of reasons why this would not be a good idea, and would be very difficult for me to achieve, but the point is that I have the capacity to see alternatives and reorientate my actions in light of a new project. In a more extreme example, I may find myself facing someone with a gun who wishes to shoot me. In this situation the number of realistic options available to me may be very small, and I may be unable to avoid death. I will, however, be able to choose the way that I die. I can choose whether to die passively or attempting to resist. We may object that such a choice is no choice at all, but the extreme example is simply to illustrate the all-pervasive nature of the freedom to identify alternatives. In more mundane circumstances this ontological freedom can play a central role in resistance to dominant ideologies and relations of power. The notion of ontological freedom allows us to preserve the role of the conscious individual acting in light of goals. This does not mean that there will not be a range of resistances to that action, but such an understanding allows us to begin to grasp social wholes as constituted by individuals, rather than as organicist entities. Collective action may create authorless forces, but by preserving a role for ontological freedom,

we understand that human action, or in Sartre's terminology, praxis, drives the process by which collective action generates structural constraint, rather than an account in which structural constraint determines collective, and therefore, individual action. Hegemonists are attempting to preserve the role of agency (not necessarily the individual), but without the crucial tool of ontological freedom.

The ontological freedom of conscious beings as a form of agency cannot be neatly categorised like those that are identified by hegemonists, but it is fundamental to all consciousness and is therefore present in all five of these forms of agency outlined by hegemonists. 'Ontological agency' has transformative potential while also being able to perform reproductive functions. Given this, the description of five forms of agency by hegemonists is inaccurate (because it fails to mention the underlying ontological freedom in all of the five forms of agency), and incorrect (since it regards four of the five forms as having no emancipatory potential). The hegemonist categorisation of agency is relevant purely as a description of action, which amounts to no more than stating that an action which reproduces social relations, reproduces social relations; it is, therefore, a tautology. The significant point here is that hegemonists fail to recognise the emancipatory *potential* of ontological freedom. The fact that the historical analysis is not optimistic is inconsequential here because we are dealing with the issue of potentiality. This means that we are able to reintroduce the optimism that would be lost to the hegemonists as a result of the contradiction in their position outlined above. By considering ontological freedom and the potential for emancipation we avoid the reliance on historical evidence that is a feature of both the hegemonist position and that of the Frankfurt School. There is no need to search for

historical examples to construct a case, which carries with it the problem of the interpretation of that historical evidence. For example, if an athlete has the potential to run a mile in three minutes thirty-nine seconds because his (or her) training suggests that it is within their capability, then the athlete does not look for a historical precedent for such an achievement. The fact that nobody has run a mile as fast as this is not a barrier to an athlete with the necessary potential being optimistic when embarking on a programme to achieve such a time. The same is true of human freedom. The fact that history is full of examples of agency failing to achieve the emancipation that was hoped for, does not mean that there is not the potential for emancipation. An understanding of how this can be achieved will come from grasping the way that freedom is constrained, and the role of freedom in creating those constraints. Historical analysis may help us here, but it cannot be the basis for our optimism. That must come from our understanding of ontological freedom.

This means that Morgan's example of the Frankfurt School is no better as an account of the potential for emancipation than the hegemonist position. Both are reliant on historical analysis of the way certain forms of agency have been exercised. This means they face the problem of relativism because it is not clear how either position can demonstrate why their interpretation of historical events (or their assessment of which events are worthy of consideration) is any better than any other.

Morgan (1994a: 96-97) claims that the reason hegemonists object to his view of freedom is that they regard the individual as inconsequential, and argue that individuals are

members of social groups and that an analysis should go no deeper than this, otherwise is becomes abstraction. They also object to the liberal view that to express freedom it is necessary to clearly distinguish between social structures.

Morgan (1994a: 97) gives three reasons why he thinks hegemonists are incorrect: first, that the lack of regard for the liberty of the individual can lead to totalitarianism. This point replicates Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of Lenin and Trotsky that, by removing democracy, the society they created was worse than that they were attempting to improve. Second, hegemonists destroy the link between individual action and that of ensembles. So they deprive themselves of the ability to adequately explain social phenomena. Finally, given the fact that human emancipation is a stated aim of the hegemonists, they effectively destroy their own chance of achieving this aim by their approach to individual freedom. Morgan also argues that while liberalism leads to an overemphasis on the emancipatory role of freedom of the individual, hegemony theory leads to an overemphasis on the ability of the working class as a liberating agent.

While all the points made by Morgan are important, the most significant criticism is the second one, that hegemony theory fails to recognise that individual praxis is constitutive of group praxis. This means that it cannot account for the praxis of classes and other social groups if analysis goes no deeper than the level of social ensembles. Hegemonists then become victims of the very accusation they level at analyses based on the individual, that of abstraction. To conduct analyses in terms of large social structures and group

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praxeis,[42] while ignoring the individual praxis that is constitutive of these structures and group praxeis, is to be condemned to abstract conceptualisation and an organicist account of social ensembles.

1.2.2 Emancipation and Social Change.

It could be argued that hegemony theory has considerably greater explanatory power in relation to the issue of what prevents, or delays social transformation, than it has on the issue of what can bring such transformation to fruition. The hegemonist position centres around the view that the hegemony process is very unstable, which implies a fundamental objection to the view that the ruling class have considerably more power, and are able to set the parameters of the negotiations. Hegemonists provide two arguments in relation to this point as it applies to sport. The first argument is that agency in sport can, by its nature be turned back on hegemony, therefore, the hegemonic position of the dominant group is unstable. For example, Tommie Smith and John Carlos staging a black power protest during the medal ceremony for the 200 metres at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City could be seen as agency being turned against hegemony. The second argument is that the fact that the dominant class cannot simply impose its will on dominated groups means that its position is fragile: that direct imposition is as likely to provoke resistance as domination which involves a degree of complicity on the part of the dominated groups.

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[42] The correct transliterated Greek spelling of the plural of praxis is praxeis, not praxes, see McBride p. 233

As Morgan (1994a) urges, both the hegemonist arguments should be questioned. In relation to the first argument, Morgan points out that the hegemonist position conflicts with the vast majority of historical evidence. As Tomlinson (1988) and Hargreaves (1986) illustrate, the most pleasurable elements of sport have consistently contributed to the pacification and depoliticisation of the working class and played a role in the maintenance of relations of domination. In relation to the second argument made by hegemonists, Morgan argues that it is purely tautological.[43] The reason that the hegemonic claim that social relations are unstable constitutes tautology is that every human project and all human relations are contingent and therefore fragile and unstable, a point which, as we will see, Sartre held as central to his ontology. This contingency and instability of social relations creates another problem for hegemonists because it means that the total domination of one group by another is impossible, and it could be argued that at the root of this is the very ontological freedom which hegemonists have ignored.

Morgan (1994b) claims that an important criticism of the emphases of hegemony theorists (or British cultural studies) is that it only deals with examples of resistance by subordinate groups in situations where power is distributed unequally. Morgan notes that MacAloon (1992) implies that the tendency of British cultural studies to study resistance under such skewed conditions means that dominated groups will eventually concede to the dominant group and 'will be found complicit in their doing so' (Morgan 1994b: 311).

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note 45.

Hargreaves and Tomlinson reject such criticism. While accepting the fact that relations of power are unbalanced means that negotiations over power will not lead to equality, they argue that the lack of equality is the very thing which creates 'an important space for the agency of the underclass' (Morgan 1994b: 311). In relation to this Morgan cites Raymond Williams (1977: 113) claim that 'the reality of any hegemony ... is that while by definition it is always dominant, it is never total or exclusive.' Morgan argues that the problem with this idea from Williams is that it can be read in three ways, only one of which is in accordance with the hegemonist account of the agency of dominated groups, and even then it does not support the hegemonist claims in relation to the transformative capacity of such agency.

The first possible reading of Williams is to some degree in accordance with the position of Hargreaves and Tomlinson in that it takes Williams' claim simply to be that dominant groups never have total control because the conditions of domination must be negotiated with the subordinate groups. This means that subordinate groups have some say in how they will be dominated. Morgan (1994b: 311) concludes that 'it is in this sense that subordinate parties are able to reflect on and exercise some control over the destiny of their own lives, and in so doing, to resist and oppose, at opportune moments, hegemonic ways of conceiving and engaging in social practices like sport.' It can be seen that this account does not provide evidence for claims to the emancipatory potential of subordinate agency.

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[43] Morgan cites MacAloon, J. J. (1987) 'An Observer's View of Sport Sociology' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 4. 108. Who claims that hegemony theory is deficient in theory but displays an abundance of 'tautological labelling and description'.

The second reading of Williams proposed by Morgan places the emphasis on the fact that the space given to dominated groups is defined by the ruling group. There is a great difference between two groups negotiating over power with one group gaining the vast majority of power and the other gaining a little, and a dominant group ceding a small space which it effectively defines. For example, there is a significant difference between a football club having a representative of their supporters club on the Board of Directors, and the club simply having a formal mechanism for consulting the supporters club. With a representative on the Board of Directors, the supporters club would be in a minority, but would have a small amount of power. A formal mechanism for consultation between the Board of Directors and the supporters club would allow the Board of Directors to deprive the supporters club of the form of agency which would challenge their control. The fact that the dominant group can define the terms of the negotiation means that subordinate groups lack 'transformative clout because the agency that privileged groups cede to underprivileged ones under the pressure of class bartering is never the dominance-challenging variety' (Morgan 1994b: 312). In other words, the negotiations are not over the dominance of the ruling group. In fact, it is the very fact that such dominance is a given that is the motor for hegemonic negotiations in the first place. On this reading of Williams, we can accept that dominated groups play an active role in negotiations, but we must add that what is being negotiated are the terms of the subordinate groups own subordination.

The third reading of Williams suggested by Morgan adds another dimension to the second reading by claiming that not only does the dominant group cede only that which will not challenge its dominance, but that it often cedes that which allows strategic manipulation. We can, therefore, often 'characterise the negotiating posture of dominant groups toward "marginalised others" as a calculative, manipulative one rather than a grudgingly conciliatory one' (Morgan 1994b: 313). Such an interpretation is lent credence by Gruneau's (1991: 177) claim that 'hegemony works best when it concedes to opposition on the margins in order to retain the core principles upon which particular forms of dominance are sustained'. On the basis of the second and third readings of Williams proposed by Morgan, there appears less inconsistency between Williams' claim that hegemony, while dominant, is never exclusive, and his recognition of the fact that 'it can be persuasively argued that all or nearly all initiatives and contributions, even when they take on manifestly alternative or oppositional forms, are in practice tied to the hegemonic: that the dominant culture, so to say, at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture' (Williams 1977: 114).

In addition to these arguments Morgan stresses that hegemonist historical analyses continually fail to provide anything which could allow them to justify optimism in relation to the transformative potential of dominated groups.[44]

The important conclusions which can be drawn from this discussion are that hegemonists fail to provide adequate explanations of major shifts in power, which, historical analysis

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[44] Morgan (1994b) cites Hargreaves (1992) as an example in relation to this point.

tells us, do occur, and that they also fail to explain intrahegemonic shifts in power in terms of their own model. If ruling groups determine that which is under negotiation, and they do not allow their own dominant position to be at stake in negotiations, then hegemony theories cannot explain major shifts in power. This means that it is equally impossible for hegemony theories to explain intrahegemonic breakthroughs. If dominant groups negotiate from a superior position there is no way of explaining such shifts in power within the hegemonic model aside from the implausible claim that power is effectively given away by dominant groups.

We have been using Morgan's position to make certain points and raise some criticisms of hegemony theory because, on this issue, Morgan's critique is particularly strong. There is little to add to his criticisms, but if we are to provide an account of social change which avoids the problems encountered by hegemony theorists, then we will need to look to the analysis of counterpraxis provided by Sartre. We will discuss this in chapter five.

1.2.3 Organicism and Objectivity.

Two further problems with hegemonic theories of sport which can been seen as very closely related are that hegemonists provide an organicist account of class and other social wholes, and the unattainable objectivity which hegemonists rely on in an attempt to avoid relativism. By adopting an organicist approach, hegemonists condemn themselves to an abstract and objective analysis of the social world despite their claims to conduct empirically grounded concrete analyses. If one theorises a concrete and empirically

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backed study in terms of fictitious organicist notions of social class, then one returns that study to abstraction, regardless of how much empirical evidence has been collected, or how many years have been spent conducting ethnographic research.

Hargreaves (1982a) adopts classic hegemonic language in his account of how a class maintains hegemony. Referring to accommodation and concessions, he claims that this is achieved by 'assessing accurately what combination of coercion and persuasion to use' (Hargreaves 1982a: 115). Here, Hargreaves makes the mistake of treating a class like a conscious being. His account of how a class maintains hegemony is organicist in that a class cannot assess anything and it cannot conduct itself according to a detailed and sophisticated strategy. The actions of a class are the result of the individual praxeis of its members who conduct themselves according to general goals shared by the members of the class, which may be interpreted differently by individual members. The actions of individuals are generally the result of their assessment of what action best serves the interests of the class in any given situation. It should also be noted that each individual has their own motivation for specific action (or inaction) which may also influence their praxis. As a result, there can be no accurate assessment of 'what combination of coercion and persuasion to use.'[45]

Gruneau adopts an equally organicist approach. The foundations of this are demonstrated in his essay on sport and 'esprit de corps', where he demonstrates a simplistic

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[45] In reality class is more complicated than we have indicated here. There are more constraints on individuals than is indicated here (for example, membership of groups). We will explore class in more detail in chapter three.

understanding of the role of the individual by taking a sharply dualistic view of social analysis, and analysis that refers to the individual. Gruneau appears to regard work which considers the individual as atomistic and anti-Marxist. This is the source of his organicism. In referring to 'countercultural' critics of the 1960s and 1970s, Gruneau (1991: 174) claims that 'Marxian language tended to become mixed with an ironically anti-Marxist nostalgia for utopian individual autonomy, the critique of bureaucratic rationality was expressed in ways that appeared to reject any form of complex social organisation altogether, and self-righteous statements of principle typically appeared side-by-side with an unconsciously Nietzschean vision of the all enveloping character of power in modern life'.

A clear example of Gruneau's organicist understanding of society is his claim that 'the fragile public consensus that briefly emerged around amateur organisations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and around the philosophy of civilising amateur sport, its ceremonies and disciplines was never natural or inevitable – the result of some blind process of modernisation. Rather, it was something that was won through a complex history of negotiations, struggles and compromises' (Gruneau 1991: 176). The terms 'won', 'negotiation', 'struggle' and 'compromises', all demonstrate Gruneau's organicist approach to the social world.

An example of the abstract and objective tendencies of hegemonist theorists is Hargreaves' claim that we should attempt to classify sports in terms of the three

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dimensions of hegemony outlined above.[46] Hargreaves must be criticised over his failure

to give any consideration to individual praxis, and for his reliance on classifications. Such

classifications become only marginally less positivist in orientation when accompanied

by the disclaimer that they are not fixed as a result of the influence of social and

historical context. Classification gives no insight into the detail of specific praxeis and

antipraxeis and how the nature of any hegemony changes continually as a result of the

deviation of antipraxis and the influence of a continually changing practico-inert.

1.2.4 The Role of History in Hegemonist Analyses.

The hegemonist insistence on historical analysis as the base of knowledge claims and

value judgements is the source of another major problem with hegemony theories.

Morgan (1994a: 111) claims that social theory must be able to 'distinguish the true from

the false, the correct from the incorrect, the right from the wrong, the legitimate from the

illegitimate.' In order to do so, a theory must be able to appeal to an epistemological

position that is free from ideological contamination. Otherwise, we are left with assertion

rather than theoretical argument and there is a real possibility of drifting into the kind of

situation outlined by Foucault, where power is central to the construction of knowledge.

Hegemonists claim that an historical perspective provides their theories with a base that

is free from ideological contamination. There are two problems with this view. First,

there is the issue of whether historical analysis can provide a basis for value judgements;

second, there is the issue of whether claims to knowledge can be based on historical

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[46] See pp. 31-32 above.

analysis. In both cases the accusation which can be levelled at hegemonists is one of relativism, but the two issues each lead to different forms of relativism. In relation to value judgements, Morgan (1994a) accuses hegemonists of relativism but it is not of the extreme relativism that holds that no claim can be made to right or wrong, but rather, what Dewey referred to as 'objective relativism' which claims that epistemological and ethical judgements are objective but are only relevant within the context of specific societies with similar economic and cultural conditions.

The issue of whether historical analysis can provide the basis for claims to knowledge is one of the major points on which a Sartrean position must differ from hegemonists. The hegemonist claim appears to be that there is no starting point more fundamental than history, on which we can base claims to knowledge or value judgements. As we will see, from a Sartrean perspective, this is completely incorrect. Claims to knowledge and value judgements must, for Sartre, be based on ontology and the analysis of praxis, rather than history. To base value judgements on history is to assert an 'ought' from an 'is'; it is to claim that things should be a particular way based on how they have been, even if we are to claim that things should be different from how they have been in the past. This provides no suitable foundation for value judgements. It could also be argued that to make claims to knowledge solely based on history is also mistaken as history is open to an infinite number of interpretations without a philosophy of history and a philosophy of Being on which to ground any interpretations.[47] Far from falsifying lived experience, an

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[47] Even with an understanding of ontology Raymond Aron argues that there can be no historical unity, 'we are left to navigate according to our individual or collective lights between the simple fact and the total

ontology and a philosophy of history are necessary to prevent interpretations of history becoming foundationless assertion. The danger, which is correctly highlighted by hegemonists, is that of essentialising humans and oversimplifying and generalising history and social practices. One way to avoid this, however, will be by looking to the anti-essentialist ontology of Sartre and the rigorously dialectical philosophy of history which he employs. The combination of the two should allow Sartre to avoid the idealism of Hegel's dialectic while reasserting the role of the individual in Marxism, and also provide an ethical foundation which enables truly grounded value judgements.

1.3 Conclusion: Finding a Way Forward.

Many of the criticisms of hegemonic theories of sport that have been made here relate to aspects of hegemonist thought which one would expect to be regarded as positive contributions. For example, a greater emphasis on the role of history and an increased role for agency compared to many previous theoretical accounts of sport would, one might think, be areas which should earn hegemonists praise rather than criticism. The problem, however, is the manner in which they incorporate such considerations. It is the attempted shift in emphasis without the concomitant move towards consideration of the individual and specifically individual praxis which leads hegemonists into problems. Despite this, the fact that hegemonist thought can be regarded as a move in the right direction, but in the wrong way, makes it worthy of study in the first place.

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account, neither of which is accessible to us. And the lines of possible navigation are multiple and relative to the individual historian's interest.' Flynn (1997) pp.5-6

In assessing the hegemonist theory of sport, and its central concern of the agency/structure dichotomy, we have followed Morgan in identifying a set of problems which, it is argued, relate largely to the failure of hegemonists to appreciate the constituting role of individual praxis. This leaves them without a properly synthetic method, no real consideration of temporality and an organicist account which is far less concrete than is generally claimed, due to the false objectivity that organicism gives their understanding of the social world.

In light of these problems, an account of the social world which lacked the failings, but which maintained the insights of hegemonic analyses of sport, would be preferable. Just such an account lies in the work of Sartre.

There are a number of questions and problems which must guide us in such an investigation. The overarching question must be: can the work of Sartre provide a significant contribution to the development of social theory, particularly in relation to critical Marxist analyses of sport? From this problem, more specific questions present themselves:

1. Can a truly synthetic method be developed from the consideration of individual praxis as constitutive of social wholes and human history?

2. By considering temporality in an account of the social world, can we deepen our understanding of change, social wholes and human action?

3. Can an account of the social world which begins from the abstract analyses of ontology reach the level of concrete historical events?

4. Can the issue of freedom and necessity, or agency and structure, be rendered intelligible, or is it a false, and meaningless, dualism?

To address these issues it will be necessary to begin by discussing the phenomenological ontology of the early work of Sartre, with particular emphasis on his phenomenological epistemology[48] and his description of human freedom, with its implications for social relations. Consideration will also be given both to the role of the body in an analysis of sport by drawing on Sartre's discussion of the body in *Being and Nothingness*, and to the ontological status of sport, which provides an important contribution to the debate around the relationship between sport and play.

It will then be necessary to consider Sartre's epistemology of praxis and its application for the philosophy and sociology of sport. This will involve following Sartre's introduction of notions such as the practico-inert, counterfinality and antipraxis in an attempt to give greater consideration to the role of situation. This will allow an

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[48] Thomas Flynn refers to Sartre's two epistemologies as the phenomenological epistemology and the epistemology of praxis in 'An End to Authority: Epistemology and Politics in the Later Sartre' in McBride, W.L. (1997) *Sartre and Existentialism*, New York, Garland. pp. 50-67.

assessment of Sartre's understanding of structure and necessity, while also looking at the modification and development of his notion of freedom in light of his greater appreciation of the weight of situation.

Sartre's theories of group formation will be examined as a means of understanding social wholes, and his notion of incarnation will be explored in relation to the example of boxing. This will provide us with the basis from which we can outline a concrete progressive-regressive study of Muhammad Ali and the 'Rumble in the Jungle' in chapters five and six. This will not provide a neat, self-contained, all encompassing theory of sport; nor should we wish it to. It will, however, be possible to make considerable progress towards formulating an outline of an approach to the study of sport and an indication of a productive direction for future work which can advance leftist analyses considerably further than hegemonist theories have taken us thus far.

Phenomenological Ontology and Being For-others.

In considering the relationship between the early work of Sartre and his later, more socially centred, work, we can identify two strands of thought which were important aspects of his writings prior to 1944 and developed to become major features of his work after that date. These strands can be referred to as Sartre's social ontology, and his theory of History. Although always related, these two aspects of Sartre's thought were not fully fused into a single position until the *Critique of Dialectical Reason.* While others have dealt with these and other aspects of Sartre's thought individually, as contributing to specific aspects of his later work,[49] the intention here is to look at how Sartre developed a social ontology and a theory of History despite the fact that his early work is often regarded as somewhat 'anti-social' (he did after all, explore the idea that 'hell is other people'), and ahistorical in its concern with consciousness. It will be demonstrated here that the roots of both Sartre's social ontology, and his theory of History, are to be found in his work prior to the conclusion of *Being and Nothingness.*

What is clear, however, is that by the completion of *Being and Nothingness* Sartre was far from being able to articulate a coherent social theory. It will, therefore, be necessary to show the modifications and developments which brought Sartre to his praxis-based theory of History and collective responsibility. Only then will we be able to demonstrate that the radical shift of emphasis for 'neo-Marxist' thought, which Sartre represents, enables us to tackle the problems identified in hegemonist theorisations of sport.

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[49] These areas of the thought of Sartre have been dealt with separately by Thomas Flynn. See Flynn (1984) for an analysis of the development of Sartre's social ontology, and Flynn (1997) for an exposition of Sartre's theory of History. William McBride traces yet another strand of the early thought of Sartre; that of his ethics, in his discussion of Sartre's political thought. Thomas Anderson has also produced two book-length studies of Sartre's ethical thought. See McBride (1991), Anderson (1979) and Anderson (1993).

This chapter will outline Sartre's early anthropology and highlight the deficiencies present in it as a properly 'social' theory. First, it is necessary to look at Sartre's basic understanding of consciousness as freedom, before exploring his early understanding of the social consequences of such a theory of consciousness. We will then be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of such a position.

A significant feature which helps to distinguish 'existentialist'[50] thought is its emphasis on the role of humans in the formation of the world, somewhat in opposition to positivist, mechanistic and deterministic accounts of society. Flynn (1984: 3) stresses this point when he claims 'what, for example, even in our post-Einsteinian age, is more commonly held to be objective and impersonal than space and time? Yet Heidegger, following a clue from Kierkegaard, formulates a personal, qualitative concept of time (ekstatic temporality), to which Sartre joins Lewin's personal (hodological) space, drawing both into the realm of the specifically human.'[51] Within such a 'human' account of the world each major thinker in the existentialist tradition developed different accounts of human existence, Sartre remained faithful to his early conception of consciousness freely responding to its facticity, or the givens of its situation. It is this view which has provided the basis for much of the criticism of Sartre's acceptance of Marxism.[52] In outlining a 'Sartrean position', it is impossible to

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[50] In *Existentialism and Humanism* Sartre claims, in relation to 'existentialism', that 'the word is now so loosely applied to so many things that it no longer means anything at all' (pp. 25-26). In *Search for a Method*, Sartre restates this position by noting that 'I do not like to talk about existentialism. It is the nature of an intellectual quest to be undefined. To name it and to define it is to wrap it up and tie the knot. What is left? A finished, already outdated mode of culture, something like a brand of soap - in other words, an idea.' p. (xxxiii). For this reason, the term 'existentialism' will rarely be used here, and the term, 'Marxism' is used with a similar note of caution.

[51] Also see Kierkegaard, S. (1967) *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. D. Swenson and H. V. Hong, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Heidegger, M. (1996) *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh, New York: State University of New York Press, and Sartre, J-P. (1958) *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. H. E. Barnes, London: Routledge. pp. 107-170.

[52] Sartre never accepted any position, least of all Marxism, unless it was on his own terms; he claimed that de Beauvoir was a much better scholar of other philosophers than he, because he always read other people's work through his own ideas. See Lundgren-Gothlin, E. (1996) *Sex and Existence: Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex'*, London: Athlone. P. 29. As a result Sartre's 'Marxism' has prompted great debate as to whether his position can be described as Marxist, and if such an interpretation requires a rejection of his early anthropology.

circumvent the issue of a possible inconsistency in Sartre's work. For this reason, it is necessary to begin a discussion of a Sartrean social theory where he himself began, with the anthropology which he developed in his early work.

It is not possible to cover anything approximating all the major arguments in the early work of Sartre, but our purpose here will be served by concentrating on specific features of Sartre's early work which help illuminate elements of his later work, particularly the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. It is from here that we will be able to address specific issues which are of concern in relation to leftist theorisations of sport. This will include the problems in hegemonist thought which have already been identified, but will also allow us to fully appreciate the significance of other deficiencies in hegemonist thought which only become clear following the exposition of Sartre's later work.

In all of Sartre's major philosophical works, he progresses from the abstract to the concrete. An important point about the relationship of *Being and Nothingness* to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is that *Being and Nothingness* moves from the abstract to the *more* concrete, then the *Critique* moves Sartre's position on to an even more concrete position. Had he completed the second volume of the *Critique*, his aim was to reach the level of concrete history. In discussing the early work of Sartre therefore, it is necessary to be selective, focusing on the elements which are most relevant to the analysis at hand. This will be achieved by first discussing Sartre's understanding of consciousness before moving to a more concrete discussion of 'Being For-others', or consciousness as existing in a world of other consciousnesses.

Much of Sartre's early thesis on consciousness, which was developed in detail in *Being and Nothingness*, was outlined in *The Psychology of the Imagination* which was published in 1940, three years before *Being and Nothingness*. In *The Psychology of the Imagination* Sartre argued that the imagination was not an aptitude, or power of

the mind, but rather consciousness 'intending' the world as unreal, or as nothingness. Sartre had asked 'what are the characteristics that can be attributed to consciousness from the fact that it is a consciousness capable of *imagining*.'[53] His conclusion establishes what will later become one of the basic theses of *Being and Nothingness*. He claims that 'for consciousness to be able to imagine, it must be able to escape from the world by its very nature; it must be able by its own efforts to withdraw from the world. In a word it must be free. Thus the thesis of unreality has yielded us the possibility of negation as its condition.'[54] In other words, Sartre equates the ability to experience oneself as separate from the world (to nihilate the world) with freedom because this is the basis of our ability to question and project (or imagine) futures. This is clearer if we view it in contrast to Being which cannot separate itself from the world (Being In-itself). Such inanimate objects have no freedom. This means that 'merely to be able to posit reality as a synthetic whole is enough to enable one to posit oneself as free from it; and this going-beyond is freedom itself since it could not happen if consciousness were not free. Thus to posit the world *as* a world, or to 'negate' it, is one and the same thing.'[55]

Sartre developed the theories he expounded in *Being and Nothingness* following his critique of Husserlian phenomenology.[56] Sartre accepts Husserl's thesis of the intentionality of consciousness, or the view that consciousness is always consciousness of something, but he rejects two other ideas which are central to the work of Husserl; the phenomenological reduction, and the notion of the transcendental ego[57]. The phenomenological reduction 'brackets out' reality; for

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[53] *The Psychology of the Imagination* p. 207.

[54] *The Psychology of the Imagination* p. 213.

[55] *The Psychology of the Imagination* p. 214.

[56] See *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Also, Cumming, R. D. (1992) *Phenomenology and Deconstruction, Volume Two: Method and Imagination*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Edie, J. (1993) 'The Question of the Transcendental Ego: Sartre's Critique of Husserl.' *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 24. 104-120.

[57] Kant first used the term 'phenomena' to describe things as they are known to the mind, as opposed to 'noumena' which is the term he used for how things are in themselves. Kant argued that noumena exist independently of our knowledge of them, and that it is not possible to know the true nature of noumena

Husserl, real objects are the subject matter of positive science. The reduction then isolates objects of consciousness and acts of consciousness[58]. Husserl refers to objects of consciousness as 'noemata' and acts of consciousness as 'noeses'. Noemata do not need to be real, as objects of consciousness the real and the unreal are identical. For Husserl, the imaginary tiger and the real tiger do not differ from each other when viewed purely as objects of consciousness. The difference between the imaginary tiger and the real tiger lies in the different modes of consciousness; imagination and perception respectively. The aim of phenomenology is to analyse what an object is and how it appears to consciousness. Whether an intentional object is real or not depends on the type of act of consciousness, for example, a real object can appear as unreal if it is imagined rather than remembered.[59] As objects and acts are of many different types, Husserl argued that consciousness had to be the foundation for all objects and acts; it could therefore, unify them. Consciousness itself is not given to awareness; we cannot know it directly (only its objects and acts) but for Husserl it is a logical necessity. He claimed that the transcendental ego unified all acts and objects. By bracketing out the objects and acts, the transcendental ego was all that remained. Husserl argued that the meaning of objects in the world is not a given, but rather, something constructed by transcendental subjectivity.

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because of the active role of the mind in knowledge. Husserl agrees with Kant on the definition of phenomena, that they are objects, or more accurately, things, as they are known to consciousness. Husserl does not agree, however, that the true nature of a thing, or the noumena, is hidden by phenomena. 'According to Husserl, the true phenomena, the objects as seen after the proper use of the phenomenological method, are objective ways of *being*; they are necessary ways of existing, if a thing is to exist. Thus the perceived-red of an apple, as distinct from the recollected-red, is the necessary way an apple must *exist* as red if it *is* to exist as red' (Catalano, 1974 p. 8). For Husserl, phenomena often constitute part of an object. A series of phenomena are unified to create a whole; redness is just one of the phenomena which are unified in an apple. For such unifications to occur, Husserl claims that it is necessary for consciousness to include a unifying structure, he calls this a 'transcendental ego'. 'It is "transcendental" because it cuts across, or transcends, the individual act of consciousness while remaining basic to each act; it is an "ego" because it is the same *I* that is conscious of all the aspects and unifies them into a unity' (Catalano, 1974 p. 8).

[58] Acts of consciousness are mental acts such as imagining, remembering, judging, reflecting, calculating, expecting, hoping, analysing etc.

[59] Critics have accused Husserl of solipsism, or the belief that the only knowable world is that which one's own consciousness constitutes.

Sartre rejects the phenomenological reduction because it holds that essence is given to consciousness. Sartre claims that existence not essence is directly given to consciousness. He regards Husserl as essentialistic because Husserl's ultimate philosophical aim is to gain knowledge of *what* things are, or to grasp their essence. Sartre disagrees with the phenomenological reduction because it brackets existence. For Sartre, existence adds to phenomena but, for Husserl, the question of the existence of phenomena is of no consequence; existence adds nothing to phenomena for Husserl.

For Husserl, the transcendental ego is the I which enables all the acts of consciousness of an individual to be unified. Sartre argues that if the transcendental ego is to unify all acts of consciousness, it must preexist all human actions. In addition to this, Sartre notes that the transcendental ego would have to be the same in each individual, otherwise objects would not appear essentially the same to each individual. If this were the case, the transcendental ego would effectively be an essence which preceded human actions. Sartre also argues that the transcendental ego would 'inhabit' consciousness, which would prevent consciousness being intentional, or a pure awareness of an object.

Sartre provides an alternative notion of the ego, not as transcendental, but as *transcendent*; that is, as outside the internal structure of consciousness and therefore as an object for consciousness. Sartre argued that for the ego to be anything other than an object of consciousness there could be no intentionality of consciousness. If consciousness is to be consciousness *of* something, as both Husserl and Sartre claim, then the ego must also be an intentional object.[60] Consciousness cannot be explained

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[60] The intentional object is the 'thing' of which I am conscious. If I *love*, then I always love *something*, whether it be my wife, my daughter or the paintings of Caravaggio. If I *fear*, then I always fear *something*. Again, this 'something' could be a mad axeman, an escaped lion or the contingency of life. Whether these intentional objects are perceived, remembered or imagined is irrelevant. What is important is the fact that there is always an intentional object; there is always *something*.

as the ego being conscious of objects. A transcendental ego would reify consciousness, or turn it into a thing. Sartre argues that consciousness is not a thing and that there can be no contents in consciousness, merely objects that are revealed to consciousness. Consciousness is therefore, emptied by Sartre. It becomes purely an awareness of objects in the world.

Sartre argues that there are two selves. First, there is the *I* which humans are aware of as a result of reflection. He claims that people think that this is their true self, and that it precedes their actions and intentions. Yet he claims that in reality the personal *I*, that which we regard as our true self, is the product of the reflective knowledge of the self which is the result of our intentions and actions, not something which precedes them.

Sartre argues that both the personal *I* and Husserl's transcendental ego are derived, they are the result of our reflection on our condition. They are, therefore, the self as presented to us by ourself and, as a result, are not the true self. For Sartre, the true self is the prepersonal awareness, the indirect awareness of a self that is present every time a human is directly conscious of an object. This true self is the pre-reflective cogito. Catalano (1974) prefers the term 'prepersonal' rather than 'impersonal' because he argues correctly that Sartre regarded the pre-reflective cogito as personal since it is an awareness and therefore cannot be impersonal.[61]

In advocating the notion of the pre-reflective cogito, Sartre does maintain the Cartesian position that all consciousness is self-consciousness.[62] He does this by

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[61] 'Sartre's existentialism is double-edged. Existence precedes essence both in man and in things. Matter simply is; it lacks all necessary reason for being. One can find no justification for matter's existence either in things, since they lack an essence, or outside things, since, for Sartre, there is no God. Man, also, is just thrown, without any prior meaning, into the world. But there is an important qualification. With the existence and advent of man reality, or being, becomes meaningful and a "world" comes-to-be.' Catalano (1974, p. 12)

[62] It is perhaps for this reason that Sartre claimed in an interview with Michel Rybalka, Oreste Pucciani and Susan Grueheck in 1975, that 'I consider myself a Cartesian philosopher, at least in *L'Être et le*

adopting the view that self-consciousness is pre-reflective. Sartre argues that the primary mode of consciousness is pre-reflective rather than reflective, and that it is pre-reflective consciousness which allows reflective consciousness. Sartre, therefore, asserts that all consciousness is self-consciousness, that the very nature of consciousness is to be self-conscious. Sartre claims, however, that pre-reflective consciousness is not self-knowledge. This allows him to claim all consciousness is self-consciousness without being in a position in which a foundation of knowledge can only exist if it is itself known. So Sartre argues that the foundation of knowledge is the pre-reflective cogito, which need not be known in order to exist. This means that it is not necessary for the foundation of knowledge to be known. This is a position that must be adopted because it is not possible for knowledge to have a foundation if that foundation must be known, because that would then lead to the question of what is the knowledge of the foundation of knowledge founded on? Which leads to an infinite regress.

Sartre argues that while consciousness need not be known to exist, the same is true of the objects of consciousness. He is claiming that the objects of consciousness exist without consciousness, but that consciousness cannot exist without objects. This is why Sartre's position is regarded as a unique form of realism rather than a unique form of idealism. He claims that while consciousness brings the world to be through the differentiation of matter, the world simultaneously brings consciousness to be because all consciousness is intentional. All consciousness is consciousness of something.[63] This can be explained further if we recall that Sartre had stressed the fact that consciousness separates (nihilates) itself from the world in order to posit *a* world

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Néant.' Schilpp, P. A. (ed.) (1981) *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court. p. 8. In relation to the question of Sartre and Cartesianism, it is important to note that while Sartre rejected the 'ghost in the machine' view inherent in the mind/body dualism of the Cartesian position, his assertion that all consciousness is self-consciousness, though not reflective self-consciousness leads to something of the Cartesian position remaining in the early work of Sartre. Despite this Warnock (1970, p. 15) claims that 'one must at no time be deceived by the pious words uttered by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty about Descartes. There is no more determining factor in their thought than the rejection of Cartesian dualism.'

[63] See McCulloch (1994) chapter 7 'Sartrean Realism', and Catalano (1974).

as a synthetic whole, in *The Psychology of the Imagination*. This is equally true of the differentiation of matter which allows there to be a world of things, or a world of intentional objects. As a result of the fact that consciousness brings nothingness to be, Being For-itself (roughly, Sartre's term for Being that is conscious) is capable of both internal and external negation. Internal negation is the nihilation, as described in *The Psychology of the Imagination*, which removes consciousness from the world, therefore bringing a world to be. External negations are the nihilations which differentiate things in the world. On the basis of internal and external negations one may mistakenly conclude that Sartre is arguing that the world is the result of consciousness, which is a form of idealism. As already noted, however, Sartre claims that matter exists independently of consciousness, but it is the nihilations of consciousness which allows there to be a world of things, while the fact that there is matter allows consciousness, as consciousness must be consciousness of something (intentionality).

Sartre argues that the ability to question oneself results in an awareness that the For-itself is not wholly determined, and that existence precedes essence. This, he claims, displays the fact that the For-itself lacks a perfect identity. It is this lack of a perfect identity of consciousness that is, for Sartre, the concrete nothingness of consciousness.

Sartre argues that nothingness should not be conceived of as a void or area of emptiness between areas of fullness which are Being. It is claimed that nothingness must not be viewed as having the clear identity of the In-itself, but rather that it must be thought of as brought into 'being' by a form of Being other than the In-itself. This form of Being which brings nothingness is consciousness, or the pre-reflective cogito. Consciousness is distanced from Being to the extent that it has an attitude to Being that is always from a certain perspective. Questions require this 'distance', the adoption of an attitude from a perspective. Sartre also argues that for a subject to have

an awareness of an object there must be, to some degree, though not totally, a lack of identity on the part of the subject. As noted earlier, it is the For-itself which lacks a perfect identity. Sartre is therefore, arguing that humans could not question if they were not Beings For-themselves, the In-itself has a total identity which eliminates the possibility of questioning.

Sartre claims that the ontological distance that prevents the For-itself from having a perfect identity is the concrete nothingness of consciousness. This nothingness creates a distance between the For-itself and the unity all Being that constitutes the world. In order to question an object it is necessary to nihilate it, or remove it from the unity of Being in which it exists. It is also necessary for the questioning subject to be distanced from this unity of Being in order to question the object. Both the removing of the object from the unity of Being and the distancing of the Being of the questioner from the perfect unity of Being are only possible because of the concrete nothingness within consciousness.[64]

For Sartre, the concrete nothingness in consciousness is the freedom of consciousness.[65] If concrete nothingness, or freedom, is at the heart of consciousness and consciousness is an awareness, it could be thought that there must be a constant awareness of the freedom of consciousness. Sartre claims, however, that nothingness, or freedom, and consciousness must constantly be in question to prevent them from becoming completely identifiable with themselves in the manner of the In-itself.

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[64] 'Nothingness cannot nihilate because nothingness is not an independent force or void, but the collapse of the identity of being. Thus, Sartre states, "nothingness [in the sense of a void] is not, nothingness 'is brought-to-be' [by the human reality that is its own nothingness]; nothingness does not nihilate itself [as a void or force], nothingness is 'nihilated' [by man who is his own nihilation]."' (Catalano 1974, p. 68)

[65] In relation to the temporality of consciousness, Sartre claims that the concrete nothingness of consciousness is the continual nihilating, or negating by consciousness which also negates the past as not now and not being the current self, then projects this past to the future, which can be interpreted freely as a result of the concrete nothingness of consciousness. Sartre argues that the concrete nothingness of consciousness, or freedom of consciousness, which is its temporality is not on the level of knowledge, but rather, the level of ontology; it is the Being of consciousness, not something that the For-itself learns.

Sartre therefore, argues that the awareness of a freedom that is in question is anguish.[66]

Sartre argues that anguish is experienced in relation to past resolutions in addition to the fact that it is experienced in relation to the future. Sartre uses the example of someone who has resolved not to gamble. This decision is in the past and cannot therefore determine that individual's behaviour in the present. If the person is to avoid gambling again they must make the decision not to gamble in the present. This means that the decision of the past must be remade now.[67] If freedom and nothingness are inherent to the nature of consciousness, yet anguish is rare, Sartre argues that this is the result of the fact that freedom and nothingness not only allow consciousness to question itself, but must also be in question themselves. This means that there is the constant possibility of anguish, but also the constant possibility of avoiding anguish. Sartre looks at the avoidance of anguish in detail in his discussion of bad faith.[68]

If we are to fully grasp ontological freedom as Sartre describes it, and its implications in relation to responsibility, we must first understand the notion of original choice. As one might expect, there is a connection between freedom and choice in Sartre's early work, but neither 'freedom' nor 'choice' have the meaning that one might assume from common usage of the terms. The specific meaning Sartre gives to freedom has

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[66] Kierkegaard views anguish as existing in the face of freedom. Heidegger, who was greatly influenced by Kierkegaard, views anguish as the 'apprehension of nothingness.' Sartre claims that this is not contradictory. The two are logically complimentary views. It is as a result of freedom that nothingness is brought to be. Sartre also draws a distinction between anguish and fear. He notes that fear is related to outside forces and is unreflective, while anguish is related to oneself, and is reflective. Sartre argues that anguish can exist without any relationship to fear. 'Anguish is precisely my consciousness of being my own future, in the mode of not-being.' (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 32)

[67] Catalano (1974) p. 71 elaborates on this point by noting that 'Sartre says that the self we are depends on the self that we are about to be precisely insofar as the self that we are about to be does not depend on the self that we are. The first part signifies that my present self depends on my future intentions - I am now painting because I intend to be one who has painted a painting. The second part indicates that this present intention to be something in the future is in existence now precisely because I choose to complete this painting; I choose it aware that I may falter and give up the very decision to do what I now intend to do.' (Catalano 1974, p. 71)

[68] See *Being and Nothingness*, part one, chapter two, pp. 47-70.

already been outlined, but this cannot be fully understood without reference to original choice. Sartre argues that the usual connection between choice and alternatives holds at the reflective level but, in dealing with original choice, Sartre is concerned with the prereflective level, or the 'fundamental project'. This means that Sartre is asserting that the motives or reasons for action (which are at the reflective level) disguise a more fundamental 'choice' which constitutes the criterion for the deliberation that produces the motivation for action. This aspect of Sartre's thought forms the basis of his biographies.[69] The aim in such texts is to decipher the project-end regressively through the actions, reasons and motives which betray that original project. Original choice, therefore, involves the establishment of values, but also the exclusion of alternative projects and as a result, alternative values. Flynn (1984: 9) points out that 'as nihilation, original choice is the concomitant awareness that the choice could have been otherwise.'

Original choice is, for Sartre, a choice both of a world and of the self. There can be no choice of self if consciousness is not other than self. If consciousness must always be intentional, it must always be consciousness of an object. In the case of prereflective self-awareness consistent application of the principle of the intentionality of consciousness means that consciousness must be presence-to-self. This means that the For-itself does not have a perfect identity, it is not perfectly at one with itself in the manner of Being In-itself, which is nonconscious and simply is what it is. In the case of Being For-itself the lack of perfect identity means that it can be said to be both facticity and transcendence simultaneously. Sartre provides a characteristically complicated reference to this when he claims that 'the for-itself is being which, in its being, is not what it is and is what it is not.'[70] This means that Being For-itself transcends its facticity, but cannot completely escape it.

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[69] See particularly *The Family Idiot* vols. i-v., *Saint Genet* and *Baudelaire*.
[70] *The War Diaries* p. 211.

The significance of this for the study of the social world rests in the fact that by 'choosing' the world I assume responsibility for it. Flynn (1984: 13) summarises the importance of presence-to-self to the construction of a social ontology by claiming that 'presence-to-self is not only the source of freedom in Sartrean existentialism, it is the basis of responsibility as well. We have discovered the link between freedom and responsibility in Sartrean anthropology: Man is responsible because he is not a self but a presence-to-self.' The connection between ontology and responsibility is something which Sartre identified in *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, published in 1939. There he claimed that 'it is precisely for the human reality that to exist is always to *assume* its being; that is, to be responsible for it instead of receiving it from outside, as a pebble does. And since "the human reality" is essentially its own possibility, this existent can itself "choose" what it will be, achieve itself – or lose itself.'[71]

Ontological freedom and original choice are both at the prereflective level. The resulting responsibility is, therefore, also at the prereflective level. This should not be confused with the unconscious. Sartre regards Freud's notion of the unconscious as implying a division of the psyche, and therefore he claims that it is a fiction. One can see in the early work of Sartre an acceptance of Heidegger's view that 'what is ontically nearest and familiar is ontologically the farthest, unrecognised and constantly overlooked in its ontological significance.'[72]

The relationship between freedom and responsibility can be explained further when we recognise that both freedom and responsibility are two different ways of describing consciousness. As Flynn (1984: 16) points out '"responsibility" means "consciousness as authorship'' and "freedom" signifies "consciousness as nihilating choice."' The mediating factor which allows us to regard freedom and responsibility

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[71] *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* pp. 23-24.
[72] *Being and Time* p. 41.

as two perspectives on consciousness is the notion of Being For-itself as presence-to-self. The difficulty which this raises for Sartre is that the emphasis on the personal in his account of consciousness as presence-to-self is so great that it would, at first glance, appear to preclude collective enterprises and any meaningful notion of collective responsibility. Our starting point in the search for a resolution to this problem will be Sartre's consideration of the social aspect of Being, which he refers to as Being For-others.

2.1 Being For-others.

The focus of *Being and Nothingness* is often regarded as being on an abstract conceptualisation of consciousness and, therefore, on the individual. In reality, however, Sartre devotes a third of the text of *Being and Nothingness* to the problem of Being For-others,[73] which is as important to Sartre's early work as Being In-itself and Being For-itself. Flynn (1984: 18) outlines the basic elements of the rudimentary social theory that is presented in *Being and Nothingness* when he claims that 'in its collective aspect, being-for-others has two foci, the "us" and the "we." They, along with being-in-situation and the phenomena of techniques and collectivities, which accompany it, constitute the rudiments of a "social" theory in *Being and Nothingness*. The result, though less than adequate to our social experience, is more than Sartre is commonly given credit for.' Flynn (1984: 18) adds, 'It will be subsumed, not rejected, in his later thought.' This is an extremely important point which prevents Sartre's consideration of Being For-others constituting simply an area of passing academic interest with no real application to our investigation.

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[73] See *Being and Nothingness*, part three, pp. 221-430. Flynn (1984) claims that a quarter of *Being and Nothingness* is devoted to Being For-others, but in reality it is in excess of a third.

2.1.1 The Problem of the Other

Sartre's discussion of Being For-others begins with, and is dependant on a resolution of, the problem of the Other. Sartre is critical of the solutions to the problem of other subjects offered by other philosophers and he concentrates particularly on the theories of Husserl, Hegel and Heidegger on this issue.

Husserl argues that every intentional object is experienced as intersubjective because the unity of all possible appearances that is the object requires an internal relation between the self and other minds. Husserl is, however, referring to the transcendental ego, which is a derived self for which the Being of an object is the essential meaning of that object. Husserl therefore, could only establish a relation between the transcendental self and the Other which was on the level of meaning.

Hegel does regard the relation as one of Being. He argues that the self can only be established when it is regarded as objectified in the Other. I see myself in the Other as an object therefore the Other is necessary for the establishment of the self. Sartre argues, however, that Hegel is actually on the level of knowledge rather than Being because the subject - object dichotomy which he develops is the product of impure reflection.[74] Sartre argues that the relation of one person to another is not a subject - object relationship, as Hegel suggests, because this view cannot conceptualise the Other as a For-itself. Sartre refers to Kierkegaard's objection that Hegel could not grasp the 'unique interiority of each individual' (Catalano 1974: 157).[75] Sartre regards Hegel's idealism as epistemologically and ontologically optimistic, because it is optimistic to hold the view that the knowledge the Other has of me is identical to how I see myself, as an object in the Other. It would only be possible to 'know' how I am

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[74] Sartre identifies two forms of reflection in *Being and Nothingness*. There is intuitive, non-positional reflection, which he refers to as 'pure' reflection, and there is positional, 'impure' reflection, which has a greater cognitive component than pure reflection. See *Being and Nothingness* pp. 150-170

[75] Also see *Being and Nothingness* pp. 239 - 240

seen by the Other, if I 'knew' the Other as a free subject. This is something which Sartre insists is not possible.

For Sartre, Heidegger in *Being and Time* achieves what Hegel and Husserl fail to achieve. The existence of the Other is a false problem for Heidegger, because human reality is part of the larger synthetic whole of Being-in the-world. Heidegger claims that 'the world of Da-sein is a *with-world*. Being-in is *being-with* others. The innerworldly being-in-itself of others is *Mitda-sein*.'[76] Heidegger also urges that 'the others are not encountered by grasping and previously discriminating one's own subject, initially objectively present, from other subjects also present. They are not encountered by first looking at oneself and then ascertaining the opposite pole of a distinction. They are encountered from the world in which Da-sein, heedful and circumspect, essentially dwells.'[77]

Heidegger argues that Being-with is a personal relation; a *we* relation. To regard the relation as impersonal is, for Heidegger, inauthentic. Sartre claims that Heidegger directs us to the solution to the problem, but does not actually give the solution. Heidegger merely asserts that human reality is part of Being-in-the-world but provides no evidence. His position is on a universal level, rather than a concrete empirical one, which leads to the common problem for Heidegger of moving from the former to the latter. Sartre argues that, on this issue, Heidegger cannot overcome this problem.[78]

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[76] *Being and Time*, p. 112. Da-sein ('being there' or 'being here' depending on the context) is the term Heidegger uses to denote both humans and the form of Being which humans have. In the latter sense it is similar to the For-itself. See *Being and Time* pp. 37-105, Charles Guignon's introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* and Polt, R. (1999) *Heidegger an Introduction*, pp. 43-45. Mitda-sein means co-existence.

[77] *Being and Time*, p. 112

[78] Sartre also accuses Heidegger of bad faith in his notion of transcendence because for Heidegger the only immediate relation to reality is to the self; whereas Sartre argues that there is an immediate relation between the For-itself and the In-itself.

Sartre begins his discussion of the existence of others by noting that it is not possible to prove the existence of others. He claims that solipsism is a logical possibility which cannot be absolutely falsified. Sartre therefore, argues that it is only possible to affirm the existence of the Other to the degree that the Other influences the awareness of the self and the world. He also claims that a theory of the existence of others must grasp the Other as a concrete being rather than a representation in the mind. Sartre claims that in addition to this there must be an internal relation with the Other as not me. This must produce the synthetic unity of self-others in which there are internal relations between the others, yet we must not make the same error as Hegel and place ourselves outside the whole. The whole must be a detotalised totality, a totality which is never fully achieved and is continually in question.

2.1.2 The Look

Sartre notes that objectivity is an aspect of the Other. On the level of perception, the existence of the Other can appear as no more than probable. Sartre argues, however, that closer inspection of the experience of perceiving the Other as an object can lead to the experience of the Other as a subject. He observes that our perception of a person differs from our perception of other objects. When we perceive a non-human object it is perceived as one object among many, and all objects are perceived as having a certain distance from us. When we perceive a human being, that person is not perceived as having distance from us, but rather as a point from which other distances can be measured. In this situation the whole surrounding environment can be regrouped around the Other, rather than the self. Non-human objects are perceived in relation to us, but in the presence of an Other, all non-human objects can be perceived in relation to the Other, and the Other is not necessarily perceived in relation to us. Humans are therefore, apprehended as objects in a different way from non-human objects. Sartre also claims that we apprehend the Other as someone who sees the same outside world that we see, but we cannot see the world from their point

of view. The Other is also apprehended as a subject for other objects, while we also realise that we can be an Other for other people, and as such other people are subjects which view us as the Other. Sartre uses the term 'look' to refer to the experience of being aware of being seen, of having a body. With the existence of the Other, in the pre-reflective cogito, we become aware that we are being seen by the Other. The immediate awareness of the Other also brings the immediate awareness of being seen by the Other. Sartre illustrates this through a discussion of the phenomenon of shame, which helps explain the meaning of being seen.

Sartre's example is that of a person looking through a keyhole, who is totally non-thetically, or prereflectively, self-conscious. The person is completely absorbed in what is seen through the keyhole. When the person hears footsteps, he/she becomes immediately pre-reflectively aware of him/herself because of the immediate awareness of being seen by an Other. Sartre argues that this produces a modification of the pre-reflective cogito and reveals consciousness to the self, as seen by the Other, and therefore as an object. The fact that the Other is a free consciousness means that I can never know how I am seen by the Other. I never know myself as the Other sees me. In a situation in which I am observed by the Other, but I am not looking at the Other, I am a transcendent being who has been transcended, a freedom that is transcended by the free consciousness of an Other. This alienates both me and my possibilities, and results in an alteration of the instrumentality of things in the world because they do not simply have a relation to me. Rather, I am related to the Other, and become an instrument of the Other, I become Being-in-the-world, an object like any other. I am 'the look', yet I am observed by the look of the Other. The existence of the Other is a limit to my freedom because my possibilities are never solely mine.

Sartre argues that the realisation of ourselves as an object for the Other is not on the level of knowledge, but on the level of the pre-reflective cogito. If it were on the level of knowledge, we could only know the Other as having a probable existence as we

could only know the Other as an object. The revelation of the existence of the self by the pre-reflective cogito simultaneously reveals the modification to consciousness that is the product of the existence of the Other. The existence of the Other, therefore, is not a fact to be deduced, but is, rather an immediate modification of consciousness. In light of this approach, it can be seen why Sartre claims that we cannot prove the existence of the Other: it is not on the level of knowledge, but the level of Being. Thus Sartre claimed that Heidegger was correct to regard the issue of the existence of the Other as a false problem.

Sartre claims that both the self and the Other as subjects refuse to be entirely objectified. In recognising the Other as an object, there is a secondary awareness of the Other as a subject. With the emotions of shame, fear and pride, the first awareness is that of the freedom of the Other, which leads to my awareness of my freedom. In recognising that I am not the Other, I also recognise the Other is related to my freedom in that the Other can limit my possibilities. In objectifying the Other, I attempt to turn the Other as subject into the Other as object. This is an attempt to transcend that which has transcended me.[79] This is the basic looking/looked-at dyad[80] which forms the foundation of all interpersonal relationships in *Being and Nothingness*. The implications of the looking/looked-at model are extensive, and ultimately it is this model which prevents Sartre developing an ontology in *Being and Nothingness* which could be said to be properly social.

One other point which emerges from Sartre's analysis of the problem of the existence of the Other is the impossibility of a collective consciousness as a result of the fact that there can be no plural look. Despite extensive modification to his social

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[79] Sartre describes pride and vanity as being in bad faith because they are an attempt to assert that the Other is not necessary for the constitution of my qualities by attempting to achieve recognition of my qualities as intrinsic rather than objective.

[80] Flynn (1984) refers to this as Sartre's 'existentialist model of society.'

philosophy, Sartre will never abandon his conclusion that collective consciousness is a fiction.

2.1.3 The Body

The For-itself becomes manifest to the Other through the body. Catalano (1974: 169) points out that 'human reality, as a Being For-itself and a Being For-others is simultaneously, totally consciousness and body.' There can therefore be no separation of consciousness and the body other than at the abstract level. Sartre regards the body as the concrete way by which we exist our facticity because the body is our past; it is that which is given. He also argues that the attempt to objectify the body of the Other enables an understanding of our body as analogous to the body of the Other. In addition, he claims that the objectification of both the body of the Other, and our own body, is an attempt to avoid the consequences of the existence of the Other. That is, the alteration to consciousness, and to the relation of the For-itself to the In-itself. In other words, the relation of me as a subject to the world in which I exist.

For Sartre, a human being is a Being-in-the-world, which brings that world into being, and everything in the world has a perspective to the body.[81] The body of the Other is not the primary manifestation of the Other; rather it is the essential modification of consciousness as being seen by the look that reveals the existence of the Other. The body of the Other is therefore, not a major aspect of the objectification of me by the Other, but it is a major aspect of my objectification of the Other. The body of the Other, however, is not an object among other objects in the world. My body is indicated to me by the reorientation of objects in the world around the body of the

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[81] Sartre argues that sensory information becomes a transcendent determination as a result of the internal negation of the For-itself which identifies the For-itself as *not* colour, smell, sound etc. He argues that every negation results in a determination as the For-itself not being a particular entity.

Other. This enables me to become reflectively aware of my body as a point of view in a world of many points of view.

2.1.4 Concrete Relations with Others.

Sartre argues that there are two different types of relation we can have with the Other. First, we can attempt to possess the freedom of the Other, without altering their freedom. This is an impossible aim, as an individual cannot possess the freedom of the Other, yet still have the Other be free. Second, we can objectify the freedom of the Other. This also fails as both these methods imply each other. The attempted preservation of the freedom of the Other objectifies his/her freedom, and the objectification of the freedom of the Other is an objectification of subjectivity. Sartre regards conflict as present in all relations with others. In making this claim, Sartre is not denying that there is co-operation between individuals, but he argues that co-operation is based on the conflictual nature of human relations, and cannot completely overcome this conflict. Sartre makes this claim on the basis of the ontological status of the For-itself as freedom, rather than on the basis of historical analysis of human relations.[82] For example, Sartre does not claim that conflict is present in all relations with others because war is a constant feature of our collective existence and always has been, or that crime and general argument and disagreement between individuals have been constant features of our history. He claims conflict is always present because of the constant objectification which is present because of the nature of consciousness.

Sartre analyses a number of manifestations of the two attitudes toward others, but claims that none should take priority because they are all the Being of the For-itself,

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[82] This is an example of the different epistemological positions of Sartre and hegemony theorists. Hegemonists would regard the only possible foundation for such a claim to be historical analysis of human relations.

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and therefore stem from the original upsurge of consciousness. Love, for Sartre, is an attempt by the For-itself to give a foundation to its Being and escape its contingency. The aim of love is to have one's existence acknowledged as necessary. Sartre claims that at the realisation of the fact that seduction, as an attempt to possess the consciousness of the Other while maintaining the freedom of the consciousness of the Other, is futile, and will always lead to failure, masochism may be adopted as an alternative project. Masochism is an attempt to be identified with one's objectification; to resign one's subjectivity to the Other and *be* one's objectivity, therefore acknowledging the subjectivity of the Other.[83] Masochism fails because the individual remains alienated, and in attempting to found one's Being by the use of the Other, one is made aware of one's subjectivity, and therefore, the futility of the enterprise.[84]

In relation to the second attitude toward others, Sartre looks at the examples of indifference, desire, hate and sadism. He describes indifference as an attempted practical solipsism in which the individual aims at ignoring the subjectivity of the Other. His conclusion on all these attitudes toward the Other is that they fail, and that the failure of one leads to the adoption of another. It is a circle which cannot be broken, even with the ultimate consequence of hate, the eradication of all others. Even in this situation, the For-itself would be a being-that-had-been-for-others, as others *would* have existed.

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[83] Sartre refers to masochism as a form of vertigo that is brought to be by the realisation of the freedom of the Other.

[84] Sartre notes that masochism, as a project, is aware of this futility, and is the enjoyment of failure, while love is a project in good faith which is destined to fail. This implies that masochism is a project in bad faith because it involves the denial of subjectivity, while love is an attempt to found one's Being, yet preserve freedom. It could be argued that the attempt to found one's Being cannot, in itself, be regarded as bad faith because consciousness is, by its very Being, a perpetual attempt to found its Being; consciousness is continually in flight from itself.

2.1.5 The 'Us' and the 'We'.

Sartre follows Heidegger in urging that humans regard themselves as a 'we' and therefore embark on collaborative projects. Sartre, however, rejects the notion of Heidegger's 'mitsein,' or 'being-with', as fundamental to human reality. Sartre argues that the 'we' takes two forms, that of an object or that of a subject.[85] Sartre regards the 'us' as a modification of consciousness, but designates it a secondary modification. The 'we', however, is, for Sartre, simply a psychological construct through which we apprehend our collaborative relations with others.

Sartre argues that the 'us' develops from the realisation by the For-itself that its relation to the Other exists as part of the 'detotalised totality' of humanity.[86] Sartre illustrates the secondary modification of consciousness that is the 'us' by describing the relation between the For-itself and the Other when witnessed by a Third.[87] He claims that the For-itself and the Other, either in co-operation or conflict, when witnessed by a third party, produces an immediate pre-reflective awareness by the For-itself of the communal actions as objectivised. As Catalano (1974: 190) points out, 'as with our being-before-the-other, the us-relation does not depend on the concrete existence of a particular *third*. By the mere fact that we are pre-reflectively aware of existing with many others, we are also aware that we *can* be united with them before a third.' Sartre argues that this is how

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[85] In English this distinction can be made by referring to the 'us' (object) and the 'we' (subject). There are difficulties in the original French text because the term 'nous' can refer to both subject and object. See Barnes, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 414, n. 16.

[86] Humanity is a detotalised totality because it can never be viewed as a synthetic whole by a consciousness that is not part of humanity.

[87] Flynn (1981) p. 346 refers to the Third as it is described in *Being and Nothingness* as the 'alienating Third'. Sartre develops the contrasting notion of the mediating Third in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, pp. 100-109 and pp. 363-382.

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class consciousness develops. It is the pre-reflective awareness of the For-itself of itself as part of a synthetic unity objectivised by the look of Thirds.[88]

In relation to the 'we', Sartre claims that artefacts reveal to us our co-operation with others (as subjects) acting on matter. This, however, is different from the 'us' relation because there is no ontological modification. Sartre also argues that the 'we' relation is 'weaker' than the 'us' because it presupposes the existence of the Other.

2.1.6 Freedom and Facticity: The Situation.

The issue of situation is of great importance to any attempt to develop a social ontology. Situation leads us to the relationship between freedom and necessity, or in the language of *Being and Nothingness*, freedom and facticity. This is more than a rough equivalence of the standard hegemonist problem of agency and structure. While the terms 'agency' and 'structure' have narrower, more specific meanings than 'freedom' and 'facticity', the two apparent dichotomies raise the same problem at different levels of abstraction. The issue of situation is something which Sartre was aware of as central to any development in his work in the direction of Marxism. Almost immediately after the publication of *Being and Nothingness* Sartre began to place more emphasis on the weight of facticity. Flynn (1984: 27) is correct to claim that Sartre's 'conceptual move towards Marxism after *Being and Nothingness* will consist chiefly in allowing greater weight to the "given," i.e., to facticity, in accounts of the existential situation.' Before consideration is given to that increased emphasis on facticity, we should first consider Sartre's view of

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[88] From this it can be seen that class consciousness is consciousness of a class as objectivised in the look of a Third, not a single consciousness or mind, Sartre argues that 'there is always and only the "for-itself": yours, mine. But that does not make several "for-themselves."' (Sartre in Schilpp 1981, p. 13). This means that class consciousness does not necessarily imply purposive action on the part of a class.

situation in *Being and Nothingness* as he will preserve much of the role for freedom which he ascribes at this early stage of his thought, despite the later shift in balance.

Sartre claims that 'the *situation*, the common product of the contingency of the in-itself and of freedom, is an ambiguous phenomenon in which it is impossible for the for-itself to distinguish the contribution of freedom from that of the brute existent.'[89] To this he adds that 'there is freedom only in a situation and there is a *situation* only through freedom.'[90] In other words, my freedom cannot exist outside of a concrete situation. I am always situated in a world. I cannot have the freedom to choose without a world in which I can identify options. It is in this sense that there can only be freedom in situation. In addition, there can only be a situation through freedom because without the freedom that enables us to separate ourselves from the world, there would not be a world. The whole issue may be ambiguous and freedom and situation may be interrelated, but Sartre makes a number of clear assertions on the issue of freedom in situation during the later pages of *Being and Nothingness*.

Sartre argues that the For-itself encounters no more restrictions in one location than another. The location of the For-itself is absurd. It is the consequence of birth and is therefore without reason. The determinist notion that 'brute' location limits the freedom of the For-itself stems from a view of freedom as In-itself, as something that could be in one place or another. Catalano (1974: 205) refers to this as 'the freedom of a would-be pure spirit that could survey the world better in this or that place.'

Sartre also argues that the For-itself gives meaning to its past in light of its fundamental project. As a result the For-itself can interpret its past in any way it chooses. Sartre does

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[89] *Being and Nothingness* p. 488.
[90] *Being and Nothingness* p. 489.

note, however, that as the For-itself is Being For-others, its past becomes part of an objective world. The For-itself therefore, becomes aware of the objective meaning of its past.

Sartre claims that environment is distinct from place because it refers to the instrumentality of surrounding things. Again he argues that the environment is only a restriction or an advantage in light of an intended end. A flood is a restriction if I intend to visit a friend, but if I wish to avoid this friend, a flood is advantageous to me. Sartre claims that while the unforeseen can occur, intentions are always open to change and therefore, the unforeseen is not completely unexpected. He claims that intentions are always open because of the contingency of Being.

Sartre regards the existence of others as a limit, rather than an obstacle to the freedom of the For-itself. For the example of language and dialect, he claims that the view that the laws of grammar must be learned as they are the technique by which an individual achieves their aim of expressing thoughts and communicating with others, is incorrect for two reasons. First, it implies a mind-body dualism and second, it leads to a regress in relation to technique, as a technique would have to be learned which could be used to learn the technique of learning grammar. In opposition to this view of language, Sartre argues that the techniques employed in language are facticities.[91] Sartre claims that the dialect of an individual is no greater limit to freedom than birthplace. Speculation on

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[91] Sartre is not however, claiming that there are no laws of language. 'The laws of language are the For-itself's use of language as objectivised by the Other. Similarities and irregularities will, of necessity, appear because the For-itself does not arise in a vacuum creating its own language, however, the laws are never fixed and clear, nor are they ever obstacles to freedom. Rather they are the very means of making freedom realisable and not an abstract wish: James Joyce's freedom and experimentation with language, as in *Finnegans Wake*, would be meaningless without the given of English to be transcended' (Catalano 1974, p. 209).

what Shakespeare would have been like had he not been English, for example, is meaningless as it implies that there is an essence preceding the existence of Shakespeare.

Sartre applies the same argument he made relating to language to the issue of nationality, where he claims that the existence of others does limit the freedom of the For-itself because it creates an alienated exteriority of the For-itself. I have a particular identity because of the Other; I am black, white, a Jew or a Christian only as a result of the existence of the Other. Sartre argues, however, that we are free either to transcend or accept such objectification.[92] The givens of facticity are therefore the ground which freedom nihilates. Sartre's description of the freedom of the For-itself leads him to the assertion that humans are responsible for the world and for their actions. He claims that:

> 'man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. We are taking the word "responsibility" in its original sense as "consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or of an object." In this sense the responsibility of the For-itself is overwhelming since he is the one by whom it happens that there is a world; since he is also the one who makes himself be, then whatever may be the situation in which he finds himself, the for-itself must wholly assume this situation with its peculiar coefficient of adversity, even though it be insupportable. He must assume the situation with the proud consciousness of being the author of it, for the very worst disadvantages or the worst threats which can endanger my person have meaning only in and through my project; and it is on the ground of the engagement which I am that they appear. It is therefore senseless to think of complaining since nothing foreign has decided what we feel, what we live, or what we are.'[93]

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[92] Sartre explores this issue further in *Anti-Semite and Jew,* trans. G. J. Becker, New York: Schocken.

[93] *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 553-554.

Sartre also makes the claim that if, as an individual, 'I am mobilised in a war, this war is my war; it is in my image and I deserve it.'[94] The claim that we get the wars we deserve has led to Sartre's view of freedom being accused of idealism, and gross underestimation of the influence of structural constraints. This accusation ignores the point that Sartre is making, which is that each individual is responsible for their reaction to the war. The *specific* war which a *specific* individual lives is *their* responsibility. It is in this sense that we get the wars we deserve. Sartre is not making a judgement on whether an individual deserves their facticity or not, as any such attempt would be absurd since facticity is simply given, and the Being of the For-itself is purely contingent. The For-itself continually fails to be the foundation of its own Being, or that of the Other, or the In-itself. As a result of this failure, Sartre argues that to act in good faith would be to accept the contingency of my Being, and accept full responsibility for my freedom in anguish. He points out, however, that frequently the For-itself responds to its own failure to be the foundation of Being, and its resulting extreme freedom, through bad faith.

Sartre has moved from an account of individual responsibility to a position where the individual has a degree of responsibility for pluralities such as the nation, the family unit, professional and leisure organisations, and even humanity itself. He refers to these as 'collectivities'. An individual does not, however, simply belong to a group, they share meanings, traditions and institutions to which they are committed and responsible, but which they played no role in creating. Sartre identifies mediating factors between the individual and the group. These are known as 'techniques of appropriating the world',[95] and are an important addition in Sartre's move towards a properly social theory although they are not given their full weight in *Being and Nothingness*.

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[94] *Being and Nothingness*, p. 554.
[95] *Being and Nothingness*, p. 512.

If we take language as an example of a technique of appropriating the world, we can see that Sartre claims, following Hegel's conceptualisation of reality and truth, that 'the *reality* of speech is language and ... the reality of language is dialect, slang, jargon, etc. And conversely the *truth* of the dialect is the language, the *truth* of the language is speech.'[96] In other words, we move towards truth by moving to abstraction, and to reality by moving towards the concrete. The free choice of the individual is the most concrete act that there is. This means that the reality of the technique of language, and any other technique for appropriating the world, is at the level of the free act individually chosen, as this is its most concrete manifestation.

Sartre concludes that 'freedom is the only possible foundation of the laws of language'.[97] This is a conclusion which applies to any collectivity and any technique of appropriating the world. This means that the freedom, choice and responsibility attributed to the For-itself and revealed by the fact that the For-itself is presence-to-self is what concretises, or makes real the abstract collection of relations which is the collectivity. Flynn (1984: 29) stresses that 'by choosing itself through the ensemble, the for-itself assumes responsibility for the collectivity so constituted'. Sartre develops this idea in *Anti-Semite and Jew* where he claims that 'Jewish authenticity consists in choosing oneself *as Jew* – that is, in realising one's Jewish condition. The authentic Jew abandons the myth of the universal man; he knows himself and wills himself into history as a historic and damned creature; he ceases to run away from himself and to be ashamed of his own kind'.[98] He or she who is referred to as *the* Jew by the anti-Semite therefore 'chooses his brothers and his peers; they are the other Jews'.[99]

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[96] *Being and Nothingness*, p. 513.
[97] *Being and Nothingness* p. 517.
[98] *Anti-Semite and Jew* p. 136.
[99] *Anti-Semite and Jew* p. 137.

We have reached the limit of Sartre's ability to formulate a theory of collective responsibility and a social ontology in *Being and Nothingness*. It should be stressed that the significance of freedom will remain in Sartre's later work and a far greater role will be given to mediations in *Search for a Method*[100] and the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

The central problem with the 'social' analysis in *Being and Nothingness* is, however, an extremely large one. The looking/looked at model of interpersonal relations, on which Sartre's analysis of Being For-others rests, is not really a social model in the proper sense but, rather, an altered version of the self – other dyad. The relationship that Sartre is dealing with through the looking/looked at model is really a relationship between one For-itself and another. Flynn (1984: 30) highlights what Sartre has neglected when he points out that 'a thorough analysis of factors which mediate collective identity and which qualitatively distinguish the Third from the Other, are either discussed psychologically (e.g., techniques) or totally ignored'. Flynn (1984: 30) concludes that 'the collective dimension of Sartre's existentialist opus is real, though inchoate and problematic'.

2.2 Being and Sport: Play, the Body and Freedom.

Having looked at the ontological anthropology of Sartre, it is possible to make some preliminary observations relating to certain aspects of the theorisation of sport. Any such discussions can, at this stage, only be partial, as we are still at an abstract level. It is possible to give consideration to the ontological status of sport, and the relationship

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[100] *Search for a Method* is the title of the American publication of Hazel Barnes' translation of *Question de Méthode*, which was published in French as the introduction to *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The British publication of Barnes' translation was entitled *The Problem of Method*.

between sport and play, along with the role of the body in the analysis of sport and the hegemonist notion of agency in light of Sartre's description of ontological freedom.

The issue of play in the study of sport has tended to be linked to the problem of which came first - labour or play? And to claims either for or against the notion of a transhistorical essence in humans. As Hoberman (1984: 23) notes 'the ideological struggle over this territory has been waged on the assumption that precedence is authority, since the question of origins involves an extraordinary authority indeed: a godlike prerogative, the absolute power of creation.' It is not, however, this debate, but rather the relationship of play to the world of institutionalised sport, which is the most productive in the attempt to theorise sport. In this respect, Sartre's discussion of the ontological status of sport and play in *Being and Nothingness* can provide a point of departure in attempting to establish whether theorists should be attempting to provide a theory of Sport, or whether institutionalised sport and play should be regarded as having completely different social significance.[101] If answers can be found to these problems, it can be established whether Morgan's criticism that hegemonists have developed a theory of institutionalised sport, while claiming to have developed a theory of sport in general has any foundation, or whether the notion of a theory of sport in general is meaningless.

Sartre argues that the desire to play is the desire to be. The root of play is the prereflective desire to be Being In-itself-For-itself (which he refers to as the 'desire to be God'). Freedom is the foundation and the goal of sports and play. Sartre claims that 'this particular type of project, which has freedom for its foundation and its goal, deserves a

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[101] This also raises the issue of what constitutes institutionalised sport, and what constitutes play? What do we make of local Sunday league football matches, and where do they lie in relation to a 'kick-about' in the park? For more detailed discussions of play see Huizinga, J. (1988) 'The Nature of play' in Morgan, W. J. and Meier, K. V. (eds.) (1988) *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport*, Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics. pp. 3-6, and Suits, B. 'Words on Play' in Morgan and Meier (1988) pp. 17-27.

special study. It is radically different from all others in that it aims at a radically different type of being.'[102] As such, it is 'entirely gratuitous.'[103] Sartre contrasts this with the 'spirit of seriousness' which attributes more reality to the world than to oneself. Sartre's discussion in *Being and Nothingness* provides something of an ontological starting point for the study of sport. It will however be necessary to demonstrate, through the later work of Sartre, that the institutionalisation of modern sport has created a complex practico-inert[104] leading to various counterfinalities and deviations, and the introduction of class and inter-group conflicts in sport. It will also be necessary to look at the notion of incarnation developed by Sartre as it may be possible to claim that any sporting activity which has rules, either developed by a governing body, or the participants themselves, incarnates institutionalised sport. This would mean that there is a distinct difference between (institutionalised) sport and play. In this way it should be possible to demonstrate the structural limitations on ontological freedom, and the deviation of the fundamental project of sports participation. We could do this while also looking at the suggestion that it is that very ontological freedom which provides the possibility of an alleviation of the limitations of the practico-inert, something which is manifest in the fact that there can be elements of play within institutionalised sport. When considered as mutually exclusive, they are both abstractions.

To do this, however, requires something of a modification to the claims Sartre makes in relation to sport and play in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre argues that:

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[102] *Being and Nothingness* p. 581
[103] *Being and Nothingness* p. 581
[104] Sartre uses the term 'practico-inert' in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* to refer to the result of previous praxis. The practico-inert is worked matter, or matter in which previous praxis is embodied. As such, the practico-inert is a limit on our action and must be transcended by our praxis.

'Play, like Kierkegaard's irony, releases subjectivity. What is play indeed if not an activity of which man is the first origin, for which man himself sets the rules, and which has no consequences except according to the rules posited? As soon as man apprehends himself as free and wishes to use his freedom, a freedom, by the way, which could just as well be his anguish, then his activity is play. The first principle of play is man himself; through it he escapes his natural nature; he himself sets the value and the rules for his acts and consents to play only according to the rules which he himself has established and defined. ... His goal, which he aims at through sports or pantomime or games, is to attain himself as a certain being, precisely the being which is in question in his being.'[105]

It is necessary to take something of a regressive step back in relation to the distinction between sport and play; a distinction which Sartre does not make in *Being and Nothingness*. In relation to his use of the term 'rules' it would perhaps be more productive to draw a distinction between rules and goals, aims or desires. Sport has goals, aims and desires while also having rules; yet play has goals, aims and desires, which Sartre correctly notes is either the desire 'to be' or 'to have', as the desire 'to do' 'is purely transitional,'[106] but play may be most productively regarded as having no rules. In characterising sport and play in this way it can be seen that sport is action which inscribes itself in inert matter as a reunification of the practical field in line with a project, or goal; it is therefore, praxis. Play, however, is simply synchronic action. The separation of the two is a necessary regressive step in the process of rendering the complex

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[105] *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 580-581

[106] *Being and Nothingness*, p. 581. The issues of rules, goals and play are dealt with in Suits, B. (1995) 'The Elements of Sport' in Morgan, W. J. and Meier, K. V. (eds.) (1995) *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport*, second edition, Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics pp. 8-15 and Morgan and Meier (1988) pp. 39-48. Suits, B. (1988a) 'Words on play' in Morgan and Meier (1988) pp. 17-27. Suits, B. (1988c) 'McBride on the Definition of Games' in Morgan and Meier (1988) pp. 55-61. McBride, F. (1988) 'A Critique of Mr Suits' Definition of Game Playing' in Morgan and Meier (1988) pp. 49-54.

interrelationship between sport and play, freedom and necessity, and praxis and action in any sporting activity. While consideration has been given to the role of freedom, play and the ontological issue of the prereflective desire *to be* and *to have*, such a discussion will remain necessarily abstract until consideration is given to the role of necessity in sport.

2.2.1 Sport, Being and the Body.

Our discussion of the early work of Sartre enables us to extend our critique of hegemonist theories of sport a little further by looking at Gruneau's treatment of the body.

Gruneau virtually ignores the body in *Class, Sports and Social Development*, although this is an omission of which he has become aware. In an article entitled *Sport and 'Esprit de Corps': Notes on Power, Culture and the Politics of the Body*[107] he follows Bourdieu in exploring the degree to which control of the body is also control of the mind. This seems something of a poorly judged enterprise. Not only does the whole issue imply a Cartesian separation of mind and body[108], but it completely ignores the fact that, as Being For-itself is facticity and transcendence simultaneously, possession of the mind cannot be gained through manipulation of the body. Ceremony does not, as Gruneau has suggested, incarnate or lead to social memory, for the simple reason that there is no such thing as social memory. There can be no plurality of consciousness, simply a partial shared facticity which has different meanings for, and is responded to differently by, each consciousness. Given the fact that consciousness is always bodily consciousness, it can

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[107] Gruneau, R. (1991) 'Sport and 'Esprit de Corps': Notes on Power, Culture and the Politics of the Body', in Landry, F. Landry, M. and Yerlès, M. (eds.) (1991) *Sport: The Third Millennium*, Sainte-Foy: Les Presses De L'Université Laval.

[108] Bourdieu does stress that what he refers to as 'l'esprit' and 'le corps', should be analysed as having a dialectical relationship, but the notion that manipulation of the body can lead to manipulation of the mind demonstrates a complete disregard for any dialectical notion of the relationship between the mind and the body.

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even be argued that while to control the body is not to control the mind, to control the body is not even to control the body. Consciousness cannot be controlled, and there can be no separation of mind and body, or consciousness and body at the concrete level. Gruneau (1991: 177-78), who describes himself as a neo-Gramscian, claims that:

'The insights one gets from Gramsci come at a price. First, Gramsci's emphasis on the struggle over common sense in the negotiation of hegemony virtually leaves the body out of account as an object domain. His primary concern is with consciousness and language as central points of struggle in the formation of active political subjects. Even the unconscious and habitual features of common sense are given a markedly cognitive tilt. A neo-Gramscian perspective can certainly accommodate discussion of the representation of the body as a bearer of social and political meanings - but has much greater difficulty discussing how bodies are variously constituted or how the body might provide, in Bourdieu's words, "an adherence that the spirit might refuse." For Gramsci, all people are intellectuals and their capacity to act as conscious agents interests him far more than any unconscious choreography of authority that might be sedimented in the body.'

This suggests that Gruneau should be characterised as a pseudo-Gramscian, rather than a neo-Gramscian. First, it is not really surprising that Gramsci should attempt to give a 'cognitive tilt' to what Gruneau describes as 'unconscious and habitual features'. In many ways this is what Sartre does as a result of the difficulty he has in accepting the Freudian unconscious.[109] Second, Gramsci is simply avoiding a mind - body dualism, something which Gruneau seems intent on falling victim to. Sartre argues that the body is the

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[109] See *Being and Nothingness* pp. 50-54. Also See Brown, L. and Hausman, A. (1981) 'Mechanism, intentionality, and the Unconscious: A Comparison of Sartre and Freud', in Schilpp (1981) pp. 539-581 and Soll, I. (1981) 'Sartre's rejection of the Freudian Unconscious', in Schilpp (1981) pp. 582-604.

facticity of consciousness and that we exist our body. There can therefore, be no separation of mind and body, and it would be impossible for bodily practices and bodily discipline to produce 'an adherence that the spirit could refuse' (Bourdieu 1989: 82).

2.3 Ontological Freedom: A Reappraisal of Agency?

The discussion of the ontological anthropology of the early work of Sartre has led to a description of the freedom of the For-itself which suggests that a reappraisal of the hegemonist understanding of agency would be productive. It could be suggested that hegemonists fail to grasp the significance of the freedom of the For-itself, by privileging control over individual choice. This is the accusation levelled at hegemonist by Morgan (1994a) who claims that both positive (control over sporting activities) and negative freedom (individual freedom of choice) should be considered. As already argued, this does not, however, lead Morgan to grasp the ontological freedom of the For-itself either. One of the most important points to arise from Sartre's ontology is that Gruneau's objection that emphasis on liberal (negative) freedom leads to idealism does not stand in relation to ontological freedom. Sartre's position is a unique form of realism and can in no way be described as idealism since Sartre places Being and knowledge on different levels. As with all of this early analysis, however, it would be premature to treat this as a complete analysis of freedom. So far, we have certainly given an indication that a reappraisal of agency may be productive, but we have not yet developed an adequate understanding of freedom to be able to conduct such a reappraisal. To raise doubt about a position is one thing; to have an indication of what to replace it with is quite another. Sartre's analysis of freedom in *Being and Nothingness* is on an abstract level and does not, despite his attempts, place significant emphasis on situation and the conditioning influence of structural elements on the basic ontological freedom of Being For-itself. It is therefore, necessary to move to a discussion of the later work of Sartre, beginning with

reference to some of the main points of development in the thinking of Sartre between *Being and Nothingness* and the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, before looking at the *Critique* in detail.

It would be useful here to summarise the key problems which have been identified in the early work of Sartre as it is our ability to address these which will determine whether progress can be made in using the work of Sartre to re-think the critical theorisation of sport.

The first major problem which can be found in the early work of Sartre is the dyadic relationship between the self and the Other which makes it impossible for Sartre to give an adequate account of social relations. While it would be an oversimplification to suggest that Sartre has simply fallen victim to what scholars of Heidegger have come to refer to as 'the metaphysics of presence' (at its simplest, the view that reality is that which remains present through change, a view which generates the subject/object dualism which dominates Western thought), there is little doubt that Sartre's acceptance of Heidegger's emphasis on the temporal spread of our Being (whether we refer to it as Dasein or Being For-itself) has not, at least in *Being and Nothingness*, freed his account of social relations from the subject/object dualism. Sartre may not offer a metaphysics of presence as a result of the subtlety of his understanding of the For-itself as presence-to-self, but he has, nonetheless, failed to avoid the hazard Heidegger warns us of in his attack on the metaphysics of presence.

Sartre also fails to address situation fully. There is a tendency in *Being and Nothingness* for Sartre to disregard the weight of situation and suggest that human freedom is such that we can overcome most, if not all, of the constraints imposed by situation. He sometimes implies that greater emphasis should be placed on freedom than on situation. This skewed emphasis was to disappear from the later work of Sartre. This is something which suggests a reading of the early work of Sartre which places less emphasis on his more idealist tendencies. Careful consideration of the chronology of Sartre's work, however, suggests that his later work modified his earlier work to eliminate the problems caused by the over-emphasis he placed on freedom in *Being and Nothingness*.

Finally, Sartre fails to draw a distinction between sport and play and as a result he fails to recognise the structural constraints and power relations in competitive sport. This problem is consistent with Sartre's over-emphasis on freedom in *Being and Nothingness* and, like the over-emphasis on freedom, it is a problem which is resolved in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

From Phenomenological Ontology to the Primacy of Praxis: The Search for a Social Ontology.

Thus far we have looked at key elements of Sartre's phenomenological description of Being-in-the-World. This has highlighted the centrality of freedom to human existence as a result of the fact that consciousness is such that humans continually project into the future and are never perfectly at one with their facticity. We have also been able to make some primary observations regarding the role of sport and play, and the bodily nature of consciousness and its significance for the study of sport as an ideological tool. This, however, is far from adequate if we are attempting to understand the relationship between freedom and structure, and how this relationship manifests itself concretely in sport, through both the event and the sportsperson as a historical actor. While the approach adopted thus far partially clarifies the issue of human freedom, it is not possible to render freedom fully intelligible without understanding its relationship to structure. This is because both freedom and structure are abstractions when treated in isolation. The application of dialectical reason is the only way such abstractions can be understood as a synthetic whole. In this way we will be able to develop a position which is truly social in that it grasps the mediating factors which render reciprocity possible among what otherwise appear as isolated individuals capable, at best, of only a psychological unity.

3.1 Problems with *Being and Nothingness.*

Sartre's ontology in *Being and Nothingness* does not, in itself, provide a complete account of the social element of the Being of the For-itself as Being-in-the-World.

The major problem which he encounters is the fact that his account of human relations is fundamentally a dyadic model, even with the introduction of the Third as described in *Being and Nothingness*. Flynn (1984: 22) explains that 'the Third operates as such only in relation to a duality (self-other). What is the nature of this duality? Generically, of course, it too is a form of being-for-others, a type of looking/looked-at relation. But that will not suffice to account for the experience of the Us. For the Third's gaze must fix and objectify not me and then another, but both together; and more important, that "togetherness" must be experienced and assumed by us. The problem is to account for this mutuality.' Insofar as the Us and the We, as discussed in *Being and Nothingness*, are modifications of the dyadic relations Sartre describes in his discussions of love, then they are not actually social in the proper sense.[110]

There is also insufficient weight given to situation in *Being and Nothingness*. Reassessment of this element will enable Sartre to move from the early ontology to the praxis-based *Critique*, without abandoning the fundamental position of the former. The problems in the early ontology of Sartre are the result of a failure to give an adequate account of the role of mediations. It is for this reason that Sartre, possibly responding to a prompt from Merleau-Ponty, gives greater weight to the role of situation and mediations in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. It would be incorrect to suggest, however, that the elements of continuity between *Being and Nothingness* and the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* are weak. As McBride (1991: 108) argues, 'for Sartre, *praxis is* freedom, but freedom now construed far more as action in and on a material world that is full of resistances than it was in *Being and Nothingness*. (It is not the case that the model of freedom in *Being and Nothingness*, as expressed above

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[110] See Flynn (1984) for a detailed discussion of this point.

all in the notion of being for-itself or the *pour soi*, is totally different - purely cerebral, for example: that work contains lengthy treatments, in particular, of human action conceived as "doing" (*faire*) ... But there is a clear change of *emphasis* in the *Critique*, and this change is well encapsulated in the change of language from *pour soi* to praxis.'

There are a number of points in the *Critique* which have a strong connection to aspects of *Being and Nothingness*, though often with modifications of emphasis. There is a connection between the emphasis on *need* in the *Critique* and the description of Being For-itself as *lack* in *Being and Nothingness*. Both works place great emphasis on the existence of the Other, but in the *Critique* Sartre moves his emphasis from the dyadic notion of the Look to a more concrete description of reciprocity involving the mediation of a third party. Sartre's emphasis on the fact that each individual can become superfluous as a result of scarcity is also very similar to the notion of the contingency of the For-itself in his earlier work. The difference being that the contingency of the For-itself is an aspect of Being while the notion of superfluity is social and material as a result of the fact that it is rooted in scarcity.

The altered notion of freedom which emerges in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, is really an *expanded* notion of freedom, in that it now includes group action. This expanded notion of freedom can be seen as a move from the abstract to the concrete. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre is concerned with ontological freedom, but in later work he extends his analysis to consider ontic freedom. Sartre claims that an

individual cannot be concretely free unless everyone is free.[111] As a result, the primary value for Sartre in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is a 'positive reciprocity of freedoms' which is central to his subsequent thought. Sartre claims that 'the revolutionary act seemed to us, at first, the free act *par excellence*.'[112] He links freedom to the demand for the liberation of the oppressed class, and of all humans and argues that freedom 'springs from a recognition of other freedoms and it demands recognition on their part.'[113] It is this mutual recognition of freedoms which makes the free act a group act.

Concern with a positive reciprocity of freedoms brings us to the need for synthetic thought. For Sartre, this means dialectical thought. Sartre shows concern with synthetic though in relation to the historical event as early as 1940.

Sartre's first treatment of the issue of history comes in *The War Diaries*. Here Sartre is largely responding to Raymond Aron's *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Aron argues that there is a multiplicity of interpretations of any historical event, but advocates a 'sceptical moderation' in relation to a unity of history. It is the lack of unity, not the plurality of interpretations, which concerns Sartre. Sartre is in agreement with Aron in relation to the claim that a range of different accounts can be given of the historical event depending on whether one is concerned with explanation or understanding of a particular event. He gives the example of attempting to explain the First World War. He identifies a number of what he refers to as 'levels of signification', but which may be more clearly understood as accounts of the event

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[111] Flynn (1984) refers to this as 'Sartre's universal freedom conditional.'
[112] *Materialism and Revolution* pp. 249-250

from different perspectives. These include the economic level ('rivalry between German and English imperialisms')[114], Pan-Germanism and the hegemony of Prussia at the level of the 'more purely historical signification'[115], a diplomatic level (failure of alliances with Russia and Austria) and 'Emperor William's court, his government, his counsellors and his personality.'[116] While Sartre is not critical of the claim that an event can be assessed from various perspectives, he does, unlike Aron, find it problematic that these explanations '*never* meet.'[117] Sartre warns that 'a common error of historians is to put these explanations on the same level, linking them by an "and" – as if their juxtaposition ought to give rise to an organised totality, with ordered structures, which would be the phenomenon itself enfolding its causes and various processes. In fact, the significations remain separate.'[118] Aron, following Weber, adopts a position whereby the various accounts that emerge are each true of the event when it is assessed from different perspectives. Sartre's objection is to the fact that there is no convergence of these varying accounts of the event. Sartre argues that all levels of signification are human. He claims that the meaning of the historical situation is given by human agents, and it is human choices which bring those situations to be. This means that the unity of the different levels of signification lays in the fact that human reality 'historialises itself.'[119] One might object to this, claiming that agents have different perspectives. Sartre did not have the social ontology to provide a dialectical account of the historical event in 1940. The issue of

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[113] *Materialism and Revolution* p. 250
[114] *The War Diaries* p. 294.
[115] *The War Diaries* p. 294.
[116] *The War Diaries* p. 295.
[117] *The War Diaries* p. 295.
[118] *The War Diaries* p. 295.
[119] *The War Diaries* p. 297. Human reality is a translation of Heidegger's *Da-sein*, which came from Henri Corbin and was assimilated by Sartre.

the role of the individual within the totalisation is not resolved until volume two of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. There, the notion of incarnation will provide Sartre with the means to develop a properly synthetic account of the historical event which avoids perspectivism.

3.1.1 The Ambiguity of the Historical Event

For Sartre, there are three sources of ambiguity to the historical event:[120]

1. The historical event is a human phenomenon, rather than a natural one. This means that the historical event is similarly ambiguous to the human condition. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre argued that human reality is a 'detotalised totality', which can never be perfectly at one with itself, or any whole with which it becomes part. This is, therefore, true of the historical collectivity. The fact that consciousness cannot be perfectly at one with itself (cannot have a perfect identity) means that 'races, nations, classes, sexes as well as social predicates such as exigency, obligation and duty – are all shot through with that otherness, that lack of self-coincidence, which characterise their component human realities. They will never be entirely what we say they are' (Flynn 1992: 221).[121] In *Notebooks for an Ethics* Sartre claims that 'in History, too, existence precedes essence. … *Separation* in History means that it is never totally what one thinks it is.'[122]

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[120] These are discussed in detail by Flynn (1992) and (1997).
[121] Also see Flynn (1997) p.25
[122] *Notebooks for an Ethics* p. 32

2. The historical event is also ambiguous because of its ontological state.[123] The event is both subject to natural laws of the universe, and the product of goal oriented human action. Sartre argues that the intention of the agent in such action can be grasped. An example of this ambiguous ontological state of the historical event could be if I send a birthday card by post. The intention of the agent who sends the card can be grasped because the event is the product of goal oriented human action. The event, however, is also subject to the physical laws of the universe. This means that if the postal van breaks down, or is in an accident, the card may not arrive on time, or may not arrive at all.

Flynn (1992) claims that the ambiguity of the event leads Sartre to employ two forms of historical explanation; 'Marxist-determinist' and 'existentialist-moral' explanation.[124] The former deals with the impersonal, or authorless, and the latter with 'those individuals whose actions or omissions leave them responsible in a moral sense, that is, accountable, for the resultant situation' (Flynn 1992:221). This moral responsibility is a central feature of the philosophy of history developed by Sartre. Moral responsibility is regarded by Sartre of equal importance to the social ontology developed in the *Critique*.

3. The remaining source of ambiguity of the historical event is the 'necessity-contingency relationship' (Flynn 1992: 222). It can be said that an action succeeded because of the initiative of the agent, and because the limitations and barriers were not greater. The human agent must avoid foreseeable barriers. In this

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[123] Sartre describes the ontological state of the event as 'intermediary between physical fact and free *Erlebnis.' Notebooks for an Ethics* p. 36

sense, human freedom is exercised within a field of probability. Sartre claims that 'if the sharpshooter did not have the sun in his eyes, he would have got me and my scouting mission would have failed. Everything depended, therefore, on a ray of sunlight, the movement of a cloud, etc. But, at the same time, my precautions were taken in order to eliminate all foreseeable dangers. In a word, possibles get realised *in terms of probability*. Freedom lives within the sphere of the probable, between total ignorance and certitude. And the probable comes into the world through man. Outside of man and his project there is only being. And the root of the probable is not knowledge, which by itself can only conceive Being or NonBeing, but action.'[125]

These points raise a problem if we wish to produce a synthetic account of the historical event. For Sartre, the solution lies in the application of dialectical reason as he conceives it. Full elucidation of the dialectic is something which can only be achieved through the dialectical investigation itself, for reasons which will be explained. It is, however, possible to establish some points relating to the nature of the dialectical investigation and to what the dialectic is *not*. It does not require thorough analysis of the concrete manifestations of the dialectic to demonstrate that simplistic notions of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are inadequate when conducting dialectical investigations. The view that two seemingly opposing entities can be said to be dialectical is a gross oversimplification of the dialectic as conceived by Hegel and applied, when rescued from standing on its head, by Marx. Given that Sartre's

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[124] See Flynn (1984) p. 59
[125] *Notebooks for an Ethics* p. 335

dialectic is even more complex than those of Hegel or Marx, the violence done to it by oversimplification is somewhat greater.

3.1.2 The Dialectic.

Hegel regarded Being and knowledge as being on the same level, so for him the rational and the real were the same, hence his idealism. Sartre rejects Hegel's position, arguing, as does Marx, that Being is irreducible to knowledge.[126] By regarding Being and knowledge as being on the same level, Hegel could argue that thought and Being are the same, and could therefore, establish a dialectic of Being by establishing a dialectic of knowledge. Sartre argues that Being and knowledge have distinct materialities, one must distinguish between the knowledge of Being and the Being of knowledge.[127]

There are two uses of the term 'Being'. First, it can be used to refer to the existence of something independently of thought about that thing. Second, it can be used to refer to the distinct mode of existence of something, or the 'way' something exists. If the term is used in the first manner, Hegel is correct to assert that thought is Being (a thought has Being, it has an independent existence). If Being is used in the second sense, however, thought is not reducible to Being. My perception of the yellow of a lemon and the 'real' existing yellow of the lemon are not the same materiality. They have two separate materialities on different levels from each other. The problem, which Sartre particularly wishes to address, is the paradox that the monistic nature of the

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[126] Sartre also makes this point in *Being and Nothingness*.
[127] See *Being and Nothingness* pp. xxiv-xxxii

historical dialectic is the result of the fact that it is dualistic: 'thought is material but is not reducible to the materiality of things' (Catalano 1986: 61).

Hegel's dialectic is no longer dialectical at the point where he asserts the reducibility of Being and knowledge. Sartre argues that the dialectic must remain dialectical at every point. This means that in addition to Being and knowledge being dialectical, they must also have a dialectical relationship to each other. Sartre, therefore, argues that the dialectic alters with a change in the related aspects. In this sense, for Sartre, there can be no abstraction of the dialectic from that which is dialectically linked. It is for this reason that full elucidation of the dialectic prior to a dialectical investigation is impossible.

Sartre claims that many Marxists solve the problem of the relation between knowledge and reality by recourse to a dialectic of nature. This removes knowledge from consideration as a distinct entity by claiming that knowledge mirrors reality. Humans simply observe the development of matter according to the laws of nature. He refers to this as an 'external' dialectic, or a 'transcendental' dialectic. This is because the dialectic is imposed from outside humans. Sartre argues that the external dialectic is not dialectical, despite reference to it by Engels. Sartre wanted, however, to describe a dialectic in which there was a place for the external dialectic as it was experienced, but he wanted to do this without the fundamental assertion, that humans make the dialectic, being lost. Sartre's objection to the external dialectic is that

subjectivity is regarded as an alien addition, which distorts, rather than makes history.[128]

Sartre attempts to formulate a dialectic that avoids the extremes of the idealism of Hegel and the scientific monism of 'modern Marxism.' He claims that truth is the product of the insertion of humans within Being. He argues that the deduction of the dialectic from nature reduces it to a scientific law, which is the product of analytic reason. Sartre claims that this would amount to the imposition of the dialectic on history by analytic reason. He argues that, as Catalano (1986: 64) puts it, analytic reason is 'a tool to fit human needs arising from a historical situation.' Sartre does claim that it is not inconceivable that, at some point in the future, it may be demonstrated that there is a dialectic of nature, but he argues that, at present, we lack sufficient information to make such a claim.

Sartre not only regards Being and knowledge as being on different levels, but also argues that the relationship between Being and knowledge is dialectical. He points out that 'the only possible unity of the dialectic as law of historical development and the dialectic as knowledge-in-movement of this development is the unity of a dialectical movement. Being is the negation of knowledge, and knowledge draws its being from the negation of being.'[129] We can see this more clearly if we turn to an example that we will develop more fully later. The way that an event such as the World Heavyweight title fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in 1974 exists (its Being), and my knowledge of the event, are separate materialities and have a

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[128] This is in stark contrast to Marx's claim that men make history.

[129] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 35

dialectical relationship to each other. We cannot reduce my knowledge of the fight, to the separate materiality of the mode of existence of the fight.

As we have already noted, Sartre's concern with individual praxis is central to his conception of the dialectic. He quotes Marx's assertion that 'men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past.'[130] He claims that if Marx is correct, we are led to a categorical rejection of analytic reason and determinism as an explanation of human history. Sartre regards the whole of dialectical rationality to be contained within the quote from Marx, and argues that such rationality 'must be seen as the permanent and dialectical unity of freedom and necessity.'[131] This means that 'man must be controlled by the dialectic in so far as he *creates* it, and *create* it in so far as he is controlled by it.'[132] Sartre also adds that it is necessary to understand that there is no such thing as *man*, rather there are individual people who are defined purely by the society in which they live, and the movement of history. 'If we do not wish the dialectic to become a divine law again, a metaphysical fate, it must proceed from *individuals* and not from some kind of supra-individual ensemble.'[133] So, we must avoid accounts of the Ali-Foreman fight which are based on generalised conceptions of class and race, and search for the unity of the event in individual praxis.

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[130] Marx, K. (1977) 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in McLellan, D. (ed) (1977a) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, p. 300.
[131] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 35
[132] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 36
[133] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 36

This, however, leads us to another contradiction in that the principle of totalisation that is the dialectic creates *one* history despite creating *several* societies and collectivities. Such totalisations, which are realities, are created from the millions of individual actions. 'We must show how it is possible for it to be a *resultant*, though not a passive average, and a *totalising force*, though not a transcendent fate, and how it can continually bring about the unity of dispersive profusion and integration.'[134] This means that if the dialectic exists, it exists because material conditions are such that it cannot not exist. Sartre elaborates on this point when he notes that:

'There is no *one* dialectic which imposes itself upon the facts, as the Kantian categories impose themselves on phenomena; but the dialectic, if it exists, is the individual career of its objects. There can be no pre-established schema imposed on individual developments, neither in someone's head, nor in an intelligible heaven ... the dialectical movement is not some powerful unitary force revealing itself behind History like the will of God. It is first and foremost a *resultant*; it is not the dialectic which forces historical men to live their history in terrible contradictions; it is men, as they are, dominated by scarcity and necessity, and confronting one another in circumstances which History and economics can inventory, but which only dialectical reason can explain.'[135]

Sartre points out that the dialectic is a totalisation of totalisations produced by *individuals*; he refers to this as dialectical *nominalism*. He also argues that if the dialectic is to be valid in all cases it must appear as necessity within the investigation

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[134] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 36
[135] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Volume one, p. 37

through which it is revealed, and it must also be the intelligibility of the process through which it is expressed.

There is a dialectical bond of Being between dialectical reason and its object. As a result, there is a totality dialectical-reason-dialectical-object, but dialectical reason and its dialectical object are, when regarded separately, abstractions. For Sartre, both the dialectical object and dialectical reason gain their specific meaning from the context. It is therefore, only the concrete synthetic totality that exists. Abstractions can be examined in isolation, but they cannot exist in isolation. As it is impossible to cover everything simultaneously Sartre begins with the abstract and moves towards the concrete in all his major philosophical works. This involves a suspension of critical judgement on the issue of the existence of the totality of *a* History.

3.1.3 Comprehension.

It is necessary for us to grasp Sartre's understanding of comprehension if we are to fully appreciate his progressive-regressive method. In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre argues, following his position in *Being and Nothingness*, that the reflexive bond of Being between consciousness and that of which it is non-thetically aware is not a reflective connection, and is therefore apodictic or necessarily true.[136] This bond of Being manifests itself, in relation to Sartre's area of interest in the *Critique*, in a prereflective awareness of one's life as historical, as a continual totalisation. The individual's increased concrete awareness of his or her life leads to

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[136] In relation to this non-thetic, or prereflective self awareness, Sartre claims that 'there must be an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself.' (*Being and Nothingness* p. xxix). See

an increased awareness of their role as part of a hierarchy of totalisations. Sartre's aim is to show how individual praxeis become subsumed in that of groups, while also showing how individual praxeis can be realised in the praxis of the group. He reverses the approach that he outlines in *Search for a Method*, which is, he notes, a movement in the opposite direction to Marxist thought. It may be argued that if Sartre is to begin with the individual then he is not moving from the abstract to the concrete as he claims. It should be pointed out, however, that he begins with the abstract self-awareness of the individual which gradually becomes more concrete as that individual conducts his or her daily life. There is a gradually increasing awareness of oneself as existing in a world inhabited with other individuals; as being simultaneously a member of a variety of groups and series[137] with many different projects and meanings.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre had argued that humans have a prereflective self-awareness. In *Search for a Method* he has stripped this idea of any Cartesian associations by arguing that we should be able to comprehend the historical agent's own understanding of their own project. The fact that the self-awareness of the historical agent is prereflective means that there is the potential for us to reflectively understand the individual better than he/she reflectively understands himself/herself.

Comprehension of the Other is possible, according to Sartre, because 'man is, for himself and for others, a signifying being.'[138] Sartre points out that if one observes someone at work and does not understand what that person is doing, one will find

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McCulloch (1994) pp. 9-11 for an explanation of the different modes of self-consciousness in the early work of Sartre.

[137] A series is an ensemble in which relations of alterity, or separation exist between the members.

clarification of the actions being observed when one is able to 'unify the disjointed moments of this activity, thanks to the anticipation of the result aimed at.'[139] He illustrates this through the example of boxing by observing that 'in boxing, one will grant to a feint its true finality (which is, for example, to force the opponent to lift his guard) if one discovers and rejects at the same time its pretended finality (to land a left hook on the forehead). The double, triple systems of ends which others employ condition our activity as strictly as our own. A positivist who held on to his teleological colour blindness in practical life would not live very long.'[140] By altering his initial position to give us temporalising praxis, Sartre allows us to see how humans can be signifying beings, but also that in comprehending the praxis of the Other in terms of its terminal signification, we may be able to grasp the dialectical relationship between biography and history. It is this comprehension that is the goal of the progressive-regressive method.

3.1.4 The Progressive-Regressive Method.

The main aim of the progressive-regressive method is, as we have noted, to achieve a comprehension of both the individual and his/her time. This is an aim that was first articulated by Sartre in *The War Diaries*[141] where he expressed the desire to understand both Kaiser Wilhelm II, including the role of his withered arm, and the First World War. The progressive-regressive method has three phases. The first is a phenomenological description akin to that carried out in *Being and Nothingness*. This

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[138] *Search for a Method* p. 152
[139] *Search for a Method* p. 157
[140] *Search for a Method* p. 157. Sartre is developing his position on the temporal spread of consciousness, which he adapted from the work of Heidegger and outlined in *Being and Nothingness* and the thesis of the intentionality of consciousness, which he borrowed from Husserl.

leads us into the confusing vocabulary which Sartre employs to describe the ontological status of human reality (Being In-itself, Being For-itself and Being For-others). This phase describes fundamental features of the human condition, such as the ontological freedom to which we are condemned and the central role of our individual project in determining the concrete way in which that freedom is exercised. But, phenomenological descriptions are abstract and atemporal and, as such, are far from sufficient to account for the concrete temporalising praxis of historical agents. If we are to understand an individual's 'historialisation', or the unique way in which they live their times, while being conditioned by them and, in turn, conditioning them, then we will require much more than the first phase of the method.

The second phase of the method is that of regressive analysis. The aim here is to identify the 'formal' conditions of the possibility of the social environment under investigation. This is the conventional terrain of sociology. In other words, it is a search for the factors that make the whole under investigation possible, and therefore, render it *partly* intelligible. If it were not for the fact that the term 'concept' has a specific 'technical' meaning in the work of Sartre, one might say that the regressive phase of the analysis is a conceptualising phase. This would be inaccurate due to the atemporal nature of concepts, but it is helpful if we regard the search for concepts as a 'rough equivalence' of what is achieved in the regressive analysis. Again, we encounter a whole new lexicon of terms. The regressive analysis is the identification of praxis, praxis-process, the practico-inert and mediating Thirds[142] in relation to the

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141 See *The War Diaries* pp. 294-319.

142 The term 'praxis-process' is Sartre's attempt to capture the fact that there are impersonal forces of the practico-inert which deviate praxis. 'Praxis' stresses the human element which drives the process, yet 'process' denotes the authorless events which both alter praxis and are a consequence of it. See *Search for a Method* pp. 163-164. The 'mediating Third' is each member of a group as they are witness

object of study. More familiar 'formal conditions' would be base and superstructure (which are not referred to often by Sartre) and class identity.

There are, however, other conditions which are identified in the regressive analysis, but these should not be referred to as 'formal'. An example of these would be the milieu in which an individual spent his/her childhood. All the structures identified in the regressive analysis are mediating factors between the individual and the social world. The danger, which Sartre identifies with Marxist economism but might equally be regarded as a fault of most sociology, is that emphasis is placed solely on regressive analysis while neglecting to consider the progressive phase of analysis.

The progressive phase aims at grasping the unique 'personalisation', or 'historialisation' of an individual historical agent. Here, the analysis reaches its most concrete. Here the individual must be studied in conjunction with his/her times. For example, Sartre studied Stalin and the drive for 'socialism in one country' in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, and 'Flaubert in the context of the rise of the modern novel as a bourgeois art form and the social and political ambiguities of the Second Empire' (Flynn 1997: 115). The investigation will be complete when we achieve a comprehension of the individual's own comprehension of the times in which they live and their own historical action.

From a disciplinary point of view such an analysis is complex and extremely demanding. Not only are we dealing with the convolutions of Sartrean philosophy, but

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to, and totalise, the reciprocity of the other members of the group. It is in this way that Sartre maintains his dialectical nominalism while explaining the unity of the group.

also uniquely Sartrean forms of psychoanalysis and sociology,[143] in addition a great

deal of historical and biographical information is required. The most important

difference between the progressive-regressive method and any other broad ranging

synthetic method is the manner in which the information from the various auxiliary

disciplines is synthesised. That aspect is not yet fully clear. As outlined here, there is a

connection between the individual and the social world through constituting praxis,

but we do not yet have a justification of the study of a *specific* individual as anything

other than *an* example which does not contribute to our *general* understanding of that

in which we are interested. It is here that Sartre's discussion of incarnation, through a

study of boxing, can be of assistance. We will return to this when we have looked in

detail at the various formal conditions of the possibility of a social environment,

which are dealt with by Sartre in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one.

We do not yet have a satisfactory account which can justify our criticisms of

hegemonist thought on sport, and provide an alternative position. We have only laid

the foundation for an understanding of the social world which can support the

criticisms of hegemonists, and provide insight of its own. The next step for a Sartrean

contribution to critical theorisations of sport must be to look at the mediating factors

which make a social world possible. These are the basis of the regressive component

of the progressive-regressive method.

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[143] See *Being and Nothingness* pp. 557-575 and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one pp. 253-663.

3.2 Praxis, Mediation and Practical Ensembles: Regressive Analysis.

We have traced Sartre's thought to the point where we have the basic framework of a dialectical method of analysis, which preserves a central role for individual praxis while promising detailed consideration of those factors which limit free individual action. We must now explore the regressive element of the method in more detail to gain an understanding of the mediating factors which constitute the conditions of social possibility. This will lead us to an understanding of the deviations of praxis and the formation of a variety of ensembles as a means to overcoming such deviation. This will give us a clearer understanding of institutions, class, societies and the state, before looking at the deviation of collective praxis in the next chapter. As one might expect with the later philosophy of Sartre, we must begin by taking a closer look at praxis, as it ultimately holds a primary role in his work from the late fifties to his death in 1980.

3.2.1 Praxis.

Catalano (1986: 95) explains Sartre's understanding of praxis by drawing a distinction between 'action,' which is nonhistorical, and 'praxis,' which is historical action. Both action and praxis are purposeful behaviour. But action is directed towards a goal that is given in nature, such as climbing a mountain, whereas praxis is directed towards a goal that *humans* posit; as a result, praxis is designed to satisfy needs that are specifically human and therefore, not given in the world. Praxis is also transcendence of the material conditions encountered by an individual or a group. In this sense,

praxis is labour[144] which inscribes itself in matter and reconfigures the field of practical experience, or what Sartre calls 'the practico-inert.'[145] Flynn (1984: 105)[146] argues that Sartre applies a 'principle of the primacy of praxis' in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. He elaborates on this by claiming that there is a threefold primacy of praxis in the *Critique*: epistemic and methodological, ontological and ethical. The epistemic and methodological primacy of praxis stems from Sartre's insistence that individual praxis is fully translucent, and therefore, completely comprehensible to itself. The individual's self-awareness of their own praxis is the basis for rendering group praxis intelligible. In other words, it is the fact that individual praxis is intelligible which makes it possible for us to understand group praxis. As constitutive praxis, individual praxis is the intelligible foundation of (the otherwise opaque) constituted group praxis. The ontological primacy of praxis comes from Sartre's claim that 'the group never has had and never can have the type of metaphysical existence which people try to give to it. We repeat with Marxism: there are only men and real relations between men.'[147] For Sartre, praxis is fundamental to authorless process. The

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[144] See *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 90 where Sartre claims that labour is the original praxis by which humans produce and reproduce their life.

[145] We have referred to the practico-inert in passing, with brief explanation of what it actually is, but it would be useful to explain the idea a little further here. The practico-inert is matter which has been altered by previous praxis. For example, if I clear some trees from a small area of land, and build a house on that land, this is historical action (praxis) which alters the practico-inert. The land would probably have been shaped in some way by previous praxis, such as the planting of trees. When I build a house on the land, I alter the practico-inert. The implications of this are wide reaching. The house will require certain amenities such as a water supply, gas and electricity, and a telephone line. A road may need to be built for access. The postal service may have to alter their provision to serve the new house. The electoral register and other public records will have to be changed. The point here is that the change is not simply isolated and superficial. The area of land can never be encountered as it was before I built the house, and any future praxis must respond to the practico-inert which now exists. The house has an inertia which affects the provision of services and anyone who encounters the area of land on which the house is built. People will no longer be able to walk over the land and no other person will be able to build on the land. We will explore a number of different aspects of the practico-inert later in this chapter.

[146] See pp. 105-112 for Flynn's discussion of the threefold primacy of praxis in the *Critique*.

[147] *Search for a Method* p. 76

practico-inert, which is the 'intelligible limit of intelligibility'[148], can only be understood as fundamentally the product of praxis. It is the ontological primacy of praxis which prevents Sartre falling victim to hyperorganicism in the manner of hegemonist theorisations of sport. The ethical primacy of praxis is a consequence of the fundamentality of praxis to the creation of social wholes and the practico-inert. In short, if people make history, then people are responsible for history and how they respond to their situation. We cannot hide behind the façade of impersonal process or organicist conceptions of social groups.

Sartre argues that individual praxis is constitutive praxis and group praxis is constituted praxis. He identifies two terms in an attempt to make the intelligibility of praxis clearer. There are two forms of praxis: that which has an author, and that which does not. 'Comprehension' is the term Sartre uses to refer to the understanding of praxis in terms of its agent or author, while 'intellection' is the term he gives to the understanding of praxis that is not reached by recourse to an agent. Sartre argues that analytic reason can only grasp praxis which has an agent; if we are to make praxis which does not have an agent intelligible, the broader dialectical reason is required.

The fact that Sartre begins with individual praxis may be regarded as a weakness in his procedure, yet, as Catalano (1986: 87) argues, this is the result of a failure to understand that procedure. Sartre does not begin with the isolated individual, but rather with the entire human condition and the fact that humans, as bodily consciousnesses freely responding to their facticity, effectively act alike. It is the shared human condition rather than a human nature, or essence, with which Sartre

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[148] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* p. 94

begins his investigation. The important distinction to be made is between the terms 'individual' and 'isolated.' Sartre is concerned with that which individuals have in common, not with isolated individuals.

3.2.2 Praxis and Need.

Sartre claims that 'everything is to be explained through *need (le besoin)*. 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. Need is a negation of the negation in so far as it expresses itself as a *lack* within the organism; and need is a positivity in so far as the organic totality tends to preserve itself *as such* through it.'[149] He argues that the individual is an organism and, therefore, must satisfy *needs* in order to survive. A lack that provides a threat to the organism is the first negation. To satisfy these needs requires material objects of which there is a scarcity. The use of the inorganic to satisfy the lack is a negation of the original negation (lack).[150] The individual is also, by his or her very Being, an agent; the individual *is* praxis; a transcendent being that must freely choose the means by which needs are satisfied. Praxis therefore, totalises the inorganic environment.[151]

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[149] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 80

[150] The most obvious example here is the lack of food. A lack of food provides a threat to human beings; this is the first negation. The satisfaction of this need requires food, but there is a scarcity of food. The use of food to satisfy the need for food is a negation of the original negation of a lack of food. The choice of how I satisfy this need (by working to make money to buy food, by stealing food or by growing my own food) is something which I must choose within the limits of my situation. My situation may make certain options impossible, but I must choose from those that are possible.

[151] Craib (1976) p. 108 describes Sartre's 'highly individual' use of the terms 'organic' and 'inorganic'. 'organic' is used to refer to conscious human beings and 'inorganic' refers to 'everything else'.

The practico-inert is created by individual praxis on inert matter. In addition to this, the individual exists in a world in which there is the constant presence of others. When these points are all taken into consideration, it is clear to Sartre that a fundamental aspect of the human world is *reciprocity*. Sartre's use of the notion of singularised universals[152] means that there is no univocal condition of reciprocity, but rather many different relations of reciprocity. Given this combination of scarcity and reciprocity, Sartre argues that conflict will be a constant feature of the human world. He also points out that scarcity results in all individuals potentially being superfluous as a result of the fact that there is always scarcity and the existence of the Other will always be a threat to my ability to satisfy my needs.

Sartre regards need as i. 'a biological function,' ii. 'non-historical action,' and iii. 'historical praxis' (Catalano 1986: 91). As Catalano (1986: 91) points out, however, 'the entire discussion is *from the perspective of need as praxis*.' There is no 'neutral perspective.' Sartre is discussing *our* needs as historical beings. He argues that there is no meaning to our needs if they are not human; a general notion of need which

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[152] McBride (1991) p. 121 points out that 'Abstract concepts such as "human nature," "friendship," "class," "nation," etc. have no univocal transhistorical meaning for Sartre.' Sartre uses the notion of the singular universal to overcome any limitations that his insistence that abstract concepts have no universal, diachronic meaning may place on his ability to discuss a generality. 'The highly abstract universal, reciprocity, must be singularised, by being located in specific places and times, in order to be understood. There is no transhistorical essence of reciprocity. What applies to "reciprocity" must apply, pari passu, to those terms, which commentators are often tempted to designate "concepts," that Sartre employs prominently in a somewhat technical way throughout the *Critique*: for instance, *praxis*, series, groups, and (an interesting though less prominent case) alienation itself. There can be no essential qualities of any of them; this fact does not prevent us from using the terms as universal descriptors for certain discernible and distinguished types of phenomena, just as long as we remember always to "singularise" them, to render them specific to the *situations* in which they are experienced or found.' (McBride 1991, p. 123). As a result of this it is not possible to regard sport as a general universal transhistorical concept, it must rather, be singularised and regarded as having concrete instances which totalise and incarnate, but this does not allow us to regard sport as an abstract category. Another example of this is fundamental violence in Sartre discussion of boxing. As an abstract, universal category fundamental violence does not exist. 'Violence is there, present, Sartre says, in the boxing public and in the public at large. The *reality* of this violence is exhausted in its singularised, concrete instances. The same applies, for Sartre to all other similar "concepts"' (McBride 1991, p. 123).

links, for example, human needs and those of animals is meaningless, despite certain similarities. 'Sartre's main point is that, even on an abstract level of satisfying needs, human beings totalise their environment by using a controlled inertia to alter it' (Catalano 1986: 92). Sartre also argues that human needs transcend what *is* towards what *is not*, in acting on the world, there is a transcendence towards a humanity that is not yet in existence. As a result tools become more than instruments for the reproduction of humanity, as in primitive societies which repeat themselves. Rather, they are also instruments which are capable of adjustment to the, as yet, non-existent humanity.

Sartre argues that the first negation of a negation, which is an affirmation, is understood through a regressive analysis of our organic existence. From this we can see that there is a non-self-contained unity to the organic, while there is no unity to the inorganic. The unity of the organic is not self-contained because it requires the inorganic for survival, otherwise it will return to the inorganic. There is, therefore, a lack and a need of the inorganic on the part of the organic. From this it can be seen that need is a negation of a negation because our organic unity is not the inorganic, nor is it purely an absence of the inorganic as it requires the inorganic for survival.

Sartre argues that labour results in the humanisation of nature, which leads to the emergence of a dialectic between that humanised nature and human reality. He claims that there is a relation of interiority between humans and matter as things in the

world.[153] Labour is not only a relation between humans and things, but also between humans. Human relations reciprocally alter, and are altered by, matter in the world.

Sartre looks at agricultural workers in southern Italy who eat once a day, or even once every two days. He argues that their isolation alters their consciousness, giving all their relations a specific feature of isolation. Isolation is made possible by the specific configuration of matter in the world; or rather, the immediate environment in the case of the Italian agricultural workers (in some cases it would be the wider world because of worldwide trade). This has led many Marxists to conclude that human relations are reducible to historical conditions. Sartre argues, however, that historical conditions are remade by praxis, while praxis simultaneously makes humans historical. The material conditions do lead to the isolated existence of the Italian workers, but there are also contributions made by oppressive praxeis that do not stem from the mode of production. The most efficient exploitation of workers, for example, requires them to be well fed and well equipped to carry out their tasks. In addition, the specific oppression of the Italian workers is interiorised by them in their own distinct way. It is *their* response to their historical conditions. Any explanation of their response cannot be reduced to the environment in which they find themselves, nor could any human response be deduced from an environment.

3.3 The Role of Mediations in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*: The Practico-inert.

We have stressed the 'primacy of praxis' in the later work of Sartre. Were our account complete at this point, we would be open to criticism for a failure to grant sufficient

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[153] This is consistent with the internal relation between the For-itself and the In-itself in *Being and*

weight to necessity and an inability to account for the unintended consequences of human action. It is in relation to such issues that an understanding of the role of the practico-inert in the work of Sartre is essential. Flynn (1997) gives two examples of failure to understand the role of mediating factors in the work of Sartre. The first example is Ankersmit's claim that 'philosophy of action can never speak the language of the unintended consequences of human action. As a philosophy of history, philosophy of action is only suited to prehistorist historiography. Being unable to transcend the limitations of methodological individualism, it is historiographically naïve.' The second example is Aron's claim that 'the *Critique* tends towards the following objective: *to establish ontologically the foundations of methodological individualism.*'[154] Flynn (1997: 120) argues that the mediating factors established in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* 'serve to keep Sartre from the extremes of both individualism and holism in the social sciences. This nuance of Sartre's "dialectical nominalism" seems to have eluded his critics.'

As the embodiment of past praxis in matter, and the influence of worked matter on humans to the exact degree that humans shape matter, the practico-inert plays an extremely large role in Sartre's account of the social world and human history. It is the whole basis of sociality. We will focus here on a number of manifestations of the practico-inert as a means to appreciating the significance of its role. The first example of the impact of the practico-inert is its role in the unintended consequences of praxis. It is here that the practico-inert functions as matter which is the negation of action.

Nothingness.

Sartre points out that praxis generates an authorless 'antipraxis', or 'counterpraxis' because of the inertia of matter. This means that praxis often results in outcomes which are in opposition to the original intention of the praxis. Sartre refers to such outcomes as 'counterfinalities.' He also looks at the influence of these counterfinalities on different groups, whether it be detrimental or advantageous,[155] and the role power plays in the influence of counterfinalities on these groups. He suggests that the elucidation of conterfinality may make it possible to create a new form of praxis which can eliminate or modify counterpraxis by understanding what the future counterpraxis would be.

A simple example of counterfinality, given by Sartre, is that of Chinese peasants who deforested land for the positive purpose of feeding their families. Sartre points out that the deforestation was conducted serially (in isolation) by individuals. There was no collective praxis. This led to the counterfinality of severe flooding, which produced changes in the existence and future praxis of the peasants, and united them, albeit negatively. Sartre does not claim to have insight into the meaning of the deforestation for the peasants; simply its meaning for us in our historical situation. We cannot grasp the historical event exactly as it was lived by those at the time. We can only understand the event as part of a totalisation, and that totalisation is *our* history. We understand the past as the past of our present, not as an isolated entity which can be studied with the objective eye of analytic reason. In this sense, it cannot be claimed that the deforestation was a counterfinality for the peasants who experienced the flooding.

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[154] See Flynn (1997) p. 120. Also Aron, R. (1975) *History and the Dialectic of Violence*, trans. B. Cooper, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. p. 200, and Ankersmit, F. R. (1994) *History and Tropology*, Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 35.

The example of the importation of gold from Peru to Spain during the sixteenth century is much more complex than that of deforestation in China because the influences that Sartre describes are social rather than natural. The importation of gold into Spain did lead to an increase in wealth, but this led to greater deprivation by increasing the cost of living while contributing to the suppression of wage increases as a means of keeping prices down. The influx of gold and the subsequent production of gold coins led currency to devalue, which raised prices, hence the attempt by merchants to keep prices lower by not increasing wages. This contributed to increased deprivation. Sartre argues, however, that there is no reason why an increase in wealth should not benefit all, even if it benefits some more than others, yet the accumulation of gold as praxis led to the counterpraxis which brought the loss of Spanish power in the Mediterranean.[156] This was accelerated by the fact that Spain was in the contradictory position of desiring the accumulation of both gold and an empire, which required a 'loss' of gold. It is this latter authorless antipraxis which led to the loss of Spanish gold as the two contradictory praxeis were never unified in one praxis and therefore, continued to work in opposition to each other.[157]

We can see from these examples that the inertia of the practico-inert can deviate praxis. We can act on the world, but it acts back and produces results that are counter to the original intention of our praxis. When we recognise that the practico-inert is

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[155] Some groups may be able to use counterfinalities for finalities of their own.

[156] See Braudel, F. (1995) *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. S. Reynolds, Berkeley: University of California Press. two volumes. pp. 462-542.

[157] McBride (1991) pp. 131-133 makes the point that these discussions of deforestation in China and the importation of gold in Spain could be seen as something of an ecological element in the work of Sartre, despite the fact that he was hardly ecologically minded. While this 'ecological' argument is something of an interpretation, backed up by reference to the work of André Gorz, the issue of counterfinalities and Sartre's interest, following Hegel, in the relationship between nature and history are important points which need to be looked at in some detail.

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also central to the temporalising nature of praxis because praxis responds to an already existing practico-inert, while creating an altered practico-inert which future praxis encounters, then we can see that the deviation of praxis can develop into a process. If Muhammad Ali joined the Nation of Islam in an attempt to respond to racial discrimination and hatred in the United States, he found that this resulted in a counterfinality which meant that his views became as racist as those he was opposed to. He became even more hated and alienated. He responded to this new practico-inert by remaining a member of the Nation of Islam and refusing to be drafted into the army. This proved a popular decision among many white, middle class Americans. The result was an increase in Ali's popularity in the United States. This may seem like a return to his original project of responding to racism, but this increase in popularity was the beginning of a gradual accommodation of Ali into middle class American society. Ultimately, Ali's project was deviated considerably by antipraxis. The practico-inert is essential to the unification of these counterfinalities into a praxis-process.

The practico-inert is also the basis of sociality because all social forms stem from relations between individuals which are mediated by matter which has been shaped by previous praxis. For example, language is a form of the practico-inert which is essential to the unity of the social world. In a similar manner, television is a form of practico-inert which mediates between individuals to allow a social form such as the television viewing public. We can develop our understanding of the practico-inert further if we look at the issue of class Being.

In relation to the issue of class Being, Sartre argues that class is not a shared consciousness which all members of a particular class possess,[158] nor is it an individual awareness of oneself as a member of a class. In conformity with his attempt in *Being and Nothingness* to avoid the extremes of idealism and Cartesian realism, Sartre claims that the fundamental structure of the world is such that class exists prior to our experiencing it. Sartre appears to be claiming that praxis inscribes matter and creates a practico-inert, and in this sense a class structure exists as a fundamental structure of the world. Class is therefore more than a subjective projection, but it is not a shared consciousness. Rather, it is a shared material condition; a shared practico-inert which each individual can respond to freely, but with a freedom which has an inertia within it which is the result of the structure of one's concrete environmental situation. In relation to this, Catalano (1986: 137) claims that 'we recognise that we are free in the way that we realise our class being but that we can never escape from this class being. From this perspective, we live in a practico-inert hell in which our freedom is outwitted by an antipraxis.' Only a historical group response will overcome the alienating inscriptions in matter of past praxeis. A group only forms a class in a 'meaningful sense' when they 'participate in large numbers in a movement whereby they define their collective objectives' (McBride 1991:95). The point here being that a class does not exist in a meaningful sense simply by virtue of the fact that there are a group of people with similar backgrounds, jobs, living conditions and general standard of living; or which stand in similar relation to the means of production. It is the unification of individuals around

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[158] McBride (1991) p. 127 highlights Sartre's warning against 'the tendency of many Marxists and perhaps even Marx himself at times to lapse into a kind of neo-organicist language about the proletariat or some segment thereof, as if it could ever be a real entity in its own right apart from the individuals who make it up at any given time and place.'

collective objectives which forms a meaningful class. This view stems from the work of Sartre in essays prior to the writing of the *Critique*.

For Sartre, alienation is the result of a practico-inert that encompasses more than the capitalist mode of production and oppressive practices of groups and series. It is by changing the practico-inert that we are able to change our history, and in doing so we are changing that which is the ground of the possibility of our praxis. The practico-inert conditions our praxis as it is the ground on which we make our free responses. Catalano (1986: 152) points out that, for Sartre, 'praxis is our every thought and deed precisely insofar as it occurs within the practico-inert field of class being and is altered by that same field. Thus, our every thought and deed is a praxis insofar as it is a spontaneous interiorisation of the "exteriorised knowledge" called class being. Furthermore, precisely insofar as it is historical, every individual praxis is part of a series in which alterity characterises each member and in which each member is linked to every other through impotence.'

Sartre claims that the unity of our individual praxis stems from the unity of our environment, rather than from a shared human nature, and our praxis attempts a transcendence of the unity and meaning of the environment as worked matter. It must be remembered that a negation of the environment, or an object within the environment, is action rather than praxis. For example, if a chair is used to hold a door open, that is simply a negation of the chair as an object. This is, of course, an abstraction of the chair from its origin as the product of a particular mode of production. As such, the chair, or any other such object does not lead to alienation or alterity.

Sartre claims that in a milieu of scarcity humans work matter in such a way as to create objective structures in the material environment as matter becomes inscribed with 'inhuman bonds of reciprocity'. This results in a barrier to true social bonds of reciprocity that existed prior to the move to a capitalist mode of production. In the Middle Ages hierarchical relations of seriality were establish by the distinction between the officials of the church and laymen. This was, however, accentuated by the capitalist mode of production with its accompanying division of labour between the skilled and the unskilled, and of course, the owners of the means of production. Sartre argues that these structures become embedded in matter and are experienced as untranscendable counterfinality. For Sartre therefore, the effects of antagonism are something which pre-exist the antagonistic activity of the individual in matter. The effects of antagonism are embedded in matter and are therefore, a feature of the environment. This alone, is not enough to constitute class Being because these embedded manifestations of antagonism are something which could be transcended by the praxis of the individual. The untranscendable counterfinality of class Being stems from the fact that such embedded antagonism exists as a series within a series. Seriality and alterity *can*, to a certain extent, be overcome however, albeit temporarily and within a specific environment, by group praxis. This leads Sartre to claim that 'the worker will be saved from his destiny only if the human multiplicity as a whole is permanently changed into a group *praxis*. His only future, therefore, is at the second degree of sociality, that is to say, in human relations as they arise in the unity of a group (and not in the disunity of the gathering-milieu).'[159]

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[159] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, p. 310

Class Being is, therefore, present in the practico-inert, and as a result of the relationship between the practico-inert and consciousness, class Being radically alters consciousness in a similar manner to the way the existence of the Other radically alters consciousness in *Being and Nothingness*. It is the symbiosis of consciousness and the practico-inert which produces this alteration. The development of a mode of production and the adoption of a system of technology leads, through each specific instance of shared or common practice,[160] to each individual worker having a connection of seriality with every other worker.

Sartre's account of the collective as the serial connection, through matter, of individual members within a class leads us ineluctably to consider group praxis. In relation to our aim of elucidating sport as a social and historical praxis, we have conducted, albeit at an abstract level, the first part of our regressive analysis by looking at constituent or individual praxis. To complete the regressive movement, we must consider constituted group praxis. This will involve analysis of the formation of groups and institutions and discussion of the way this creates the inertia of structural constraints on human freedom.

Sartre argues that common praxis, the group and the common individual are all both products *and* means. Common praxis and the group are the product of individuals organising themselves to achieve an aim; yet they are also the only means by which the aim can be achieved. The common individual is a product of the group and common praxis insofar as there could be no 'common' individual without them, but the common individual is also the means for the attainment of the goal because 'the

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[160] Such as the formation of a union, or the building of a factory.

group has its practical limits in the individual'.[161] Without the common individual there can be no group, and it cannot achieve anything. The organisation of individual praxeis to generate power for the individual, which they could not possess on their own, is what produces common praxis.

3.3.1 The Mediating Third.

Sartre claims that the formation of historical society is not as simple as organicist and individualistic theories suggest. It is always necessary for there to be a Third[162] to mediate between two individuals if reciprocity is to be achieved. Also, reciprocity is always achieved through matter. Sartre uses the example of observing a gardener, and someone mending the road, from his window. The two men are separated by a wall with broken glass on top of it as protection of the property in which the gardener is working. The two workers are, therefore, unaware of the presence of the other, or of the presence of Sartre observing them. He notes that, as a petit bourgeois intellectual, his immediate relation to the two men is negative as he is not a member of the same class as them and, therefore, cannot achieve an adequate comprehension of the work that they are performing. Sartre claims that his relations with the workmen are relations of interiority because they affect his Being. In this situation, Sartre is aware of the fact that the work of each of the workmen is not the work of the other, and is not his work. The distinctive nature of *his* project is, therefore, apparent to him. He encounters it as a limited engagement with reality. The complete meaning of this limitation is inaccessible to Sartre. Our limitations exist in a plurality, as we cannot

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[161] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 524

know exactly how others encounter us. There is, however, a degree to which one's encounter with others in this manner is not entirely negative as it is possible to form a 'we' by attempting to know them and develop a union with them.

The workers are in ignorance of each other through Sartre. If the Third, here Sartre, did not exist, such as a situation where two people were the only people on an island, but were unaware of the existence of each other, there would be no ignorance. There is no subjectivity to ignorance however, as there is a use to ignorance. It would, for example, be possible for Sartre to use the fact that the two workers are ignorant of each other to make a profit from convincing the road mender that he should hire a gardener. It is through the mediating Third that we perceive the totality of a shared world. The Third is, therefore, essential to the formation of a historical society. A society does not exist because a group of people decide that it exists, nor is it an organic whole. Historical society requires mediation.

The mediation of the Third introduces a temporality that cannot be reversed. The example Sartre uses is Levi-Strauss's account of potlatch. Temporality is introduced to the exchange of gifts as it is objectified by the Third. Sartre notes, however, that the role of the Third should not be regarded in an idealist manner. Two individuals do not communicate with each other by using the mind of the Third. Communication between two individuals takes place through words, which are a form of materiality. It is the fact that others use language, which mediates between two individuals when

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[162] For details of the development of the idea of the Third in the work of Sartre see Flynn (1981) pp. 345-370.

they communicate in private. Language can therefore be used privately simply because of the mediation of public language.

The fact that there is a superficiality to our immediate concrete existence means that our immediate experience is also, to some degree, abstract. On the level of superficial reality, it appears that two people communicate with each other in a reciprocity that only involves them. It becomes apparent, however, on closer inspection that this reciprocity requires a Third as mediator. In this sense, at one level, there is a reality to the abstract. This position enables more complex synthetic analyses of praxis. A worker, for example, may appear to have a direct relation to the matter which he or she works, but while this is true, it must also be remembered that this relation with matter exists simultaneously with that of other workers. A road mender may know that he is mending the road, but he also knows that he is not gardening, and that he and a gardener are workers. 'For Sartre, however, all personal relations are possible only because their schema already exist in matter; gardening and road mending are possible jobs only because there is a specialised world in which gardens and roads need to be maintained by specialised jobs. It is a de facto occurrence that these schemas also imply mediation; that is, they have entered into a hierarchy of totalisations that make history' (Catalano 1986: 103). Human reality is defined by praxis, or a relation to matter that is historically specific. This means that reciprocity cannot be defined as it will change with historical circumstances.

We are beginning to see the role of the practico-inert in the formation of the collective, and the fact that the practico-inert is central to the deviation of praxis. These two points have led us to the need to analyse group formation as group praxis is the only means by which praxis can, temporarily, overcome antipraxis. To that end,

we have looked at the mediating role of the Third. We can now turn to the different

forms of group (Sartre uses the term 'ensembles' and ascribes 'group' a more specific

meaning) identified by Sartre

3.4 The Theory of Ensembles

In his discussion of ensembles (Sartre's term for any multiplicity of people) Sartre

differentiates between collectives and groups. The collective is a 'two-way relation

between a material, inorganic, worked object and a multiplicity which finds its unity

of exteriority in it'.[163]

An example of a collective, which Sartre outlines, is that of people waiting in a queue

for a bus. In this situation, the individuals in the queue experience a superficial

seriality,[164] which does not significantly influence praxis. There is in the queue, a

partial alterity, or separation, though true alterity isn't experienced. There is a degree

of reciprocity in the separation of the individuals within the queue. The bus provides a

partial unification which makes the isolation of the individuals take on a specific

form. Each individual is 'negating his ties to specific groups. Everyone is simply one

who is waiting to get on a bus. *At this level, true alterity does not exist*: each person is

oneself just as every other person is oneself' (Catalano 1986: 145). As a result there is

no alienation in this situation, or at least at the abstract level at which this situation is

being considered because 'everyone is identical with the Other insofar as they are

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[163] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one p. 269. Also see *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one pp. 253-342, Flynn (1984) pp. 97-98, Flynn (1997) p. 122, Catalano (1986) pp. 142-162 and McBride (1991) pp. 137-140.

[164] For Sartre a series is an ensemble whose members experience relations of alterity, or separation. This is contrasted with the group, members of which experience relations of reciprocity.

waiting for the bus.'[165] Sartre claims that because of the level of abstraction with which we are dealing here, there is a place for conceptualisation, in which 'everyone is the same as the Others insofar as he is himself.'[166]

The collective displays relations of seriality, while the group exhibits mediated reciprocity and is capable of common praxis. The first form of group considered by Sartre is the group-in-fusion.

3.4.1 The Group-in-Fusion.

Sartre uses the example of the group who took the Bastille at the beginning of the French Revolution to illustrate the seemingly spontaneous group formation that he refers to as the 'group-in-fusion.'[167] There had been great unrest in Paris. The Quartier Saint Antoine was a working class area that held a number of the protagonists in the unrest. There were rumours that the Quartier Saint Antoine would be isolated by soldiers, under orders from the King. It was also thought that the residents would be massacred. Sartre claims that it is not important whether the rumours were correct, simply that the residents came to regard themselves as superfluous in the eyes of the ruling group. The significance of the Bastille was both practical and symbolic as the area was surrounded on all other sides by a bend in the River Seine, therefore the Bastille occupied much of the section of the Quartier Saint Antoine which gave access

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[165] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 262

[166] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 262

[167] The English translation of the *Critique* refers to a 'fused group' rather than a group-in-fusion, which is the preferred term of almost all commentators as Sartre was attempting to communicate the fact that what he is describing is a continual process; a becoming, rather than something which *is*. McBride (p. 234, note 1) notes that in an unpublished doctoral thesis entitled 'Jean-Paul Sartre's Fusing Group and

to the rest of Paris. The spreading of the rumour led to the gradual gathering of people and the move on the Bastille. Sartre claims that it is not significant who was the 'regulative Third', or the person who first articulated the notion of taking the Bastille. He notes that this was simply the articulation of a common *praxis* rather than an order. The degree to which this description of events is entirely accurate is inconsequential to the point which Sartre is making. There may have been a number of agitators from outside the Quartier Saint Antoine, but Sartre is not claiming that the formation of *any* 'group-in-fusion' must follow exactly this pattern in all its detail.[168] He is not arguing that there is a sequential necessity to that which he has described in relation to the formation of *all* such groups. He is merely asserting that there is a distinct difference between the group-in-fusion and serial collectives, and that intelligibility of the group-in-fusion is necessary before the 'degraded'[169] groups, which are formed as a means of perpetuating the group, can be rendered intelligible. Even here, we could be misled and assume that the various aspects of group formation described by Sartre have a sequential necessity, and that any group *must* develop through *all* of the stages. This is not what Sartre is suggesting. The group-in-fusion does not necessarily form a pledged group. It may simply dissolve. The same is true at the point of development from the pledged group to the organised group, and from there to the institution.

Its Relation to Marxism' (Purdue University, 1980) Anthony DeCorso suggests the term 'fusing group.'

[168] A modern example of the group-in-fusion would be anti-capitalism demonstrations in Europe and North America, which were organised via the internet. The internet introduces a new form of mediation between members of the group-in-fusion.

[169] The use of the term 'degraded' here does not have its usual value based meaning. See the *Critique* volume one p. 591.

In addition, Sartre is making an important point relating to the relationship between individuals and groups. He argues that group praxis is more than simply an extension of the reciprocity of individuals. For if group praxis were an extension of individual praxis, it would share the same characteristics as individual praxis. It would be translucent in brief moments of prereflective awareness at the abstract, or localised level, but 'mystified, alienated and cheated' at the concrete historcal level, as a result of the antipraxis of the practico-inert, which prevents the individual being aware of the concrete historical context of his or her actions.[170] Sartre argues, however, that group praxis should be studied because it is a temporary and limited resolution of the contradiction between individual praxis and the practico-inert and its counterfinalities.

For Sartre, group praxis stems from individual praxis because each individual is a Third in relation to other individuals, who are themselves Thirds. In addition to this however, material conditions must be such that they form a unity that generates pressure to form the group. The environment[171] and other groups constitute the antipraxis of the practico-inert and it is the interiorisation of this antipraxis by individuals who are all Thirds that results in the formation of the group-in-fusion.

The problem which then arises, is how to explain the fact that group praxis is both individual and common. Sartre argues that 'group relations are relations of reciprocity mediated by and through the group precisely as the group is a praxis' (Catalano 1986:

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[170] Catalano (1986) gives the example of running for a bus to go to work. On the abstract level, this individual praxis is intelligible during moments of prereflective awareness in which the individual is aware that he or she is running for a bus so that they can get to work on time. The concrete historical context of this action however; that the individual runs to catch a bus to get to work, as do all other workers who go to work on a bus, escapes the individual.

173). In this way, through the mediation of the group as praxis, the actions of the members of the group are both their own and the groups; individual and common. As mediation is through praxis, there is an avoidance of the alienation that normally results from reciprocity between individuals in which the historical dimension of the matter which mediates such reciprocities 'exerts an active passivity' which alienates the individuals from the true historical meaning of their action.

In relation to this mediated reciprocity within the group-in-fusion, Sartre argues that not only is each member of the group a Third, but each member is a potential sovereign of the group. Sartre therefore asserts the ternary nature of group relations rather than the conventional sociological view that such relations are binary (individual-community). There is a relation of each person who joins the group to every other member of the group, as a 'unity of individuals as inseparable moments of a non-totalised totalisation,'[172] and this relation is mediated through the group. Sartre argues that this leads to an elimination of the 'inhumanity' that scarcity produces in the practico-inert. In group relations, each member has an immanence to the other members as a Third. They have the same relation to other members as all other members, through the mediation of the group. This is significantly different from a situation where each Third objectifies and transcends the Other through his or her project, as the Other simultaneously objectifies and transcends him or her in their project. Sartre regards this freedom as *power*, and claims that it is able to remove alterity. The mediation of the group therefore, returns our objectivity to us as we see

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[171] This is the hodological space in this situation, the space in relation to praxis. In the example of the storming of the Bastille, the hodological space would include the surrounding streets, the river and the Bastille itself.
[172] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, p. 374

in each member of the group, our 'lived objectivity.'[173] Alienation is, therefore, overcome temporarily through the formation of the contingent group-in-fusion.

Sartre also claims that in the group antipraxis does not have the influence that it has in conventional seriality, where it steals the individuals action from him or her and it is encountered as the action of the Other. The potential sovereignty of each member of the group means that an individual's action *is* his or hers, it is not encountered as the action of the Other. The fact that each member has this potential for leadership of the group means that each person is a potential transcendent Other, who would gain control of the group and use this for his or her own purpose. While the group-in-fusion exists, however, that potential transcendence remains a 'transcendence-immanence.' Sartre notes that 'we shall call the individual's being-in-the-group, in so far as it is mediated by the common *praxis* of a regulatory third party, his "interiority" or "bond of interiority" in relation to the group.'[174] He also uses the term 'alternation of statutes'[175] to refer to the fact that the potential of each member of the group to be a regulatory Third can be realised without that individual becoming a transcendent Other. Sartre regards this as 'the very law of the fused group [sic].'[176]

In relation to the group-in-fusion, there are two points which must still be addressed, both of which relate to the fact that Sartre has described a multiplicity of centres of praxis which are both individual and common. It is necessary, therefore, to explain how each of these are individual, and why they can only be as they are, by being

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[173] Catalano (1986) p. 174 points out that 'here, however, we must recall Sartre's dialectical nominalism; the term "objectivity" no longer has its abstract meaning of the self as objectified. In the present discussion, objectification takes place in the practico-inert field of seriality.'
[174] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, p. 381
[175] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, p. 381

common praxis. It is through the individual as a Third that the whole group is totalised. As a result, the individual is responsible for the action of every member of the group, as they are for him or her. The reason that this individual praxis *must* also be common praxis is that it is only as a member of a group that the individual has sufficient power to act as he or she may wish. Sartre's point is that the acquisition of this power in the group-in-fusion need not lead to a loss of freedom.

3.4.2 The Pledged Group and the Organised Group

As the formation of a group-in-fusion is 'apocalyptic' and tends to be momentary if action is not taken to preserve the group, the members of a group-in-fusion take a 'pledge' which binds the members of the group to each other, something which was not present in the group-in-fusion. The pledge leads to the development of inertia as a result of the fact that the pledge is freedom limiting itself. This inertia is a counter to the inertia of the practico-inert. The pledge also introduces what Sartre refers to as 'fraternity-terror', or the anticipation of varying degrees of violent response should a member denounce this pledge in any manner in the future. Following the pledge, the group moves towards organisation as functions and tasks are designated within the group. The function of the organised group generally replaces fraternity-terror as an aid to cohesion.

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[176] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, p. 381

Sartre gives an example of a football team as an organised group, which illustrates the power structure that develops within such a group and is necessary for the maintenance of that group.[178] A player has a duty as a result of the pledge to do everything possible to ensure that his or her performance is of as high quality as possible, but a player also has a right to high quality training and support. These relations result in a power structure that must be maintained. Within this structure, however, the good player exercises his or her freedom in the manner in which he or she carries out his or her function. Each player may be given direction by a coach or manager, but it is the concrete choices of the players on the pitch that determine the result. Praxis cannot, therefore, be reduced to the function which regulates it. That function is an abstract schema, which simply acts as a context for the actions of the player. Sartre also gives the example of an airline pilot to illustrate the role of individual choice.[179] In an emergency it is the pilot who must make the decision as to how he will use that which is at his disposal. Sartre argues, therefore, that it is antipraxis which causes alienation, not the constraining aspects of a situation.

The pledge and the move towards organisation within the group leads to a new form of alterity which can be referred to as 'cultural' rather than 'natural.'[180] Within the pledged group, differences between the members of the group are set aside to allow the achievement of shared goals, but these differences are replaced by those that stem from the differentiation of tasks necessary to achieve these goals. The intelligibility of this

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[178] See *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, pp. 450-451 and pp. 456-460.
[179] See *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, pp. 453-454.
[180] The alterity of seriality is such that the individual has no understanding of why his or her neighbour is the Other. The alterity created by the differentiation of tasks in the organised group is understood as necessary for the group to carry out its function.

cultured alterity lies in the fact that it is the difference between individuals in this situation which allows the attainment of goals. In addition to this change in alterity, there is also the development of a unique mediated reciprocity. The totalisation that the pledge relates to has within it many diverse functions carried out by individuals. Each of these individuals has a reciprocal bond to the other as a result of the pledge. This means all relations within the pledged group are relations of involuntary reciprocity which alter group praxis.

Common praxis generates inertia as a result of the pledge and organisation of the group. The hierarchical structure of groups leads members to encounter inertia on different levels. The ability of the group to achieve its aims is connected to its links with the practico-inert. For example, the specific group praxis of a football team may be aimed at winning a football match, but to achieve this they must successfully deal with links to the practico-inert, such as transporting the team to the match. The organisation of transport therefore, becomes a function of the club. The group is structured, with its own inertia, to combat the inertia of the counterpraxis of the practico-inert.

For Sartre, there is no separate ontological status to common praxis. It is constituted by individual praxis. Organisation has unity as both its goal, and as that which it negates. Unity is necessary to achieve goals which individual praxis could not. Yet that totality must be negated in favour of specialisation, which enables the group to attain the maximum degree of power. The unique existence of the group lies in its simultaneous pursuit and negation of unity.

Sartre has outlined a seemingly paradoxical organised praxis which is free, but has structures which can be thought of as having mathematical relationships and can be studied by science. He explores this paradox in a discussion of the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who has demonstrated that structure does not change even if there is a substitution of individuals. The example that is given is that of two patrilineal and patrilocal family groups (families A and B). There is a marriage between an *a* man and a *b* woman. In this situation, family A has lost a female member so family B are in debt. This can be represented by the addition of positive and negative signs to the individuals concerned. This means that the family of the woman becomes (-) and the family of the man becomes (+). In this way, it can be determined whether cousins in succeeding generations are parallel (++, or --) or cross (+-, or -+). Marriage is forbidden between those who are (++) or (--). This mathematical structure stems however from praxis as it is the result of the shared goal of battling scarcity in the availability of individuals to each group. Sartre argues that there are three levels on which structure can be regarded. First, the level of praxis; second, the level of power and function (freedom-terror, and right-duty); and, finally, the level of the schema or skeleton of the structure. The organisation of a group is first a praxis on itself, the group acting on itself; then it is a relation of its functions; and finally an objectification of these functions in a schema. Sartre's point is that the schema is not the foundation of the other two features, but is the product of organised praxis as it is differentiated into functions. Praxis is therefore, irreducible to the mathematical relations of the schema which its organisation produces.

As a result, the limitations on individuals in succeeding generations in relation to who they can and cannot marry are elements of praxis as it attempts to overcome the practico-

inert (in this case, existing conditions of material scarcity), and this does not introduce alienation and alterity as it may appear. The practico-inert generates an inertia, which Sartre refers to as 'passive activity.' The organisation of the group gives it a qualitatively different inertia, which Sartre refers to as 'active passivity.' At a more abstract level than that involving alienation from class conflict, active passivity is the result of intentional praxis. 'In the example given by Lévi-Strauss, the determination of the child's eligibility for marriage is an aspect of the group's self-determination of how to live viably with another group. By being born into the community, the child, by what Sartre calls a "second pledge," participates in the original pledge of the community' (Catalano 1986: 193). There is a reciprocity to this relationship; the group does, to a degree, determine the child, but it is also the means by which, to some extent, the freedom of the child loses its impotence in the face of the practico-inert.

3.4.3 The Institution

The pledged group and the organised group display a tendency to solidify into a hierarchical structure of serial relations in an attempt to preserve their ability to counter the inertia of the practico-inert. This is the formation of institutions. Groups have both internal and external unity. Internal unity is gained by the pledge, with each member of the group acting as a regulating Third. External unity stems from the Being For-others of the group, or the fact that the ensemble is recognised as a group from outside. All members of the group have a partial sovereignty in that they can organise the environment as a means of achieving a goal. They are, however, limited by the reciprocal

sovereignty of each of the other members of the group. By a practical action, such as gaining possession of the ball in a football match, an individual is in a position to organise the environment in light of the aim of scoring a goal. This individual is, however, dependent on the other members of the team. The other players remain individuals. They do not become an entity to be used by the player who has gained possession. Catalano (1986: 212) points out that 'every regulatory act of totalisation is also a de-totalisation, revealing every other as a limited sovereign.' As a result, the group is always a de-totalised totality.

Institutions are the result of attempts to achieve praxis which has an ontological unity. This is, of course, impossible because, according to Sartre, individuals are the only ontological entities, and all group praxis is constituted by individual praxis. Sartre claims that there is an introduction of fraternity-terror as a result of the formation of the institution, because group praxis cannot attain the unity of individual (organic) praxis. The aim of fraternity-terror is to achieve maximum unity of all individual praxis within the group in light of the shared goal.

There are two extremes to which fraternity-terror can lead. First, the common individual can assert a level of freedom similar to that which existed prior to the pledge. This is effectively the attainment of complete sovereignty in which common praxis is subordinated to individual praxis. Second, individual praxis can be absorbed by group praxis to such a point that individual praxis is of no significance. Catalano (1986: 214) points out that 'both extremes follow from the precariousness of the quasi sovereignty of

the regulatory third.' Both extremes lead to the reintroduction of seriality into the group. It is also here that conflict arises. In some situations fraternity-terror in which the individual consents to control as a means of gaining greater unity, can degenerate into a reign of terror. The reign of terror returns us to the practico-inert, that which the group was formed to combat. It is in the degenerate institution that sovereignty of an individual or subgroup can occur. This has the effect of both unifying the group which is degenerating, while also contributing further to the degeneration.

3.4.4 States and Societies

One might assume that society would constitute some form of group, yet Sartre stresses that the people in a society are a collective. 'A society is not a group, nor a grouping of groups, not even a struggling grouping of groups.'[181] Despite this, there must be some unity to a society if it is to be distinguished from other societies. Although some form of territory may be a necessary condition for a society, it is not a sufficient condition. If we took a number of people from various parts of the world and gave them their own territory (such as a deserted island), they would not instantly constitute a society. The sufficient condition for a society is the internal bond of ensembles (groups to series) that is brought about historically. Examples could include a historical unity in the face of a common enemy (such as Palestinians living in territory occupied by Israel), or a shared means of production (such as that which was experienced by Soviet society). The state is the most significant example of a bond of groups to series. The collective of society is a

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[181] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 635

form of seriality. The state is an institutionalised group, which not only has a bond to other groups in society, but to the collective as a whole. The ability of one group to act on other groups is far from unique, but it is the sovereignty of the state, which distinguishes it from other groups which act on groups.

Sartre claims that there is an ambiguity to the sovereignty of the state, which is the result of both contradictory praxis and mystification. The sovereignty of the state is a mystification because it appears that the state is the embodiment of the sovereignty of the individuals which constitute society. Yet, in reality, the sovereignty of the state is something which stems from the impotence of the members of society, and the sovereignty of the state ensures that the impotence of the individual members of society is maintained.

Sartre argues that members of the government are unified by the sovereign as a Third, and that they share in the power to varying degrees. Those members of a society that are outside the government have little access to power. The mystification of the sovereignty of the state is successful in that the people of a society accept the state as the embodiment of their society. In this sense, there is an appearance of the state as the most suitable unity of the people as a collective. Yet any society is a collective, not a group. If society was a group, it could not have another group (the state) as sovereign. This is the basis of contradictory praxis. The state has the contradictory aim of both unifying the population into a cohesive society, while also preventing them from becoming a group by perpetuating their seriality. The state emerges from the dominant class but, while it

strives to maintain the power of that class, it also attempts to maintain class divisions so that the ruling class is never the only class, but rather *one* of the *classes* in society. This may involve shifting allegiances between classes on the part of the state as a means of maintaining unity.

Sartre's analysis is in opposition to the sharp division between political and other forms of institution. For example, the distinctions drawn by Locke (civil society and government) or Hegel (civil society and the state), which are still prevalent in modern political philosophy as a result of renewed interest in the work of Gramsci. Sartre rarely used the term 'civil society' and did not discuss the state or government in great detail. This is because Sartre is attempting to 'shift the ground, to undermine the traditional distinctions, images, and terminology' (McBride 1991: 147). Sartre moves the sharp distinction, placing it between the series and the group. For Sartre, groups never succeed in becoming *totalized totalities,* or achieving the total 'agreement of minds' which Sartre argues is a feature that idealism attributes to groups. He points out that groups can vary in character and the degree to which they could be described as cohesive. We can see this if we recall examples such as a bus queue, a group which gathers for a political demonstration, a football team and the workforce of a multi-national company. As McBride (1991: 147) reminds us, 'a group is always constituted, never constitutive: the only constitutive organism in the sociopolitical world is the human individual. Between any pair of selected individuals within even a group-in-fusion at its height there remains, even at the moment at which it is closest to complete "fusion," at least an infinitesimal gap.' This is important because Sartre is not simply shifting terminology to move the

debate to his territory: rather, he is shifting the whole analysis because of his commitment to the epistemological (and methodological, ontological and ethical) primacy of praxis. So, if we don't debate with Hargreaves in the Gramscian terminology of state and civil society, it is for epistemological, methodological, ontological and ethical reasons.

In the *Critique*, Sartre attacks the 'myth' of perfect community which can be found in much Western political philosophy from Plato to Lukács. Sartre is aware of the periods of disappointment and disillusionment which invariably follow revolution eventually. Sartre demonstrates that the organicist model of community never conforms to reality when the revolution has taken place and it is necessary to begin assigning roles and tasks and a new hierarchy develops.

3.4.5 Other-Direction

Sartre attempts to show how small degenerate institutionalised groups are capable of manipulating much larger serial collectives by the application of unified praxis. Education and communications are, for Sartre, means by which the sovereign can manipulate the collective of society. The media create the illusion of unity among all members of society. Yet, in reality, there is no reciprocity, only seriality. This seriality is further accentuated by, for example, different types of newspaper and different coverage of events by television programmes. This means that 'the sport viewing public' has a fictitious unity; in reality, sport is riddled with class, gender, racial and political division. This means that different groups, with different interests and goals, are manipulated by

the sovereign, but as a collective they exist in seriality. Catalano (1986: 224) indicates why this 'other-direction' is so pervasive when he claims that 'the greatest evil for any institutionalised government is the independent union of its people for any purposes whatsoever. The sovereign thus always maintains a situation of manipulated seriality; and, precisely insofar as we are members of a society, we can never escape other-directed behaviour.' Other-direction permeates much of our social life. An example given by Sartre is that of the music Top Ten. This creates the illusion of a false unity among the collective. It is the illusion of a false totality that allows actions to be other-directed. Sartre draws a distinction between racism, which he sees as a form of other-direction stemming from the manipulation of seriality, and anti-semitism when regarded as a movement. Anti-semitism is the action of a degenerate group. As such, it is not condoned by the sovereign; unlike other-directed racism.

We have followed Sartre's project of deconstructing social wholes to reveal the individual praxis which constitutes them. This is, in-itself, a regressive analysis of the social world. Here, it will serve as the abstract basis from which we can conduct our own regressive analysis of the 'world of boxing' as encountered by Muhammad Ali at the time of his World Title fight in Zaïre against George Foreman.

Our next task will be to offer a similar abstract account of the progressive element of Sartre's method. For this, we will look at the posthumously published *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume two. Before this we should offer some comments on Sartre's view of class struggle, by way of a conclusion to our deconstruction of social wholes.

3.4.6 Class Struggle and Dialectical Reason.

Sartre agrees with Marx that human history is the result of class struggle. In relation to this, however, he claims that Engels was correct to argue, in opposition to Dühring, that class conflict cannot be the result of the oppressive actions of individuals. He claims that the idea of oppression must already exist as part of the practico-inert, and that individuals must interiorise that idea before transcending it through their praxis. Such praxis is the work of both groups and individuals in relations of seriality. In this position, Sartre preserves the role of individual praxis insofar as it is individuals who are violent and oppressive, while also preserving the structural element by placing violence and oppression in the practico-inert. Violence is a *hexis,*[182] which is maintained by individual praxis and transcended towards greater violence. Class oppression is, therefore, the result of a praxis-process of oppression and not the result of the actions of evil individual capitalists. Nor is class oppression the result of economic changes which demand violence and oppression. Sartre argued this point in opposition to Engels, who claimed that class conflict is purely the result of the means of production and, therefore, laws of economics.[183]

Our history is that which we regressively encounter from our current specific situation, and which our praxis in the present transcends. An objective history would be that

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[182] 'Hexis' is an inert, or stable state or condition. As such, it is opposed to praxis. Sartre also often uses the term 'exis'. The use of the two terms is simply the result of confusion over the rough ( ) or smooth (') breathings. A rough breathing indicates an initial 'h' sound and a smooth breathing indicates the absence of this 'h' sound. The correct term, therefore, is 'hexis'.

[183] See Engels, F. (1978) *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

encountered from a God's eye view of the past. It would require us to be outside human history. So, in regarding the past as the past of our present, Sartre adopts a position on history which does not claim objectivity, but equally is not a position in which the past is relative. If history could be said to be relative then that would mean that any view of history was as good as any other. For Sartre, however, there is only one history and it is that which we transcend in our present praxis, but that history is intimately linked to our situation, it is not objective. This will become clearer when we explore the notion of incarnation in the next chapter.

We can, therefore, see that scarcity *led to* oppression and violence despite the fact that there is no a priori reason why this should have happened. Although scarcity could have led to co-operation, it did not, and we cannot know the humanity that would have existed if it had given rise to co-operation. That is not *our* history.

Sartre's concern is to stress the primacy of praxis in any account of social wholes. Catalano (1986: 247) emphasises this in relation to capitalism, when he claims that:

> 'The capitalist system is not, as Sartre sees Engels to have maintained, a completed totality, but a serial relation, a collective within which active and institutional groups operate. The capitalist thus finds himself within a collective whose totalisation is always in flight, always beyond in some finite goal. This totalisation is hypothesised *as if it were* a completed totality, in order to invert the economic laws: in reality, each individual's serial behaviour constitutes economic laws, but,

as a totality, the capitalistic system *appears* to have laws that govern individual

behaviour.'

This also emphasises Sartre's resistance to hyperorganicism. For Sartre, the primacy of

praxis implies a rejection of hyperorganicism, and leads him to adopt the same approach

to class as he does to capitalism. In both cases, and many others, he argues that the whole

is constituted by individual praxis, and as a result, the whole should not be regarded as

'an autonomous force obeying its *own* laws and acting upon *us*' (Aronson 1981: 687). As

we have already noted, Sartre's method of countering hyperorganicism is to deconstruct

social wholes to reveal the constituting role of individual praxis. That was the task of

volume one of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. In volume two, he attempts to

demonstrate how individual praxeis join to form social wholes. It is to this issue that we

will shortly turn our attention.

Selective use has been made of the work of Sartre here. Little consideration has been

given to his ethical thought because although there is a clear underlying ethical

dimension to all his work, Sartre did not produce a satisfactory ethics in the late-1940s

when he prepared what would later be published as *Notebooks for an Ethics* and *Truth

and Existence*. Even if we consider other works written between the mid-1940s and early-

1950s which could be seen as contributing to Sartre's position on ethics at this time, such

as *Existentialism is a Humanism* and *Saint Genet*, it is still quite clear that any ethics

which emerges is far too abstract (Sartre later used the term 'idealist' to describe the

ethics which he developed in *Notebooks for an Ethics*). When we add these criticisms to

those made at the end of chapter two it is quite clear that there is a tendency in the Sartre's work prior to the mid-1950s to over-emphasise freedom and give insufficient weight to what we can refer to as 'the given' (structure, situation, one's entire facticity, the Other and collectives). As a result, Sartre did not have an ontology which would allow him to deal with the issue of history in *The War Diaries*. His treatment of the historical event as 'the In-itself of the For-others' was far too abstract and dualistic. Although Sartre correctly identified the individual project as the key to a synthetic account of the historical event, he was unable to exploit this insight prior to his adoption of dialectical reason. *Existentialism is a Humanism* created further problems by being perhaps the single most influential text in the misreading of Sartrean existentialism as committed to an idealistic notion of freedom. The publication of this text was a mistake on the part of Sartre which he quickly became aware of, but the fundamental problem with the text is that it exhibits the skewed notion of freedom and necessity which colours much of his early work. *Notebooks for an Ethics* sees Sartre moving towards the position that he would adopt in the *Critique* through a detailed reading of Hegel, but Sartre is still committed to the dualist ontology of *Being and Nothingness* and is, therefore, unable to account for history as a truly social phenomenon. Sartre's work does not, at this point, provide a proper synthesis of the 'Marxist-determinist' and 'existentialist-moral' (Flynn 1984: 59) positions that he sees as central to an adequate philosophy of history. By the end of volume one of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre has provided a detailed regressive analysis of the social world, but he has not yet introduced the temporal dimension that is essential to progressive analysis. Volume one of the *Critique* provides a strong base for a totalising account of history, but it does not provide such an account. If

consideration is not given to volume two then the reader has little real indication of what Sartre's philosophy of history would look like. Instead, he appears to have produced an elaborate sociology. This is important because a reconsideration of the work of Sartre is timely because prior to the publication of volume two of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and its fairly swift translation into English, it was impossible for theorists to accurately assess Sartre's project in the latter part of his life. To a lesser extent the same is true of the early writings. The posthumous publication of *The War Diaries*, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, and *Truth and Existence* showed that Sartre was far more concerned with History and the study of collective action than is suggested by *Being and Nothingness*. This is one of the reasons why (at least, some) previous criticisms of Sartre are beside the point. The focus here is on the later work of Sartre, with relevant consideration of his early work. This is an attempt to draw on the most balanced reconstruction of a Sartrean position and leave criticisms of Sartre's clear over-emphasis on freedom and the individual in *Being and Nothingness* as largely redundant because he so obviously addressed these issues in his later work. Also, as the posthumous publications show, he was aware of the problems and thinking about them much earlier than is often appreciated.

The Synthesis of History and Biography: Progressive Analysis.

By following Sartre's dialectical nominalism, we have looked at the role of individual praxis as constitutive of social wholes, and therefore, collective praxis. We still do not have an adequate understanding of those social wholes, or a justification for the study of a particular individual. We need to look at the deviation of collective praxis, because it is quite clear that individuals are unable to completely overcome the deviations of antipraxis simply by forming groups. Also, we need to explore the issue of the synthesis of history and biography, which is the goal of a dialectical analysis which adopts a principle of the primacy of individual praxis.

4.1 The *Critique* Volume One: The Beginning, Not the End

Aronson (1987: 2) makes the important point that, prior to the publication of volume two of the *Critique*, those who studied volume one had to assume that that volume was regarded by Sartre as in some way complete, because he had chosen not to complete and publish volume two. This led commentators to emphasise 'specific structures rather than the larger historical process'[184]

As an example of a possible failure on the part of most commentators to grasp Sartre's aim in the *Critique* project, Aronson (1987) points out that, in light of the second volume, it is possible to read Sartre, in volume one, as attempting to understand the Russian

Revolution through an analysis of the French Revolution. This is not particularly clear if only the first volume is considered.[185]

Sartre claims that 'dialectical investigation in its regressive moment will reveal to us no more than the static conditions of the possibility of a totalisation, that is to say, of a history.'[186] Volume one of the *Critique* concludes 'as soon as we reach the "locus of history"; it is solely concerned with finding the intelligible foundations for a structural anthropology.'[187] Volume two 'will attempt to establish that there is *one* human history, with *one* truth and *one* intelligibility.'[188] This is the assumption with which Sartre began his study of dialectical reason. As Aronson (1987) points out, this position is somewhat opposed to Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty had drawn a sharp distinction between the subjective dialectic of Western Marxism and the objective dialectic of 'naturalistic Marxism.' He had concluded that both should be abandoned because the subjective dialectic led to an unattainable myth and the objective dialectic led to totalitarianism, such as had happened in the Soviet Union. Sartre, however, argued that the subjective dialectic created the objective dialectic and vice versa. He therefore, rejected the sharp distinction between the two, rather like Gramsci and members of the Frankfurt School, 'searching instead for the subjective roots of the objective alienations and the objective

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[184] Aronson cites Pietro Chiodi's book, *Sartre and Marxism*, as an example of this. It is, however, to varying degrees, an inevitable weakness of any work on Sartre that was written prior to 1985, when volume two of the *Critique* was first published in France.

[185] Sartre had a great interest in the Russian Revolution and the subsequent separation of theory and praxis that led to the stagnation of the dialectic. He wrote about this subject in *The Communists and Peace, The Spectre of Stalin, Search for a Method, Dirty Hands, The Devil and the Good Lord,* both volumes of *The Critique of Dialectical Reason,* and a little known screenplay called *In the Mesh* (*L'Engrenage*). Sartre, J-P. (1954) *In the Mesh,* trans. M. Savill, London: Andrew Dakers.

[186] *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* volume one, p. 68

[187] *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* volume one, p. 69

[188] *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* volume one, p. 69

root of subjective possibility - at one and the same time' (Aronson 1987: 26). While Merleau-Ponty had regarded the weight of history and the transformative capacity of individual subjects as two distinct areas, which were both inadequate, Sartre realised that explanations must take account of both areas, not one to the exclusion of the other. He argued that:

'If one wants to grant to Marxist thought its full complexity, one would have to say that man in a period of exploitation is *at once both* the product of his own product and a historical agent who can under no circumstances be taken as a product. This contradiction is not fixed; it must be grasped in the very movement of *praxis*. Then it will clarify Engels's statement: men make history on the basis of real prior conditions (among which we include acquired characteristics, distortions imposed by the mode of work and of life, alienation, etc.), but it is *the men* who make it and not the prior conditions. Otherwise men would be merely the vehicles of inhuman forces which through them would govern the social world. To be sure, these conditions exist, and it is they, they alone, which can furnish a direction and a material reality to the changes which are in preparation; but the movement of human praxis goes beyond them while conserving them.'[189]

So, in stressing *one* history, the stance of Sartre is actually similar to the stance of many orthodox Marxists. Although Sartre is close to orthodox Marxism in his view that there is one meaning of History, he is directly opposed to orthodox Marxism in another sense with his emphasis on the idea that the human subject is what produces the dialectic. This

position takes Sartre closer to Western Marxism. As Aronson (1987: 4) notes 'he seeks to ground the totalising movement of the whole not in more general currents and structures but in the (conflictual) activities of individuals. Thus he intends to show that human subjects create *and* are controlled by the dialectic.'

Regressive analysis deconstructs social wholes into synchronic 'abstract elements, categories and processes' (Aronson (1987: 34). This is an attempt to demonstrate that such structures are intelligible and that they bare a dialectical relationship to each other. The progressive moment attempts a reconstruction that introduces a diachronic element into the analysis to establish whether the resulting totalisation is intelligible. If this is established, it is therefore shown by that intelligibility that the totalisation is also 'directed'.

In volume one of the *Critique*, Sartre attempts to demonstrate that individual praxis is the root of History. He describes the formation of increasingly more complicated social realities, but begins from the simplest point, individual praxis. Aronson (1987: 38) points out that 'his concern is to reveal how and under what conditions our products become forces beyond our control and in turn dominate the praxis which creates them.' It is important to note that volume one concerns itself only with structures whose construction was, at least to a degree, intended. Volume two, however, tackles the question of those structures whose formation was not intended. In its simplest form this includes the outcomes of class conflict, and by the end of the study, the movement and direction of History. Sartre is attempting, in the second volume of the *Critique*, to establish a singular

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[189] *Search for a Method* p. 87

unity of human history, with a singular intelligibility and a singular truth. Aronson (1987) points out that without volume two of the *Critique* we are given no indication of how there can be *one* history, only many histories. This is important as it may provide at least part of the explanation of why the *Critique*, and the later thought of Sartre was largely ignored during his lifetime.

4.1.1 Towards the Intelligibility of History

In volume two of the *Critique*, Sartre tackles the problem of how there can be one totalisation, one intelligible movement of History, given conflicting praxis of two individuals or groups. The praxis of both is intelligible and has intentionality, yet the fact that there is conflict makes it difficult to explain how the praxis of both can combine to move History forward.

Another major theme of the second volume of the *Critique* is to distinguish the suitable roles of dialectical and analytic reason. Sartre does this by discussing military battles. He argues that the application of analytic reason to the analysis of battles leads to the consideration of each manoeuvre as one possibility among a multiplicity, and therefore cannot grasp the battle as a whole. Sartre is critical of analytic or positivist reason (or what he sometimes refers to as sociological reason): he does regard it as having a role to play, but a minor one in comparison with dialectical reason. Sartre argues that the application of analytic reason to the analysis of a battle does not attempt to develop any understanding of the individual combatants. It does not consider the battle from the

position of those involved, but rather from an external point of view. He claims that, in

battle, the individual combatant is not in possession of all the necessary information to

analyse fully the possible manoeuvres; there is a great deal of the situation of which he is

unaware. It is in light of this scarcity, this ignorance, that he 'invents' from within the

battle. For Sartre, dialectical reason is able to incorporate this ignorance and the

discontinuities and mistakes that exist in the 'historical reality and temporal individuality

of a particular conflict.'[190] A dialectical study, therefore, works at the concrete level

which an analytical study cannot reach. As Aronson (1987: 44-45) points out, "the

dialectic seeks the historical individuals, in their actual situation, with their actual

confusions and urgencies. But, ... the dialectic seeks more: it seeks the larger wholes

created by their praxis in conflict with each other."[191]

Sartre is arguing that groups in conflict are in the process of becoming a larger more

significant group. They move towards this by a praxis-process. The praxis of two or more

conflicting individuals, or groups produces objects that are alien to both of the

individuals, or groups. This praxis is referred to by Sartre as anti-labour. It should be

noted that it is the praxis that is anti-labour, not the product of that praxis. Analytic

reason cannot grasp the product of anti-labour as it is the product of action and reaction

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[190] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p.9

[191] Sartre was alert to the concrete nature of the synthetic totality in contrast to abstraction in his early work. In *Being and Nothingness* (p. 3) he notes 'M. Laporte says that an abstraction is made when something not capable of existing in isolation is thought of as in an isolated state. The concrete by contrast is a totality which can exist by itself alone. Husserl is of the same opinion; for him *red* is an abstraction because colour can not exist without form. On the other hand, a spatial-temporal thing, with all its determinations, is an example of the concrete.' He points out that consciousness is an abstraction because consciousness must be consciousness of something, and is, therefore, reliant on the In-itself. The phenomenon is also an abstraction because it must appear to consciousness. Sartre concludes 'the concrete can be only the synthetic totality of which consciousness, like the phenomenon, constitutes only moments.

while appearing to originate from a shared project. That shared project, or 'enterprise' does not exist, and has never existed other than as 'the non-human reverse side of two opposed actions each one of which aims to destroy the other.'[192]

This raises a problem which is central to volume two of the *Critique*:

> 'If History is totalising, there is totalisation of struggle as such (it does not much matter, from the formal point of view we are adopting, whether this struggle is an individual fight, a war or a social conflict). And if this totality is dialectically comprehensible, it must be possible through investigation to grasp the individuals or groups in struggle as *de facto* collaborating in a common task. And since the task is perpetually given, in the guise of the residue of struggle - be it even the devastation of a battlefield, inasmuch as the two adversaries can be seen as having jointly burned and ravaged the fields and woods - it must be possible to grasp it as the objectification of a work group, formed itself by the two antagonistic groups. But it is quite obvious that the joint devastation has not been the object of a concerted praxis, and that only topological unity, for example, can give the battlefield the aspect of a systematically razed whole.'[193]

Aronson (1987) stresses that the reason that history consists of products of anti-labour can be found in Marx. If history is class struggle as Marx claimed in the *Communist*

The concrete is man within the world in that specific union with the world which Heidegger, for example, calls "being-in-the-world."

[192] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 12
[193] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 12

Manifesto,[194] the products of history stem from conflictual praxis, and are therefore, made by humans. That they are made by humans means that they escape the individual, or individuals, who created them. Not in the same sense that the product of labour in capitalist production escapes the producer, as alienation, but because the conflict between the individuals, or groups, means that they rob each other of their act.

Sartre argues, however, that the struggles in a society are not historical accidents, rather, they are the way humans live scarcity; they are the result of the continual effort of humans to move beyond scarcity. In qualifying this, he points out that there is nothing that can be demonstrated as a priori, universal or necessary about scarcity or history. There does not have to be a conditioning of history by scarcity; indeed a society does not necessarily need to create a history. Sartre simply claims that our history is conditioned by scarcity, and has been a history of class struggle.

Sartre, therefore, argues that the result of anti-labour becomes the facticity which future generations must transcend while involved in conflict which is different from that which produced this facticity. He also notes that, in referring to this facticity, we are returned to the praxeis of the groups in conflict which produced it, and that the product of anti-labour escapes those that produce it and is therefore different from the projects of each of the groups in conflict. An additional, and extremely important, point is that Sartre argues that each event is a totalisation of the whole, rather than simply an aspect of a totalisation. This raises the issue of how the whole can be totalised in a single event. Sartre's solution to this problem is the notion of incarnation. It is through this idea that we not only see

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[194] *The Communist Manifesto* p. 79

how the event totalises the whole, but also how the study of an individual and their wider

socio-historical environment gives us an understanding of the totalisation as a whole.

This is distinctly different from simply providing us with a single case, which would have

to be added to a number of other cases to produce an account of history that was a sum.

Through the notion of incarnation we can achieve a synthesis.

The example Sartre uses to explore the issue of conflictual praxeis at the simple level of

individual praxis is that of a boxing match. This is not a complete study of boxing but,

rather, a study of boxing from a specific perspective (we will explore boxing further in

chapters five and six). The example of boxing allows us to explore the notion of

incarnation, which will provide us with the basis for a sketch of a study of Muhammad

Ali and 'The Rumble in the Jungle.' In addition, it will give us a clearer understanding of

the deviation of conflictual praxis as a result of anti-labour.

4.2 Boxing and Incarnation.

Sartre begins his analysis of boxing by claiming that 'from the very outset we note that

the deep truth of every individual fight is competition for titles.'[195] There is a hierarchical

arrangement to the evening as it builds toward the main fight. Sartre argues that the

hierarchy is interiorised by the boxers themselves. 'These two men very much

(seemingly) at their ease, who climb into the ring amid the applause in their brightly

coloured robes, are in themselves "common individuals": they contain within them the

opponents they have already defeated and, via this mediation, the entire universe of

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boxing. In another way, you can say that the hierarchy supports them: that they are its illuminated peaks.'[196] Sartre therefore argues that the movement of a particular evening of boxing is a reproduction of that of the particular boxer's life. He argues that the whole of boxing is present throughout each moment of a fight. Boxing is present at every moment as an inert condition in the technical abilities of the fighters and in the invention by which each fighter creates, with that set of technical abilities, a unique fight. In this way, there is a transcendence of the techniques which the boxers have learned, yet every action is also a realisation of the techniques which they have acquired. Sartre is arguing that each fight is the incarnation of boxing as a whole, with its hierarchical structure, governing bodies, rules, promoters, spectators and tickets, in addition to the specific techniques and training. This means that we can only understand a particular fight through all other fights and through the totality (or, more properly, the detotalised totality) of world boxing as a whole. Each fight produces a retotalisation of boxing by providing a new result which will either confirm or alter the hierarchy with which that specific fight began. He then extends this claim further when he argues that each fight is the incarnation of all violence.

Sartre argues that, in a boxing match, the urgency and fundamentality of violence, which has its foundation in scarcity, is removed. The links between such violence and scarcity, which result in urgency, are broken and there is an insertion of the mediation of the 'entire group' and something of a 'steralisation' of the event through the introduction of a prize and judges. This removes the urgency of the violence and leads to a situation in

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[195] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 18
[196] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 19

which, he claims, there is rarely any real hatred, the fight becomes functional; it is a job. The fight is then a spectacle which acquires social values. Violence is equated with strength and therefore Good. There is, however, a reality to the spectacle of violence in the form of a boxing match. It cannot be claimed that the spectacle is the presentation of exclusively imaginary violence for the spectators. Sartre argues that, contrary to the notion that the violence is imaginary, it is rather the incarnation of fundamental violence. Aronson (1987) notes that this is very different from Roland Barthes's treatment of wrestling in *Mythologies*, which treats wrestling as a performance; and, as a result of the fact that it is staged, or planned violence, he is correct to do so. Sartre argues, however, that this approach cannot be taken with boxing. It would not hold the status that it does were the violence fictitious. 'But the spectator of that purified brawl is an actor, because it is really taking place in front of him. He encourages the boxers or finds fault with them, he shouts, he thinks he is making the event as it takes place. His violence is wholly present and he tries to communicate it to the combatants, in order to hasten the course of the fight. That violence, moreover, is not satisfied with objectively helping the efforts of each antagonist. It would not be violence without favouring, without preferring, without opting to be partisan.'[197] Sartre argues that the spectator backs one of the fighters and that, in following this individual, the spectator effectively fights through the mediation of the boxer that he or she supports. Sartre even argues that, as a result of this, the spectator becomes the incarnation of violence. He notes that violence can erupt in the audience, and that the anger that is present, from both the crowd and the fighters, is dormant until the fight begins.

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[197] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, pp. 25-26

Sartre does not regard incarnation as the 'conceptualisation of experience' nor as the 'exemplification of the concept'. He argues that incarnation is praxis or praxis-process. Spectators create the fight in their spectating. It is therefore impossible to regard someone simply as an observer of violence. The act of observation is also, simultaneously, praxis. It is complicity, as is the deliberate act of nonviolence. Sartre argues that we primarily have a lived, rather than a cognitive, relationship to incarnation. He claims that the fight is a life and death struggle. When the spectators call for a knockout, they are calling for death. Sartre regards this as concrete, not symbolic. Regardless of what happens to the fighter who is knocked out; whether he dies, or as is more likely, recovers, the spectators have called for the extreme, which brings the end of the fight.

The act of incarnation is therefore, a material process, and as such, it is totally real. In it there is a concretisation of latent violence and a realisation of the desires of both the spectators and all those in whom scarcity produces latent violence. Sartre is therefore, asserting, as Aronson (1987: 63) puts it, that 'the very meaning and substance of this match, here, can only be the vast progressive totalisation which is history itself.'

The spectators, therefore, are correct to feel part of the fight; they are. Sartre argues that the incarnation of violence in the boxing match is a totalisation because violence stems from scarcity, so during the fight there is an expression of violence that originates outside the fight; an expression of violence that has its origins elsewhere. It is in this sense that the fight is the incarnation of *all* violence. The fight is a totalisation because it is the event by which specific acts of violence are gathered together and expressed. Sartre is not

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referring to violence as a general entity, but specific acts of violence. He argues that fundamental violence is wholly present at a boxing match but, in addition to this, he claims that it is always wholly present, and the fact that it is present in one place does not mean that it is not wholly present elsewhere. Sartre refers to *all* violence because he is attempting to reach the unifying act of the individual subject and in doing so he must resist attempts to fragment violence into its various manifestations. For Sartre, all violent acts are interconnected: to describe an act of violence, which is after all (as Aronson (1987) notes) a praxis that has its roots in scarcity, as *all* violence is to regard it as the 're-exteriorisation of interiorised scarcity. But this scarcity is never an abstract principle, or one external to the social ensemble. At every instant, it is a synthetic relation of all men to non-human materiality and of all men among themselves through this materiality, inasmuch as the ensemble of techniques, relations of production and historical circumstances give this relation its determination and its unity.'[198] So, for Sartre, any violent act is the re-exteriorisation of a real scarcity that is an element of facticity shared, and interiorised by all, which is not only an important but a conditioning aspect of their lived experience. Sartre argues, 'it is enough to see how much oppression, alienation and misery the act of a drunken father who beats a child gathers within itself, in order to understand that all the social violence of our system has made itself into that man and his present rage.'[199]

Given that Sartre has described a boxing match as being a particular fight with temporal specificity, boxing as a whole, and all human violence, he must now go on to look more

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[198] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 28
[199] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 28

closely at the concrete universals of boxing as a whole and all human violence. In doing this he must move from immediate totalisations to 'mediated totalisations'. In moving on to look at the 'ensemble of mediations' which are features of the reciprocal production of an event (in this case a boxing match), and the various actors involved in such an event, Sartre must look at institutions and social structures. He notes that boxing is an exploitative, bourgeois institution that is economically driven and draws its labour force from the exploited and then proceeds to inflict an additional form of exploitation on them. He claims that, as most boxers are members of the working class, they are conditioned in violence; and, when they fight, they incarnate the violence inflicted on the working class by the ruling class in the form of scarcity. Sartre argues that such violence can serve revolutionary and class purposes, but only when 'absorbed in social praxis'. When violence which incarnates the violence of scarcity takes the form of individual violence, it is counterproductive. Rather than working for the interests of the exploited class, it works against them. By becoming a professional boxer, the individual is attempting to break free of his class. The structural violence of scarcity requires a collective response; the individual incarnation of such violence is, for Sartre, a diversion which serves the ruling class. The individual boxer, therefore, is working against his own class. Sartre claims that the same process is in operation when, as Fanon noted, natives of colonial nations are violent towards each other, or when members of the exploited class are further exploited in their mobilisation as members of paramilitary groups of the right. Sartre regards such acts, not only as a transcendence of facticity or given situation, but also as attempts to escape one's class. Sartre claims that, through training, the psychological approach to the sport, the required strength, and the notion of the 'art' of

boxing, the sport 'produces its man.' He refers to the point an individual becomes a boxer as 'the contractual moment.' At this point the fighter pursues the project of escaping his class through the commodification of his violence. This is contrasted with the project of those who purchase that violence as a means of profit. This is the 'decisive instant of incarnation.'[200] The boxer is, therefore, socially defined by his alienated violence. Boxing becomes a transcendence that aims at the universal and which is the individual's chosen manifestation of their original alienation. It also preserves the particularity of the fighter.

Sartre emphasises the importance of the particular within the general to the event. He argues that the individuality of the fighters is essential, they could not be the human equivalent of robots. Each fighter must have individual characteristics and features which *signify* them to the spectators. It is the individuality of the fighters which concretises the event for the spectators. Sartre regards necessity and contingency as having an internal link, they are not in opposition to each other. He is arguing that chance is dialectically intelligible. Contingency is necessary and, as a result, events such as a punch during a boxing match are both singular and universal. This contingency and singularity of the event leads, for Sartre, to the singularisation of all boxing and all violence.

For Sartre, the boxer is a worker whose violence is mediated by capitalist institutions. He notes that the boxer as worker makes money for entrepreneurs and is selling his labour to make a living. He also notes that fighters are treated like machinery while in preparation for a fight. This alienates the boxer from his body. While it would be possible to restrict the number of fights to limit the damage to the fighter, this is rarely the situation because

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[200] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 37

the market demands that boxers are as productive as possible. The fighters themselves know that it is only through fighting that they can advance their careers. At all but the highest level, therefore, they are unable to reduce the frequency of the fights, which maintains the degree of exploitation.

The liberating potential of the fighters' violence is lost because he is taught to save his violence for the fight and to be passive when he is not fighting. The violence of the boxer serves the ruling class, while the boxer attempts to escape his class. Sartre notes that there is only class movement in a small minority of cases. The fighter remains exploited in the act of selling his violence and finds himself in a similar situation to the worker, but the boxer is isolated, unlike the workers who have at least established a degree of class solidarity. The violence which the boxer inflicts on members of his own class is the same violence which is inflicted on oppressed groups by the ruling class through capitalist exploitation and vice versa in class struggle. The fact that a successful fighter will be able to sell his labour for a higher price following an important victory means that we are no longer faced with the situation of worked matter mediating between human beings, but rather humans are themselves the worked matter. It is the alienation of the violence of the oppressed which is incarnated in the specific event that is a particular boxing match. It is incarnated because it is alienation in this form which is present in the actions of all oppressive regimes.

There is a derealisation of the violence in a boxing match in the sense that that which is temporary is represented as permanent through the marketing of the fight and media

coverage. This is present in the notion that the solution to the conflict is in the fight, which is, of course, false. Sartre argues that along with this derealisation there is a simultaneous 'breaking out' of this mystification. The fight presents the derealisation, but simultaneously all those involved with the fight, in whatever capacity, are pulled towards the reality of the situation. The antagonism is that of the competitive market, and the fighters are both products and victims of capitalism despite being workers involved in class struggle against capitalism. Sartre places great emphasis on the fact that the spectators are witnessing a *real* incarnation of conflict in the working class, not a symbolic representation of it as one might find in wrestling. The fact that the fighters have sold their labour (their violence) means that the violence is not revolutionary, but rather, the source of profit, which is organised by the capitalist to maximise profitability.

Incarnation is therefore, for Sartre, the 'totalisation of everything' which is irreducible to abstractions, it is an 'oriented totalisation' which is concrete. The specific event of a punch gives everything; it is the singularisation of everything that is contained in the social whole. If anything in the social whole were different, the specific concrete reality that is this punch would not be possible.[201]

The progressive-regressive method is threatened by the problem of synthesising the details of the individual biography with the wider social and historical context in which the individual exists. It would be comparatively simple to link the two 'with an and' to produce a sum of the significations of an event; but, as we have argued, this is

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inadequate. The notion of incarnation and the accompanying emphasis on individual

praxis as constituting allows us to recognise that the individual action incarnates the

social whole, while being altered by that whole and, in turn, altering and retotalising it.

As a result, it is through the study of the individual and his/her comprehension of the time

that we reach the most concrete level of socio-historical analysis. It is here that a

synthesis, rather than a sum, can be achieved.

A major criticism which can be levelled at Sartre here is that he is overly negative in

relation to the general plane, while continually employing it to great effect. This point is

stressed by Aronson (1987: 71-73), yet Aronson is more critical of Sartre's tone than his

actual pronouncements on the issue. Incarnation is at the heart of this problem. Sartre

claims that there are two approaches to dialectical analysis. The first is that of

'decompressive expansion' which involves movement from the object to the whole (or

the concrete to the abstract, or the particular to the universal). This involves

understanding the specifics to form a picture of the whole. Sartre argues for a reversal of

this process (totalising compression), claiming that each of the specifics is present in the

whole and is a contributing factor to the singularisation of that whole, such as the boxing

match.[202] Sartre is not claiming that the general does not exist, simply that it is incarnated

in the particular and that, as a result, it is more abstract and therefore not the terminal

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[201] This is similar to the example of Shakespeare's birthplace, which we gave in chapter two. Had
Shakespeare not been English, he would not have been *Shakespeare*. Similarly, had anything in the social
whole been different, this punch would not be *this* punch.

[202] In relation to these two approaches, Sartre claims that 'the first procedure, which is unfortunately that to
which Marxist "analyses" too often limit themselves, effectively dissolves the event into the ensemble of
mediations as *non-singularised* concrete totalities; the second - which alone is capable of grasping the
dialectical intelligibility of an event - strives to discover within the event itself the interactions constituting
the singularity of the process on the basis of singularisation of the circumstances. It is actually *through the*

point of any analysis. Incarnation effectively removes anything other than a conceptual distinction between the general and particular. This is a corollary of dialectical analysis.

Sartre has just demonstrated that in boxing the whole enterprise takes place within an organising framework, which is capitalism. Each individual takes on that whole before altering it and moving it onward. For each boxer, there is a totalisation in process. In the example of boxing, there is an organising framework which is not in dispute. Sartre wishes to move forward by looking at examples where the organising framework is contested. He aims to 'see how conflict itself can act as a "totalisation without a totaliser"' (Aronson 1987: 74).

4.3 Anti-Labour and Contradiction: Conflict within the Organised Group

In his study of boxing Sartre has looked at how two individuals produced by a social whole incarnate that whole in the specific event of a boxing match. From here, Sartre moves to the problem of how groups in conflict collaborate in a common work. This is in many ways the central problem of volume two of the *Critique*. Sartre's ultimate concern is with how conflictual classes collaborate to create the movement of History, while being carried along by that movement. If Sartre is unable to find a solution to this problem he will be unable to claim that there is a dialectic at all. Sartre begins by looking at two subgroups in conflict within an organised group.

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project which condenses them that the mediating fields receive a new status of efficacy.' (*Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume two, p. 48)

Subgroups emerge from the specialisation that is necessary for the group to maximise its potential to achieve its goals. The group is subdivided so that there can be an allocation of roles and tasks. As a result, each subgroup has its own function within the organised group, which is related to the tasks that they perform. Each subgroup serves a function which prohibits them from doing anything other than fulfilling that function, but gives them the right to carry out their particular task. Subgroups are, therefore, each a 'reciprocal counterpart'[203] of the others. Sartre argues that conflict emerges from the fact that these subgroups exist. As everything is becoming, the group encounters a range of different situations. The various subgroups must respond to these situations while conforming to their specific function and serving the project of the group. This leads to two or more subgroups laying claim to the role of providing a solution to a particular problem. One solution achieves certain criteria for a solution, but does not achieve others. Another solution may meet criteria that were not met by the first solution, but fail to address elements that were covered in the first solution. In relation to this Sartre argues in volume one of the *Critique* that true agreement of minds is not possible as this implies the existence of an objective truth. He claims that groups reach 'agreement' by a reconfiguration on the part of the members who live the tension of the contradiction of the problem. This reconfiguration around an agreeable solution means that effectively a new group is formed. Conflict cannot be claimed to be the result of differences between the members of the group, rather it stems from the structure of the development of that group. Sartre is not arguing that contradiction is part of the structure of the group as if it were an essence of the group. The development of common praxis alters the group and, until the group reshapes itself to accommodate the changes, there will be conflicts. The

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[203] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, p. 472

important point to stress is that everything is becoming. The group is continually altering and developing. Conflict is a manifestation of the need for change within the group prior to that change occurring.[204]

In relation to the development of the group, there is a very specific form of practico-inert that is the product of praxis acting on its source. The group produced this practico-inert because the group produced a change in itself. In this situation, for Sartre, the group *is* the practico-inert. This change demands a new response which none of the subgroups are designed to deal with. The subgroups each have their own function, but this was in light of the previous form of the group. The change in the group means that the subgroups can each claim to be able to resolve the problems which arise as a result of the change, although none of them are specifically designed for this task. The fact that the object changes as a consequence of action results in the function of the subgroups being inadequate and obsolete. This means that the indetermination is from the object to the original functions. Sartre argues that the indetermination 'moves retroactively from object to functions, because it is the object as a new consequence of action that makes the functions obsolete and disqualifies them.'[205] In other words, the changes in the group (which were the result of the praxis of the group) have rendered the functions of the subgroups obsolete because they were determined when the group was in its previous form.

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[204] Sartre argues that 'no conflict is even possible in an integrated community, if it is not the actualisation by men of an objective contradiction.' *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, pp. 53-54.
[205] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 55

Sartre argues that conflict between subgroups threatens the group as a whole because it introduces a 'dualism of identity.'[206] Each subgroup usually incarnates the whole, which brings a unity to the group. When two or more subgroups lay claim to the same function, they cannot each incarnate the whole, which threatens the unity of the group. The fact that each subgroup then regards the other(s) as a threat to the unity of the group means that each subgroup desires the eradication of the other(s).

A mediator within a group moves between the subgroups in conflict and the larger unity and has the task of totalisation. The aim of the mediator is to remove the threat to the group. This may be achieved by the eradication of one of the subgroups, of both subgroups, or by the formation of a synthetic transcendence of the two conflictual subgroups. It is possible, however, that a mediator may fail to recognise the importance of altering any subgroups to the new situation of the group. This failure to grasp the real nature of the problem results in failed mediation, which perpetuates the problem.

If the fragility of the group makes liquidation of any of the subgroups impossible there is the potential for the development of a schism. Sartre gives the example of the schism between Rome and Byzantium, which led to the formation of two new groups and two Roman Empires. Another example which could be given here is that of the schism between the Rugby Union and the Rugby League in 1894 which led to two distinct codes of the same game.[207]

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[206] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 63
[207] See Collins (1998).

If one subgroup is successful in liquidating the other, then that subgroup adopts a new significance in the synthetic reunification of the group. In addition, there is a new distribution of roles and tasks. The victorious subgroup has new tasks and a new role stemming from the reorganisation and the new situation of the group. The new role and tasks include coverage of those areas previously dealt with by the subgroup which has been defeated. The defeated subgroup, including some of its members, is dissolved in the victorious group. Sartre claims that 'at first, in fact - in the event of destruction aimed at the organ without affecting the individuals - it may perhaps incorporate part of the members of the liquidated organisation (sometimes even the majority). But above all it necessarily inherits - whether the liquidation concerned the sub-group as such, or was accompanied by an extermination - attributions of the vanished organism, and must fulfil the functions the latter used to fulfil.'[208] To illustrate this Sartre notes that 'in some countries, the Communist Party - or some other authoritarian and centralised left-wing party - has eliminated the formations of the Far Left (leftists), along with the democratic parties (social democracy, etc.) that used to constitute the right of the Left. All these parties used to govern together and, despite their differences, praxis united them. When a series of contradictions induced the strongest to liquidate the rest, remaining alone it found itself compelled to become at once its own right and its own left.'[209]

Sartre makes the point that it is the degree to which the liquidation of a sub-group leads to a greater effectiveness of the group that determines whether it can properly be regarded as a transcendence and progress. This leads to the question of whether the liquidation of

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208 *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 74
209 *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 74

one sub-group by another always leads to increased effectiveness of the group, or whether liquidation always leads to progress. Sartre embarks on an analysis of the positive and negative features, for the group, of the liquidation of a sub-group. He argues that there is no a priori tendency towards progress in the praxis of a group. Aronson (1987: 96-97) points out that this is even less likely in relation to class struggle because, with class struggle, there is no totaliser. Aronson claims that Sartre's position '[lays] to rest any illusion that progress and improvement are more likely than corruption and decline.'[210] An example of this is H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, which pictures an evolutionary future, but there is no progress in human affairs.

If a group does not respond to changes in situation then there is a deviation brought about by the attempt to stay the same. Such an attempt to stay the same is often the result of a desire for unity following the battle between two sub-groups. Sartre develops this idea in relation to Stalin's leadership of the Soviet Union after his conflict with Trotsky. The resulting deviation can lead the group to concern itself with different goals, or can lead to failure.

The attempts at destruction by the two sub-groups are never wholly successful, but they produce new realities within the group. If mediation is attempted by a third sub-group, the project of this sub-group can be modified by each of the two conflictual sub-groups. Despite the fact that the mediating sub-group may be successful in finding a solution to the conflict, Sartre claims that 'the product of this shifting struggle will in one way or another bear the mark of the three sub-groups, but it will no longer correspond to the

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[210] Also see Aronson, R. (1992).

intentions of any one of them.'[211] Sartre refers to the product as a 'monstrous and deformed reflection'[212] of the original projects.

Sartre argues that it would be absurd to attempt to explain anti-labour by treating each of the contributing praxeis as distinct from each other. He claims that anti-labour is the 'dialectical totalisation of the two antagonistic tactics *in their irreducibility.*'[213] The product of anti-labour has the same quality of working back on those who produced it as any other product of praxis. It is not simply the product of the particular sub-groups, but the product of the entire group. The product of anti-labour is an objectification of the conflict and provides a negative unity of the sub-groups: this is a practico-inert object in the same way that any other product of group praxis is a practico-inert object. It is therefore, a passive synthesis which future praxis can reinvigorate. Sartre proceeds to look at an example of anti-labour and its product in the slogan and practice of 'socialism in one country' which was adopted by Stalin. He aims to undertake a reconstruction through progressive analysis to help him understand the totalisation of directorial (dictatorial) societies. This should have formed part of a wider study of bourgeois (disunited) societies, and ultimately, a study of world history itself. In reality, much of what Sartre does cover in volume two of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is largely regressive. Flynn (1997:150) refers to Sartre's study of Soviet society as a 'torso.'[214]

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[211] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 96
[212] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 96
[213] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume two, p. 97
[214] Sartre stopped work on volume two of the *Critique* in 1958, by which time he was fifty-three years old, and had already had health problems. He made a few notes on some of the work that was never undertaken, in relation to disunited societies and world history, a little later (1961-62). These notes form an appendix to volume two of the *Critique*. It has been suggested that Sartre abandoned volume two of the *Critique* because he was aware that, at his age, a monumental task such as the completion of the *Critique* was beyond him. Contat and Rybalka (1974) claim that 'Sartre stopped writing when he realised that

We will not follow Sartre in his analysis of Stalin because that was a step in his study of world history. We do not want to go that far. Instead, we will explore his project of studying the individual and his/her times, through a study of Muhammad Ali. This is closer to the terrain of *The Family Idiot*. Before we attempt to sketch such a study, though, we must return to our point of departure, and consider the degree to which the work of Sartre addresses the problems that we highlighted in relation to hegemonist analyses of sport. Is a Sartrean position any better than the hegemonist account? We cannot answer this fully without applying the work of Sartre to a concrete example, which we will attempt, at least at the level of a sketch, in chapters five and six. We can, however, make some remarks relating to the degree to which Sartre offers an account of the social world which *does not* fall victim to the accusations that we levelled at hegemonist thought.

We argued that hegemonist analyses of sport failed to take account of individual praxis. Sartre attempted to build his position on the thesis of the threefold primacy of praxis. Hegemonists struggle to explain changes in relations of domination. An understanding of antipraxis and anti-labour may help us give a better account of change. When this is added to a closer consideration of temporality, we can see that the work of Sartre is much better equipped to deal with the issue of change than hegemonist analyses of sport. If

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elaborating the second volume – which, let us recall, was to reach the level of concrete history – would require a series of readings and historical investigations which would represent a life's work for a single philosopher or, for a research team, many years' work' (Contat and Rybalka (1974) p. 373. Also see Flynn (1992) p. 250). Sartre did claim in 1975, however, that 'I feel perhaps some regret about the *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, which I could have finished. But it did not happen. Well, that's too bad' (Sartre, J-P. (1981) in Schilpp (ed) (1981). In *Hope Now*, Sartre simply claims that 'I set the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* aside because it seemed not to have ripened within me. I didn't manage to find my way out of it' (*Hope Now*, p. 86. The status of this text is unclear. It has been described as the 'abduction of an old man'

praxis is temporalising and consciousness is spread over three temporal dimensions, or ekstases, we immediately have an account which not only understands the influence of the past on our current situation, but is also capable of understanding our action, both in the past, and at the present, in terms of not only the past but also, the present and the future. This is because praxis responds to a practico-inert (past) in light of a current situation (present), which can be transcended by projecting a not yet existing situation (future). This is possible because consciousness is not perfectly at one with itself, so the present is not wholly present (presence-to-self). When we add to this that praxis encounters the inertia of antipraxis, which necessitates the formation of groups to temporarily overcome our impotence in the face of the practico-inert; and, that the formation of groups leads to the deviating inertia of the product of anti-labour, then we are better positioned to understand the deviations of group praxis without having to rely on simplistic models of hegemonic 'negotiation' and 'consent'. Put simply, the praxis of a group will be deviated and result in change in, and degeneration of, the group because of antipraxis and anti-labour.

It is therefore not necessary to place all our efforts to understand social change into our analyses of the counter-hegemonic struggles of subordinate groups. We are not dealing with a struggle between dominant and subordinate groups, but with a struggle between dominant groups, subordinate groups, and the practico-inert. The Bolshevik revolution did not end because subordinate groups carried out a counter-hegemonic struggle (although some such struggles may have taken place); rather, it reached its demise after a

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by Benny Lévy, Sartre's secretary. See *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*, p. 118-120, and Aronson, R. (1996) 'Sartre's Last Words', in *Hope Now*, pp.3-40).

long period of degeneration of the party and deviation of the original project. This was the result of anti-labour, which is inevitable because of the inertia of the practico-inert. The role of human freedom in all of this may not appear large,[215] but it is fundamental to this account. We simply could not understand social change if we ignored the primacy of praxis.

Hegemonists are guilty of organicism, and appealing to an objectivity which cannot be achieved without this organicism. If hegemonist organicism is an inadequate way of understanding social wholes, and Morgan's criticisms of the hegemonist account of change and the emancipatory potential of sport suggest that it is indeed inadequate, then the whole basis for the objectivity which hegemonists claim to be able to achieve disappears. This raises problems with the distinction between state and civil society, central to hegemonist analyses. In short, hegemonist organicism means that they cannot tell us what the state and civil society actually are. They are little more than conceptual place holders in an account of the social world that resembles the analytic analysis of a battle that Sartre outlines in volume two of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Hegemonists are, therefore, vulnerable to the same criticism that Sartre made of analytic reason; they are unable to account for the synthetic whole. To recruit another Sartrean criticism, this time from *The War Diaries*, hegemonists link the different levels of signification 'with an and.' This is not a synthesis, but a sum.

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[215] In relation to this Sartre claimed in 1969 that 'a man can always make something out of what is made of him. This is the limit I would today accord to freedom: the small movement which makes of a totally conditioned social being someone who does not render back completely what his conditioning has given him. Which makes of Genet a poet when he had been rigorously conditioned to be a thief.' 'The Itinerary of a Thought' in *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, Sartre, J-P. (1974) trans. J. Matthews, London: New Left Books. For more on Genet see *Saint Genet* p. 35).

This is important because it leads us to another criticism that we directed at hegemonist accounts of sport in chapter one. If hegemonists provide us with a sum, rather than a synthesis, then their understanding of the role of history is seriously flawed. Lack of consideration of temporality also contributes to this problem. If hegemonists want to reserve history as the basis for claims to knowledge and value judgements, then their position is seriously undermined if they are unable to grasp history as a synthetic unity.

The objectivity granted to hegemonist analyses by the organicism which they adopt, also leads to problems with the hegemonist treatment of ideology. As already noted, hegemonist discussions of ideology often underplay the role of the individual, and are therefore too simplistic, suggesting either that individuals are barely able to resist ideologies or failing to account for why they adopt them.

We have seen a cohesion to the problems with hegemonist analyses. They centre around the issue of individual praxis. Failure to consider individual praxis leads to a failure to grasp counterpraxis, and therefore a failure to account for change in relations of power. Lack of consideration of individual praxis also leads to organicism and a false objectivity. This means that hegemonist reliance on the concept of civil society must be brought into question, and they are unable to account for history as a synthetic unity. Finally, the failure to consider individual praxis leads to a misunderstanding of ideology and the centrality of the issue of temporality to an understanding of the social world.

The primacy of praxis is fundamental to the work of Sartre and, therefore, suggest that his account may provide considerable insight, but we must assess it when applied to a concrete example. We cannot conduct a detailed analysis, but a sketch of a progressive-regressive analysis of Muhammad Ali and the 'world of boxing' in the 1960s and 1970s will provide us with a basis from which to assess a Sartrean contribution to the critical theorisation of sport.

It would be helpful at this point to summarise the gains made, for the critical theorist of sport, by drawing upon Sartre's overall method. This will provide clarification of the purpose of adopting the method prior to the exemplification which follows in chapters five and six.

Organicism is a common fault in social theory and as such we must adopt an approach which avoids this pitfall. The problem with organicism is that it abstracts a generalised essence from concrete reality. This move from reality brings a concomitant move away from a theorisation which accurately represents the social world as it really is. In short, organicism simplifies any account of the social world but it does so at the expense of accuracy. This simplification is, no doubt, a large part of the appeal of organicist accounts. It is much easier if we can refer to class, race, society, power and other such abstract constituted wholes without giving adequate consideration to how they are constituted and what we are actually doing by abstracting such concepts. The work of Sartre will not allow us to do this and that is to its credit because it avoids the loss of accuracy that comes with abstract conceptualisation and does not lose sight of the

complexity of the social world and human history. By avoiding these problems the critical theorist of sport is much better equipped to give a concrete account of the sporting event and preserve the complexity of the social, cultural and historical dimensions of sporting practices.

In addition to avoiding organicism, the work of Sartre brings a number of related benefits to the critical theorisation of sport. The primacy of individual praxis is central to Sartre's avoidance of organicism because it allows accounts of social wholes as constituted by individual praxis rather than as themselves constitutive. This is not only essential to the cohesion of Sartre's method, but it also allows the progressive-regressive method to provide a much better account of social change than is possible with an organicist model such as that employed by hegemonists. The hegemonist is tied to the dualism of dominant and subordinate groups and must account for social change within this framework with the nebulous concept of power as his or her only assistance in the attempt to explain the 'negotiated' relationship known as hegemony. The work of Sartre introduces anti-praxis and antilabour, the authorless counterpraxeis which are generated by action on matter and conflictual praxis respectively. Both these forms of counterpraxis deviate the project of individuals or groups and allow us to account for social change as a praxis-process which is not simply the product of negotiation between dominant and subordinate groups. Sartre also provides us with a much more useful mechanism for understanding the relationship between the individual and the groups (an issue which is largely regarded as unproblematic in hegemonist sociology of sport).

A final area in which the work of Sartre is extremely useful is in the consideration of temporality. Temporality is almost completely overlooked in the sociology and philosophy of sport. This is hardly surprising when we consider the centrality of abstract conceptualisation to social theory. Abstract organicism requires a freezing of time simply because concepts are of little use if we accept that they are continually changing. It is common to find an insistence on the usefulness of concepts along with the seemingly contradictory claim that change and historical analysis are important. This is the position we find in hegemonist sociology of sport. There is a failure to recognise that it is the neglect of temporality which is at the root of hegemonist organicism. There can be no history without temporality.

Sartre does not, however, complete his project in volume two of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. He provides little in the way of an example of progressive analysis in the second volume of the *Critique* as he engages in a long deviation on Stalinism. *The Family Idiot* is also rather disappointing as an exemplification of progressive analysis. The text remained incomplete but Sartre claimed that it would be fairly simple for someone else to complete the work. This is because Sartre provides sufficient indication of what progressive analysis should be to allow his readers to adopt the method for themselves. That is exactly what we are about to do here. Sartre's exemplification of the progressive-regressive method is partial and, at times, his theoretical account of the method can be rather unclear, but he provides us with enough information to apply the method to a concrete example.

'I Don't Have to Be What You Want Me to Be', But I Can't Be What I Want: Ali and the Sixties

We should begin our regressive analysis of Muhammad Ali and the fight with George Foreman in Zaïre by returning to the childhood of Cassius Clay and exploring Sartre's use of existential psychoanalysis to unveil the original choice of a fundamental project by the individual.

Sartre reminds us that 'everything took place in childhood; that is, in a condition radically distinct from the adult condition. It is childhood which sets up unsurpassable prejudices, it is childhood which, in the violence of training and the frenzy of the tamed beast, makes us experience the fact of our belonging to our environment as a *unique event.*'[216]

For Sartre, the importance of psychoanalysis is that it provides the essential mediation between general, abstract structures and specific individual traits and actions. The family is the mediation between the individual and the class. There is a constitution of the family by history, but, the family is experienced by the individual in childhood as an 'absolute.'[217] This means that 'psychoanalysis, working within a dialectical totalisation, refers on the one side to objective structures, to material conditions, on the other to the action upon our adult life of the childhood we never wholly surpass.'[218] Marxism generally fails to grasp the importance of this because 'today's Marxists are concerned only with adults; reading them, one would believe that we are

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[216] *Search for a Method* pp. 59-60
[217] *Search for a Method* p. 62
[218] *Search for a Method* pp. 63-64

born at the age when we earn our first wages. They have forgotten their own childhoods. As we read them, everything seems to happen as if men experienced their alienation and their reification *first in their own work*, whereas in actuality each one lives it *first*, as a child, *in his parents' work*.'[219] Sartre sees no opposition between psychoanalysis and dialectical materialism, but this is because both terms have a significantly different meaning for Sartre than for many of their other practitioners. Sartre produced his own form of psychoanalysis in *Being and Nothingness*, and, as we have seen, his dialectical materialism is founded on the principle of the primacy of praxis.

Sartre was concerned with this blend of the general and the particular, the abstract and the concrete, and structure and the individual from as early as the late 1930s. Sartre postulates 'couldn't one try to show *not* the situation acting upon man – which leads to disjunction of the signifying layers – but man throwing himself through situations and living them in the unity of human reality? Wouldn't one thus manage to realise an unexpected and unforeseeable unity to the signifying layers? Don't the signifying layers remain parallel – just as the sciences are at first, in Comte – because they're considered first in isolation? But what if one considers them on the basis of human reality's project?'[220] Sartre gives a short example by looking at the life of Kaiser Wilhelm II as the projection of human reality through a succession of different situations. Here, Sartre wants to see whether he can find an 'inner relation of comprehension'[221] between the withered arm of the Kaiser and his English policy. He

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[219] *Search for a Method* p. 62
[220] *The War Diaries* pp. 300-301
[221] *The War Diaries* p. 301

explains 'I should like here to try, following Ludwig's interpretations,[222] to draw a portrait of William II as human reality assuming and transcending situations – in order to see whether the different signifying layers (including the geographical and the social layer) are not found unified within a single project.'[223] Sartre proposes that we move 'from the man to the situation, rather than from the situation to the man.'[224]

He adds that 'It matters little whether Ludwig's interpretations are *all* accurate. It's enough to consider them true, as a working hypothesis – since it's a matter of giving an example of method, not of discovering an actual historical truth. To tell the truth, it's even less a matter of establishing procedures that would be of benefit to history, than of instituting a kind of metaphysics of historiality and showing how the historical man freely historialises himself in the context of certain situations.'[225] Sartre appears to have adopted a similar attitude in relation to *The Family Idiot* because this work contains a number of errors, regarding details of Flaubert's life, which biographers of Flaubert have suggested are fairly surprising, yet which seem to be of little concern to Sartre. We will attempt, here, to avoid such disregard for basic information about Ali's life, although, like Sartre, we are only attempting to illustrate a method.

There is a strong continuity between the search for an 'inner relation of comprehension' in *The War Diaries*,[226] and Sartre's attempt to 'establish the organic bond of interiority that is regarded as indispensable when we say that a writer

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[222] Ludwig, E. (1926) *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, London.
[223] *The War Diaries* p. 301
[224] *The War Diaries* p. 301
[225] *The War Diaries* p. 301
[226] *The War Diaries* p. 301

expresses his times.'[227] The latter aim is outlined in *The Family Idiot*. This means that Sartre was concerned with the issue of unity in any account of the historical event for over thirty years, more or less, the whole of his career.

5.1 Prereflective Consciousness and the Mediation of the Family

For Sartre, the family is an extremely important mediating factor in our attempt to understand an individual. He is interested in the manner in which the child 'appropriates the values and expectations placed on it by the agents in its milieu' (Flynn 1997: 180). This involves both assumption and transcendence of the givens of the child's situation. Barnes (1981: 24) summarises Sartre's position when she claims that 'the child's constitution is formed under the influence of his prehistory and his protohistory. Prehistory includes the objective structure of the family into which the child is born – the character and social situation of the parents, the number, age, and sex of the siblings. Protohistory refers to the early events – truly or falsely interpreted by the child – within which he slowly constructs what we would call the beginning of his biography, his history proper. It includes the preverbal relation with the parents, especially the mother.'

We could say that Sartre does not wish to lose the ability to claim that humans are always prereflectively aware, yet needs to preserve an element of lived experience that is in some way outwith knowledge. He achieves this through his distinction between prereflective and reflective consciousness, and their concomitant forms of understanding, preontological comprehension and reflective knowledge. It is through

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[227] *The Family Idiot*, volume five, p. 391

this distinction that Sartre can claim that individuals can be unaware at a reflective level of the intentions behind, and meanings of, their praxis. This individual agent will, however, have a preontological comprehension of those intentions and meanings. For example, if I argue with my wife after coming home late from work, I may be reflectively unaware of my motivation and intentions, yet have a preontological comprehension of the fact that I feel that I am spending too much time at work and not enough time at home with my wife and daughter. The argument stems from my resentment at the fact that my wife reminds me of my guilt. If I were to reflect on the argument, I may become perfectly aware of the motivation for my actions, but at the time all I have is a prereflective awareness of that motivation. Sartre claims that he wants 'to give the idea of a whole whose surface is completely conscious, while the rest is opaque to this consciousness and, without being part of the unconscious, is hidden from you.' He continues 'when I show how Flaubert did not know himself and how at the same time he understood himself admirably, I am indicating what I call lived experience [*le vécu*] – that is to say, life aware of itself, without implying any thetic knowledge of consciousness.'[228]

By drawing distinctions between the prereflective 'intentional choices', and reflective 'decisions or judgments' (Flynn 1997: 181), Sartre can claim, when referring to the murder of a character in one of Flaubert's early works by that character's younger brother, that 'it may be, for example – for all I know – that Gustave was never in on the secret of his [own] fratricidal intentions.'[229]

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[228] *Life / Situations* pp. 127-128. Also see Flynn (1997) p. 181 and p. 307 n. 6
[229] *The Family Idiot*, volume two, p. 292

The family plays a central role in the constitution of the individual. It does not, however, determine the individual. As we might expect, Sartre claims that the historical agent will transcend 'what others have made of him.'[230] There is what Flynn (1997) has described as a settling of accounts with one's family through the events of one's life. The family not only mediates the specifics of itself, in relation to the personalisation of the child, but also society. The family is 'a mediation between the universal class and the individual.'[231] It is through the family that the child is concretely conditioned by the society in which it lives.

We have looked at Sartre's approach to the study of an individual's childhood and the connection between childhood and the praxis of an adult. This is important if we are to avoid the criticism Sartre levelled at Marxism, of treating individuals as if they were born adults. If we were conducting a full analysis of Muhammad Ali, rather than sketching such an analysis, we would have to explore his childhood, and its impact, in great detail. As we do not have space for this, we will concentrate on some key points relating to Ali's childhood. Sartre would regard the details that we omit as hugely important. In a sense, they are, but unlike Sartre, we have limited space and cannot produce a piece of work akin to *The Family Idiot*.

5.1.1 The Childhood of a Leader?

Cassius Clay was born in Louisville, Kentucky on 17th January 1942. Remnick (2000: 81) explains that 'in the understanding of his place and time, of Louisville after the war and through the fifties, he was a child of the black middle class.' He stresses,

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[230] *The Family Idiot*, volume one, p. 627

however, that if one were both black and Southern, then middle class did not mean the same thing as it did to white Americans at that time. However, there is no doubt that Clay was fairly privileged compared to the men who would later become his opponents.

The Clays bought their house while they were in their twenties for $4,500. In Louisville the elite tended to live in the East End. The Clays lived in an all-black area in the West End, but it was an area which was some distance from the poorer black neighbourhood. Cassius Clay had no experience of wealth until he became successful as a boxer; but, equally, he did not suffer from a lack of the basic necessities as a child. Cassius occasionally took a job, to earn a little extra money, but there was no need for him to spend his childhood working as a means of sustaining his family in the absence of a father, or any other such commonly over-romanticised scenario.

Cassius's mother, Odessa Clay, took both her sons to church every Sunday, and encouraged them to 'keep clean, to work hard, to respect their elders' (Remnick 2000: 83). As a result of his mother's influence, Cassius was polite in adult company. Christine Martin, the wife of Clay's first trainer, reported that Cassius didn't join the other boys from his gym in pursuing girls when they were on trips, but would spend much of his time reading his Bible, which he took with him everywhere he went. It seems unlikely that Cassius actually read his Bible very often, because he was barely able to read.[232] Clearly, however, he had been instilled with a respect for the Bible by his mother, and also with a sense of appropriate and polite behaviour, which, in

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[231] *Search for a Method* p. 62

certain company, he followed to the letter. In 1963 the *New York Times* described

Clay as 'a delightful young man' (Tosches 2000: 189). Early film of Clay shows him

clearly attempting to appear as clean-cut as possible. His politeness and respect seem

contrived, but this was a well practised act. He had been doing it in adult company all

his life, under the influence of his mother. His comparative lack of interest in girls had

more to do with the fact that he found the whole issue of relationships with the

opposite sex intimidating, and his lack of experience, rather than any conviction that

to pursue girls was inappropriate behaviour.

Odessa's approach to parenthood, and her attitude to young Cassius are partly

explained by her having 'had a pretty hard life' as a child (Hauser 1997: 15). She saw

little of her father, and didn't know much about him because her parents separated

when she was young. She often had to stay with an aunt because her mother could not

look after three children on her own. She met Cassius Clay senior when she was

sixteen, and he was twenty. Clay became something of a figure of stability. Four years

is a significant age difference when one is only sixteen. Marriage and a family

provided Odessa with the stability that had been missing during her life until that

point, and also the comparative financial security that she did not have prior to

meeting Clay. This would suggest that marriage and having children was very

important to Odessa.

In later life, Ali largely avoided talking about his childhood as a means of avoiding

the issues of the behaviour of his father and segregation. Cassius Clay senior was

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[232] At this point Cassius was an undiagnosed dyslexic. This had a great impact on his educational attainment, and will have added to his experience of otherness, something which we will argue below is a major feature of his life.

arrested nine times for various offences. On two occasions he was arrested for assault and battery. Odessa Clay called the police on three occasions asking for protection from her husband. A number of years later, Odessa insisted that they have a period of separation. Remnick (2000) recounts an incident in which Cassius senior was stabbed in the chest by a woman. When a friend offered to take him to hospital, he refused, and suggested instead that they give him a drink and pour a little on his chest, 'like the cowboys do.' Remnick (2000: 85) points out that 'at an early age, Cassius appears to have learned how to block these chaotic incidents out of his mind; even after he had become perhaps the most visible and press-friendly figure on earth, he avoided probing questions about his father.' He would make light of such incidents by joking about his father being a playboy who didn't want to grow up, but Remnick (2000: 85) reports that one of Ali's closest friends claimed that 'it seems to me that Ali suffered a great psychological wound when he was a kid because of his father and that as a result he really shut down. ... In many ways, as brilliant and charming as he is, Muhammad is an arrested adolescent. There is a lot of pain there. And though he's always tried to put it behind him, shove it out of his mind, a lot of that pain comes from his father, the drinking, the occasional violence, the harangues.'

Hauser (1997: 17) argues that the experience of the segregated way of life in Kentucky 'weighed upon' Clay, adding that 'the reminders of second-class citizenship were everywhere.' It is the exclusion of Clay as the Other, which is important, rather than any experience of racial violence, which he appears not to have had. Ali's brother, Rahaman Ali (Rudolph Arnette Clay) claimed that 'Louisville was segregated, but it was a quiet city, very peaceful and clean. There wasn't much crime; no drugs; very little drinking and prostitution. Things were different from the way

they are now. Growing up, the only problems Muhammad and I had with whites were

if we were walking in a certain part of town. If we were in the wrong place, white

boys would come up in a car and say, "Hey, nigger, what are you doing here?" I never

got into any fights. No one attacked me. It wasn't like in the Deep South, but people

would call us nigger and tell us to get out if they thought we were someplace we

didn't belong' (Hauser 1997: 17). Cassius Clay would have developed a racial

consciousness very early in his life. Kentucky did not secede during the Civil War, yet

there appears to have been a majority of the population who were sympathetic to the

confederacy. Jim Crow held less of a stranglehold than it did in the Deep South, but

segregation of public services and businesses was still the dominant experience during

Clay's childhood. Segregation and a sense of otherness, principally in relation to race,

conditioned Cassius Clay's early life.

The murder of Emmett Till in the summer of 1955 had a significant impact on

Cassius. Emmett Till was a fourteen-year-old boy from Chicago, who spent the

summer with relatives in Money, Mississippi. The state of Mississippi is notorious for

its racial intolerance, but in 1955 this was exacerbated by moves towards integration

in the United States, and specifically, the *Brown v. The Topeka Board of Education*

case of 1954. As over five hundred blacks had been lynched in Mississippi since

1882, Emmett's parents were concerned that he should be made fully aware of the

reality of Jim Crow in the Deep South. Despite his apparent understanding of the

situation, Emmett, responding to a dare from other children, went to talk to a white

cashier in a store, and as he left he said 'bye, baby.' A few days later the husband of

the cashier, Roy Bryant, and his half brother, J. W. Milam, dragged Emmett Till from

his bed and shot him in the head. They then wrapped a weight round his neck with a

piece of barbed wire, and threw his body in the Tallahatchie River. An all white jury

acquitted both Bryant and Milam after deliberating for only sixty-seven minutes. One

of the jurors claimed that if they 'hadn't stopped to drink pop, … it wouldn't have

taken that long' (Remnick 2000: 88). The black press contained pictures of Till's face,

taken after the body had been removed from the river. Cassius Clay senior made sure

that his sons saw these pictures. 'Cassius absorbed the crime on a personal level: Till

was just a year older than he' (Remnick 2000: 88).

5.1.2 The Childhood of the Other: Cassius Clay and Original Choice.

A key issue which is beginning to emerge already is that Ali's response to otherness,

or rather, his prereflective original choice was the choice to actively respond to

continually being portrayed as the Other. This does not determine the nature of his

specific responses at different times in his life, but it does mean that there is always

action of some kind, even when it is comparative inaction (compared to members of

the Civil Rights Movement at certain times for instance).

Ali was always the Other, even during his childhood. He was thrown into the world as

the Other, and will have felt the impotence that results from that otherness. There is a

fear of physical violence and death which accompanies racial otherness (it also

accompanies otherness in relation to gender, but this does not apply to Ali). In the

same way that Flaubert turned to literature despite the fact that reading was a painful

and difficult experience for him, so Ali turned to boxing, despite violence being a

problem for him. Ali's life is marked by a continual attempt to avoid physical harm.

This may seem a strange claim to make in relation to a boxer, but, as Sartre argued in

the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume two, there is a derealisation of violence in boxing.[233] It would have been comparatively easy for Ali to put aside the dangers of boxing itself. Otherness also occurs as a result of the behaviour of his father, and the accompanying threat of violence. The fear of violence which marks Ali's life may stem from the fear of his father when he was drunk and violent. It may be this that is the earliest exposure to the potential for physical harm, and therefore, this which contributes to his constitution as someone who will always attempt to avoid that which can cause him physical harm. The basis of the desire to act in response to otherness may stem from his father's attempts to teach his children to confront their fears. Cassius Clay senior claims that he taught his children to 'always confront the things you fear' (Hauser 1997: 15). The combination of the desire to confront that which he fears, and the fear of violence, may have led Cassius to the prereflective choice of always acting, but only in the manner which will bring the least threat of physical harm. Having his bicycle stolen at the age of twelve (an event which prompted the first meeting between Cassius and Joe Martin, the man who trained him as a teenager) would also have introduced an otherness. One of the most common responses from victims of burglary, or any theft, is the claim that they feel the presence of the Other very strongly. There is a modification of consciousness following such an incident which is not dissimilar to the keyhole account of shame in *Being and Nothingness*.

The murder of Emmett Till was a reminder of the danger of being black in the South. Ali seems to have been racially aware at the age of four or five. Being loud and seeking attention at large family gatherings may also have been a response to the

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[233] We discussed this in chapter four.

otherness that one encounters in large groups. He used this to promote fights and make money later in his life, but it would also have been a response to otherness when surrounded by large groups and projected to the world by the media. His original choice may have been to act in the face of otherness (race, father, crowds, loss of bike), but to do so in a manner which carried the least degree of personal risk. Preservation of the body seems important. Otherness and violence appear to be linked in Cassius's experience. The earliest example of this came with the otherness imposed by a drunk and violent father. The strong relationship between Cassius and his mother partly stems from the unifying influence of his father's behaviour. Cassius and his mother are unified in their separation from Cassius senior, not simply at times when he is violent, but continually because of their awareness of his capacity to be violent.

The almost complete devotion of his childhood to boxing would also have designated Cassius the Other. At school he was 'Cassius the boxer', he was defined by his being a boxer. Tosches (2000: 189) likens Ali's complete immersion in boxing from such an early age, to the life of a child actor. He claims 'Clay had not been a child actor. He had been something more bizarre: a child boxer, whose life had been given over to the game at the age of twelve. Since then ... he had boxed rather than lived, and his intelligence and involvement with life were as atrophied as any actor's.' While there is a degree of truth in such a claim, we cannot reduce the childhood of Clay, and it's influence on the adult, to a truncated existence centred around boxing. There were far more significant influences in his childhood.

Ali's decision to join the Nation of Islam comes from a combination of the prereflective choice to act in response to otherness, and events at the time bringing

that otherness to the fore yet again. In addition, there is clearly an adolescent search for meaning, identity, acceptance and a collective belonging. We must also remember that Cassius Clay was barely literate, poorly educated, and that he had a religious background. In this sense, Cassius Clay is similar to Bob Marley, who had a religious sensitivity from childhood, and changed his religion to a politically motivated, back-to-Africa, Garveyite sect, which was not dissimilar to the Nation of Islam. The change of religion, in the case of both Marley and Ali, is a response to their times and their situation, but it is made easier by the underlying religious sensitivity. The Nation of Islam was a safe option, given that Ali had little to lose because he was already treated like a second class citizen in his home town. The notion that involvement with the Nation was a great risk, and that he had a lot to lose, is only something that becomes apparent later in his life. At that point, it is not his involvement with the Nation which is causing him vilification, it is his stance on going to Vietnam, which is not as closely linked to the Nation as he, and others, would have us believe.

Once the choice to join the Nation had been made, it became part of Ali's facticity, and part of the practico-inert. This means that it had a conditioning, but not determining influence on his praxis after he became part of the Nation. Membership of the Nation of Islam also led to Malcolm X 'sitting on his hands' on occasions when he could have done and said more, and eventually wished he had.[234] But in both cases, it was the individuals themselves who made the choice to do nothing. They could not claim that the Nation of Islam stopped them doing anything.

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[234] See p. 240 below, where we discuss the examples of the killing of Ronald X Stokes and the Atlanta plane crash. Both events took place in 1962 and on both occasions Malcolm was concerned at the passive approach of the Nation of Islam, but ultimately felt he could have done more than he did. The same is true of the murder of four girls in a Birmingham Baptist church in September 1963, see pp. 242-43 below.

It could be argued that the choice of the Nation of Islam was a selfish choice, rather than a self-sacrificing one, given the original choice of action. By choosing the Nation, Ali is active in his response to otherness, even when he is inactive. It means that he does not have to carry signs, march, get beaten up by police and racist whites, or go to jail, yet he is still actively responding to being designated the Other. Ali's life during the sixties is marked by a great desire to avoid violent conflict, to avoid risking any personal harm, despite the fact that he is a boxer, risking harm whenever he fights. There is a distinct difference between the violence of boxing, and the violence of the civil rights marches, lynchings and assassinations in Ali's mind, even if the difference is not, in reality, as great as he seems to think. This self-preservation is continued in his response to the draft. When he made a comment about not having 'any quarrel with them Vietcong', this was an off-the-cuff remark made at a time when he had just been told about the draft, and was being hounded by the press for comments. The remark reveals his concern for himself, rather than any political, religious or moral stance against the war.

We have a number of small totalisations taking place here. There is the childhood as the Other, culminating in the choice of the Nation of Islam. There is then the period where he is drawn into the debate over race in the United States. His actions here are motivated by self-preservation, the original choice of action, membership of the Nation (a degenerate institution led by a sovereign), and the fact that his otherness had been intensified by membership of the Nation. Active response to otherness required an increase in that otherness, either by joining the civil rights movement, or the Nation of Islam, or some other form of action. All forms of action brought vilification and heightened otherness, but the nation brought greater vilification than membership

of the civil rights movement, yet, despite this, it also provided the greatest opportunity to avoid direct physical action and confrontation; the risk of violence was reduced to a minimum.

This second totalisation culminates in the refusal of the draft, which leads to a third totalisation around the issue of the war in Vietnam. Each of these totalisations contains the previous totalisations, so by the time we are dealing with the issue of Vietnam, or more properly, the draft itself (an important distinction to make), then Ali totalises the previous experiences and actions. He finds himself in a situation that was shaped by his previous praxis in response to the practico-inert which he encountered at the time, and in light of a goal which he aimed for. Antipraxis deviated his praxis, leading to the formation of new goals, in light of a new practico-inert brought about by his own praxis and the resulting antipraxis. The praxis of joining the Nation of Islam led to greater vilification of Ali, but it also made him part of an organisation which has a history of resisting the draft. When the draft became an issue for Ali he found himself in a situation that had been shaped by his previous praxis, such as the choice to join the Nation of Islam. This previous praxis led to him encountering the issue of the draft from a particular perspective. This situation arose from a synthesis of his goal-orientated praxis and the deviation of that praxis.

By the time of the draft refusal, Ali is facing a practico-inert which is not only encountered by black Americans, but also by whites. This allows his situation to influence, and be influenced by, not only the objective spirit[235] of black America, but that of a large proportion of white American youth as well. This third totalisation

culminated in his ban from boxing, the peak of protest against the war, and is superseded by another phase as activity in Vietnam is reduced, and the ban is lifted. In this situation, the times had changed, the moment had passed. Praxis and antipraxis had brought a change in the practico-inert, and temporality had asserted itself.

By the time of the protest over the draft, and the ban and threat of jail, Ali was no longer the same man who had joined the Nation of Islam and avoided any personal sacrifice (within the difficult situation he found himself). He was still not the great principled figure, driven by religious, moral and political motives to improve the situation of 'his people' (whoever his people are supposed to be) that he presented himself as, but he was responding to a past which left him in a situation in which he had clearly taken, or been forced to take sides. There appears little ambiguity in his situation, his enemies are already made, and he is finding new allies (white youth), which he could not rely on before.

From the lifting of the ban onwards, there is a degree of accommodation of Ali into the system. He becomes more acceptable than he had been since he was portrayed as the good guy in the build-up to his first fight with Sonny Liston. This has a lot to do with the changes in the role of the Nation of Islam, which was also being accommodated, and the fact that Ali had more popular support as a result of the refusal of the draft than he ever had over the issue of race.

When he began fighting again he went through a period which must have been very difficult and depressing for him. He was suspended from the Nation for a year. He

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[235] We will deal with this term in more detail shortly. Sartre came to regard objective spirit as 'culture

lost to Joe Frazier, Ken Norton broke his jaw, he could no longer claim to be world champion, and it looked like he would never be champion again. The ban was lifted in 1970, he lost to Frazier in 1971, the Norton fight was in 1973. It was a long period between 1970 and 1974, when he beat Frazier in their second fight and finally got the chance to fight Foreman in Kinshasa. The 1970-74 period is another totalisation because Ali was still claiming that he was the Greatest, but without much evidence for this for a very long time. He hadn't fought for three and a half years between 1967 and 1970, and he had a difficult period of good, but not outstanding, results from 1970-1974. This is reflected in Norman Mailer's account of Ali's training at Deer Lake, seven weeks before the fight with Foreman. Ali was a different man again. He was depressed and appeared to be in poor condition.[236]

Our first engagement with the example of Muhammad Ali leaves us with a series of questions. Many of which are provoked by Sartre's account of the life of Flaubert. Was the choice to join the Nation of Islam a turning point when Clay lost a naïve assumption that he could be treated as an equal if he won an Olympic gold medal, even if there was no single event which constituted a 'crisis' akin to that of Flaubert? If Flaubert's crisis is 'prophetic' in relation to the events of 1848, then, is Ali's choice of the Nation of Islam prophetic of the disillusionment of black America with the peaceful protest of the civil rights movement? Flaubert desires that which he 'so roundly mocks' (Flynn 1997: 184), acceptance by the public. 'Renown is what counts, this alone will satisfy his pride and his resentment.'[237] Is the same true of Ali? Does he criticise a society, yet court its acceptance and approval? Or is Ali different? Does

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as practico-inert.'
[236] See Mailer (1975) pp. 3-18
[237] *The Family Idiot*, volume two, p. 232

he want to occupy the highest profile within a society that he despises and wishes to attack? There is something of a contradiction in combining the separatist ideology of the Nation of Islam with Ali's central role (at the time) in American popular culture.

5.2 Objective Spirit

The amount of new philosophical material in *The Family Idiot* is not proportionate to the size of the text, but there is one other notion which we must be aware of before we attempt to understand anything further of the life of Muhammad Ali. In *The Family Idiot* Sartre uses the term 'objective spirit' as a more specific way of referring to the socio-historical nature of facticity.

Sartre first made reference to objective spirit in *Notebooks for an Ethics*. It is in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and *The Family Idiot*, however, that we find Sartre dealing with objective spirit in two different, yet related, ways, which suggest a broadening of his use of the term by *The Family Idiot*. In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* he refers to objective spirit as 'a medium for the circulation of significations.'[238] By *The Family Idiot*, Sartre regards objective spirit as 'nothing more than culture as practico-inert.'[239] The first of these understandings of the term refers to the linguistic and non-linguistic relations between individuals that are dominant in a society. For example, in relation to French society at a particular period during Flaubert's lifetime, objective spirit in this sense would not only be the linguistic practices adopted by Flaubert's class, but non-linguistic practices such as mode of dress, the practice of holding dinner parties, and the exchange of calling

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[238] *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, p. 776

cards. These are aspects of culture, but the broader understanding of objective spirit as culture as practico-inert would also include wider aspects of culture, such as the mode of production.

Any reference to the objective may bring accusations of abandoning the primacy of praxis that we have argued is central to Sartre's thought. This is particularly true when we consider that Sartre is interested in the possibility of collective bad faith. It must, therefore, be stressed that Sartre is totally opposed to any notion of collective consciousness, and is able, as a result of the idea of the practico-inert, to preserve his dialectical nominalism, while illustrating the basis for such phenomena as collective bad faith. Sartre stresses that '*Objective Spirit*, while *never* on the side of pure lived experience and free thought, exists *as an act* only through the activity of men and, more precisely, through the activity of *individuals*.'[240] Objective spirit is a key conditioning factor for the historical agent, and it is the basis for the possibility of collective bad faith, yet none of this is determining.

We have finally gathered all our theoretical tools. We must now apply them to the example of the life of Muhammad Ali, and the specific historical event of the World title fight between Ali and George Foreman in 1974. We will move, more or less chronologically,[241] through Ali's life towards the 'Rumble in the Jungle.' Our aim will be to demonstrate the unifying and constitutive role of the praxis of Muhammad Ali, within our account of his unique historialisation of his times.

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[239] *The Family Idiot*, volume five, p. 35
[240] *The Family Idiot*, volume five, p. 41
[241] As we have argued that praxis is temporalising, it is very difficult to account for Ali's praxis if we do not pay close attention to the chronology of events. While this emphasis on a chronological narrative may appear rather passé following the postmodern attack on matanarratives, such arguments are unconvincing.

5.3 Regressive Analysis: Uncovering the Making of a Situation

On February 25th 1964 Cassius Clay defeated Sonny Liston to become Heavyweight Champion of the World. After the fight Clay didn't join the celebrations in a luxury hotel in Miami, but returned to the black ghetto which he had made his base in preparation for the fight. He spent the evening in conversation with Malcolm X, Sam Cooke and Jim Brown, the Cleveland Browns running back, who was 'an early champion of black rights in sport' (Marqusee 1999: 7). This was significant because Malcolm X was asked to leave Miami prior to the Clay – Liston fight, because his presence was inflammatory. At that point, the fight was not going to take place because Florida was a Jim Crow state, and the Nation of Islam were getting far too much publicity for Bill MacDonald, the promoter, to tolerate. Harold Conrad was sent to ask if Malcolm X would leave town, and Malcolm agreed that he would, for the sake of the fight, but that he would return for the fight itself.

The morning after the fight Clay had breakfast with Malcolm X, then met the press 'to confirm his involvement with the Nation of Islam' (Marqusee 1999: 7). It was at this press conference that Clay announced, 'I believe in Allah and in peace. I don't try to move into white neighbourhoods. I don't want to marry a white woman. I was baptised when I was twelve, but I didn't know what I was doing. I'm not a Christian any more. I know where I'm going, and I know the truth, and I don't have to be what you want me to be, I'm free to be what I want' (Marqusee 1999: 8).

As Marqusee (1999: 8) points out, 'no boxing champion, and no black sports star, had ever issued such a ringing declaration of independence.' This, however, was just the

beginning of Cassius Clay's controversial pronouncements. Two days after he became heavyweight champion Cassius had the following to say at a press conference, here quoted at length, because it summarises the public position which he held for a number of years:

'Black Muslims is a press word. It's not a legitimate name. The real name is Islam. That means peace. Islam is a religion and there are 750 million people all over the world who believe in it, and I'm one of them. I ain't no Christian. I can't be, when I see all the coloured people fighting for forced integration get blowed up. They get hit by stones and chewed by dogs, and they blow up a Negro church and don't find the killers. I get telephone calls every day. They want me to carry signs. They want me to picket. They tell me it would be a wonderful thing if I married a white woman because this would be good for brotherhood. I don't want to be blown up. I don't want to be washed down sewers. I just want to be happy with my own kind.

I'm the heavyweight champion, but right now there are some neighbourhoods I can't move into. I know how to dodge boobytraps and dogs. I dodge them by staying in my own neighbourhood. I'm no troublemaker. I don't believe in forced integration. I know where I belong. I'm not going to force myself into anybody's house. I'm not joining no forced integration movement, because it don't work. A man has got to know where he belongs.

People brand us a hate group. They say we want to take over the country. They say we're Communists. That is not true. Followers of Allah are the sweetest people in the world. They don't carry knives. They don't tote weapons. They pray five times a day.

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The women wear dresses that come all the way to the floor and they don't commit

adultery. All they want to do is live in peace. They don't want to stir up any kind of

trouble. All the meetings are held in secret, without any fuss or hatemongering.

I'm a good boy. I never have done anything wrong. I have never been in jail. I have

never been in court. I don't join any integration marches. I don't pay any attention to

all those white women who wink at me. I don't carry signs. I don't impose myself on

people who don't want me. If I go in somebody's house where I'm not welcome, I'm

uncomfortable, so I stay away. I like white people. I like my own people. They can

live together without infringing on each other. You can't condemn a man for wanting

peace. If you do, you condemn peace itself. A rooster crows only when it sees the

light. Put him in the dark and he'll never crow. I have seen the light and I'm crowing'

(Hauser 1997: 82-83).

The WBA (World Boxing Association), which is southern-dominated, began to

attempt to strip him of his title. Columbia pulled his album 'I Am the Greatest',

endorsement deals disappeared and a television appearance was cancelled.

During the build-up to the first fight between Clay and Liston, the fight had been

billed as the 'good guy versus bad guy', just as the Patterson-Liston fights were

presented to the public. Harold Conrad referred to this as the 'white hat against black

hat.' As the fight neared, Clay's association with the Nation of Islam was beginning to

make the fight look more like 'two black hats fighting' (Hauser 1997: 66). The racial

connotations of the marketing significations of the fight cannot be overestimated. This

fight took place during a period of massive social unrest in the United States. Unrest

over the issue of Civil Rights, which was often shorthand for the issue of the treatment of African-Americans, as we have come to refer to them. In addition, the fight took place in Florida; a state riddled with racism, and with a warped pride in its recalcitrance in relation to integration and Civil Rights. Sonny Liston had long been the victim of racist stereotyping. He was the animalistic black man, yet Clay was becoming equally dangerous, but in a different way. Sonny Liston may have been the personification of the old racist fear of the violent black sexual predator, a black bogeyman, akin to something found in children's stories, but Clay was more dangerous. His was a political and religious threat, and he had support.

It is important to stress that this support was not universal among black Americans. Tosches (2000: 189) points out that Liston was a hero of a different section of the population, black and white 'street punks', people 'who could not afford the ticket price to have their own voices heard at the fights when Sonny was booed and execrated.' Tosches (2000: 189) also points out, referring to Clay, that 'even as his image changed and the maw of mass mediocrity vomited him forth, he became the darling of a more elite mediocrity, a white intelligentsia who sought meaning and metaphor in boxing.'

During the Cold War, sport in general, but particularly the Olympic Games, became the site of ideological warfare in which the United States and nations of the Soviet Bloc attempted to demonstrate the superiority of their political systems through the achievements of their athletes. The Rome Olympics of 1960 came only a year-and-a-half after the Cuban revolution, when the scene was already being set for the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis. This was the peak of the Cold War.

Simply by competing in Rome, let alone winning, Cassius Clay became, at the age of only eighteen, a figure of ideological and political significance. At this stage, however, he had insufficient confidence to make political pronouncements. When asked by a Soviet reporter to explain his feelings about being Olympic champion representing a nation in which he couldn't eat in many restaurants, Clay replied 'tell your readers we got qualified people working on that problem, and I'm not worried about the outcome. To me, the USA is the best country in the world, including yours' (Hauser 1997: 28).[242]

Clay was changing the public role of the sportsperson by being both vocal and opinionated. He got the idea of this approach from the wrestler Gorgeous George, but this does not mean that Clay did not possess the ability to outtalk anyone, prior to the realisation that he could use this 'skill' for marketing/money-making purposes. It was not only the fact that Clay was loud which made him a completely new figure amongst sportsmen and women; he also brought a new blend of influences from popular culture, which he incorporated into his act. This was new in sport, but Bob Dylan, who was born less than eight months before Cassius Clay, was doing a similar thing in popular music. Marqusee (1999: 50) points out that 'Clay was a child of the popular audio-visual culture of the fifties. His monologues were studied with references to Hollywood movies, television and radio comedies, pop records, baseball as well as boxing and professional wrestling.' Some regard Ali's loud approach as over-compensation for his shyness. This argument is lent credence by the fact that in private, when he is dealing with people on an individual basis, Ali is quiet and thoughtful. Yet, as soon as he had an audience, he would begin his act.

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[242] Also see Remnick (2000) pp. 103-104

Clay adopted a style which showed the impact of minstrelsy and a range of other aspects of Black America's oral tradition (the dozens etc.). In utilising any approach which had comedic effect, even if it meant making a fool of himself, Clay became part of a tradition spanning from minstrelsy to Louis Armstrong. What was often overlooked in this approach, was the fact that such representations of blackness were not simply entertainment for whites, but contained 'messages intelligible to black audiences' (Marqusee 1999: 52). Clay allied a feminine side to this ('I'm too beautiful to be a fighter'). This was not simply jest. As we have seen, preservation of his body was extremely important to Clay, and it seems likely that his aesthetic appreciation of his own physique, coupled with his fear of violence, contributed to this aspect of his engagement with the world. When Clay responded to any reference to Sonny Liston with 'ain't he ugly', the point was not so much that Liston was ugly, but more that Clay was beautiful. The initial intention behind Clay's approach to public representations of himself was largely to make money, but as his career developed this approach proved to be more one of political and religious significance, but its value was still personal. Not only was it Clay who benefited financially, but he was also able to avoid direct action on the issue of Civil Rights, and avoid the draft.

5.3.1 The Nation of Islam.

Malcolm X visited Clay's training camp in Miami, when he was preparing for the World Title shot at Liston. Malcolm and his family stayed as Clay's guests (all expenses paid as a sixth wedding anniversary present). Elijah Muhammad could not have been pleased. He had originally tried to distance the Nation from Clay because

he didn't think Clay would beat Liston. Clay was publicly known to be a Muslim prior to the Liston fight, but not prior to signing the contract for the fight. Clay knew he would have to split with Malcolm after he beat Liston, but he seemed uncertain about doing this and may have hoped that Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X could be reconciled.[243]

The split between Malcolm X and Cassius Clay was inevitable, Malcolm was moving further away from the anti-integrationist rhetoric of Elijah Muhammad, who claimed that:

> 'our people are the fools of the nations. Integration means self-destruction. The black people throughout the earth are seeking independence for their own, not integration into white society. What do we look like, trying to integrate with our four-hundred-year-old enemies? We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendants from slaves to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of their own – either on this continent or elsewhere. We believe that our former slave-masters are obliged to provide such land and that the area must be fertile and minerally rich. Since we cannot get along with them in peace and equality after giving them four hundred years of our sweat and blood and receiving in return some of the worst treatment human beings have ever experienced, we believe our contributions to this land and the

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[243] Marqusee (1999: 90) provides further evidence for the suggestion that the Nation was a safe haven for Ali, from which he could sound radical without having to *be* radical and take any risk. He argues, 'I suspect that at the core of Ali's decision to break with Malcolm and follow Elijah Muhammad was his suspicion that Malcolm would lead him deeper into political activism, expose him to greater danger. He kept saying that he didn't want to face firehoses and dogs, and he meant it. Malcolm on the other hand, was preparing to reach out to those facing the hoses and the dogs, and to join their struggle on his own terms.'

suffering forced upon us by white America justifies our demand for complete

separation in a state or territory of our own' (Hauser 1997: 87).

This view concealed the degree to which the Nation of Islam was, like Rastafari in

Jamaica, a response to the situation in which many black people found themselves in

white ruled Western nations by the early 1930s. Davis (1983: 58-59) points out that

'for Bob Marley's generation the new black consciousness that emerged in that

decade [the sixties] was more than just civil rights and black power. It was black

religion. For them, the Messiah was on earth.'[244] Much the same is true of

Muhammad Ali. One of the differences is that the figurehead of Rastafari had nothing

to do with the movement, whereas Elijah Muhammad ran the Nation of Islam as a

sovereign. Both the Nation of Islam and the Rastafari movement were heavily

influenced by Marcus Garvey. While Rastafari drew largely on myth about Garvey,[245]

certain features of the Nation of Islam show continuity with Garvey's doctrine.

Stephens (1999: 156) points out that 'Garvey popularised a "race pride" that was

xenophobic, anti-Semitic, and dismissive of the "lessons of history" other than a need

for self-mythologisation.' Garvey took millions of dollars from poor black people on

the pretext of his 'back to Africa' slogan. In reality, Garvey never set foot in Africa,

and none of the ships he bought for his Black Star Line were sea-worthy. Garvey was

an extreme conservative, and even claimed that 'we are the first Fascists ... Mussolini

copied our Fascism' (Stephens 1999: 155). Garvey was vehemently opposed to

interraciality and despised Jews. He constructed a mythic Ethiopianism, yet he was

scathing in his criticism of Haile Selassie and early Rastafarians led by Leonard

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[244] Also see Davis (1984) pp. 91-92 and Davis (1993) p. 64
[245] As a result, there are great discrepancies between the stance of Rastafarians, and that of Garvey. See White (1991) pp. 5-16, and Stephens (1999) pp. 154-166

Howell. Stephens (1999) suggests that Garvey's class based elitism may have led him to disassociate himself from the largely lower working class Rastas. Many of these traits are echoed in the intolerance of the Nation of Islam. There were links between the Nation of Islam and the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazis, and Marcus Garvey was once described as an answer to the prayers of the Ku Klux Klan because his advocacy of segregation and his 'Back to Africa' movement suited the ends of the Klan.

Attallah Shabazz, the daughter of Malcolm X, argues that the Nation of Islam was not really a religious organisation. She claims that although Cassius Clay was a religious man, and religion had always played a significant role in his life, his involvement with the Nation of Islam was more of a 'social and political awakening' (Hauser 1997: 98). The Nation was an organisation which balanced his Negritude. It enabled alienated black men and women to gain a self-respect, which allowed them to make progress in a society which held them in segregated subservience. The problem with this is that the Nation of Islam adopted a highly destructive approach to making fairly small gains.

We must ask why did the Nation of Islam appeal to Cassius Clay? Clearly, the Nation gave him a sense of personal and collective identity. We must remember that he was really only a boy when he encountered the Nation of Islam for the first time, and he was still a very young man by the time he made his association with the Nation public. The ritual and regime of the Nation of Islam also appealed to Clay. It was not dissimilar to that of the gym. This is also about finding a purpose, identity and meaning for one's existence. Much of people's involvement in sport is based on this. Pat Cash once claimed

that you play tennis when you have nothing better in your life. When you have, you stop playing. The ritual, structure and system of sport contribute significantly to filling such a void. For Clay, the Nation of Islam served a similar function. The Nation, like boxing, was presented as an alternative to ghetto life.[246] Not only that, it was presented as a safe alternative to ghetto life.

Elijah Muhammad was telling potential followers that there would be no need for them to open their mouths. He would do the talking and take the risks. This would have been particularly appealing to Clay. He did not want to have to take any risks, yet he did want to act. Elijah Muhammad's pronouncements appeared to be exactly what Clay required. The doctrine of the Nation of Islam was such that it provided a simple potted history and worldview for Clay, who was poorly educated. Yet it was 'engaged' enough to appear as if it were deep thinking. It also played on the religious background that is dominant in most black families in America, especially in the South at the time of Clay's childhood. In short, Clay was already susceptible to religion and unusual views of the world. Although Elijah Muhammad did not really envisage boxers as the ideal target for his doctrine, Cassius Clay was one of the upwardly mobile new black elite who Elijah Muhammad was appealing to. Ultimately, it was Ali who took all the chances and did most of the talking. There were also benefits to being a member of the Nation of Islam. It was an organisation of significant size with a wide range of business interests. This meant that Clay would be looked after.

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[246] See Marqusee (1999) p. 60

In all of this, however, we are led back to the choice to act, but in the manner which reduced the risk of physical harm to a minimum. Clay gave an indication of this desire to act unharmed when he claimed that 'I'm not going to get myself killed trying to force myself on people who don't want me. I like my life. Integration is wrong. The white people don't want integration' (Hauser 1997: 65). He frequently referred to firehoses, dogs and riot police, claiming he did not want to fall victim to them, and that he would not place himself in a position where this could happen. Invoking the imagery of Civil Rights protests in this way was often taken simply as Clay making a political point. But it was more than this. He meant exactly what he said. He did not want to get hurt. Not only are his references to such violence, and his desire to avoid it, far too frequent to be ignored, but when they are considered in the wider context of Clay's childhood, and his life after the early sixties, they display Clay's prereflective response to his continual portrayal as the Other. Marqusee (1999: 60) hints at this when he claims that Clay's choice to join the Nation of Islam 'obviated other choices – between personal integrity and social participation, between acceptance of and opposition to racism – and that was no small part of its appeal.' It was not that Clay wanted to avoid these issues entirely; quite the opposite, he wanted to tackle them, but he did not want to come to any harm in the process. Also, he did not want to have to engage with these problems intellectually to the degree that he had to 'find' his position. Membership of an organisation such as the Nation of Islam, or any other religious group or political party cannot prevent the individual having to think through their position in detail. It may do so for some time, but for many individuals, the development of their situation over time leads to them having to engage with the issues, rather than adopting a pre-packaged position in its entirety. This

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is what happened to Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. Ultimately, although rather more slowly, this is what happened to Muhammad Ali.

Membership of the Nation of Islam can be understood as people in a situation, facing a practico-inert which they wished to change. Their praxis is an attempt to alter their situation. It was the extremes of the situation which produced the extremes of the response, but the response was not solely the direct result of praxis. There was a deviation of the praxis of individuals such a Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali as a result of their membership of the Nation of Islam. The nature of the Nation as an institution led by a sovereign meant that the praxis of Elijah Muhammad, which was often directed at his own interests, conflicted with the pledge of the group. The power and significance of Elijah Muhammad within the Nation was such that his praxis was the praxis of the Nation. Malcolm X and his supporters became something of a subgroup within the Nation. Both Malcolm and Elijah Muhammad advocated different approaches to the same problems.[247] This contradiction necessitated the liquidation of the subgroup led by Malcolm X. The result of this conflict, however, was a deviation of both the praxis of Malcolm and the praxis of the Nation. The deviation of the praxis of the Nation, and the reconfiguration of the Nation after Malcolm X was expelled, meant that there was effectively a new Nation of Islam after this conflict was resolved. The position and nature of the Nation was altered as a result of the dispute between Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X.

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[247] See the discussion of conflict between subgroups in chapter four.

The fact that the pronouncements of Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X were broadcast to the world, and represented in various ways by the media, also led to a deviation of their praxis. The responses to their declarations would often be different from those that they had intended. This would necessitate modification of their position in an attempt to re-orientate the understanding of their stance. There are a number of reasons for such varied responses. There is the simple misrepresentation by the media (either deliberately or accidentally), or accurate representation to an audience that are unsympathetic, such as i. racist whites, ii. those involved with the Civil Rights movement, iii. people in different parts of the world, who read the speeches of Malcolm X through their own experiences, altering their meaning. Media coverage of one's pronouncements leads to the gradual deviation of one's praxis.

In addition, the praxis of the Nation of Islam was deviated by various events. We have already noted the influence of Malcolm X, but by allowing Cassius Clay to become a member, the Nation altered its position in the pursuit of wider recognition and support. Initially Elijah Muhammad did not want to be associated with a boxer, but Clay's success was such that he reconsidered. This had an impact on the nature of the Nation, not least because Cassius Clay was to become such a prominent figure within the organisation. Clay also had a particular resonance in respect of the Vietnam War. The war shifted the political terrain on which the Nation had been acting and, ultimately, led to modification of the Nation itself.

5.3.2 Political Praxis and the Creation of a Practico-inert

The domestic political events in the United States during the 1960s are important because praxis at this time creates the practico-inert that Ali is responding to by the time of the 'Rumble in the Jungle.' For this reason we will look at the political climate in which Ali's own praxis was conducted during the sixties. This will allow us to identify a praxis-process, or the actions and deviations which created Ali's situation by the time he fought Foreman. We will begin by looking at events surrounding the Civil Rights movement, before looking at the impact of Ali's refusal of the draft.

In April 1962 there was a police invasion of Mosque No. 27 in Los Angeles. A twenty-eight year old member of the Nation of Islam, named Ronald X Stokes was shot through the heart from a distance of eight feet despite having been unarmed and having his arms raised at the time. On the same day, six other Muslims were shot and there were a series of arrests and beatings of Muslims. The murder of Stokes was ruled justifiable homicide the following month. Malcolm X was co-ordinating the Nation's response, but Elijah Muhammad was unhappy with Malcolm's antagonistic approach, and ordered him to limit his comments on the issue. The official Nation of Islam line severely limited Malcolm's campaign. He was already having doubts about the passive approach of the Nation; at least the Civil Rights protestors were active.

In June 1962 over one hundred citizens of Atlanta were killed in a European plane crash. Malcolm X claimed that this was divine retribution for the killings of Muslims two

months earlier. He also said that he hoped that a plane falls from the sky every day. Splits were beginning to form within the Nation of Islam. At the heart of this internal division was Malcolm X and his concerns over the passive approach that the Nation was adopting in the face of murder and discrimination.

In 1963 there were around one thousand desegregation protests in the South, leading to fifteen thousand arrests. Although these protests occurred in approximately one hundred cities, Birmingham, Alabama proved to be the epicentre of action against segregation. In April 1963 the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) staged a series of sit-ins, vigils and marches. The arrest of Martin Luther King prompted his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail.* May 2 saw six thousand black children march through Birmingham. As the march was relayed on national television, police used firehoses, dogs and clubs on the children. Nine hundred and fifty-nine of those children were jailed. The public nature of this spectacle forced Kennedy to act. Desegregation in Birmingham was effectively enforced by the federal government on 10th May 1963. In all of this Cassius Clay and Malcolm X did nothing.

The success in Birmingham was followed by a violent backlash, which included the assassination of Medgar Evers, which, despite Bob Dylan's claims, was not perpetrated by a 'pawn in their game.' The day after Medgar Evers death, Kennedy announced the creation of a Civil Rights Bill. The reasons for this are complex, and have comparatively little to do with the death of Medgar Evers, or the imprisonment and beating of hundreds of school children. Marqusee (1999) suggests that, while Kennedy was desperate to

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preserve Democrat support in the South (he had, after all, beaten Richard Nixon in the 1960 Presidential Election by the narrowest of margins), he was swayed by the need to compete with the Soviet Union for the support of newly independent nations in Africa and Asia. The Cuban Missile Crisis had, in the end, given Kennedy something of an upper hand in the Cold War. He could not afford to jeopardise that advantage by handing Khruschev such a powerful propaganda tool.

The announcement of a Civil Rights Bill was, on the face of it, progress, but there was no guarantee that the Bill would progress quickly. It was this problem which led to the march on Washington by 250,000 people on 28th August 1963. The march was a triumph for Martin Luther King. It was the occasion for his *I Have a Dream* speech,[248] and it played a significant role in him being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. The Civil Rights legislation which the Kennedy administration had initiated finally came into effect under Lyndon Johnson in 1964 and 1965. Malcolm X, however, met with members of the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC)[249], and declared the proceedings a 'farce.'

The backlash continued. On 15th September 1963 a Baptist church in Birmingham was blown up. Four girls were killed, and riots followed. Cassius Clay didn't want to get involved. All he could say was 'I ain't no Christian. I can't be when I see all the coloured people fighting for forced integration get blowed up. They get hit by stones and chewed

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[248] For the text of this speech see MacArthur, B. (ed) (1996) *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 487-491.
[249] Pronounced 'snick.'

by dogs and they blow up a Negro church and don't find the killers' (Marqusee 1999: 69). Malcolm X didn't really get involved either, but he was unhappy about this. Elijah Muhammad was preventing him from reacting to the events in the South, but gradually Malcolm realised that he must act. He began making comments which alarmed Elijah Muhammad. This culminated in his claim, following the assassination of Kennedy on November 22, that as Kennedy had been responsible for the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo and Diem in Vietnam, along with a host of other political crimes in Africa and Asia, his assassination was a case of 'chickens coming home to roost.' This, he continued, was something which made him glad. He was immediately suspended from the Nation of Islam by Elijah Muhammad, who had warned that the Nation should not attempt to swim against the tide of national grief. Doing so, he felt, would condemn the Nation to even greater national hatred than it was already subject to. What he did not make clear was that his business interests would be severely hit by such an outcome. It was during this period that Malcolm X began to receive death threats, and Cassius Clay was revealed as a member of the Nation of Islam.

As already noted, Ali's engagement with the issue of race in America during the height of the Civil Rights protests was only ever verbal. He avoided physical involvement at all costs, and praxis such as the split with Malcolm X reflected this desire to avoid deeper involvement. Ali faced a different practico-inert from many of the protestors involved in the Civil Rights movement, including the children demonstrating over segregation of schools. Ali was extremely wealthy, and a member of an organisation which looked after him. He had been profoundly affected by segregation but, as a member of the Nation of

Islam, he subscribed to a doctrine of segregation himself. Ali's situation exerted no necessity to act, but the objective spirit of the time was such that protest was not only acceptable within Ali's milieu, but it was also glorified. It was in this climate that Ali began what would have been, for a less prominent figure, a moderate degree of action. The real affront to white sensibilities was in the doctrine to which Ali subscribed, rather than in the action of members of the Nation of Islam. The action which was threatening at this time, was that of the protestors. Curiously, the actions of school children were more threatening than those of the heavyweight champion of the world.

5.3.3 'I Ain't Got No Quarrel ...'

When Ali failed his Selective Service exam for the second time he was classified 1-Y, ineligible for service. Marqusee (1999: 88) notes that Ali had 'always had difficulty with the written word.' For once, that difficulty was serving him well.

Early in 1966 there was a change in the passing percentile of the intelligence test for the U.S. army from 30 to 15. This made Ali eligible for service. On February 14 Ali's lawyer asked the Louisville draft board for either postponement of reclassification, or deferral. The request was denied three days later. Marqusee (1999: 162) describes Ali's reaction as one of 'bafflement.' The press were hounding Ali for a reaction and he 'blurted out' the 'off-the-cuff remark' 'man, I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong'. This remark had a resonance among the anti-war movement, which Ali had not intended. There is a kind of counterfinality here. Ali's intention (an off-the-cuff, somewhat self-pitying remark) is

deviated by the fact that it was captured and made public, thus becoming part of the practico-inert, allowing an antipraxis (simply the act of making it public, never mind the media and interest group manipulation which followed) to alter its meaning.

Marqusee (1999) outlines the view that this reaction was an accident, and that there is nothing heroic about it: Ali's motives were selfish. This argument is supported by the fact that Ali didn't know where Vietnam was, and he persistently referred to the people as 'Vietmanese'. Marqusee refers to Gerald Early's argument that Ali 'hadn't a single idea in his head' and relied on a 'shallow simplistic sincerity that protected him'.[250] Marqusee (1999: 163) claims, however, that 'the closer one looks at Ali's actions and reactions in 1966 and 1967 and their historical context, the clearer it becomes that this man had many ideas in his head, and that it was his choice to act on them, come what may'. This may also be too simple. The initial remark about having no quarrel with the Vietcong was an accident. The initial impact was a counterfinality. Ali was not, as Early suggests, simply a dupe, unthinkingly carried along and manipulated by others, having accidentally made the initial remark. Nor did he, as Marqusee suggests, formulate the whole situation by acting on his ideas. Rather, he made the comment probably out of desperation and self-pity, and no-doubt a fair amount of understandable fear. The result of the initial comment was out of his control (antipraxis). This formed a new facticity or practico-inert, in which Ali found himself embroiled in protest over the war (as a result of a single comment, and his past as a vocal critic of white America). It was at this point that he made choices in light of a past, a present, and aiming towards a goal. He found himself in a present in

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[250] See Marqusee (1999) p. 163

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which he was already vilified, possibly going to be sent to die in Vietnam[251], which

would have conveniently removed a problem for many in power (boxing, FBI, CIA and

the U.S. government). That was his past and present. The future he aimed at was to avoid

going to Vietnam. Conveniently he found himself in a situation, because of the cultural

and political climate, where he could appear to have political and religious objections to

the war, and which he may have actually had. Because of his recent history, he had little

in the way of reputation to lose, and a ban from boxing, fines, and even prison are

preferable to an ignominious death in Vietnam at the age of twenty-four. One might ask if

there is bad faith in Ali convincing himself that he had a cause, when he was really

concerned for himself.

There are two related issues which arise here. First, there is the issue of previous

responses to war among black Americans, and related to this is the response to the war in

Vietnam. We will begin with the previous responses to war. Marqusee (1999: 167) points

out that Vietnam was the first war where black Americans were largely opposed to

military action. Prior to Vietnam, they had served willingly, often in the hope that they

would then be regarded as full, equal citizens as a result of their actions during the war.

This never happened. W. E. B. Du Bois had urged blacks to accept the First World War

as their war. In 1918, in remarks which he later regretted, he wrote 'this is our country:

We have worked for it, we have suffered for it, we have fought for it ... then this is our

war' (Marqusee 1999:167). The 'Red Summer' lynchings (of 1919) of seventy blacks, ten

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[251] The likelihood of being killed in Vietnam if you were a black soldier was far higher than if you were white. In 1966 22 per cent of U.S. casualties in Vietnam were black, yet blacks comprised only 11per cent of the population. Blacks were also far more likely to be drafted than whites. See Marqusee (1999) p. 170.

of them uniformed soldiers, showed this to be an unwise approach to the war. Big Bill Broonzy felt a similar sense of betrayal after fighting in the First World War. He later wrote 'When Will I Get to be Called a Man?', and 'Black, Brown and White'. These are rare examples of committed social comment in country blues.

In 'When Will I Get to be Called a Man?' Broonzy sings:

'When I was born in this world, this is what happened to me:

I was never called a man and now I'm fifty-three

I wonder when will I be called a man

Or do I have to wait 'till I get ninety-three?

When Uncle Sam called me I knew I would be called the real McCoy

But when I got in the army they called me soldier boy ...

... When I got back from overseas, that night we had a ball

I met the boss the next day, he told me 'Boy get you some overall'

I wonder when will I be called a man

Or do I have to wait 'till I get ninety-three? (Bruynoghe 1992: 70)

There was a verse of 'Black, Brown and White' which was not recorded, but was often added by Broonzy when he sang the song live:

I helped build the country

And I fought for it too

Now I guess you can see

What a black man has to do

If you's white, you's alright

If you's brown, stick around

But if your black

Mmm, Mmm brother, git back, git back, git back (Bruynoghe 1992: 82)

Broonzy wrote 'Black, Brown and White' in 1945, and tried to convince all the major record companies in the United States to record it, without success because they objected to the lyrics. Broonzy finally managed to record the song in France in 1951. The song was unpopular among black Americans. Broonzy felt that 'the reason why the Negroes don't like the song *Black, Brown and White* is because they don't want to be a Negro and they try not to look like one' (Bruynoghe 1992: 88).

If we turn our attention specifically to the war in Vietnam, we should note that there was something of a tradition of avoiding the draft within the Nation of Islam. Elijah Muhammad went to jail, as did his son. Malcolm X feigned psychiatric instability. Many Civil Rights protestors asserted that there was a strong link between, on the one hand, the issues of Civil Rights and race, and the anti-war movement on the other. Martin Luther King was careful at this stage not to advocate draft dodging, but SNCC (including

Stokely Carmichael) were opposed to the war. Carmichael declared 'to hell with this country' (Marqusee 1999: 173). The anti-war movement was comparatively small in 1966 when Ali refused the draft. Public opinion had not yet swung away from military action, and no members of the Democratic Party had yet raised objections to the war. The media had not yet questioned the action in Vietnam, and responses to anti-war sentiment were vigorous and often vitriolic. In asserting himself as part of the anti-war movement, Ali found himself allied to a sixties counter-culture that gained its unity not from a univocal ideology, but from that to which it was opposed. A myriad of diverse lifestyles and worldviews were homogenised as much by the responses that they drew as from their need to unify in the face of a common enemy. The 'Masters of War', as Bob Dylan called them, were also responsible for racism, poverty, gender inequality, homophobia, 'tricontinental'[252] debt and ideological xenophobia. This homogenisation works both ways. Jimmy Cannon claimed Ali was 'part of the Beatle movement. He fits in with the famous singers no one can hear and the punks riding motorcycles with iron crosses pinned to their leather jackets and Batman and the boys with their long dirty hair and the girls with the unwashed look and the college kids dancing naked at secret proms held in apartments and the revolt of students who get a check from dad every first of the month and the painters who copy the labels off soup cans and the surf bums who refuse to work and the whole pampered style-making cult of the bored young' (Hauser 1997: 145-46). In reality, Ali didn't 'fit in' with any of this, but he and everyone else described by Cannon

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[252] The term 'tricontinental' has been adopted here following Young (2001). He uses the term in preference to 'Third World' to refer to the unified opposition to colonialism and imperialism articulated at the first *Conference of the Organisation of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America* in Havana in 1966. This was known as the 'Tricontinental.' In the strict sense, the term refers to the alliance and any unified strategy to combat colonialism and imperialism among African, Asian and Latin American nations, but its meaning has been extended here to a more appropriate substitution for the term 'Third World.'

were unified by, and in the face of, a threat from of a common enemy. In this sense, these groups became a group-in-fusion at certain times. They did not exist as an organised group, but formed into a temporary cohesive force in the face of a threat on specific occasions. A similar thing was happening across Europe. This led not only to the events in Paris during May of 1968, but also to riots in many other cities throughout the summer of that year.

There is a counterfinality to the praxis of the boxing establishment in relation to Ali's fights at this time. They banned his fights in America, which simply forced him to fight abroad. As Marqusee (1999: 197) observes 'the authorities inadvertently assisted the complex process that was to turn Ali into a genuine global champion and thereby provide him with a genuine political leverage deeply resented by the U.S. establishment.' The decision to ban Ali's fights in America was an attempt to weaken him, but it actually strengthened his position. Marqusee (1999: 204-05) explores this theme of a global constituency further when he claims that:

'It is too often forgotten that the American sixties were merely a single facet of a global phenomenon. Ali was one of those who acted as a transmitter between struggles in America and struggles outside. Through his media appearances in every corner of the planet, Ali played a major role in stimulating the worldwide circulation of ideas and images that lies at the heart of the sixties. He became part of a number of overlapping global conversations and movements, linking sports fans, the Black Atlantic, the Third World and the international opposition to

America's war in Vietnam. Just as the anti-colonial movement inspired the American black freedom struggle, so that struggle inspired others in Africa, Asia and Europe. Television carried scenes not just of carnage from Vietnam, but also of street demonstrations and battles with authority in Paris, Northern Ireland, Prague, Mexico and Japan. Through this global chain reaction the Black American freedom movement fed and was in turn nourished by events elsewhere.'

Marqusee makes the mistake of referring to a 'global chain reaction'. There is no chain reaction. Rather, individual praxis encounters a different practico-inert as a result of praxis elsewhere. Conditions change. The situation of protestors in London is changed by events in Paris, but there is nothing inevitable about events in London. Protests in London are responding to a different practico-inert than those in Paris. The political and economic climate in Britain and France were different from each other in 1968, and the two nations have distinctly different histories which, among other things, contribute to different views of protest. For example, the French had a successful popular revolution, while the English simply had a short-lived revolt led by Cromwell. Occupation of France during World War II gave the French a very different relationship to the notion of freedom when compared to that in England. Also, the role of intellectuals in French society as a whole, but specifically in politics, is much more influential than it is in England. This is one of the reasons why there is a greater tradition of public support for, and tolerance of, political protest in France. We must not organicise 'the French' or 'the English' but we must recognise that individuals living in these two societies encounter a very different practico-inert from each other. The notion of pan-Africanism fails to recognise the

difference in practico-inert between societies. Being a black Briton is very different from being a black American, which is different from being a black African from a former French colony, which is different from other African colonies. There may be some perception of universality of struggle among protestors, bit it is only ever partial. They are always prereflectively aware of the specific situation they encounter. The crux of Marqusee's (1999: 205) thesis is that 'the key to Ali's story and to the dynamic of the sixties is this meeting and mingling of global currents. Unfortunately, in the historiography of the American sixties, American exceptionalism has prevailed, and as a result the causes, content and consequences of the social movements of the era have been misrepresented. Once liberated from its parochial prison, the sixties seems a lot less about "permissiveness" or "self-indulgence" and a lot more about the growth of a global consciousness from below. For people all over the world, Ali embodied that consciousness. And he in turn was profoundly shaped by his growing awareness of the representative role in which he had been cast.' This is an oversimplification. Marqusee polarises the individual (permissiveness and self-indulgence) and the collective (global consciousness from below). He ignores the dialectical link between the two. There is a danger of organicising the global consciousness, and dismissing the particularising of the general by individual praxis, which is at the heart of Sartre's notion of incarnation. Marqusee overplays Ali's sense of responsibility to a wider constituency, but he observes some key aspects of the way that Ali developed a global constituency. Many of the non-Americans who were involved in the anti-war movement employed 'the weapons of Americanism' (Marqusee 1999: 206). They loved American popular culture; rock and roll, John Ford movies, blue jeans, jazz, blues, R&B, Hollywood, Ginsberg, Kerouac,

Bob Dylan and Ali, yet they hated U.S. government policy. Ali was able to oppose the policy of his government from within the framework of American popular culture. This is one of the reasons why he was so popular outside America. This feature also contributed to the popularity of Dylan, Marlon Brando, and a host of literary figures such as Ginsberg, Kerouac, Burroughs and Salinger.

There are moments of clarity in an otherwise confused account of Ali by Marqusee (1999). One such moment of clarity is his claim that 'for years the government strove vainly to demarcate the "religious" from the "racial" and "political" in Ali's resistance to the draft. And Ali himself rarely succeeded in convincing anyone (other than himself) that his refusal to serve in the military was entirely and exclusively religious. The difficulties in disentangling Ali's motives ought to give pause to those who would, in retrospect, segregate the elements that form the composite moment of the sixties, in an effort to reclaim some and renounce others. Ali's journey through the decade illustrates the inter-relationship of the early and late sixties, of self-expression and collective action, the cultural and the political, the margins and the mainstream, personal identity and global solidarity. The only interpretations of the sixties that can illuminate the period, and provide guides for the future, are those which can account for these inter-relationships, and for Muhammad Ali' (Marqusee 1999: 252-53). What Marqusee fails to do, however, is take his own advice. He does not offer an account of Ali which could be regarded as synthetic. It is merely a collection of points from different levels of signification, with heavy emphasis on the political and the cultural.

Following a visit from Martin Luther King, Ali changed his position by adopting the language of the Civil Rights Movement. This was not a change which was widely recognised. Marqusee (1999) explains this change of position in terms owing more to Marqusee's adoration of Ali than to the reality of Ali's life and the events of the time. He argues that 'both Ali's turn to the Nation and his support for the integration struggle in Louisville had their roots in his personal identification with a larger constituency. It was his abiding sense of responsibility to that constituency that compelled him to re-define again and again the parameters of the role model, to reconstruct who and what he represented, independently of the powers that be, even as he exploited their media to do it' (Marqusee 1999: 214). Marqusee privileges Ali's situation over Ali himself. This turns Marqusee's Ali into a passive reflection of his times. The 'identification with a larger constituency' thesis provides a superficial unity to two short periods of Ali's life but, in achieving this, Marqusee loses the man. Muhammad Ali disappears and is replaced by an empty figure. It is the mythic Ali which has been presented to us through media discourse for decades, and which reached its apogee during the opening ceremony of the 1996 Olympic Games.

Not only did Ali move closer to the Civil Rights movement, but there was a shift in Martin Luther King's position shortly before his death. He came closer to Malcolm X's final position by articulating his support for both Ali and the Anti-war movement. It seemed that, following the polar extremes of the early sixties, a degree of unity was being reached by black leaders. In reality, this had a lot to do with the emergence of the black power movement, and any unity was overshadowed both by the fact that Martin Luther

King made peace with the later thought of Malcolm X after the latter had been killed, and because King himself would soon be assassinated.

On April 28th 1967 Ali reported for induction in the Army. His refusal to answer to the name Clay, making his induction impossible, led to him submitting a request for exemption on the grounds that he was a minister of Islam. He then issued a statement in which he claimed that his decision was a private and individual one. While this is not completely true; his decision was partly the result of his social and historical situation, the degree to which Ali's personal background and his unique mode of engaging with those social and historical circumstances, are largely overlooked. In short, no consideration is given to Ali's prereflective, original choice. The fundamental project, which motivates Ali's praxis is ignored, in favour of an account in which his praxis is dissolved in the structural constraints of his situation.

Ali's refusal to be inducted in the army led to him being stripped of his title and his boxing license. Opinion on this in America appeared mixed, but abroad Ali had much greater support. Ali's lawyers appealed against the low numbers of blacks on the draft boards. The appeal was denied. This was an attempt to politicise the conflict with the government. The various actions of Ali's lawyers reflect his desperation, his indecision, and the fact that his position developed. His initial refusal had personal (self-preserving) motivation, but developed a great amount of ideological baggage as the war continued, which helps us to explain not the Ali who refused the draft, but the Ali who returned to boxing after his ban.

5.3.4 Exile and a Wider Constituency.

Ali began the 'career' he would pursue during his ban, speech making at universities, only one week after refusing induction. The talks which Ali gave on the college lecture circuit were largely about black separatism and the need for a black homeland. On May 8th 1967 he was released on $5000 bail and forbidden from leaving the United States. On June 19th 1967 he was found guilty. The judge imposed a $10,000 fine and Ali was sentenced to five years in prison. He was released on bail pending appeal and his passport was confiscated. He appealed against the confiscation of his passport, but the appeal was denied. At this point Ali was facing jail, and one might expect that he would have no qualms about joining a demonstration. This was not the case. He spoke at an anti-war demonstration in Los Angeles, but did not march. Again, his motivation was the avoidance of violence. Ronald Reagan sent the LAPD to forcibly break-up a peaceful sit-in protest, but by then Ali had left.

Such events were becoming much more widespread. There were increases in conscientious objection applications, greater anti-war protest at home, and an increasing number of protests against the draft. Ali became a role model for such protestors, making 'dissent visible, audible and attractive' (Marqusee 1999: 234). There was, however, a distinct lack of anti-war sentiment being expressed in pop music at this time. Most songs that were political were against the draft. But there were very few songs which were really political. There was a preponderance of material on the 'love and peace' theme.

One feels that the obvious question this raises is whether musicians were scared to get involved and risk being called up themselves.

During his ban, the white promoters and lawyers left Ali. The Nation of Islam, despite keeping control of his affairs, did so from a distance. The Nation gave no financial, and very little political backing while Ali was unable to fight. Ali felt vindicated in his decision not to get involved in sit-ins or marches, following the events in Los Angeles. He continued to avoid such events throughout the period of his ban. At this time Ali married for the second time, to a seventeen year old (Belinda Boyd) raised in the Nation of Islam.[253] They had four children (including twins) in four years.

By 1968 anti-war protests were continuing to increase and were particularly focused around universities. At the Olympic Games in Mexico City, Tommie Smith and John Carlos reasserted the issue of Civil Rights, and highlighted the emergence of the Black Panthers and the Black Power Movement. Smith explained the symbolism of the protest: 'I wore a black right-hand glove and Carlos wore the left-hand glove of the same pair. My raised right hand stood for the power in black America. Carlos's raised left hand stood for the unity of black America. Together they formed an arch of unity and power. The black scarf around my neck stood for black pride. The black socks with no shoes stood for black poverty in racist America. The totality of our effort was the regaining of black dignity' (Marqusee 1999: 244). While black protest was the track and field headline of these games, George Foreman was to be found waving the Stars and Stripes after

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[253] Ali is now married to his fourth wife, Lonnie.

winning a gold medal. This was to make it even easier for Ali to portray Foreman in the same light as he did most of his other opponents, six years later when they met in Kinshasa. Foreman was an Uncle Tom, the white man's puppet, while Ali was the representative of black struggle throughout the world. The implication was that Ali was African, and that it was black men like Foreman who were partly responsible for the plight of black Africa by perpetuating racist white domination in America. In Mexico City, Foreman's praxis created a practico-inert that he would have to work hard to overcome in Kinshasa. Ultimately, he would be unsuccessful in his attempts. Ali was undoubtedly the Zairois favourite.

We may have identified signs of an original choice in the praxis of Ali, but he cannot be reduced to the desire to act in the manner which will cause least physical harm. We must remember that Ali *lived* unique historical situations: he threw himself through situations and 'lived them in the unity of human reality.'[254] It is this 'projection of human reality through a succession of situations'[255], and the concomitant assumption and transcendence of those situations which we must understand if we are to grasp the free historialisation of Ali in the context of specific situations. Ali lived the period of great social unrest over the issue of Civil Rights in the Unites States from the unique perspective of his own fundamental project, and his unique situation within those events. The same is true of the overlapping period of protest at the events in Vietnam. Throughout the sixties, Ali's situation developed as he found himself responding to a practico-inert which was created by his praxis, and the praxis of those who were also living these situations. The position

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[254] *The War Diaries* p. 301

in which he finds himself, and the practico-inert to which he had to respond at any given time was the product of praxis-process. Praxis and the deviation of that praxis by both the action of matter, and the anti-labour endemic to the formation of pledged groups, organised groups and institutions, produced the situations which Ali's own praxis was aimed at transcending. This transcendence was conceived, however, in light of a fundamental project, which helped shape the form of his praxis along with continuing deviations and changes in the practico-inert which he encountered.

Ali found himself encountering a situation in which segregation was a significant feature of his life, and the issues surrounding Civil Rights were dominating the domestic political agenda. Ali found himself compelled to act, but as a result of a conditioning process begun in the protohistory of his early childhood, he adopted the least dangerous approach to action. The Nation of Islam provided Ali with the safe haven from which to 'act', while also filling an adolescent void in relation to identity and understanding of both his situation and himself. Again, his protohistory played an important role in his choice of the Nation of Islam. The predisposition to religion gained from his relationship with his mother assisted the appeal of the 'complete' political, religious and regimental doctrine of the Nation of Islam.

The choice of the Nation altered the practico-inert which Ali encountered significantly. His praxis was now mediated by the group, and he was now in direct opposition with white society and the Civil Rights movement. The situation made the refusal of the draft

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[255] *The War Diaries* p. 301

easier than it would otherwise have been. The transcendence of the situation in which he found himself in his late teens, by the choice of the Nation moved him closer to a position that would facilitate support from white youth, alienated from their own social milieu by the actions of their government in Vietnam, and the more personal issue of the draft. Ali's praxis in choosing the Nation was not enough on its own to facilitate such unity with white youth, but the wider political praxis of the United States Government, and the responses of young white Americans made such unity possible. The motivation for different groups protesting against the war and the draft varied greatly, and Ali was far from representing a majority, but his profile was such that he formed an important part of the self-understanding of groups-in-fusion as they formed throughout this period.

This would further the process by which, through the deviation of praxis, Ali would ultimately be accommodated into the mainstream of American society, like the majority of those involved in the protests against the war and the draft. This is a complex process, which was far from complete when Ali returned to boxing following his three and a half-year ban.

Praxis-Process and 'The Rumble in the Jungle.'

We have charted a number of totalisations which bring us to the situation faced by

Muhammad Ali prior to his fight against George Foreman in Zaïre. We have seen his

constitution through a prehistory and protohistory, leading to the prereflective choice of a

fundamental project. We have seen this project influence his praxis through periods of social

unrest in the United States over the issues of Civil Rights, the war in Vietnam, and the draft.

Throughout this, Ali's praxis responded to specific forms of otherness and was conducted in

a manner which would bring the least degree of physical harm to himself. Ali would make

controversial declarations, but refused to join marches and sit-ins. Throughout the sixties we

see a form of bad faith developing, as Ali struggles with the issue of commitment. His praxis

is continually deviated by a range of constraining and oppositional conterpraxeis. The period

of Ali's ban from boxing, and the concurrent protests against both the draft and the war in

Vietnam, led to something of a partial accommodation of Ali, if not into the mainstream of

American society, then at least into a large sector of white society.

When Muhammad Ali fought George Foreman in Zaïre, his praxis, and that of others, had

significantly altered the situation in which he found himself. His right to be Muhammad Ali,

continually criticising his own government and American Society, had, to a degree, been

established over the course of the sixties. Ali could go to Africa and spout almost any kind of

rhetoric he wanted. Although he would always be despised in certain circles, Ali had become

an icon of popular culture, and as such, substance was subordinated to style.

Ali encountered a situation in Zaïre which was a very different practico-inert from that which

he had faced in the United States. The choice of Zaïre as a venue was the consequence of

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Don King's financial dealings in his search for backing. It was nothing to do with Ali's pan-Africanism. Such a venue would, however, through the mediation of King and the press, call for Ali to assume a position in relation to Africa. If the fight had been held in France, Ali would not have been expected to display any kind of 'Frenchness'. Yet, largely as a result of his past praxis and his association with the Nation of Islam, the venue for this fight would assume a central role in Ali's unique historialisation of his situation.

6.1 The Role of Zaïre and Pan-African Discourse

The fight was being held in the worst possible location for anyone with a true commitment to pan-Africanism. Zaïre was formerly known as the Congo, and before that, the Belgian Congo.[256] Patrice Lumumba, who was a great influence on Malcolm X, founded the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), and ultimately became the first, and last democratically elected leader of the Congo, following independence from Belgium. His government immediately encountered resistance, from the Western backed Moise Tshombe. Lumumba wanted the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Congo, but he was careful to make it clear, on a visit to New York, that he was not a communist, but a nationalist, and that he would adopt a neutral stance in relation to the Cold War. Sartre has noted Lumumba's ability to tailor his position for his audience, and clearly his comments in New York did nothing to relieve American concern at his election. Lumumba advocated African autonomy; this brought him into conflict with multi-national corporations and the United States government. The Congo was, and still is, the richest country in Africa. It has large deposits of copper, cobalt, manganese, tin, diamonds, gold, zinc and uranium.[257] In addition it is a source of timber and rubber. Western companies and governments were concerned that Lumumba's

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[256] After Mobutu's reign came to an end, the name of Zaïre was changed to Democratic Republic of the Congo.

quest for both economic and political independence, would lead to the end of supplies of minerals and precious metals not only from the Congo, but other areas of Africa. Their fear was that Lumumba's message would spread to the rest of Africa.

Mobutu Sese Seko was Lumumba's defense minister. He had CIA backing when he staged a coup on September 5th 1960.[258] Lumumba was placed under house arrest. He escaped in late November, but was rearrested on December 2nd 1960. As Sartre explains 'the alive and captive Lumumba was the shame and the rage of the entire continent: he was present for everyone as a demand which they could neither fulfil nor remove; *in him*, everyone recognised the power and the ferocity of neocolonial trickery. He therefore had to be dealt with as quickly as possible; imperialism kept its hands clean; it was in the interest of its two main representatives, Kasavubu and the pathetic Mobutu, not to have spilt this blood in front of their people.'[259] Lumumba was therefore handed over to Tshombe, who did the torturing and killing for them.

Lumumba became a martyr. Sartre argues 'the dead Lumumba ceased to be a person and became Africa in its entirety, with its unitary will, the multiplicity of its social and political systems, its divisions, its disagreements, its power and its impotence. He was not, nor could he be, the hero of pan-Africanism: he was its martyr. His story has highlighted for everyone the profound link between independence, unity and the struggle against the multi-national corporations.'[260] Malcolm X made sure that Lumumba's influence would be felt, not just in Africa, but worldwide, particularly in the United States.

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[257] The Congo supplied most of the uranium for the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. At this time the country was still a Belgian colony.

[258] Hochschild (2000) suggests that Eisenhower approved Lumumba's assassination. See Hochschild, A. (2000) *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, London: Macmillan.

[259] 'The Political Thought of Patrice Lumumba' in *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* p. 199.

[260] 'The Political Thought of Patrice Lumumba' in *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* p. 200.

It was this background which Ali encountered when he arrived in Zaïre. One might argue that if Ali had had any principles, or Malcolm X had still been alive, Ali would not have been fighting in Zaïre. This is not an isolated example of Ali's actions failing to match his rhetoric. Shortly before the Foreman fight, he had considered a fight in South Africa.

Both the choice of Zaïre as the location for the fight, and the pan-African rhetoric surrounding the fight, contributed to the deviation of Ali's praxis. The whole tone of the fight centred around Zaïre and pan-Africanism, and as a result, Ali's praxis was always coloured by this background. Ali's concern for black Americans now became welded to his concern for Africans. The two things were never previously as closely linked, both in Ali's mind, and in the minds of those who watched his fights. His concern for black Americans greatly outweighed his concern for Africans, but in Zaïre, the two became wrapped into a single issue. This probably led to the specifics of both cases being forgotten. The result of this is the reduction of serious issues to throwaway media slogans. Don King was responsible for much of this. He brought the fight to Zaïre, and he was the initial driving force behind the stereotyped African discourse around the fight. King's role in the deviation of Ali's praxis is significant. He offered Ali five million dollars to fight in a country that his principles, or simply consistency of position, should have kept him away from. Once Ali had chosen to fight in Zaïre, he was condemned to be part of the superficial spectacle that King was building with the help of the media. King was motivated by building a career for himself. He had only been out of prison for a very short time, and this fight was his chance to make enormous sums of money and finally build a career that would be legal. Ali, however, had spent ten years taking a political and religious stand. As we have seen, this was not as selfless as it appeared, but he was nonetheless, associated with serious issues and a commitment to certain causes. The fight in Zaïre would ultimately trivialise Ali's commitment and render

much of what he said during the time he was in Zaïre, hollow rhetoric. The harder Ali tried to make serious comment on the situation of black peoples throughout the world, the more he seemed to be part of the circus that was going on around him, and which he was an integral and essential part of. Mobutu, and the nation he had built also led to a deviation of Ali's praxis. He became, unintentionally, a sponsor of Mobutu's regime. Ali was a large part of a three-month international advertising campaign promoting Zaïre and its leader.

Foreman received a cut above his right eye during a sparring session eight days before the scheduled date for the fight. Ali's response to this news is revealing of his attitude to the pan-African nature of the discourse around the fight. Ali had had enough of Zaïre. Despite the praise he heaped on the country in public, he didn't really like it and he wanted to go back to America. In his desperation to get the fight completed and get back to the United States, Ali proposed a number of bizarre and unrealistic solutions to the problem created by Foreman's cut eye. First, Ali suggested that the fight go ahead, and that Foreman be allowed to wear a head guard. Then he suggested that they replace Foreman with Joe Frazier, and that rather than taking five million dollars each, Frazier would get one million and Ali three million. His next suggestion was to move the whole fight back to the United States. He argued 'they've seen us over here in Africa. It would be easier to fight in the United States, especially for George' (Hauser 1997: 270). Ali was only concerned that they had played the part that they came to Africa to play. The hollow pan-African rhetoric had been committed to tape, and reported worldwide. He had done his job and now he wanted to go home. Black people may be treated like second class citizens in the United States but, it was Ali's home, and no matter how much phoney 'African-ness' he attempted to generate, he wasn't an African, and he didn't like living in Africa. Staging the fight in Zaïre was not really that important to Ali. It

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was not his idea to hold the fight there, and while he would play the part required of him for a while, there was a limit to his patience.

Marqusee (1999: 271) describes some footage omitted from *When We Were Kings*. He laments its omission, claiming that it 'reveals that at this moment of ultimate trial, the consummate test of his career, Ali remembered the teachings of his dead friend, Malcolm X. "I'm fighting for God and my people," he said. "I'm not fighting for fame or money, I'm not fighting for me. I'm fighting for the black people on welfare, the black people who have no future, black people who are wineheads and dope addicts. I am a politician for Allah."' Ali was fighting for five million dollars, and he admitted that, in some footage which did make its way into the film. Ali admitted that the fight was in Africa because they had offered ten million dollars, five million each for him and Foreman. Don King had persuaded each fighter to sign a contract for five million dollars. Foreman signed first, then King pursued Ali. That meant that King controlled both fighters,[261] but he did not have ten million dollars. He proposed a deal with Mobutu, who provided the money as a propaganda investment to raise the profile of Zaïre, and himself. This, allied to Ali's reactions when told of the cut to Foreman's eye, makes it quite clear that Marqusee's interpretation of Ali's motives is misleading. There is a considerable amount of bad faith in Ali's approach to the fight, and to much of his career prior to the fight. Ultimately, he is concerned with himself and his own situation. The bad faith occurs in his self-deception in relation to his motives and commitment. Much of the time, he manages to convince himself that he is committed to pan-Africanism and black unity. In a sense he is, because he cares about such issues to a degree. But Ali could never be a martyr. There is a considerable difference between concern and commitment. It is in the confusion of the two that Ali's bad faith emerges. He convinces

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[261] In private Ali and Kind often fought, but in public they praised each other continually.

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himself that he *is* African, and that he *is* a great fighter for black unity. He sees himself as a thing In-itself. Ali claimed 'Yeah, Africa's my home. Damn America and what America thinks. Yeah, I live in America, but Africa's the home of the black man. And I was a slave four hundred years ago, and I'm going back home to fight among my brothers.'[262] The truth was, America was his home, and, after a very short time in Zaïre, he wanted to go back home. In the black unity narrative of the fight such details as Ali's desire to go home, and the fact that the fight was staged with the financial backing of one of Lumumba's murderers, were to be conveniently overlooked.

Ali behaved like he had never been to Africa before. He talked of the wonders of African technological advancement, and marvelled at the fact that the crew of his plane were all black. He contrasted this with the Hollywood stereotype of Africa and Africans. In reality, Ali had been to Africa eleven years earlier. None of the 'wonders' were new to him, and his comments had been much the same during his first visit.

The fight became a huge celebration of Pan-Africanism, at least on the surface. Marqusee (1999: 270) claims that the fight in Zaïre was the first occasion since the Rome Olympics in 1960 that Ali had allowed someone else to 'manipulate and package his symbolic value.' Marqusee seems to have failed to grasp the fact that Ali's 'symbolic value' was manipulated and packaged by other people, despite his own attempts to shape it, throughout his career, and this will continue to happen as long as there is any public interest in Muhammad Ali.

Ali's pronouncements prior to the fight were not much different from usual. There was simply more emphasis on Africa. In addition to this, George Foreman declared 'Africa is the

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[262] *When We Were Kings.*

cradle of civilisation, everybody's home is Africa.'[263] Don King and James Brown[264] (there

for the accompanying music festival) had plenty to say on the issue of black unity. As

Marqusee (1999: 270) points out, 'Kinshasa became a self-consciously African affair, the

acme of what might be called "dashiki-ism" among the black American middle class.' But

the Africa that was being created for this spectacle was not the Africa that the Zairois wanted

presented to the world. It was an Africa that doesn't exist. Unless it is invaded by black

American phonies. The reality was that a large number of Americans, black or otherwise,

descended on Zaïre, used it as a marketing tool; the novelty of the 'Rumble in the Jungle'[265],

took ten million dollars offered by a dictator from a tricontinental nation, and left. Not only

did Mobutu pay much of the ten million dollars that went to the fighters, but in four months a

new runway was built at the airport. In addition, a new four-lane motorway was built (linking

the airport and the hotels), one hundred phone lines were installed (to connect the stadium to

the satellite station) and the stadium itself was completely rebuilt. The whole thing was a

'first world' rip-off. One recurring theme in *When We Were Kings* is the issue of how one

should pronounce Zaïre. 'Is it Zeeare, Zairee, or Zeere?' Not only did the black musicians

and people associated with the fight not know where they were going, or how to pronounce it,

but they didn't care either.

Marqusee (1999: 275) points out that 'the fight in Kinshasa proved a staging-post in a path of

development that would leave Africa at an even greater economic and political disadvantage.

Between 1975 and 1995, debts rose, commodity prices fell, and transfers of wealth from sub-

Saharan Africa to the United States grew larger by the year.' In this sense, one may argue that

Ali's involvement with the fight in Kinshasa may have done more harm to black people than

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[263] *When We Were Kings.*

[264] Marqusee (1999) pp. 269-270 points out that 'James Brown thought King a hustler form the start, but played along with the black rhetoric for the sake of the show.'

[265] This title is itself a patronizing stereotype.

he could possibly have done good in the whole of the rest of his life. Material harm and symbolic atonement do not neutralise each other.

The music festival was unpopular. The great connection between soul, Chicago blues and Africa, which was such a dominant theme, was entirely lost on the Africans. It was only on the final night, after tickets were given away for free, that the festival drew a respectable crowd.

6.2 'The Rumble in the Jungle'

Ali may have had a significant psychological battle to fight because he was clearly scared of Foreman, who had a formidable record of disposing of opponents in less than two rounds, but Foreman had similar problems. He claimed 'Ali had been important to me for a long time. I remember being in junior high school, and walking home with a friend who had a record of Cassius Clay reading poetry. I went over to this friend's house; we listened to the record; and I just about fell in love with Ali. Then, when I was sixteen, working in the Job Corps, people would say to me, "George, you're always picking on someone. Why don't you become a boxer?" And I said okay; I'd become a boxer, because I wanted to be like Muhammad Ali. He talked; he was handsome; he did wonderful things. If you were sixteen years old and wanted to copy somebody, it had to be Ali' (Hauser 1997: 267-68). This is important because it means that throughout his career, Ali's praxis was laying the foundations for the fight with Foreman, because Ali's praxis affected Foreman, even years before they fought in Zaïre. Ali was contributing to the creation of the practico-inert faced by Foreman in Kinshasa. Foreman was facing a childhood hero of his, a man he idolised for many years; the man who was his role model. Adding to Foreman's problems was the fact that he was not well known in Zaïre.

Ali was seen as a hero. Foreman offended the Zairois by bringing a German shepherd with him. Belgian colonialists had used German shepherds as police dogs. Foreman was also paying the price for wrapping himself in the Stars and Stripes after his Olympic victory in 1968. Ali was able to draw on this during the build up to the fight to portray Foreman as an Uncle Tom. This was a common ploy of Ali's, but it had an extra resonance in the discourse surrounding the fight in Kinshasa. This in itself, led Ali further into the pan-African rhetoric surrounding the fight. Ironically, Ali's attacks on Foreman made him more of a central figure in the commodification of Africanism that marked the whole spectacle.

In a truly synthetic, totalising, account we must be able to explain Ali's tactics during the Foreman fight as having a synthetic relationship to the wider account of his life and the social and historical situation of the event. We cannot simply explain tactics as part of the autonomous realm of 'sport.' Tactics are not simply adopted by the objective selection from a factical range of alternatives, in light of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of an opponent. Tactics are part of the practico-inert, but certain tactical approaches assert themselves as preferable to others, not only because of the nature of the opposition, but also because of the mode of victory which specific tactics precipitate. Ali chose two very distinct tactical approaches as much for the manner of victory they would allow him, as the simple fact that they would enable him to win.

Throwing right hand leads and sitting on the ropes are the kind of practices one would expect from novices. The right hand lead involves throwing the right without throwing a jab first. The punch must travel a greater distance and therefore takes longer to reach its target. For this reason, it is easier to see a right hand lead coming. Also, it is a dangerous punch to throw, as a fighter is open to a counter-punch with a left hook. Ali threw eight right hand leads in the

first round. The right hand lead tactic was an insult to Foreman, who would not have had any practice at dealing with it because no sparring partner would dare to adopt such an approach. The rope-a-dope was generally considered a tactical mistake. Both tactics introduce a mastery of boxing, a 're-writing of the book' into Ali's victory. He didn't simply 'slug it out' with Foreman, nor did he adopt his 'usual' tactic of 'dancing.' It was an innovative victory by a 'scientific fighter.' It gave him a larger claim to the title 'The Greatest.'

Ali explained, 'I didn't really plan what happened that night. But when a fighter gets in the ring, he has to adjust according to the conditions he faces. Against George, the ring was slow. Dancing all night, my legs would have got tired. And George was following me too close, cutting off the ring. In the first round, I used more energy staying away from him than he used chasing me' (Hauser 1997: 276). The ring was slow because it had the universal safety flooring called Ensaflor. Ensaflor must be kept in a cool environment; otherwise it becomes soft. A request was made that the ring should not be constructed until the evening of the fight, but this was ignored. This slowed the ring considerably, disadvantaging Ali, because it made it too difficult to dance for fifteen rounds. In addition, the ring was new. New ropes, like new guitar strings, stretch during an initial period of use. Because the ropes had been exposed to the heat and humidity, they had already stretched. As a result, the ropes were loose during the fight. This made it easier for Ali to lean back on the ropes to avoid Foreman's punches. There are unintended consequences here. Constructing the ring early changed the nature of the fight. There is also an antipraxis as a result of the fact that the materials used for the floor of the ring behave, under certain conditions, in a manner that is counter to their usual and desired properties. The combination of the soft floor and the fact that Foreman was cutting off the ring very well, deviated Ali's praxis and necessitated a change of tactics. It did not, however, determine what those tactics would be. The right hand lead tactic was reflectively

chosen in advance of the fight, but the rope-a-dope was only (reflectively) chosen during the fight. There is, however, a prereflective connection between the alternative tactics and the manner of victory, regardless of whether we are referring to the use of the right hand lead or the rope-a-dope.

This is all part of the desire to dissolve otherness. The tactics which Ali adopted would bring him a victory that was so unusual that it would present Ali as truly 'The Greatest'. The desire to completely dominate, and be recognised as by far the best boxer 'in the history of the world', is part of Ali's quest to overcome otherness. For Ali, as a boxer, his tactics probably seemed a more important element of his victory than it did to most spectators because he would understand the historical significance of such tactics. After the fight, Ali said 'I want all boxers to put this in the page of boxing. Staying on the ropes is a beautiful thing with a heavyweight, when you make him shoot his best shots, and you know he's not hittin' you. I would've gave George Foreman two rounds of steady punchin', because after that he was mine.' Foreman seemed to appreciate the significance of the mode of victory. He claimed 'Muhammad amazed me; I'll admit it. He outthought me; he outfought me. That night, he was just the better man in the ring ... and now I'm just proud to be part of the Ali legend. If people mention my name with his from time to time, that's enough for me. That, and I hope Muhammad likes me, because I like him. I like him a lot' (Hauser 1997: 278). It is this kind of appreciation, along with the adulation and iconic status that Ali enjoyed, and still enjoys, which became the closest attainable dissolution of his otherness. It is impossible to avoid otherness, but this was the closest Ali could get to it. As he gathers a constituency, it becomes a salve to his otherness. Instead of being the Other, he is 'their' Muhammad Ali. Everywhere he goes he is treated like a hero, like the 'King of the World.' He experiences it in this way, particularly in Zaïre, and amongst children. The irony is that he is as much the Other as ever.

He is not 'their' Ali, but a mediated icon, a myth. He is more isolated and alienated than he ever was. He is a millionaire who never wanted for basic necessities. How can he have any connection with the poor of Zaïre? He never marched, or joined sit-ins. He excluded himself from the Civil Rights movement and set himself in direct opposition to it by advocating segregation. He was a racist, sexist bigot himself. How can he have any connection with black Americans? He talked of white devils, knew nothing of the war in Vietnam, and would never have been sent to fight in the war anyway, unlike others who resisted the draft. So what does he have in common with draft resisters and anti-war protestors? He never joined their protests either.

It is the mythic Ali that is 'their' Ali. But the real Muhammad Ali only looks like him. Ali's narrative for the fight in Zaïre is one which eradicates his otherness and replaces it with an African unity, with himself at the centre. Marqusee (1999) is correct to point to the global constituency which Ali developed, but fails to stress that the identity construction of people around the world (influenced by Ali) is rooted in fiction and is heavily shaped by the unique situation of those individuals. There may be some general trend, but to organicise Ali's influence into a 'movement' is to misinterpret reality. As Hobsbawm (1997) points out, 'identity history is not enough.'[266] The real Ali is not understood by the various reactions to him by people he never met, but by his response to their reactions. It was, for him, the best resolution to his otherness that he could ever achieve. The insistence on the notion that he was 'The Greatest' was a quest for the absolute, which, though unattainable, mirrored his equally unattainable quest to dissolve his otherness. The whole thing is in bad faith because Ali's otherness is a consequence of his Being as For-itself. He is aiming here, to be In-itself-For-itself, what Sartre referred to as the 'desire to be God.'

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[266] See Hobsbawm (1997) pp. 351-366.

The prereflective desire to be In-itself-For-itself, or a necessary, rather than a contingent being, was outlined by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, and developed as the foundation of Sartre's first attempts to formulate an ethics.[267] Ali's praxis clearly displays signs of the desire to be In-itself-For-itself. His quest for adoration as 'The Greatest', and his construction of a constituency betrays such a prereflective desire. Ali did not develop a constituency by accident. His praxis was directed at such a goal, although deviations over time led to the specific nature of that constituency changing. It is here that we are able to gain a fuller understanding of Ali's original choice. We had argued that he chose to act, but in a manner which avoided the risk of harm to himself. That action is part of the attempt to resolve the otherness which plays a significant role in everyone's life, but was a particularly central feature of Ali's childhood and boxing career. The preoccupation with self-preservation in such action is not really part of the original choice. Rather, it reveals the human aspect of the whole project, and the fact that Ali was motivated more by the desire to conquer otherness than by any apparent commitment that he may have had to various causes. On the ontological level, otherness is a permanent feature of the very Being of the For-itself. We are all, therefore, subject to the objectification of otherness. Ali's life, however, is also marked by a high degree of what we might call 'ontic otherness.' This is the portrayal as the Other as a result of the colour of one's skin, socio-economic class, gender, nationality, or any other concrete facticity which forms the basis of one's isolation. Both forms of otherness are lived in a synthetic unity by the individual, but it is the ontic aspect of otherness which is most likely to form the basis, and motivation, for praxis aimed at the unattainable goal of resolving all otherness.

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[267] See *Notebooks for an Ethics*. Also see de Beauvoir's treatment of this issue in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Anderson (1979) and Anderson (1993), Jeanson (1981), Barnes (1978), Jopling (1992) and Simont (1992).

On a reflective level, Ali thought he was promoting knowledge of self among black Americans, and pan-African unity which would improve conditions for black people throughout the world. He saw himself as a messenger between black America and Africa. On a prereflective level this was part of his construction of a global constituency which would accept him as an absolute, as 'The Greatest', and in doing so, reduce to a minimum, the degree to which Ali could be regarded as the Other. We have already noted the paradox that Ali is, by the pursuit of a global constituency, further isolated, suffering the otherness of the mediated icon.

Through the period of Ali's career there were changes in his reflective understanding of his project. By the time of the Rumble in the Jungle, he was pursuing a global constituency based on pan-African unity. Prior to this, the focus for that unity was the issues of the treatment of black Americans, and the draft. Earlier still, the focus was the issue of race in America. Throughout all of this, the Nation of Islam, and the opposition between Muslim and Christian faiths was an ever-present backdrop. As already noted, Ali is in bad faith. He thinks he *is* a committed catalyst of black unity working for a cause. In reality he is 'a man' (the inscription on Sonny Liston's grave). He has greater commitment to himself. There is also collective bad faith here, because there is a large constituency which sees Ali as the political activist with a committed social conscience. There is the implication of selflessness, and Ali is portrayed as not just 'a man', but as 'a good man.' The foundation for this collective bad faith, in absence of a collective consciousness, is objective spirit.

6.3 Objective Spirit and Deviated Praxis.

Cultural practices form a practico-inert which is shared by a large group of people. The formation of these cultural practices through the praxis of individuals, deviated and transcended in specific ways, forms the basis for collective bad faith. In the case of Ali, the culture which formed the basis for collective bad faith, was a complex synthesis which we have tracked in some detail. Cassius Clay encountered the Nation of Islam at a time in the social history of the United States, when racial oppression was prompting resistance and protest in a number of forms. The Nation of Islam was a product of the popularity of the 'Back to Africa' sentiments of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, who found a larger audience in the United States. The ideology behind the Nation was established in the 1930s, but the social climate necessary for the movement to establish a foothold among American blacks who were willing to voice dissent, took some time to emerge.

The popularity of radical protest contributed greatly to the environment in which Muhammad Ali could develop as a figure of international significance. Also of great importance was the development of the audio-visual popular culture which developed in fifties America, and gradually spread to much of the rest of the world. Cassius Clay discovered the Nation of Islam at a time when a unique combination of influences converged for him. Protest was popular, racial awareness was growing, youth culture had emerged, and the social and political concerns which had prompted protest were being reflected in the folk revival in which Bob Dylan played a key role, if not as its most authentic exponent, then at least as its greatest populariser. Among all of this, Elijah Muhammad was offering a risk free method of being radical packaged in a simplistic (mis)representation of an exotic new (at least for Clay) religion.

As he established himself as a central figure in this cultural milieu, the political developments of that society pulled Ali into another locus for radicalism, the issue of the draft and the politics of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and South-East Asia as a whole. This would widen the attraction of protest for white middle class American youth, and strengthen the links between their 'issues' and those of black Americans. Ali found himself, partly as a direct result of his praxis, and partly as the unintended consequence of that praxis, occupying ground at the very heart of this cross-pollenisation of popular discontent within the United States. This was a development which was being mirrored in many nations around the world, laying a foundation for Ali's quest for a global constituency.

Ali's involvement with the anti-war movement expanded his appeal, not only in America, but throughout much of the world, as a result of the perceived solidarity among discontents of whatever kind during the late sixties. In addition, however, such involvement led to a deviation of Ali's own mission. On the face of it, his cause was growing larger, but at a prereflective level, his potential for an assault on otherness was growing as his constituency also grew. With this came the burden of representation. By the time of the fight in Zaïre, the burden of representation was greater than ever, because there were more people than ever before in some way part of Ali's constituency. The pan-African rhetoric added much to the burden, but it was the way in which the media packaged and disseminated this, with Ali and Don King playing central roles in trying to influence the resulting product, which really shaped the nature of that representation.

The media coverage of Ali objectified him and presented him to a worldwide audience. This both allowed Ali to reach a constituency, and influence their understanding of particular social issues, and placed a burden of expectation on him as he adopted yet another form of

representative role. This role was similar in many ways to the role he had prior to the fight in Zaïre, but now it contained a much greater burden of expectation from Africans. The African rhetoric surrounding the fight was a successful promotional tool, and it helped to widen Ali's constituency, but it did not create a univocal interpretation of Ali's representative role. The media introduced Ali to a worldwide audience. This led to a multiplicity of interpretations and appropriations of him. This is largely the result of the specificity of the historical and social situation of specific members of that global audience. The media offers an interpretation of Ali, but it is not necessarily adopted universally. The constituency which Ali had developed by the time of the fight in Zaïre, contained many different groups, such as black Americans with a background in the Nation of Islam, the Civil Rights movement, the Black Power movement, or no previous record of political involvement. In addition to this, Ali's constituency contained black people from other parts of the world, Muslims, liberal whites, socialists, and those who were simply caught up in the glamour and romance of the spectacle generated by Ali.

The production of an image, and a message for Ali, was not only directed at those who admired him, but was also a response to those who were opposed to the political and religious stance he had adopted during his boxing career. In this sense, racist whites, those of right wing political persuasion, and the conventional middle-American white society from which Ali was so consistently excluded, played a significant role in the formation of the Muhammad Ali who fought George Foreman in Kinshasa. Ali's praxis is deviated by the responses to that praxis. Those responses alter the practico-inert which Ali must interiorise and transcend by his future praxis. For example, when Ali claimed 'I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong', he did not aim to become a focal point of the anti-war movement. This became part of his project as responses to this comment influenced the situation in which he found himself,

leaving him in a different situation, to which he had to respond in some way, even if that response was to remain silent. Those who were opposed to Ali's position were, therefore, a significant influence on how that position developed, as were those who were resisting the draft or opposed to the war in Vietnam. They appropriated Ali's comments in particular ways which suited their aims.

The hexis-idea[268] of racism also deviated Ali's praxis. The fact that his praxis occurred on a background of racism, gave his actions a racial significance, which deepened Ali's own reflective understanding of his praxis as racially motivated. In addition, Ali's praxis is regarded by others as being racially motivated, when in reality this was not always the case. As Ali's career develops, there is a degree to which racism alters Ali's praxis so that it *is* racially motivated.

6.4 The Fight as Totalisation

Ali and Foreman came to the fight containing within them the opponents they had defeated. By the end of the fight, there had been a reconfiguration of the hierarchy within boxing, and boxing itself had been retotalised by the fight. The violence in the fight was functional. Both Ali and Foreman were carrying out their job. The fight was a spectacle which acquired social values. The violence was equated with strength and as a result, it was also equated with good. The violence is, however, the incarnation of fundamental violence. Ali's career as a boxer is the re-exteriorisation of the interiorised scarcity of opportunity and resources available to black Americans in the South during the fifties and sixties. The violence of the Nation of

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[268] Hexis is a stable, or inert condition, and can be regarded as in opposition to praxis. Sartre often erroneously refers to hexis as 'exis.'

Islam is also a re-exteriorisation of such interiorised scarcity. The fight in Kinshasa totalises the violence of Ali's career, but it also totalises the praxis of the Nation of Islam.

The Zairois spectators are complicitous in the making of the fight. Their spectating is praxis, and their support for Ali is a commitment which allies their praxis to that of the Nation of Islam and the Civil Rights protestors in America. The fight becomes a synthetic unity of black African and American praxeis, in their respective struggles for self-determination and equality of opportunity in a milieu of scarcity. The specifics of those struggles are very different, and the fight is a further example of American capitalist domination and manipulation of black people, African or American. The fight is a kind of necessary compromise for Zairois and black Americans. At the concrete level, Ali, Foreman and Don King gain much more from the fight than any of the Zairois, including Mobutu.

Boxing is an exploitative, bourgeois institution that is economically driven and draws its labour force from the exploited and then proceeds to inflict an additional form of exploitation on them. Most boxers are black or Hispanic, and they are also members of the working class. The violence of such fighters can serve revolutionary and class purposes, but only when absorbed in social praxis. Ali's praxis works against the interests of most black Americans, and against the interests of his class. His involvement with the Nation of Islam further works against black Americans and the working class, because it perpetuates a racial division within the working class, and attempts to generate unity among blacks on the basis of religion. The attitude of the Nation of Islam towards the Civil Rights movement also creates division among black Americans. Individual violence is counterproductive, especially when it is part of an orchestrated spectacle driven by a white middle class media, and 'individualist' promoters such as Don King.

In becoming a boxer, Ali pursued the project of escaping his class through the commodification of his violence. In this sense, Ali's praxis further contributed to his otherness because it isolated him from his class. He became socially defined by that isolation. Ali, himself, takes the place of the worked matter which conventionally mediates between human beings. The commodification of his violence means he is worked matter. Ali is also the incarnation of the notion that the solution to the conflict in boxing lies in the fight. The implicit message is that victory in the ring contributes to the solution of the political and social problems with which Ali is concerned. This is, of course, false. Ali has sold his labour (his violence). This means that his violence is not revolutionary, but rather, a source of profit, which is organised by the capitalist to maximise profitability. In the case of the fight in Kinshasa, the capitalists in question were a closed circuit television company called Video Techniques, who were the real promoters of the fight. Don King's only real role was to convince the fighters to sign a contract. This was hardly a difficult task, given that there was ten million dollars on offer. This was considerably more than either fighter could possibly have expected. It was not King's influence on the organisation of the fight which was particularly important, it was his influence on the tone of the fight. He contributed greatly to the pan-African rhetoric which became the focus for the marketing of the event.

This is only a sketch of a progressive-regressive analysis of Ali and the fight in Zaïre, and as such, it is lacking in detail, but it serves our purpose as an illustration of the method when applied to a concrete example. We have seen Ali's praxis, and the various deviations of it, totalised in the single historical event of the fight in Kinshasa. We do not, however, achieve something akin to a structuralist snapshot, which freezes time. We cannot account for the event without realising that there is a certain action of the future. In this case, Ali was already, in his praxis prior to the fight, moving towards the complete accommodation of

himself within the mainstream of American society. There were significant indications of this as early as December 1974, when Ali was the guest of Gerald Ford at the White House. He was also invited to the White House by Jimmy Carter in 1980, but it was the 1996 Olympic Games which gave the clearest indication that there was no longer anything dangerous about Muhammad Ali.

The death of Elijah Muhammad in February 1975 saw the start of a rapid transformation of the Nation of Islam. Wallace Muhammad became the supreme minister of the Nation, and immediately began the process of aligning the Nation with Sunni orthodoxy. This meant a name change, to the World Community of Islam in the West, and a public renouncement of any claim to the divinity of Elijah Muhammad.[269] The contradictions of the spectacle in Atlanta are still striking, however. As an orthodox Muslim, Ali's involvement in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games is not in any way proscribed, but it is ideologically inconsistent with most of his pronouncements since 1964. What we must appreciate is the fact that the deviation of Ali's project that we described over the course of the first thirty years of his life, continued over the next thirty years. Praxis-process continues after a sporting career has ended. This is another indication of the partial nature of our sketch. We have attempted here to understand a detotalised totality, a totalisation which is still in process, and will not end until Ali dies. This does not, however, detract from the value of such an undertaking, especially if it is conducted, as it has been here, to illustrate a method, and the insight gained by a particular theoretical approach.

The progressive-regressive method allows us to understand the fight between Ali and Foreman as part of a praxis-process in which social wholes are not determinants of the event,

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[269] Louis Farrakhan formed a second Nation of Islam based largely on the same doctrine as the original Nation during Elijah Muhammad's lifetime.

but are constituted by individual praxis while also having a deviating influence on that praxis. A Sartrean account of the fight preserves the role of individual action without underestimating the deviating and constraining role of social structures. This approach also preserves the complexity of the event avoiding organicist reductionism. In its simplest form, it matters that *George Foreman* fought *Muhammad Ali* in *Zaïre* (as opposed to someone else). Ali's actions and the way that those actions changed the conditions which he faced created the situation in which the fight took place. While there are other perspectives from which the fight can be viewed, Ali's project unifies those perspectives into a synthetic account as a result of the principle of incarnation. The progressive-regressive method also preserves the temporal spread of praxis. When this is combined with the principle of the primacy of praxis Ali is seen as a true historical agent rather than an actor manipulated by structures or a hidden power network.

Organicist accounts of Ali and the 'Rumble in the Jungle' would reduce the event to generalities such as Ali's symbolic value, class, power or a combination of these or other abstractions. This moves any theorisation as far from the concrete reality of the unique historical event as is possible. It ignores the dialectical interplay between individual historical action and the residues of that action which constrain future action. Not only does the organicist approach give such an abstract account that it fails to grasp the concrete reality of the event, but it also fails to provide a synthetic account. If we abstract various concepts from an account of Ali and the fight there is no way to draw these together into a synthesis. We are left with one conceptual perspective on the event *and* another and so on. But the 'and' does not constitute a synthesis. The fight cannot be explained by reference to Ali's class background *and* his race *and* counter-hegemonic power struggles *and* the symbolic significance of Ali for black Americans and/or black Africans etc. We could continue adding

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conceptual perspectives but at no point do we achieve a synthesis. We only ever produce a very long sum with nothing other than superficial description of the apparent relationships between the various conceptual perspectives.

In preserving the constituting role of Ali's praxis we not only achieve a synthesis but also preserve the key element which allows an account to be given of change, temporality and the relationship between Ali and wider social wholes such as the Nation of Islam. This insight, however, comes at a price. We lose the tidy, generalisable account that is sought by conceptualisation. Sartre's progressive-regressive method is not a magic answer to the problem of developing social theory. The method is nothing *more* than a method. It does not carry conclusions from one investigation to another, other than those which are ontological, epistemological and methodological. This means that it is always necessary to carry out the investigation. There is no shortcut around the analysis because the method itself tells us little about the results of an investigation prior to it being undertaken and completed. The fact that the progressive-regressive method is not a magic answer should not be a surprise, but neither should this be regarded as a negative point. It is unreasonable to expect to find 'the answer' in social theory and what we know of the complexity of the social world is entirely consistent with the conclusion that the best we can achieve is a method which, in itself, tells us very little, but is extremely useful when used to analyse concrete historical events.

Conclusion: Whither a Sartrean Contribution?

This has been an ambitious project. To rethink the critical theorisation of sport is a difficult task, but to do so through work which has lain largely unnoticed since the 1950s in any academic discipline, while being more or less completely ignored in the study of sport is a particularly grand ambition. It is useful to recall exactly what has been done here so that we are better equipped to evaluate the progress made. First, the issue of what hegemonist theorisations of sport (exemplified by Hargreaves and Gruneau) actually claim was dealt with. From here, a number of problems with the hegemonist position were identified. It was argued that hegemonists fail to adequately consider individual praxis. This leads them to provide organicist accounts of social wholes and to rely on a false objectivity. Hegemonist analyses also fail to produce an account of the social world which considers temporality. These factors contribute to the hegemonist difficulty in explaining social change and history. The nature of these problems suggested that the work of Sartre could be useful in an attempt to rethink the critical theorisation of sport.

The work of Sartre was explored in three chapters which loosely followed the three phases of his progressive-regressive method. This began with phenomenological ontology and an analysis of the basic human condition as a being which is condemned to a particular form of freedom and is thrown into a world of similar beings and inert matter. The difficulties that this presents for human relations, particularly unified group formation were explored. In addition, the temporal spread of consciousness was addressed, laying the foundations for the consideration of historical action as

temporalising. Such an approach provided an abstract starting point from which to re-think the critical theorisation of sport. Already, the orientation of the discussion had changed in such a way that the alleged deficiencies in hegemonist thought were being addressed. The problem arose of maintaining a position which preserved the basic gains of the early work of Sartre, while moving to a more concrete level of analysis. No progress would have been made if the problems with hegemonist thought had been resolved by moving to a level of abstraction which could not provide a foundation for concrete studies.

From here, an analysis of the conditions for the possibility of a social world was undertaken (the terrain of regressive analysis), it was found that Sartre was able to deconstruct social wholes using a range of notions which preserve his commitment to dialectical nominalism. This moved the investigation closer to a concrete analysis without losing any of the gains made by the phenomenological ontology of chapter two. In chapter three the thesis that individual praxis is constitutive of social wholes was explored by considering the formation of a range of different ensembles. The constraining features of the inscription of past praxis in matter (the practico-inert) and the role of matter in producing a counterpraxis which deviates individual praxis were also addressed.

Chapter four developed the argument further by considering the totalising nature of praxis through the notion of incarnation. Particular consideration was given to incarnation in relation to the conflictual praxis of a boxing match. An understanding of counterpraxis

was developed by looking at the deviation of group praxis through anti-labour. This material provided an abstract understanding of progressive analysis. At this point the discussion lacked concrete subject matter, and therefore remained at an abstract level. This issue was addressed in chapters five and six, through a sketch of a progressive-regressive study of Muhammad Ali and his fight with George Foreman in Zaïre. Here, the aim was to account for the concrete event as a praxis-process in which praxis assumes and transcends a practico-inert which is formed by previous praxis and the deviations of counterpraxis. Ali was seen acting in light of reflective and prereflective goals and an existing situation. Deviations of this praxis were also identified as Ali totalised (historialised) his epoch as it totalised him. In short, it was attempted to show Ali assuming his situation while choosing his action and responding to the deviations of his praxis and the changes in his situation.

We are left with the issue of the degree to which the work of Sartre provides us with a superior approach to the critical theorisation of sport when compared to the hegemonist position. In many ways, this has already been discussed, but we must be explicit about the conclusions reached if we are to be clear on the progress made.[270]

Comparison of the work of Sartre and that of hegemonist theorists of sport is potentially problematic. While there are a number issues on which both perspectives may adopt (at least broadly) similar views, we must not attempt to produce a synthesis of the two positions. While both would be critical of functionalism, determinism and a lack of

consideration of agency in New Left and structuralist Marxism, Sartre's understanding of agency is very different from that of the hegemonists. Both are critical of static and ahistorical versions of Marxism and both advocate dialectical analysis. But, again, Sartre's conception of the dialectic is very different from that of hegmonist thought. Both positions are anti-essentialist and a Sartrean analysis of sport would accept the hegemonist view that the notion of a univocal 'Theory of Sport' is meaningless. Both aim at the resolution of dualisms and offer a humanist reading of the work of Marx. Finally, Both perspectives appreciate the fact that we are not dominated by non-human forces, and that therefore, culture is very important in any attempt to understand the social world. Yet despite this, we must conclude that there are few, if any, theoretical insights provided by hegemonist theorisation of sport, which are not found in the work of Sartre. More importantly, the work of Sartre provides us with breakthroughs which are impossible for hegemonist thought.

The sketch of an analysis of Muhammad Ali and 'The Rumble in the Jungle' given here, cannot be easily compared to hegemonist analyses of such a topic. It would be simple to provide a concluding assessment of the merits of a Sartrean approach to the theorisation of sport by comparing the accounts of Sartrean and hegemonist theorisations of the same topic. The problem with this, however, is that no hegemonist analysis would look at the individual and the historical event. Hegemonist work would tend to focus on the relations of power within boxing, focussing on the ruling class hegemony in relation to control of the sport. Hegemonist work would be concerned with the role of coercion and consent

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[270] We cannot reflect on where the Sartrean approach leaves the theorisation of sport as a whole, because each theoretical approach will be affected differently. We can only reflect on where the Sartrean approach

(and agency and structure) in achieving 'negotiated' and supposedly fluid power relations, despite the fact that they appear remarkably persistent. The role of the culture of boxing and its place within working class culture would be examined as the context for such negotiation. Muhammad Ali may be used in a hegemonist analysis of boxing to illustrate the potential for counter-hegemonic resistance within forms of popular culture, or even the ultimate failure of such resistance, but the individual praxis of Ali would play no greater role in a hegemonist account of boxing than this. The focus of hegemonist analyses and Sartrean analyses is completely different, yet, despite this, a Sartrean analysis covers much of the same terrain as the hegemonist analysis, while also contributing much more in addition.

The emphasis on individual praxis, which we find in the work of Sartre, allows us to see boxing as a praxis-process much more clearly than a hegemonist account. As noted earlier, the hegemonist approach struggles to render social change intelligible. If a theoretical position has difficulty accounting for change, then it also struggles to demonstrate process. A Sartrean approach does not present given oraganismic totalities, such as class, race and the world of boxing, with which we must then produce a theoretical account. Dialectical nominalism does quite the opposite. It regards such wholes as detotalised totalities, which are constituted by individual praxis and the deviations of that praxis by the inscription of previous praxis in matter, whether that be the individual's own praxis or the praxis of others. In this way Ali is not simply an example of counter-hegemonic resistance, whether it be successful or otherwise, he is a historical agent who lives through situations and is responsible for his praxis. As a result,

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leaves *specific* theorisations of sport. We have chosen to concentrate on the hegemonist position.

he incarnates the social wholes which are the basic currency of hegemonist analysis. It is through him that they have an existence at that *specific* time and in that *specific* place and without him they would be different. Hegemonists deal with observed resultants, but fail to let us see how those resultants are constituted. Even a brief sketch showed that the historical event is much more complicated than the work of hegemonists suggests. The complexities of the childhood of the individual, the personal project, counterfinalities, antipraxis and anti-labour all contribute (driven by individual praxis) to the construction of the situation. The agent responding to a present in light of a past and in projection towards a not yet existing future, who lives a situation and incarnates social wholes in doing so, cannot be removed or displaced from the centre of any social analysis. The work of Sartre allows this point to be respected while avoiding the obvious dangers of such an approach. The analysis could easily deteriorate into biography or a naïve idealism.

This leads us to the question of what specific insights we gain from Sartre. The most important point to stress here is not that certain individual points could not be found in other theoretical traditions, but that a number of important points are linked together in a coherent position in the work of Sartre. It is this unity which is particularly important.

We should return here, to four questions which we raised in chapter one:

1. Can a truly synthetic method be developed from the consideration of individual praxis as constitutive of social wholes and human history?

2. By considering temporality in an account of the social world, can we deepen our understanding of change, social wholes and human action?

3. Can an account of the social world, which begins from the abstract analyses of ontology, reach the level of concrete historical events?

4. Can the issue of freedom and necessity, or agency and structure, be rendered intelligible, or is it a false, and meaningless, dualism?

It would appear that we can give positive responses to each of these.[271] What is particularly important, however, is the fact that in the work of Sartre we find a synthesis of all of these issues. In this case the whole is certainly greater than the sum of its parts. In most social thought we find accounts which are simply conceptualisation (in Sartre's rather negative sense of the term as static and atemporal). This leaves us at a level of generality which prevents us from reaching the concrete. In the work of Sartre, we are presented with a synthetic account which is temporally sensitive. An important point to stress about the four questions above is that each of these questions indicates a problem with hegemonist thought on sport. Hegemonist thought does not provide a synthetic method and struggles to explain change, social wholes and human action for a number of

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[271] In relation to the final question, we can say that Sartre leads us to a solution to the problem of agency and structure, but that the solution shows us that the question of the degree to which agency and structure each contribute to the whole, is something which only arises at the level of abstraction we encounter in regressive analysis. As the regressive analysis is not the terminal point of any study, it is inappropriate to ask such questions of proportion at that point. By the time we reach progressive analysis, the question becomes redundant as we have reconstituted the whole. In this sense, it is a meaningless question.

reasons, not least its neglect of temporality. Hegemonist thought does not consider ontology and as a result hegemonists deprive themselves of an understanding of a hugely important form of human freedom. Finally, hegemonist theorisations of sport regard the issue of agency and structure as central to any account of the social world, yet, they are unable to resolve the issue.

Hegemonists are asking us to accept a theoretical approach to the study of sport which ignores temporality and has little interest in the individual (which immediately condemns them to abstraction). It also provides no satisfactory resolution of the issue of agency and structure, despite asserting the centrality of the problem, and simply cannot provide a synthetic account of any of its objects of study.[272]

Here, an alternative approach has been proposed which is a concrete, synthetic method which has temporality and individual praxis at the heart of its account of the social world. As a result, it offers a solution to the problem of agency and structure which would probably prove unacceptable to most hegemonists, but this is itself revealing of a fundamental point about the whole issue. The important question has always been *how* do freedom and necessity *together* produce social wholes? *Not*, what are the relative contributions of the two abstractions. Flynn (1997: 147) notes that 'dialectical circularity suggests that we live with the ambiguity. So too does the resistance of consciousness and later of praxis to the logic of identity.' The work of Sartre is full of such unsettling conclusions. Flynn's example makes the point very well. What could be more

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[272] These are problems which are not simply confined to hegemonist thought, but to all social theory which has a primary role for analytic reason.

challenging to our understanding of 'the order of things', than Sartre's description of the For-itself as 'being which, in its being, is not what it is and is what it is not.'[273] The notion that the principle of identity only applies to the In-itself is a radical challenge to our understanding of the world.

If we pose a question, but don't like the answer, we can either reject the argument which brought that answer, or, accept that the question was posed in a state of ignorance and it should not, therefore, be surprising that when we reach an answer, we find that the terrain is very different from that which we assumed in posing the question. For example, an explorer who believed the world to be flat may have wished to sail to the edge of the earth to find out what was there. If this explorer was then presented with overwhelming evidence that the earth was spherical, he could not reject this evidence because it did not provide him with the kind of answer he wanted at the outset. In the same way, we cannot reject the account of agency and structure which stresses the ambiguity of the problem *if* it explains why there should be such ambiguity. The same is true of the example of the principle of identity given above. This is exactly what Sartre's dialectical nominalism achieves. It provides an explanation of why there should be ambiguity in relation to agency and structure, just as his phenomenological ontology explained the lack of perfect identity on the part of the For-itself. Such an explanation removes the urgency of the question. We now understand that we can create seemingly unsurpassable dualisms very easily if we focus on abstractions, but when we remember that they are really only aspects of the whole, then we can see that our concern should be with *how* these aspects *together* produce the whole. In other words, we should avoid the mistake of most

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[273] *The War Diaries* p. 211.

sociology and many forms of Marxism and not become preoccupied with regressive analysis to the exclusion of the progressive movement which resolves many of the issues which otherwise appeared to be great problems.

This is perhaps *the* central contribution of a Sartrean approach. It allows us to break free of the analytic reason (along with its quantitative tendencies) which every supposedly dialectical and totalising social philosophy which ignores the primacy of individual praxis remains tied to. The contribution can be seen to be greater still when we recall that there is a whole range of theoretical approaches to the study of sport (functionalism, structuralism, figurational sociology, the work of Foucault etc.) which embrace analytic reason unquestioningly. Analytic reason, by its very nature, rules out synthesis, and therefore, intelligibility of the whole.

A difficulty arises if we attempt to clearly outline the gains made by adopting a Sartrean approach to the theorisation of sport. It is the same difficulty which is found in any attempt to discuss the various moments of a dialectic. The interconnections between the points lead to the account becoming rather complicated. For example, a resolution of the problem of agency and structure can be achieved by the subordination of analytic reason to dialectical reason, but this only allows progress if individual praxis can be shown to be the motor of the resulting dialectical analysis. This cannot be achieved without addressing the role of temporality, both because of the temporal spread of consciousness and the fact that no unity can be found for History without an understanding of temporality. Equally, we cannot understand temporality without an understanding of

consciousness and vice versa, and we cannot understand praxis without giving an account of temporality and consciousness, which, of course, we don't fully understand without rendering praxis intelligible. The complications go further, but it isn't necessary to follow them here. The important point is that synthetic unity is fragile. We cannot hope to maintain a synthetic account if we fail to deal with consciousness, individual praxis or temporality, which are all interconnected. It is through recognition of these interconnections that we become fully aware of the failings of the hegemonist approach to the study of sport. Suddenly, what appeared to be a few omissions and inaccuracies becomes a fundamentally flawed approach, which has survived as a result of its superficial plausibility.

Aronson (1987: 221) identifies four interrelated aims of the project which Sartre undertook in writing the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. First, Sartre wished to demonstrate the superiority of dialectical analysis over analytic reason and improve our understanding of the dialectic. Second, he aimed at demonstrating that we can only understand history (especially the deviations of history) by the application of dialectical reason. Third, Sartre attempted to show that all 'substantive social and historical "realities"' (Aronson 1987: 221) are the result of the action of praxis on matter and the concomitant re-creation of the practico-inert. Finally, Sartre wished to demonstrate that society and history are 'totalisations without a totaliser.' Aronson (1987: 221) notes that while Sartre does not achieve his final goal, the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* 'goes remarkably far toward meeting the other three.'

Consideration of Sartre's entire project has deliberately been avoided here. It would not serve the purposes of this thesis to debate the issue of totalisation without a totaliser, although it is a necessary backdrop to any work such as this and presents itself as a problem which must be resolved by any future critical analysis of dialectical reason. If we cannot view human history from outside, then any grand totalisation must be regarded as a totalisation without a totaliser. Sartre identifies this issue at the end of volume one of the *Critique*, when he claims that:

> 'History is intelligible if the different practices which can be found and located at a given moment of the historical temporalisation finally appear as partially totalising and as connected and merged in their very oppositions and diversities by an intelligible totalisation from which there is no appeal. It is by seeking the conditions for the intelligibility of historical vestiges and results that we shall, for the first time, reach the problem of totalisation without a totaliser and of the very foundations of this totalisation, that is to say, of its motive-forces and of its non-circular direction.'[274]

Such metahistorical questions are extremely important, but we cannot consider them in adequate detail here. We will, however, confine ourselves to some brief remarks because it is the failure of Sartre to clearly resolve this issue which could form the basis for the claim that the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* was a mistaken and futile project.

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[274] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 817

Flynn (1997: 176-77) points out that the notion of a totalisation without a totaliser appears to run counter to Sartre's dialectical nominalism as it appears to suggest a dialectic without an agent. Aronson (1987: 235) mistakenly holds this view, claiming that 'a totalisation without a totaliser is inaccessible to Sartre's thought *on principle*.' Flynn (1997) claims, however, that this is to misread Sartre's intention, and that we can make sense of the notion of a totalisation without a totaliser, without appealing to a hyperorganism. Flynn (1997: 177) argues that the 'enveloping totalisation' (totalisation of totalisations) is incarnated by the concrete historical event. The event is the historialisation of the epoch by the historical agent, who is, simultaneously, totalised by the event. Flynn (1997; 177) notes that:

> 'The life of Stalin or, … of Flaubert is a totalising project (the primacy of praxis); but it is also the incarnation of a set of real relations, both synchronic and diachronic, that Sartre later calls "epoch," and each is "totalised" by it to the extent that he "totalises" it (the principle of totalisation). Thus "totalisation without a totaliser" does not refer to some "hyperorganism" or some transcendent reality, which Sartre would reject on principle. Rather, it denotes that set of objective relations or possibilities that are put in motion and sustained, even in their deviating and counterproductive functions, by individual and group or collective activity.'

In other words, the 'totalisation without a totaliser' is produced by our praxis in a world which deviates that praxis. The enveloping totalisation is not created from outside, but produced from within by the very nature of praxis and counterpraxis, or the way humans

act on matter in a world of other humans also acting on matter. As Flynn (1997: 178) puts it 'the unity of History and its single Truth are a function of the dialectical movement by which "History totalises itself." This is the "totalisation without a totaliser." ... More succinctly, dialectical Reason simply *is* that elusive "totalisation without a totaliser" on which the intelligibility of History depends.' What Sartre failed to do in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* was to demonstrate the totalisation without a totaliser through concrete analysis of history. But this does not mean that 'totalisation without a totaliser' is an incomprehensible slogan, which *cannot* be demonstrated through concrete analysis.

We should focus our concluding remarks not on the issue of the 'totalisation without a totaliser', but on the third of Sartre's aims, the demonstration of the primacy of praxis. Aronson (1987: 228) recognises that Sartre 'has achieved the monumental breakthrough of finding praxis at the basis of structure, everywhere the eye can see.' In volume one of the *Critique* Sartre asks 'how can *praxis* in itself be an experience both of necessity and of freedom since neither of these, according to classical logic, can be grasped in an empirical process?'[275] He resolves this issue by the end of volume two of the *Critique*. By then he has demonstrated in great detail through a range of examples, the way that praxis inscribes itself in matter to create structure, while the structure created by praxis is absorbed in, and transcended by, future praxis.[276] This is hugely important from our perspective because this is (in different language) the resolution of the problem of the

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[275] *Critique of Dialectical Reason* volume one, p. 79
[276] Aronson (1987: 228) claims that 'by the end of volume two, Sartre has answered this most difficult question by demonstrating praxis as an a priori basis of a variety of its inertial deposits. Again and again, through the *Critique*, we experience praxis cohering into structure, inertia dissolving back into the praxis from whence it came. ... He gives us the ability both to see praxis *and* its freezing into structure – in one and the same act, in one and the same process, in one and the same product.'

apparent dichotomy of agency and structure, which has dogged hegemonic analyses of sport. It is through the work of Sartre that we see just how inadequate the hegemonist treatment of this issue is. While never 'descending' to the level of individual praxis, hegemonist thought could *never* provide anything other than a superficial welding together of the two abstractions. This insight alone is sufficient to make the application of the work of Sartre to the critical theorisation of sport (or any other social phenomena) eminently worthwhile.

The suggestion that Sartre may be overly negative in relation to generality[277] is something which arises from his emphasis on the particular. However, the question of Sartre's difficulty in dealing with the general plane misses the point of his analysis. For Sartre, there is no general plane, nor is there a particular or specific plane. It is for this reason that Sartre uses the term 'singular universal.' The concrete and the particular are dialectically linked within the whole. There can be no pure generality and no pure specificity. At the concrete level everything is a whole which displays aspects of both the general and the particular.[278] For example, the following are all generalities which are singularised in concrete incarnations:[279] The human condition, Being In-itself, Being For-itself, Being For-others, facticity, the practico-inert, objective spirit, the serial collective, the group-in-fusion, the pledged group, the organised group, the institution, scarcity, the mediating Third, antipraxis, anti-labour and the dialectic. It is for this reason that there cannot be a 'Sartrean Theory of Sport.' We must agree with hegemonists that a theory of

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[277] See Aronson (1987: 71-73 and 223-25).
[278] Aronson (1987: 224-25) makes this point, but mistakenly regards it as insight that *he* brings to us. He fails to attribute this view to Sartre, arguing instead that Sartre is unclear and appears to reject the general. This is a rather disingenuous reading of Sartre.

sport in-itself is impossible because Sport does not exist independently of concrete incarnations of sport.

Heidegger invoked the term 'Holzwege' (woodpaths) to describe some of his work. In German this expression refers to a dead-end. Heidegger's view of such Holzwege was that despite the fact that they do not lead to clear conclusions and fail to resolve the problems we are trying to overcome, they are, nonetheless, extremely useful. As Polt (1999: 7) explains 'if we follow a path to its end and are forced to return, we are different, even wiser, than we were before we took this path. We have come to know the lay of the land and our own capacities. We know much more about the woods, even if we have never gotten out of them.' This is an important point to recognise here for one of two mutually exclusive reasons. Either we regard hegemonist theorisations of sport as a very interesting and illuminating Holzweg, from which we must now depart and explore alternatives, or, we regard the work of Sartre as ultimately a dead-end, from which we have learned a great deal.[280] A case in favour of the former and against the latter has been presented here. If we are to accept the view that there is much to be gained from the work of Sartre in relation to the critical theorisation of sport, then we must accept that there is much work to do in developing a Sartrean approach to the theorisation of sport.

We have dealt exclusively with an elite high-profile professional sporting example. Such an example is very different from children playing football in the street or a school sports

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[279] Incarnation is the key idea as far as the issue of the general and the particular is concerned.
[280] The hegemonist and Sartrean approaches have been presented here in such a way as to exclude the view that one approach can be used to strengthen the other in a sufficiently balanced way to consider a synthesis

day. The high-profile example is greatly influenced by money, and the fact that it is a mediated spectacle which has a cultural impact around the world. The event is part of a process of globalisation and is an historical event by virtue of the fact that it alters the practico-inert. Global sporting events change the world in which they take place and become part of the praxis-process of history. The same cannot be said for all activities that we may wish to refer to as sport. This is important because it has an impact on the breadth of the application of the method outlined here. The progressive-regressive method analyses praxis, or historical action. This means that the progressive-regressive method cannot be used to analyse everything. It is not designed to explain all action, only historical action. Action does not become praxis (and therefore historical) by virtue of the fact that it is high-profile, although if an action is high-profile it will alter the practico-inert and it will, therefore, constitute historical action. There are plenty of everyday activities which constitute praxis but could not be regarded as high-profile. If we take the two examples that we mentioned earlier; the school sports day and children playing football in the street, we find that the school sports day constitutes praxis but, in most cases, children playing football in the street does not. During the school sports day actions are inscribed in the practico-inert. Trophies are won and school records are set. Each sports day creates conditions which must be transcended by future action. The same is not necessarily true of children playing football in the street. It is highly likely that they could play for a couple of hours and return home without having altered the conditions in which they live by their actions. This would not, therefore, constitute praxis and would not be a suitable example to analyse using the progressive-regressive method.

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of the two perspectives. We appear to have ruled out the possibility of claiming that they are both worthwhile paths.

Consideration of the different events which could be studied raises an important issue in relation to the study of history. The scope of the progressive-regressive method extends beyond examples which are likely to be of interest to many people. An analysis of the school sports day may work, but it is unlikely to be very interesting for most people. This is important because it is just this kind of selectivity which gives us a wealth of information on certain historical events and leaves us completely unaware of others. History is not the sum total of every action that was ever taken since the origin of human life. As a result of this it is unproblematic that the progressive-regressive method cannot be used to analyse non-historical action. The important point, however, is that many praxeis are simply not regarded as interesting enough to study. The progressive-regressive method allows us to overcome this problem because it regards history as the past of our present. When this approach is taken we have a means by which we can be selective in relation to what is and is not important without relying on personal preference or interest. By locating the synthetic unity of the event in the project of individual praxis, previous events become important as the source of the conditions which praxis must transcend. They do not have an a priori importance or an importance in-themselves. So although the other fights which took place on the evening Cassius Clay fought his first boxing match could be analysed as events which contributed to boxing, they are not, as a result of the focus of our example of 'The Rumble in the Jungle', important enough to consider here. It is in this way that events present themselves as of relevance or as being unimportant. The fact that the progressive-regressive method reaches its limit with non-historical action means that it should always be possible to use the method to analyse

praxis that is of no interest to the particular study being undertaken. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Sartre regarded the progressive-regressive method as the basis of the intelligibility of human history.

What has been presented here is an initial exploration of the path. There are indications that this path may lead in a worthwhile direction, but we require more detailed concrete studies and further work on the outstanding problems presented by Sartre's work, the principal issue being that of the totalisation without a totaliser.

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